

THE AWADH TENANT STRUGGLE, 1917-1939:
A HISTORY FROM BELOW

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis entitled "The Awadh Tenant Struggle, 1917-1939: A History from Below" carried out under the supervision of Dr. P. Sudhir, Reader in History, University of Hyderabad, is original. This thesis or a part thereof has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma at this University or any other university.

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Supervisor's Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "The Awadh Tenant Struggle, 1917-1939 : A History From Below" submitted by Ms. Nisha Rathore for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad, has been done under my supervision and embodies the result of bona fide research work done by her.

Certified further that this dissertation or a part thereof has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma at this University or any other university.

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DEDICATION

In memory of my aunt Krishna Chandra
who wished me to study the role of Awadh peasantry
in the freedom struggle of India

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	: All India Congress Committee
BIA	: British Indian Association
BRP	: Baba Ram Chandra Papers
CID	: Criminal Investigation Department
CPC	: Criminal Procedure Code
CS	: Civil Service
CWC	: Congress Working Committee
DC	: Deputy Commissioner
DCC	: District Congress Committee
DM	: District Magistrate
GAD	: General Administration Department Records
ICS	: Indian Civil Service
IPC	: Indian Penal Code
NAI	: National Archives of India
NMML	: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
PAI	: Police Abstract of Intelligence
PCC	: Provincial Congress Committee
TCC	: Tahsil Congress Committee
UPCC	: United Provinces Congress Committee
UPSA	: Uttar Pradesh State Archives

Introduction

There exists no continuous history of the Awadh tenant struggle from 1917 to 1939, i.e. from its beginning to its end. A couple of years here and a couple of years there have attracted the attention of Awadh historians. Some have written on the years 1920-21, and the others on the years 1930-1932, and still others have studied these years in a discontinuous fashion. All these studies have been conducted by isolating the tenant struggle from its total context. When a struggle is studied by detaching it from its total context, then it fails to give a clear picture, or a clear historical account, of the struggle. One who is writing on the stretch of 1920-21 takes a sudden start at 1920 and ends abruptly at 1921 as if the struggle of tenants came to an end in 1921. This is a mistaken approach. The mistake is similar to the one which is committed while writing on the Non-Co-operation Movement and abruptly ending it with the Chauri Chaura incident. Non-co-operation was a part of the freedom struggle, and the freedom struggle did not stop at Chauri Chaura. It continued. Similarly, the Awadh tenant struggle did not stop with the amendment to the Oudh Rent Act in 1921. It continued. So also is true of the Awadh tenant struggle of 1930-1932. It did not begin as a fresh struggle in 1930 and ended at 1932. The Civil Disobedience Movement cannot be studied by detaching it from the Non-Co-operation Movement. These were parts of the same movement, the movement for the freedom of the country. The experiences of the latter are intimately connected with launching of the former movement. Similarly, the Awadh tenant struggle of 1930-1932 cannot be studied by detaching it from the struggle of 1920-21. The withdrawal of Civil Disobedience in 1934 was not the withdrawal of the national movement for freedom. So also the Awadh tenant struggle did not stop in 1932. It continued till

1939 when the Oudh Rent Act was withdrawn. For the tenant struggle of Awadh was a reaction against the Oudh Rent Act.

The tenant struggle of Awadh ran its own course like the Congress struggle for freedom of the country. There were no gaps and holes in the Congress struggle, so also there were no gaps and holes in the tenant struggle. The present study unfolds the Awadh tenant struggle in terms of three distinct phases. The first phase of the struggle covers the period from 1917 to 1921; the transitory phase from 1922 to 1929 and the second, i.e. the final phase, from 1930 to 1939. In 1939 the Oudh Rent Act was withdrawn. The struggle against this Act, therefore, was also withdrawn. The tenants of Awadh in 1940 jumped into the freedom struggle of the country, and the tenant struggle lost its independent identity. Its identity was merged with the identity of the Congress. However, we should not forget that the tenant struggle of Awadh started against the Oudh Rent Act. Therefore, in the present study the study of this Act has been given primacy over the study of other issues. It is the Oudh Rent Act which gave birth to the tenant struggle in Awadh. History of Awadh tenant struggle is the history that coincides with the growth of the Oudh Rent Act.

The Awadh tenant struggle in an organised form started sometime in the second decade of this century. However, the origin of this struggle goes back to 1868 when the Oudh Rent Act was instituted by the British. In 1857 revolt the rural mass of Awadh was involved in the struggle against the British. And this mass, as is well known, was under the leadership of the taluqdars. The revolt of 1857 shows the kind of relationship that existed between the tenantry and the taluqdars. It was a relationship of mutual trust, something like Gandhi's idea of "trusteeship". Tenant-taluqdar tension was certainly missing, otherwise the tenants would not have followed their taluqdars in 1857. The reciprocal relationship between the tenants and taluqdars had to be ended in order to establish

the British rule over Awadh. Through the Oudh Rent Act of 1868 the united energy of tenants and taluqdars was diverted from the anti-British struggle to the struggle among themselves, to the struggle of tenants against their taluqdars. The Oudh Rent Act was framed in such a fashion that the militancy and radicalism of tenants were diverted towards their landlords. The tenants had no time to think in terms of fighting against the British. Thus the national struggle against the British was converted into a parochial struggle against the landlords. The Oudh Rent Act of 1868 gave birth to the class struggle between tenants and landlords. The British rule survived with this class struggle.

So far as the organised tenant struggle is concerned, the existing sources refer to Rure Sabha which was started in the village Rure in Patti Tahsil of Pratapgarh District sometime in the second decade of this century. No precise date can be fixed for the formation of the Sabha. But the Sabha was started long before Baba Ram Chandra reached Rure on the invitation extended by Sahdev Singh and Jhinguri Singh. Sahdev Singh worked in a firm, named King Brothers, at Calcutta and was influenced by the national awakening of Bengal. There is every likelihood that he started the Sabha which was later joined by Jhinguri Singh and Dirgpal Singh. At a later stage this Sabha had its branches in several neighbouring villages. Though Rure is a Thakur village, all the neighbouring villages are Kurmi villages. In due course Jhinguri Singh's name became intimately associated with the names of Kurmi peasant leaders Kashi, Bhagwan Din, Ajodhya and Priyag. There is no surprise about this association, because tahsil Patti is a Kurmi dominated tahsil.

According to several persons interviewed at Rure and Pratapgarh they fix the year 1904 for the beginning of Rure Sabha. Bansh Bahadur Singh, advocate, a kinsman of Jhinguri Singh, subscribes to this view. And so does Kamla Kant Pandey, advocate, subscribe to this view. Some reporter

of Rashtriya Sahara has fixed this year in the issue of 7 March '93, and the whole of Pratapgarh has got prejudiced about this date.¹ If the Sabha was started by Sahdev Singh then it is impossible that it started in 1904. According to Sahdev Singh's son, Samar Bahadur Singh, Sahdev Singh used to come from Calcutta on long leaves. A time came when he gave up his Calcutta job. But no precise date can be fixed for the resignation of Sahdev Singh. Professor K.D. Sharma, Patti Degree College, Pratapgarh, believes that Sahdev Singh started attracting people for listening to the Ramayana. Later these meetings acquired political significance.² It is only after Jhinguri Singh joined Sahdev Singh that the Kisan Sabha form was acquired by those meetings. So the Sabha might have started sometime in the second decade of this century, around 1914. According to Ram Chandra, who is a more authentic source, the Sabha started in 1917. He fixes the date that coincides with Gandhi's entry into Champaran.³ But he also accepts that before his coming to Rure there were already some branches of Rure Sabha in the neighbouring villages. All this takes time. The branches cannot spring up all of a sudden. The original Sabha at Rure might have started earlier, say, by the beginning of the second decade or so. However, in the absence of any convincing evidence the date fixed by Ram Chandra is the only reliable date. Ram Chandra had not to start a Kisan Sabha at Rure. He found it ready-made to become its leader. But whoever knows Ram Chandra in Pratapgarh also knows the names of Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Priyag.

I worked on the first phase of the tenant struggle of Awadh leading to the revolt of 1920-21 for my M.Phil. degree. But when I wrote my M.Phil. dissertation I did not consider the revolt of 1920-21 as a phase of any struggle whatsoever. Following the existing historiography of the time I considered the struggle of 1920-21 as a self-contained unit. Like other historians of Awadh I thought that the struggle began sometime in 1920, or

a little earlier, and came to an end after passing of the Oudh Rent (amendment) Act. This Act was taken as the victory of the revolting peasants.⁴

With the kind of historiography which attracted me in the year 1989-90 there was no question of the phases of the peasant struggle. If I had continued with that historiography, the historiography that led me to see the struggle of 1920-21 as a self-contained unit, then the struggle of peasants in 1930-32 would have been another struggle, a fresh one, quite different from, and independent of, the first struggle.

My later studies, particularly in the Intelligence Department of U.P., and the field work, particularly in the Pratapgarh district, led me to see that the struggle of 1930-32 was continuous with the struggle of 1920-21. These were not two struggles but only one struggle with two different phases, one before 1921 and the other after this date. The year 1921 is taken as a demarcation line because it is this year in which the Oudh Rent (amendment) Act was passed. Even after this date the struggle continued. And the struggle terminated only when the U.P. Tenancy Act was passed in 1939 and the Oudh Rent Act was withdrawn. The years between 1921 and 1930 could be considered as the transitory phase of the struggle. Awadh tenant struggle was tied to the Oudh Rent Act. As soon as the Oudh Rent Act was withdrawn the irritant for the struggle disappeared.

It is not a sheer accident that brought me to my present study, i.e. the study of the tenant struggle from 1917 to 1939. I started working on the struggle of 1930-32 thinking that I already completed my study of 1920-21. In the course of my study what surprised me most was that some grass-root leaders of tenantry who participated in the struggle of 1930-32 were the same who took active part in 1920-21. Ram Chandra was the only exception who had no interest in the struggle of 1930-32. But Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Bhagwan Din and Ajodhya were as active in 1930-32 as they

were in 1920-21. These grass-root leaders did not stop their struggle after 1921 in spite of police repression. They kept a dominant position in the tenant struggle from 1917 to 1939. It became impossible to detach the struggle of 1930-32 from the struggle of 1920-21. Looked at from the point of 1930-32 the struggle of 1920-21 appeared to me very different from how it appeared to me when I worked on it by isolating it from the total context. The struggle of 1920-21 stands on the shoulders of the struggle of 1930-32. This is similar to the relationship between Civil Disobedience and Non-Co-operation. The experiences connected with the latter stood on the shoulders of the former. I, therefore, decided to switch over from the tenant struggle of 1930-32 to the tenant struggle from 1917 to 1939.

Concerning the continuity of tenant struggle after 1920-21 Jawaharlal writes 'Agrarian troubles continued to crop up in Oudh but on a smaller scale.'⁵ Large-scale troubles could not be expected. Neither the British wanted them nor was the Congress interested in them. However, the successive crop failure from 1927 and the start of depression at the close of 1929 made it impossible for the tenants to survive. Therefore, they jumped into the Civil Disobedience in 1930-32. Referring to this upsurge, Gyan Pandey writes 'The evident success of 1920-21 agitation and the continued presence of influential grass-root leaders, such as famous Baba Ram Chandra proved important inspiration for the Oudh peasant.'⁶ There is no doubt that the no-rent campaign of 1930-32 was encouraged by referring to the courage which the tenants exhibited in 1920-21. But Ram Chandra's presence was not an encouraging feature; he no more remained a source of inspiration for the peasants.

There simply existed no ground to stop the tenant struggle after 1921. The Oudh Rent Act was not instituted in 1868 to give any rights on land to the tenant. It was instituted to confer rights on land to those

taluqdars who deserted their king in 1857 and joined hands with the British. The tenantry as a whole was considered as deserving punishment for its active participation in the revolt. Thus the Rent Act of 1868 was meant for punishing the tenantry and rewarding the taluqdars. But the withdrawal of this Act in 1886 and the introduction of a new Act was no better. The Act of 1886 introduced the seven years tenure with $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent enhancement limit after the expiry of tenure. But it also introduced clauses which made eviction possible at any time during the tenure. The condition of tenants worsened on account of all kinds of exactions which became possible because of the scarcity of land. This resulted into the tenant upsurge of 1920-21. As a result the Oudh Rent Act was amended in 1921. But the amended Act too did not help the tenantry. On the contrary, this Act introduced clauses which made eviction even easier than the earlier Act. Though the tenure was extended from 7 years to 10 years, the enhancement of $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent was withdrawn. Its limit was extended. Not only were the taluqdars allowed to enhance rents to undesirable extent, the tenants continued to be evicted at any time with some or the other excuse. Growth of the Oudh Rent Act coincided with the growth of tenants' misery. Then how was it possible for the tenants to withdraw their agitation? The agitation was simply suspended for a couple of years because the grass-root leaders were put in jail.

A difficulty however remains to be solved. The peasant upsurge of 1930-32 was the result of the Congress-led "no-rent" campaign whereas the upsurge of 1920-21 was the result of a kind of self-mobilisation of peasants. As Jawaharlal writes, '... the kisan agitation in certain parts of Oudh in 1920 and 1921 was, ... in its own way, a remarkable and revealing one. In its origin it was entirely unconnected with politics or politicians.'⁷ This is only partly true. It is only the organisation of Rure Sabha which was independent of the outside politicians. So what Jawaharlal

says holds true only about the Pratapgarh tenantry. Self-mobilisation of tenantry in other parts of Awadh did not occur. It is the Oudh Kisan Sabha which was responsible for mobilising tenantry in Rae Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad. And Oudh Kisan Sabha was an amalgamation of kisans and the seasoned Congress politicians. Thus for the violence of 1920-21 one cannot put responsibility on the self-mobilisation of tenantry. There was no violence in Pratapgarh though the mobilisation of tenantry was entirely unconnected with politics or politicians. But there was violence in Rae Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad where the tenantry was mobilised by Oudh Kisan Sabha. Of course this does not mean that the call for loot and violence was given by the Oudh Kisan Sabha, and no such call was given by the Rure Sabha. The situation of 1920-21 was so explosive that any kind of leader, with or without any sort of ideology, could have excited the tenantry. Difficult thing was not how to excite tenantry, the difficult thing was how to bring down the excitation of tenantry, how to make them non-violent. In 1920-21 Rure leaders did a remarkable job by keeping the tenantry of Pratapgarh cool. Since such leaders were missing in the other three districts, violence in those districts could not be avoided.

The question arises how can the upsurge of 1920-21, which was officially independent of the Congress, be brought closer to the upsurge of 1930-32, which was the creation of Congress? How could they be considered as parts of the same tenant struggle? It is possible to consider them as parts of the same struggle if it can be shown that the Congress struggle merged with the tenant struggle in 1930. It is the same whether you call 1930-32 as the Congress struggle or you call it a tenant struggle. It is beyond any doubt that the Congress did succeed in bringing to its side the important grass-root leaders of the 1920-21 upsurge. Jhinguri Singh along with Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Priyag accepted the Congress ideology in 1920s. After coming back from jail in 1922 they started their campaign

against nazrana and bedakhli. But their campaign had an added feature. They started moving with swaraj flag in their hands, and started talking about swaraj along with their issues concerning the removal of taluqdari system. They also included the use of khaddar and charkha in their programme. When Gandhi gave his call for salt agitation they jumped into it. It was reported that 'Seven persons including Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya and Bhagwan Din have been prosecuted for breach of salt laws. Salt is still manufactured by their supporters.'⁸ All these seven persons were grass-root leaders of Awadh tenant struggle of 1920-21. This shows that the kisan agitation merged with the Congress agitation in 1930. Going to jail for salt was not going to jail for the removal of the Oudh Rent Act, it was for the removal of the British from India.

Rure leaders were committed to non-violence. This was the reason that no violence occurred in Pratapgarh during 1920-21 though Pratapgarh had the credit of initiating the Kisan Sabha agitation. Historians of Awadh are puzzled over the fact that there was no violence in Pratapgarh, the birth place of kisan agitation, when there was violence in Rae Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad. The reason given by them is the absence of Ram Chandra from Pratapgarh. Since Ram Chandra those days was 'imprisoned' in the Anand Bhavan of Nehrus, no violence occurred in Pratapgarh.⁹ But then Ram Chandra was not present in either of the three districts where violence occurred in his absence. Then how could his absence be the reason for the non-occurrence of violence in Pratapgarh? It is simply because the grass-root leaders of Pratapgarh kisan agitation were committed to non-violence that no violence occurred in Pratapgarh.

After coming back from jail in 1922 the Rure leaders became more vocal about non-violence. In his speeches Jhinguri Singh 'insisted on non-violence.'¹⁰ With the passage of time his faith in Gandhi and his tactics increased, and he remained committed to Gandhi till his death.

Perhaps he died sometime in 1943. He was imprisoned last time on 10 December 1942 during the 'Quit India Movement.'¹¹ Jhinguri Singh was also imprisoned in January 1941 for satyagraha in his own village Rure.¹² During the span of 21 years, from 1920 to 1942, Jhinguri Singh was imprisoned several times. So was the case with his other associates. After 1929 they became partly Congress agitators. But all the time they fought for the kisan cause.

If the kisan agitators of 1920-21 were coming closer to the Congress and merging with it, the Congress started pleading for the kisan charter of demands. It is through the platform of Oudh Kisan Sabha that they were approaching kisans. The Oudh Kisan Sabha was formed on October 17, 1920 with the help of Ram Chandra, Jawaharlal, Gauri Shankar Misra and Matabadal Pandey. The last was an advocate of Pratapgarh and so he was more actively associated with the affairs of the Sabha.¹³ Oudh Kisan Sabha was the result of the union between city intelligentsia and the rural mass of kisans. The Rure Sabha was literally a rural sabha. But so was Congress only an urban sabha. Left to themselves, they posed no challenge to the British. It is only their union that posed a challenge. Therefore, the formation of Oudh Kisan Sabha was full of potential danger. According to Emerson, Gandhi told him in 1931 that 'Kisan Sabhas were in fact Congress creations.'¹⁴ This may be true about Kisan Sabhas created in and after 1920 but not before that year in Awadh. If there were any Congress-created Kisan Sabhas in Awadh before 1920 then they were in the city files of the Congress offices. It is for the first time that Jawaharlal visited the kisan sanctuary of Pratapgarh in June 1920, and exchange between kisans and the Congress started. But Rure Sabha was formed long before Jawaharlal visited Pratapgarh. Rure Sabha was the result of general mass awakening, to use Poucheпадass' expression. But Congress itself was the result of this awakening. Coming of Gandhi too

was a part of this awakening. If one hesitates in calling this awakening 'national' because the concept of nation is an import from the West, then this awakening can be called anti-British.

Jawaharlal's visit to Pratapgarh made him a public speaker and a national leader. He accepts that the peasants of Pratapgarh 'took away the shyness from me and taught me to speak in public. Till then I hardly spoke at a public gathering; I was frightened at the prospect.'¹⁵ The gain was reciprocal. Rural mass was no more shy of the urban intelligentsia. The kisans became bolder in their dealings with the Government officials. Their timidity was gone. If Jawaharlal started gaining confidence, the kisans too started gaining confidence. The demarcation line between the educated elite and the illiterate peasants disappeared. Congress welcomed the peasants and the peasants welcomed Congress. Congress no more remained a body of city intelligentsia.

Addressing the kisans of Pratapgarh during the transitory phase of the tenant struggle Jawaharlal reacted to the issue of ejectment from land. He said that the ejectment 'was a common grievance and that Indians, as a whole, had been ejected from the possession of India and no relief could be expected till these foreigners had been turned out.'¹⁶ This was putting the Congress goal of achieving freedom from the British rule before kisans in their own language. For the kisans knew the language of eviction more than any other language. Addressing the same kisans five years later he said that 'he wanted them (kisans) to have the ideas of baghawat (revolution) even as he himself had. A man should own his own land and should work with his own hands. Labourers enrich the country but zamindar tribe is harmful and a burden on the country.'¹⁷ Jawaharlal's anti-zamindari attitude certainly impressed the kisans of Pratapgarh. Kisans did not lack the ideas of baghawat; they already exhibited these ideas in 1920-21. It is Jawaharlal to whom the ideas of

baghawat were new. There was a perfect harmony between the new thoughts of Jawaharlal and the old thoughts of kisans; therefore, kisans were naturally driven towards the Congress.

Jawaharlal was quite different from Gandhi. For Gandhi economic and political reforms could wait till swaraj was achieved. But Jawaharlal gave more importance to these reforms. In his letter to the Tribune, August 26, 1928, Jawaharlal wrote

Whether I am injuring the cause of nationalism or not, it is not for me to say. But I am very sure that nationalism minus the nation, or rather minus the vast majority of the people, is something that I do not hanker after. The nation to me is the 95 per cent or 98 per cent— or whatever the percentage may be, and not the 2 per cent or 5 per cent consisting of the big zamindars and capitalists and other of their kind.¹⁸

His writings and speeches were full of these ideas. It is natural for kisans to develop mental equation with Jawaharlal. He even suggested to Emerson in July 1931 to take advantage of the economic depression and 'to buy out the big landlords in the United Provinces and redistribute their estates.'¹⁹ According to Emerson, Jawaharlal had the idea 'that a period of acute agrarian depression is a good time for land purchase by the state.'²⁰ There is no reason to doubt Jawaharlal's sincerity towards tenants.

How could the upsurge of 1920-21 be a self-contained unit? It could be a self-contained unit if one has no desire to open the pages of history, i.e. the pages of Government and non-Government sources. One should not be bewitched by the historiography that considers the upsurge of 1920-21 as a self-contained unit, independent of, and different from, the upsurge of 1930-32. They are simply two different phases of the same upsurge, the same struggle, that was launched by the tenants of Awadh.

The historians of Awadh, be they elitists or subaltern, have felt shy of bringing to prominence the names of leaders who started the struggle of tenants by establishing the tenant sabha at Rure. Sahdev Singh, Drigpal

Singh and Jhinguri Singh (Thakurs) were assisted by Kashi, Bhagwan Din, Ajodhya and Priyag (Kurmis) in establishing this sabha.²¹ There is a well-known historiography which accepts that the subaltern masses will be led by the leaders coming from the elite class; therefore, the subaltern historiography on Awadh follows the lead given by the elitist historiography in the choice for the subaltern leaders. Ram Chandra is equally prominent in both the historiographies. The real subaltern leaders do not emerge in the pages of history books. If at all their names occur they occur only in the footnotes of history books. They do not transcend the footnote stage, perhaps because in real life they have nothing but a footnote existence. Rure Sabha was not the creation of any kind of outside leadership, Congress or non-Congress. Tenants of Patti mobilised themselves under the leadership of Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Priyag, to name some of them; and these leaders were one and all of them tenants. They were not landless labourers or urban dwellers. So also they were not babas and faqirs of any kind. Their education was restricted to the Ramayana.

Jhinguri Singh was a more prominent leader among them. The tenants of Jhinguri Singh's own caste did not follow his lead, perhaps because they were not suffering from hari, begari and so many other cesses which were imposed on the Kurmis. During the course of the tenant struggle many leaders from outside Patti came, including Ram Chandra, and left, but Jhinguri Singh continued the struggle without any break. The struggle stopped only after his death during the Quit India Movement. That the struggle of Awadh tenants was stopped after the death of Jhinguri Singh was accepted by Ram Chandra. While writing a letter to the Deputy Commissioner, Pratapgarh, sometime in 1940s Ram Chandra wrote 'Jhinguri Singh left us before completing our work. Congress became an unlawful body. And the Government got involved in the War. We had no other alternative but to sit

silent. From that time to this no leader or member of any party came to help us.'²² Jhinguri Singh's death was symbolic. He came to start a struggle. Once the struggle was stopped and the goal was achieved he was free to go back.

Ram Chandra joined the struggle sometime in 1918-19 as a vakil and a propagandist of Rure Sabha. Ram Chandra hypnotised the tenants so much that they could never imagine that he would give them wrong advices. He was inferior only to Gandhi in their mind. Ram Chandra tried to emulate Gandhi, and became the local Gandhi of Awadh, of Pratapgarh in particular. However, he was a different man after coming back from jail in 1923. He had all kinds of deviations and remained baba only in name.²³

While Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Priyag were coming closer to the Congress, Ram Chandra was drifting away from it.²⁴ Perhaps the pull of grass-root leaders did not allow Ram Chandra to desert Congress altogether. There is no surprise that Jawaharlal ultimately could not appreciate Ram Chandra as he appreciated him in 1920-21. But he continued appreciating other grass-root leaders like Kashi and Bhagwan Din who were given passes to meet him after he became the Prime Minister of India. He did not forget them.²⁵ But he also did not forget to discredit Ram Chandra whom he raised high in 1920-21. In his Autobiography he described Ram Chandra as an "irresponsible and unreliable" person.²⁶ What Jawaharlal wrote was true.

I had to re-write on the struggle of 1920-21. My M.Phil. dissertation may be all right from the point of view of the historiography that I accepted at that time. But I lost interest in that historiography and my own work grounded in that historiography. I lost interest in my earlier work for some other reasons too. It was based on a false historical truth provided by others.²⁷ Now the struggle of 1920-21 does not appear to me as an isolated, sporadic, phenomenon; it appears as a phase of a longer strug-

gle which continued till the passing of the U.P. Tenancy Act of 1939. In my recent reconstruction of the struggle I have been greatly helped not only by my field work but also by the writings of Jacques Pouchepadass on Champaran,²⁸ Ghanshyam Shah on Bardoli²⁹ and Gyan Pandey on Uttar Pradesh.³⁰ The works of Bipan Chandra,³¹ Ranajit Guha,³² Sumit Sarkar,³³ D.N. Dhanagare,³⁴ Peter Reeves³⁵ and James Scott³⁶ have helped me in their own way. The works of Gandhi and Jawaharlal belong to a class by themselves, for they were participants in the drama and not only the observers of the drama. As participants they wrote about the drama; therefore, their writings should be kept apart from the writings of the historians.³⁷ They were not historians; they were the makers of Indian history. They were not dealing with class-room lectures, they were training people for freedom struggle. S. Gopal's interpretation of Jawaharlal's relationship with tenantry gave me a clue to understand the role of tenantry in the freedom struggle.³⁸ Rudrangshu Mukherjee's work on Awadh was relevant in connection with the relationship between the taluqdars and their tenants during the Revolt of 1857, and the later degeneration of this relation.³⁹ There are so many other historians who influenced me.

Personal discussion with Jacques Pouchepadass was of immense help. I got help from him at the initial stage of my work. He gave a proper direction to my work, and continued helping me throughout these months through correspondence. He suggested certain basic source-material for me to unearth. That material helped me in reconstructing the picture of Awadh Tenant Struggle from 1917 to 1939.

The real credit for the tenant uprising of 1920 in Awadh goes to the "Oudh Policy" of the British. Oudh Rent Act was instituted by the British to convert the natural leaders of tenantry into their enemies. Instead of looking after the welfare of their tenantry the taluqdars started looking after the welfare of the British. Instead of attacking the British, a si-

tuation was created when the tenantry started attacking the taluqdars. Sporadic violence against the landlords was a common phenomenon in the nineteenth century. With the beginning of the twentieth century, different parts of India saw the mass violences in which whole taluqas and districts were involved. Mass violence occurred in a few districts of Awadh in 1920-21. If one follows Ranajit Guha then the violence of Awadh was "spontaneous" and was not the result of "elite politics".⁴⁰ The Congress did refuse to own it.

Oudh Policy was framed by Canning, nursed by Benett and championed by Butler. Willingdon was perhaps its last executor. Recently Metcalf and Peter Reeves have unearthed a group of British officials who according to them opposed the Oudh Policy. They are McMinn, Irwin and Sanders.

McMinn's Introduction to the Oudh Gazetteer (withdrawn),⁴¹ Irwin's Garden of India⁴² and the Pratapgarh Settlement Report of Sanders⁴³ are given as examples of opposition to the Oudh Policy. But none of these works shows that the officers in question were interested in the tenantry. These so-called opponents of the Oudh Policy were with its supporters in giving no importance to the tenantry. It was taken for granted by all the British officers that the Awadh tenant suffered from 'feudal submissiveness' and was incapable of revolting either against the taluqdars or against the British. In 1920-21 the tenants of Awadh disproved the Oudh Policy without holding any seminar on the policy.

A critical evaluation of Sanders is relevant, not only because he was supposed to be an opponent of the Oudh Policy but also because he was the Settlement Officer of Pratapgarh from where the tenant struggle started. He was partly responsible for the struggle. His overassessment of Revenue made the Patti taluqdars to represent their case to the Board of Revenue. They succeeded against Sanders; their revenue was reduced. This made the taluqdars of Patti autocratic and they started harassing their tenantry,

and ultimately it resulted into tenant struggle. Sanders criticised the taluqdars for concealment of rent and not encouraging the tenantry to produce indigo and other exportable crops. Government suffered because of the concealment of rent and the poor production of exportable crops. Sanders affirmed Irwin's thesis that the tenant of Awadh suffered from Feudal submissiveness and is contended with one square meal a day. And during the mango and mahua crop he even saved his meal. With such a tenantry the British could earn huge profits.

The Deputy Commissioner V.N. Mehta was an Indian version of Sanders. He came to Pratapgarh at a time when the tenants of Pratapgarh already lost their autonomous consciousness, to use an expression popular with the subaltern historians. The world of the tenant was no more closed. Its windows were opened, first by the Rure Sabha leaders then by the leaders of Oudh Kisan Sabha. Mehta came to implement the Oudh Policy during these difficult days of 1920. He brought the message to kisans concerning the amendment to the Oudh Rent Act. He presented before the tenants an outline of an Act in which the tenancy period was extended to 14 years. But his draft proposal at the same time suggested the withdrawal of the conventional limit of enhancement of rent. So also he argued against the proposal to stop eviction. Tenants were kept in dark about all this. Mehta came to neutralise the influence of Jawaharlal. Just three months before Jawaharlal toured the whole of Pratapgarh. This was the start of his political career. He liked the tenants and the tenants liked him.

Since Mehta kept his report confidential, he appeared to tenants as their saviour though he was only an agent of the British. The Oudh historians of our time, like the Pratapgarh tenantry of Mehta's time, consider Mehta as the sympathiser of tenantry. This is in spite of his report of 111 pages, which is no more a confidential document.⁴⁴ Mehta failed because the echo of swaraj was heard in the whole of Awadh.

Practically nothing has been written by the historians about the transitory phase of the Awadh tenant struggle. Perhaps because they defined struggle in terms of violence. So once violence was stopped struggle was also stopped. But as soon as Jhinguri Singh and his associates came out of jail in 1922 they started their struggle against bedakhli, nazrana, etc.⁴⁵ There occurred a difference to the consciousness of grass-root leaders, they lost purity of their peasant consciousness. They started moving with swaraj flag in their hands and also started preaching the lessons of ahimsa, Hindu-Muslim unity and the use of khaddar, etc.⁴⁶ It was so unfortunate for the British, for the British wanted them to remain confined to their limited, autonomous world of peasant consciousness. The British disliked the tagging of swaraj with the tenant struggle. The tenant struggle could remain to their advantage only when it remained parochial and limited.

In the transitory phase the sporadic leaders, mostly babas and faqirs, totally disappeared from the scene. The only baba was Ram Chandra whose consciousness too widened. Instead of moving with Rure leaders he started moving with the national and semi-national leaders. He lost interest in the tenant struggle, and got himself occupied with the construction of a temple and a dharmashala.⁴⁷ He developed the sense of owning property and started buying land and even started negotiations for buying a village.⁴⁸ When Jhinguri Singh and Sahdev Singh invited Ram Chandra in 1918 to come to Rure and to work for the Rure Sabha, he readily agreed to do so. The ground was already prepared by the grass-root leaders, he had only to take command. But the situation after 1922 was different. When in 1924 Jhinguri Singh invited Baba to come and take part in the Kisan Sabha organisation, he asked him to secure 4,000 invitations.⁴⁹ He wanted his reception to be grand, matching a national leader. Jawaharlal was received at Rure in 1923 by 2,000 kisans.⁵⁰ Baba for his own reception wanted this

figure to be doubled. But the magic of Baba's name was disappearing. Only 200 kisans gathered to receive him. Baba knew about this possibility, so he did not reach the station that day.⁵¹ Earlier kisans contributed only Rs. 10/- for Ram Chandra's reception though the target was fixed for Rs. 300/-⁵² Rure failed to receive Baba in a proper fashion. Baba's position in the eyes of tenantry decreased. He was not a grass-root leader and he failed to become a national leader. He was hanging in the air like Trishanku.

Pratapgarh gave birth to so many leaders of the grass-root level in the transitory phase. Sri Harakh, Matacharan and Debi Din were most active according to the police reports. All of them came from Patti. From Rae Bareli and Sultanpur there is no reporting of grass-root activity of any significance. Only Fyzabad competed with Pratapgarh. It gave birth to both kinds of leaders, those who believed in militancy like Khalil Ahmad and those who believed in non-violence like Gudar Kurmi.⁵³ Biyalis Gaon Movement (42 Villages Movement) was also intensified with Jagat Singh and Ganpat Singh as two of their leaders. Ajodhya Das was like Khalil Ahmad. Both of them believed in such militant actions as grazing taluqdars' crops, cutting their bamboo and beating their servants.⁵⁴ This kind of militancy was honoured by the British, because this did not lead to swaraj. However, the tenant struggle had a setback after the introduction of Hindu-Muslim tension in Fyzabad in the late 1920s. Biyalis Gaon Movement suffered most.⁵⁵ The tenants and their leaders were Hindus and the landlord Muslim. By the end of 1929 most of the Muslim grass-root leaders of tenant struggle withdrew from the struggle. No such thing happened in Pratapgarh. Maybe because the tenant leaders, so also their landlords, were Hindus.

It is said that religion helped the agitation of 1920-21. Babas and faqirs took the help of religion and became the leaders of tenantry. But

the transitory phase saw a reverse picture. Swaraj flag obtained superiority over the religious flags. Baba Ram Chandra's religious volunteers were moving with swaraj flag to obtain collection for the construction of a temple. From one village, namely, Chakia, Rs. 150/- were collected for a temple with the help of swaraj flag.⁵⁶

The second phase of the tenant struggle began in 1929 and continued till the passing of the U.P. Tenancy Act of 1939. The struggle was intensified in 1930 and again in 1931 in spite of the 'truce'. The struggle was certainly not given up in the truce period, and so also it was not given up after the withdrawal of no-tax in 1934. It was the continuity of this struggle that the Congress was victorious in Awadh in the elections of 1937, and consequently the withdrawal of the Oudh Rent Act in 1939.

There is a sense in which the result of Non-Co-operation was not in favour of the Congress. It resulted into the tenant violence. The taluqdars were allies of the British since 1858, the violence of 1920-21 made these allies into the bosom friends of the British. The tenant-landlord struggle helped only the British. Oudh Rent Act was devised to create this struggle. What could possibly harm the British was the tenant-landlord reconciliation. Once the landlords came on the same platform as the tenants, the situation of 1857 would be created. This was a frightening situation for the British. Gandhi wished the landlords to come on the same platform as the tenants to defeat the British policy of divide and rule. Civil Disobedience was an attempt to bring all classes of people to one platform. Common salt is taken by all except the high blood pressure patients. Salt is a classless category. However, soon Gandhi was attracted towards the successive failure of crop since 1927 and later the onslaught of depression. Awadh was a remarkable place to start no-tax campaign.

From the very beginning of 1930 the tenants of Awadh suffered because

of depression preceded by bad harvesting since 1927.⁵⁷ They were not in a position to pay any rent because of the arrears of rent and loans of the past years. Economic friction worked against all those tenants who had arrears of rent. And the preceding bad harvesting imposed arrears of rent on almost all the tenants. How could they pay the arrears of rent? They had to pay the unappreciated money in terms of the appreciated money. So they had to pay several times more than what they were required to pay. Same was the case with loans. If food grains are harvested every week or at the most every month, then perhaps the tenants would have managed without borrowing. But there was a long gap between the sowing of seeds and the harvesting of crop, so the tenant could not live without borrowing. From 1927 to 1929 he was heavily indebted. Again he had to pay in terms of the appreciated money what he borrowed with unappreciated money. Irwin's Government did nothing for the tenant, knowing fully well that the tenant was undergoing the worst crisis of the century. Since the Congress call for no-tax Irwin had been waiting for the tenant-landlord crisis to grow. Of course, the pretext was that he was observing the price rise. The situation was slipping out of his hands. Neither the tenants paid rent nor the taluqdars revenue. Irwin was forced to have pact with Gandhi. Gandhi did not withdraw the Civil Disobedience, he only suspended it. Truce removed Irwin and brought Willingdon.

Willingdon's immediate political step was to announce remissions. His remissions favoured taluqdars over tenants. Gandhi immediately issued his manifesto to kisans in which all the importance was given to kisans, hardly any importance to taluqdars and no importance to the Government.⁵⁸ Hindi version of Gandhi's manifesto became popular throughout Awadh, and kisans stopped paying rent. Government remissions were less than 3 annas in a rupee, whereas Gandhi's manifesto recommended remissions to 8 annas in a rupee, and in exceptional cases less than 8 annas. From mid-1931 the

Government decided to crush the no-rent campaign. From Pratapgarh all the Rure leaders were arrested in July 1931.⁵⁹ Of course Ram Chandra in the days of salt and no-rent had no identity of any kind. Jhinguri Singh, Bhagwan Din, Kashi and others earlier broke salt law and were imprisoned for six months.⁶⁰ Again they were arrested for the no-rent campaign. But Ram Chandra kept himself aloof from these developments. Rure leaders were unique. They rejected Congress at the district level, but accepted the orders of Gandhi and Jawaharlal. Though they were committed followers of Ram Chandra yet did not care for him in the case of salt and no-tax.

Participation of tenantry in the salt agitation shows that the tenants were as much against the British raj as any other class of people of India. Salt agitation was not launched to amend the Oudh Rent Act. It was launched to obtain swaraj. For the grass-root leaders of tenantry their struggle was a part of national struggle. The participation of tenantry in the salt agitation disproves the views of all those historians who think that the tenants were fighting only for their parochial demands. Salt agitation was falsely declared an urban agitation to show that it did not reach the villages. But it was more popular in villages than in cities. Tenant leaders who started the tenant agitation in 1920 went to jail in connection with the salt agitation.

The switch from salt to no-tax in 1930 was welcomed by all the three parties, Congress, tenants and the British Government. A stage came when salt became stale, and the Congress wanted to revitalise the Civil Disobedience, so opted for no-tax. Depression attracted the Congress leaders and the no-tax was launched. Tenants welcomed it because they had the support of such a large body as Congress for not paying rent. Government thought that the no-tax would lead to a class conflict and violence between tenants and landlords. Government expected that the Congress would support the tenants; therefore, the Government would have a chance to crush

both, the Congress and the tenants. The Pioneer predicted "the bloodshed".⁶¹ If bloodshed occurred Government had no other option but to intervene. However, no bloodshed occurred except at those places where the Government wanted it to occur. In Kahla, Pratapgarh, on 16 February 1931 police fired at a peaceful no-rent meeting, killing three innocent persons and wounding about 50 persons.⁶² The result was not discouraging. Matacharan was born to fight the British with greater determination. He was not discouraged by the bullets.⁶³

In June 1931 prices of food grains reached their lowest pitch. Yet the Government was not interested in substantial remissions on rent. Instead of substantial remissions it started substantial repressions. Section 12A of the Oudh Rent Act was used to realise rent. Most of the grass-root leaders of tenantry were arrested. Congress was forced to break the terms of truce and declared the second no-tax campaign in December 1931. Willingdon was waiting for such a step of the Congress. He wanted to wipe out the Congress from India. Congress power was kisan power.⁶⁴ So kisan power was to be broken. All kinds of emergency powers were used and the national leaders were arrested in the first week of January 1932. Any person who preached no-rent was put in jail. According to both, the Government officials and the historians, the no-rent of 1932-33 failed.⁶⁵ But the fashion in which its failure was brought about helped the Congress rather than crushing it. This was something like breaking the hunger strike of someone by forced feeding. There is a sense in which the hunger strike is broken; food has been forced into the stomach. But the purpose of hunger strike has been achieved. "Forced realisation of rent" was like "forced feeding". The fact that the tenants paid rent does not show that they became the supporters of the Government or that they opposed the "no-rent call". If Willingdon had not been harsh towards the tenantry in 1931-33, perhaps the election results of 1937 would have

been different. The Congress victory in the election of 1937 demonstrates the success of Civil Disobedience. There is an attempt to show that the Congress elections of 1937 were won by the appointment of what is called "the Mass Contacts Committee".⁶⁶ This is to divert attention from the no-rent campaign, as if the Civil Disobedience had no contribution towards the results of 1937. But freedom cannot be won by appointing "freedom committees". One has to fight for freedom and that takes time. So also is true about mass contact committees. Congress already established its contact with masses through its political actions like Non-Co-operation and Civil Disobedience. The latter was an immediate cause for the victory, because it is the latter action that exposed the British for the kind of rule that was reserved for India.

During the second no-rent campaign Ram Chandra played a very dubious role. He established Praja Sangh in 1933 which indirectly supported the British. The Sangh was functioning under the Government patronage. Once Praja Sangh was established Government withdrew its Aman Sabhas.⁶⁷ As a result Jawaharlal was totally disillusioned about Ram Chandra. According to him, Ram Chandra proved an irresponsible and unreliable person. After the elections of 1937 Ram Chandra "established a Congress Office at Pratapgarh"⁶⁸ and carried 1000 tenants to the Anand Bhavan.⁶⁹ But Congress was not moved to take him back.

A character similar to that of Ram Chandra was Kalka Prasad of Rae Bareilly. At one time he was president of DCC of Rae Bareilly. The office carried Rs. 50/- per month allowance.⁷⁰ So once he was removed from his office he became opponent of the Congress. This is the problem with offices carrying payment. Once the payment is stopped, the ideological commitment is also stopped. It was to the advantage of the tenant struggle that its grass-root leaders were not allured to hold these offices. Kalka Prasad was no grass-root leader of tenantry, he was never a tenant of any

kind in his life. He was a paid agitator of the Congress.

Subaltern historiography on Awadh has succeeded in unearthing the two leaders of tenantry, Ram Chandra and Kalka Prasad. It is not the case that Awadh lacked grass-root leaders of tenantry, but that they do not fit into the subaltern historiography; therefore, their names have been deliberately omitted. Swaraj is an elite idea, an idea foreign to the peasant consciousness. Therefore, a tenant leader is no grass-root leader of any kind if he carries in his mind the idea of swaraj. Congress stands for swaraj and the tenant for his one square meal a day. Since the subaltern historiography is simply the colonial historiography in disguise as Bipan Chandra thinks,⁷¹ those grass-root leaders who opposed the colonial rule and fought for swaraj have no place in this kind of historiography. Most of the grass-root leaders of tenantry, if not all of them, opposed the colonial rule. They were not just contented with one square meal a day, they wished to take that meal in a free country, in a country of their own. The subaltern historiography on Awadh is not an attempt to write history from below, it is an attempt to write history from the middle. It is an attempt to write history from the point of view of Ram Chandra and Kalka Prasad, the two and the only two heroes of the subaltern historiography on Awadh. The third one has yet to be discovered.

History from the above is the history of the nationalist historiography in which history has been looked at from the point of view of the national leaders like Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Motilal, Gandhi and so on. Masses are unlimited, so their grass-root leaders cannot be limited. But the subaltern historiography on Awadh could discover only two leaders, Ram Chandra and Kalka Prasad. The position of nationalist historiography is better than that of the subaltern historiography. If it has the revolutionaries like Subhash and Jawaharlal on one side, it has the reactionaries like Rajagopalachari and Srinivas Sastri on the other side. Gandhi

had to keep balance between the two. History from below is richer than the history from above. It is the history looked at from the point of view of such leaders as Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din, Priyag, Sri Harakh, Matacharan, Deota Din, etc., to mention a few grass-root leaders of the Pratapgarh tenantry. Since the tenants of Awadh have a long list, the grass-root leaders of those tenants have a long list. Thanks to the Intelligence Department of U.P. that the names of grass-root leaders have been preserved for writing a genuine history of the people, a genuine history from below. This Department has given equal importance to a grass-root leader as to a national leader, because the strength of the latter depends on the strength of the former. Jawaharlal and Gandhi would have failed to evict the British from India if there had been no grass-root leaders of tenantry. Urban intelligentsia would have got suffocated in the unclean atmosphere of cities.

History from below, history of the people, is the history that has not yet emerged either in the writings of the nationalist historians of Awadh or in the writings of the subaltern historians of Awadh. They have their own reasons for avoiding such a history. If the subaltern historiography means the same thing as the history from below, if this is the very definition of this term, then there exists no subaltern historiography on Awadh. This ideal has yet to be realised. A genuine people's history of Awadh has yet to be written. History looked at through the eyes of Ram Chandra and Kalka Prasad is not the history of the people. It is not a history from below, it is a history from the middle.

What Sumit Sarkar and Gyan Pandey, to name two important subaltern historians, have done is not a history from below but a total war against the Congress, not very different from a propaganda war. It may be totally wrong to look at history through the eyes of Gandhi and Jawaharlal. History should be looked through the eyes of the people. But Sumit Sarkar

and Gyan Pandey have not looked at history through the eyes of the people; they have looked at history through the eyes of the British administrators and their historians. It is not the people of Awadh, the masses of Awadh who have looked at the Congress with hostile eyes. It is the British administrators and their supporters who have looked at the Congress with hostile eyes. Now, in the name of 'people's history' the subaltern historians are trying to convert that victory into a defeat. 'Swaraj' has been converted into an elite idea, pursued by the elite Congress. Tenants were not interested in struggle for swaraj, they were only interested in the struggle against their landlords. They lived in their own world, a windowless world. Congress was a body foreign to them, and always remained foreign to them. This is how the British thought about tenants, and this is how the subalterns are thinking about tenants.

Tenants of Awadh looked at the "truce" with fascination. They started expecting the arrival of swaraj. Tenants started flocking around the Congress offices rather than the Government offices.⁷² Truce was an attack on Irwin administration, but the subaltern historians have converted it into an attack on the peasantry.⁷³ The primary purpose of Gandhi's manifesto was recommendation concerning rent remissions, but this issue is suppressed. Only the "trusteeship" issue is highlighted, and Gandhi is attacked for retention of zamindari system. Again, Gandhi's conditions for the trusteeship are suppressed because these conditions make zamindari system non-functional. The worst part of the game is treatment of no-rent campaign of 1932-33. It has been shown as if the tenants paid rent because they opposed the Congress. It is not the repression that led to the payment of rent. It was anger against the Congress for its behaviour in mid-1931 that led to the payment of rent in 1932-33.⁷⁴ This is how the British administrators painted the picture. The subaltern historians have picked up that picture and started propagating it. All what the subaltern

historians are doing is falsification of the people's history. When Congress totally failed to mobilise the taluqdars, its mobilisation has been declared perfect.⁷⁵ When Congress totally succeeded in mobilising tenants, its mobilisation has been declared imperfect.⁷⁶ Congress has been converted into an alien power. To call it an elite body is to call it a body of outsiders, a body which lies outside the world of peasants and workers.

Dhanagare has gone a step forward. Poor peasants did not participate in the no-tax campaign of 1932-33 because the depression did not hit them. Since no violence occurred in 1932-33 it is proved that the poor peasants did not participate in the agitation.⁷⁷ Their failure to participate in the agitation shows that they were well off and were not affected by depression. The question whether or not poor peasants participated in no-rent agitation or whether the depression had any effect on them is not a question of economics for Dhanagare, but the question of simple logic with important premises missing. To accept Dhanagare's thesis one must discount Willingdon's preparedness against agitation, and so on.

After studying the present works of history, one would feel that India has yet to achieve swaraj in Ideas. Political swaraj has a shaky foundation without swaraj in ideas. Does not history require such a movement?

Notes and References to Introduction

1. Both, Bansh Bahadur Singh and Kamla Kant Pandey produced the copies of Rashtriya Sahara, a newspaper published from Lucknow.
2. For a considerably long time Mr. Sharma has been busy in collecting facts about the origin of Rure Sabha. In his research he is helped by Mr. Jai Ram Verma, an advocate who happens to be a Kurmi. Jai Ram Verma also provided me with helpful material.
3. BRP, Part-I, SW, F. Nos. 2A and 2C.
4. The title of my dissertation is 'Class, Caste and the Awadh Peasant Revolt, 1920-21', University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, 1990 (unpublished). Some of the ideas of this dissertation were introduced in my paper 'Hinduisation, Sanskritization, De-Brahmanization and the Oudh Peasant Revolt of 1920-21', New Quest, September-October 1990. Now I do not accept the analysis given either in my dissertation or in my paper. The new source-material added a new dimension to the struggle of 1920-21.
5. Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography, New Delhi, 1980, p. 62.
6. Gyan Pandey, 'A Rural Base for Congress: The United Provinces, 1920-40' in D.A. Low (ed.), Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle 1917-47, Arnold-Heinemann, 1977, p. 206.
7. Jawaharlal, Autobiography, p. 63.
8. PAI, Pratapgarh, 10 May 1930, p. 521. During the days of salt agitation Ram Chandra was busy in the village cleaning operation in the villages of Banda District of U.P.
9. BRP, Part 1, SW, F. Nos. 2A and 2C. Ram Chandra describes his stay at Anand Bhavan as an imprisonment. He writes that he was not allowed to go out or meet people.
10. PAI, U.P., February 1923, p. 63.
11. Thakur Shiv Shanker Singh, a kinsman of Jhinguri Singh, has shown me the jail certificate issued by the D.M. of Pratapgarh on 24 July '73. According to this certificate Jhinguri Singh was imprisoned on 10

December 1942. This was his last imprisonment before his death some-time in 1943.

12. This information has been obtained from Jhinguri Singh's letter to Jaggi, the Kurmi peasant woman whom Ram Chandra married at his advanced age (BRP, 1st instalment, Jaggi). I verified Jhinguri Singh's arrest as well as release from the Collectorate Records, Pratapgarh. According to the Superintendent of Pratapgarh Jail, Jhinguri Singh was released from jail on 10 January 1942 under the good conduct remission rule with 70 days remission earned. (Collectorate Records, Pratapgarh, Department XVII, F.No. 35(a).) Though good his conduct became dangerous, so he was arrested again on 10 December 1942. This was his last journey to jail.
13. Sri Krishna Murari, son of Matabadal Pandey, provided me with two books written by his father: 1) Awadh ke Kisanon ki Durdasha, 2) Kisanon ki Phansi. These books exhibit kisans' sufferings.
14. H.W. Emerson, Home Political 14/30-K.W. (1932), p. 23. Both Gandhi and Jawaharlal had interviews with Emerson during the course of Civil Disobedience Movement.
15. Jawaharlal, Autobiography, p. 57.
16. PAI, Pratapgarh, May 1923, p. 275.
17. Ibid., May 1928, p. 156.
18. Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol. 3 (ed.) S. Gopal, 1972, p. 250.
19. Emerson's note, Home Political 33/23, 1931.
20. Ibid.
21. BRP, Part-I, SW, F.Nos. 2A and 2C.
22. BRP, Part-I, SW, F.No. 11.
23. Like Jhinguri Singh's following Ram Chandra's following too consisted of Kurmis. While interviewing the grandson of Pandit Sri Harakh of Anapur Village I was surprised to know from him that Ram Chandra was a Kurmi. He too was perhaps surprised to know from me that Ram Chandra was a Brahmin. This shows that the Kurmis were the backbone of Awadh tenant struggle. Ram Chandra's relationship with the Kurmi caste became more intimate when Jaggi was given in sankalp to him.

Jaggi is the daughter of the grass-root leader Bhagwan Din. She told me that she is the daughter of Mathura Kurmi. There is no contradiction, because Jaggi was "gohanlagwa", to use the local language, meaning her mother accepted Bhagwan Din as her husband after Mathura's death.

Jaggi's own account of her marriage differs from Ram Chandra's. She told me that she was very young, sort of a minor, when she was given in sankalp to Ram Chandra. This was the time when Vishnu Sahai was the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh, i.e. during the Civil Disobedience days. Jaggi remembers Vishnu Sahai. According to the people of Rure she was given in sankalp to convert Ram Chandra into an inhabitant of Rure. He was treated by the police as an outsider. He was also given some land in Rure village. After Jaggi's sankalp, according to Jaggi, Ram Chandra started addressing himself as Kalanki. Being a Brahmin he married a Kurmi girl; therefore, he became a Kalanki, meaning an outcaste.

Ram Chandra writes that Jaggi was already married to someone whom she did not like. Later he had "Gandharva" marriage with her, meaning a marriage which does not require priests and witnesses, etc. There is no reference to sankalp, etc. Maybe Jaggi was too young when given in sankalp to Ram Chandra, and Ram Chandra wishes to hide this.

Jaggi is a remarkable person, the most remarkable grass-root leader I came across in my life. Even at this advanced age she thinks only about the tenants. According to her only when all the tenants of India have comfortable homes and sufficient land the tenant struggle will stop. She had lived a very miserable life, and continues to live with her miseries. (See Ram Chandra's account of his marriage-- BRP, 1st instalment, P.No. 1.)

24. The identification of Jhinguri Singh with Kurmi caste was so intimate that Kapil Kumar in his reputed work on Awadh Peasants in Revolt (Delhi, 1984) confused Jhinguri Singh and Sahdev Singh with Kurmis (p. 224). This is in spite of the fact that during his field work Kapil Kumar stayed with Jhinguri Singh's kinsmen. He took their help in all kinds of ways for collecting the Ram Chandra papers. The kinsmen of Jhinguri Singh and Sahdev Singh are very upset about the fact that he has converted them into Kurmis. Instead of thanking them for all kind of help they rendered to Kapil Kumar, he has humili-

liated them. The condition of present Pratapgarh is very different from the days of Jhinguri Singh. Casteism has now reached its zenith. Thakurs and Brahmins look down at Kurmis. Thakurs also dislike Kurmis claiming themselves to be Kshatriyas.

25. Kinsmen of Kashi and Bhagwan Din have kept these passes as souvenirs.
26. Jawaharlal, Autobiography, p. 53.
27. Writing about Jhinguri Singh and Sahdev Singh that they were Kurmis hardly mattered to Kapil Kumar. It was a minor mistake for him. But I committed a major mistake following Kapil Kumar. What led Jhinguri Singh and Sahdev Singh to call themselves as Thakurs when they were Kurmis? I was led to think that they were involved in the process of Sanskritization. Thus Sanskritization became the theme of my M.Phil. dissertation and the article contributed to the New Quest, Sept.-Oct. 1990. I was deluded into thinking that I am giving a novel interpretation to the revolt of 1920-21, whereas I was giving only a wrong interpretation.
28. J. Pouchepadass, 'Local Leaders and the Intelligentsia in the Champaran Satyagraha (1917): A Study in Peasant Mobilization', Contributions to Indian Sociology (NS) Number 8, 1974; 'Peasant Classes in Twentieth Century Agrarian Movements in India' in E.J. Hobsbawm, Witold Kula, Ashok Mitra, K.N. RøJ, Ignacy Sachs (eds.) Peasants in History: Essays in Honour of Daniel Thorner, Calcutta, 1980.
29. Ghanshyam Shah, 'Traditional Society and Political Mobilization: The Experience of Bardoli Satyagraha (1920-28)', Contributions to Indian Sociology (NS), Number 8, 1974, pp. 89-107.
30. Gyan Pandey, The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh, 1926-34: A Study in Imperfect Mobilization, OUP, Delhi, 1978.
31. Bipan Chandra, Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India, New Delhi, 1979.
32. Ranajit Guha, 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India' in Ranajit Guha (ed.), Subaltern Studies, Vol. I, OUP, 1982.
33. Sumit Sarkar, 'Popular Movements and "Middle Class" Leadership in Late Colonial India: Perspectives and Problems of a "History From Below"', Calcutta, 1980.

34. D.N. Dhanagare, Peasant Movements in India, 1920-1950, Delhi, 1983.
35. Peter Reeves, Landlords and Governments in Uttar Pradesh: A Study of Their Relations until Zamindari Abolition, Oxford, 1991.
36. James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, OUP, 1990.
37. There are innumerable commentaries on Gandhi. Perhaps more people are hostile to him now than when he was alive. Not only the individuals, schools have come into existence to discredit Gandhi. The same is true about Jawaharlal.
38. See particularly S. Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Vol. I, OUP, 1976.
39. Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Awadh in Revolt 1857-1858, Delhi, 1984.
40. Ranajit Guha, 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India', Subaltern Studies, Vol. I, pp. 4-5.
41. The withdrawn Introduction of the Oudh Gazetteer has its copies in the India Office Library, London.
42. H.C. Irwin, The Garden of India, London, 1880.
43. J. Sanders, Pratapgarh Settlement Report, 1896. Sanders has made fun of taluqdars without thinking in terms of helping the tenantry.
44. Report of V.N. Mehta, Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh, to the Commissioner of Fyzabad Division, 11 November 1920, File No. 753, Revenue, 1920, UPSA. Most interesting document in this report is Mehta's own proposal to amend the Rent Act. His proposal is to help the Government by finding ways to enhance the revenue.
45. PAI, Pratapgarh, 1922, p. 1326.
46. Ibid., 1923, pp. 19, 63, 299.
47. Ibid., 1924, p. 183.
48. Ibid., 1923, p. 377.
49. Ibid., 1924, p. 409.
50. Ibid., 1923, p. 275.
51. Ibid., 1925, p. 29.
52. Ibid., p. 9.

53. Gudar Kurmi continued to take part in Congress activities in 1930s. But Khalil Ahmad was active only in 1920s.
54. Khalil Ahmad started as a Khilafatist and Ajodhya Dass as a non-co-operationist.
55. Since the estate belonged to Raja Abujafar Hindu tenant leaders were arrested.
56. PAI, Pratapgarh, 1924, p. 285.
57. See the Reports of the Revenue Administration of U.P. 1927 to 1930.
58. Gandhi's manifesto was based on the actual analysis of the situation. Tenants were not in a position to pay even 8 annas in a rupee, yet the Government favoured taluqdars in the matter of remission.
59. PAI, July 1931, p. 630.
60. Ibid., May 1930, p. 521.
61. The Pioneer, 22 October 1930.
62. PAI, February 1931, p. 170.
63. Later his name occurred in PAI several times.
64. See PAI, 1931, specially reports from Rae Bareli.
65. Gyan Pandey accepts the view that the no-rent campaign failed. See The Ascendancy of the Congress, p. 192.
66. D.A. Low, 'Congress and "Mass Contacts", 1936-1937: Ideology, Interests and Conflict Over the Basis of Party Representation' in Richard Sisson & Stanley Wolpert (eds.), Congress and Indian Nationalism: The Pre-Independence Phase, OUP, Delhi, 1988.
67. There was no reporting about Aman Sabhas.
68. PAI, February 1937, p. 185.
69. Ibid., April 1937, p. 294.
70. Ibid., Rae Bareli, August 1931, p. 682.
71. Bipan Chandra and others, India's Struggle For Independence 1857-1947, New Delhi, 1988.
72. According to PAI this was common in the middle of 1931.
73. See Sumit Sarkar, Popular Movements..., p. 51.

74. Gyan Pandey puts responsibility on the Congress attitude towards the tenantry in mid-1931. See his The Ascendancy of the Congress, p. 192.
75. This kind of declaration has been made by Sumit Sarkar in his Popular Movements..., p. 51.
76. For Pandey the Congress mobilisation was imperfect. This led him to introduce the subtitle for the book "A Study in Imperfect Mobilization".
77. See D.N. Dhanagare, Peasant Movements in India, 1920-1950, pp. 120-23.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL GROWTH OF OUDH RENT ACT

The British introduced the rule of law into their colonies. This rule was an attempt to civilize their subjects, as if they lived without any rule before becoming the subjects of British empire. The British were teaching their subjects the significance of the rule of law by forcing them to live according to this rule. The Land Rent Act introduced into Awadh after her annexation is an expression of the British rule of law. This rule of law was responsible for all kinds of miseries imposed upon those who cultivated land with their own hands. These cultivators of the Awadh soil became acquainted with the Rent Act for the first time in 1868. This Rent Act was however withdrawn and in its place another Act was introduced, called the Second Oudh Rent Act of 1886. The Rent Act of 1886 had its own imperfections and was amended in 1921. However, the United Provinces Tenancy Act of 1939 made the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 and its amendment in 1921 null and void. Since 1939 the tenants of Awadh lost their special status, they are living under the same roof as the tenants of Agra Province. The history of peasant sufferings and peasant uprisings is deeply connected with the history of the Oudh Rent Act. In this chapter I have attempted to study the growth of the Oudh Rent Act, from its birth to its demise, with the hope that such a study may give me a picture of peasant protest that occurred during the British rule in Awadh.

This chapter is divided into five different sections, viz., Condition of Tenantry Prior to the Oudh Rent Act, First Oudh Rent Act of 1868, Second Oudh Rent Act of 1886, the Oudh Rent (Amendment) Act of 1921 and the United Provinces Tenancy Act of 1939.

Condition of Tenantry Prior to the Oudh Rent Act: Before the intervention

of the East India Company in the affairs of Awadh, i.e. before 1775, the tenants in Awadh enjoyed a paramount power. This power came to them not through any written contract with their landlords but through their art of agriculture. Agricultural art and skill was restricted to the people of the lower castes like Kurmis, Koeries, Lodhs and Ahirs. What is a weaver for the production of textile goods or an ironsmith for the production of iron tools, so is the position of an expert in agriculture for the production of food grains. Not everybody can be a weaver or an ironsmith so also not everybody can be an agriculturist. The agricultural art and skill was the only instrument through which the agricultural castes defended themselves against the enhancement of rent, etc. The fear that they will leave the land and go to some other lands kept the landlords restricted to the normal rent. While commenting on the earlier days Baden-Powell writes,

Land was once as abundant as it was fertile, and good cultivating classes were attracted to it as tenants. Such are the large classes of Kurmis and Muraos, who form a considerable part of the tenantry, and number about a million of souls. They are the backbone of the wealth of the country, and, though they will pay very high rents, the value in which they are held will deter a landlord from driving them off his estate by excessive extortion.¹

History tells a little different story. The tenants who were attracted to Awadh were not charged high rents, they were charged lower rents than the tenants of other castes during those days to which Baden-Powell is referring. It is they who were responsible for the land-reclamation and for making soil worth cultivation. They were responsible for making soil fertile. Because of their technical proficiency in agriculture, the land was in need of them. The demand was for tenants, and not for land. Land was in abundance, not the tenants.

Tapan Raychaudhuri writes while referring to a report of the British officials. As late as 1772, British officials wrote in envious admiration of Oudh's flourishing agriculture under Shuja-ud-daula that his metropolis Faizabad 'eclipsed Delhi, after the anarchy of 1759-61, in prosperity and

magnificence!² It is the tenantry of Awadh which was responsible for the flourishing of agriculture. One of the possible reasons for the flourishing of agriculture was the reclamation of land. New areas of jungle were brought under the plough. The extension of cultivated land gave way to more production. Land was in abundance, but not the cultivated land. The cultivated land was created by the tenants of lower castes. In the beginning less amount of rent was charged from those who reclaimed land. As Bayly points out, 'Kurmi, Kacchi and Koeri... castes were given special rental rates for bringing areas of jungle under the plough. In the first five years, for instance, the rent might be only what was common for soil of the same type.'³ Bayly finds their settlements in the Eastern, Western and Northern Awadh. They came from the Delhi region where condition became very disturbed, no agriculture was possible in those conditions. According to Bayly Awadh 'gave protection to migrant families of the castes which specialised in agricultural production.'⁴ Awadh gave protection to them, and in return they gave agricultural products to Awadh. This is how agriculture came to a flourishing state during the days of Shuja-ud-daula.

The villages of Awadh were importing expert agriculturists, i.e. the cultivators of lower castes, from the disturbed North-Western Provinces. At the same time they were in the process of exporting non-agricultural hands to the urban centres of Awadh. So there was no pressure on the agricultural land or rural life. There were two major sources for the absorption of rural mass in the cities. First was the army and second the urban-based industries. Soldiers for the army were recruited from villages. And soldiers were recruited not only by the Nawabs of Awadh but also by the taluqdars and other kind of amirs. In 1849, according to Sleeman, 'taluqdars had 250 forts, 500 pieces of cannon and an average of 400 men in each fort.'⁵ And 'at the time of annexation there were 623

forts, 351 in good condition.'⁶ Concerning the employment of the rural mass by the Nawabs, Bayly remarks, 'Peasants formed a reserved army of the early Nawabs'... 'Asif's great monuments in the city of Lucknow were said to have employed 40,000 people from the district during the horror of the 1783 famine.'⁷ What is wrong with Asif's employment of famine-stricken people? He found a way for the survival of people.

From seventeenth century Awadh had a reputation for the textile industry. But once the textile industry of the North-Western provinces collapsed because of the anarchic condition prevailing there, Awadh had a textile boom. Textile producing experts like weavers, spinners and dyers migrated to Awadh. Awadh welcomed these textile experts as it welcomed the people of the agricultural castes. Mirzapur (ceded in 1775) became the "Manchester of India." The eighteenth century textile boom in Awadh had its beginning in the Lucknow part of Awadh from the early part of the seventeenth century. As Naqvi points out 'In Oudh Lucknow was one of the principal centres of cotton fabric from the early 17th century and W. Finch had found great traffic in "linen" here.'⁸ Later Daryabad and Khairabad became great centres of textile production. In due course Nawgaon (Hardoi), Akbarpur, Tanda and Jalalpur (Fyzabad) emerged as the textile centres. Benaras produced silk of fine quality. Awadh textile had both national and international markets. Referring to the export of Awadh textile, Naqvi points out 'Oudh stuffs used to be exported to Persia, Europe and South East Asia through the port of Calcutta, and presumably a smaller quantity of Central Asia by overland routes.'⁹ Awadh textile was popular with the western merchants who were operating in India. Referring to these merchants Bayly writes 'So strong was this demand from the "western merchants" indeed that the East India Company found it necessary to use its political power in the Lucknow court to secure a monopoly on the production of the Awadh weavers at Tanda and Aliabad.'¹⁰ 'Monopoly over the product of wea-

vers' allured the British to have monopoly over the whole of Awadh.

The textile industry of Awadh was spread out in its cities as well as villages. Village weavers were independent of the large-scale weaving which was operative in the Awadh towns and cities. Village contributed to the textile industry in three ways. First, they supplied their own share of finished textile goods. Secondly, they supplied labour force to the urban centres. And thirdly, they produced cotton for the urban textile industry. There is a fourth way, that of supplying food grains to the industrial workers of all kinds. Awadh was not only self-sufficient in producing food grains, it had the record of exporting food grains. Referring to the importance of textile Naqvi says, 'In the middle age, cotton fabrics dominated the economy in much the same manner, as steel works do today.'¹¹ Many Awadh towns were formed, others later came to be known, for their cotton fabrics. The status of these towns was the same as the status of Jamshedpur in our own age. The picture of Jamshedpur in our mind brings out the picture of a town where nothing but steel is produced. Similar is the situation of mid-eighteenth century Awadh towns. They were Jamshedpurs of textile industry.

The British wished to extinguish the textile industry of Awadh in order to introduce their own Manchester textile. They succeeded in annexing Benaras in 1775 and Lower Doab and Rohilkhand in 1801. Finally, they annexed Awadh in 1856 on the pretext of ill-management of the State. The real reason was to crush the textile of Awadh. As Professor Bipan Chandra says, 'In reality, it was the immense potential of Awadh as a market for Manchester goods which excited Dalhousie's greed and aroused his "philanthropic feelings".'¹² The process of annexing Awadh was started by Wellesley when he imposed the Subsidiary Alliance on Nawab Saadat Ali Khan in 1801. According to Rudrangshu Mukherjee this alliance was an interference, and 'such an interference would provide not "only supper of Oudh"

but also immense commercial and economic gains for British imperialism.¹³

Awadh was not restricted only to the production of textile. It had a well established iron industry. Shuja started producing arms for his army. Barnett accepts 'Factories for producing muskets, and foundries for cannon, were soon producing war material which rivalled that of the Company in quality.'¹⁴ There was all-round industrial development.

Connected with the industrial development of Awadh is the fact of growing importance of Awadh towns as centres of trade and commerce. Awadh towns were well connected with roads and rivers. There were two highways passing through Awadh. The Jamuna and Gandak appear as two arms of Awadh, and its body being drenched by the water of the Ganges, Ghagra and Gomti. The rivers Son and Chambal help trade with the Central India. The Ganges functions as the sea of Awadh; it carries goods to Calcutta for the international markets. If eighteenth century saw Lucknow becoming a great trade centre at Gomti, Fyzabad became a great centre at Ghagra. Jaunpur was a junction for two highways. Other than Punjab there is no part of India which is so suitable for riverine traffic as Awadh. But Punjab was in turmoil. As Bayly points out '... the commerce... which had once existed along the route between Delhi and Mughal Bengal was replicated along the link between Lucknow and Calcutta.'¹⁵ Because of Maratha invasions of Bengal, Awadh was even safer than Bengal for trade and commerce. According to Chaudhuri 'during the period of Maratha invasions close to 4,00,000 people were killed in Bengal and Bihar and among them were many merchants, weavers, silk dealers, and other useful inhabitants.'¹⁶ In the whole of North, Awadh was the safest place for trade and commerce. To have trade of one's own industrial goods Nawabs imposed heavy duties "on imported goods".¹⁷ The basic economic truths were known to the Nawabs.

The causal conditions which led to the industrial development of Awadh, and swung the balance of trade in her favour, were also responsible

for the development of Awadh urban life and culture. According to Naqvi 'The influx of poets and intellectuals at Lucknow court from Delhi and surrounding areas in the last decades of the 18th and early 19th centuries is common knowledge.'¹⁸ The fall of Delhi coincides with the rise of Lucknow and Fyzabad. Hambly finds the prosperity of eighteenth century Awadh 'manifested especially in the flourishing conditions of urban life.'¹⁹ But it is impossible for the urban life to flourish without the agricultural base. As Naqvi points out 'The agricultural fertility acted as the base on which the superstructure of industrial prosperity could possibly be erected.'²⁰ Villages supplied not only the manpower for urbanisation but also food to the urban dwellers, both industrial and non-industrial.

The British did not like the prosperity of Awadh. They decided to annex it and convert it into an agricultural form of Britain. For the promotion of British industries, Indian industries must be stopped. India should remain only an agricultural country. As R.C. Dutt quotes a remark of a Director of the East India Company made in 1823, 'Henry St. George Tucker, himself a Director of the East India Company wrote in 1823: "India is thus reduced from the state of a manufacturing to that of an agricultural country."²¹ The programme of converting India into an agricultural country was started by the British long before the annexation of Awadh. After annexation the British decided to send the urban population of Awadh back to villages. If the eighteenth century saw the rural population migrating to the urban centres of Awadh, with the coming of the British the table has turned, the urban population started migrating to villages. Agricultural activities are performed in villages, not in cities. The Subsidiary Alliance was the first calculated step. It led to the 'replacing of thousands of Saadat Ali's own officers and troops, making his regime suffer gross abuse from those who were dispossessed of their livelihood.'²² These troops had no other option but to migrate to villages from where they

were recruited. After annexation the situation worsened. Not the Nawab's troops were thrown out, 'the taluqdars' forts were levelled, and their armed retainers permanently disbanded.'²³ The total of disbanded soldiers of the Nawab and his taluqdars will be in lakhs, not in thousands. Where did these disbanded soldiers and retainers go? Could they afford the luxurious urban life without jobs? They had no other option but to migrate to villages. Except in the days of famines, villages allow people to survive, if not with two meals then with one meal.

The next step was the disbanding of textile workers. The process started with Wellesley's intervention into Awadh affairs. Import of Manchester textiles replaced the export of Awadh textiles in the same fashion in which the British soldiers replaced the Awadh soldiers. The quality of export from Awadh was very different after 1801 from what it was prior to this date. Consider the following comparative study by Rudrangshu Mukherjee:

In 1795-6 Rs. 50 lakhs worth of goods were exported from Awadh; in the same year Awadh piece-goods exported from Calcutta were worth Rs. 30 lakhs... By 1803 exports from Awadh to Bengal were Rs. 76,18,193, but the proportion of cotton piece-goods within the total amount had fallen to only Rs. 9,95,630. Significantly, this gap was filled by the increasing export of raw cotton which was worth Rs. 55,42,927 within the total export to Bengal of Rs. 76,18,193 in 1803.²⁴

The fall in the export of textile piece-goods and rise in the export of raw cotton shows the decline of Awadh textile industry after the imposition of Subsidiary Alliance. The textile industry of Awadh totally collapsed after the annexation. The 'Manchester of India', Mirzapur, became a cotton market long before the annexation. As Bayly points out 'At its height after 1861, Mirzapur was primarily a forward cotton market for Calcutta.'²⁵ On the same page Bayly refers to Mirzapur as the Manchester of India.

Once the textile industry of Awadh declined, and simultaneously the

other industries were not allowed to develop, the people involved in textile work became unemployed. They had no chance to migrate to other textile centres of India. Just as they came to Awadh from the North-Western part of India in the mid-eighteenth century, they could have possibly migrated to other parts of India if the situation became difficult in Awadh. This option was unfortunately not open to them, for the British discouraged the production of textile throughout India. In order to introduce their Manchester goods in India, the Company, according to Dr. Tara Chand: 'oppressed the weavers and other artisans and perpetrated inhuman crimes to crush the rival producers: instances of thumbs of workmen being cut off to prevent them from winding raw silk or weaving cloth were not unknown.'²⁶ Under these circumstances the textile workers could not leave Awadh. The doors of Indian textile were closed to them. They had no option but to remain in Awadh. What they did was simply to migrate to the Awadh villages from the Awadh cities. The cotton weavers and spinners perhaps became cotton growers. Thus they increased the rural population. They too became a part of village economy, if there was any such thing, like the soldiers and retainers of Awadh Nawabs and taluqdars. The pressure on agricultural land increased beyond imagination.

Though the trade and commerce of Awadh did not decline in the nineteenth century, it was moulded to fulfil the needs of the British economy. We can see this from the following remark of Rudrangshu Mukherjee, 'China got raw cotton from Awadh, Britain got tea from China, and Awadh got British control.'²⁷ Thus the Imperial Balance was maintained. And in maintaining the Imperial Balance Awadh got nothing but poverty, particularly the poverty of the rural masses.

Like trade, the agriculture of Awadh did not decline, but was moulded to satisfy the needs of the British economy. The production of those crops increased which were to be exported. Referring to the expansion of agri-

culture in the United Provinces during 1860-1900, Elizabeth Whitcombe writes, 'The expansion was most marked in "valuable" crops... especially indigo, sugar-cane and cotton.'²⁸ To this list of the "valuable crops" was later added opium, which too had its market in China, particularly when the cotton export to China declined. The Chinese became addicted to opium, so export to China continued, earlier of cotton, later of opium. Referring to the cultivation of cotton in Awadh, Rudrangshu Mukherjee points out 'the whole purpose of gearing up cotton cultivation and export of raw cotton from Awadh to Calcutta was to supply the China market.'²⁹ The China market was restricted to cotton and opium, for wheat, sugar-cane and indigo the British had the whole European market. As Rudrangshu Mukherjee further points out 'The expansion of the European market for indigo stimulated the cultivation and trade of indigo in Awadh.'³⁰ Thus what the cultivators of Awadh produced was not for their own consumption, it was for the consumption of foreigners. Not only that the cultivators of Awadh did not eat indigo or opium, they were not in a position to eat even wheat and sugar. It is for the payment of high rents that they produced the so-called valuable crops. And then they had hardly any land left to produce the coarse crops which they could possibly eat. So they had hardly anything to eat, yet they survived, survived through indebtedness, through bondages.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India writes 'Oudh has probably the densest rural population if any equal area in the world.'³¹ This is the position of Awadh at the close of the nineteenth century. Within a span of hundred years an extremely thin rural population bursts into an extremely thick rural population. Who is responsible for the density of rural population? It is certainly not the high birth-rate in Awadh. The responsibility goes to the coming of the British to Awadh. Collapse of industries led the industrial workers to migrate to villages. The soldiers and retainers of

Nawabs and their taluqdars after disbanding migrated to villages. In the eighteenth century only the cultivators of agricultural castes came to Awadh from outside. But they increased the cultivated land of Awadh. They did not make land crowded, they decreased the crowd by extending the volume of land for cultivation. But there is a limit to which the volume can be extended. Perhaps they reached the maximum limit. Migration from cities to villages was more than the land could hold. The tenants were no more in demand, it was the land that was in demand.

While referring to the population of U.P. peasants during the nineteenth century, Crooke writes:

... the conditions vary enormously in different parts of the country. The Azamgarh peasant, with 1244 souls to a square mile of cultivation, has to subsist on about half an acre; in the Meerut division to the extreme west each person has about an acre and a half; in Oudh about three quarters of an acre.³²

Meerut was the suburb of Shahjahanabad, and Azamgarh belongs to the Greater Awadh which was ceded in 1801. Meerut agriculturists and textile workers migrated to different parts of Awadh in the eighteenth century. They were not any kind of burden on Awadh; they improved its economy. The agriculturists brought about the green revolution and the textile workers the textile boom. However, in the nineteenth century a qualitatively different kind of migration to Awadh villages occurred. Those who had no knowledge of agricultural skills started migrating to Awadh villages. The weavers, dyers and spinners of cotton were trying to grow cotton. Those who were trained to thrash human heads were trying to thrash wheat and rice. Those who lived by saluting their maliks were forced to plough the soil. Agriculture was the last resort of all kinds of urban unemployed hands.

In this situation the worst sufferers were the tenants of the agricultural castes. In the changed situation they were charged more rent than the tenants of the higher castes. Caste-wise imposition of rent became a new convention. Those who reclaimed land, those who made Awadh soil fer-

tile, those who generated more land for occupation became the worst sufferers. They were now charged more rent because they belonged to lower castes. They had no written contract with their landlords, so suffered more.

The First Oudh Rent Act of 1868: It took considerable time for the British to introduce this Act, for Awadh was annexed in 1856. And one may be misled by the designation "Rent Act". One may think that this Act looked after the "rent-payers". But this Act looked after only the "revenue-payers" and other rich landholders. How this was done will be shown in this section. The Rent Act of 1868 was the consequence of the second Summary Settlement. The Governor General gave assent to this Act on July 22, 1868. There is a history behind the introduction of this Act. The history goes back to the first Summary Settlement. That Settlement was made in 1856 after the annexation of Awadh in February 1856. The first Summary Settlement incorporated the principles laid down by Lord Dalhousie. In his letter to the settlement officers he instructed them

to bear in mind, as a leading principle that the desire and intention of the Government is to deal with the actual occupants of the soil, that is, with village zamindars, or with the proprietary coparcenaries, which are believed to exist in Oude, and not to suffer the interposition of middlemen, as Talookdars, Farmers of the revenue, and such like. The claims of these, if they have any tenable claims, may be more conveniently considered at a future period, or brought judicially before the courts competent to investigate and decide upon them.³³

It is the tone and the spirit behind the letter which is more important than the actual result of the Settlement. Dalhousie's letter clearly humiliates the taluqdars by calling them 'farmers of the revenue' and by giving priority to zamindars over them. The settlement was to be made with the zamindars, and if there was any left-over it could be settled with the taluqdars at 'a future period' after studying their claims. Taluqdars treated themselves as rajas and nawabs, having their forts with all kinds of soldiers and retainers. They were not just "the farmers of

revenue" as Dalhousie calls them. The relation between them and the cultivators of the soil was that which exists between a raja and his praja. Referring to the relation between the taluqdars and their cultivators before annexation, Metcalf points out that 'Their states have been called "little kingdoms", and the taluqdars, as little "kings" or rajas, were not owners of land but rulers of men.'³⁴ Dalhousie wished the taluqdars to know that they were not 'the rulers of men'; they were not even the owners of land. All land belongs to the Company; the taluqdars were only the revenue collectors for the areas of land allotted to them. And as revenue collectors they were inferior to the zamindars in the eyes of the British. They had a secondary status.

Crooke gives expression to Dalhousie's view when he points out that the British 'were pledged to support the village community, which they regarded as the only element in the country which deserved to be maintained; they looked on the Taluqdar as a grasping interloper, a danger to the State, a curse to the people themselves.'³⁵ Crooke has certainly exaggerated the situation. For the moral character of the taluqdars was certainly not the concern of the British. Their concern was only the might of the taluqdars; they were "a danger to the State". They had forts and armies with military equipments. They were treated by their subjects as rajas. The British at this stage only wished to convert these rajas into mere "landlords", and their subjects into "tenants". Raja and praja has to be converted into landlord and tenant; the later is purely an economic relationship. It is after annexation, and not prior to the annexation, that the taluqdars became mere 'farmers of the revenue'.

By having direct settlement with the zamindars, the British were killing two birds with one stone. The ego of zamindars was inflated, they were "mini-taluqdars", though without forts and retainers. The taluqdars on their own turn, in spite of their forts and retainers, were nothing but

"big zamindars". Neither taluqdars nor zamindars were rulers of men, they were simply holders of land. "Taluqdars" and "zamindars" were mere titles for collecting rents from the tenants and paying revenue to the Company. Zamindars were not given any kingly powers of which the taluqdars were deprived.

Though the British were against the taluqdars, direct confrontation with them at this stage would not have been wise. So they decided to attack their financial resources. They snatched parts of their estates and settled them directly with the zamindars. In the first Settlement the taluqdars lost some 9,900 villages out of 23,500 villages which they held at the time of annexation.³⁶ This was a very peculiar kind of arrangement. If all 23,500 villages had been directly settled with the zamindars, then this would have led the British to have direct confrontation with the taluqdars, for which they were not prepared at this stage. Without confronting the taluqdars their power was to be weakened. Though a large number of villages were left with the taluqdars, what they got was only a left-over, left-over after the settlement with the zamindars. A class of landholders was created which will not bow down before the taluqdars. Perhaps the British thought that this newly created class of landholders would side with them against the taluqdars. They created this class to use it at a proper time in the future. The question has been raised by Metcalf why the direct settlement with zamindars was restricted only to 9,900 villages? Why was it not extended to more number of villages? His response is: 'In view of the government's avowed hostility towards them it is perhaps surprising that the taluqdars retained so many villages as they did. Most likely, they were simply too firmly rooted, and the villagers' rights too indistinct, to permit everywhere their being ousted from power.'³⁷ Perhaps the 'firm roots of the taluqdars' and not the 'indistinct rights of the villagers' was the reason for the limited number of villages which came in-

to direct settlement. Where there were no claims, fictitious claims could easily be manufactured. But this was not done. The real reason for the limited operation was the principle of consolidation by avoiding confrontation. Perhaps a limit was reached under which the taluqdars would not become totally hostile to the British power. However, the British miscalculated. The taluqdars disliked both, the withdrawal of their villages and the setting up of the new gentry (new landholders) within their boundaries.

Dalhousie's scheme misfired. The first Summary Settlement lasted only fifteen months, from the time of annexation to June 1857 when the War of Independence (Mutiny? Revolt?) started. Taluqdars, who had all the reasons to participate in the War against the British, took active part, carrying the zamindars (new gentry, new landholders, village proprietors) with them. The British had direct settlement with the zamindars, thinking that they would side with them against the taluqdars. But at the time of the War they sided with the taluqdars, which meant the same as rising for the Independence of the country against the foreign rule. Zamindars gave up their parochial interest. They decided to remove the firangees from Awadh. Perhaps the taluqdars, so also the zamindars, were convinced that what was happening in 1857 was the War of Independence against the foreign rule. Of course there were exceptions. But such exceptions have always existed, and will continue existing so long as human civilization exists. If the newly created landholders by the British would have supported the British, as many taluqdars did, the War would have failed from its very start. Of course the War ultimately failed but not without teaching a lesson to the British.

The 1857 War of Independence proved that it was a futile attempt on the part of the British either to abolish the old gentry (taludars) or to create a new gentry (zamindars). The British decided that it was not the

new gentry but the old established gentry that must be backed up. After recapturing of power the British made second Summary Settlement. They wished to avoid the mistakes committed by them in the first Summary Settlement. New principles of settlement were to be evolved. The zamindar proved himself as a wrong horse to back. The 1857 War taught the British the lesson that they cannot rule Awadh peacefully without taking taluqdars in their favour. Sir James Outram, the Chief Commissioner of Awadh, writes on 5th January 1858 'I see no prospects of returning tranquillity except by having recourse for the next few years to the old talukdari system ... Talukdars have both powers and influence to exercise for or against us. The village proprietors have neither.'³⁸ Instead of proving their loyalty to the British, the village proprietors proved their loyalty to the taluqdars. So the taluqdars deserve favour and not the village proprietors. It is only with the loyalty of the taluqdars that the British rule in Awadh was possible. Thus a new "Oudh Policy" had to be evolved, a policy that would endure the British rule in Awadh. The old "Oudh Policy" led to the revolt of 1857; therefore, it must be rejected. The second Settlement gives expression to the "New Oudh Policy", the Policy which was followed by the British till they ultimately left India in 1947. The settlement must be taluqdari settlement, and not the zamindari settlement. The zamindari settlement, the first Settlement, had already failed. The mistake should not be repeated. So the second Summary Settlement was carefully made. Baden-Powell speaks of it "as the taluqdari Settlement".³⁹ The following remarks are made in the General Report on the Administration of the Province of Oudh: 'Talookdars, if they choose, could materially assist in the re-establishment of authority and the restoration of tranquillity, it was determined by the Right Honourable the Governor-General, that the settlement of the land revenue should be made with talookdars.'⁴⁰ Thus, the 'New Oudh Policy' was made with the expectation that the taluq-

dars would assist the British in bringing about peace and tranquillity in Awadh. The events of 1857 should not recur.

Outram's remark quoted above, and so also the Governor-General's order, back the taluqdari system. Retention of the taluqdari system, however, does not mean the retention of the persons who occupy their positions in the system. Positions in the system are constant, persons who occupy those positions are variable. Removing a person from the system is not the same thing as rejecting the system. So far as the stability of the system is concerned, any person is as good as any other person, for persons are only the variables of the system. For stability of the system only constants are required. Following this mathematical principle Canning confiscated the proprietary rights of the taluqdars. There was no danger involved in the confiscation of such rights. Because, after the suppression of the Revolt, as Metcalf points out 'the taluqdars' forts were levelled, and their armed retainers permanently disbanded.'⁴¹ For the sake of consistency the proprietary rights of zamindars and other village proprietors were also confiscated. All of them participated in the War of Independence. All of them should know that the Land of India belongs to the Crown. They can be landholders on the will of the Crown. Thus, Canning started with a pure formal taluqdari system, for which he required only persons (values of the variables) of his choice to fill the positions which are constant.

Baden-Powell justifies Lord Canning's proclamation for the confiscation of proprietary rights of taluqdars. Referring to this proclamation he remarks 'I have never, for my own part, been able to discover what was wrong in Lord Canning's proclamation, or how it was possible to effect any real good in the necessary work of defining and placing land-tenures on a legal basis.'⁴² Thus, to provide a rational or legal basis Canning, according to Baden-Powell, begins with a 'tabula rasa as to enable a fresh

start to be made on a reasonable basis.'⁴³ But unfortunately the British did not begin with a tabula rasa or a clean slate. They began with a highly unclean slate and an extremely unreasonable basis. For the property of those taluqdars who helped the British at the time of the War of Independence was not confiscated. Baden-Powell is aware of this inconsistency, this uncleanness. He himself writes, 'The Mutiny supervened, the work done perished. The war ended; all lands were confiscated by proclamation in 1858, with the exception of the estates of six (reduced to five) loyal taluqdars.'⁴⁴ The mathematical formula for the loyal taluqdars was not applied, as if these taluqdars were constants of the system and not its variables. Loyalty is the rational and legal basis for the British rule of law. For the British the rule of law simply means the rule that helped the British to establish their empire. Whosoever helped the British at the time of Revolt deserved to be placed as a taluqdar in the Awadh taluqdari system. Even the loyal subjects of other States of India were given taluqdari estates in Awadh for their loyalty.

The second Summary Settlement, i.e. the taluqdari settlement, was completed in 1859, which settled only one issue, and that issue was not of rent but of revenue. Who should be the revenue-payers? What should be the percentage of revenue to be imposed on the revenue-payers? The taluqdars were considered as the most suitable agents for obtaining revenue. To give them formal recognition they were given Sanads at Lucknow Darbar presided over by Lord Canning on 26th October 1859. These Sanads were documents giving formal recognition to the taluqdars. Concerning these Sanads Metcalf writes that they

confirmed the holders in the full proprietary possession of their estates provided only that they paid their revenue, remained loyal to the British government, encouraged agricultural prosperity, preserved the rights of those beneath them on the land. By this act all claims to land in taluqdari possession, no matter how that land had originally been acquired, were forever debarred.⁴⁵

The territorial disputes were solved in the sense that the law courts were not allowed to entertain any appeal concerning these disputes. There could have been two kinds of territorial disputes. A village or a group of villages was attached to a taluqdar of which he was never a landlord. And the territories of some estates were extended by decreasing the territories of the other estates. No sort of appeal against this was allowed. Whatever a taluqdar has got he has got it rightly. No questioning was permitted. Whatever the legal right a taluqdar got over his land, he has got it as a matter of favour. For this favour a taluqdar is expected to be loyal to the British Government. Loyalty to the British was no less an important condition than the payment of revenue. If any taluqdar ever plans to revolt his land right will be withdrawn and his property confiscated. Of course the British made the material condition of revolt impossible. For 'the taluqdars were required to disband their followers, surrender their cannon, and dismantle their forts.'⁴⁶ They were expected to live like landholders and not like rajas and nawabs. There was no praja to be attracted towards them, there were only tenants from whom rent could be charged. A raja has been converted into a mere taluqdar who pays revenue to the government and collects rent from his tenants.

In their Sanads the taluqdars were required to "preserve the rights of those beneath them". Till the issue of Sanads no law was framed to protect the rights of those beneath the taluqdars. Who were beneath the taluqdars whose rights were to be preserved? There is no specification of those classes of people in the Sanads whose rights were to be preserved. There were so many classes of people who were beneath the taluqdars. Reference has certainly not been made to all of them. Reference has been made only to those classes of people about whom discussion went on for ten years after the award of the Sanads. The discussants were the Chief Commissioner of Awadh, the taluqdars and the British Government. Since there

was a kind of general amnesty given to taluqdars, some kind of amnesty must be given to those zamindars and other village proprietors with whom direct settlement was made in the first Summary Settlement. Some 9,900 villages at that time were snatched from the taluqdars and given to these zamindars. In the second Settlement 'only 906 villages were settled with the village zamindars.'⁴⁷ So the zamindars lost some 9,000 villages. These zamindars require sympathetic treatment. If not the proprietary rights, they should be given some kind of right which is superior to that of an ordinary tenant. Thus they were given, as a result of discussion, underproprietary rights, they were proprietors placed under the superior proprietors, the taluqdars.

The zamindars and other village proprietors were given subproprietary tenure or the right of sub-settlement by the Act XXVI, called the Oudh Sub-Settlement Act of 1866. This Act was the result of "Oudh Compromise", a compromise reached with the taluqdars, Chief Commissioner and the Government of India.⁴⁸ Thus those who were proprietors in the first Settlement became underproprietary in the second Settlement. They were placed beneath the taluqdars. This was a kind of victory of the taluqdars, for the zamindars were not allowed to have their independent status. Of course Canning was happy neither with the taluqdars nor with the village proprietors, the zamindars. Consider the note from the Imperial Gazetteer about Canning's views:

Lord Canning in April, 1858, described the majority of the taluk-dars as men, distinguished neither by birth, good service, nor connexion with the soil... but at the same time he justified the new policy by declaring that the village proprietors had shown themselves unfit for the position in which they had been put. In October he was of opinion that the action of the latter had almost amounted to an admission that they did not value independent rights.⁴⁹

The fact that the village proprietors followed the taluqdars in the Revolt of 1857 shows that the former deserve no independent rights, their rights

should be subordinate to the rights of the taluqdars. Taluqdars are bad, but the zamindars are no good. Therefore, Lord Canning accommodated both of them. Such people can function as better instruments for governing a country. Those who distinguish themselves or have independent mind can be a danger to the government.

Concerning a tenant who 'could show that he was once proprietor-- i.e. within thirty years before February 13, 1856 (date of annexation) he might be entitled to the occupancy-right.'⁵⁰ Occupancy rights to those who were entitled were formally accepted at roughly the same time when the underproprietary rights to zamindars were accepted.

After a couple of years of passing of the Oudh Settlement Act, 1866, the First Oudh Rent Act was passed in 1868. This Act was passed to safeguard the interest of the 'rent-payers', i.e. the interest of those who are technically described as 'tenants'. Tenants are different from those who pay revenue to the government. A taluqdar pays revenue to the government and a tenant pays rent to the taluqdar. Revenue and rent explain the relationship between a taluqdar and a tenant, the latter is subordinate of the former. The First Oudh Rent Act of 1868 safeguarded the interest only of underproprietors and occupancy tenants who were 'beneath the taluqdars'. It did not at all touch the tenants-at-will who formed the majority of people 'beneath the taluqdars'. They were left undefended and unsafe. They had no legal instrument to fight against excesses committed by the taluqdars and underproprietors. The underproprietors were even more cruel to their tenants and subtenants than the taluqdars. It is said by the Government officers and the historians that the tenants suffered more in the underproprietary villages than in the proprietary villages. While writing about occupancy tenants, Baden-Powell remarks

... in Oudh, 'occupancy tenants' as representing the residuary class of persons, who have some right to consideration, and yet not definite enough to be sub-proprietors, & c, are a small class.

Under the Act of 1868 they were holding only 1 per cent of the whole cultivated area: 78 per cent was held by tenants-at-will.⁵¹

Thus those who cultivated 78 per cent of the soil were left at the mercy of proprietors and underproprietors; the Oudh Rent Act of 1868 was not meant to give them legal support. These tenants have been described in the Banking Enquiry Committee Report as those 'who enjoy no rights save that they are allowed to hold their land for one complete agricultural year. Generally they pay high rents for small holdings.'⁵²

If the definition of 'tenant' in the context of Oudh tenure system is accepted then the Oudh Rent Act of 1868 is restricted only to one per cent of landholders, those who were occupancy tenants. For Awadh Baden-Powell defines tenant 'When the cultivator of land is not in proprietary possession under the taluqdar, and is not the holder of any "Sir", or "birt", or other of the sub-proprietary holdings, he is a tenant.'⁵³ This definition of tenant excludes not only the taluqdars, but also all kinds of underproprietors from the class of tenants. Only occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will are genuine tenants. But occupancy tenants occupy only one per cent of the land. So the Rent Act of 1868 takes care of only a small fraction of tenantry. Then how can the Oudh Rent Act of 1868 be even called a Rent Act? It gives no protection to a majority of rent-payers. It is so paradoxical that though it is called Rent Act, it protects only the proprietors and underproprietors with a side glance at the occupancy tenants.

Not only that the Oudh Rent Act of 1868 is no rent Act, it is an anti-tenant Act; for it provides no kind of right to the tenant on the land but provides all kinds of rights to the landlords for evicting the tenants just with one month's notice, and just with the expenses of eight annas. In order to evict the tenant a landlord is required to put only eight-anna stamp on his application. According to Mata Prasad Saksena 'No

limitation on the enhancement of rents was prescribed and the courts were even prohibited from enquiring into propriety of rate of rent payable by ordinary tenants.⁵⁴ This is the British rule of law for the Awadh tenants.

The Second Oudh Rent Act of 1886: Not even two decades passed that the Rent Act of 1868 was withdrawn and in its place a new Act was introduced, called the Second Oudh Rent Act of 1886. The Rent Act of 1868 was not worth revising or amending, it was worth only for withdrawing. The British officials started feeling the necessity of withdrawing it. It served its purpose, its continuity is harmful to the cause of the British. What was its purpose? With what intention was it introduced? It had no other purpose but to punish the tenantry with those very hands which led it to participate in the Revolt of 1857. There was a general amnesty granted to the taluqdars and zamindars, but no amnesty to the tenantry which plunged into the revolt with all its crude weapons. The situation of revolt in Awadh was very different from the situation in the rest of the United Provinces and other parts of the country. According to Rudrangshu Mukherjee "The people of Awadh had fought the British".⁵⁵ And by "people" he means the rural mass, the tenantry. Concerning the weapons of the 'peasant army' Mukherjee has collected evidence that 'by the beginning of February 1859 there had been collected 29,941 spears, 427,932 swords and 129,414 firearms. Bows and arrows were counted at 6,418. Firearms could be recovered even from the house of an ordinary peasant.'⁵⁶ An ordinary peasant had firearms for the reason that the taluqdars' sowars, foot-soldiers and retainers came from the ordinary peasant houses. Even the Nawab's army was rural as has already been pointed out in the preceding section. Raja Jailal, the son of Darshan Singh, was an important figure in the Revolt of 1857. "In the new government of Begum Hazratmahal, Raja Jailal Singh

was made the Minister of War and the Collector of Revenue. He was given the chukladari of Dariabad and Azamgarh."⁵⁷ According to Rudrangshu Mukherjee 'Raja Jailal Singh seems to have been the most important and powerful figure on both bodies. He also acted as the link between these bodies and the Begum.'⁵⁸ The bodies in question are 'military cell' and 'court officials'. All the members of his family, his brothers, Beni Madho, the Raja of Atraulia, Raghubar Dayal and his son-in-law Jai Ram Singh participated and perished in revolt. Raja Jailal Singh was executed by the British on October 1, 1859 at Lucknow.⁵⁹ Tenantry in general and Kurmis in particular participated in the freedom struggle of Awadh. For Jailal Singh was a Kurmi, his grandfather, the father of Darshan Singh, was an ordinary Kurmi Cultivator. Kurmi cultivators, who according to Baden-Powell, formed "a considerable part of tenantry", jumped into the fire of revolt because the man of their caste held the highest position of honour in the government of Begum Hazrat Mahal. Tenants of Awadh had hardly any love and respect for the alien rule.

Even if one hesitates in calling the revolt of 1857 as the first War of Indian Independence, it was certainly the first War of Oudh Independence. Rudrangshu Mukherjee quotes Canning admitting that "the rising against our authority in Oude has been general, almost universal".⁶⁰ It is the participation of tenantry in the revolt that has given it its universal character. As a matter of fact only the peasants were fighting throughout the territories of Awadh, for "the sepoys were really peasants in uniform".⁶¹ The strength of the revolt came from the non-uniformed sepoys and the uniformed peasants. This situation was lacking in the other parts of the country. Peasant-participation was missing in those parts; therefore, it was easy to suppress the revolt in those parts. Peasants of Awadh were not fighting for any material gains; they were fighting

for the honour of their king. Perhaps the taluqdars were fighting for their material gains.

In converting a raja to a landlord the British were converting a patron of tenants to their enemy. Those who were leaders of the tenants in 1857 revolt should become their oppressors. This is the best way of punishing the tenantry for its participation in the revolt. This also prohibits the possibility of a future revolt in Awadh; the tenantry has lost its leaders. Rudrangshu Mukherjee writes about the situation

The British destroyed the talukdar-peasant interdependence by conquering Awadh militarily and then buying over the talukdars with rewards of land. It was only then that talukdars became subordinate allies of the Raj, representing the politics of order and collaboration. Defeat led to subordination and loyalty. The peasantry now faced a landlord without the former frills of patronalism and 'rajadom'.⁶²

The relation of raja-praja was that of interdependence, but that of talukdar-tenant is not of interdependence. The tenant is made totally dependent on the taluqdar. If the military defeat made the taluqdars subordinate and loyal to the British, the Rent Act of 1868 made tenants subordinate to the taluqdars without being loyal to them. The British saw to it that the tenants never become collaborators of taluqdars, that they never become loyal to them. If the tenants become allies of the taluqdars then the possibility of revolt occurring again cannot be ruled out. This would endanger the rule of the British in Awadh. Therefore, the Rent Act of 1868 gives no powers to the tenants but gives all powers to the taluqdars. This was the best way of producing a rift between taluqdars and tenants, that they should consider each other as their enemies.

The Sanads made the taluqdars dismantle their forts and remove the military outfit. Instead of the military outfit they were required to establish 'revenue outfit', an outfit which will look after their rent collection from tenants and deposits of revenue to the government. They had to appoint zeladars, karindas, sepoys, etc. The financial aspect of the

State was looked after by this 'revenue outfit'. The efficiency of this outfit depended purely on the quantum of rent collected. Means used for collecting the rent was not so much important. Because the taluqdar is now looking at his cultivator of the soil only as the rent-payer. He is not looking at him as his praja. The events such as deaths, births, marriages, crop failure, indebtedness, etc. of the cultivator are not his concern. He has transcended these concerns when he was converted into a landlord. His revenue outfit too transcended the mixed state of being an army outfit. Its function was only to realise rent, and as much rent as possible from the tenants. The Rent Act of 1868 did not impose any restriction on the realisation of rent.

Sometimes, though not always, the heavy extortion of rent was the only way to meet the revenue demand of the government. "The Oudh assessments were made on the usual plan of 'half assets'".⁶³ To this 50 per cent were added the cesses of Road, Postal, School, Patwari, etc. coming to nearly 5 per cent. This revenue demand was very heavy. In his Open Letter to Lord Curzon, O'Donnell makes fun of the British who knew what percentage of tax they pay in their own country:

What a gay and contended and aboundingly loyal subject the Briton would be if the tax rose, not to 10 but to 50 per cent. And yet it is a fact that in "prosperous India" the annual taxation of land over nearly all its provinces is equivalent to at least a 55 per cent.⁶⁴

The revenue demand on Awadh was high, but then it was not higher than the other provinces of India. However, there is a sense in which it was higher than the other provinces of India. For Taluqdars were given Sanads which distinguished them from the rest of the Awadh people. Even if they were no more rajas, they were given all the external appearances of rajas; they should look like rajas. Though they were not rulers of men, they had to appear before men as if they were rulers. Though they lost their raj, they had to maintain the semblance of raj. And for maintaining the sem-

blance of raj sometimes they had to spend more money than an actual raja would have spent. They had to maintain paid admirers (courtiers) and a bureaucratic set-up. Some States like Balrampur had even the Prime Minister. Metcalf has given a list of senior officials of the Balrampur estate in 1881-82 which includes the name of the Prime Minister.⁶⁵ From where will the money for maintaining the semblance of raj come? There were only two sources. One was the extortion of rent from the tenants. And the other was borrowing money from the Mahajan. And the taluqdars used both the sources. The result is obvious. In spite of rent extortion most of the estates of Awadh became heavily indebted. Heavy revenue demand from the government plus the maintenance of the semblance of raj made the taluqdars indebted to Mahajans and other kind of banking resources. Taluqdar-tenant system for Awadh proved as a system of indebtedness. Taluqdars imposed indebtedness on the tenant, and the British Government converted the taluqdar into an indebted being. By supplying Sanads to taluqdars the taluqdars were converted into dummy rajas. It is quite expensive to act as a dummy raja. If the British wished to retain the semblance of raj in Awadh then the revenue demand on the taluqdars should have been lowered. Instead of lowering the revenue demand they allowed the taluqdars to extort from their tenants as much rent as they like. This will serve two purposes. This will lead to the punishment of tenantry for its participation in the revolt of Awadh's freedom. And this will also introduce a permanent rift between the taluqdars and their peasants, thus ensuring the British Raj in Awadh. The tenant should not become an ally of the taluqdars. The taluqdars should not be collaborators with the tenants.

The revolt of 1857 occurred in both the provinces of the North, the North-Western Provinces and the province of Oudh. But the widespread peasant uprising occurred only in the Oudh part of the North. Therefore, the Rent Act which was introduced in Oudh after suppression of the Revolt was

very different from the one which was introduced in the North-Western Provinces. In the latter province the Rent Act X was introduced in 1859, a couple of years after the Revolt. As a result there was only 38.5 per cent cultivated land that was occupied by the tenants-at-will. Occupancy-tenants occupied 36.5 per cent of the cultivated land.⁶⁶ The position of tenants-at-will was not so bad. There were cases when the tenants-at-will refused 'hereditary rights' on their land, because they wanted to retain their freedom "to give up and go".⁶⁷ But the Oudh Rent Act of 1868 produced very bad results. Occupancy-tenants had only one per cent of the cultivated land, and the tenants-at-will occupied 78 per cent of the cultivated land.⁶⁸ Why in Awadh the occupancy-tenants were restricted to only one per cent of the cultivated land? Why in the North-Western Provinces the figure reached to 36.5 per cent? In Awadh the condition for occupancy was thirty years continuous possession of the land before annexation, whereas in the North-Western Provinces it was only twelve years possession.⁶⁹ Why was this discrimination made after having an absolute control over the two provinces, and complete suppression of the Revolt? Why was the tenantry of Awadh allowed to suffer? Why was such a special Act as the Act of 1868 introduced which gives protection to only one per cent of the tenantry and gives all protection to the landlords? The responsibility is shifted to the taluqdars, the dummy kings, who were a party to the "Oudh Compromise". So far as the tenantry of Awadh is concerned, so far as the realisation of their rent is concerned, these dummy kings were treated as real kings. All the responsibility for peasant suffering goes to them. They, and not the British, were responsible for framing of the anti-tenant act. The British only carried out the wishes of the dummy kings when they passed the Act in 1868. Within a decade's time after the revolt the taluqdars became allies of the British. They became their collaborators. They forgot about the rural mass of Awadh of which they were once leaders. Now

they were the rulers of that mass. At the matured stage of the Act of 1868 it was found

that out of the total cultivated area in Avadh only $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent was cultivated by proprietors, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent by sub-proprietors or tenants having occupancy rights and 88 per cent was cultivated by the 'tenants-at-will', as against 38 per cent of the cultivated area occupied by 'tenants-at-will' in the province of Agra.⁷⁰

The position of occupancy-tenants has improved; from 1 per cent he has reached $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. But then the tenant-at-will has also not remained where he was earlier. Instead of 78 per cent he has started cultivating 88 per cent of the land. The cultivator of Awadh is so very different from the cultivator of Agra province. Awadh became the miserable land of the cultivators-at-will.

No sooner than the Rent Act of 1868 was passed that the taluqdars, zamindars and other kinds of village proprietors started using it against their tenantry. The British officials in their Settlement Reports, Famine Reports, etc. have narrated the tales of peasant suffering resulting from the Act of 1868. The twentieth century Awadh historians of our times have also retold those tales through their own historical jargon. It is pointless to repeat those tales. However, in the present context I would like to refer to the report of Pratapgarh Settlement given by J. Sanders. Referring to the consequences of Oudh Rent Act of 1868 Sanders quotes from the Pioneer of February 26, 1892 which says

the majority held their lands at the beck and call of the taluqdar, who might turn them out or double their rents at his own sweet will without a voice or hand being raised to oppose him. A carefully written notice, a petition with an eight anna stamp on it, and, because he had by some trivial word or deed offended his landlord, many a hitherto prosperous husbandman had his means of subsistence taken from him, and was ejected for ever from fields that had been cultivated by his ancestors as far back as the memory of man could go.⁷¹

Sanders perhaps did not realise the full implications of these remarks. What was the condition of tenantry before the annexation, and what is its position after the annexation and introduction of the Rent Act of 1868?

This Act displaced the tenant who occupied the fields that 'had been cultivated by his ancestors as far back as the memory of man could go.' Who will accept that the condition of tenantry became better after annexation than prior to the annexation? But one of the main reasons for annexing Awadh was to liberate tenantry from its horrible state, from the clutches of taluqdars:

The Governor General had made up his mind to annex Avadh and the ostensible excuse was that the cultivators had been reduced to such a condition that the British Government in fulfilment of their ultimate responsibility could not overlook the state of affairs.⁷²

In what way does the Act of 1868 fulfil the responsibility towards the tenantry of Awadh? The real reason of annexation was the possibility of huge revenue to be obtained from the landlords, the revenue which did not reach the King of Awadh. Thus the revenue from the taluqdars was secured, and what happened to the tenantry was not their concern. Rather the tenantry was allowed to be punished for its anti-State activities in 1857.

The Rent Act of 1868 allowed the tenant to stay in his field only for one year. Suppose his one crop fails, then he can compensate for the loss in the second crop. Therefore, the long duration of one year is allowed. If the landlord wishes he can eject the tenant after one year. What is required for ejection is just one month's notice and a revenue stamp of eight annas. It is generally for the enhancement of rent that the ejection notice is given. But the landlord is not required to give any reason in his notice. His wish and will is the only reason. And he is free to enhance the rent to any limit he likes. No limit on the enhancement of rent was prescribed in the Act of 1868. "The courts were even prohibited from enquiring into propriety of rate of rent payable by ordinary tenants."⁷³ This shows that the doors of law courts were open for the landlords to get their tenants evicted and to enhance their rents to any extent they like. But the doors of law courts were closed to the tenant for

fighting his case against eviction and enhancement of rent. This was the British rule of law for the rural mass of Awadh. Of course the law courts allowed the tenant to give the relinquishment notice. He was given a legal right to relinquish his land and become landless. Thus there was no law to help him in retaining his land, but there was a law to help him in giving up his land. The choice is given to the tenant, whether he wishes to quit his land through eviction or through relinquishment. By giving land to the landlords the British converted the landlords into their allies and collaborators. By further giving them the Rent Act of 1868 they converted the landlords in their slaves, they were revenue-paying slaves. The taluqdars brought political stability to the British rule in Awadh.

The British, however, were interested not only in harvesting revenue, they were also interested in harvesting cotton, indigo, opium, sugar-cane and wheat for the foreign markets. And the harvesting of agricultural products is possible not through the hands of the revenue farmers but through the hands of the agricultural farmers. Therefore, after obtaining political stability in Awadh with the help of taluqdars, the British diverted their attention to the possible agricultural products from Awadh. According to Rudrangshu Mukherjee 'in 1856... it was estimated that Awadh was capable of producing half the amount of indigo that was produced in Bengal.'⁷⁴ Soon the idea of producing indigo in Awadh was implemented. Pratapgarh Settlement Report of 1896 gives a list of 30 indigo factories in the district of Pratapgarh alone.⁷⁵ The Report further mentions that 'Captain Chapman and Raja Rampal Singh have large factories for its manufacture.'⁷⁶ Similar to indigo, the British thought of intensifying the production of cotton. Rudrangshu Mukherjee quotes the remarks of the Commercial Superintendent of Lucknow made in 1860: 'No country in the world affords a finer investment for capital than India and no part of India better than Oudh.'⁷⁷ The Superintendent's further remark refers to a pos-

sible state of tenantry, 'If seeds and advances are given the landowner would cultivate cotton to any extent required.'⁷⁸ It is not only that advances for the cotton crop were contemplated, advances were given for all the valuable or exportable agricultural products in Awadh. Because of these advances the cultivator became bonded. All kinds of people came forward to give advances, merchants, money-lenders, landlords and the government itself. The cultivator was no more in a position to grow anything else. He lost all his resources to grow food for his own consumption. He was drowning in the ocean of indebtedness.

The third valuable crop was poppy from which opium is extracted. An extraordinary attention was paid to poppy in the later years of the century because when trade to China in cotton declined opium took up its place. See Appendix II on poppy production at the end of the chapter. In 1864-65 it occupied only 1,061 acres, but in 1890-91 it was cultivated in 14,721 acres: 'Poppy especially is favourite... The system of advances sufficiently explains its popularity.'⁷⁹ Encouragement to sugar-cane was as much as to poppy. So many sugar factories were established in the Pratapgarh district alone. A list of sugar factories is given in Appendix III at the end of the chapter. Referring to the Patti subdivision it is remarked 'The chief manufacturers of sugar are Kalwars, who have amassed large profits by their business from which they have advanced money.'⁸⁰ Thus be it cotton, indigo, poppy or sugar-cane, the cultivator has been bonded through advances to produce it. He has hardly any land left to produce food for his own subsistence.

The above references might have shown that Awadh had the potentiality to become a good agricultural form of Britain. For its Chinese and European markets the British Government could have cotton, indigo, opium, sugar and wheat in abundance. But the Rent Act of 1868 was a real obstruction in the production of agricultural goods. If a tenant is ejected

every year why should he think in terms of improving his land? Why should he dig wells or think in terms of permanent channels for carrying water to different parts of his field? The cultivator is as good with his sickle and plough as with his spears which he used in the Revolt of 1857. As a matter of fact it is his knowledge of sickle that helped him in using swords and spears. He is not only expert in using plough, he also knows how to subsist with minimum amount of food intake. His poverty-line is made up of a hard stuff. It is unlike the poverty-line of an English cultivator. If an English cultivator is deprived of a good breakfast he goes below the poverty-line. But the Awadh cultivators do not touch the poverty-line if 'they have one square meal a day and a handful of "chabena" or parched grain once or twice at other times.'⁸¹ This is his normal "standard of living". Of course sometimes during the seasons he saves his meal and chabena too. 'When the mango crop is a good one many live on it, and in 1894 the ample mahua crop was the main diet of many for several weeks.'⁸² So the cultivator can survive without touching the crops produced with the help of his plough. The property of the tenant can be judged by the fact that 'All classes of tenants and even labourers have brass and iron-cooking pots and lotas. Herds of sheep and goats are to be found in every villages.'⁸³ This implies that they have transcended the stone-age. They have entered into the age of iron and bronze. Sheep and goat are a proof that they have started domesticating animals. Sanders seems to have forgotten to mention the name of "dog". Dog is the earliest domesticated animal of man.

The British realised the importance of Awadh land and also the importance of its cultivators. For his "one square meal and a handful of chabena" the cultivator requires a small piece of land for growing coarse crops like jowar, bajra, etc. which do not require either much ploughing or watering. The cultivator can keep intact all his resources for the

production of valuable crops. The valuable crops have to be protected and promoted. But then the protection of valuable crops requires the protection of cultivators. Rent Act of 1868 gives no protection to the tenant. Therefore, this Act must be rejected. The practice of yearly eviction of the tenant must be stopped. The tenant must improve his land, must introduce irrigation facilities, etc. This he can do only if he is allowed to retain his land for a longer time. And who is profiting from the enhancements of rents? Landlords and money-lenders are the only profiteers. Landlords hide the rents realised; therefore, do not pay the right percentage of revenue to the government. The enhancement of rent must be legalised and regularised, otherwise the government will never get its proper share of revenue. So also the agricultural productivity must be improved. It is for obtaining the proper share of revenue from the landlords and good produce of exportable crops that the Second Rent Act of 1886 was passed by the government.

The Second Rent Act XII was passed in 1886 but came into effect from January 1, 1887. Section 36, part B of Chapter IV (on Enhancement and Fixing Rates of Rent) considers the cases of those tenants who do not possess occupancy-rights and are not subtenants. Such a tenant 'shall be entitled to retain possession of the holding occupied by him at the commencement of the Oudh Rent Act at the rent then payable by him, for seven years from the date of the last change in his rent...'⁸⁴ These tenants have later been described as "statutory tenants" because they have been given statutory rights which are different from the rights given to the occupancy-tenants. Thus for the first time since the British rule in Awadh a legal protection was given to the tenant. He was allowed to retain land for seven continuous years rather than one year as was the case with the Rent Act of 1868. Perhaps the seven years period was considered sufficient to ensure agricultural productivity. A tenant could not only

dig well on his land but he could also enjoy the fruits of his labour for seven years in succession. Digging of the well, which ensures productivity, was one of the important issues of the Act of 1886. All the valuable crops require heavy watering. In the absence of canals and nearness to natural channels of water, wells were the only alternative. Therefore, the Section 23 (2), Chapter II is inserted 'Every statutory tenant shall be entitled to construct, maintain and repair a well for the irrigation of his holding.'⁸⁵ However, 'if the landlord desires to construct the well himself, he shall have a prior right to do so.'⁸⁶ On the construction of wells depends the production of indigo, poppy, sugar-cane, etc. Therefore, wells must be constructed either by the tenant or by the landlord.

The enhancement of rent must be regularised so that the government may obtain the real proportion of revenue. Rack-renting leads government to suffer a loss of revenue. The Chapter IV of the Act deals with the enhancement of rents which is possible only after the statutory period of seven years. Though statutory right is not heritable, the heir of the deceased tenant is allowed to stay on the land till the completion of the statutory period. Section 38 (1) of Chapter IV says 'A landlord may enhance the rent of a statutory tenant or of a person who succeeds as an heir of a statutory tenant under section 48.'⁸⁷ And the section 48 reads 'When a statutory tenant dies, his heir shall be entitled to retain occupation of the holding at the rent payable by the deceased for a period of five years from the date of the tenant's death...'⁸⁸ So the heir of a deceased tenant is as good as a new tenant.

Enhancement of rents and the ejectment of tenants was controlled by the Act. The enhancement was "limited to one anna in a rupee or $6\frac{1}{4}$ p.c."⁸⁹ For ejectment of the tenant earlier the landlord was required to spend only eight annas on the revenue stamp. But now there 'was imposition of a court-fee equivalent to half year's rent of the holding, subject

to a maximum of Rs. 25/-, which in no case could be recovered from the tenant.⁹⁰ An attempt was made to stop rack-renting by prescribing the limit of enhancement. And by increasing the court-fee ejectment notice was made difficult. It would seem that the Rent Act of 1886 has given considerable protection to the tenant.

The proposal for life-tenancy was rejected because this would convert the landlords into mere "revenue farmers", they would not look like lords of the land. Even the statutory period for longer duration was rejected, because a tenant who had absolutely no right on the land, seven years right is more than what he expects. With seven years time in his hands he has all the reasons to develop his land. Perhaps the period of seven years was taken as the Golden Mean. The tenants were given right on their lands without disturbing the allies of the British, the taluqdars.

The Oudh Rent (Amendment) Act of 1921: This Act was only an amended form of the Rent Act of 1886. Its only purpose was to give more rights to the statutory tenants. The immediate cause for amendment is said to be the violent form which the tenant agitation took in 1920-21, led by Baba Ram Chandra and Jhinguri Singh.⁹¹ The real cause is, however, more deep-rooted. It is rooted in the British policy to rule Awadh by introducing a class conflict between the tenants and landlords. The tenants should never become the allies of the taluqdars. Their alliance would lead to the recurrence of such revolts as the one that occurred in 1857. The so-called "Oudh Policy", the Policy that was created by Canning, nursed by Benett and strongly defended by Butler, was the Policy of creating enmity between landlords and tenants. The landlords who were the natural leaders of the tenantry when they were its raja, should become the enemies of tenantry. In converting a raja into a landlord an attempt was made to convert a god into a devil (rakshas). The Rent Act of 1868 converted the landlords into

rakshas as who evicted the tenants from those fields which were cultivated by them "as far back as the memory of man could go". These rakshasas forgot that the tenants were their paja and to look after their paja was their paramount duty. Now they have only one duty--how to realise rent from their tenants. They forgot that they were their gods.

Consider the remarks of Sanders which have been quoted by the Awadh historians in order to justify their interpretations. About the taluqdars and their relation with tenantry Sanders remarks

It is contrary to the Indian or the Oudh idea that the landlord should interest himself actively in the welfare of his tenantry. The Indian idea of a good landlord is of one who lets his tenants alone. Enhancing rents... does not in the tenant's eyes make him a bad landlord.⁹²

Welfare of tenantry is a Western idea, and according to Sanders 'In Oudh, annexed 40 years ago, it is not to be expected that landed proprietors should at once assimilate this purely Western idea.'⁹³ All this means that what the British did for 40 years after annexation was nothing but allowing the landlords to develop their Indian or Awadhian identity. They had no intention to disturb the Indianness of the taluqdar's identity; therefore, the taluqdar was allowed rack-renting. The conversion from a raja to a landlord was not an attack on the Indian identity of a taluqdar, for he was given the Rent Act of 1868 in compensation for any amount of loss in the process. It is not only in the case of rent that the Western ideas were not introduced to the Indians, the position of revenue is no better. 55 per cent revenue would be beyond the imagination of an English Landlord yet it was imposed on the landlords of India. And the landlord must pay his revenue either through rack-renting or with the help of money-lenders. It is not only the tenants who had to depend on the money-lenders, it would be a surprise if a landlord is free from the debt of money-lenders.

The Rent Act of 1886 was the first attack of the British on the

Indian identity of the taluqdar as Sanders understands by Indian Identity. The tenant was protected from the enhancement of rent for seven continuous years. How much protection was given to the tenant is a matter to be investigated. So also it is a matter of investigation whether the tenant developed good feelings towards his landlord as a result of the Rent Act of 1886. The Rent Act of 1868 certainly did not allow any good feelings between taluqdars and tenants. Only Sanders can imagine that a tenant will not have bad feelings towards his taluqdar in spite of the fact that he is evicted from that land which was cultivated by him 'as far back as the memory of man could go.' For seeing the consequences of the Rent Act of 1886 attention may be drawn to the remarks of S.H. Fremantle, the settlement officer of Rae Bareilly who was contemporary of Sanders:

In many cases in which the enhancement exceeds one anna in the rupee, I have had petitions from the tenants for reinstatement, pititiously stating that their forefathers had always held the land and how should they be treated in the same way as tenants whose holdings were of recent date. There is little doubt that provisions of section 48 fall very hard in individual cases, and I think it is a pity that a full court-fee is not payable on ejectment under this section.⁹⁴

Everybody is equal before the law. Therefore, the tenants who cultivated the same land which their forefathers cultivated were equalised with the tenants who started cultivating the land from 1886. This means that the landlords of Rent Act of 1868 were less cruel than the landlords having powers of the Rent Act of 1886. The tenants who were not evicted by the former Act were evicted by the latter Act. In what way is then the latter Act superior to the former Act? In what way has the latter Act protected the tenantry? Protection to tenantry is only an illusion created by the latter Act. A section of the Act introduces the court-fee of Rs. 25/- for eviction of the tenant, at the same time introducing another section for eviction which does not require any court-fee. The Rent Act of 1886 is as much a bundle of contradictions as is the colonial rule. There is a move

to protect the tenantry and at the same time a move to withdraw that protection.

Further remarks of Fremantle highlight the tenant-landlord tension created by the land-rent Act of 1886. He had attempted to show how Irwin's "good tenant" is heading towards a total extinction. According to Irwin a "good tenant" is

one who is ready to live on one meal a day, and, in native phrase, to sell his wife and children rather than fail to pay the highest possible rent for his holding; who submits unquestioningly to any cesses it may please his landlord's demand; and who is always willing to work for him without payment; to give for him evidence in court, and, speaking generally, to do any conceivable thing he is told.⁹⁵

This good tenant is dying out. For tenants, according to Fremantle, 'are learning to assert such rights as they have. During the 40 years of British occupation there has been very much litigation between landlord and tenant. A dispute arises, and is taken to the courts, everyone in the village becomes a partisan. Of course after the production of a large amount of false evidence, the matter is settled, but the relations between the parties and many others have been permanently embittered, and confidence has been destroyed. Each case diminishes the members of "good" tenants and the importance of the taluqdar.'⁹⁶ "Litigation" exhibits the form of "peasant protest". And the protest is not just subjective, it is organised. Of course the protest is organised only at the village level, for "everyone in the village becomes a partisan". The fact that a taluqdar has to go to the court itself decreases his importance; he is not the ruler of men, he is only one man among others. How can such a taluqdar attract Irwin's "good tenant"? A tenant would like to be ruled by a man of honour. And a taluqdar has lost his honour. The Rent Act of 1868 itself exhibits the signs of peasant protest. Each eviction notice given in the court exhibits peasant resistance. The tenant knows that he cannot stay on the land if the landlord so wishes. The courts are in favour of

the landlord, yet the tenant resists. He vacates the land only after the court notice. The number of notices for eviction given in the court exhibits the number of tenants who protested against the landlords. Of course the protest or resistance is not organised. Perhaps the organisational character emerges only after the Rent Act of 1886 when 'everyone in the village becomes a partisan.'

The Rent Act of 1886 has "permanently embittered" the relations between landlords and tenants. This is what Canning wanted, and this was achieved by the 40 years of the British rule in Awadh. Within 40 years' time those who led the Revolt of 1857 the taluqdars, ultimately lost their importance in the eyes of the tenants. Taluqdars became enemies of the tenants, yet Butler in 1907 thinks that the taluqdars have the same relation with their tenants which they had before the annexation of Awadh.

Butler writes

The Raja is over-bearing, often cruel, but his people live at his gate, where his horses and cattle and elephants are stalled, and there is a strong bond of common humanity between them. It is the old idea 'You shall be my people and I will be your God.'⁹⁷

Is not Butler deluding himself and his superiors? The two rent Acts have succeeded in converting the God into a rakshasa. Of course the rakshasas are quite dangerous. The common bond of humanity between the taluqdar and tenant disappeared with the introduction of the Rent Act of 1868, and by the time the Rent Act of 1886 was introduced they became each other's enemies. The British law courts were established to introduce enmity and rift between them and to deprive the tenants of all his rights. As

Fremantle further remarks

We have opened the courts to disputes between landlords and tenants, and so inevitably created ill-feeling between them, but in the last resort one of the parties, the tenant, is found to have practically no rights.⁹⁸

Whatever rights the Act gave to the tenant, the courts took away those rights. What is the use of opening the doors of courts to the tenants?

The Rent Act of 1886 was like a locked house with all its windows open for entry. The privilege of seven years tenure was not extended to many different classes of tenants. Two classes of such tenants are very important. One class consists of those tenants who have been described as shikmi, i.e. tenants of tenants. They become subtenants; therefore, they are deprived of statutory protection. The other class consists of those tenants who cultivate sir land of the landholder. Sir is the private or personal land of the landlord.⁹⁹ Thus once a land is converted into a shikmi or a Sir land, the tenant on this land is deprived of the statutory right. Therefore, as soon as the Act was passed the landholders started converting their land into shikmi and sir. For obtaining shikmi right a patta (written deed) is required. The patta is given in the name of a relative or a friend or any other person who is reliable. According to this patta the person in whose favour the patta has been given has become the tenant of the landholder. Therefore, any tenant who occupies the shikmi land has become a subtenant, and hence he cannot have advantage of the statutory right. He is a tenant-at-will who can be charged any rent the landholder wishes. Similar is the case of the cultivator of the sir land of a landholder. Since sir land is landholder's private land, he can charge from the tenant any rent he wishes. The cultivator of sir land too is a tenant-at-will. Since the Rent Act of 1886 allows the tenants on both kinds of lands, the shikmi land and sir land, and gives them no protection, shows that the Act is just not interested in the extinction of tenants-at-will. The Act is interested only in the restricted existence of this species.

Why did the Act of 1886 keep its windows open for inviting subtenants? Why did it not convert all tenants into statutory tenants? The clue to answer such questions lies in the revenue demand from the taluqdars. Corresponding to rack-renting there was rack-revenuing (to coin a new expres-

sion). If the taluqdars were involved in the former racket, the government was involved in the latter racket. And both these rackets led only the tenant to suffer. In order to satisfy the revenue demand of the government, which was stretched to its maximum limit, the taluqdars used their tenants to meet the demand. High demand of revenue can only be met by high demand of rent. F.W. Brownrigg, the Settlement Officer of Sultanpur District, finds both "demand for revenue" and "rent realised" increased. He gives causes for rack-renting but no causes for rack-revenuing. The causes for the former are given because he wishes to show that the rack-revenuing has nothing to do with rack-renting 'Speaking in a general sense it may be postulated that one of the first effects of an enhancement in the revenue demand is an increase in rent.'¹⁰⁰ He contradicts that the increase in rent is the consequence of revenue enhancement. The former, according to him, is the consequence of two factors '(1) the increase in population, insofar as it has created a demand for land... and (2) the enhanced value of crop produce.'¹⁰¹ By giving all these explanations, has Brownrigg falsified that both revenue and rents have increased? Can he deny that the Landlord will meet the enhanced demand of revenue from the enhanced demand of rents? Is there any other way in which the enhanced revenue can be met? The Settlement Officer of Rae Bareilly accepts clearly that the enhancement of revenue can only be met by enhancement of rent. He says, 'It is very difficult to say to what extent rents are economically open to enhancement. Though it is practically certain that many strong landowners will be able to transfer a considerable portion of the increased burden to their tenants.'¹⁰² But in what way can these strong landholders transfer their burden to tenants? Is there any other way except through rack-renting? Then how can rack-renting be stopped? For rack-renting tenant-at-will is the best target. So the British law did not stop the generation and propagation of tenants-at-will.

For the British had no wish to stop their own practice of rack-revenuing.

Though the nineteenth century Awadh did not observe an organised protest of a wider range on rack-renting, it did observe an organised protest against the rack-revenuing. The taluqdars of Patti, Pratapgarh District protested against the second Settlement conducted by Sanders.¹⁰³ The Settlement led to very heavy revenue demand. The taluqdars represented their case through BIA, an association which they established to fight for their demands. The Lieutenant Governor Sir Charles Crosthwaite came to Pratapgarh in January 1894, and later J.R. Reid, a Senior Member of Board of Revenue, visited Patti. Reid reduced the total revenue demand by Rs. 20,400 and then Rs. 12,300 more. Later Sanders himself reduced the demand by Rs. 13,000. Lieutenant Governor finally reduced the demand by Rs. 10,000. "The ultimate enhancement" for Patti pargana, according to Metcalf, 'was brought down to 38 per cent over the previous settlement.'¹⁰⁴ Sanders gives the comparative figures. In the previous settlement the incidence of revenue per acre of cultivated land was Rs. 2, a.3 & p.5. But in the second settlement it was increased to Rs. 2, a.6 and p.6. Similarly the incidence of revenue per acre of assessable area in the previous settlement was Rs. 1, a.8 and p.7. In the second settlement it was enhanced to Rs. 2, a.1 and p.2.¹⁰⁵ The previous settlement was done in 1871.

The protest of Patti taluqdars succeeded in curtailing rack-revenuing, but not to the extent it should have been curtailed. Enhancement of 38 per cent revenue over the previous settlement has another dimension. The Revenue imposition of 1871 settlement was based on the rents realised those years. Rack-renting was legally sanctioned by the Rent Act of 1868. As has already been pointed out earlier, no limit was imposed on the imposition of rent. But if the revenue demand was based on the rents realised, then the demand was already high because the rents were high. Enhancing 38 per cent revenue means rents have enhanced. So the Rent Act of 1886

has not stopped enhancing rents, it has not stopped rack-renting. This is possible only if it has not stopped propagation of tenants-at-will. They were propagated through shikmi and sir.

Attacking the conversion of an ordinary tenant to a tenant-at-will the Pioneer writes

A quasi-fictitious patta is executed in the name of one of the taluqdar's servants, or more generally relatives, by whom again the land is with all due form sub-let very often to the original cultivator himself. The zilladar collects the rent as before, and the actual tiller of the soil never sees from one year's end to another the pseudo-tenant whose shikmi he nominally is.¹⁰⁶

How could Pioneer call the pattaholder as a pseudo-tenant? He is a genuine tenant accepted by the law. So also the law does not prohibit pattas to be written in favour of one's servants and relatives. Instead of blaming the law it is blaming a law-abiding landholder. It is the law that has permitted him to have shikmi-tenants. If Pioneer wishes to blame then it should blame the framers of the law. But being an organ of the law-framers it cannot blame them, and blames those who obey the law. The concluding remarks on the issue are quite interesting: 'The real tenant is again in his old bad plight, liable to ejection, liable to enhancement, and there is no remedy.'¹⁰⁷ Why is there no remedy? Because the British do not want to have any remedy. Why were the statutory rights not extended to all classes of tenants? Why was the category of subtenants allowed in the Act of 1886? The reason is very simple. The high revenue demand of the government can only be met by landlords through imposing high rents on their tenants. The high rents cannot be imposed on the statutory tenants; therefore, subtenants are required.

It is certainly not the love for the Indian tenantry that Pioneer was moved to attack the landlords and their shikmi-tenants. Government suffers "loss through this practice". 'Returns supplied to Government only deal with tenancy rents, and thus Settlement Officers before whom they are

laid may often be led to believe that a landlord derives a much smaller profit from a village than he actually does.'¹⁰⁸ This is certainly not true about all the Settlement Officers. Sanders, for example, has been careful to see the actual rents realised. The worry, however, remains that the 'revenue is under-assessed and the Government suffers in proportion.'¹⁰⁹ So it is not the tenantry, but the loot of the tenantry in which the government fails to have a share. Government does not get its reasonable share from rack-renting for which a provision in the Act of 1886 was made.

Not only that the landlords earned more money through their shikmi and sir tenants, they started the practice of nazrana, meaning a gift or a present. This nazrana in due course became a kind of concealed rent. Once a tenant is evicted he is required to pay nazrana to be reinstated. Nazrana became a custom of the time, and it was charged like rent. Landlords were not satisfied with the $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent rent enhancement. Perhaps they felt that it was too low. This might have led to the enhancement of nazrana. There is clear mention of nazrana at the time of second Regular Settlement. The practice started with the British land-tenure system. A tenant is required to pay not only rent but also nazrana so his burden increased. Land-competition made nazrana possible. Since nazrana is not a declared rent, the landlord is free from the share of revenue on it.

The government was not ignorant about the practice of nazrana and rack-renting, and yet it made no effort to revise the Act of 1886, or to make nazrana illegal. Though the government suffered huge losses because of the corrupt practices, it was not given any share in the loot, it allowed those corrupt practices. Perhaps the government wished to convert taluqdars into totally corrupt persons. In this fashion it was easier for the government to convert taluqdars into their allies and collaborators. The ushering of twentieth century saw the rise of Indian Nationa-

lism. The nation started listening to the voices of Tilak, Pal and Lajpat Rai. Congress started losing its moderate character; it was preparing for a showdown.¹¹⁰ The Indian militants had started their separate war against the British. The British were in search of their allies and collaborators. Who could be the collaborators of the British in Awadh? Tenants were ruled out. For they can be moved only by black leaders. The choice fell on the taluqdars. After the Revolt of 1857 the taluqdars were used to crush the tenantry. They were given the Rent Act of 1868 to do so. Now they are required again. Now they are required to perform a bigger task. They have to stop the tide of nationalism and freedom. They have to see that the flame of nationalism and freedom is extinguished in Awadh. And they require bigger sums to perform this task. The money obtained through shikmi and sir lands given by the Act of 1886 was too small. Either the government should pass another Act to allow more legal money to them or it should allow them to have money through illegal exactions. Thus the taluqdars were allowed to have nazrana and so many other kinds of illegal cesses. The government simply took an attitude of overlooking those cesses. It was not the concern of the government what the taluqdars do to their tenants, government's only concern was that the taluqdars side with them against the rise of nationalism. They should become the residential agents of the British.

Both Dalhousie and Butler were misled about the taluqdars of Awadh in their own ways. Dalhousie thought that the taluqdars had no hold over their tenantry, and Butler thought that they had considerable hold over their tenantry. Perhaps the situation would have been very different if Dalhousie would have thought like Butler and Butler like Dalhousie. But this was not to happen. Both Dalhousie and Butler involved tenants to revolt. Dalhousie made them to revolt in favour of their taluqdars, and

Butler made them to revolt against their taluqdars. Awadh taluqdars were allowed by Butler to charge "whatever rent they please" from their tenants.¹¹¹ How could the taluqdars imagine that there would be a better government than that of the British? It is only the British who have given law into the hands of the landlords to realise as much rent from the tenantry as they wish. They must collaborate with the British and not with any kind of anti-British movement. According to Metcalf, Butler's government thought that the tenants were inert and, therefore, "could be ignored".¹¹² But this was not only how Butler thought. This was also how Dalhousie thought. And Dalhousie's views about the Awadh tenantry were shaped by Sleeman's report.¹¹³ Dalhousie gave no land rights to the tenants, the settlement was made with the village proprietors and taluqdars. The tenants were considered as inert and hence they were ignored. But these very inert tenants took up arms and fought against the well-trained army of the British. Again in 1920-21 these very inert tenants brought a revolution in Awadh by rising against the corrupt practices of nazrana, evictions and rack-renting. These tenants knew that the British were supporting the taluqdars, that the British army and police were with the taluqdars, yet they revolted. The tenants of Awadh once again, after 1857, have shaken the roots of the British administration in Awadh. The British were forced to amend the Rent Act of 1886. The Oudh Rent (amendment) Act, 1921, was passed by the Local Legislature, assented by the Governor on 28th November 1921, and the Governor General on 18th January 1922. It became a Government of India Act on 11th February 1922.

The fact that the Rent Act of 1886 was only amended in 1921, and not withdrawn, shows that very few changes in the former Act were introduced. The important changes in favour of tenants were the following: Section 36 of the Rent Act of 1886 was amended which allowed only seven years statutory right to tenants. Now they were given ten years statutory rights as

if all the problems of tenants would be solved by extending their rights for three years more. The next important amendment was that of the Section 48 of the Act of 1886. The new Section 29 says 'When a statutory tenant dies, his heir shall be entitled to retain occupation of the holding at the rent payable by the deceased for a period of five years from the date of the tenant's death.'¹¹⁴ This is a new right given to the heir of a deceased tenant. Amendment to Section 13 is also important. Landlords were not providing rent-receipts to their tenants. The law was introduced to provide receipts of rents realised. The last important step was the withdrawal of Section 51 of 1886 and in its place the introduction of Sections 51A, 51B, 51C, 51D, 51E, 51F and 51G. All these Sections refer to the introduction of "roster year" and appointment of officers for controlling enhancement of rents.

The Rent Act of 1921 was only a symbol of tenants' victory. They could talk about it and could hang it on their walls as do our graduates with their degrees. These degrees do not bring jobs for them. Similarly the Rent Act of 1921 failed to solve any of the problems of tenantry. Neither sir lands were abolished nor shikmi tenants were withdrawn. Since the taluqdars and zamindars had majority in the Local Legislature they gave as many rights to themselves as to the tenantry, so neutralised whatever rights were given to the tenantry.

The United Provinces Tenancy Act of 1939: This Act was passed by the Provincial Legislature on October 3 and 4, 1939, assented by the Governor on December 6, 1939 and was Gazetted on December 16, 1939. Not only the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 was repealed, so was the Agra Tenancy Act of 1926 repealed. The whole province was given one and the same rent law. The tenants of Awadh for the first time were brought under the same law as the tenants of Agra province. The British policy of dividing landlords and tenants in-

to two different provincial entities, having two different sets of laws was given up. This was the first major step taken against the British policy by the Congress Ministry which came into existence by the Government of India Act of 1935. The Ministry was formed in July 1937, and it took the step of looking at the horrible state of Awadh tenantry. It had to fulfil the promises made to the Awadh tenantry. The enthusiasm of Awadh tenantry, and its expectations from the Congress Ministry, can be judged by the scene on the election day in Pratapgarh District. Visalakshi Menon writes 'a very large number of voters had brought with them pieces of dried cow dung to the various polling stations where these were lighted and... "bedakhli", i.e. ejectment notices, were burnt once for all.'¹¹⁵ One of the resolutions passed in the Faizpur session of the Congress, 1936, was "Fixity of tenure with heritable rights..."¹¹⁶ Most of the resolutions were in favour of the tenantry. Therefore, the Congress Ministry of 1937 was bound to withdraw the anti-tenant Act of 1886 with all its anti-tenant amendments. The Rent Act of 1921 hardly gave any relief to the tenantry.

The Act of 1921 has inserted a new Section 30A in the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 which made the acquisition of land by landlords possible without facing any difficulties. Under this Section so many grounds have been provided to the landlord to evict his tenants. Some of them are quite flimsy grounds such as "(a) agricultural development (c) own cultivation (f) for groves and (g) for planting trees." After eviction a few plants would justify the eviction. And any stage of agricultural development is a backward stage. Eviction is obtained by applying to the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner of Rae Bareilly writes to the Commissioner of Lucknow about the working of Section 30A 'The landlord is almost invariably the better off and is often at an advantage over the defendant in that he employs while the defendant cannot afford to pay the cost of employing a pleader.'¹¹⁷ Similarly the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur Kheri

writes 'that landlords enhance the rent without reference to the Special Officer's rate; and in the case of big landlords it is very difficult for the tenant to resist.'¹¹⁸ This means that the sections on "roster" have hardly any value. Not the government officers but the landlords decide the enhancement of rent. And if the enhanced rent is not paid the tenant is evicted.

The Deputy Commissioners and even the Commissioner of Fyzabad division have expressed unhappiness over the Section 67 (1)(b) of the Rent Act which does not allow statutory rights to those tenants who have underproprietary rights over a small piece of land or a grove in a village. The Deputy Commissioner of Rae Bareli writes 'it is very hard on such persons that they cannot enjoy statutory right and in consequence can be ejected at any time. It gives frequently an opportunity to landlords to exact Nazrana.'¹¹⁹ The Commissioner of Fyzabad division writes that this section 'makes it impossible for an underproprietor or proprietor, however minute his proprietary or underproprietary share may be, to acquire statutory right... I found a Non-commissioned Officer of the Indian army, who had a distinguished Military record ejected by the taluqdar from his cultivation on the ground of his possession of a share of a small bagh.'¹²⁰

There are some sections in the amended Act of 1921 which specially hit the high caste tenants. Since these tenants pay their ploughmen in the form of subletting a piece of land, they cannot obtain statutory rights on their lands. According to the Deputy Commissioner, Rae Bareli, 'Section 62 (1)(b)... are oppressive, because tenants of high caste generally have to sublet some land to their ploughmen; thus they are in consequence liable to ejectment. This is another handle to the landlord for the exaction of Nazrana.'¹²¹ The Commissioner of Fyzabad division finds the Section 68A oppressive to the high caste tenants who cannot survive without helping hands: 'It is ordinary custom for persons employing permanent servants on

the work of cultivation, instead of giving them cash wages, to give them a small portion of land to cultivate.'¹²² It is not only a high caste tenant, any tenant can be in a position that he can survive only by subletting his land: 'If for instance a statutory tenant becomes insane or blind or otherwise physically incapacitated from cultivation, why should he not be allowed to sublet?'¹²³ Any tenant, and not only a high caste tenant, can become insane or blind. And when one is sick, and is unable to work in his field, then he requires his field more. But he cannot retain the land because he cannot sublet it. The Commissioner also finds the Section 62A (e) concerning pahikasht as an excuse for evicting tenants: 'I have come across several cases under this section when the tenant actually lives within the sight of the fields from which he is evicted.'¹²⁴ The landlords wish to keep only those tenants on their land whom they can monopolise.

It is not only the Section 30A that was devised to evict tenants, so many other sections in the amended Act of 1921 help the tenant's eviction. The Act was so amended that the landlords should not suffer any loss in terms of evicting tenants. And the Deputy Commissioners were made responsible for giving eviction orders. They gave these orders, because they were legally bound to do so. But they felt morally guilty in passing eviction orders. Reactions of a few Deputy Commissioners and one Commissioner have been cited here. One can imagine the reactions of other Deputy Commissioners of other districts of Awadh, so also of the other Commissioner of the other division. Their reactions could not be different. The whole Awadh had taluqdar-tenant system. Bedakhli, i.e. eviction, and nazrana were two curses of this system. The British knew about these curses, and yet made no attempt to remove them. Did they not wish to let the tenantry remain cursed?

Consider now the issue of enhancement of rent. $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent enhance-

ment of rent after the expiry of tenure was sanctioned by the Act of 1886. This limit was withdrawn by the amended Act of 1921. A new Section 21 (1) was introduced which reads 'A landlord may enhance the rent of a statutory tenant or of a person who succeeds as an heir of a statutory tenant under Section 48, either by written agreement or by notice.'¹²⁵ Instead of '6½ per cent of rent' the Act has introduced 'written agreement about rent'. All kinds of unwritten dealings are possible only behind the written agreement about rent. A landlord would agree to the written enhancement only when the nazrana (unwritten rent) is paid to him. If the tenant is not willing to pay the unwritten rent, then he has no alternative but to face the notice of eviction. Therefore, if the tenant wishes to retain his land he has no other alternative but to accept the unwritten conditions given by the landlord.

One would feel that the difficulties which the tenant faced after seven years, he is now facing after ten years. His tenure has been extended by three years. But this favour too is an illusion. For at any time during the tenure of his statutory period, the landlord can evict the tenant under 62A (1). This Section, like the Section 30A, is a newly inserted section. The section reads 'A statutory tenant shall be liable to ejectment from his holding by suit during the currency of his tenancy.'¹²⁶ The grounds for ejectment are that the tenant is (a) unfit for the purpose of his tenancy (b) the whole or a part of his holding has been sublet (c) the rent payable in kind has diminished (d) lease has expired and (e) holding is situated in a village in which he does not reside.¹²⁷ A landlord can easily prove through the help of his pleaders that the tenant is unfit for his tenancy.

The newly inserted Sections 30A and 62A of the amended Act of 1921 have brought the tenantry to the stage of the Rent Act of 1868, where he

had no guarantee of tenure. His eviction is as easy as the eviction of a tenant of the later Act. Rack-renting has not stopped, it has increased. Perhaps the only difference is that the government could obtain its share of revenue in the earlier days, now it is not obtaining its own share from the loot of the tenants. Now the higher rents are paid in the form of nazrana; therefore, the government is a loser. Taluqdars of the twentieth century developed the same relationship with the British Government which they had with the Nawab of Awadh before annexation. The Nawab never got his proper share from the taluqdars. Taluqdars realised more rent from their tenants, but they kept the rent hidden, and allowed the Nawab to suffer. Now, after the annexation also, the Awadh taluqdars were not giving proper share of revenue to the British Government. The British knew about this fact but did nothing; they found themselves helpless. Perhaps the Nawab also knew what his taluqdars were doing, yet he was helpless. His enemies, including the British, did not allow Nawab to oppose taluqdars. The British Government too found itself in a similar situation. Throughout India anti-British feelings were taking their roots. Gandhi took up the leadership of Congress, and Nehru and his group was trying to take up the cause of tenantry. The British, like the Nawab of Awadh, were frightened (though they never lost their composure). The taluqdars appeared to them as the last straw to hang on, as if the taluqdars would save the sinking British empire in India. So the taluqdars were allowed to evict their tenants, take as much rent as they wish. What was required in return was simply their faithfulness to the British masters.

Not only that the new laws for evicting tenants were introduced in the Rent Act of 1921, provisions were also made to increase the volume of khudkasht and sir lands. The new Subsection 17 was added to the Section 3 of the Rent Act of 1886 to provide more scope for sir and khudkasht. To the land 'which was recorded as sir at the last settlement',¹²⁸ was added

'land which for the seven years immediately preceding the passing of this Act had been continuously dealt with as sir.'¹²⁹ In each village a landlord was allowed to have his sir land up to "one tenth" of the total cultivated area of his proprietorship.¹³⁰ Sir is very important, because a tenant on such a land can never obtain statutory rights because he is not a tenant in the eyes of law, he is a subtenant. An attempt to increase sir land simply means an attempt to increase the number of tenants-at-will.

The Section 55 of the Rent Act of 1886 was amended, and its Subsections (3), (4), (5) and (6) were withdrawn because of the peasant agitation of 1920-21.¹³¹ This Section refers to notices of eviction. If the tenant wishes to defend himself he should 'institute a suit for that purpose within thirty days from the date of the service of the notice.'¹³² Not only that the time was too short, the tenant was made into a defendant party. He was not in a position to employ pleaders, so he generally used to lose. But in the amended Act too the tenant has been made into the defendant party. The insertion of new Section 30A of the amended Act says, 'A deputy Commissioner shall, unless there are reasonable grounds to the contrary, on the application of a proprietor or under-proprietor who is the landlord of a holding, authorise the acquisition of the holding or part thereof.'¹³³ Who will prove that 'there are reasonable grounds to the contrary?' Does not such a proof depend on the defendant? The tenant has to provide the contrary ground. Making the tenant a defendant is a subtle way of deciding the case against him, because he cannot afford to fight his case through the machinery of law-brokers. It is the landlord who should be the defendant party, it is he who should provide defence for his eviction notice. Instead, the tenant has been converted into a defendant party. The agitation of 1920-21 was launched against the conversion of a tenant into a defendant. Though the Section 55 of the Act of 1886 was

withdrawn, its harmful consequences were retained, and were transferred to the Section 30A. The Deputy Commissioner of Rae Bareilly writes 'Section 30A throws all the onus of proof upon the tenant; under it the Deputy Commissioner is compelled to order ejectment, unless the tenant establishes reasonable grounds to the contrary. The expression "Reasonable grounds to the contrary" is vague, and needs in my opinion to be altered, so as to show that likely hardship to a tenant if ejected as is to be regarded as a reasonable ground. It seems also desirable to amend the wording of the section, so as to shift the onus of proof from the tenant to the landlord.'¹³⁴ The Deputy Commissioner is clearly expressing the views of the 1920-21 agitators. "Likely hardship of a tenant" itself "is a reasonable ground" against his eviction. And the "onus of proof" must be shifted "from the tenant to the landlord". Not the tenant but the landlord should be a defendant party. The Section 30A should be so amended that it converts landlords into the defendant party. And the "poverty of the tenant" should be a "reasonable ground" against his eviction.

The above discussion might have shown that the amended Act of 1921 stands only as a symbol of tenant victory. The British were not in a position to give anything substantial to the tenants. The British required taluqdars' favour to crush the national awakening. They were not in a position to disfavour taluqdars. It did not occur to their mind that tenants were a part of the national awakening, that the tenant uprising of 1920-21 was the result of national awakening. They continued to have the same picture of tenants which was painted by Sleeman, McMinin, Irwin and Sanders, to name a few important officials. Butler continued thinking that there was a 'common bond of humanity between the raja and his people.' The raja must be given wholehearted support. He will manage the tide of his people against the national awakening in Awadh. Therefore, the Act of 1921 did not make any attempt to disturb the raja.

Though there was stagnancy in the thought of the British about tenants, the Congress was rapidly moving towards the tenantry. The ideal of Purna Swaraj could be achieved only with the help of tenants. Urban centres can give birth to politicians, leaders, intellectuals, i.e. the businessmen of all kind, but not to those who can use their plough and sickle to fight against the mighty arms of the British. In Faizpur Congress Session the Congress took a historical step by converting itself into the party of tenants. And this step paid them dividends. They won the election of 1937 with thumping majority. They had to care for the feelings of their voters. The U.P. Tenancy Act was passed without any obstruction by Hailey, the then Governor of U.P. If the Governor had attempted to obstruct the bill it would have led the British to leave Awadh sooner than the time they left. For Awadh masses, its tenant class was with the Congress and not with the taluqdars. The election of 1937 showed to the British that they were backing the wrong horse. But then there was no other horse left for them to back.

The U.P. Tenancy Act of 1939 abolished the category of statutory tenants, and in its place it introduced the category of hereditary tenants who were little inferior to occupancy tenants. Congress restored to the tenants the rights which were denied to them by the British in their Acts of 1868, 1886 and 1921. It is not the British rule of law but the Congress rule of law which gave hereditary rights to the tenants. Even the tenants on sir lands could obtain hereditary rights under restricted circumstances. The Section 16(1) of the Act considers these restricted circumstances. A tenant of sir would 'become a hereditary tenant of his holding if at such commencement such sir holder possesses fifty acres or more than fifty acres of sir.'¹³⁵ Even the tenants of those sir holders who had less than fifty acres of land were given 5 years' tenure: 'Every person who is a tenant of sir at the commencement of this Act and who does not become a hereditary

tenant... shall be entitled to retain possession of his holding for a period of five years from the date of the commencement of this Act' (Section 20).¹³⁶ Though the sir lands were not abolished, grounds for their extension were taken away. It is pointless to extend the sir holding beyond fifty acres.

Section 90 was specially inserted to stop nazrana and begar. 'No landholder shall take a premium for the admission of a tenant to holding and it shall not be a condition of any tenancy that the tenant shall render any service to or do any work for the landholder, whether for wages or not.'¹³⁷ This was an attack on the two evils of nazrana and begar which were specially attacked by the agitators of 1920-21.

We have already seen the reports of the Deputy Commissioner of Rae Bareli and the Commissioner of Fyzabad division, how they were disturbed with the Act of 1921 which did not allow the statutory tenants to sublet their lands. The Act of 1939 allows tenants to sublet their lands. Section 39 says 'A tenant other than a tenant of sir, or a sub-tenant, may sublet the whole or any portion of his holding under such restrictions as are imposed by this Act.'¹³⁸ Section 40 (2) imposes the restriction that the subletting cannot be done "exceeding one year."¹³⁹ However, the Section 41 (1) removes this restriction 'when the lessor is a female, a minor, a lunatic, an idiot, or a person incapable of cultivating by reason of blindness or physical infirmity or because he is in the military, naval or air service of the Government.'¹⁴⁰ The Commissioner of Fyzabad division wanted that the tenant should be allowed to sublet his land if he is physically and mentally handicapped. The Act of 1939 takes care of his wish. It takes care even of those tenants about whom the Commissioner never thought. Even the physically fit high caste tenants could sublet their land to their servants and ploughmen. Only binding is that they could do it only for one year.

There were so many other rights which were given to the tenants, such as the right to improve land (Section 65), the right to plant trees (Section 80), etc.¹⁴¹ The Act took care of the tenant in many other ways. The most important way was to make nazrana as an illegal exaction. The whole Chapter XIII of the Act deals with the issue of illegal exactions. The tenant was given right to have "compensation for illegal exactions".¹⁴² The Act has been introduced within the framework of taluqdar-tenant system. The powers of taluqdars were to be curtailed, not abolished. So also the rights of tenants were to be defended, but not by abolishing the taluqdari system. Congress did not think it politically expedient to attack the taluqdari system before obtaining freedom from the British rule. Whether or not the U.P. Tenancy Act of 1939 brought any revolutionary changes is to be looked at from the point of total political perspective. It will certainly not be an exaggeration to say that for the first time the Awadh tenantry got certain rights on their land. The earlier Acts gave them rights which in the same breath were taken away from them. What is the use of giving life tenancy to a tenant when the law permits the landholder to evict his tenant at any time during his tenure? What is the use of fixing the enhancement of rent to the limit of $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent when the landholder can charge any amount of nazrana? Why not the nazrana was made an illegal exaction? When one looks into the three Acts given by the British to the Awadh tenantry, the Acts of 1868, 1886 and 1921, one would find that one and all of them were anti-tenant acts. Growth of Oudh Rent Act from its birth in 1868 to its demise in 1939, is the growth of tenants' misery. The Oudh tenantry was punished through these Acts. For what offence? There seems to be no other reason than its participation in the revolt of 1857. The tenantry was made to be punished through its own leaders. The Oudh Rent Act converted these leaders into rakshasas. General amnesty was given to these leaders so that they could be used to deal with the revolting te-

nantry.

A postindependence official of Awadh, echoing the voice of his British predecessors writes,

For the first time the rights of the landlords and the tenants were codified under the Oudh Rent Act of 1868. Till then the relations between the landlord and the tenant were more or less governed by custom or usage and the good conscience of the landholder.¹⁴³

For what purpose the codification done? Was it for any other purpose except to realise 55 per cent revenue from the landholders, the heaviest revenue realised in any part of the world? Has the codification helped the tenants? In what way was the result of codification better than the result of 'custom', 'usage' and 'good conscience?' The official in question himself writes referring to the Act of 1868 that the tenants 'had no security of tenure at all, nor did the Act of 1868 give them this much needed security.'¹⁴⁴ Reacting on the second rent Act he writes 'The Act of 1886 for the first time gave the tenants security from ejectment, at least for seven years... limits were also placed on the enhancement of rent which the taluqdar could make.'¹⁴⁵ But he himself writes that 'the provisions designed to afford a degree of protection to the cultivators could very easily be circumvented.'¹⁴⁶ Then how was the tenant protected by the Act of 1886? And referring to the final stage of the development of the Oudh Rent Act, the stage of the amendment Rent Act of 1921, he writes 'At best, this amendment was a kind of compromise to answer the exclusive situation which obtained in 1920 and 1921. It did not really solve the problem of the cultivators whose economic condition deteriorated further by the worldwide slump in prices... The fall in prices... increased the real burden of rural indebtedness.'¹⁴⁷ Yet the officer in question concludes his remarks on the Act of 1921 that it 'marked an important stage in the evolutionary process of tenancy legislation in Avadh. From a complete absence of laws

in 1856 a stage has now reached where the tenants had been recognised as an important part in Avadh.¹⁴⁸ What sort of importance has been given to the Awadh tenant? Has he been given any other importance than the importance of rent-milking animal? All milking animals are looked after, so the rent-milking animal is also looked after. And once this animal stops giving milk or gives less milk he is thrown out (ejected). Has the condition of tenantry improved by giving laws to it than when there were no laws imposed on it? Does not the evolutionary process of tenancy legislation coincide with the evolutionary process of the tenants' misery? Has the economic condition of the tenants of Butler, Irwin and Sanders become better than the economic condition of the tenants of Sleeman? Majority of Sanders' tenants were in a position to afford 'one meal and one chabena' a day. Were Sleeman's tenants getting even less than this? Then how were they surviving?

Appendix - 1

(75)

Appendix VII (a)—List of Indigo Factories.

Serial number.	Tahsil.	Pargana.	General Register number.	Circle Register number.	Village.	No. of Factories.	Taluka.
1	Patti.	Patti.	80	II-D. 18	Biranti	1	Mufrid.
2			138	III-D. 23	Bhanaipur	1	Parbat.
3			450	I-D.	Raepur Bichhur	1	Raepur Bichhur.
4			216	III-D. 15	Pandri Zabar	1	Madhupur.
5			314	II-D. 47	Jamtali	2	Uraia Dib.
6			329	IV-D. 62	Jagdisgarh	1	Hissa II.
7			290	III-J. 101	Dohri	1	Madhupur.
8			501	I-J. 40	Saifabad	1	Hissa II.
9			594	III-D. 14	Kanpa Madhupur	1	Madhupur.
10			623	III-D. 152	Kopa	1	Hissa 2.
11			720	III-D. 103	Majhanli... ..	1	Raepur.
12			777	III-J. 115	Narayanpur Kalan	1	Mufrid.
13			810	II-D. 65 135	Harpur Saond	1	Ditto.
14	Purtilgarh.	Purtilgarh.	9	I. 3	Ajzara	1	Taraul.
15			12	I. 6	Asapur	1	Balabidpur.
16			62	I. 32	Barhni Bhualpur	1	Dumipur.
17			316	II. 68	Rajgarh	1	Taraul.
18			395	III. 111	Sandarpur	1	Dandi Kachh.
19			468	III. 183	Kalipur	1	Taraul.
20			500	IV. 200 97	Lohangpur	1	Ditto.
21	Debar.	Debar.	20	II. 6	Bargou	1	Bargou.
22			40	VI. 7	Beti	1	Shamlat Kundrajit.
23			103	II. 21, and 29	Deobar Patti	1	Mufrid.
24			105	VI. 13	Deori Harde Patti	1	Kundrajit.
25			219	IV. 61	Mahrajpur	1	Shekhpur Chauras.
26	Kunda.	Monikpur.	12	II. 7	Bazar Kusabil	1	Rampur.
27			81	II. 13	Pangon	1	Ditto.
28	Rampur.	Rampur.	8	IV. 1	Agai	1	Rampur.
29			104	II. 21	Dharupur	1	Ditto.
30			137	V. 16	Sital Mau	1	Ditto.

C. E. CRAWFORD,
Settlement Officer.

Appendix - II

30. Table of cultivation of poppy from 1861 to 1903.

The following table gives the area under poppy with average produce per high and acre, value of opium produced per acre, from 1861 to 1903 :—

Year.	Area in highs.	Area in acres.	Opium produce	Value of opium.	Average produce per high.	Average produce per acre.	Average value per mound.	Average value per mound.
	B.	B.	Al.	B.	C.	B.	a.	b.
1861-65	1,628 7	1,061	227 15 6	55,476 14 0	6 84	10 24	200 0 0	62 4 1
1865-66	1,750 0	800	236 5 13	42,506 5 11	7 6	11 13	180 0 0	58 3 1
1866-67	1,620 0	1,037	280 32 7	60,616 3 0	6 12 1	10 13 1	180 0 0	48 11 1
1867-68	2,013 4	1,277	321 21 3	67,888 14 7	6 9 3	10 11	180 0 0	48 1 1
1868-69	2,365 19	1,179	395 19 6	71,155 12 2	6 11	10 11	180 0 0	48 1 1
1869-70	1,639 2	902	211 21 1	38,074 15 6	5 8	8 12 1	180 0 0	39 9 1
1870-71	2,106 18	1,317	255 4 7	45,918 3 3	4 13 1	7 12	180 0 0	31 11 1
1871-72	2,356 10	1,473	282 8 15 1	56,111 13 6	4 12 1	7 10 1	200 0 0	38 5 1
1872-73	2,622 2	1,639	367 8 14 1	73,114 9 1	5 9 1	8 15 1	200 0 0	41 13 1
1873-74	2,622 2	2,079	574 2 8 1	1,11,582 9 6	6 14 1	11 6 1	200 0 0	55 1 1
1874-75	4,068 18 1	2,812	708 36 5 1	1,11,783 0 9	6 4 1	10 1 1	200 0 0	60 6 1
1875-76	6,353 16	4,116	1,338 12 13 1	2,67,661 4 9	8 2	13 0	200 0 0	65 6 1
1876-77	6,656 1	4,173	1,128 33 11 1	2,23,769 9 9	6 12 1	16 13 1	200 0 0	61 1 1
1877-78	6,567 2	4,286	1,390 0 16 1	2,60,204 4 7	8 13	12 15 1	180 0 0	68 4 1
1878-79	5,119 17	5,996	1,572 15 8 1	2,83,029 13 9	6 10 1	10 10 1	180 0 0	47 11 1
1879-80	12,700 10	7,538	1,385 1 1 1	2,19,304 12 6	4 5 1	7 0	180 0 0	31 6 1
1880-81	13,001 3	8,153	1,632 2 14 1	2,33,773 2 4	6 0	8 0	200 0 0	36 0 1
1881-82	12,562 19	7,852	1,897 7 1 1	4,11,529 9 4	6 0 1	9 10 1	200 0 0	48 1 1
1882-83	11,210 19	8,882	2,207 31 14 1	4,41,529 9 4	6 3 1	9 15 1	200 0 0	49 11 1
1883-84	16,177 6	10,205	3,152 18 3 1	6,30,162 11 4	7 10 1	12 3 1	200 0 0	61 1 1
1884-85	20,711 0	12,916	3,301 29 1 1	7,00,118 11 11	7 6 1	11 12	181 4 8	61 1 1
1885-86	18,152 9	12,520	2,977 8 6	6,36,135 11 8	6 15	9 8 1	179 12 1	42 11 1
1886-87	17,816 8	11,151	3,051 25 8 1	6,29,251 8 9	6 12 1	10 13	188 6 9	50 11 1
1887-88	15,731 17	9,812	1,513 13 3	3,03,610 3 2	5 3 1	6 24	208 12 6	56 6 1
1888-89	21,630 3	13,188	2,798 31 3	6,49,065 11 1	5 10 1	8 4 1	196 4 0	40 11 1
1889-90	23,629 19	14,721	2,759 19 3 1	6,21,000 8 7	5 3 1	7 8	188 16 1	35 1 1
1890-91	21,176 4	13,235	1,596 19 3 1	3,56,173 1 1	5 8	6 14	208 6 9	29 11 1
1891-92	15,692 11	9,808	2,160 16 4	3,91,362 4 5	5 6	8 13	181 3 0	30 11 1
1892-93	13,731 10	6,482	1,156 21 14 1	2,28,419 11 10	5 6	6 6 1	197 6 10	26 9 1

(79)

Appendix VII (b)—List of Sugarcane factories.

Serial number.	Tahsil.	Pargana.	General Register number.	Circle Register number.	Name of village.	Number of Factories.	Name of taluqa.
1	Unth.	Partabgarh.	534	I 245	Gonda ...	3	Mufrid.
2			386A.	...	Chetpalgarh ...	1	Nurpur.
3			33	II-J.	Utras ...	1	Mufrid.
4			41	IV-J.	Aurain ...	1	Hissa 9 and 11.
5			45	III-D.	Uska ...	3	Madhpur.
6			79	III-D.	Barchauli ...	1	Hissa 9.
7			100	14 1-3	Bharokhau ...	1	Raepur Bichhur.
8			138	III-D.	Bhanaipur ...	2	Parhat.
9			145	III-J	Babuta ...	2	Hissa 9 and 11.
10			169	III-D.	Birapur Kalan ...	1	Raepur Bichhur.
11			180	10 1-3	Patehtiya Kalan ...	1	Batraj Kuar.
12			210	III-J.	Panwara ...	1	Hissa 11, 9.
13			282	10 1-3	Pura Kishungir ...	1	Dalippur.
14			305	III-D.	Dandapur Adharganj ...	1	Ditto.
15			400	III-D.	Dhansar ...	1	Hissa 9.
16			414	III-J	Dei Dih ...	2	Sultan Kuar.
17			438	10 1-3	Rampur Bela ...	5	Hissa 11.
18			450	III-D.	Bangganj ..	2	Hissa 9.
19			448	10 1-3	Ramaipur (Pirthiganj Dakhli) ...	1	Batraj Kuar.
20			611	IV.	Karanpur Khuji (Sitlaganj) ...	1	Dalippur.
21			615	III-J.	Kanja ...	1	Hissa 11.
22			620	III-J.	Kansa Patti ...	1	Ditto.
23			637	III-D.	Keora Khurd ...	1	Batraj Kuar.
24			650	10 1-3	Kaneora Pura Khushali ...	3	Dalippur.
25			690	III-D.	Gondal Patti ...	3	Hissa 11.
26			734	1-D.	Misrauli Jagdispur ...	1	Uraia Dih.
27			753	III-J.	Mahdaha ...	4	Hissa 11.
28			619	III-D.	Kandhai Madhpur ...	2	Madhpur.

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39. Baden-Powell, Land-Systems of British India, Vol. 2, p. 203.
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41. Metcalf, 'From Raja to Landlord', p. 127.
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43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., p. 203. Baden-Powell calls the revolt of 1857 as "Mutiny". But in the same breath he says 'The war ended'. So it was a war, and not just a mutiny. Who were the warring factions? On the one side were Indian rulers, princes, taluqdars and zamindars and on the other side the British rulers and their loyalists. Were not the Indians fighting for independence from the British rule? Would not then this become the War of Independence? Of course it started as a mutiny. But it ended as a War, the First War of Indian Independence.
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CHAPTER 2: THE TENANT STRUGGLE: FIRST PHASE

The growth of the Oudh Rent Act, as has been shown in the preceding chapter, was the growth of tenants' misery. Two Rent Acts, those of 1868 and 1886, had brought the level of tenantry to that of a subhuman existence. In order to meet the heavy rent demand and nazrana they started curtailing their food-intake, and tried to subsidise their food with wild fruits and roots available in the forest. Mahua and mango became their staple diet during the seasons. There was no chance for rents to go down or be stable. The deindustrialisation of Awadh, the dismantling of taluqdars' forts and the disbanding of Nawab's army led to the pressure of population on villages. If the eighteenth century saw the migration of rural mass of Awadh to the cities, the nineteenth century saw the city population migrating to villages. How could one expect the rents to go down when the volume of rural population was extending? The two settlements of Awadh districts, one completed after the Rent Act of 1868 and the other after the Rent Act of 1886, certified the upward trend of rents. More rent leads to more revenue. Therefore, the British Government made no genuine efforts to stabilise rents. The demand for revenue cannot be enhanced if rents are stable. Each settlement took for granted the enhancement of rents, and while assessing revenue demand the possible rent enhancement was taken into consideration. So the Awadh tenant was like a trapped rat, moving around the trap-box, finding no way to go out of the box. Oudh Rent Act was the major instrument of 'Oudh Policy' through which the British had political control of Awadh and obtained regular revenue from it which also enhanced regularly. This policy ultimately led to a widespread tenant-landlord struggle in Awadh. The struggle took its birth around 1917.

For the sake of historical analysis we can distinguish two phases in

the struggle. The first phase refers to the period before passing of the Oudh Rent Act of 1921, and the second to the period after passing of this Act till the U.P. Tenancy Act of 1939 was passed. Of course there is a transitory period lying between the two phases, the phase of 1920-21 and 1930-32. So also the struggle lingered on till 1939 when the Oudh Rent Act was withdrawn. The tenants became violent in the first phase of the struggle. With the experience of the first phase tenants realised that violence does not pay under the British rule. Their sickle and plough could not face the British cannon. So they declared non-violence as their policy of struggle. Of course non-violence was the policy of tenant-leaders even in the first phase of the struggle. But they could not check the outburst. The sporadic leaders were evolved and they attempted to establish swaraj by violent means. Even in the second phase of the struggle occasional violence occurred.

This chapter is divided into five different sections. First section deals with 'Oudh Policy' which originated in Canning's proclamation made in 1858. Second section deals with Sanders who was the Settlement Officer of Pratapgarh Second Settlement, 1896. Third section is devoted to V.N. Mehta, the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh in 1920. Fourth section deals with the socioeconomic perspective of the tenant struggle of 1920-21. Fifth, i.e. the last section, devotes to the nature of the struggle and the quality of leadership.

Oudh Policy: This is the policy of Canning which took its birth for "buying over the taluqdars" to break the tenant-landlord interdependence. So long as this interdependence continued the 1857 revolt of Awadh could not be suppressed. The tenants of Awadh had the ability to fight without proper food and rest. They were not fighting for any material gains. They were fighting for the King of Awadh, whom they placed next to God. They

never saw their King (Raja, Nawab), so also they never saw their God.

Firangees must leave Awadh, they were a danger to their King and Religion.

Soon after the capture of Lucknow, Canning made the proclamation which has generally been described as the proclamation for amnesty. A part of the proclamation says:

Talookdars, Chiefs and Landholders... who shall made immediate submission to the Chief Commissioner of Oude, surrendering their arms and obeying his orders... their lives and honour shall be safe... To those amongst them who shall promptly come forward and give to the Chief Commissioner their support in the restoration of peace and order this indulgence will be large.¹

Except six taluqdars, who sided with the British, the property of all other taluqdars and landholders was confiscated. This was certainly not amnesty. This was a pure parody written on amnesty. This would have been an act of amnesty if Canning's proclamation had been made after the suppression of revolt, after the defeat of revolting mass of Awadh. By capturing Lucknow, the King of Awadh was not captured, and so were not captured the Begum, her close associates and the uniformed and non-uniformed peasants of Awadh. The war was on; it was not switched off. In capturing Lucknow only the centre of revolt changed; it shifted to the suburbs of Lucknow. The whole Awadh was in revolt, and Lucknow was only a tiny part of Awadh. Canning's proclamation was an attempt to switch off the war. Others should follow the example of six loyal taluqdars.

Canning's proclamation was not an act of amnesty, it was a call given to the taluqdars, chiefs and landholders to become disloyal to their king and the land of Awadh. Terms were extended to purchase their loyalty, and Canning did succeed in purchasing their loyalty. Most of the taluqdars, after Canning's proclamation, deserted their king and became loyal to the British. The British ultimately succeeded in suppressing the revolt. Those who remained loyal to their king like Raja Jailal Singh and Raja Beni Madho perished. Each drop of white blood was avenged with hundreds

of drops of black blood. The tenants of Awadh even now remember how their innocent forefathers were hanged on the branches of trees; they were given only exemplary punishment. Awadh was enslaved again.

Could Canning give the same call to the tenantry of Awadh which he gave to the taluqdars, chiefs and landholders? Could he think in terms of bribing the tenantry of Awadh? He could not. For the simple reason that the tenants of Awadh were not fighting for their own honour or for their own pieces of lands. They did not expect that there would be forts for them to live or the jageers would be given to them once the firangee rule came back to Awadh again. The tenants were fighting for the honour of their king and the retention of their religion. They rejected both, the alien rule and the alien religion. Therefore, there was not even a remote possibility for them to sell their loyalty. But all those who were not ready to sell their loyalty were rebels in the eyes of the British. Canning considered the tenantry as the rebel element of Awadh. As rebels they deserved nothing but punishment. How to punish them? The question was not of giving amnesty to them, the question was only of punishing them. Canning decided to punish them through the same taluqdars who acted as their leaders at the time of revolt. The taluqdars deserted their tenants, deserted their king, deserted their honour and became loyal subjects of the British. They were given sanads to disarm their tenants. As Barrow tells about one of the important taluqdars, 'I would make him responsible for the peace in his part of Oudh, and then disarm him with the rest.'² The tenants were disarmed, they were allowed to use only sickle and plough, and in due course it was difficult for them to manage their one meal a day. Though they were the best food-producers of the Northern India, the taluqdars reduced them to the state of food-gatherers. For all the food they produced went into the stomachs of others. The end

of 1857 revolt was the end of tenant-taluqdar interdependence. This was the beginning of tenant-taluqdar tension. The British thought that they could rule Awadh only by introducing tension between these two classes. So long as this tension persisted mutiny could never recur. The taluqdars of Awadh were converted into the British residents in Awadh. Of course, in spite of their new identity, the taluqdars could not change their colour. Their new style of life was neither consistent with British aristocracy nor with the Rajas of India. They had virtues of neither, but the vices of both. Though they were given British titles, they were not given powers of the British aristocracy. And they already sold out their Raj to the British, so they became only dummy rajas. They became unfit to be assimilated in the British stream of life. And by selling their loyalty to the British they were cut off from the Indian stream of life. Thus, Oudh Policy, i.e. the policy of 'buying over taluqdars', was to convert taluqdars into real bastards, having no leadership qualities. The only quality they were required to have was the quality of collecting revenue from their tenants, and handing over its major share to their British superiors. This policy converted tenants into rent-paying hominids with subhuman qualities. The Oudh Policy, which was framed by Canning, continued till the time of Hailey. Benett nursed it and Butler became its last champion. And Hailey had no other way but to continue with the policy of Butler. Canning used the policy to break the tenant-taluqdar interdependence. Butler used it to fight against the national awakening.

Canning knew that the taluqdars 'distinguished neither by birth, good service, nor connexion with the soil.'³ But once they changed their loyalty they deserved to be considered as the 'ancient, indigenous, and cherished' leaders of Awadh society.⁴ Not the former but the latter views of Canning were to be accepted by the British officials working in India. The latter views of Canning embody Oudh Policy. Benett knew about the

Mutiny and also knew how Canning broke the backbone of the Revolt by buying over the taluqdars. He expounded the Oudh Policy in his Introduction to the Oudh Gazetteer. McMinn's Introduction was withdrawn because it was against the Oudh Policy. Copies of McMinn's Introduction exist in the India Office Library and are beyond the reach of an ordinary Indian historian. Both Metcalf and Peter Reeves have read McMinn's work, and from their remarks on his work, it is easy to infer McMinn's views.⁵ McMinn supported Canning's original and unrevised views that the taluqdars were distinguished neither by birth, good service, nor connexion with the soil. Such views could not be made public, could not be incorporated in a Gazetteer devoted to Awadh. These views break the market rules concerning the buyers and sellers. Taluqdars were 'precious commodity' during the days of Awadh revolt. Once the British bought them, and with their help broke the revolt, then they had a moral obligation to praise them. One does not lose anything by praising someone on the paper and continue insulting him at the back. The Gazetteer must praise taluqdars, the British should exhibit the sense of market ethics.

It is not clear whether it is genuinely his view or only market ethics that led Benett to praise Chhatris (Kshatriyas). They were the ancient and indigenous rulers of Oudh. It is the 'foundation and the framework of social system', i.e. the system of caste, which made them rulers.⁶ The "Chhatris" were 'formerly the rulers of the whole, now the landowners of the greater part, of the province.'⁷ Mohammadan rule converted them from rajas to landowners. It is not the Chhatris who are to be blamed but the Mohammadan rule. Benett means to say that the British did good by annexing Awadh. It is the consequence of annexation that the Chhatris have regained their earlier position. They have now some dignity as taluqdars. Under the Mohammadan rule they lost their dignity. And the British had

not done anything wrong in choosing the Chhattris as taluqdars and zamindars by giving them proprietary and underproprietary rights. "Tall, brave, handsome and generous" the Chhattris 'are hardly excelled by any yeomanry in the world, and they are as much elevated above the lower classes by their tradition and pride of birth as they are above the Brahmans.'⁸ So Chhattris were the chosen leaders of all Hindus from a lowly pasi to the highest Brahman. It is perhaps this quality that the Chhattris could mobilise the Hindus of the whole Awadh to rise against the British in 1857. And the British did good by buying over these brave leaders. Peace came to Awadh only after these leaders sold out their loyalty to the British. Benett is quite objective towards Chhattris. He praised even those Chhattris who sided with the Begum in the revolt. Referring to Raja Debi Bakhsh Singh of Gonda he pointed out that the Raja 'elected to sacrifice position and wealth, and die a starving exile in Naipal rather than desert his defeated mistress.'⁹ "Chivalrous honour" of the Chhattris was the same whether they fought for the British or fought against the British.

Benett's 'introduction' to the Oudh Gazetteer is certainly not balanced. He has highlighted Chhattris to such an extent that one who is ignorant of Awadh would think that all the taluqdars of Awadh were Chhattris. In order to defend taluqdars he was defending Chhattris. But the taluqdars of Awadh came from all sorts of castes and religions. Metcalf mentions the names of so many castes and religions holding taluqdari estates. Not only Chhattris, there were taluqdari estates of Brahmins, Kayasthas, Khattris, Kurmis, Nanakshai Faqirs and Muslims. Among the outsiders were not only Sikhs but also Europeans in the year 1877.¹⁰ Then why should Benett specially defend the Chhattris? The reason is simple that McMinn attacked Chhattris. McMinn seemed to have no worries about the non-Chhatti taluqdars; he was worried only about the Chhatti taluqdars. For

a Chhattri raja 'is no longer the national champion; he has in Oudh neither a cause nor a weapon, for the whole country has been disarmed. The Kshattris have lost prestige largely, power entirely, and the people no longer feel the need of them.'¹¹ McMinn seems to lack basic understanding of Oudh Policy. If the Chhattri raja is a national champion and has a cause and a weapon then he would become a challenge to the British rule in Awadh. And if such a raja is allowed to have prestige and power, and people start feeling for him, then Awadh would not be ruled by the British. Perhaps McMinn exhibits very poor understanding of the "people's feelings". Did people have any feelings for the alien rule? It is the alien rule that brought to them such taluqdars who had no feelings for them. If McMinn means that the time of 1858 was different from the time of 1877, this is a different matter. The Chhattri rajas were a necessity in 1858, but they could be thrown away in 1877. Oudh Men thought differently. They thought that 20 years of time was too short to take any such action. People's memory is short, but not so short as McMinn thought.

McMinn's study of the rural people of Awadh is inferior to that of Benett. 'The danger, McMinn claimed, was that the Rajputs, an important element of this cultivating class would provide a nucleus for popular discontent which might become a serious political danger.'¹² History has proved otherwise. A nucleus for popular discontent among the cultivating classes in Awadh in 1917 was provided by the Kurmi tenants. These tenants started a struggle against the landlords of Awadh which continued till the end of the British rule in India. Benett understood the importance of Kurmis which McMinn could not. Benett writes about the Kurmis: 'Though war is not their trade, they are not destitute of spirit, and are capable of being converted into good soldiers.'¹³ Perhaps Benett knew about their role in the revolt of 1857. During the time of revolt these cultivators converted themselves into "good soldiers". Again in 1917 attack on the te-

nant-landlord system was launched by the Kurmi tenants of Awadh. Since McMinn exhibits a poor understanding of Awadh tenantry, his objections to the Oudh Policy cannot be taken very seriously. McMinn's isolation of Chhatttri taluqdars for attack is quite misleading. He did not attack the tenant-taluqdar system evolved by the Oudh Policy, but only the Chhattris. According to him Chhattris as landlords were of no use to the British rule in Awadh, and as tenants they were a "political threat" to the British rule. One may be misled into thinking that there was nothing wrong with Muslim, Sikh and European taluqdars. These taluqdars did not come from the ancient and indigenous stock of Awadh. And McMinn was interested in exposing only those taluqdars who were supposed to have their ancient and indigenous roots.

The question arises how far the opponents of Oudh Policy were really its opponents. Maybe they were opponents created by the historians to satisfy themselves that there were "right kind of British officials" and "wrong kind of British officials". Wrong kind succeeded over the right kind. McMinn's work has not been made public, its mutilated references here and there hardly present a coherent view. Irwin's Garden of India suffers from hasty generalisations without sufficient facts and figures. Sanders seems to be the best choice for analysis. He is supposed to be an opponent of the Oudh Policy both by Metcalf and Peter Reeves. Sanders is the follower of the line of thought given by McMinn and Irwin. In understanding Sanders' views we can understand the opposition to the Oudh School of thought.

Sanders was unlike both McMinn and Benett. His business was not to undermine or highlight the role of Chhatttri (Kshatriya) rajas. His concern was tenant-taluqdar system and the achievements of the British through this system. He started with awareness:

In the turbulent decade succeeding the Mutiny it was felt by legi-

slators, and rightly, so that the only way to consolidate our power and ensure order in the unsettled province of Oudh was by transferring all rights of ownership in land to a body of wealthy taluqdars who, having all their interests bound up in the safety of our Government, would do their utmost to help us safely through a period of trouble and danger. These times successfully tided over.¹⁴

Has not Sanders shown awareness that the only way to "consolidate British power" in Awadh was to transfer "all rights in land to taluqdars"? It was only in 1868, a decade after mutiny that the Rent Act of 1868 was passed which transferred all rights in land to taluqdars. The introduction of taluqdars was perhaps 'a shaky foundation for British authority and control' as McMinin thought.¹⁵ But this was the only foundation possible during the mutiny, whether shaky or solid. There was no question of land-rights being given to the tenants. What did the taluqdars get in return for their help in consolidating the British power in Awadh other than the right in land? Nothing except they lost their feudal rights and privileges. They were converted from Feudal Lords to Landlords. This was again an achievement of the British. The 'taludars found that, whereas in the regal days they had been but feudal lords... their position was now vastly changed... they had now become in very truth owners of the land, with their right fixed and permanently established on a legal basis.'¹⁶ Thus the taluqdars have entered into a new age. British forced feudalism to disappear. From 1858 the age of capitalism and landlordism started in India. Thus the Oudh Policy was not a backward step but a progressive step. But Oudh Policy had not only a political side it had also an economic side. The economic side referred to land revenue and land produce. Once the political control was established the British turned their attention to the economic aspect of the Oudh Policy. The landlords were expected to pay revenue and encourage agriculture. These conditions were laid down in the sanads given to them.

Sanders was as much an upholder of Oudh Policy as was Benett. The

fundamental principles of this policy, as laid down by Canning, were (a) to have political control over Awadh, (b) to derive fixed share of revenue from the rents collected by the landlords and (c) to obtain land produce from Awadh for foreign markets. These principles were operated through the tenant-landlord land tenure system. Sanders' Pratapgarh Settlement Report never rejected these principles. He attacked taluqdars by using the Pioneer articles because they were hiding rents, thus forcing the Government to suffer the loss of revenue. So also he criticised the taluqdars for not encouraging the tenantry for the production of exportable crops. Sanders, like Canning, had no interest in the welfare of tenantry. His sympathy for the tenants can be judged by the fact that he does not find tenants suffering because 'they have one square meal a day and a handful of "chabena" or parched grain once or twice at other times.'¹⁷ He thought them considerably well-off because they 'have iron-cooking pots and lotas.'¹⁸ He praised their effort to save their regular meal and chabena. Mango and mahua crops functioned as 'the main diet of many for several weeks.'¹⁹ Not only their wants were few, they were destitute of all spirit. Sanders thought like Irwin that the tenants suffered from feudal submissiveness and could never imagine to revolt against their landlords. They could be ignored.

Sanders came to Awadh when national awakening had already taken its birth in the country. Taluqdars once again became a precious commodity. There was no land left for buying over taluqdars' favour. All the land was already given to them after the revolt of 1857. In what new way were they to be favoured? The new way was that they were allowed by the British to charge any amount of rent and nazrana from the tenantry as they wished. This was the new price given to the taluqdars. Sanders was rebuked by the higher British officials for exposing the frauds of taluqdars. One does not expose the frauds of one's allies and collaborators. Butler was sent

to Awadh for championing the cause of Awadh taluqdars. The position and prestige of taluqdars were to be restored. Yet while writing to his family members Butler considered the taluqdars as 'under-bred loutish lot.'²⁰ But his public opinion was different. He considered the relationship between a taluqdar and his tenant as that which holds between God and the worshipper, 'You shall be my people and I will be your God.'²¹ Thus the people were left to their God, Butler was least interested in them.

There is one marked difference between Sanders and those British administrators whom Metcalf and Peter Reeves describe as "Oudh Men". Oudh men did not hesitate in using abusive language while referring to taluqdars. For both Canning and Butler taluqdars were under-bred loutish lot. But Sanders refrained himself from such a language. Even he had no wish to criticise taluqdars directly. He used the medium of Pioneer articles. He criticised the taluqdars in a refined way, and not in the crude way as was done by the Oudh men. Perhaps the family background of Sanders had something to do with his cultured behaviour. But so far as the Oudh Policy towards taluqdars and tenants is concerned, Sanders was an Oudh man.

Sanders and Pratapgarh: Two Government officers made their mark on Pratapgarh, the Settlement Officer J. Sanders, CS and the Deputy Commissioner V.N. Mehta, ICS. The former came to Pratapgarh at the close of the nineteenth century and the latter in the beginning of the twentieth century. Mehta wrote his report while sitting on the mouth of an erupting volcano, and Sanders wrote his report without knowing that he was sitting on the mouth of any volcano. The major theme of both the officers was the same, rack-renting and other frauds of the taluqdars. Sanders wrote his report of 373 pages with a remarkable leg-work followed by mental work. Perhaps it is the bulkiest Settlement Report written by an Oudh official. Mehta's report of 111 pages, followed by the forwarding letter of H.R.C. Hailey, Commissioner of Fyzabad Division, of 9 pages, was the result of interview-

ing several hundred tenants of Pratapgarh. Sanders submitted his report in the year 1896 and Mehta in November 1920. Sanders wrote his report in the context of "revenue demand" whereas Mehta in the context of "tenant struggle" which was already taking shape. If one wishes to write on the Awadh tenant-landlord struggle, the reports of Sanders, Mehta and Hailey are of considerable value. Though Mehta and Hailey have attracted the attention of Awadh historians, Sanders has escaped their notice. Therefore, Sanders requires special attention.

Sanders started exposing frauds of the taluqdars because he had a directive 'that Government will protect its revenue from frauds.'²² Sanders wished to assess the real ratio of revenue so that his Government does not suffer any loss. But this was impossible simply by studying the returns supplied by the taluqdars. He moved through the villages of Pratapgarh, enquiring from the tenants the amount of rent they paid to their taluqdars. Sanders did not believe in the rent-rolls of the taluqdars. He recorded his observations by referring to an article of Pioneer:

In districts where the period of settlement has almost expired and a fresh one is in near prospect, it is a well-known fact that nearly all landlords endeavour as far as possible to conceal any increment of rent that may have taken place since last settlement. Nothing is easier than to execute a fictitious patta for a decreased, while the sub-tenantry patta remains for the same or even an increased, rent figure. Returns supplied to Government only deal with tenancy rents, and thus Settlement Officers before whom they are laid may often be led to believe that a landlord derives a much smaller profit from a village than he actually does. Naturally the revenue is under-assessed and Government suffers in proportion.²³

Thus it was the suffering of Government and not the suffering of the tenant that led Sanders to expose taluqdars. There was a big difference between the rent receipts of the landlords and the actual rents charged from the tenants. By the time the stage of second settlement reached honest taluqdar became a rare commodity in Awadh. 'Besides actual concealment of true rents,' according to Sanders,

there is a practice reported nearly from every district of Oudh in

1893, of premia on the grants of renewal of tenancies... which does not appear in the records, others are the conversion of cash rents into rents in kind, ejectment of tenants and the letting of their holdings at nominal rents to relatives, servants & c.: the actual cultivators paying high rents being recorded henceforth as sub-tenants.²⁴

There were so many other ways in which rents were realised without entering them into rent-rolls. They were such as

the recovery of the costs of ejectment notices from incoming tenants or from the tenants on whom the notices were issued, when allowed to retain their holdings; collusive relinquishment made with the object of concealing the true assets, conversion of land into khudkasht, the landlord's occupation being nominal, and the land being sublet at high rents. Instances of these devices were reported from many districts including Pratapgarh.²⁵

All these devices were the product of the Rent Act of 1886. Since no tenancy rights were given to the subtenants the landlords started searching ways to convert a tenant into a subtenant. Even the introduction of the ejectment notice fees from 8 annas to Rs. 25/- did not help. Ultimately the fees was paid by the tenant.

Awadh historians are very much worried about the practice of nazrana. When did it start? Those who think that it started at the beginning of the twentieth century are certainly wrong. Sanders writes 'All round nazranas are known to be taken by landlords on coming to the gaddi, on the birth of an heir, and on other occasions.'²⁶ Sanders does not specify those other occasions. It can easily be inferred that there was the custom of land-nazrana too. For Sanders talks about the 'premia on the grants of renewal of tenancies.' These premia are nazrana for the renewal of tenancies. This is endorsed by Hailey's forwarding note to Mehta Report written in 1920: 'It is amply proved that nazrana in the sense of premia on the renewal of leases is widely taken on certain estates, and that it is now a regular form of income to the landlords.'²⁷ And this form of income became regular in the nineteenth century itself.

By the beginning of twentieth century nazrana assumed a dreaded form.

Nazrana controlled the tenant activity. If he wished to do anything new in his field or house he had to pay nazrana. Referring to this practice Mehta writes

Every landholder, if he wills it, can take nazrana and there are extremely few who do not will it. He would be a rara avis to be installed in a museum. Where cash nazrana is not taken other devices of payments are expected. The very best accept voluntary gifts. The very worst practice all kinds of tricks to extort the highest amount of nazrana. There are varying gradations of extortion in between.²⁸

Nazrana, with the passage of time, became a regular concealed rent. According to Mehta nazrana amount per bigha of land in the Pratapgarh District varied from Rs. 27/- to Rs. 125/-²⁹ Perhaps nazrana rate, like rent rate, differed according to the nature of the land. Nazrana, however, should not be considered as an addition to the usual rent. The estates which were run by taluqdars' servants things were little different. Sanders gives a better insight into the situation. Sanders is aware 'of the wholesale subletting that has taken place in some villages.'³⁰ But with the help of the patwari and taluqdars' servants they got their rents reduced. Nazrana was used to bribe them. 'Many tenants... were ejected, but replaced in possession of their holdings at a reduced rent on payment of nazrana to the taluqdars' servants. Others purchased the favour of these individuals and obtained large holdings at very low rents, which they sublet.'³¹ Who suffers in this transaction? According to Sanders only the Government suffers because the 'recorded rental is not entirely true.'³²

Sanders found two special features of the Patti Tahsil. Taluqdars of this tahsil forced their tenants for hari on their sir lands. As he says, 'I inspected much of the sir of the pargana and often found it the best land... The landlord is moreover entitled to a day's labour or its equivalent in cash or grain (hari), from each tenant for his sir which he never fails to exact.'³³ In this very tahsil 'the tenants are called out at any time to do "begar".'³⁴ So those who were not the subtenants of sir had to

suffer on account of begar. Tenants suffered more because of begar; they were called out at any time, so their own sowing or harvesting was delayed. If there was delay in sowing then the crop might not be good. So also is important the harvesting time. Tenant's loss was no loss for taluqdars.

A little deviation on the origin of nazrana will not be a fruitless activity. The Settlement Officer of the third Settlement of Pratapgarh, completed in 1930, says about nazrana that 'it began in Patti first about the second decade of the expiring settlement and, spread to other parganas in the district quickly.'³⁵ Patti seems to be the favoured place for all unfavoured activities towards the tenantry. The inference of the officer was based on the fact that the percentage of rent-rise was very high in the first decade of the expiring settlement but started declining in the second decade and further declined in the third decade. From the figure of 14 it came down to 8 and then to 5.³⁶ So nazrana was the substitute of rent. The percentage of rent did not rise because the taluqdars started taking more nazrana. However, the malady of nazrana seems to have a much older history. It was the result of the game of hide and seek between the British Government and the taluqdars. And the game certainly started after the first regular settlement made in 1871, if not earlier. During the course of settlement the taluqdars realised that the declaration of rent realised from the tenants led them to suffer. 50 per cent of the maximum was taken away by the government. To avoid the revenue demand of the government, they resorted to the fraud of concealing rent. Obtaining high nazrana from the tenants in place of high rent saved the taluqdars from the government revenue. Government attempted to play its own game. No rights were given to the tenants in the Act of 1868. Taluqdars were allowed to enhance as much rent as they liked, and just by spending 8 annas they could evict the tenant. Government gained if the taluqdars enhanced rents. Rack-renting helped the government in having more revenue. So the government gave free-

dom for rack-renting, and the courts were not allowed to listen to the tenant. Evictions and relinquishments were the consequences. So the first regular settlement of 1871 taught the taluqdars a lesson that it was not rack-renting but the concealment of rent which was more beneficial to them. So nazrana, or whatever it might have been called at that time, might have started quite early. Concealment of rent became a general practice by 1880. This was shown by the fact that rents became stable, without any tendency to rise, after 1880. They remained unchanged till the year 1892. As Sanders points out, the 'statistics of the rentals of twelve years preceding verification show that in the majority of villages the tenant's rental of 1288 Fasli was the same, or nearly the same, as that of 1299 Fasli.'³⁷ All these twelve years the concealed rent (nazrana) was enhancing and not the rent which was recorded in the rent-rolls of the landlords supplied to the settlement officers.

The competition for land increased with the introduction of the British rule in Awadh. It was the annexation of Awadh which was responsible for the density of rural population. Of course the British administrators and their academicians were constantly propagating that the rural population of Awadh increased because the rural mass of Awadh had no sexual restraint. This was an attempt to divert attention from the real causes leading to the density of rural population. Industries of Awadh were abolished, Nawab's army replaced and the taluqdars' forts were dismantled. Where would all these people go? To take one example, Tanda and Akbarpur in Fyzabad were reputed centres of textile industry in the eighteenth century as has been shown in the first section of the first chapter. The East India Company, as has been shown earlier, wished to have the monopoly of textile of these centres. However, these very textile centres were converted into the indigo producing centres in the nineteenth century.³⁸ Concerning the competition for land during 1860s, the Settlement Officer of the first regular settlement of

Pratapgarh, Mr. King pointed out that 'all landlords speak of the great demand for land... Rents too were very high and have a tendency to rise.'³⁹ When there was great demand for land in 1860s and the rents had a tendency to rise, why did the rents suddenly stop rising after 1880? With the rise in rural population in 1880s over 1860s the demand for land should have increased in 1880s and thereby the rents should have risen further. But they did not rise. The reason is simple. The landlords of Awadh became intelligent; it was not the rack-renting that helped them; it was the concealment of rent that helped them. Instead of enhancing the legal rent, they enhanced the illegal rent (nazrana). They started the concealment of rent.

The government introduced the Rent Act of 1868 for its own advantage. It was the revenue policy of the government that allowed the taluqdars to enhance rents. But the taluqdars started hiding the enhanced rents, and obtained perfection in this art by 1880. But in their game of hide and seek, the British succeeded in catching the taluqdars. They passed the Rent Act of 1886 in order to check the enhancement of rent. The Act was meant for regulating rents. If the tenant was evicted every year then the concealed rent could not be avoided. In giving statutory right of 7 years to the tenant and fixing the enhancement rate at $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent the government thought that the taluqdars would have no opportunity to obtain concealed rent. It is certainly not to improve the lot of the tenantry that the government introduced the Act of 1886. This Act was introduced to have the proper share of revenue and the proper land-produce. If the tenant is evicted every year then no wells would be dug and no improvement of land would occur. But indigo, poppy and sugar-cane could not be grown without irrigational facilities. Soon it was discovered that the taluqdars made this act too ineffective, because they were a party in framing it. Many provisions in the Act were introduced which brought the tenantry back to the stage of 1868. They continued being evicted, and nazrana continued without check.

Therefore, the government in its Administrative Report of 1893 instructed the Settlement Officers 'It must be understood that Government will protect its revenue from fraud and landlords guilty of devices of this nature will have no claim to assessment on half assets or to a settlement of their revenue for a long term of years.'⁴⁰ Sanders was certainly following the government instruction in exposing the frauds of the taluqdars. There would have been no problem if taluqdars had shared their loot with the government. Only the tenants would have suffered. Government would have kept silence.

Incidentally, Mehta, the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh in 1920, whose report on the tenantry of Pratapgarh has become a classic, exhibits total ignorance about the conditions after annexation. According to him 'uptill the passing of the Act XIX of 1868 tenants in Oudh were in requisition and not land. Under these circumstances tenants had practically enjoyed fixity of tenure without occupancy right of any specific character.'⁴¹ But Mr. King, the Settlement Officer of Pratapgarh during 1860s, as we have already seen, talks about 'the great demand for land.' Who is to be believed, Mr. King or Mr. Mehta? Certainly the former, because he was in active service when the Rent Act of 1868 was passed. Mehta says so many things about which he may not be knowing what he means. One sample may be taken. He says 'with the firm establishment of the British rule however, population increased, competition for land increased and rack-renting and unnecessary ejectments came very much to the fore.'⁴² He has made the British rule responsible for all the rural ills like (a) increase in population (b) increase in land competition (c) rack-renting and (d) unnecessary ejectments. But he has forgotten to mention one fundamental step of the British firm rule. It was the step of introducing poverty in Awadh. Once poverty is introduced all the other ills naturally follow.

To come back to Sanders after this brief interlude, Sanders has fur-

ther attacked taluqdars for their failure to take interest in increasing the land-produce and wasting their whole time and money on feudal displays and activities. So far as improvement of land by proprietors was concerned, according to Sanders, 'The only proprietor of the district who has made any extensive improvements is captain Chapman.'⁴³ The Indian proprietors were worthless. Chapman established a big indigo factory and provided extensive irrigational facilities for the production of indigo. To encourage and promote agriculture the land held by Chapman was recommended to be made revenue-free. The Settlement Commissioner wrote to the Government that the 'Government should remit the revenue for the period of the ensuing settlement on the whole of this land.'⁴⁴ Sanders had all kinds of hesitation in favouring Chapman, but he was forced to favour this "European" by Benett. Sanders doubted Chapman's statement of accounts, his claim that all his land was reclaimed, his claim that the reclamation was completed in 1889 and not in 1878 in which it was mentioned about Chapman's land of '4,000 bighas as the reclaimed portion of which 2,000 bighas as first class land protected by irrigation.'⁴⁵ Then what is the justification for making Chapman's land revenue-free? Yet Benett's G.O. No. 2562 of 4th October 1892 forced Sanders to take the decision

I should therefore propose that for 15 years, that is, from 1886 to 1901, the reclamation (called 'kachhat') portion of mauza Beti should be held revenue-free by Captain Chapman as under-proprietor on account of the reclamation works; and, for the remainder of the term he should hold it at less than half revenue at a favourable or almost nominal rate on account of the irrigation works, namely, at Rs. 1000 or even Rs. 500 revenue.⁴⁶

If Benett or Sanders had extended these terms to other taluqdars of Awadh, Awadh would have really become the Garden of India, not "Irwin's Garden" but Indian Garden. But with only "nominal revenue" in hand how could the British rule Awadh? Therefore, the leniency in revenue was kept only restricted to the European planters.

According to Sanders 'the improvements made by the larger landlords

are too few to deserve any special attention. They consist of some pakka, i.e., ordinary brick-wells, and few bandhs.⁴⁷ Only those landlords deserved to be praised by Sanders who encouraged indigo cultivation, and made facilities available for its cultivation. He goes on commenting

It is no disparagement to the landlords nor does it prove a spirit of prejudice towards them for the Settlement Officer to mention the fact that they are unimproving. Among other reasons there is the one that several had adopted sons fetched from small villages to the "gaddi", and who have not the necessary sympathy with their tenants.⁴⁸

Sanders accepts that unless there was sympathy with the tenants a landlord could not think in terms of improving their condition. The real sons only, and not the adopted sons, could have sympathy with the tenants. Those who have inherited the "gaddi" are different from those who have come to the gaddi as a result of adoption. But what about the Europeans and those landlords who came from other parts of India and placed in Awadh as taluqdars? Have they inherited the gaddis? Why only the Europeans and other non-Awadhian taluqdars? Excluding the six taluqdars Canning confiscated the gaddis of all the taluqdars. How many taluqdars acquired their gaddis by inheritance? Right of inheritance was withdrawn. It is not inheritance but the Act 1 of 1869 that brought the taluqdars into existence. A taluqdar was one whose name appeared in the list which was promulgated in the Gazette of India on July 31, 1869. No taluqdar inherited the gaddi, it was given to him as a matter of favour. How could then the taluqdar have any sympathy with the tenants? He had not obtained his gaddi by inheritance, he had obtained it by the Act 1 of 1869. He could not go to any court against the rejection of his right of inheritance. Tenant-taluqdar interdependence had been sacrificed. A taluqdar could not extend his sympathy to his tenant because the tenant did not consider the taluqdar as his raja. The title of raja was only a show. The British law-courts gave them equal status. No judge stood up when the raja entered the court. And even

a peon of the Government did not give much value to the raja. The tenant was certainly not blind. He knew the limited powers of the taluqdars. Taluqdars hated the tenants, and the tenants hated the taluqdars. Both stood in the law-courts on equal footing.

While attacking the taluqdars Sanders totally forgot that he was dealing with landlords having feudal titles. A feudal lord is totally different from a landlord with feudal titles. The former has not to display that he is a feudal lord. But the latter has to display that he is a feudal lord, half knowingly that he is no such thing. It is the feudal titles, like those of "Maharaja", "Raja", etc., given by the British to the taluqdars, which had made them into very complicated characters. They had to make themselves believe that they were rajas and maharajas of some sort, and, therefore, they must spend a lot of money on marriages, dancing girls, etc. Sanders preaches these landlords with feudal titles to give up their habit of 'wanton and profound extravagance.'⁴⁹ But giving up this habit means dishonouring the titles given to them. Why should Sanders blame the taluqdars? He should blame the British who gave them those titles which led to wanton and extravagance. When feudal lords were gone why should the feudal titles be kept? Of course most of the taluqdars became indebted to maharajas because of their feudal titles. Sanders accepts that a taluqdar spent his time and money 'on the wedding, ceremonies, jugglers and dancing girls which tradition imposes on him as the appropriate surroundings of his rank.'⁵⁰ But who was responsible for giving ranks to taluqdars? Do not the feudal titles like "Maharaja", "Khan Bahadur", etc. place taluqdars on a different rank from others? Were these titles given to them for hanging on the drawing-room walls? A feudal title presupposes a feudal form of life. A taluqdar preferred indebtedness to dishonouring his title. While referring to the causes of taluqdars' indebtedness Sanders remarks that 'it lies within their own control' to avoid 'gross extravagance, ruinous marriage, and other

expenses.'⁵¹ Sanders is wrong. It was certainly not in their own control to give up these expenses. Their expenses were in the hands of the society in which they lived. No one would get his daughter married to a taluqdar if he did not spend huge amount on barat (marriage party), feast, fireworks, etc. Marriages are not performed in the temples and mosques, they are the places of worship for Hindus and Muslims. Church-marriage can be simple, but not the Hindu or Muslim marriage. And if a Hindu taluqdar does not spend money on festivals and functions then he was no taluqdar. The same goes with Muslims. Should taluqdars give up their religion? The taluqdars of Awadh preferred indebtedness to giving up their religion or dishonouring their titles.

Sanders praises the management of Court of Wards estates over the taluqdari estates. 'Many of these landlords who received their estates from the Court of Wards vastly improved, free of debt and with a surplus of ready money.'⁵² Then why not all the taluqdari estates were handed over to the Court of Wards? Why were they returned to taluqdars again once their financial position was strengthened? Why was the taluqdari system retained at all? Could the babus and peons of Court of Wards help the British rule in Awadh? In what way would the babus and peons of Court of Wards help the British if Mutiny occurred again? Could these babus and peons create a following? A landlord with feudal titles could create a following on account of his titles. Though a Feudal Lord was different from the landlord with feudal titles, even the latter was a far superior alternative to the babus and peons of the Court of Wards. Feudalism could not be revived, Feudal Lords were a dangerous proposal, but landlords with feudal titles were the most harmless and useful people. Since they had no powers, they could easily be blamed for mismanagement by the Government. During the times of famines they could be blamed for not helping the tenantry or for creating

the famine situation. Not the Government but the taluqdars could be made responsible for creating famine situations in Awadh. Taluqdars were the best of all possible alternatives to have the British control over Awadh. So the British could not do away with them. They were decorated with all kinds of British and Indian feudal titles. The British titles like 'Sir', 'Honourable', etc. were to remind them that they were the British subjects. And the Indian titles were to be used at the time the British required the following of Indian rural mass.

Sanders had a far more misleading picture about the tenantry of Awadh than the one he had about the taluqdars of Awadh. Only one remark of Sanders will clarify his picture about the tenantry of Awadh. He says

A large portion of the tenantry, that is the lower castes, are as submissive as in Nawabi times, and willing to endure any exactions rather than risk the loss of their holdings. The fact that this body has borne the brunt of the enhancements of the past thirty years proves that they have not yet got rid of the "feudal submissiveness" of the regime of the king of Oudh.⁵³

Sanders has obtained his picture of the Awadh tenant from Irwin, and passed it over to Butler. For Irwin a good tenant is one who lives on 'one meal a day', pays the 'highest possible rent for his holding' over and above all other kinds of taxes and dues by 'selling his wife and children'. Sanders has added chabena to the tenant's 'one square meal a day' perhaps because he is talking about tenants in general and not only about 'good tenants'. For both Irwin and Sanders tenants exhibit feudal submissiveness. In feudal times the tenants used to surrender themselves totally to their feudal lords. Though the feudal lords were abolished by the British, the feudal character of the tenantry could not be abolished. Their landlords have now become their feudal lords. Butler is not at all different from Irwin and Sanders. His picture of Awadh tenantry is that of feudal submissiveness for which Irwin and Sanders are responsible. According to Butler the landlords are cruel to their tenants, yet the landlord is their 'God'

and the tenants 'his people'. If Butler is the champion of Oudh Policy, then Irwin and Sanders too are the champions of Oudh Policy. All of them have presented a distorted picture of Awadh tenantry which ultimately led to the failure of Oudh Policy and the start of a widespread tenant-landlord struggle in 1917, coinciding with the Champaran struggle. Benett and Hailey (Commissioner of Fyzabad in 1920) seem to have a slightly different picture of Awadh tenantry than that which was accepted by Irwin, Sanders and Butler, perhaps because both of them were conscious about the role of tenantry in revolts. Benett was conscious of its role in the revolt of 1857 and Hailey has seen its role in 1920-21. Benett knew the capability of Kurmis to 'become good soldiers' and Hailey thought about their 'concerted action'. 'Kurmi' signified the class of tenants as 'Chhatttri' signifies the class of landlords, though there were Chhatttri tenants and Kurmi landlords.

If Sanders' "feudal submissiveness" of the tenant succeeded in misleading Butler, it might have misled the British Government itself. The government became careless about tenants. Their suffering hardly mattered to the government, they posed no kind of threat to the government. Other step of Sanders had far more reaching consequences. His assessment of Patti tahsil brought sharp reaction from the taluqdars of Patti. They represented their case, and their revenue demand was reduced to a very great extent. The taluqdars defeated Sanders for exposing their frauds. The government decided to overlook the frauds of taluqdars. Revenue was to be assessed on the basis of the rent-rolls supplied by the taluqdars. Hidden rents realised from the tenantry was not the concern of the government. The loudest asserters against the assessment, according to Sanders,

were those very landlords in whose estates rents were highest, viz., the taluqdars of Kanti, Tajpur, Isanpur, Patti Saifabad. They objected to the assessments of all or nearly all of their villages: and the first two named have perhaps benefited more than any other by the liberal substitute of standard for corrected rentals in high rented villages. The taluqdar of Rampur has many indigo factories and he increased his khudkasht for the purpose of growing the indigo

plant.⁵⁴

It seems that the taluqdars of Patti increased their khudkasht with the excuse of planting indigo. Perhaps indigo led the British administration to sacrifice Sanders. Sanders was not as precious as indigo. Of course the growing nationalism in Awadh in the late nineteenth century added the importance of taluqdars. Taluqdars were once again to be bribed. How to bribe them? Let them take from the tenantry nazrana or any other kind of hidden rent. Let them continue with their frauds.

The second regular settlement of Patti, Pratapgarh, marks the beginning of a new era. From 1896 the landlords of Patti became its Feudal Lords so far as the tenantry was concerned. They were above the petty British officials. They were required to support the British against the national awakening. And in return for their services they were permitted (though not in writing) to charge any amount of nazrana and any other kind of tax from the tenantry. There remained nothing hidden about the hidden rents. There remained only two kinds of rents, the rents for which the taluqdars paid revenue and rents for which they were not required to pay any revenue. After 1896, i.e. after the success of the taluqdars against Sanders, the taluqdars appointed their lathi-force. It is with the help of this force that all kinds of legal and illegal taxes were realised. Of course the British force of police and army was always there. But they were required only when the taluqdars' lathi-force failed. As a matter of fact the lathi-force became a status-symbol in Awadh. A taluqdar's social position was known by the number of lathi-bearers he had. They were the taluqdars' new retainers.

Simultaneous with the taluqdars' acquiring new powers, the tenant unrest was increasing. Irwin, Sanders and Butler were totally wrong about the tenantry of Awadh. How could these masters fail to observe the implications of evictions and relinquishments? It was only when the landlord's

lathi-force failed that he approached the law-courts for eviction. If not all, most of the eviction cases signify tenant protest. So also is true about relinquishments. Of course there were cases of fraud behind relinquishments. But all relinquishments were not frauds. Though the taluqdars were given feudal powers, the tenants of Patti were fast coming out of their feudal shell. They were equipping themselves with lathis to meet the lathi-force of the taluqdars. Patti became a volcano of tenant unrest. It was only waiting for a leader to lead them.

Mehta and Pratapgarh: If one studies the Mehta Report of 11th November 1920 and compares it with the findings of Sanders about the tenantry of Awadh, one may find many things in common. Both considered taluqdars as evading revenue by obtaining hidden rents. Welfare of tenantry or the government was not the concern of taluqdars. Sanders had all the material for predicting the eruption of tenant unrest. But he wrongly thought that the tenant of Awadh suffers from 'feudal submissiveness' in spite of the increasing notices of eviction and relinquishment. While studying the Mehta Report one has to be careful, as careful as while studying the Report of Sanders. Though an Indian, Mehta was an ICS Officer. Like Sanders, he was a spokesman of the British Government. One should not exhibit overenthusiasm about Mehta. One may use the facts and figures supplied by Mehta, but not the analysis of those facts and figures by him. Mehta had written for the benefit of the government.

Mehta was deputed by the government to report about the widespread tenant unrest in Pratapgarh. Government had reports about 'highhandedness on the part of tenants.'⁵⁵ Tenants declared Jhinguri Singh, a tenant of Rure village, tahsil Patti, as their raja. Jhinguri Singh was known to have established so many tenant-sabhas in his tahsil since 1917. Tenants used to come to register their grievances to Jhinguri Singh rather than going to

the taluqdars and officials of the British Government. Jhinguri Singh established a kind of alternative government. He "swallowed all laws" of the British.⁵⁶ This was an open rebellion of the tenants and had the potentiality to become as dangerous as their rebellion of 1857. This danger led the British to appoint Mehta, the Deputy Commissioner, to find out causes for tenant unrest. An Indian official was purposely chosen. The British were a discredited lot.

Within the span of 20 years, the span between Sanders and Mehta, the scene had changed. From "highhandedness of landlords" the scene had switched over to the "highhandedness of tenants". The Oudh Policy of the British had totally been defeated. The taluqdars who came forward to defend the British against the rising nationalism at the close of the nineteenth century, were themselves in need of the British defence against the tenants. The Oudh Policy of buying over the taluqdars and allowing them to establish a reign of terror over tenantry had failed. Sanders' prestige was unnecessarily lowered in favour of the frauds of taluqdars. Feudal titles of landlords stopped impressing the tenants; the endurance power of tenants reached its limit. Butler's raja was converted by the tenants into a titled dummy of a raja. How wrong was Sanders in thinking that the Indian tenant could not revolt against his landlord whatever amount of rent the landlord might charge from him!

Mehta, like Sanders, thought that nazrana and eviction were the two fundamental reasons for tenant suffering. Obviously that suffering led ultimately to unrest and disturbances. According to Mehta 'nazrana must go voluntary or enforced' which was also the view of Sanders.⁵⁷ Both connected the issue of eviction to that of nazrana. Frauds concerning eviction were committed for the sake of nazrana. So once nazrana goes, frauds concerning evictions would also go. Existence or departure of nazrana was purely a legal issue without having any political implications. According to

Mehta it was the Rent Act of 1886 which was responsible for the malady of nazrana. For that Act allowed only one anna in a rupee enhancement after every seven years:

The one-anna-in-a-rupee increment every seven years has rendered the honest zamindar indigent. It has left the less scrupulous untouched. It has robbed Government, that is the people, its proper share of land assets without leaving ample margin to the tenant—the object to be benefited for a decent standard of life. So long as it remains nazrana will remain.⁵⁸

So it was the section on enhancement of rent by $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, in the Act of 1886, which was responsible for making zamindars dishonest and forcing both the government and the tenant to suffer. Tenant suffered because he paid nazrana over and above his rent. The government suffered because it failed to get its share of revenue from the nazrana obtained. The question arises whether the tenants' suffering would disappear once nazrana was abolished, and zamindars were allowed to enhance rents beyond $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. There is no doubt that the revenue of the government would increase because the rents, and not nazrana, would increase. How would the problems of tenants be solved by converting nazrana into a legal rent? How could rents be stopped from enhancing if the competition for land persists? Unless the competition for land was stopped, there was no solution of the tenants' problems. And the competition for land could be stopped only in one way, to encourage industries and other employment opportunities. But it was against the policy of the British to develop industries in Awadh; the policy was to crush its industries. Oudh was to remain only the market for British goods. Under these circumstances the competition for land could never be stopped. Hence rents could never be stopped from rising.

Mehta seems to be wrong in thinking that nazrana was the consequence of the Rent Act of 1886. The truth seems to be that the Rent Act was the consequence of nazrana. Nazrana was invented to avoid revenue. The first settlement which was completed in 1871 taught the taluqdars that it was useless

to enhance rents, what was useful was to conceal rent. Nazrana was the concealed rent and became quite regular after 1880. It was to stop the concealed rent, as had already been pointed out, that the Act of 1886 was passed. However, instead of removing the illness, the Act only aggravated the illness. No further amendment to the Act was required because the British formed alliance with the taluqdars. The taluqdars were allowed to develop perfection in the technique of obtaining nazrana. With the close of the first World War they became perfect in this technique.

While discussing the technical efficiency of the taluqdars, Mehta discusses the various forms of nazrana and the modes of eviction. Maybe all these forms and modes were existing during the days of Sanders. But Sanders, because of his limited operation, did not take interest in the multiplication of examples. He simply hints at nazrana, bedakhli, begar and hari, without going into the details. Mehta has gone into the details. For the sake of historical curiosity, consider Mehta's detailed information:

The possibility of eviction led to special degradations. One of those degradations is selling of girls. 'A father sold his daughter of 5 years to a husband of 40 years just for raising Rs. 300/- to pay nazrana. The other one sold his 12 years daughter to a husband of 60 years, again for raising only Rs. 300/-' Mehta mentions several such cases.⁵⁹ Now, take one example of excessive nazrana. On a land of only $2\frac{1}{2}$ bigha 'five years ago Rs. 40/- were paid as nazrana, four years ago Rs. 13/-, last year Rs. 6/- to ward off bedakhli. This year he was ejected and the holding was given to another tenant for Rs. 300/-',⁶⁰ Mehta has examined several witnesses claiming to have paid excessive nazrana, yet lost their lands. Sometimes even tragedies can have comic element. This comic element occurs in the tragedies connected with the Section 48 of the Oudh Rent Act of 1886. This Section allowed the landholders to eject heirs of a deceased tenant. Unless the heir pays nazrana there was no chance for him to get the land of his

deceased father.

A new kind of Mahabrahman has come into being whose one object is to pray for an epidemic, as in popular parlance a grain dealer is supposed to pray for a famine, so that he may have a rich harvest of "Murda faroshi fees" and this Mahabrahman (the most despised amongst the Brahman because he receives funeral gifts) is the zamindar. Before the ashes are cold on the pyre this Mahabrahman has to be satisfied.⁶¹

So the Section 48 of the Rent Act has converted landlords into Mahabrahmans charging 'murda faroshi fess'. The tenants of Pratapgarh deserve congratulations for retaining their sense of humour, in spite of their tragic existence, for describing Section 48 as the 'murda faroshi kanun'. It was the British rule of law, it was their Oudh Policy, which was responsible for Kanya Vikrya and Murda Faroshi.

Sanders pointed out that the best lands were converted by the landlords into khudkasht and sir. They could easily get subtenants on higher rates on those lands. According to Mehta, people stopped improving lands: 'No one improves his land because he knows that it may be promptly taken away and tacked on to the sir and inferior land given instead.'⁶² The best lands of Awadh were directly in the hands of the taluqdars. The statutory tenants were having only second-rate lands, and for those second-rate lands they paid huge nazrana. There was no attempt on the part of statutory tenants to convert their second-rate lands into the first-rate lands. In the nineteenth century indigo was the best excuse to extend khudkasht which was later converted into sir. Later poppy and sugar-cane became new excuses for extending khudkasht and sir. On a superficial glance one may infer that the extension of sir led to the loss of both the tenant and the government. The Rent Act of 1886 did not give any rights to subtenants, and the cultivators of sir were subtenants. Because of subtenants the government lost its revenue. However, the government loss was compensated by the production of indigo, poppy and sugar-cane. There is a sense in which the production of sugar-cane in those days had more harmful consequences than the production

of indigo and poppy. Since the Indians were already addicted to bhang and ganja, they did not acquire the habit of opium. The whole of indigo, and nearly the whole of opium, was exported. But only sugar was exported, not the molasses. Molasses led to the production of liquor. The production of liquor was in the hands of the government, and the government obtained heavy revenue from it. Two kinds of liquor were produced: 'the country liquor' and 'the foreign liquor', though the latter was as much Indian as the former. Liquor soon replaced bhang and ganja. Whatever money the tenants they spent on the country liquor, and the taluqdars spent their money on foreign liquor, which was foreign only in the sense that its production was in the foreign hands. Thus the loss of government revenue was doubly compensated.

Mehta refers to so many other taxes not mentioned by Sanders which were levied by the taluqdars: (a) bhusa, chaff of grain. (b) Karbi as an alternative to rice straw. (c) Payal or rice straw. (d) Pati or sugar-cane leaves. (e) Upli or cow-dung cake. (f) Gur in addition to sugar-cane juice. (g) Milk--it was specially taken from Ahirs, Koreshis and Gadarias. (h) Sugar-cane juice, from those who grew sugar-cane. (i) Goats, from those who used zamindar's grazing grounds. (j) Blankets were to be given by those who kept goats and sheep. (k) Shoes or Charsa--the tax on the hide collectors. (l) San, a fibre used for making ropes. (m) Ghi--from those who kept buffalo. Most of these taxes were included in the pattas and kabuliats, so they were formally accepted by the government.⁶³

There were so many informal taxes, the foremost being Nazar. Perhaps nazrana had its origin in nazar. Just being a tenant one had to give nazar to his landlord and his estate staff. In this connection Mehta records 'A big landholder complained to me on the day of Dasehra that his Shagun amount came up to Rs.31,000, but the Kisans have become so recalcitrant and disobedient that this year it only amounted to Rs. 8,000.'⁶⁴ This means

that even in 1920 nearly one fourth of kisan population continued to have 'feudal submissiveness'. The taluqdars and the British were not totally drowning in the sea of revolt. There were chances for them to be rescued. But in 1920 Butler could not boast that 'the taluqdars are Oudh.'⁶⁵ Oudh of 1920 was not the Oudh of 1896. In 1920 the recalcitrant and disobedient tenants became the Oudh. Signal had been given to both, the taluqdars and the British that their days were numbered.

Other than nazar there were such informal cesses as Rajauti. This was the cess imposed 'when a particular landholder became a raja.'⁶⁶ Rajauti was a form of nazar. Then there was 'Larai Chanda', i.e. the war-fund. Since the taluqdars contributed to the war-fund, they realised from the tenantry more than what they gave to the government.⁶⁷ Connected with Larai Chanda was recruiting Chanda. Cesses were also imposed for buying elephants, motors, horses, carriages, etc.⁶⁸ Even money was paid for getting any kind of receipt from the estate clerk.⁶⁹ Oudh Kisan Sabha referred to such further cesses as Untawan, mundawan, annaprasana, Kamishnaravan (Commissioner's visit), Dipty Kamishnaravan (Deputy Commissioner's visit) and Latiyawan (Visit of Lat Saheb, i.e. the Lieutenant Governor).⁷⁰ There seems to be no limit to informal cesses, the cesses which never found their way into the pattas and kabuliats. Therefore, all of them were illegal, at least in the sense that no revenue was given on those cesses to the government.

Mehta was not deputed to expose the frauds of taluqdars. He was not to assess the revenue demand like Sanders. He was to enquire into 'the causes of the agrarian disturbances' in his district.⁷¹ Though Mehta suggested some remedial measures to remove disturbances, revenue might have been his other job. He even suggested the amendment to the tenancy law, and provided a draft-proposal in his report. His responsibility was tremendous. He was required to appear as the messiah of tenants, as a Mahatma,

without at all injuring either the taluqdars or the British Government. As a government servant it was his duty to propose the enhancement of revenue, which depended on the retention of taluqdari system with greater powers to enhance the rents. If not wholly, he did succeed partly in projecting himself as the messiah of tenants. He did not forget to mention in his report that a tenant described him as "Mahatma". Mehta records 'One man... had the impudence to allege that a certain small sum was taken from him for defraying expenses in connection with the entertainment of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.' The impudent man, according to Mehta, 'was pulled up by a relation who roundly abused him and took him to task for lying in the presence of an officer like me (he used the word Mahatma)'.⁷² So Mehta became a Mahatma for tenants in spite of the fact that he was an officer of the British. Neither Irwin nor Sanders could achieve this distinction, though they have been projected by the Awadh historians as the sympathisers of the tenants. Perhaps the colour of their skin was a great obstruction. How could Mehta succeed in projecting himself as the messiah of tenants, as a Mahatma? Through his promises to get changed the Rent Act of 1886, to recommend to the government to stop nazrana and bedakhli. He also attempted to buy over Ram Chandra and Jhinguri Singh to his side. Nothing is known about Jhinguri Singh, whether Mehta had any degree of success with him. But Ram Chandra, throughout his life, exhibited dependence on Mehta. Mehta could count on him. Jhinguri Singh was a tenant and a tenant leader. But Ram Chandra was not a tenant, he was only a tenant leader, but an extremely powerful tenant leader. Mehta's success can be judged by the fact that the Post-Independence Awadh historians consider Mehta as the champion of Awadh tenants. They have not only used his facts and figures, but also the analysis of the situation provided by him, his opposition to the Congress, the Oudh Kisan Sabha, etc.

Mehta was the champion of the British cause, and not a champion either of the tenants or of the taluqdars. He wished to succeed where Sanders failed. His report itself is a remarkable document for writing a research paper, if not a dissertation. His draft-proposal for rent-act amendment was meant only for increasing the government revenue. He wished to abolish nazrana by converting it into rent. This gives no relief either to the tenant or the landlord. Instead of 7 years' tenancy Mehta offered 14 years' tenancy, 4 years more than what was accepted by the Amended Rent Act of 1921. Instead of one-anna-a-rupee enhancement, Mehta had suggested four-anna-a-rupee enhancement leading to 33 per cent. Even this four-anna enhancement was provisional: 'The four-anna in the rupee increment is for this occasion only in order to bring up rents to a rational level and it will not be the standard to regulate future increments.'⁷³ Even if the tenant did not pay any nazrana he would lose because his rent had increased, and it would continue increasing. Taluqdars did not gain because their hidden rent had been attacked. If the rents were high then the tenant would not pay nazrana. Neither the landlord nor the tenant gained, the government gained. Revenue could be imposed only on the open rents, not on the hidden rents.

Though Mehta wished to abolish nazrana he provided grounds for its retention. Section 3 of his draft-proposal says 'Tenancies by registered lease can be created for any period at the rent agreed upon. The tenant will be liable to be ejected at the end of the period of lease but if he holds on, then he will be a class-2 tenant.'⁷⁴ To his class-2 tenants Mehta does not offer 14 years' tenure. What about rent agreement between the landholder and the tenant? Was it not possible to enter a smaller figure in the registered deed, and having greater hidden amount? Registered deeds were always dubious. These deeds allowed horse-trading.

There is no doubt that Mehta was interested only in obtaining proper

percentage of revenue for the government. His motive in exposing landlords' frauds concerning nazrana was the same as those of Sanders. According to him 'State should safeguard itself against any loss of its share of net assets by subterfuges familiar to every District Officer.'⁷⁵ It is to obtain correct information about assets that the subtenancies were created "through registered instrument".⁷⁶ Muafidars can also "be assessed to rent" and they will 'fall in the category of tenants of class(2)'.⁷⁷ Thus, all those tenants who were excluded from assessment were brought by Mehta into the fold of assessment. Expressing his conviction about rents he says 'I have been firmly convinced that rents are much below the level to which they should be pitched, had there been no nazrana'.⁷⁸ Thus Mehta was suggesting to increase the rent so much as to be equal to both the present rent and nazrana. So by abolishing nazrana how would the tenant be better? He remained where he was. Of course the taluqdar was a big loser. Though he took more rent, now he had to depart with the 50 per cent share. Suppose the taluqdar charges Rs. 100 for a piece of land, and he informs the tenant that his rent is Rs. 25 and nazrana Rs. 75, taluqdar in question is required to pay only Rs. $12\frac{1}{2}$ as revenue because the rent is only Rs. 25. Suppose now the rent becomes Rs. 100 because the nazrana is abolished, tenant has no benefit, but the taluqdar is now required to pay Rs. 50 as his revenue. This simple arithmetic can explain how Mehta is planning to help government by abolishing nazrana. The tenants did not see the consequences and were impressed by the Mahatma Mehta. Mahatma Mehta had neither helped the tenant nor the landlord, he had served only his British master.

Though Mehta wished to abolish nazrana and to convert it into an open rent for obtaining more revenue for the government, he was not in a position to do away with eviction. He allowed taluqdars to keep the instrument of eviction. Taluqdars would become just revenue collectors, and not the proprietors of land, if they were deprived of the power of eviction. He

opposed Ram Chandra for creating 'a wrong impression that he would get the ejectment law altered.'⁷⁹ How could the ejectment law be altered if the land did not belong to the tenant? If Mehta wished to have ejectment law unaltered, then why did he mislead tenants? What was the necessity of interviewing hundreds of tenants who were ejected? What was the necessity of hearing their tales of suffering? Tales of nazrana worked on Mehta because its abolition increased the volume of government treasury. Tales of evictions did not work on Mehta because he was not in favour of giving occupancy rights to the tenants of Awadh. But how could nazrana be stopped without stopping eviction? Nazrana and eviction are two faces of the same coin. Mehta was simply playing with the feelings of Awadh tenants. He appeared as their Messiah, and obtained the title of Mahatma from them, but worked for the welfare of the British Government. By allowing the instrument of eviction with the taluqdars he was also working for them. But in no sense was he working for the tenants. He only cheated them. According to him the fixity of tenure would solve all the problems of tenants: 'I have mighty hopes that the fixity of tenure will be the salvation of tenants.'⁸⁰ Instead of 7 years he has extended the tenure for 14 years. Just by extending 7 years more how would the problems be solved? And how many would get this 14 years' tenure? Mehta's draft-proposal has three classes of tenants. He allowed all the scope for landlords to create class-2 and class-3 tenants. Class-2 tenants would have only 5 years' tenure, and class-3 without any fixity of tenure.

Mehta's pro-landlord tendencies emerge more clearly when one studies the creation of class-2 and class-3 tenancies. Concerning the former, he says 'I want to discourage class(2) tenancies and, therefore, I have reduced the period from seven to five years.'⁸¹ Seven years' tenancy was given by the Act of 1886. He thinks that the tenants would be encouraged to go for 14 years' tenancy if 7 years' tenancy was dissolved and in its place

5 years' tenancy was introduced. Yes, the tenants would prefer 14 years' tenancy. But what about the landlord? Land belonged to him and not to the tenants. He would be encouraged to convert the 7 years' tenants to 5 years rather than allowing them to go for the 14 years' tenancy. As a matter of fact Mehta's rent act was more harmful to the tenants than the Rent Act of 1886. This becomes further clear by seeing the status of his class-3 tenants. Concerning these tenants he says 'The class(3) tenancy has been brought into being for highly developed or precarious land. The contract of tenancy will be for any length of time and terms of contract may have nothing to do with the prevalent rentals. The lessee on the termination of lease to be relegated to class(2) unless ejected.'⁸² Why should the landlord go even for class-2 tenants when he can have class-3 tenants on both kinds of lands "highly developed and precarious", with any amount of rent for any length of time? The choice was purely landlord's. Mehta's rent act would convert all tenants of Awadh into the class-3 tenants. They would be real tenants-at-will with all kinds of contracts and leases. Not only that he gave no occupancy rights to tenants, he had given handle to the taluqdars to convert all tenants into the leased bonded tenants.

One may be misled into thinking that Mehta's act would improve the condition of sir tenants or subtenants. Most of the tenants who became violent in 1920 were sir tenants who paid heavy rents and were liable to ejectment at any time. Mehta had extended five years' tenure to the sir tenants to stop their violence. At the end of five years 'they are liable to be ejected by notice. If they are not so ejected, they will get a fresh period of five years.'⁸³ So the sir tenants could never become the class-2 tenants. They would only remain class-3 tenants with five years of cultivation right. Mehta's designs can be understood only by his next step. At the next step he says 'No sub-tenancies can be created except by a registered instrument (the kanungo's attestation will suffice).'⁸⁴ Kanungo's attestation implies

that subtenant's rent was assessable. Landlords would be in a position to hide their rents. But this was no solution. The rent of subtenants would always remain high. We have already discussed the views of Sanders and Mehta that the landlords acquired the best lands of their villages by converting them into sir. Mehta had not fixed any limit on the acquisition of sir lands. As soon as the land became first-rate through the toil of the tenant it was converted into the sir land. Concerning fixation and enhancement of rent Mehta's approach was for upward trends of rents: 'I have made increase in his rent depend on the productive capacity of the soil. Future increase in rent will not be hide-bound by any mechanical anna-in-the-rupee scheme of enhancement.'⁸⁵ Since rents were not hide-bound, how could the landlord be stopped from charging higher rents from his subtenants? He had the excuse of the higher productive capacity of his soil. Unless rents were hide-bound their higher jumps could not be stopped. For the rent of a piece of land did not so much depend on the productive capacity of the soil as on the competition for land. And land in Awadh was not only an economic proposal, but its having become a natural necessity, a necessity which transcends its explanation in economic terms.

Mehta knows that the kisan is devoted to land as Tulsidas to Rama. As he says,

Tulsidas is devoted to Rama as the kisan to his kasht. The rent is fourfold, the debt is heavy and yet he loves his field. He pays the nazrana arrived at after a great deal of most undignified degrading haggling and is not ousted from his land.⁸⁶

Mehta wishes his kisan to continue remaining devoted to his kasht by paying fourfold rent and nazrana. He does not wish his Tulsidas to give up devotion to Rama and, therefore, he puts no legal prohibition on eviction, and rejects all attempts to make rents hide-bound. All the three classes of tenants (1), (2) and (3) could be evicted. So long as eviction continued nazrana would also continue. This truth Mehta knew very well. By freeing

rent from the hide-bondage the kisans would naturally become Mahajan-bonded. The Rent Act of 1921 has several provisions derived from the draft-proposal of Mehta. The fact that this Act served taluqdars more than the tenants itself shows Mehta's achievement.

Mehta was sent to contact the tenantry to find out causes for their unrest and to suggest the remedial measures. He soon discovered that naz-rana and bedakhli were the two main causes, if he did not already know this. So he promised the tenants to get the rent law of 1886 changed. He also extended the government patronage to the tenants. Pratapgarh was becoming another Champaran. It had to be stopped from becoming Champaran. Mehta's extensive tour of Pratapgarh for the whole of October was the tour of a government propagandist. He was the missionary of the government. Even before taking his tour in May of 1920 he asked Ram Chandra 'to stop his propaganda which sowed ill-will between tenants and zamindars but forward these complaints for me to look into.'⁸⁷ This was an attempt to stop the tenant-sabha (kisan sabha) of Jhinguri Singh becoming a focus of attention. For any tenant who 'felt aggrieved rushed to the sabha with his complaints.'⁸⁸ Not the village Rure but the Deputy Commissioner's office was the proper place to lodge complaints. Mehta attempted to diffuse the situation. He knew that Ram Chandra was a professional agitator and professional agitators could easily be moulded. Their commitment to a cause is situational. However, Mehta's scheme failed. On Ram Chandra's persuasion Jhinguri Singh started forwarding the complaints to the Deputy Commissioner. But attention from tenant-sabha of Rure could not be diverted. Complaints from three tehsils, Patti, Pratapgarh and Kunda, were forwarded to the Commissioner's office. But they were not originally lodged at the Commissioner's office; they were lodged at the Rure office, and the Rure Officer, Jhinguri Singh, forwarded them to Mehta. Tenants gave importance to Jhinguri Singh and Rure, and not to Mehta and his Commissioner's office. Of course Mehta

by his move obtained very high respect from Ram Chandra. The latter started calling the former as the Saviour of Kisans, the maker of their destiny.⁸⁹ This was the only achievement of Mehta.

The other move of Mehta was no less a failure. To counter the Rure Sabha, Mehta activated Kisan Hitkarni Sabha. The function of this Sabha was to establish harmony between the landlords and tenants. If the tenants had any grievances against their landlords they should be amicably settled through Hitkarni Sabha. No need to go to Rure Sabha which had political motives. It seems that Ram Chandra also worked, at least for sometime, for Kisan Hitkarni Sabha. There is a handwritten document in which Ram Chandra explained the aims and objectives of Kisan Hitkarni Sabha.⁹⁰ Its aims are very different from the aims of Rure Sabha. In his report Mehta writes 'A Kisan Hitkarni Sabha was brought into being to serve as a sort of conciliation board between tenants and zamindars and it served a laudable purpose as long as I was here. The district was quite.'⁹¹ Mehta wishes to show that the situation changed only when he was on leave.

Mehta finds himself defeated when he found that the tenant-sabha of Rure has lost "its rustic simplicity" and has acquired "the artificiality of the headquarters".⁹² He thought that he could handle the rustics who lacked political consciousness and with this hope he visited the birth-place of the tenant-sabha, which was also the birth-place of Jhinguri Singh. He had no option but to blame the city politicians for corrupting the minds of submissive tenants. Perhaps the picture of tenants which Mehta had was not very different from that of Sanders. It is difficult to demolish an official picture. Mehta does not mind overlooking the fact that before coming in contact with the city people, Rure became the centre of tenant attraction of three districts, Pratapgarh, Rai Bareli and Sultanpur. The tenants of these districts came to lodge their complaints with Rure. If they were rustics, they were very advanced rustics. They

were a product of national awakening.

Mehta was hopeful about the consequences of his report. He wrote 'My labour will be amply rewarded if thereby the lot of these men behind the plough can be improved--and more rational relations established between purified landlordism and rejuvenated tenantry.'⁹³ But his draft-proposal for the amendment to Rent Act did not give any relief to men behind the plough, and did not make any serious attempt to purify landlordism. Since Mehta appeared before the tenants as their Messiah and Saviour he had no wish to be exposed. He advised that his 'report should be kept thoroughly confidential.'⁹⁴

For taluqdars Mehta appeared as the Sanders of 1920. Though the tenants were ignorant about Mehta's report, taluqdars came to know about it. Both Sanders and Mehta exposed the frauds of taluqdars which injured them. Both Sanders and Mehta had a remarkable capacity to sympathise verbally with the tenants. But they only helped the British. History was repeating. Mehta was withdrawn from Pratapgarh. The taluqdars of Awadh won again, only Ram Chandra continued praising Mehta.

Socioeconomic Perspective of Tenant-Struggle: The tenant-struggle which originated in Pratapgarh District sometime in the second decade of the twentieth century took a violent form in the districts of Rai Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad in the year 1921. According to Butler, the then Governor of U.P., these districts saw the 'beginning of something like revolution.'⁹⁵ Judith Brown goes a step further when she says 'U.P. became one of the Government of India's nightmares during 1920.'⁹⁶ It is not only the Governor of U.P. who was shaken, the Government of India itself was shaken. What was not shaken was the tahsil Patti of Pratapgarh District, and the village Rure from where the struggle started. The struggle was started by the tenant leaders, Jhinguri Singh, Sahdev Singh and Drigpal Singh (Thakurs)

with the assistance of Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwandin and Pryag (Kurmis).⁹⁷

All these leaders were committed to non-violence. They were fully aware that violence could either remove the taluqdari system or the British who were responsible for the system. Their struggle was not a temporary or a transitory phenomenon. They planned to have a long enduring struggle. They were trying to evolve 'collective consciousness', a consciousness in which the individual is not lost but becomes supremely important because of other individuals. Slowly the Rure tenant sabha was spreading its wings to other villages of the tahsil Patti. The formation of Rure Sabha was the result of general mass awakening. The tenants of Pratapgarh started organising themselves on the pattern of Champaran, perhaps with the hope that Gandhi would look into their difficulties only when they were organised. Prior to Gandhi's entry into Champaran, or even the entry of the Congress into Champaran, the peasants there were already organised. And their organisation was the result of general mass awakening which was intensified by Gandhi's magic name. Gandhi's African struggle and his peasant appearance further intensified the struggle.⁹⁸ The taluqdars of Awadh might have appeared to the tenantry like the planters of Champaran. So Champaran might have become the ideal pattern on which the tenants of Patti tahsil started organising themselves. Therefore, in their minds there was no such question as the question of starting physical violence against the taluqdars. The violent revolt was not the ideal of Patti tenants, and the whole of Pratapgarh District was influenced by the Patti thoughts. Hence the kind of revolution that occurred in Rai Bareilly, Sultanpur and Fyzabad was missing in Pratapgarh. It does not show the weakness of Patti tenants, but their strength and preparedness for a long enduring struggle. They had no wish to see the end of their struggle. For they knew that the armed struggle would not succeed against the British. Taluqdars had with them the might of British force.

The tenant struggle of Awadh had its origin in a peculiar socio-economic situation. The historians of Awadh who are busy in doing the post-mortem analysis of Awadh tenant struggle cannot escape noticing the fact that the rural population of Pratapgarh exceeded the other districts of Fyzabad division, i.e. Sultanpur and Fyzabad. Hailey's note on Mehta's report is very useful for providing a socioeconomic analysis of the situation. The peculiar characteristic of Pratapgarh rural population is that it 'is composed of Kurmis, whereas in Sultanpur and Fyzabad the Kurmi caste is negligible in numbers and high castes largely predominate.'⁹⁹ Hailey further remarks 'there can be no doubt that the Kurmi caste has suffered severely from the levy of cesses. It is noteworthy that little or no mention is made of these levies in the complaints received from other districts... It seems probable that the levy of those cesses is a more serious abuse in Pratapgarh than elsewhere.'¹⁰⁰ And in Pratapgarh District Patti tahsil specialised in these abuses. Patti taluqdars became autocratic after their success against Sanders. They had the support of the Oudh Policy, they increased all kinds of cesses on their tenantry. What was the social composition of tenantry? In Patti tahsil Kurmis were the dominant caste: 'Some of the villages in tahsil Patti are composed mainly of Kurmis.'¹⁰¹ Naturally the Kurmis suffered more in the hands of the taluqdars of Patti. Over and above the illegal cesses, being low caste tenants, they paid higher rents than the tenants of higher castes. In Patti, Kurmis were the real suffering tenants. Though Muraos were also charged higher rent like Kurmis the former were small-scale cultivators. They restricted themselves to vegetables, poppy, etc. They were not large-scale cultivators like Kurmis who cultivated wheat, sugar-cane, etc. The agricultural wealth of Pratapgarh depended on Kurmis, yet they were the worst sufferers. The British officials considered the Kurmi as a natural resource like water and air. The scarcity of water would lead to the scarcity of food crop pro-

duction. Similar is the case of the scarcity of Kurmis. Mr. Fordham, the Settlement Officer of Sultanpur, 1939, writes about Sultanpur that 'the Kurmis, who invariably grow excellent cane, are the expert husbandmen of the district. But they are all too few and it is peculiarly unfortunate in a district that possesses so few natural advantages that 53 per cent of the holdings area should be in the hands of Brahmans and Thakurs, neither of whom are agriculturists.'¹⁰² The scene was opposite in Pratapgarh District.

The Thakurs and Brahmans were inferior agriculturists, yet they paid less rent. The British were interested in agricultural production. They brought canals to Awadh and encouraged the digging of wells, etc. for obtaining the production of poppy, sugar-cane, wheat, etc. for foreign markets. If Muraos specialised in poppy production and vegetables, Kurmis in wheat and sugar-cane. Why did they allow the taluqdars to realise more rents from the Kurmis, Muraos, etc.? Instead of charging more rent the lower caste tenants should have been charged less rents to encourage agricultural production. But the British sacrificed their smaller interest to a bigger interest. If they equalised the rents of all the tenants, then there was a possibility for tenants to unite. There should be no chance left for tenants to unite because a united tenantry could be dangerous. As Hailey points out 'Concerted action among tenants composed of high and low castes would be far more difficult to bring about.'¹⁰³ Why should the tenants of high caste join hands with the tenants of low caste when the former paid less rent than the latter? Castewise division and distinction of rent did not lead to any loss of revenue. If the Brahmans and Thakurs paid less rent, Kurmis and Muraos paid more, then the rent is equalised for the sake of imposing revenue. Neither the government nor the taluqdars suffered because of castewise imposition of rent. Only the low caste tenants suffered. They deserved suffering for their wholehearted participation in the

revolt of 1857. Further, if the taluqdars were allowed to charge less rent from the high caste tenants, they would have some following at the time of need. Taluqdars belonged generally to the high caste, so they would have following of the high caste tenants. It was not only the caste factor which would unite the high caste tenants with the taluqdars, the payment of less rent would be a further uniting factor. So the British wished to control tenantry first by introducing division in it and then favouring high caste tenants.

Incidentally Mehta in his report had not suggested legislation against the castewise imposition of rents. Even if nazrana was abolished how would the low caste tenants gain? Mehta had not suggested any remedy to remove the suffering of tenants, for the majority of tenants in Pratapgarh were Kurmis, and they were liable to be charged more rents than the tenants of higher castes.

While referring to Kurmis, Hailey writes that they 'had lost all proprietary rights long before the Mutiny and were therefore given no under-proprietary rights at the first settlement.'¹⁰⁴ Kurmis lost the proprietary rights 'after the mutiny' and not 'long before the mutiny'. They considered Raja Jailal Singh as their real raja and jumped into the revolt and were punished by the British. Though Benett maintains that Kurmis are 'not destitute of spirit, and are capable of being converted into good soldiers,'¹⁰⁵ yet the British removed them from their list of "Marshal races" because they marshalled against the British in the revolt of 1857. They were debarred from entering into the army. The British chalked out the position for Kurmis that they should remain only the tenants-at-will. Perhaps some of them remained taluqdars by mistake; they might have been confused with the Thakurs because they too write Singh with their names. It is interesting to note that Ahirs, Muraos, Koeries and Lodhs belong to the same level of castes as Kurmis, they are all low caste touchables, only a

few Kurmis among them were taluqdars of Awadh in 1877.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps Kurmis could become taluqdars because of their mistaken identity.

When economic exploitation reaches its zenith, it reaches its threshold, then tolerance becomes impossible. If Awadh had to have a tenant struggle on account of economic exploitation, then Pratapgarh was the most suitable place, and tahsil Patti was the most suitable spot. It was dominated by Kurmis who were the worst sufferers among the low caste cultivators. Though Muraos also paid more rent like Kurmis and suffered from all kinds of exactions, their financial position was stable. Since the vegetables are produced quickly they do not take longer time like wheat and sugar-cane; Muraos had regular daily and weekly income. They had not to wait for six months or one year for their returns. Their position was not very different from the position of a regular wage earner. This was not the position of Kurmis. They had no regular daily or weekly earning and, therefore, they were exploited by both the taluqdars and mahajans. The economic exploitation roused the Kurmis and led to the birth of Kashi, Bhagwan Din, Ajodhya and Pryag. According to Hailey 'Kurmis have a reputation of being a dangerous body when roused, and as they keep very much to themselves, combine better than other castes.'¹⁰⁷ British had ample knowledge about Kurmis, not only about their agricultural skills but also about their collective action at the time of need.

Kurmis, though not rich, were the dominant caste of Patti tahsil. So it was natural for them to jump into the struggle of tenants. What makes a caste dominant? This has become a difficult question because of our sociologists. A little deviation at this stage is essential. According to M.N. Srinivas 'A caste may be said to be "dominant" when it preponderates numerically over the other castes, and when it also wields preponderant economic and political power.'¹⁰⁸ In this sense Kurmis of Patti were certainly not dominant, because they had neither economic nor political power

with them. For his views Srinivas has been attacked by Louis Dumont. According to Dumont the sole source of dominance is "ownership of land". For him the numerical strength of a caste at the village or social level is irrelevant, because 'land-owners are able to obtain the services of landless through the institution of clientship.'¹⁰⁹ Of course this is not to deny the situations where "landowners" belong to the caste which numerically preponderates over other castes. While looking back at his study of the Rampura village of Mysore State, Srinivas finds that the 'few Brahmins who were residents there were completely, even pathetically, dependent on the powerful Okkaliga landowners.'¹¹⁰ So Srinivas does not deny the connection between "landownership" and "dominance". The dominance of a caste does not necessarily depend on its position in the caste-hierarchy. The Okkaligas are inferior to the Brahmins, yet they belong to the dominant caste.

It seems that Srinivas has completely surrendered himself to the position of Dumont. He has accepted Dumont's patron/client model without any hesitation. Referring to the leaders of the dominant caste Srinivas remarks, 'The leaders of the dominant castes resembled chieftains, and evoked fear and respect from ordinary folk. Each leader was the head of a faction composed of kinfolk, castefolk, and clients from other castes.'¹¹¹ In revising his position to satisfy Dumont, Srinivas has certainly gone beyond Dumont. For Srinivas does not mind applying the jungle-model to the Indian village society. Caste-chiefs of Srinivas are not very unlike the dacoit-chiefs who are respected by the members of the gang because they are feared. However, Srinivas makes only a modest claim. He compares 'the leaders of the dominant caste,' not with the Indian dacoit-chiefs, but with the 'African tribal chiefs' who evoke fear. Dumont has objected to Srinivas that he has 'transplanted the notion of "dominance" from the African to the Indian field.'¹¹² Instead of revising his position Srinivas

continues to justify the application of his model to the Indian village society forgetting that India is not Africa and that the Varna-system is not the "African tribal chief" system. Of course the leaders of the dominant caste in some villages may not be behaving very differently from the Indian dacoit-chiefs or the tribal chiefs of Africa. But the source of dominance is not always either the muscle power or the money power. There are charismatic leaders in Indian villages who are respected not because they are big landlords or force people to submit to them. The peasant struggles of early twentieth century had brought to light so many charismatic leaders from villages who were neither rich peasants nor had any kind of muscle power. Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Pryag, who were the backbone of kisan agitation in Pratapgarh, were such charismatic leaders. Except Jhinguri Singh the other four leaders did not have even land sufficient for their subsistence. Of course the numerical strength of the caste to which these four belonged helped in building up their images.

The related concept, the concept of "dominant peasantry" too involves complications of its own. In order to understand its complications consider the remark of D.A. Low. According to him the dominant peasants are those '... whom the British administrators called "the village brotherhood", anthropologists "the dominant caste", economist "rich peasants", some political scientists "elite proprietary" (others, variously "kulaks", "rural middle "class", "jotedars", "maliks", "dominant" rural strata, etc.),¹¹³ From Low's remark it follows that the dominant peasants of a village or locality may be the same as the dominant peasants belonging to a particular caste. A dominant peasant has been identified with the caste which may be dominant. But there may be a multicaste dominant peasantry involved in a struggle as was the case of Champaran.

In the case of dominant peasantry, like the dominant caste, economic independence is an extremely important factor. As Pouchepadass thinks, the dominant peasantry emerges as '... a category which includes the whole group of peasants of respectable caste who hold enough land so that they supply the needs of their families without having to go out to work for anyone else.'¹¹⁴ This is a modest but elastic definition. The catch lies in referring to the holding of "enough land". One may hold land which may be enough for bare subsistence. But one may also hold land which may be enough for one's luxurious subsistence. In the latter case Dumont's patron/client relationship could be operative. But in the former case though there are no "clients", there may be followers who come to their leader out of sheer respect for any of his achievements. Since the definition of "dominant peasantry" given by Pouchepadass is elastic it avoids the kind of objections raised by Shahid Amin against the dominant peasantry thesis. The thesis proposed by Pouchepadass is certainly not a variant of patron/client theories of mobilisation as Shahid Amin thinks.¹¹⁵ A peasant who holds only so much of land that satisfies the needs of his family 'without having to go out to work for anyone else' does not necessarily convert him into a kulak or a jotedar or a malik, etc. Of course Pouchepadass does not deny that in some cases the dominant peasants may be kulaks or jotedars, etc. But this is not true of all the cases of dominant peasantry.

One can construct two models for explaining the role of dominant peasantry for its initiative in the peasant movements of early twentieth century. Model-1 is that in which the dominant peasants come from a given dominant caste, i.e. it is a mono-caste model. Model-2 is that in which the dominant peasants come from different castes, i.e. it is a multicaste model.

Model-1 is applicable to Bardoli Satyagraha, because in Bardoli the peasant organisation was initiated by the dominant peasants who were Pati-

dars. First the Patidar leaders consolidated their caste, then, with the help of their caste fellows they mobilised the peasants of different castes. Consequently, the dominant peasantry, belonging to a dominant caste, was transformed into a multicaste dominant peasantry. The man who initiated the whole movement was Kuvarji Mehta. About Kuvarji Mehta, Ghanshyam Shah writes that

in the beginning, his team consisted of his kinsmen, former students and their relatives. Then he won over his caste fellows, and through them, leaders of other castes and communities. Gradually his team acquired a wide base. In the 1928 Satyagraha these various ranks formed a network which reached the remotest villages in the Taluka. There were in all 150 local leaders of different castes and communities.¹¹⁶

One leader of one caste led to the existence of many leaders of many castes. But history remembers only Patel and Gandhi, not Kuvarji Mehta. Kuvarji Mehta was an ordinary school teacher. He was quite unlike a powerful Okkaliga land-owner from the Rampura village of Srinivas. In no sense was Kuvarji Mehta a tribal chief, though the tribe of Patidars respected him and responded to his call for uniting the peasants of Bardoli.

Model-2 can be applied to the Champaran movement. This movement was initiated by the oligarchy of rich peasants. According to Pouchepadass 'This oligarchy consisted for the greater part of high-caste peasants, Brahmins, Rajputs, Babhans, Muslim Sheikhs, etc. Most of these leaders were well-off or rich peasants.'¹¹⁷ Since the peasants who initiated the Champaran movement were rich, Dumont's patron/client model fits into the situation. The landless and the petty landholders got involved in the movement because of their patrons.

Neither Model-1 nor Model-2 exemplifies the Awadh tenant struggle. Jhinguri Singh, Sahdev Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Pryag did not form in any sense the oligarchy of rich peasants. Jhinguri Singh and Sahdev Singh were Thakurs and belonged to village Rure. From enquiry it appears that they were occupancy tenants, because the village Rure was

free from eviction and murda faroshi. There are no Kurmi tenants in Rure, though all the villages surrounding Rure are Kurmi villages. Kashi belonged to village Bisaray, Ajodhya to village Tivipur, Bhagwan Din to village Bhadraj and Pryag to village Bhavpur. Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Pryag were tenants-at-will. All of them faced eviction at one or the other time. Even now the economic condition of their families is so poor that one can never imagine that they were ever well-off tenants. Eviction was not the curse restricted to these four grass-root leaders. Even Jhinguri Singh was an evicted tenant. He was evicted from his land belonging to the neighbouring village Bharokan on the ground that he was a Pahi-kashtkar. Thus eviction was a bond common to the grass-root leaders of Rure sabha. Though Jhinguri Singh was a Thakur the identity of interest brought him to the Kurmi tenant leaders. And if he had to lead the Kurmi tenantry then he could not restrict himself only to the issue of eviction. Nazrana, begari, hari, etc. had also to be attacked.¹¹⁸

The situation of Awadh was very different from that of Champaran. In Awadh it was impossible for the multicasite peasantry to initiate the struggle. Though Sahdev Singh, Jhinguri Singh and Drigpal Singh were Thakurs, Thakur tenantry did not follow them. Similar was the case of Baba Ram Chandra. He was a Brahmin. But the Brahmin tenantry did not initiate the struggle. The struggle was initiated by the Kurmi tenantry. Therefore, the real grass-root leaders of Awadh struggle were Kashi, Bhagwan Din, Ajodhya and Pryag who were assisted by so many other Kurmi grass-root leaders. The leadership of Jhinguri Singh and Baba Ram Chandra was parasitic upon the leadership of Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din, Pryag and so many others like them.

No less significant is the social position of the higher caste tenants in the caste hierarchy. Their high social position did not allow them

to collaborate with the low caste tenants. A higher caste tenant may be poor, yet he feels superior. It is out of question for both of them to come on the same platform. Referring to the internal conflicts within the peasantry in Awadh, Bayly remarks that '... in culture and economic interest the higher caste tenants and petty landlords... never merged with the Kurmi peasant associations.'¹¹⁹ Thus economically as well as socially the class of tenants was divided on the basis of caste. But caste in Champaran did not function as a divisionary factor. As Judith Brown remarks, 'Caste was not a critical factor in shaping the structure of power in Champaran.'¹²⁰ That is why it was possible for the dominant peasantry in Champaran to be multicaste. According to Pouchepadass 'Raj Kumar Shukla, Khendar Prasad Rai, Sant Raut, Lomraj Singh, etc. were some of the main leaders.'¹²¹ These leaders came from both high as well as middle castes, i.e. from the so-called "respectable castes". And they constituted an oligarchy of rich peasants.

In Awadh the divisionary elements were unlimited. The differentiation in land rent introduced not only division between the high caste and low caste tenants, it further succeeded in introducing the division within the low caste tenants. As Eric Stokes points out '... in 1929 the Kurmi was required to pay roughly a third more in rent than the Thakur, while Kachhis and Muraos paid almost double.'¹²² Concerning the imposition of rent the situation before 1929 was not better. The castewise imposition of rent was the legacy of the taluqdari system from its very beginning in the nineteenth century. Of course the situation was very different just a century before, i.e. during the days of Nawabs. In those days, as has already been pointed out, the Amirs of Awadh invited Kurmis, Kachhis and Koeries to settle down in Awadh because of their proficiency in agriculture. They were at that time charged less rents. But the introduction of taluqdari system in Awadh changed the picture totally. The ability to produce more food crops became

a curse. Since they were producing more so they were charged more rent.

It would not be out of context to refer to the issue of Sanskritization in this context. For Sanskritization was used to avoid excessive rent. Like the issue of "dominant peasantry" Sanskritization too is the brain-child of M.N. Srinivas. Though the sociologists and historians have produced much literature on Sanskritization, they have not seen its connection with land rent. The desire for higher status in society is grounded in having better economic status. From the beginning of this century Kurmis had been trying to project themselves as Kshatriyas. They had been using such titles as 'thakur', 'singh', etc. The Census of 1911 refers to the claim of Kurmis as Kshatriyas. They established the All India Kurmi-Kshatriya Association of which there was a meeting in 1913 which was attended by 'the leader of the Patidar Yuvak Mandal' from Gujrat.¹²³ This shows that the Patidars, originally known as Kanbis, are the same as the Kurmis of U.P. Kurmis of U.P. consider Sardar Patel as a man of their own caste.¹²⁴ The most interesting piece of document is the resolution of the All India Kurmi-Kshatriya Conference forwarded to the Simon Commission. This resolution specially attacks the Oudh Rent (amendment) Act of 1921.

This Conference expresses its deep sense of regret and indignation at the alarming interpretation placed upon section 51 D subsection 4 of the Oudh Rent Act, coupled with section 87 of the Land Revenue Act, in excluding this caste as a whole from the benefits conferred by the section and respectfully but most emphatically, urges upon the United Provinces Government to issue necessary instructions to the special officers in charge of record operation to recognise the claims of the community, both as Kshatriya and advanced agriculturists in the matter of concessional and favourable rents.¹²⁵

Kurmis wished to be considered as Kshatriyas, not simply because their social position would improve, but because their rent would decrease. This is the connection between 'sanskritization' and 'land rent'.

Finding no way out for the solution of their economic difficulties, the Kurmis of Patti jumped into the tenant struggle. Kashi, Ajodhya,

Bhagwan Din and Pryag joined hands with Jhinguri Singh, Sahdev Singh and Drigpal Singh. All these leaders were real subaltern figures. In these leaders one can see that there is no rigid boundary between the "subaltern thesis" and the "dominant peasantry" thesis. The boundaries have been artificially created by the historians. All these leaders were self-sufficient economically in the sense that they had not to work in the fields of others to fulfil the needs of their families. Even those leaders who were tenants-at-will managed their affairs without working on the fields of others. To broaden their movement they invited Ram Chandra who was not a tenant of any kind. Ram Chandra was a sadhu, a baba. He was not invited to Rure to lead the Brahmin tenantry though he was a Brahmin. He was invited to lead the same tenantry that took interest in the Rure Sabha, at that time it was purely a Kurmi tenantry. Ram Chandra was invited to Rure because he was sadhu-baba, having charismatic character to attract people. A sadhu-baba in Hindu society is supposed to have transcended the Varna-hierarchy; therefore, he can find his place in any varna, any caste. It is only at the second stage of the Awadh tenant struggle, sometime in 1918-19, that Ram Chandra joined the struggle.¹²⁶ Both Drigpal Singh and Sahdev Singh had gone out of the scene and the combine that started working was that of Ram Chandra, Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Pryag and Bhagwan Din. And this combine started spreading its roots in the adjoining tahsils. In this combine of leadership we see the hierarchical relationship. Kashi, Ajodhya, Pryag and Bhagwan Din were the intermediaries between the Kurmi tenantry and the non-Kurmi leaders Ram Chandra and Jhinguri Singh.

Ram Chandra remained a controversial figure throughout his life. He was not a simple straightforward leader like Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya and Bhagwan Din. Maybe because he lacked the subaltern consciousness of these leaders. Mridula Mukherjee seems to be right when she writes

that

Baba Ram Chandra's range of experience and exposure to the world was certainly far removed from that of an ordinary peasant of Awadh and his consciousness and ideology can hardly be considered representative of the 'autonomous' or 'pure' consciousness of the 'subaltern' peasants he led.¹²⁷

The sense in which Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Pryag were subaltern leaders, Ram Chandra was not, because he was not tenant of any kind, evicted or non-evicted. He was like their vakil, pleading their cases everywhere he goes, be they the government officers or the nationalist intelligentsia. In the process he was trying to acquire subaltern consciousness, and to give up his baba and vakil identity. His marriage to the Kurmi peasant woman, Jaggi, was a step in this direction and so was his organising the Kurmi-Kshatriya Sabha. He was making an attempt to de-Brahmanise himself, as I once argued, to become a part and parcel of the Kurmi tenantry.¹²⁸ He did not organise either the 'Brahma Samaj' or the 'Sadhu Samaj'. He wished to give up his past identity. Being a Maharashtrian Brahman he was a total stranger to Awadh. But he attempted to acquire a new identity by living with the tenants of Awadh. He tried to become a family member of Kurmi tenants.¹²⁹ But it is doubtful whether he succeeded in changing his identity. The upward pull and his desire for national respectability did not allow him to become one with tenants.

The first phase of the Awadh tenant struggle can be described as a Kurmi-based class struggle. According to Ram Chandra the credit goes to 'Kurmis for awakening other castes to participate in the kisan movement.'¹³⁰ Therefore, the Kurmis played the same role in Awadh which the Patidars played in Bardoli. The Awadh tenant struggle had gone through several stages. After organising themselves the Kurmis started organising those tenants who belonged to the castes of the same social level as Kurmis, such castes as

Koeries, Kachhis, Muraos, Ahirs, Lodhs, etc. At the last stage the struggle became secular, attracting the tenants of all castes and religions. Muslims too jumped into the struggle with Hindus. This becomes clear from Ram Chandra's diary when he wrote

I am very much attached to Pratapgarh because of the reason that the Kurmis, Koeries, Vamads and Ahirs participated in the peasant movement of 1919-20-21 after losing their thousands of rupees and suffering in jail. Because of this movement the land act was changed. Afterwards Thakurs and Brahmans also came with me.¹³¹

Brahmans and Thakurs also came, but they were the last to come. At the initial stages, the high caste tenants were not impressed by the fact that Ram Chandra and Jhinguri Singh belonged to high castes. It is only at the last stage that the whole rural mass of Awadh came to participate in the struggle. Except taluqdars the whole rural mass was active. And the rural mass of Rai Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad became more active than the rural mass of Pratapgarh. There was a sort of rural revolt against the British in Rai Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad.

Autonomy of Tenant Struggle: The tenant struggle of Awadh which started in the Patti tahsil of Pratapgarh District was of a sustained character. Its leadership was in matured hands. This struggle was qualitatively different from what is known as Aika Movement and the movements which were observed in the year 1921 in Rai Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad. All these movements were sporadic led by the sporadic leaders.¹³² The tenant struggle of Pratapgarh was of an autonomous character, in the sense that it was not started by outside leaders with or without tenant background. Ram Chandra at a later stage became its informal yakil and a propagandist, giving to the tenants different kind of advices at different times, such advices as meeting the government officers, taluqdars and the nationalist intelligentsia, etc. Though he did not have a formal degree to be a yakil, he was educated enough to impress his clients. Geeta and Ramayana were his law-books and they worked better than the law-books on the minds

of illiterate tenants.¹³³ The tenants surrendered themselves to his advices and converted Ram Chandra into a hero. They were so much hypnotised by Ram Chandra's Ramayana that they could never imagine that Ram Chandra would ever give them wrong advices. Ram Chandra was inferior only to Gandhi in their minds; he became their Gandhi. After 1916 and his entry into Champaran in 1917 Gandhi for the rural mass of Awadh became an avtar of God. Ram Chandra tried to emulate Gandhi and to some extent he succeeded in his effort.

Compare Jawaharlal's first impression of kisans of Pratapgarh and their ability to organise with V.N. Mehta's impressions of these very kisans which he recorded in his report of November 1920. Jawaharlal visited Pratapgarh sometime in the month of June, hardly three months before Mehta's appointment to make an extensive tour of Pratapgarh. Needless to point out that there would have been no tour of Mehta if Jawaharlal had not visited Pratapgarh villages. And Jawaharlal's three days with peasantry were countered by Mehta's thirty days with all the government machinery with him. At last the government was moved. But how moved was Jawaharlal? He felt that he was a visitor from another planet, and he was seeing something new on the earth.

Enormous gatherings would take place at the briefest notice by word of mouth (Sita Ram). One village would communicate with another, and the second with the third, and so on, and presently whole villages would empty out, and all over the fields there would be men and women and children on the march to the meeting place. Or, more swiftly still, the cry of Sita Ram - Sita Ra-a-a-a-m would fill the air, and ravel far in all directions and be echoed back from other villages, and then people would come streaming out or even running as fast as they could.¹³⁴

Were these men, women and children just a 'sack of potatoes', as Marx thought about peasantry, without any ability to organise themselves? Were they suffering from 'feudal submissiveness' as Sanders thought about them? Of course they were poor, extremely poor, and were perhaps not in a position to afford even one meal a day which was allowed by Irwin, and lived only on

parched grain. When Jawaharlal looked at them he accepts 'I was filled with shame and sorrow, shame at my own easy-going and comfortable life and our petty politics of the city.'¹³⁵ Congress till 1920 was the body of urban politicians who knew nothing about villages. Even Champaran could not change them.¹³⁶ Jawaharlal was forced to give up his old bourgeoisie picture of India, 'A new picture of India seemed to rise before me, naked, starving, crushed, and utterly miserable.'¹³⁷ And yet these utterly miserable beings had life enough to organise, and organise on their own, without any outside leadership, except perhaps the peasant-image of Gandhi, who even for Jawaharlal was 'the great peasant'.¹³⁸ The tenants of Pratapgarh were like Eklavya learning to organise in the absence of their Guru who rejected them because they were not Kshatriyas, they were not the tenants of white planters, they were tenants of black taluqdars. After seeing the organised peasantry Jawaharlal had a surprise and an amazement: 'What was surprising to me then was that this should have developed quite spontaneously without any city help or the intervention of politicians and the like. The agrarian movement was entirely separate from the Congress.'¹³⁹ 'What amazed me still more was our total ignorance in the cities of this great agrarian movement. No newspaper had contained a line about it: they were not interested in rural areas. I realised more than ever how cut off we were from our people and how we lived and worked and agitated in a little world apart from them,' he says.¹⁴⁰ If Irwin, Sanders and Marx had accompanied Jawaharlal they would have been shocked and not only surprised and amazed. Pratapgarh peasants totally falsified their views about peasantry. And though the Congress did not know about peasants, Gandhi knew about them, and so preferred 'to become a peasant'. There was an invisible bond between peasants and Gandhi. And in the case of Pratapgarh peasantry it always remained invisible. They were not so fortunate as the peasants of Champaran. However, they succeeded in having a visible bond with Jawaharlal, which hel-

ped them for getting the government machinery moved. Jawaharlal's remarks quoted above are sufficient to show that the peasant movement of Pratapgarh was autonomous; no member of his 'little world' came to lead them or even came to see their organisational strength prior to Jawaharlal's visit.

Incidentally, the situation was the same in Champaran before 1917. Congress was a body of city intelligentsia, knowing nothing about villages and the rural mobilisation going on there. Consider Kripalani's remark quoted by Pouchepadass in connection with Champaran,

In those days such was our nationalism that we did not know what was really happening in the villages. We, the educated, lived more or less an isolated life. Our world was confined to the cities and to our fraternity of the educated. Our contact with the masses was confined to our servants, and yet we talked of the masses and were anxious to free the country from foreign yoke.¹⁴¹

How could this 'little world of educated elite' think in terms of freeing the country from foreign yoke when it did not know either the country or the foreign yoke? Foreign yoke in its nakedness could be seen only in the villages. Gandhi realised this truth as soon as he entered the Indian politics, which was the reason why he converted himself into a villager. And the villagers of India started considering him as their own man. Of course they bypassed the city intelligentsia that surrounded Gandhi. Villagers established a metaphysical bond between themselves and Gandhi.

Mehta's position was quite different from Kripalani's and Jawaharlal's. He was the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh in 1920, so neither the peasants nor the villages were new to him, it was the part of his official duty to deal with them. Mehta's report is so very different from Jawaharlal's that one can easily distinguish the autobiographical sensitivity from the dull narration of facts and events. Mehta had not felt 'shame and sorrow' when he saw the poverty-stricken peasants, and he had not condemned the 'little world of officers to which he belonged.' Mehta knew very well that it was the bond between the taluqdars and the government officers which

made illegal exactions of cesses possible. In one taluka Jawaharlal was told 'there had been as many as fifty different kinds of such exactions.'¹⁴² Mehta's own list falls quite below this number. The responsibility for throwing tenants into the lap of the city politicians goes purely to the government officers, including Mehta himself. Their appeals against the taluqdars to these officers fell on the deaf ears. Did not Jhinguri Singh forward the complaints of kisans against the taluqdars to Mehta's office? On Ram Chandra's advice these complaints were forwarded to Mehta. Mehta asked Ram Chandra to do this. What action did Mehta take on those complaints? Rather in his report to the Commissioner he referred to the criminal prosecution of some tenants and their leaders. Did he prosecute even one taluqdar? Did he not know that all the taluqdars of Awadh deserved prosecution? If he was sincere he should have punished at least one taluqdar to set up an example. Then what is the point in advising Ram Chandra for forwarding complaints to his office. Mehta simply wished to show his superiors that he attempted to stop the peasant movement like a 'good government servant'. It was Mehta's helplessness, and the helplessness of the government servants like him, to act against the taluqdars, that the kisans of Awadh were driven to obtain outside help. Pratapgarh at that time was the soul of Awadh tenant struggle. Patti taluqdars were responsible for forcing tenants to organise. Gandhi's image helped them to organise. Ram Chandra became an instrument to spread the organisation. It was not just a chance that the tenants met Jawaharlal and other politicians of Allahabad. They went to Allahabad for no other purpose. They realised that their problem was not a simple agrarian problem to be solved by the government officials. The problem required its solution at a level higher than that of Mehta and his band of government officers.

Two pages of Mehta's report, pages 2 and 3, are subtle attempts at distorting the history of Pratapgarh tenant struggle. Whether or not the go-

vernment was misled, the historians of Awadh were certainly misled. Since Ram Chandra was convinced that Mehta was the saviour of kisans, the historians of Awadh were also convinced that Mehta stood for the kisans. The true history, to repeat, is that the Kurmi tenant leaders of Patti, Bhagwan Din, Kashi, Ajodhya and Pryag joined hands with Thakur Jhinguri Singh and Thakur Sahdev Singh who started the tenant sabha at Rure to which they belonged. The sabha was started against nazrana, bedakhli, hari and begari, which were purely economic issues. Mehta totally avoids the fact that the Rure Sabha was started by the local grass-root leaders. He has attempted to show that 'the people of Rur were suffering from no disabilities nor had they any grievances.'¹⁴³ He could easily supply the certificate of 'no disabilities' by showing that the rental figures of Rure were not so high as the rental figures of other villages. But what about nazrana, hari, begari and so many other kinds of cesses? Less rent in Awadh was an index of more amount of illegal taxes. Concerning grievances, Mehta himself accepted that whenever a tenant 'felt aggrieved' he rushed 'to the sabha with his complaint'.¹⁴⁴ This remark about complaints refers to the same old sabha which was visited by Mehta. He found 'the ochre coloured flag' on the thatch where the sabha 'was formally inaugurated'.¹⁴⁵ Mehta has invented a cause for starting sabha at Rure. The cause is not economic; it is religious. He traces it to the Tulsidas's Ramayana: 'The cause of the selection of Rur as the headquarters of the sabha is rather interesting. When Rama and Laxmana attended Sita's Swayamvara, Tulsidas describes them as follows: 'In the assembly of Rajas the two brothers shone like two moons in the galaxy of stars' 'Raj Samaj Virajat Rure'. 'Rur' means beautiful. 'Rure' was construed to mean 'in Rure village'.¹⁴⁶ Thus the Rure village became the headquarter of Sabha not because of any economic disability or because of Jhinguri Singh, but because of the Ramayana of Tulsidas. Mehta has converted an issue of 'recent history' into an issue of 'ancient his-

tory'. All because he wishes to show that tenants of Rure, like the tenants of the whole Awadh, are submissive, incapable of organising themselves. They have been organised by an outsider. Ram Chandra is his obvious choice, because Ram Chandra knew the Ramayana. Ram Chandra, who was an agitator, a professional agitator and not any kind of tenant, organised the Rure tenant sabha. Mehta has converted Ram Chandra into an architect of tenant agitation. He wishes to give no credit to Jhinguri Singh and other tenant leaders.

According to Mehta report Jhinguri Singh was not a genuine leader of tenants. Rumour was responsible for making him into a leader. He writes 'Rumour had it that Jhinguri Singh was declared Raja of Rure.'¹⁴⁷ Thus Jhinguri Singh acquired importance in Rure because of the rumour and not because of any leadership qualities. But Mehta also writes that Jhinguri Singh 'lectured that he swallowed all laws',¹⁴⁸ What does Mehta mean by swallowing all laws? Does he mean anything more than that in his lectures Jhinguri Singh rejected all laws? Obviously the laws which Jhinguri Singh rejected (swallowed) were concerning the land-tenure system? This means he was attacking the taluqdari system in his lectures. Was he doing anything else? If he was doing anything else in his lectures then either he would have been in the mental asylum or in a jail. 'Swallowing all laws' means becoming an outlaw. Did Jhinguri Singh appear as an outlaw or a raja to those who came for his lectures? Mehta invents tales to distort the history of Pratapgarh tenant struggle. He saves himself through these tales.

Continuing with his distortion Mehta further writes 'Circumstances happened that brought this isolated movement of purely agrarian character within the vortex of politics.' Ram Chandra Sharma told the peasants 'that if they were united and got Mahatma Gandhi to back them then wrongs would be righted as the wrongs of Champaran agriculturists were righted.'¹⁴⁹ Mehta wishes to show that Ram Chandra united the peasants in the name of Gandhi

and Champaran. And whose name was used and what pattern was adopted when Jhinguri Singh and Sahdev Singh initiated the sabha at Rure long before Ram Chandra came to Awadh? There is no doubt that in 1917 Gandhi became the hero of all the peasants of Hindi-belt. But then the peasants of Patti tahsil had not to wait for Ram Chandra to come and tell them that Gandhi righted the wrongs done to the Champaran peasants. And what does Mehta mean by calling the Pratapgarh movement as the 'isolated movement of purely agrarian character.' Yes, it was isolated. But so was the movement of the 'little world of Nehru and Kripalani' isolated. Perhaps the 'little world of city intelligentsia' was more isolated than the world of peasants, because very few people live in cities, and only a small fraction of them constitutes the intelligentsia. Calling the tenant movement as purely agrarian Mehta wishes to say that it had no political dimension. Are nazrana and bedakhli purely agrarian issues, requiring no political decision and intervention? Can eviction be stopped without giving proprietary rights on land to the tenants? In attacking nazrana and bedakhli the tenants of Patti were attacking the taluqdari system. Their demand was for the proprietary rights on land. If a tenant works on the land of others, then his eviction cannot be stopped. To stop his eviction land must belong to him. How can the problems of tenants be narrow agrarian problems? They require political decisions. The organisation of peasants of Pratapgarh was a political organisation. Therefore, Mehta himself could not solve the problems of those peasants. The logic of the situation demanded the meeting of two worlds, the 'little world of city intelligentsia' and the 'massive world of rural inhabitants'. And it was not the first time that the massive world went to meet the little world. Champaran already set the trend. And the tenants of Pratapgarh were only following the historical step.

Continuing his tirade against the tenants of Awadh, Mehta writes 'Taking advantage of the saptami bathing in Pryag he (Ram Chandra) took 500 te-

nants... to Allahabad where Gandhi was expected on his way back from the All India Congress Committee meeting at Benaras. Mr. Gandhi could not be met but the officers of the Allahabad Kisan Sabha befriended them and a meeting was held at Balua Ghat.¹⁵⁰ Granted that the saptami bath was a non-political motive. Was the desire to meet Gandhi also non-political? Did the tenants go to Allahabad for just darshana of Gandhiji? Were they not interested in bringing Gandhi to Pratapgarh or at least telling their grievances to Gandhiji? Tenants were certainly not misled by Ram Chandra. They went to Allahabad for no other purpose but to meet the politicians of Allahabad. As Jawaharlal writes that the 'kisans marched fifty miles from the interior of Pratapgarh District to Allahabad city with the intention of drawing the attention of prominent politicians there to their woebegone condition.'¹⁵¹ What was wrong if the tenants went to Allahabad? Did the taluqdars listen to them? Did the government officers care for them? Was there any other alternative?

Mehta's one more comment deserves attention. Jawaharlal and Gauri Shanker 'came and the Sabha of old was rehabilitated and put on proper lines at Rur and Amargarh... The backwaters were intermingled with the maelstrom of metropolitan politics.'¹⁵² As a result, Mehta unhappily reports, there was a 'change in the tone of applications filed before me, i.e. the change from the rustic simplicity of Rur to the artificiality of the headquarters.'¹⁵³

When did the rustic simplicity of Rure disappear and the artificiality of the headquarters introduced? It is on 17th October 1920 the Oudh Kisan Sabha was formed.¹⁵⁴ It was the result of the union of city intelligentsia with the peasantry of Pratapgarh. City politics shifted from Allahabad to Pratapgarh, the home of peasant awakening. The fact that Pratapgarh became the home (headquarter) of Oudh Kisan Sabha shows that the little calf got a new vigour by joining the mother-cow. She saved the calf from its appoa-

ching death. It is also noteworthy that the Oudh Kisan Sabha was formed during the middle period of Mehta's enquiry, for Mehta started his enquiry on 2nd of October of the same year. On 17th October the local leaders formally rejected the patronage of Mehta which was extended to them for suffocating their awakening. Mehta was one of the invitees to the meeting of 17th October which was attended by Jawaharlal and Gauri Shanker. Mehta sensed he lost his game, he had the ICS instinct, so he walked out of the meeting when Jawaharlal gave Gandhiji's message of non-violence and boycott of Assembly elections.¹⁵⁵ Mehta realised that he was no match to the young Jawaharlal. Peasants had slipped out of his hands and had gone into the hands of Jawaharlal.

Mehta wished to undermine 'the rural awakening' in his report. Though he talked about 'metropolitan politics' he was unable to coin the word 'rural politics' for what was going on in Pratapgarh villages even before Jawaharlal's visit to those villages. He knew that 'eviction and nazrana' could not be stopped without giving proprietary rights on land to the tenants. But giving proprietary rights on land to the tenants means abolition of taluqdari system. So the demand of the peasants was highly political, yet Mehta considered it as a minor agrarian issue. Thinking metropolitan as 'maelstrom' on the part of Mehta is like thinking 'to contain a gallon of water in a tea cup.' Freedom could not be achieved in the metropolitan cities because India does not live in these cities. Freedom requires the carrying of rural simplicity to the city centres, and bringing of city sophistication to the rural centres. Of course any kind of meeting between the 'little world of city intelligentsia' with the 'massive world of rural India' was a danger signal to the British. Since Mehta was a faithful employee of the British he warned the British that 'the movement is now on uncertain grounds.'¹⁵⁶ This warning was the consequence of his participation in the meeting of 17th October. Mehta simply did not know what

steps he should take for containing the peasantry. He accepted the failure of his hollow promises to get the rent law changed to the advantage of the tenantry. When Mehta calls the rural awakening as 'backwaters' he simply exhibited his frustration when faced with a massive challenge. Perhaps he knew, he was intelligent enough to know, that swaraj and swadeshi were given a concrete substance in the voice against nazrana and bedakhli. Prior to the tagging of the former with the latter, the former were nothing but the city slogans requiring no serious attention. The little city calf would have died if it was not brought to its mother-cow of the villages. The voice against nazrana and bedakhli raised by tenants since 1917 was the voice of swaraj and swadeshi. Though quite late, Jawaharlal realised it.

Mehta depended on Ram Chandra to contain the awakening of peasants by pampering him in all kinds of ways. But Ram Chandra appeared to him as playing a double game. He continued calling Mehta as the saviour of kisans, yet he wished to come closer to Jawaharlal and Gauri Shanker. He wished to be closer to the national figures for himself becoming a national figure. Therefore, Mehta, after seeing his failure, started blaming the 'outsiders' for fomenting the tenant unrest in Pratapgarh. He did not mind distorting the history of tenant struggle in Pratapgarh. Not Jhinguri Singh, Sahdev Singh (who brought back with him the experience of Bengal awakening), Bhagwan Din, Kashi, Ajodhya and Pryag but Ram Chandra, who came back from Fiji, established the Rure Sabha. The date for the origin of struggle was shifted to 1920. Ram Chandra, an outsider, started unrest among tenants. He and no one else was responsible for awakening the tenants from their feudal submissiveness. Later Ram Chandra brought the new outsiders, the city dwellers, Jawaharlal, Gauri Shanker and other professional leaders and vakils to Pratapgarh. These new outsiders changed the rustic simplicity of Rure Sabha and brought into it the artificiality of the headquarters. Original Rure Sabha was established not because of any economic reasons or the

highhandedness of Patti taluqdars after their success against Sanders but because of 'Raj Samaj Virajat Rure'. Though Mehta failed in containing the tenantry of Pratapgarh he did succeed in containing the historians of Awadh tenant struggle. With Ram Chandra these Awadh historians started considering Mehta as the saviour of kisans, though in reality he was only an Indian edition of Sanders. For his attempt to mislead Pratapgarh tenants, Mehta in due course became a member of the Board of Revenue. Ram Chandra continued his links with Mehta even after he became the member of the said Board.

Gandhi's commitment to Swaraj and Swadeshi, Ram Chandra's coming to Rure and finally Jawaharlal's entry into Pratapgarh and the formation of Oudh Kisan Sabha led to two important consequences. City press started writing about the kisan awakening. Press started visiting the kisan sanctuary. The second important consequence was that the inmates of kisan sanctuary were preparing themselves to give more news to the press. Gandhi's ideal for obtaining Swaraj was tagged with non-violence. The tag of non-violence was removed from Gandhi's Swaraj, particularly in the districts of Rai Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad. By the end of 1920 there was a mushroom growth of tenants, most of whom were not tenants of any kind, and came only to provide leadership to the tenantry. These leaders started violence for establishing Swaraj in the countryside of Rai Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad. Since Swaraj was for everybody rural labour also joined hands with the revolting peasants and their leaders. The leaders of the revolt, produced by the situation of the time, obtained gathering at the spur of the moment by using the name of Gandhi and Swaraj. Their leadership depended on the borrowed charisma.

Following the example of Baba Ram Chandra so many babas and faqirs came into existence and became leaders of tenantry without having the restraining influence of the grass-root leaders like Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Bhagwan Din, etc. These grass-root leaders had the qualities of sustained leadership with commitment to non-violence. Their commitment to non-violence was fur-

ther reinforced by Jawaharlal's entry into Pratapgarh. These grass-root leaders were tenants first and became leaders afterwards. But most of the mushroom leaders were tenants at no time, either before taking the charge of leadership or after leaving such a charge.

No one can deny the fact that a great revolution occurred in the three districts of Awadh in 1920-21, yet the British officers continued deluding themselves that the name of 'H.R.H. the Duke of Cannaught' is 'a household word throughout India'.¹⁵⁷ It is not the name of Duke of Cannaught but the name of Gandhi that became a household word in India in 1921. It was his name that converted Ram Chandra into 'the second Mr. Gandhi' in the government files.¹⁵⁸ To think that Rure Sabha was autonomous does not mean that it was not inspired by Gandhi. Even the mushroom leaders of Rai Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad used the name of Gandhi. Some of them might have thought that they were fulfilling the wish of Gandhi in revolting against the British and their agents, the taluqdars.

Notes and References to Chapter 2

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10. Metcalf, Land, Landlords, and the British Raj, table 13, p. 402.
11. Ibid., p. 194.
12. Reeves, Landlords and Governments in Uttar Pradesh, p. 42.
13. Oudh Gazetteer, Introduction, p. xxiii.
14. Pioneer, February 26, 1892. Cited in Sanders, Pratapgarh Settlement Report, 1896, p. 64.
15. Reeves, Landlords and Governments in Uttar Pradesh, p. 43.
16. Sanders, Pratapgarh Settlement Report, p. 64.
17. Ibid., p. 66.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Cited in Reeves, Landlords and Governments in Uttar Pradesh, p. 47.
21. Ibid., p. 56.

22. Sanders, Pratapgarh Settlement Report, p. 183.
23. Ibid, p. 65.
24. Ibid., p. 183.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. H.R.C. Hailey, Commissioner, Fyzabad Division, forwarding note on the Report of V.N. Mehta to the Chief Secretary, United Provinces Government, 25 November 1920, F. No. 753, Revenue, 1920, UPSA.
28. Report of V.N. Mehta (Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh), 11 November 1920, File No. 753, Revenue, 1920, UPSA, p. 8.
29. Ibid. See Exhibit S, p. 104.
30. Sanders, Pratapgarh Settlement Report, p. 187.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., p. 227.
34. Ibid., p. 198.
35. Rai Sahib Babu Viswanath Singh, Pratapgarh Settlement Report, 1930, p. 13.
36. Ibid.
37. Sanders, Pratapgarh Settlement Report, p. 61.
38. Fyzabad District Gazetteer, 1960, p. 23.
39. Cited in Sanders, Pratapgarh Settlement Report, p. 77.
40. Ibid., p. 183.
41. Mehta Report, p. 6.
42. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
43. Sanders, Pratapgarh Settlement Report, p. 273.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., p. 274. Mr. Buck was some government officer of 1878.
46. Ibid., pp. 274-75.
47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., p. 89.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., p. 83.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p. 183.
54. Ibid., p. 203.
55. Mehta Report, p. 1.
56. Ibid., p. 3.
57. Ibid., p. 9.
58. Ibid., p. 8.
59. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
60. Ibid., pp. 16-18. See also Exhibit S on excessive nazrana, p. 104.
61. Ibid., p. 9.
62. Ibid., p. 49.
63. Ibid., pp. 57-60.
64. Ibid., p. 63.
65. Butler, Oudh Policy, Allahabad, 1896, pp. 55-56. Cited in Metcalf, Land, Landlords, and the British Raj, p. 198.
66. Mehta Report, p. 70.
67. Ibid., pp. 70-71.
68. Ibid., pp. 71-74.
69. Ibid., p. 70.
70. Ibid., p. 1.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., p. 70.
73. Ibid., p. 29.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., p. 31.

76. Ibid., p. 29.
77. Ibid., p. 30.
78. Ibid., p. 32.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid., p. 29.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., p. 32.
86. Ibid., 'Summary of findings and recommendations,' p. 2.
87. Ibid., p. 3.
88. Ibid.
89. Baba Ram Chandra Papers (BRP) 1st Instalment, F. No. 1.
90. Ibid., F. No. 25.
91. Mehta Report, p. 4.
92. Ibid., p. 4.
93. Ibid., p. 1.
94. Ibid.
95. Butler Collection, Mss. Eur. F. 116 (India Office Library, London), Vol. 80. Cited in Gyan Pandey, 'Peasant Revolt and Indian Nationalism: The Peasant Movement in Awadh, 1919-22' in Ranajit Guha (ed.), Subaltern Studies, Vol. I, Delhi, 1982, p. 43.
96. Judith M. Brown, Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics, 1915-1922, Cambridge, 1972, p. 324.
97. BRP, F. No. 1.A.
98. Jacques Pouchepadass, 'Local Leaders and the Intelligentsia in the Champaran Satyagraha (1917): A Study in Peasant Mobilization', Contributions to Indian Sociology (NS) Number 8, 1974, pp. 67-87.
99. Hailey's Note, p. 1.

100. Ibid., p. 2.
101. Ibid.
102. J.A. Fordham, Sultanpur Settlement Report, 1939, p. 19.
103. Hailey's Note, p. 2.
104. Ibid.
105. Oudh Gazetteer, Introduction, p. xxiii.
106. See Metcalf, Land, Landlords and the British Raj, Table 13, p. 402.
107. Hailey's Note, pp. 1-2.
108. M.N. Srinivas, The Dominant Caste and Other Essays, Delhi, 1987, p. 4.
109. Ibid.
110. M.N. Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India, Delhi, 1972, p. 151.
111. Ibid., p. 152.
112. Ibid., p. 151.
113. D.A. Low, 'Introduction: The Climactic Years, 1917-47' in D.A. Low (ed.), Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle 1917-47, London, 1977, p. 2.
114. Jacques Pouchepadass, 'Peasant Classes in Twentieth Century Agrarian Movements in India' in E.J. Hobsbawm, Witold Kula, Ashok Mitra, K.N. Raj, Ignacy Sachs (eds.), Peasants in History: Essays in Honour of Daniel Thorner, Calcutta, 1980, p. 147.
115. Shahid Amin, 'Agrarian Bases of Nationalist Agitations in India: An Historiographical Survey' in D.A. Low (ed.), The Indian National Congress: Centenary Hindsight, Delhi, 1988, pp. 98-128.
116. Ghanshyam Shah, 'Traditional Society and Political Mobilization: The Experience of Bardoli Satyagraha (1920-1928)', Contributions to Indian Sociology (NS) Number 8, 1974, pp. 89-107.
117. Pouchepadass, 'Local Leaders and the Intelligentsia in the Champaran Satyagraha (1917)', pp. 72-73.
118. These observations are based on my extensive field-study of the villages of Patti tahsil. Jhinguri Singh was evicted from the land which is closer to Rure than to Bharokan, but it lies within the boundary of the Bharokan village.

119. C.A. Bayly, 'Rallying Around the Subaltern', Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol. 16, No. 1, October 1988, p. 118.
120. Judith Brown, Gandhi's Rise to Power, p. 56.
121. Pouchepadass, 'Local Leaders and the Intelligentsia in the Champaran Satyagraha (1917)', p. 71.
122. Eric Stokes, 'Agrarian Relations: Northern and Central India' in Dharma Kumar (ed.), The Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol. 2, Delhi, 1982, p. 67.
123. Jan Breman, Of Peasants, Migrants and Paupers: Rural Labour Circulation and Capitalist Production in West India, Delhi, 1985, pp. 96-97.
124. I met several Kurmis of Patti tahsil who call themselves Patels.
125. Simon Commission Report on India, Vol. XVII, Delhi, 1988, p. 537.
126. See BRP, 1st Instalment, SW, S. No. 2-D.
127. Mridula Mukherjee, 'Peasant Resistance and Peasant Consciousness in Colonial India: 'Subaltern' and Beyond', Economic and Political Weekly (EPW), October 8, 1988, p. 2114.
128. Nisha Rathore, 'Hinduization, Sanskritization, De-Brahmanization and the Oudh Peasant Revolt of 1921', New Quest, No. 83, September-October 1990, pp. 261-70 + 286.
129. Jaggi even now calls herself a Kurmin, and the elite of Pratapgarh addresses her as a Kurmin. She was an active organiser of Kurmi-Kshatriya Sabha held at Kahla, Patti, on June 15, 1940.
130. BRP, 1st Instalment, S. No. 2-D.
131. Ibid., F. No. 11.
132. Awadh historians have failed to distinguish the 'sustained movement' from the 'sporadic movement' and, therefore, for them the sustained movement also died with the death of the sporadic movements.
133. Using the Ramayana in the speeches before peasants was a common practice with the grass-root leaders. Jhinguri Singh, Bhagwan Din and Kashi too were using the Ramayana. They also used to sing bhajans to attract the audience. It is said that Sahdev Singh knew each and every line of the Ramayana. So there was nothing novel about Ram Chandra's using the Ramayana.

134. Jawaharlal Nehru, Autobiography, New Delhi, 1980, pp. 51-52.
135. Ibid., p. 52.
136. Gandhi's image should not be studied by equating it with the image of the Congress.
137. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 52.
138. Ibid., p. 253.
139. Ibid., p. 54.
140. Ibid., pp. 54-55.
141. J.B. Kripalani, Gandhi, His Life and Thought, New Delhi, 1970, p. 61. Cited in Pouchepadass, 'Local Leaders and the Intelligentsia in the Champaran Satyagraha (1917)', p. 70.
142. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 54.
143. Mehta Report, p. 2.
144. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid., p. 2.
147. Ibid., p. 3.
148. Ibid.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.
151. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 51.
152. Mehta Report, p. 3.
153. Ibid., p. 4.
154. See Independent, 27 October 1920 and Leader, 4 November 1920. At that time Lucknow was evolving as the centre of taluqdars' politics. In 1857 the peasants of Pratapgarh were awakened to defend Qaisar Bagh of Lucknow but in 1920 they were attacking Qaisar Bagh occupants. So Qaisar Bagh remains important.
155. Independent, 27 October 1920.

156. Mehta Report, p. 4.
157. Chief Secretary to Government of U.P., 21.1.21, F. No. 50-3, GAD, 1921, UPSA.
158. Quoted by both M.H. Siddiqi and Kapil Kumar. Siddiqi, Agrarian Unrest in North India: The United Provinces, 1918-22, Delhi, 1978, p. 183; Kumar, Peasants in Revolt: Tenants, Landlords, Congress and the Raj in Oudh, 1886-1922, Delhi, 1984, p. 139.

CHAPTER 3: THE TENANT STRUGGLE: TRANSITORY PHASE

So far as the tenant struggle is concerned the transitory phase is as important as the preceding phase, i.e. the struggle of 1920-21, and the succeeding phase, i.e. the struggle of 1930-32. The tenant leaders in the transitory phase were consolidating their forces and framing new strategies to meet the demands of a new situation. It has been taken for granted by the Awadh historians that the tenants of Awadh stopped their struggle after passing of the Oudh Rent (amendment) Act of 1921. Government was supposed to have fulfilled the demands of the tenants. But the tenants did not stop their struggle after 1921, because the government simply did not fulfil their demands. However, the period between 1922 and 1929 had seen many changes. There occurred a qualitative change in the leadership. Several leaders, majority of them babas and faqirs, who were responsible for a large-scale violence in Rae Bareli, Fyzabad and Sultanpur, disappeared from the scene. They failed to surface again on the scene. The leaders of the Aika movement too totally got evaporated. Therefore, these leaders could easily be described as sporadic. They must be distinguished from the sustained leaders who continued their struggle after 1921. The logic through which the tenant leaders continued their struggle was that the Oudh Rent (amendment) Act of 1921 did not solve the problems of tenantry. Eviction, nazrana, hari, begar, etc. continued. Therefore, the struggle too should continue. However, there occurred certain qualitative changes even in the sustained leadership. For example, the horizon of Baba Ram Chandra's activities expanded. Tenantry no more remained his exclusive concern.

The tenant struggle during the transitory period was acquiring a wider shape. New leaders as well as new centres of struggle were coming up. Congress also appeared on the scene and wished to establish itself as the

true guide of kisans. Congress was trying to mobilize all classes, and not only the kisans. Jawaharlal took over the responsibility on himself for mobilizing the kisans. On the other hand, Gandhi was trying to win over the taluqdars. The arrangement worked. Both of them succeeded in their projects. Jawaharlal became quite popular with the grass-root leaders of the Rure Sabha. Gandhi succeeded with the Kalakankar and Bhadri Estates.

Sporadic Leaders and their Short-lived Achievements: It can hardly be doubted that what happened in Awadh in 1920-21 was nothing but a revolt. The Commissioner of Fyzabad Division accepted in his report that the spirit of the movement was the same which is found 'in most of revolutionary movements, viz., of unrest, discontent with existing conditions which breaks out in plunder of all... propertied classes.'¹ And the revolt was not restricted only to the propertied classes. The report further accepts that 'There is growing feeling against the European. The white races are held up to obloquy and hatred by the speakers... The police are abused for deserting their countrymen to serve this race.'² Revolt against the British appealed to all classes 'to the landless it means that the European stands between him and the plunder, to the tenants that the European prevents their getting rights, to the half educated that removal of present Government means freedom of their country from foreign oppression.'³ Most of those who participated in the revolt wished the Europeans to leave India. Exceptions were few. Concerning these exceptions the Commissioner further wrote, 'this growing wave of unrest would have definitely brought to the side of Government the zamindars, men of property and substantial tenants.'⁴ These were very few and even they were not in a position to really support the Europeans. These would be supporters of the British rule were 'in minority and overawed. They pay their subscriptions to the funds collected by the preachers (of revolt). The banias are equally afraid... and refuse supplies

to police and Government servants.'⁵ The preachers of revolution were demanding Swaraj against the British Raj. They expected that the Swaraj would be established 'through the intervention of Mahatma Gandhi.'⁶ For them the British Raj was as good as dead.

The colonial administrators and their historians, sitting far away from the Awadh in revolt (both in space and time), were made to believe that the Awadh revolt was not against the British, it was only against the taluqdars. It was parochial and limited. In his telegram to Delhi the Chief Secretary to Government of U.P. assured that in Rae Bareli 'an European can camp there alone quite safely,' because the 'tenantry have taken interest only in their own grievances against the landlords.'⁷ So also hostility to government was missing. As the telegram continues, 'In view of grossly misleading statements I may say that all reports from both Rae Bareli and Fyzabad indicate that the tenantry are actuated by no hostility to Government or to Europeans.'⁸ But who was the author of the 'grossly misleading statements' that the agitation was against the government and the Europeans? Who had said that in the Fyzabad Division not even the propertied classes were coming forward to support the British rule? None other than the Fyzabad Commissioner himself, who happened to be a European, was the author of these grossly misleading statements.

If the agitation was not against the government, then why think in terms of revising the Oudh Rent Act? Why think in terms of suspending eviction? The Fyzabad Commissioner, Mr. Hailey, was informed by Lucknow that 'the board have been asked for their proposals urgently to amend the Oudh Rent Act... The question of introducing emergent legislation to suspend ejectments is also being considered by Government.'⁹ Stopping of ejectments and the amendment to Oudh Rent Act were the only remedies to stop revolt spreading to other parts of Awadh from Fyzabad Division. This clearly falsifies the speculations of those who think that the kisan agitation became

a kisan revolt in the Fyzabad Division because of the participation of landless labourers. Government did not contemplate in terms of giving land to the landless labourers; it contemplated only in terms of stopping eviction and amending the Oudh Rent Act. Government knew very well that the kisan revolt was a creation of kisans only, and it could be stopped only by satisfying the kisans. Though the landless labourers participated in the revolt, they did not count as any kind of threat. Kisans, not landless labourers, posed a threat. The revolt in Rae Bareilly and Fyzabad Districts was a kisan revolt. 'Sita Ram' which was originally used by the kisans to bring their brothers from other villages became a war-cry of kisans. As the Commissioner of Fyzabad accepts in his report 'One of the most powerful weapons at their command is the war cry--sita ram ki jai. They all say that when this is sounded, most turn out and to a large extent this is done. It has become a cry of discontent.'¹⁰ Sita Ram was certainly not a war-cry when Jawaharlal visited Pratapgarh first time in June 1920. Jawaharlal writes that the people who came running after hearing Sita Ram 'were in miserable rags... but their faces were full of excitement and their eyes glistened... They showered their affection on us and looked on us with loving and hopeful eyes.'¹¹ But these men had no love and affection for the British. They lost all hopes and became violent. These men and women in rags shook the roots of British rule in Awadh. And the British had no option but to hasten the amendment to the Oudh Rent Act which they imposed on the Awadh tenantry in 1886. The British knew very well that the root cause of kisan revolt was the Act of 1886. Unless it was amended there was no hope for the revolt to subside. As Jawaharlal writes 'Frightened by the agrarian movement, the Government had hurried on with tenancy legislation. This promised some improvement in the lot of kisan but the measure was toned down when it was found that the movement was already under control.'¹² The British were contemplating to introduce, as has been shown above, 'emergent

legislation to suspend ejectments'. But once the movement came under control they gave up legislation against ejectment. And the amended Act of 1921 which was given to the Awadh tenantry was nothing but a hoax. It did not improve the lot of tenantry. Not only ejectments continued, but also nazrana, begari, hari, etc. continued. The revolution was a total failure. Of course the kisan leaders soon realised that the amended Act of 1921 was no better than the original Act, and, therefore, they restarted their agitation as soon as they were released from jail.

The kisan revolt of 1920-21 brought to surface two kinds of leaders, those who were mobilising kisans to fight against the Oudh Rent Act, and those who were inciting them to violence, to participate in plunder, etc. Even the British Government made a distinction between these two kinds of leaders, though they were against both the kinds. In the eyes of the British those who were uniting tenants to fight against the Oudh Rent Act were as dangerous as those who were instigating tenants to loot the granaries and houses of taluqdars. Both deserved to be arrested and put in jail. Slow poison in some sense is more dangerous than the fast poison. It is too late before the slow poisoning is detected. Therefore, the government issued orders 'to prosecute for the recent disturbances... the ringleaders and those actually engaged in crime.'¹³ Not all ringleaders were engaged in crime; some of them kept themselves away from all criminal activities. Yet they were undoubtedly leaders--ringleaders--of tenantry. Take the case of Rae Bareilly. Matabadal Koeri was a ringleader of tenantry. He established a branch of kisan sabha at Rasulpur and was a close associate of Rure Sabha leaders.¹⁴ He was an evicted tenant like the Rure Sabha leaders Kashi, Bhagwan Din, etc. He led the Rae Bareilly tenants to Ajodhya Congress of kisans.¹⁵ The leaders who emerged during the time of revolt in Rae Bareilly, whose names were not even heard during the days of Ajodhya Conference, were all very different from Matabadal Koeri. Take five prominent

leaders who have become popular with the Awadh historians, Janaki Das, Ram Ghulam, Rahmat Ali, Shah Mohammad Naim Ata and Brij Pal Singh. There were so many others like them.

Janaki Das was a baba, a sadhu, and not a tenant of any kind, evicted or non-evicted. His stature as a baba was also not very high. He was operating in the estate of the taluqdar, Thakurain Sheoraj Kunwar. The village Chandania was managed by Thakur Tribhuvan Bahadur Singh. It was reported that 'Taluqdar Tribhuvan Bahadur Singh of Chandanian (Chandania) was besieged in his house by a mob of about 3000 men headed by Baba Janaki Dass who is reported to be an absconded offender. Some gold rings and coins are alleged to have been extorted from the taluqdar.'¹⁶ It was possible that no gold rings and coins were extorted from the taluqdar; the report was totally fabricated. So also it was possible that Baba Janaki Das was not an absconding offender. It was simply to arrest him that such a charge was fabricated against him. But what did not seem to have been fabricated was that Baba Janaki Das did lead the mob of 3000 men who besieged the house of the taluqdar in question. What made him into the leader of this mob? He was distinguished from the mob only in his dress. Of course he also had his unique designation--the designation as baba. Perhaps his dress and designation were sufficient to make him into a leader of the mob. Whatever else his dress and designation had succeeded in achieving, they certainly succeeded in creating large amount of confusion in the minds of the tenants of Rae Bareli.

The arrest of Baba Janaki Das at Chandania in January 1921 was taken by many as the arrest of Baba Ram Chandra, and the crowds of men collected at Munshiganj bridge decided to free the baba from Rae Bareli jail.¹⁷ They wanted to prove that they were as brave as their brothers of Pratapgarh who forced the release of Ram Chandra from Pratapgarh jail in September 1920. However, this time a different end awaited the tenants. The government de-

cided that the situation of Pratapgarh should not be allowed to recur. Referring to the release of tenant leaders from Pratapgarh jail in September 1920 Jawaharlal writes 'for the kisans this was a great triumph and they began to think that they could always have their way by weight of numbers alone. To the government this position was intolerable and soon after a similar situation arose and this time it ended differently.'¹⁸ The time to which he is referring is the 7th of January 1921 and the place is Munshiganj Bridge of Rae Bareli where the tenants from adjoining villages started gathering from early morning to 'see the Baba', according to the then Deputy Commissioner, and to report 'their grievances against the taluqdars.'¹⁹ The Baba was in the Rae Bareli jail.

In the early hours of the day a faqir named Rahmat Ali Shah was found instigating the tenants to invade Rae Bareli jail and have the darshana of Baba. As the Deputy Commissioner of Rae Bareli writes about him 'The principal leader appeared to be a fakir Rahmat Ali Shah, who afterwards pretended to make himself useful in helping the crowd to move back, but really was doing his best to detain them.'²⁰ He had a distinct identity, he had 'a cane' whereas others 'had lathies'.²¹ As the day was passing, the crowd started increasing. At about 10.30 a.m., according to the Deputy Commissioner, the crowd 'must have numbered not less than five thousand. Later in the day it was estimated at from seven to ten thousand.'²²

At about 12 noon another holy man, a sadhu, made his appearance. Like Rahmat Ali Shah, he too was found exciting the mob. He was more violent than Rahmat Ali Shah. As the Deputy Commissioner reports, he had

threatened to assault Captain Alderson. Captain Alderson had to show his revolver to evade his attack. He (the sadhu) had a spear in his hand and was exciting the crowd. Captain Alderson had had considerable difficulty in dealing with two attempts to rush the bridge.²³

Later it was ascertained 'that one so-called Baba leading a crowd of villagers was a registered criminal Pasi named Ram Ghulam... The garb of a

faqir is, of course, very commonly adopted by a criminal.'²⁴

What the Deputy Commissioner wished to show was that the crowd at Munshiganj Bridge was the crowd of villagers, i.e. tenants. Left to themselves these villagers were harmless creatures, but they were incited by the babas and faqirs who temporarily became their leaders. The mob became excited, unruly and was making attempts to cross the bridge. The Deputy Commissioner also accepts in his report that at the time at which the mob was becoming violent some members of the mob 'were cooking their food on this side of the bridge on embankment.'²⁵ How violent were the villagers could be judged by the fact that they were cooking their food. Yet the government and the taluqdar Sirdar Birpal Singh were preparing their plans to kill these innocent non-violent villagers. Jail-invasions must be stopped at all costs.

Jawaharlal reached Munshiganj before the firing, but he was not allowed to address those kisans who gathered near the bridge. He himself writes

An officious person told the D.C. (Deputy Commissioner) that I was expected by the mail and suggested that I should be allowed to address the kisans and disperse them if possible. But the twins would have none of it. Was an agitator, a firebrand, to play the part of peacemaker where Government and taluqdar had jointly failed?²⁶

But Jawaharlal was not allowed to become a peacemaker because the twins were not interested in peace. They wanted the situation to aggravate so that they had some kind of reason or ground to open fire on the crowd. Ultimately Jawaharlal was removed from the scene and after the sacrifice of a few lives Sirdar Birpal Singh and the Deputy Commissioner succeeded in dispersing the crowd and establishing peace on the Munshiganj Bridge. Jails of India became free from invasions. Jawaharlal gives a moving description of the firing at Munshiganj Bridge:

The kisans were shot at Munshiganj because they would not go away at the bidding of the Deputy Commissioner or even of Sirdar Birpal Singh. They sat there patiently regardless of threats, not fearing

the serried ranks of the armed police. They offered no violence neither were they over-awed by fear of death. They had come to help a comrade and they would not desert him. Some were cooking. The mounted police charged into the crowd and trampled many and then it is said that some threw stones. And Sirdar Birpal Singh had to fire in self-defence and the police had to fire though no one ordered it to do so.²⁷

Munshiganj bridge became a second Jallianwala Bagh. As Jawaharlal continues writing:

Sir Michael O'Dwyer had gone, but Sir Harcourt Butler, the just, the wise, the sympathetic, remained to carry on the traditions of British rule and British justice. And so it was that Indian blood was again shed and the Governor hastened without respite, without enquiry, without thought, to offer his congratulations to all concerned 'and specially Sirdar Birpal Singh'. And the Commissioner says ditto and the Deputy Commissioner says Amen.²⁸

Though Jawaharlal spoke highly of kisans and condemned the clique of government and Sirdar Birpal Singh, he had not spoken a word, good or bad, about such babas and faqirs as Rahmat Ali Shah and Ram Ghulam. He had no courage to condemn these babas and faqirs, but he had courage enough to be silent about them. These babas and faqirs appeared as kisan leaders only in the Deputy Commissioner's report, and from there they reappeared again as kisan leaders in the books and articles written by the Awadh historians of our time. Of course in the history books they have come out with brighter colours. The part of the government report that they were kisan leaders is accepted but that part of the government report is totally rejected which calls them 'criminals', 'bad characters' and 'absconding offenders'. The history of the so-called kisan leaders like Rahmat Ali Shah and Ram Ghulam started at Munshiganj Bridge and it also ended there. Not because they were killed in firing, but because their leadership was highly sporadic. The position of Baba Janaki Das was a little superior to that of Ram Ghulam. But the difference was only quantitative and not qualitative. He too disappeared from the kisan struggle after he went to jail in 1921. He was certainly not given either death sentence or life imprisonment.

The past history of Shah Muhammad Naim Ata of Salon was unlike the past

history of Janaki Das or Ram Ghulam or Rahmat Ali Shah. No government officer ever claimed that Shah Muhammad Naim Ata was an 'absconding offender', 'a bad character' or 'a criminal'. He was the head of the dargah at Salon. In the technical language he was Sajjadah Nashin of the dargah. And he became head of the dargah through his ancestral right. He was quite convinced that Gandhi Raj would replace the British Raj. Therefore, he started advocating his case to become the king of Salon once Gandhi Raj was established. But the Munshiganj firing perhaps convinced him that there was no chance for the British to leave India; therefore, he decided to amend his relations with the British.

A certain Maulvi was induced to declare that he would be the king of Salon on the advent of the Gandhi raj. He repented however, and went to the headquarters in an ekka to apologise to the Deputy Commissioner for what he had done, as he said, under pressure.²⁹

Maulvi refers to Shah Muhammad Naim Ata. Thus ended the magnificent obsession of the kisan leader of Salon. On January 11, 1921 Shah Naim Ata withdrew himself from the agitation of kisans, because this agitation failed to make him the king of Salon.

Brijpal Singh was the principal agitator in the Karhia riot that occurred on March 20, 1921.³⁰ He was an ex-soldier of the army and was the prisoner of war in Germany. So he was unlike a sadhu or a faqir leader. He was also unlike a tenant-leader who would remain non-violent. Militancy was in his blood. However, militancy alone would not bring the tenants to fight against the British police. Karhia situation, on a small-scale, was like the situation of Munshiganj Bridge. On one side was police under the Deputy Commissioner and on the other side Brijpal Singh, Jhanku Singh and others with the tenant-force of about 3000. Peace was established only after firing and killing of tenants, and later arresting all the ringleaders, including Brijpal Singh. How the tenants were collected at Karhia and were retained there does not speak very high of Brijpal Singh. It was not the

militancy of Brijpal Singh but the name of Gandhi that gave courage to the tenants. The tenants were informed by Brijpal Singh that 'Mahatma Gandhi would arrive at 11 o'clock and he would regulate the Deputy Commissioner's action.'³¹ Though brave, Brijpal Singh knew his limitations. The soldiers who were led by him in the battle-field of Karhia were under the Field Marshalship of Mahatma Gandhi. They would fight only on Gandhi's orders. Therefore, Brijpal Singh had to tell the lie about Gandhi's visit to Karhia. Brijpal Singh was jailed for 4 years. What happened to him after four years is not known. He did not surface again as a tenant-leader. Perhaps for him the war against the British ended.

Consider one important leader, not from Rae Bareli but from Fyzabad. The leader in question is Suraj Prasad alias Ram Chandra. He was very different from all the leaders we have discussed so far. Maybe he assumed the name 'Ram Chandra' because of the currency of this name in Awadh. Since Suraj Prasad was operating as a sadhu, he could easily be confused with Baba Ram Chandra of Rure. However shortlived his kingdom was at the close of 1920, he declared that 'he was now ruler of the tract which he marked out with his flags and distributed villages among his followers.'³² In order to manage and to have influence on his subjects he 'collected a body-guard of lathials.'³³ Thus he was quite unlike other kisan leaders who moved without lathials. He was the ruler of kisans, and not their leader. And the kisans got attached to him because he 'taught that no rent should be paid nor should any rights be allowed to zamindars.'³⁴ The tenants in his kingdom were happy because they were required to pay money only towards the expenses of Suraj Prasad's retainers (lathials) which was as good as nothing if compared with the rent and nazrana charged by the zamindars and taluqdars of Awadh. In order to impress on his subjects that he was the paramount ruler of his tract he 'arrested a constable on patrol', thus showing that he did not care for the British rule.'³⁵ Karindas of the Kapradih

estate, from which Suraj Prasad carved out his kingdom, were not allowed to enter his kingdom. Not only the Kapradih estate, but even the Oudh Kisan Sabha rejected him. Deonarain reported that he was an impostor.³⁶

Suraj Prasad, along with his retainers and followers, was arrested on January 29, 1921. Hearing the news of his arrest, several thousands of his subjects gathered at Goshainganj Railway Station and the police had to 'fire in order to disperse the crowd.'³⁷ His influence was so great that long after his arrest many refused to believe that he would not come back and resume his kingdom.³⁸

It seems that the question what made Suraj Prasad a popular leader worried the British officials. Their worry was removed when they looked at the 'holy dress' of Suraj Prasad. This sort of dress was used by Shah Naim Ata, Janaki Das, Ram Ghulam, Rahmat Ali Shah and so many other leaders. According to the British it was the holy dress, the dress of sadhus and faqirs, which was responsible for the Awadh kisan revolt of 1920-21. 'Any person claiming to be a sadhu claims reverence and gets a following. The pretender Ram Chandra was followed by crowds, simply because he got hold of a saffron robe and posed as a holy man.'³⁹ If this is true then the British would have never succeeded in having their foothold in India. India was never short of the saffron robes or holy men. Suraj Prasad (the pretender Ram Chandra) was followed by the crowd, not because he wore a saffron robe, but because he decreased their load of rent and nazrana. He also stopped the practice of eviction. The government officials have accepted in their report that all those who wore saffron robe 'claim to be the followers of Gandhi and speak in his name.'⁴⁰ But for following Gandhi and speaking in his name one did not require a saffron robe. If such a robe was required Gandhi would have failed to mobilise the country and his name would have been restricted to a very small group of persons. Brijpal Singh and his followers had no saffron robe, yet they created a following through

Gandhi's name. Brijpal Singh's supporters Jhanku Singh and Jagmohan died but they had no saffron robes. Salik and Ram Autar were hanged for the Sehagaon Panchimgaon riot that occurred on 23 January 1921, but they had no saffron robes.⁴¹ So many non-violent tenants at Munshiganj died, but a sadhu was spared who attacked Captain Alderson with his spear. Captain Alderson was not provoked to fire at him. If the sadhu in question was Ram Ghulam, then he was one of the leaders who looted the bazar at Dih just a couple of days before Munshiganj tragedy.⁴² It seems that the kindness which the British showed to the sadhus and faqirs was not extended to the ordinary tenants, though at the same time it was maintained that the sadhus and faqirs were 'criminals', 'bad characters', 'absconding offenders', etc.

Though the subjects of Suraj Prasad's kingdom waited for him to come back and resume his kingdom, he never came back to Kapradih. Perhaps he too like Brijpal Singh lost interest in the kisan struggle. Maybe he had no wish to come back to the same place as an ordinary person of which he was the paramount ruler.

Not very different from Suraj Prasad was the case of Thakur Din of Kutia, Pratapgarh District. The latter carved out his own raj from Parhat estate as Suraj Prasad carved out his kingdom from Kapradih estate. Both of them started operating at roughly the same time. But Thakur Din was no kind of sadhu, he was the servant of the taluqdar of Parhat. Like Suraj Prasad, Thakur Din also started a sabha at Kutia. He instigated the tenants to loot the crop of the taluqdar and granaries of banias.⁴³ No rent was to be paid to the taluqdar. His end was like the end of Suraj Prasad. He was arrested along with his followers at Kutia but with two dissimilarities. Thakur Din's arrest led to no demonstration by his tenants, the kind of demonstration which people saw at Goshainganj station when Suraj Prasad was arrested. This shows that Thakur Din was not as popular with his tenantry as some Awadh historians have made him. There is no record to show

that the tenantry of Thakur Din wished him to come back and rule them. But the tenantry of Suraj Prasad wished him to come back and rule them. It seems that Suraj Prasad was a far superior human being than Thakur Din. There can be no doubt that Suraj Prasad had his own charisma, and not the charisma borrowed from Baba Ram Chandra as the government officers and the historians of Awadh believe. Maybe there is some truth in the story that the Naga-Sadhu converted Suraj Prasad from a Kayastha to a Kshatriya and gave the name Ram Chandra to him. It is only to discredit him and his popularity that the government officers started describing him as the 'pretender Ram Chandra'.⁴⁴ It is so tragic that he did not come back to the kisan agitation. Perhaps he would have served better than Thakur Din if the latter too had joined the kisan struggle after his release from jail. But this is only a hypothetical conditional, nothing positive can be said about the alternative.

Whether to give credit to Gandhi or to discredit him, the reports of government officers made Gandhi as the main source for the kisan revolt of 1920-21. 'Gandhi' and 'Swaraj' found their way deep into the psyche of the kisans. The kisan leaders, including Baba Ram Chandra, were acting on the borrowed charisma, the charisma borrowed from Gandhi. The huge crowd that gathered near Pratapgarh jail for the release of Ram Chandra in September 1920 was partly, if not wholly, the result of the rumour that Gandhi was coming for the release of Ram Chandra.⁴⁵ Even a section of crowd at Munshiganj came because of the rumour that Gandhi-Baba was arrested and put in the Rae Bareilly jail.⁴⁶ Kisans wished to see Gandhi, if possible, to touch his feet. He became the Avtar. Therefore, there is no surprise that the kisan leaders used the name of Gandhi wherever they wanted to use kisans.

The Aika movement that started in Awadh after the suppression of what was officially described as the kisan-sabha movement too had swadeshi and swaraj as its political ideals. Aika leaders expected British Raj to be

replaced by the Gandhi Raj.⁴⁷ If the kisan movement of Pratapgarh, Rae Bareilly, Sultanpur and Fyzabad is described as the 'Baba Ram Chandra movement' then it would be quite apt to describe the Aika movement as 'Madari Pasi movement'. According to the official sources Madari Pasi was 'the leading spirit' behind the movement.⁴⁸ Though the movement started 'in Hardoi at the beginning of 1921',⁴⁹ it soon reached the districts of Sitapur, Lucknow, Bahraich, Unnao and Bara Banki. It was more widespread than the kisan sabha movement. Therefore, it would not be proper to compare Madari Pasi with such leaders as Suraj Prasad or Thakur Din who were small operators. His position was similar to the position of Ram Chandra, with one difference that Madari Pasi was a tenant whereas Ram Chandra was a professional leader without having any tenant background.

The intelligence source describes the method of forming Aika 'A Katha known as the Katha Satnarain is recited by a Pandit... After the Katha all take an oath to unite against exactions by zamindars, to give mutual help and to abstain from crime and law suits.'⁵⁰ Aika was not very unlike the kisan sabha agitation. Like the latter, the former too became anti-government. How fast the Aika movement was spreading could be judged by the fact that 'one police circle alone reports 21 aika meetings with attendances varying from 150 to 2,000 within the space of three days.'⁵¹

Aika movement was suppressed with great difficulty. The usual method was the use of police firing at several places. Madari Pasi went underground, and it took some time to arrest him. The villages were terrorised, their belongings taken away by the police and the agents of taluqdars. Rs. 1000/- was announced for the arrest of Madari Pasi, yet he escaped arrest till the month of June 1922. Though it covered a large area of Awadh, Aika movement was a one-man show--the show of Madari Pasi.

What happened to Madari Pasi after he was released from jail? Fortunately we have for our information the CID report. On December 4, 1926,

'Madari Pasi, a leader in the Eka movement, has recently been released from jail. He is keeping quiet and has obtained a letter from Maulana Shaukat Ali to his old zamindar asking for the restoration of his kasht.'⁵² Thus Madari Pasi decided to become the tenant of a zamindar again. Madari's name lost its charm for the police and newspapers. Ultimately Madari Pasi too proved himself as a sporadic leader. He gave up his struggle against the taluqdars and the rent act given by the British. Rather people stopped listening to him. During the no-rent campaign meeting at Bharaon, Hardoi, in 1931 it was reported that 'Madari Pasi, the notorious leader in the last non-co-operation movement, wanted to preside, but was not allowed, owing to his caste.'⁵³ If this report is correct then the higher caste gentlemen forgot the higher caste symbolisms used by Madari Pasi to initiate the Aika movement--such symbolisms as 'taking oath before the Ganges', 'A Pandit performing ceremony' or 'Satyanarain Katha', etc. Ultimately for the higher caste gentlemen Madari was only a Pasi, belonging to the caste of a criminal tribe according to the British. The British perception of Madari Pasi was not very unlike the higher caste Hindu perception. Maybe there is more than one reason for Madari Pasi to give up his kisan struggle.

The contribution of the sporadic leaders of 1920-21 and 1921-22 agitations was quite significant in the struggle for freedom of the country. But it would certainly be wrong on the part of a historian to eulogise the sporadic leaders with a language which is fit only for eulogising Bhagat Singh of our time or Raja Jai Lal Singh of the 1857 revolt. Not only Bhagat Singh and Jai Lal Singh had noble causes, they had a noble end. It is for freedom of the country that they went to the gallows. Referring to the murder of Chandra Shekhar Azad and others by the British police Jawaharlal remarked 'Do not think even for a moment that we who do not agree with these comrades are superior to them.'⁵⁴ Praises should be showered, not so much on the sporadic leaders as on those who were led by them, i.e. the

kisans who faced bullets and death-sentences. For they justify Jawaharlal's observation that the 'peasants are superior to city dwellers in that they are the bravest fighters and they will fight unstintingly to the very end.'⁵⁵ Salik, Ram Autar, Jhanku Singh, Jagmohan and so many unknown tenants in 1920-21-22 fought to their very end. So also it would be wrong to go on praising national leaders by overlooking or undermining the grass-root leaders. But it does not mean that someone has to be converted into a grass-root leader in order to praise him.

Some of the sporadic leaders of 1920-21 revolt of Awadh, for example, Baba Janaki Das and Baba Ram Ghulam have been described by the British officials as 'criminals', 'bad characters', 'offenders', 'ex-convicts', etc. But so far as the national struggle of the peasants is concerned they played the same role which was played by Maulvi Shah Muhammad Naim Ata and the soldier Brij Pal Singh, who were not described as criminals, etc., by the British officials. Some historians maintain that it is to discredit peasant leaders that they have been described as criminals, etc. Then why did the British spare other peasant leaders from such descriptions? Why should the past of a hero be static? Why should a coward of one time not become a hero at some other time? Is it not a remarkable fact about national awakening that it succeeded in converting so many criminals into the national heroes. So many Angulimals became saints. But this does not wipe out the fact that they were Angulimals at one time. History has not given so much importance to ordinary saints as to those who were Angulimals at one time. Therefore, let Angulimals remain Angulimals; otherwise, we will not have remarkable saints to guide us. And then why should only saints be participants in the national awakening? Sinners have as much a claim on the nation as do the saints. The British police equally tortured both the saints and the sinners. So there is no surprise that the sinners joined hands with the saints to drive the British out of this country.

The term 'grass-root leader' has recently been misused by the historians, particularly by those who stand for the grass-root historiography. They would convert anybody into a grass-root leader in order to praise him. Both Jhinguri Singh and Madari Pasi were tenants, and Ram Chandra was not any kind of tenant. If Jhinguri Singh and Madari Pasi are described as grass-root leaders, then Ram Chandra was certainly not a grass-root leader, for he was not a tenant of any kind. If he was a grass-root leader, then he was a grass-root leader by courtesy. His leadership was parasitic upon the grass-root leadership of Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Pryag of Pratapgarh, and similar such grass-root leadership of other districts of Awadh. Ram Chandra was a kind of 'honorary grass-root leader'. He became the holder of doctorate degree without writing a dissertation. He had not to undergo the difficulties of collecting data, processing and interpreting it, and then writing a dissertation. He got his doctorate degree without tears. Of course Ram Chandra worshipped plough. In September 1925 Ram Chandra 'performed the plough worship ceremony at Bhartipur and called for subscriptions.'⁵⁶ But worshipping the plough does not mean using it or even knowing how to use it. Writers are not created by worshipping the pen, or, soldiers by worshipping the gun. So also the tenants are not created by worshipping the plough. Much more is required for becoming a tenant or a grass-root leader of tenants.

Ram Chandra was not alone in having honorary doctorate from kisan convocations. He brought so many vakils from the cities of Awadh and introduced them to the tenantry of Pratapgarh. Vakils came one after the other, starting from Gauri Shanker Misra and Mata Badal Pandey. At a later stage came Mani Lal and Ganpat Sahai, to name two of them. The last big name was that of Pandit Munishwar Datt of Pratapgarh who perhaps exploited the situation to the maximum extent. In the beginning the tenants were only clients of these vakils. Later these vakils became their leaders, and still

later the leaders of Uttar Pradesh as a whole. The relationship of the vakil and client was converted into the relationship of the leader and the led. Vakils too became the holders of honorary doctorate degrees. Ram Chandra lost his original position; he was converted into a supporting actor. Circumstances did not allow him to rise above the level of a supporting actor. Of course he did not allow himself to come down to the level of extras. He was only quantitatively and not qualitatively different from the vakil leaders.

Kisan struggle of Awadh led to a paradoxical situation. Just as at the university convocations the honorary doctors steal the show, the historians of Awadh, and not only the national politicians, have written books and articles in praise of the honorary doctors, forgetting that these honorary doctors are only the byproduct of the system. Poor dissertation writers have even now remained hidden in the huts of the villages and in the official records of the government. Subaltern historiography is no exception. Instead of highlighting the genuine subaltern leaders, the genuine holders of doctorate degrees, they highlight the role played by the holders of honorary doctorate degrees. Like the elitist historians they too consider the kisans having no capacity to organise themselves. Their home-spun sabhas are as weak as the home-spun cloth. The subaltern historiography on Awadh is an elitist and colonial historiography in disguise. The writings of these historians exhibit that no self-conscious, autonomous and dynamic leadership can be provided by those who use sickle and plough. Leadership will be provided by those who come from outside, be they babas and vakils or having any other profession than that of a tenant. Tenants suffer from feudal submissiveness, they could be awakened only by the outside Messiahs. Instead of accepting the truth that the kisan leaders like Jhinguri Singh, Sri Harakh, Bhagwan Din, Ajodhya, Kashi and so on, created Messiahs; they accept the truth that the Messiahs created these kisan leaders. They wish

to see reality upside down. They think that the convocations are held for the award of honorary doctorate degrees to a few persons, and not for hundreds of those who write dissertations and suffer. Grass-root leadership of Awadh tenantry, like the tenantry in other parts of India, was free from political wickedness. All the credit for their work was stolen away by the outsiders.

Sustained Leaders of Pratapgarh and their Ideology: It has already been pointed out that the responsibility for initiating the tenant struggle phase 1 goes to Jhinguri Singh. Around 1917 Jhinguri Singh with the help of Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Pryag converted Rure Sabha into a real kisan sabha, having only one ideal, the ideal of fighting for the kisan demands. Even in the transitory phase, the phase beginning from 1922, Jhinguri Singh emerged as the leader who started the ball of struggle rolling. As early as July 1922 the U.P. Intelligence source points out 'Jhinguri Singh who was released from jail, has again begun to stir up tenants against begar in the police circle Aspur.'⁵⁷ Begar was one of the major issues in the struggle of phase 1. The issue remained dominant even in the transitory phase. But this was not the only issue. There were other important issues. And the struggle had to be started against all those issues. In the next meeting same year Jhinguri Singh gave a call for 're-starting of propaganda as hari, begar and nazrana had been started again owing to the cessation of agitation.'⁵⁸ The amended Rent Act of 1921 did not make nazrana or hari or begar illegal; they were started again. Therefore, Jhinguri Singh felt the necessity of starting agitation against all of them. However, the agitation should not be violent as happened in 1920-21. Violence would lead to the failure of the agitation. Therefore, Jhinguri Singh 'appealed for volunteers and money and insisted on non-violence.'⁵⁹ Rure Sabha leadership of Jhinguri Singh and his four co-workers was commit-

ted to non-violence. It is because of this commitment that no violence occurred in 1920-21 in the district of Pratapgarh. After coming back from jail in 1922 Jhinguri Singh again asserted his faith in the Gandhian ideology of non-violence. He succeeded in connecting the kisan sabha charter of demands with the Congress ideology. At a meeting of the kisan sabha, held on December 29, 1923 in a village of Jaunpur District, according to the U.P. Intelligence source

Jhinguri Singh of the village Ruri, Pratapgarh, asked the audience to work on the charkha, to refrain from giving begar to zamindar or to Government servants or to work for the latter; he appealed for funds and emphasised that they must have swaraj as Government administration is faulty.⁶⁰

Jhinguri Singh's activities were not restricted to Pratapgarh alone, he was found organising tenants in the neighbouring districts. Jhinguri Singh's new slogan was to adopt charkha and give up begar. Charkha symbolises the union between kisans and the Congress. The use of charkha was Gandhi's call to the country. It stood not only for the boycott of foreign cloth but also for the boycott of the taluqdari system, the system of begar for the taluqdar. In one's spare time one should use charkha rather than doing begar. Government administration had failed, and the only alternative was swaraj.

It seems that Jhinguri Singh alone had been organising tenants in Pratapgarh District till the beginning of 1926. Of course he was assisted by his committed co-workers Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Pryag, but not by Ram Chandra. This becomes clear from the note of the Intelligence Department. 'A small meeting of kisans in police circle Patti decided to ask Baba Ram Chandra to return and resume his kisan sabha work.'⁶¹ Earlier in December 1924, according to the Intelligence source 'Jhinguri Singh, the well-known kisan agitator of this district, has again resumed activity and has invited Baba Ram Chandra to visit Pratapgarh to revive the kisan Sabha movement.'⁶² Jhinguri Singh might not have been known to the nationalist

intelligentsia and to their historians, or they might have considered it below their dignity to mention his name, he was well-known to the British Intelligence Department and the tenants of Pratapgarh District. Like 1918 Jhinguri Singh again in 1924 invited Ram Chandra to take interest in the kisan organisation. Ram Chandra was certainly not away from Pratapgarh. He was in Pratapgarh, but he was not taking any interest in the organisation of tenants. Ram Chandra was quite opposite to Jhinguri Singh. Jhinguri Singh had only one commitment, commitment to fight against eviction, naz-rana, begar, hari, etc. Jail term did not stop his organising tenants against these evils. But Ram Chandra's attention was divided; he had so many kinds of activities to be performed. He also developed a sense of ownership property after coming back from jail in 1923. Earlier he had only the Geeta and the Ramayana as his property, and he used them for earning his livelihood as well as organising tenants or helping the grass-root leaders to organise them.

It seems that soon after coming back from jail Ram Chandra started demonstrating his craving for owning property. The Intelligence source reports 'that Ram Chandra Sharma has collected about Rs. 1,200 and has started negotiations for the purchase of a village in P.C. Sangipur.'⁶³ This shows a wish on the part of Ram Chandra to become a zamindar. Purchase of a village means having tenants and obtaining rents from them. Whether or not he purchased any village but he certainly purchased land.

Ram Chandra at a meeting held in police circle Sangipur announced that he had purchased five bighas of land for Rs. 1,500 and said that it was the bounden duty of the kisans to plant trees and build a hut for his residence on the plot. There are rumours that he is acquiring property with the money raised from cultivators.⁶⁴

Ram Chandra himself gave opportunity to these rumours. As back as April 1923 he told kisans of Pratapgarh that 'he was in possession of much land which he would give to them on 2 years' lease if they wished to leave that district.'⁶⁵ The question is not that he had so much land in some other

district that he could lease it out to the tenants of Pratapgarh, the question is that Ram Chandra started giving importance to the fact that he was in much better position. For him having of land became a status symbol. He wished to exhibit that he owned land. With such wishes how could he fight the landowners, how could he fight those who were landlords?

It is not certain that Ram Chandra became an absentee landlord which he wished to become but he certainly became an absentee tenant. He referred to the land of 5 bighas, in his diary, which was bought with the money given in charity by the Kurmi tenants. The amount so given was Rs. 1500 and the land was that of Ashpak Husain, a zamindar of Fyzabad.⁶⁶ So Ram Chandra's diary account tallies with the Intelligence report. However, Ram Chandra further writes that the land which he bought in 1925 was left to be looked after by the 5 panchs of the village and he left the village for doing the work of kisan organisation. Later in 1939, 200 Kurmis by spending Rs. 900 completed the work of baradari on the land.⁶⁷ It seems that the Kurmi cultivators who bought the land for Ram Chandra also looked after the land on his behalf. The land could not tie him to the spot, or made him a cultivator.

To have some extra income the zamindars of Awadh used to establish bazars. The practice was to charge commission from the shopkeepers. The commission depended on the sale. Baba Ram Chandra also established a bazar. The Intelligence source writes 'Baba Ram Chandra went to Allahabad to purchase cloth for sale at a bazar established by him at Ghusamuth.'⁶⁸ The reference to bazar occurred in 1928. It is possible that the bazar was established for the sale of khadi, for those were the days when Ram Chandra was involved in propagating the use of khadi. But then khadi could be sold in established bazars. Why a special bazar for it? There seems to be no other reason for establishing a bazar except that he wished to be known as the owner of a bazar. Owner of a bazar was as important as the owner of a

land.

Ram Chandra's interest was not restricted to buying land and establishing a bazar, he also established a Dharamshala and a temple. When Jhinguri Singh was organising tenants against nazrana, bedakhli, hari and begar Ram Chandra was raising money for a Dharamshala and a temple. In June 1924 it was reported from Pratapgarh that 'Baba Ram Chandra Sharma is touring the district, collecting for a dharamshala, specially from the Kurmis who seem to be dissatisfied with the disposal of the subscriptions given to him last year.'⁶⁹ This means that Ram Chandra started raising money for the Dharamshala as soon as he came back from the jail. His raising money for buying a village coincided with his raising money for a temple of which he was the manager. It is reported that 'certain emissaries of Baba Ram Chandra, with a swaraj flag, visited village Chakia and collected Rs. 150 for a temple of which Ram Chandra is the chief manager.'⁷⁰ The interesting thing is not only that money was collected by Ram Chandra's emissaries for a temple, but also that the money was collected by exhibiting the swaraj flag. The swaraj flag does not fit into the situation, ochre coloured flag fits into the situation. But perhaps the swaraj flag started working on the minds of cultivators by 1924 more than any other flag. Therefore, the swaraj flag, and not the ochre coloured flag, was used for collecting money for the temple. The swaraj flag acquired all the magic power.

The only place where the swaraj flag failed was an office of the government. Government officers disliked the swaraj flag, they had no wish to see a person bearing a swaraj flag. It is reported that

on May 11 Jhinguri Singh and others headed a deputation of some hundred kisans to the Deputy Commissioner to represent the grievances of the kisan party; a swaraj flag was carried by the party and Jhinguri Singh attempted to act as their spokesman, but the Deputy Commissioner refused to acknowledge him and told the kisans he would listen to them provided they came direct and individually and not in a body; shouts of Gandhi ki jai were raised.⁷¹

Just three years before in July 1920 Jhinguri Singh had led a party of near-

ly 53,000 kisans to the Deputy Collector's office at Patti. Not only did the Deputy Collector meet Jhinguri Singh he even asked him to address the party to avoid disturbance and undesirable consequence.⁷² Perhaps the government servants acted only when they were pressurised through the numerical strength. The figure of 100 was not sufficient to move them. Perhaps the swaraj flag and Gandhi ki jai were missing when Jhinguri Singh led 53,000 kisans.

Jhinguri Singh had the same charter of demands in 1923 which he presented in 1920. He did not deviate from his ideal, the ideal of removing nazrana, bedakhli, etc. And no 'outside leadership', be it the leadership of city intelligentsia or that of babas and faqirs, was involved in organising the party of 53,000 kisans. It was purely a homespun organisation; therefore, no newspaper gave an advance notice about it. It was not even a district level organisation, it was a tahsil level affair.

Compare the Patti gathering of July 1920 with the gathering at Ajodhya just after a few months, i.e. in December 1920. Since the later gathering was organised by the Oudh Kisan Sabha it was given wide publicity. The names of Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and Jawaharlal were included in the list though they did not come. Ram Chandra, Gauri Shanker Misra, Deo Narain, Kedar Nath and Lallanji were some of the national and seminational leaders who participated.⁷³ Ram Chandra was the moving spirit behind the Ajodhya conference. And his spirit depended on the spirit of the grass-root leaders like Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din, Pryag, Matabadal Koeri and so many others like them. Though the preparation was made several weeks in advance and the kisans of the whole Awadh were invited, strength did not reach more than a lakh kisans. According to Jawaharlal the conference held at Ajodhya 'was attended by nearly 100,000 kisans.'⁷⁴ Even the figure of 100,000 was not expected by the Fyzabad leaders like Kedar Nath and Lallanji.⁷⁵ Fyzabad leaders could not create the backing of grass-

root leaders like Jhinguri Singh and Matabadal Koeri and hence they did not know the power of grass-root leadership. Instead of Ajodhya if the conference had been held at Pratapgarh the figure of participants would have easily been doubled. But it was good for the cause of kisans that the conference was held in a place outside Pratapgarh. Pratapgarh was not new to the organisation of kisans. The new centres of organisation were to be created.

Commenting on the influence of Ajodhya conference on peasantry, Farnon reports from Rae Bareli 'For the first time in history they (peasants) had begun to realise the power of an united peasantry... They were learning the value of concerted action.'⁷⁶ Farnon's remarks may be true about Rae Bareli peasants. They might have been awakened for the first time in history after going to Ajodhya. Not only the Champaran peasants were awakened long ago, much before Gandhi's visit to Champaran, the Awadh peasants of Pratapgarh too were awakened long ago. It was the result of awakening that 53,000 peasants gathered at Patti in July 1920. Of course no garlanding of peasant leaders occurred at Patti, so also no leader performed any acrobatics.

Government, and not only the taluqdars, perhaps were quite disturbed by the Patti gathering. Concerted action leads to rebellion. The government, therefore, decided to arrest Jhinguri Singh along with his committed followers. His followers or co-workers were Rure Sabha activists. Ram Chandra too was to be arrested, for he became a sort of the spiritual head of the Rure Sabha activists. Therefore, hardly a month passed for the Patti gathering that on August 28, 1920, both Jhinguri Singh and Ram Chandra along with other grass-root leaders were arrested on the false charges of theft of a log of wood belonging to a lady taluqdar.⁷⁷ Instead of crushing the rebellion the government itself prepared ground for seeing more of the rebellion. On hearing the news of the arrest of their leaders about 5,000 peasants assembled near the jail 'wanting either to see the two ring-leaders or to be

put in jail with them.'⁷⁸ The two ringleaders were Jhinguri Singh and Ram Chandra. This might have been a unique experience, not only for the jail authorities and the government, but also for the non-cooperators of the Congress. Five thousand kisans offering themselves to be put in jail, the place, which for Jawaharlal 'was associated with isolation, humiliation and suffering.'⁷⁹ The time of 1920 was very different from our time, jail-going then was as good as going to the hell. Jawaharlal accepts that 'in 1921 prison was an almost unknown place, and very few knew what happened behind the grim gates that swallowed the new convict.'⁸⁰ Yet on September 1, 1920 nearly five thousand peasants offered themselves to be put in jail because their leaders Jhinguri Singh and Ram Chandra were behind those 'grim gates'. Was it not a case of mass satyagraha, a case of non-violent mass action? This was what Gandhi wanted the whole country to do in order to fulfil his wish for 'bringing swaraj in a year'.⁸¹ It is as if the peasants of Pratapgarh were conscious of Gandhi's call for bringing swaraj in a year. Swaraj in a year was possible only when the whole nation offered to be imprisoned, not by committing violence but by remaining non-violent. But the British authorities were interested in leaders and not their followers. So the peasants who wished to be in jail with their leaders had to go back disappointed.

Peasants came back after ten days. Their number swelled by several times. The number was in the air that Gandhi would be reaching Pratapgarh for the release of Ram Chandra.⁸² Thus the image of Ram Chandra was magnified in the eyes of peasants. The images of the grass-root leaders like Jhinguri Singh were pushed aside. Ram Chandra was not an ordinary leader but a leader who was close to Gandhi. Though the peasants failed to have the darshana of Gandhi, they persisted for having the darshana of Ram Chandra who was expected to be released by Gandhi. They would not leave

the jail premises unless they had the darshana of Ram Chandra. An old advocate of Pratapgarh recently described the scene of Pratapgarh jail as the scene of Bastille.⁸³ But the invaders of Bastille were violent whereas the peasants of Pratapgarh were embodiment of non-violence. They were simply interested in seeing Ram Chandra which, according to the authorities, was impossible without releasing him. A trial of some sort was held within the jail compound and Ram Chandra was released along with other grass-root leaders.

There were several reasons for the release of Ram Chandra and his associates. The charges against the arrested leaders were fake. The government stood on weak grounds. The numerical strength of the peasants who came for the darshana was quite high. But neither the fake charges nor the numerical strength were sufficient to have moved the government to release the leaders. Though the number of peasants who were demanding darshana was very high, they were non-violent. They were not so much interested in the release of their leaders as in seeing them. Perhaps no government official of Pratapgarh had the courage of General Dyer to open fire on the non-violent innocent mob. They preferred releasing Ram Chandra to giving order for firing to disperse the mob. After the release Jhinguri Singh wanted to sue the taluqdar who filed a fake case against the arrested persons. But Ram Chandra stopped him.⁸⁴ Perhaps Ram Chandra had no wish to humiliate the lady taluqdar.

The Pratapgarh victory of kisans was followed by the Rae Bareli defeat of kisans which we have already discussed. Jawaharlal writes that the kisans started thinking that 'they could always have their way by weight of numbers alone.'⁸⁵ The weight of numbers succeeded in Pratapgarh but it failed in Rae Bareli. Jawaharlal contributed three articles on the Rae Bareli tragedy to Independent of January 22, 23 and 6 July 1921.⁸⁶ Though the 'weight of numbers' failed in Rae Bareli, no one could deny its impor-

tance; otherwise, the concept of 'mass mobilization' has no meaning.

Gandhi referred to the weight of numbers when he wrote

Supposing ten persons in each of the 700,000 villages in India came forward to manufacturing salt and to disobey the Salt Act, what do you think this Government can do? Even the worst autocrat you can imagine would not dare to blow regiments of peaceful civil resisters out of a cannon's mouth.⁸⁷

Thus the weight of numbers should have a further qualification that they should be peaceful civil resisters. Pratapgarh tenants who surrounded the jail were peaceful civil resisters. The government officers did not have the courage to blow them out of a cannon's mouth. But the situation in Rae Bareilly, so also later in Fyzabad, was quite different. There was a mushroom growth of sporadic leaders who incited the peasants in the name of 'Gandhi' and "Swaraj". Sporadic leadership is a dangerous phenomenon, it exposes to danger those who are led. Events in Rae Bareilly from 2 January 1921 onwards exhibit a violent turn because of the sporadic leaders who lacked vision. Babas and faqirs who became leaders in Rae Bareilly and Fyzabad suddenly appeared on the scene. They had neither the character of grass-root leadership nor that of the national and seminational leadership. They were quite unlike Baba Ram Chandra, 'the dreaded Baba', who, according to Jawaharlal 'did magnificent work... amongst kisans.'⁸⁸ None of the babas and faqirs of Rae Bareilly and Fyzabad had the following of such committed grass-root leaders as Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din, Pryag, etc. These grass-root leaders did not allow Ram Chandra to perform any dreadful acts. Even those leaders in Rae Bareilly and Fyzabad who were not babas of any kind did not behave very differently from the babas.

The attempt to invade Pratapgarh jail in September 1920 was very different from the attempt to invade Rae Bareilly jail in January 1921. There was no history of violence, tenant violence, before the former attempt occurred. But there is a history of violence when the latter attempt occurred. Violence in different places at Rae Bareilly already started from

January 2, 1921. There was a general atmosphere of loot and arson before the Munshiganj firing on January 7, 1921 occurred. When we compare the two situations, the situation of Pratapgarh and the situation of Rae Bareli, we should not forget the differences in these situations.

Peasants everywhere in Awadh, be it Pratapgarh or Rae Bareli or Fyzabad, were alike. They were embodiment of courage and determination. In 1921 Jawaharlal talks about the Rae Bareli peasants 'I, who for long believed in the doctrine of the sword, have been converted by the kisans to the doctrine of non-violence. I have come to believe that non-violence is ingrained in them and is part of their very nature.'⁸⁹ And he came to this view by seeing the courage of kisans. Ahimsa requires courage and truthfulness. The kisans did not read Gandhi's books, but they exhibited in their behaviour Gandhi's philosophy. Maybe Gandhi obtained his philosophy of ahimsa too and not only his dress from kisans. In his Autobiography Jawaharlal writes about the courage of Fyzabad peasants 'I called upon those who had participated in the looting to raise hands, and strange to say, there, in the presence of numerous police officials, about two dozen hands went up. That means certain trouble for them.'⁹⁰ Jawaharlal thinks that he had exposed to trouble those who raised their hands. But it was Gandhi and not Jawaharlal who exposed them to trouble. It was the courage and truthfulness that led the two dozen hands to go up.

Though there was no violence in Pratapgarh it was restricted to Rae Bareli, Fyzabad and Sultanpur, yet the tenants of Pratapgarh suffered the same consequence as those of the other three districts. Jawaharlal remarks 'The Government tried to crush by hundreds of arrests and other methods both the agrarian and the Congress movements in the rural areas of Rae Bareli and Pratapgarh. Most of the principal workers were common to the two movements.'⁹¹ This means acceptance on the part of Jawaharlal that the Congress

was as much responsible for violence in Awadh in 1920-21 as the agrarian movement, for the principal workers of both the movements were the same. But how could the two movements evolve common leadership? They could do it because swaraj was the common goal for both the movements. Grass-root leaders of the agrarian movement were convinced that eviction and nazrana could not be abolished without abolishing the taluqdari system. And the abolition of taluqdari system presupposes the abolition of British rule from Awadh. The agrarian movement was not parochial as the colonial historians would like to accept. This movement was as national as any other national movement. And this was the reason that the Awadh agrarian movement continued till the British were thrown out of India. Of course the independent identity of the agrarian movement was lost after 1939. Oudh Rent Act was abolished. Therefore, the grass-root leaders of the agrarian movement participated wholeheartedly in the Congress movement for freedom of the country.

How different is the perception of the colonial historians of Awadh of our time with the colonial administrators of Awadh during 1920-21. The colonial administrators of that time attempted, through the agency of the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh, Mr. V.N. Mehta, to keep the agrarian movement independent of the Congress movement. Ram Chandra was pampered by Mehta so much that he started believing that Mehta was the saviour of kisans, and this belief persisted with him till he died in 1950. But the British administration accepted its defeat when it failed to avoid the union between kisans and the Congress. Government had no alternative but to withdraw its 'patronage of kisans when the Oudh Kisan Sabha was formed.'⁹² The two movements could not exist independent of each other because the goal of both the movements was freedom from the British rule. Union of these movements posed a real challenge to the British; therefore, they started crushing both the movements. For the British administrators there was only one

movement, only the names differed. The movement was for swaraj, be it the kisan movement or the Congress movement. No kindness was shown to the leaders of the agrarian movement over the leaders of the Congress movement. In crushing these movements the British were crushing the voice of swaraj. If the kisans were not for swaraj then why crush the agrarian movement?

The colonial historians of our time keep the two movements separate. Not only that they had separate origin, the agrarian movement started long before the Congress movement, but that they had no common ground to join. Congress movement could survive only by the 'unity between different classes', whereas the agrarian movement presupposed a class-conflict, the conflict between the tenants and landlords. This is twisting the dialectic of the situation. The tenants were against landlords, they knew that landlordism would go only when swaraj was established. The landlords were against tenants, they were even against swaraj because of the fear that once swaraj was established landlordism would cease to exist. The British fed them with these ideas. The true dialectic of the situation is not how the colonial historians present it. They overlook, perhaps knowingly, the importance of the situation that the agrarian movement did as a matter of historical fact coincide with the Congress movement. Congress movement was not antithetical to the agrarian movement. If it was antithetical to the agrarian movement then it would have never coincided with it. British administrators of 1920-21 did not consider them as independent movements, and they were right in their perception. Only the colonial historians of our time are wrong about the perception of the movements which occurred in 1920-21.

The real dialectic of the situation is very simple. If landlordism is posited as the thesis, then agrarian movement against landlordism is anti-thesis. Modified landlordism, as presented by Gandhi and accepted by the Congress, is the stage of synthesis. Congress attempted to synthesize or harmonize the two warring factions, the landlords and the tenants. Land-

lordism is retained, but not in its original form. Tenants are retained but they have not to suffer like the times when they suffered during their days of unmodified landlordism. Gandhi's idea of "trusteeship" exhibits the stage of synthesis, the stage of modified landlordism.

Gandhi has been represented by some historians as the supporter of the taluqdars, and by the others as the supporter of the tenants. But he was the supporter of both and the opponent of both. The stage of synthesis supports both and opposes both. It cannot support only the thesis, so also it cannot support only the antithesis; its purpose is to harmonise both of them. Instead of fighting with each other they should fight against the British. Class struggle between the landlords and the tenants was the creation of the British. So the British must leave India; otherwise, the struggle would continue without bearing any fruit.

Gandhi issued a manifesto to the kisans of U.P. on May 23, 1931 telling them that they should not forget that they were tenants of zamindars. 'Congress aims at reaching Purna Swaraj through Truth and Non-violence. And it will fail insofar as the kisans fail to observe these two cardinal principles.'⁹³ He also made an appeal to the zamindars

to forego the questionable perquisites they take from the tenants in the shape of forced gifts on marriage and other occasions, or nazrana on transfer of holdings from one kisan to another or on restriction to the same kisan after eviction for non-payment of rent. They should give them fixity of tenure, take a lively interest in their welfare.⁹⁴

Both these documents, the manifesto to kisans and the appeal to zamindars, have been most vehemently criticised by even those who consider themselves as Hegelians. Gandhi has been considered as an anti-tenant and a reactionary of the highest order because he stood for the zamindari system. But the zamindari system which Gandhi accepted was the system in which there would be no eviction, no nazrana and the tenants would have fixity of tenure. Would the tenants have any ground for struggle in Gandhi's zamindari system? In condemning Gandhi the Hegelians do not mind sacrificing

the foundation of their thought, the historical dialectic. Perhaps the colonial administrators understood Gandhi better than the Hegelians and the colonial historians. He was the only leader who posed a real challenge to the British Raj in India. He wanted the union between the Congress and the kisans. Therefore, the British administration tried its best to create a gulf between the two.

Ram Chandra's contribution to the Awadh kisan movement is undeniable. He was responsible for getting Congress attached to the agrarian movement. Though he was not responsible for establishing Rure Sabha, he was responsible for establishing the Oudh Kisan Sabha, which resulted into the union between kisans and the Congress. Rure sabha symbolised the agrarian movement. Congress realised that it could not launch a national movement without having the nation with it. Kisans were the nation. Congress must have kisan orientation; otherwise, it would suffocate in the cities.

If the sporadic leaders disappeared after their arrests in 1920-21, there had occurred a change in the character of sustained leaders. Of course some grass-root leaders might have died in jail because of cholera and other epidemic diseases which were a common feature of jails of those times. Health and sanitation were no considerations for convicts of those times. Jawaharlal writes 'Over a thousand arrests were made, and the district gaol was overcrowded, and the trial went on for the best part of a year. Many died in prison during the trial.'⁹⁵ Among the arrested leaders were not only those who incited peasants for violence but also those who were 'civil resisters' though this expression became popular in later years. Jawaharlal further points out about the gaol-going of peasants 'All this, it might be remembered, was prior to the gaol-going which the Congress started at the end of 1921.'⁹⁶ Is it not interesting? Peasants took the first step towards going to jail, Congress only followed them. But the peasants were arrested for criminal actions. Whatever actions they did were not conside-

red by the police as political actions. Thus the gaol-going of peasants was not a 'political action', they were not political prisoners, they were ordinary convicts. Though they were arrested for 'Gandhi' and 'Swaraj', they were not considered as the political opponents of the British Raj. Jawaharlal writes about the peasants of Fyzabad in 1921 'The poor ignorant peasants were actually told that it was the wish of Mahatma Gandhi that they should loot and they willingly agreed to carry out this behest, shouting "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai" in the process.'⁹⁷ In spite of 'Gandhi ki jai' their action was not political. Both political scientists and government administrators considered their actions as non-political. For they were neither Khilafatists nor Non-cooperators.

Jail-term did not break the sustained leaders of kisan movement. They started their work as soon as they came back from jail. Jawaharlal writes about their later activities

It was surprising that they had shown for a whole year great powers of resistance against the combined pressure of government and landlord. But they began to weary a little and the determined attack of the government on their movement ultimately broke its spirit for the time being.⁹⁸

One would be surprised only when one compares the well-organised non-cooperation movement with the ill-organised kisan movement. How could the latter movement persist even for a month though it persisted for a year? In their cruelty the taluqdars surpassed the government. And the movement was broken only for the time the sustained leaders were in jail. Kisans have a remarkable power of civil resistance. They started their resistance to eliminate the taluqdari system, and the system continued; therefore, their resistance continued. They were not intelligent enough to search for 'an excuse' to stop their resistance. The idea to stop the resistance did not occur to their mind. Concerning the continuity of the kisan movement, Jawaharlal writes 'There were not such vast demonstrations as before, but most villages contained old workers who had not been terrorised and who

carried on the work in a small way.'⁹⁹ But after Chauri Chaura Congress too was not doing anything in a big way. Till 1928 it was lying low. The civil resistance was totally given up by the Congress, yet the kisans continued their civil resistance. It is their nature to resist that they joined the Congress in its activity of gaol-going 'at the end of 1921'. Jawaharlal accepts 'Even in this the kisans took a considerable part, in spite of all they had suffered during the previous year.'¹⁰⁰

Closeness to national leaders like Jawaharlal and Gauri Shanker Misra led Ram Chandra to consider himself as a national leader. When he came back from jail in 1923 he did not jump into the kisan movement like Jhinguri Singh, Sri Harakh and their followers. He wished to appear before the kisans as a national leader. Instead of organising the peasantry he wanted to address an organised peasantry. He was certainly not the same 'dreaded baba' of 1920-21 who was the 'spiritual head' of the kisans. Intelligence source reports 'Jhinguri Singh, the well-known kisan agitator of this district, has again resumed activity and has invited Baba Ram Chandra to visit Pratapgarh.'¹⁰¹ Ram Chandra imposed a condition to come back to kisan work. 'The baba has replied asking for a general invitation from at least 4,000 kisans; Jhinguri Singh is collecting signatures.'¹⁰² This shows the difference between Jhinguri Singh and Ram Chandra. In the Government files Jhinguri Singh was a well-known kisan agitator. He remains attached to the kisan cause now as ever. He remains attached to Baba now as ever, because he is unable to perceive any change in Baba. For Jhinguri Singh kisan cause is the highest cause, it is the only cause for which he lived. Baba is needed for helping him in the kisan cause. Ram Chandra, on the other hand, had already risen much above the grass-root level.

Meeting of January 10, 1925 at Rure, the birth-place of Jhinguri Singh, is quite significant: 'Jhinguri Singh organised a meeting of kisans in V.

Rhur and asked for Rs. 300 for a reception of Baba Ram Chandra; he received less than Rs. 10.'¹⁰³ Either the peasants lost faith in Jhinguri Singh or the magic of Baba's name had disappeared. It seems Ram Chandra became apprehensive about his reception. He wished his reception to be grand, matching the reception of a national leader. January 15, 1925 was fixed for Ram Chandra's reception: 'Some 200 persons assembled at the railway station to receive Baba Ram Chandra on January 15, but in his place Dr. Mani Lal and Deo Narayana came.'¹⁰⁴ Deo Narayana was the General Secretary of Oudh Kisan Congress. He was 'in 1921 sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200.'¹⁰⁵ He helped Ram Chandra in organising the Ajodhya meeting of kisans in December 1920. Dr. Mani Lal was Ram Chandra's old associate from Fiji. Mani Lal came down from Fiji to Awadh for the ostensible purpose of helping the kisans. Ram Chandra got him settled down in Fyzabad.¹⁰⁶

Ram Chandra was certainly not coming first time to Rure or Pratapgarh on the 15th of January 1925, so that he required a special reception. As early as April 22, 1923 he attended a meeting at Rure with Jawaharlal and Narendra Chandra Banerjee. The meeting attracted 2,000 persons. At this meeting, according to the Intelligence source, 'Jawaharlal Nehru was given a great reception'. He pointed out that if kisans 'required the English to leave India they must prevent Indian money going out of India, and should, therefore, boycott English goods and use swadeshi... Ram Chandra Sharma reiterated the above arguments.'¹⁰⁷ In the year 1924 Ram Chandra was very much in Pratapgarh District, collecting money for buying a village and constructing a dharamshala, a temple, etc. He was released from jail sometime between February and April 1923. In the first week of February 1923 Jhinguri Singh 'appealed for a good reception on the release of Ram Chandra Sharma.'¹⁰⁸ And in April last week of that year Ram Chandra was in Rure for the reception of Jawaharlal. This means that there was no hero's welcome to

Ram Chandra after he was released from jail. His reception might have been an ordinary affair. Though late Jhinguri Singh might have thought of giving Ram Chandra a reception fitting to the status of Ram Chandra when he visited Rure again on January 15, 1925. Ram Chandra was conscious of his role in 1920-21 revolt. He had no qualms in considering himself as the architect of the revolt.¹⁰⁹ He considered it as the 'Baba movement', a movement led by Baba Ram Chandra.¹¹⁰ Historians of Awadh follow Ram Chandra's words. They too call it Ram Chandra movement. They too praise V.N. Mehta because Ram Chandra praised V.N. Mehta. They too condemn Congress because Ram Chandra condemned the Congress leadership for not cognizing his worth. Of course the historians sometimes become choosy. They do not follow Ram Chandra in making Jhinguri Singh as the central figure for the movement of 1920-21. No Baba movement was possible if there had been no Jhinguri Singh.¹¹¹ However, the situation changed after 1922. Before 1920 Ram Chandra was not known to any national leader, he was an ordinary sadhu earning his daily bread by reading the Ramayana and the Geeta. But now he was an architect of a revolt. Jawaharlal wrote about him in Independent of 21 January 1921 when he was a guest in the Anand Bhavan: 'What magnificent work Pandit Ram Chandra Sharma—one of the dreaded Babas—has done amongst the kisans.'¹¹² He informed the Leader about Ram Chandra that 'he is at present stopping with me at Anand Bhavan and will be happy to give an interview to the special correspondent of the Leader.'¹¹³ Thus there was every reason for Ram Chandra to think about himself as a superior being. He was no more the unknown Baba of 1920. He was a well-known national, or seminational, leader of 1925. Unless the minimum of 4,000 peasants requested him to resume his kisan sabha work, it would be below his dignity to come for the work. When sometime in 1918-19 Rure leaders, Jhinguri Singh and Sahdev Singh, invited Ram Chandra to Rure he imposed no such condition. The situation had changed in 1925. Now he wished to appear before an organised pea-

santry.

Kisan Agitation during the Transitory Phase in Sultanpur, Rae Bareli and Fyzabad: It would be interesting to compare the kisan agitation of Pratapgarh with the kisan agitation of Sultanpur, Rae Bareli and Fyzabad during the transitory phase. Take first the case of Sultanpur. It presents a gloomy picture of tenant agitation. Grass-root level activity of tenantry is as good as missing from 1923 to 1928. There was only one grass-root leader of tenantry, Nageshwar Lal, Kayastha, who was a patwari. He was convicted in 1921. After coming back from jail in 1922 he tried to revive the kisan sabha activity in Dostpur, bordering Fyzabad. He was stopped from his activities. As the Intelligence source reports 'Nageshwar Lal, ex-Patwari, a firebrand, is bound down under section 108, Criminal Procedure Code.'¹¹⁴ He was 'convicted during the agrarian troubles in 1921.'¹¹⁵ For quite some time Nageshwar Lal went out of circulation.

Why was there no revival of grass-root activity of tenantry in Sultanpur when it revived with a big bang in Pratapgarh in the transitory phase? The answer is simple. If there was any grass-root activity of tenantry prior to 1922 only then would it have been possible for it to revive. The grass-root activity of tenantry prior to 1922 was as good as zero. Deo Narayan and Kedar Nath who established the branches of Oudh Kisan Sabha in Sultanpur from December 1920 were outsiders. Deo Narayan was from Azamgarh and Kedar Nath from Fyzabad. They were 'professional leaders', having their background as U.P. Kisan Sabha men. They were not grass-root leaders of tenantry of Sultanpur in any sense, and they also failed to evolve any grass-root leadership of tenantry. The fact that Deo Narayan became the General Secretary of Oudh Kisan Sabha itself shows that he was much above the level of a grass-root leader. And Kedar Nath was more interested in Fyzabad leadership than his leadership in Sultanpur.

Deo Narayan and Kedar Nath were not so fortunate as Ram Chandra. The

tenantry of Patti, Pratapgarh was already organised under the grass-root leadership of Jhinguri Singh, Sahdev Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and others when Ram Chandra reached Rure. But there was no organised tenantry or its grass-root leaders when Deo Narayan and Kedar Nath reached Sultanpur. They had to start from a clean slate. But they could not make any headway with the tenantry of Sultanpur. They, therefore, started organising the landless labourers. Oudh Kisan Sabha in Sultanpur in 1921 was as good as Mazdoor sabha, for it was restricted to the organisation of agricultural labourers.¹¹⁶

A deviation at this stage is essential. How different was the aim of Rure Sabha from the Oudh Kisan Sabha. Rure Sabha started a war against the Oudh Rent Act, the Act which brought taluqdars into being. It had nothing to do with the condition of landless labourers. Its war was against eviction, nazrana, begar, hari, etc. But there was no question of a landless labourer being evicted, because he had no land. Though the condition of landless labourers might have been inferior to that of the tenants, Rure Sabha was not interested in them. But Oudh Kisan Sabha was as much interested in the landless labourers as in the tenants. And in Sultanpur it was exclusively concerned with the landless labourers. Therefore, the designation 'kisan' was a misnomer for Sultanpur Oudh Kisan Sabha. It would be better if it was described as 'Oudh Mazdoor Sabha'.

Why no grass-root leadership of tenantry was evolved in Sultanpur? Why no struggle was waged against the Oudh Rent Act in Sultanpur? The answer again is simple. The tenantry of Sultanpur was of a very different kind from the tenantry of Pratapgarh. Pratapgarh tenantry, particularly of the tahsil Patti, as has already been pointed out, was composed of Kurmis who had a reputation for concerted action. But the tenantry of Sultanpur was of higher castes, Brahmans and Kshatriyas. Only '16 per cent of the total area was cultivated by Kurmis, Muraos and Ahirs.'¹¹⁷ 'Muraos pay with

ease Rs. 11.1, an acre, Kurmis Rs. 8.2, Ahirs Rs. 7.9 and Brahmins and Thakurs with much sighing and reluctance, Rs. 5.9 and Rs. 5.8.¹¹⁸ These facts and figures have been obtained from the Final Settlement of Sultanpur which was completed in 1939. The situation would not have been very different in 1920.

In the absence of local grass-root leaders, visit of the city intelligentsia from Sultanpur and the outside leaders was not very effective. After 1922 Ganpat Sahai, Vakil of Sultanpur, Baba Ram Chandra, Mani Lal and Lalanji of Fyzabad and so many other leaders from Banaras and Allahabad visited Sultanpur villages in order to organise kisans. Baba Ram Chandra started his campaign with 'the worship of charkha' in Sultanpur.¹¹⁹ But in September 1925 Ram Chandra along with Jhinguri Singh performed 'the plough worship ceremony' at Bharatipur, Pratapgarh.¹²⁰ Why plough worship in Pratapgarh and charkha worship in Sultanpur? Perhaps Ram Chandra exhibited insight about the situation. Plough worship would not be so effective in Sultanpur because the tenantry of this district, being high caste, disliked touching the plough. As Fordham, the Settlement Officer, pointed out concerning Brahman and Thakur tenants of Sultanpur 'neither of whom are agriculturists by tradition, and who seem to regard a lack of agricultural care and skill as an essential quality of their caste superiority.'¹²¹ Perhaps charkha would be a better instrument for attracting the Sultanpur tenantry than the plough. But in the case of Pratapgarh plough was the best alternative, because most of the grass-root leaders of Pratapgarh were good at plough. Sultanpur tenantry was conscious of their dependence on the farm labourers who belonged to the menial castes. Though holding hardly any land, Chamars were next to Brahmins in population of Sultanpur.¹²² Without their help neither the zamindars nor the higher caste tenants could plough their lands. According to the Intelligence source 'A meeting of zamindars

discussed the idea of refusing land to menials in future, and themselves arranging for the work usually done by menials.'¹²³ What kind of arrangement was contemplated? Only the zamindars knew. But it is clear that the zamindars were not happy with the menials who were working on their lands. Perhaps the farm-hands were becoming conscious that they were paid low wages and were exploited.

In spite of the lectures of Gauri Shanker Misra, Ganpat Sahai, Ram Chandra, Lalanji and others, the local grass-root leaders were not created in Sultanpur for several years. Perhaps the grass-root leaders are not created by lectures, they are created by circumstances. Patti circumstances were missing in Sultanpur. An attempt was made, perhaps by Ram Chandra, to organise peasantry with the help of a Patti grass-root leader, Sri Harakh. Sri Harakh came from the Anapur Village of Patti. Though his name was not heard during 1920-21, he became an active grass-root leader during the transitory phase. He appeared in Sultanpur in 1925. It was reported 'A meeting of the Sabha attended by 30 persons, all Kurmis, was held in police circle Kuribhar on November 30. The speaker, Sri Harakh, brahman of Pratapgarh, dealt with the usual subjects and in conclusion invited his audience to communicate personally with Dr. Manni Lal, president of the Kisan Sabha.'¹²⁴ Though a Brahman, even in Sultanpur Sri Harakh could draw the attention only of Kurmis who had no strength in the district. It seems that the Kurmis of Sultanpur too suffered more than the other castes in terms of eviction, naz-rana, etc. Sri Harakh addressed two more meetings, one on December 15, 1925 and the other on January 9, 1926. The reporting of his fourth meeting is quite significant: 'About 20 Kurmis from Mahlon attended the Cawnpur Congress. Sri Harakh returned with them and held a small meeting of about 30 Kurmis on January 3, addressing them in the usual strain.'¹²⁵ In the Kanpur Congress too Sultanpur was represented by a few Kurmis. This perhaps is the same Congress which was called 'Kisan Mazdoor Sammelan' of which Ram Chandra

became an active leader.¹²⁶ Since it was not purely a kisan affair, kisan participants were not impressed by this Congress. Kisans of Awadh wished to keep their struggle separate from other sorts of struggles going on in the country at that time. Kisans were fighting against the Oudh Rent Act. Therefore, their fight was different from that of mazdoors.

Sultanpur was not new to Ram Chandra. He already tried his luck in this district before reaching Pratapgarh around 1918. While forwarding Mehta's report to the Chief Secretary to U.P. Government, Hailey, the Commissioner of Fyzabad Division remarks

It is certainly noteworthy that Ram Chandra is said to have begun his preaching some three years ago in Sultanpur and Jaunpur and to have met with no great amount of success. In Pratapgarh he almost at once secured a hearing and in short time became the recognised leader of the kisans.¹²⁷

In the transitory phase too Ram Chandra had hardly any success in Sultanpur though he moved along with the city intelligentsia. He was moving along either with Gauri Shanker Misra or with Ganpat Sahai or with Mani Lal and so on. Is it because he started moving with the city intelligentsia rather than with the grass-root leaders that he lost charm for the kisans? This may be one reason. But the real reason was the difference in the composition of Pratapgarh tenantry from the Sultanpur tenantry. In Pratapgarh the tenantry was dominated by Kurmis. But Sultanpur had dominance of higher caste tenantry. And the higher caste tenantry had no wish to revolt against the British rule. It is interesting to note that even in Sultanpur Kurmis came out to listen to the Kisan Sabha lectures. This shows that they suffered in a similar way at Sultanpur as at Pratapgarh.

If the U.P. Intelligence Department is to be believed then for the first time in 1928 a local leader emerged from Sultanpur. His name is Ram Lal Misra who became the President of Kisan Sabha. Later he became an important leader of Sultanpur. Of course Ganpat Sahai, Advocate, remained associated with the Kisan Sabha activities throughout the transitory period.

But he belonged to the city intelligentsia of Sultanpur. He was totally under the spell of Ram Chandra. Perhaps his clientele improved because of his association with kisans. He became the leading advocate of Sultanpur.¹²⁸ Ram Chandra in 1928 took Ganpat Sahai to Pratapgarh to introduce him to the tenantry there. 'Rupees 6 were subscribed to defray the expenses of Ganpat Sahai who agreed to champion the cause of the kisans if his expenses were paid.'¹²⁹ Thus Ganpat Sahai agreed to champion the cause not only of Sultanpur kisans but also of the Pratapgarh kisans. It seems that he was in touch with kisans and the kisan sabha movement since its inception. He addressed several meetings of kisans from 1922 to 1928 at Sultanpur.

The success of Patel at Bardoli had some impact on the kisans of Sultanpur. His success was a topic of discussion in one of the kisan sabha meetings held in September 1928. Patel was described as 'General Patel.'¹³⁰ But the kisan movement remained subdued. Even the speeches were of a mild nature. Only Gauri Shanker Misra's speech appeared to be little stronger. It was reported that 'he said that he was a capable man but fools from Europe came to govern and kept him in slavery.'¹³¹ But this he said from the Congress platform at a meeting presided by Daden Saheb, the second son of the Raja of Amethi. The meeting was held to listen to Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. The Europeans might be anything but certainly not fools; otherwise, how could they keep in slavery the intelligent Indian advocates, judges and ICS officers? Gandhi never considered them fools.

Rae Bareli: The position of Rae Bareli in the transitory phase was better than that of Sultanpur. But Rae Bareli too was quite unlike Pratapgarh. As early as January 1922 at Salon 'Phalgu Prasad of Pratapgarh told kisans not to pay rent as the rule of Gandhi was coming.'¹³² It was taken for granted by the grass-root leaders that rent was not required to be paid once Gandhi Raj or Swaraj was established. Phalgu Prasad gave a signal to the Rae Bareli

tenants to revive the kisan sabha activities. Just after two months in March 1922, it was reported that 'Bisheshwar Dayal Patwari of Salon, revived the kisan sabha in village Jahwashargi, police circle Bachraon.'¹³³ A panchayat was also established. Salon became a stronghold of kisan activities in 1921. Therefore, it is not surprising that these activities were again revived in 1922.

Incidentally, at the close of the transitory phase too, i.e. in 1928, a grass-root leader of Pratapgarh Kisan Sabha made his mark on the kisans of Rae Bareilly. It is reported that one Prag of Pratapgarh Kisan Sabha 'was convicted under section 228, I.P.C., and sentenced to three years' simple imprisonment for insisting on reading out aloud in court a kisan sabha book during the hearing of an appeal.'¹³⁴ Prag seems to be the same man as Priyag or Pyag, one of the reputed five activists of the Rure Sabha whose name has been mentioned several times in this dissertation. Was not Prag involved in a kind of civil disobedience, not obeying the British law? Was not Prag popularising kisan sabha views by his active resistance to the British laws? Yet he was non-violent. Prag's method was certainly unique. Prag had chosen a Rae Bareilly court, not a court of Pratapgarh. Rae Bareilly kisans had to be awakened like the kisans of Pratapgarh.

Phalgu Prasad was expecting too much when he thought that no rent was required to be paid once Gandhi Raj was established. But it is certainly not expecting too much on the part of a grass-root leader when he thinks that eviction could be stopped only when swaraj is established. A grass-root leader, Bal Krishna, addressed 200 kisans of the village Paho who had a swaraj flag. He said that ejectment would be stopped and swaraj would be established.¹³⁵ Ejectment was the real source of kisans' misery for the reason that nazrana depended on ejectment. The amendment to the Oudh Rent Act which was made in 1921 did not make ejectment unlawful, and the ejectments continued. So the tenant leaders were not wrong in thinking that the

ejection would continue till the British remained in India. The British had no wish to stop ejection. So there was no other way for the kisan struggle except to tie it with the struggle for swaraj.

Though there was revival of kisan agitation in Rae Bareilly, but on a quite small-scale. No sustained leaders were emerging. The situation of Rae Bareilly in many ways was similar to the situation of Sultanpur. There is no doubt that the kisan sabha was planted in Rae Bareilly at the close of 1920, but its roots could not spread in the district because of the violence that started from January 2, 1921. Matabadal Koeri invited Ram Chandra to Rasulpur estate on 28 October 1920 to launch the sabha.¹³⁶ The sabha at Rasulpur and all other branches of sabha in Rae Bareilly were not the branches of Rure Sabha, they were the branches of Oudh Kisan Sabha. Oudh Kisan Sabha was an amalgamation of non-cooperators and kisans, whereas the Rure Sabha was purely the sabha of kisans. Purity of kisan struggle was lost with the launching of Oudh Kisan Sabha at Rae Bareilly. So at any time in its history Rae Bareilly had not observed the kisan struggle of the sort which was launched by the Rure leaders.

Referring to the agrarian movement of Oudh, Jawaharlal remarked, as quoted earlier, 'The agrarian movement was entirely separate from the Congress and it had nothing to do with the non-cooperation that was taking shape.'¹³⁷ The agrarian movement that was entirely separate from the Congress was only the Rure Sabha movement which started in Patti tahsil of Pratapgarh sometime in 1917, if not earlier, coinciding with Gandhi's entry into Champaran. And the Oudh Kisan Sabha could not abolish or absorb into it the Rure Sabha movement. It continued its identity independent of the Congress. It revived again after its grass-root leaders came out from jail in 1922. Oudh Kisan Sabha could do only one harm to Rure Sabha movement. Ram Chandra became a part of the city nationalist intelligentsia. He started moving with Gauri Shanker Misra, Matabadal Pandey, Ganpat Sahai,

Mani Lal, etc. He established higher contacts and left behind Jhinguri Singh, Pryag, Kashi, Bhagwan Din, etc. to manage affairs on their own. Ram Chandra became a national figure.

If Rure Sabha is described as kisan sabha from below, then there existed no kisan sabha from below in either of the three districts of Awadh, Rae Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad.¹³⁸ It existed only in Pratapgarh. Of course the tenants from all the other three districts used to come to lodge their complaints to Rure Sabha, but they could not form any kisan sabha from below in their own districts. In their own districts, not the kisan sabha from below, but the kisan sabha from above, the Oudh Kisan Sabha, formed its branches at the close of 1920. Even the Rasulpur Kisan Sabha which was formed by Matabadal Koeri was not a branch of kisan sabha from below, it was a branch of kisan sabha from above, the Oudh Kisan Sabha. Of course Matabadal Koeri was a leader from below, being an ordinary evicted tenant, rather than a professional leader. But history cannot deny the fact that he was a member of Oudh Kisan Sabha.

It is no surprise that there was no revival of kisan sabha activity from below in Rae Bareli in 1922, the fashion in which it revived in Pratapgarh. Since there was no kisan sabha from below in Rae Bareli in the years 1920-21, there was no question of its revival in 1922. Nothing is known about Matabadal Koeri; what happened to him. Maybe jail in 1921 swallowed him, as it swallowed many. Historians of Awadh are in the habit of making generalisations. What is true of one district is also true of other district. If Congress swallowed the agrarian movement of Rae Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad, then it also swallowed the agrarian movement of Pratapgarh. If there was an agrarian movement from below in Pratapgarh, then there must be an agrarian movement from below in Rae Bareli, Sultanpur and Fyzabad. Jawaharlal gave clues for such generalisations. He maintains that the 'principal workers were common to two movements' in Rae Bareli and

Pratapgarh, 'the agrarian and the Congress movements'.¹³⁹ But the leaders of the agrarian movement in Pratapgarh were certainly not the non-cooperators, though they were put in jail with them. Jhinguri Singh and others were imprisoned for their kisan struggle. It is because of this that the withdrawal of non-cooperation movement by Congress did not lead the Rure Sabha leaders to withdraw their struggle. Had they been non-cooperators they would have withdrawn their struggle after the Chauri Chaura incident. But the grass-root leaders of Rure Sabha restarted their struggle just after coming back from jail in 1922. But this did not happen in Rae Bareli. Kisan struggle of Rae Bareli could not revive in 1922, perhaps because it was dominated by the non-cooperators. Once the non-cooperation was withdrawn, the kisan struggle was also withdrawn.

Kalka Prasad has been considered as the grass-root leader of Rae Bareli tenantry since 1920. But his exclusive concern was not tenantry. He was a non-cooperator. Not only was he the son of a Congressman, he was himself a committed Congressman. In 1921 he was persuading 'chaukidars and patwaris to resign'.¹⁴⁰ Then how could he be considered as a grass-root leader of kisan sabha from below? It was certainly not the business of kisan sabha from below to ask chaukidars and patwaris to go. They wished only the Oudh Rent Act to go. It was the business of non-cooperators to persuade chaukidars and patwaris to go. Kalka Prasad was not involved in any noticeable activity till 1928. Stopping of non-cooperation perhaps also stopped his activities. He, along with Ram Bharose, a new Congress militant, emerged again as the leader of tenantry against the Tiloi estate in 1929. They were imprisoned 'under section 107'.¹⁴¹

The Rae Bareli tenantry could not be better than that of Sultanpur. 66·08 per cent land was held by Thakurs; 6·06 by Brahmans; 10·05 by Muslims; 3·59 by Sikhs and 3·05 by Kayasthas. What remains was held by other castes.¹⁴² The position of Sultanpur Brahmans was better than that

of Rae Bareli. As regards cultivation,

Thakurs cultivate the largest area amounting to 18·0 per cent of the total, Ahirs come next with 16·1 per cent, closely followed by Brahmans at 15·6 per cent. Then come Pasis, Kurmis and Lodhs in that order. Murais and Kachhis together cultivate 5·8 per cent and Muhammadans 5·1 per cent. Thus Thakurs and Brahmans, who are on the whole but indifferent farmers, cultivate one-third of the district. Both are privileged in the matters of rent..... The rates paid by the ordinary castes do not vary much. Kayasthas pay the lowest rates in the district.¹⁴³

There seem to be two main reasons why a united action was impossible on the part of tenantry. Because of the favourable rents Thakurs, Brahmans and Kayasthas did not join hands with the low caste tenants. Among the low caste tenants only Kurmis and Lodhs did not have any subsidiary income. Ahirs of Rae Bareli were 'peaceful tenants' having 'fair number of cattle'.¹⁴⁴ Pasis, in addition to agriculture, had pigs and worked as servants.¹⁴⁵ The situation was such that even lower caste tenantry could not unite. Populationwise Ahirs were more numerous than Pasis, and Pasis more numerous than Brahmans, and Brahmans more numerous than Chamars, and Chamars were more numerous than Thakurs. Lodhs and Kurmis occupied the sixth and seventh positions respectively.¹⁴⁶

There was one major difference between Rae Bareli and Sultanpur. The difference was about the privilege rent. In Sultanpur this privilege had no tendency to disappear. But it was reported that in Rae Bareli this 'privilege shows a marked tendency to disappear. Brahmans often pay full rates, being enabled to do so from their subsidiary incomes from money lending or service.'¹⁴⁷ But the fact that the Brahmans were often charged full rents does not mean that they were charged unfavourable rents like the rents charged from Kurmis or Muraos. Their rent rate was not brought down to the level of low caste tenants. Then agriculture was a secondary profession for Brahmans. They were earning huge sums through other resources. In spite of full rents Brahmans remained in a privileged position.

How close were Brahmans to Thakurs is shown by a resolution of the Kshatriya Sabha of Rae Bareli. It was 'resolved that Thakurs and Brahmans should themselves plough land and a demonstration by taluqdars and other prominent persons attending was made subsequently to show that this involved no loss of caste.'¹⁴⁸ This demonstration shows that there was no social distance between Brahmans and Thakurs. Social distance existed only between them and the lower caste cultivators. In such a situation such tenant leaders were required who could remove the social distances between the tenants of different castes. Oudh Rent Act could not be withdrawn without a united action of tenantry. But such leaders were not emerging.

Writing in the beginning of 1929 the special representative of Pratap expressed his view about the Kisan Sabha of Rae Bareli that 'it is on its death-bed. It has its office bearers, but only on the paper, not in the hearts of kisans.'¹⁴⁹ He praised the young men Kalka Prasad and Ram Bharose for rising to the occasion. Congress had to come out for full support to the kisans. Kisan struggle was moving at snail's pace at Rae Bareli from 1922 onwards. The struggle had to be intensified.

Fyzabad: This district exhibited more kisan activity in the transitory phase than any other district of Awadh, including Pratapgarh. The reason was that most of the local non-cooperators and Khilafatists came from villages. Therefore, they could easily give rural orientation to their struggle. They had grievances against the landlords. Khilafat and non-cooperation became good instruments for the expression of those grievances. The old '42 villages movement' (Biyalis gaon movement) of Jalalpur Circle, in Raja Abu Jafar's estate, continued in 1920s also. So far as Fyzabad is concerned, this movement was as strong as Aika movement in Hardoi. Jagat Singh, Ganpat Singh and Lachman Singh emerged as a few grass-root leaders connected with the '42 villages movement'. As early as March 1922 non-cooperation meetings

in Tanda Circle 'had an anti-taluqdar and anti-begar tinge'.¹⁵⁰ Panchayats which were established by the grass-root leaders were similar to the 'aika movement'.¹⁵¹ Open attack was made on 'the poppy cultivation, begar, naz-rana, etc.'. ¹⁵² In his note the Deputy Commissioner of Fyzabad accepted that 'There are signs of revival of landlord-tenant quarrels both in Pirpur and Musipur estates.'¹⁵³ History was repeating. The tenants were stirred up like the days of 1920-21. There was hardly any discontinuity. The struggle of tenants which started in 1920 continued into 1922.

Other than the grass-root leaders of the '42 villages movement' the transitory phase of the tenant struggle in Fyzabad gave birth to such grass-root leaders as Khalil Ahmad, Jagmohan Singh, Vazir Ahmad, Gudar Kurmi, Ajodhya Das, Muhammad Saghir, Ali Nasir, Nisar Ahmad, Rakhraj Singh, Muhammad Shafi, Tribhubhavan Datt, Muhammad Nasir, Nageshwar Lal, Mahadeo Prasad, Nasir-ud-din, Bhagwati Kurmi, Hyatul Faqir, Anwar-ul-Haq, Janaki Prasad, Narendra Deo Verma, Bala Prasad, Ram Samujh Lal, Ajodhia Prasad. Maybe there were some grass-root leaders who escaped the notice of U.P. Intelligence Department or the notice of the present writer in studying the Intelligence files. Any district of Awadh would be proud of such a long list of grass-root leaders. Then there were old leaders who were trying to organise tenants, such leaders as Kedar Nath Sonar, Lallanji, Deo Narayan and Baba Ram Chandra. Mani Lal was also brought to Fyzabad by Ram Chandra. This band of leaders became active when non-cooperation and khilafat movements started declining. Jawaharlal, Jamnalal Bajaj, Kripalani, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Gauri Shanker Misra had also addressed the kisans at different times. Madan Mohan Malviya too appeared in 1928.

Khalil Ahmad, Gudar Kurmi, Ajodhya Das, Jagmohan and Wazir Husain revived the agrarian agitation in Akbarpur, Tanda, Kotwali and Jalalpur in the months of June and July 1922. Khalil Ahmad started a panchayat in his village Tajpur. 'In one case a fine of Rs. 100 was imposed on a patwari in

settlement of a civil court case.'¹⁵⁴ To stop the agitation spreading further Jagmohan and Wazir Husain were prosecuted.¹⁵⁵ Yet by the end of 1922 the agitation was spreading like fire. In the second week of November 'There have been six meetings during the week at one of which the audience numbered 2,000.'¹⁵⁶ It was also reported in this week 'that Gudar Kurmi, a firebrand, is stirring up trouble between zamindars and tenants in the Tanda tahsil.'¹⁵⁷ In the beginning of January Ajudhya Das was served a warrant of arrest.¹⁵⁸

Khalil Ahmad was a Khilafatist. He used his Khilafat instrument against the landlords for helping tenants. In one of the meetings at Tanda he said that 'A resolution had been passed at Gaya that all should advise the police and the army to give up services if war breaks out between Britain and Turkey.'¹⁵⁹ And his anti-British attitude helped him in becoming anti-landlord. He was anti-British and anti-landlord at the same time like so many grass-root leaders of tenantry. When Raja Abu Jafar refused 'free grazing to people who refuse him bhusa and pial; Khalil Ahmad has taken up the matter and has sent a lot of cattle to graze in the prohibited area.'¹⁶⁰ Khalil Ahmad, along with Ajudhya Das, addressed 5,000 tenants who were demonstrating against the oppression of the taluqdar of Bhati.¹⁶¹ In a fortnight's time in April 1923 there were some 32 meetings which had for their theme 'non-payment of nazrana, bhoosa and pial to zamindars'.¹⁶² Khalil Ahmad was one of the principal speakers in the meetings. For a couple of years, 1923 and 1924, Khalil Ahmad became the most powerful grass-root leader of Fyzabad. He eclipsed all the other leaders.

Like Khalil Ahmad, Ajudhya Das was a non-cooperator. In the meetings at Jalalpur he 'discoursed on the Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh... the need of swaraj and appealed to Government servants to resign their posts.'¹⁶³ On January 23, 1923 he 'emphasised that nazrana, bhusa and pial should not

be given to zamindars.'¹⁶⁴ The aim of non-cooperation for Ajudhya Das was not different from the aim of tenant struggle. What removed him from the scene was not non-cooperation but the tenant struggle. Ajudhya Das and Nageshwar Lal were sentenced for life in the Raiganj case. A dispute occurred between the volunteers of Ajudhya Das and the Zileदार of Bhit. The result was Zileदार's death.¹⁶⁵ But Khalil Ahmad was different. In spite of his violent tenant activities he was not sentenced. This led people to be suspicious about him. And he had to clarify his position before the public. At one meeting he 'announced that he kept on good terms with Government officials to save himself getting into trouble, but that his "friendship" was only a blind.'¹⁶⁶ Such announcements created more suspicion than removing them.

All the grass-root leaders had their own character. Space does not allow to discuss all of them. Yet Gudar Kurmi deserves special attention. Though described as a firebrand in the police reports, he was quite cool. He decided to implement the idea of panchayat, and to provide justice to the needy persons without going to the law courts. Even for petty cases tenants had to spend huge sums which they did not have. He started presiding over panchayats at Tanda.¹⁶⁷ He was convinced that only Congress could solve the problems of tenantry. He continued helping the evicted tenants.¹⁶⁸ He 'advised the kisans to join Congress' as it was 'The only means of remedying their poverty.'¹⁶⁹ In 1930 he established the tahsil Congress Committee in his village Fatehpur 'with the object of improving the conditions of kisans and holding enquiries into cases of ejectment.'¹⁷⁰ He did not disappear from the scene like several other grass-root leaders.

It is so unfortunate that a time came when the tenant struggle was converted into the struggle for leadership, and the differences between landlords and tenants became differences between Hindus and Muslims. New leadership clashed with the old leadership. Deo Narayan wanted to hold a ki-

san sabha meeting at village Arya on July 14, 1923 'but none turned up as Khalil Ahmad had forbidden to do so.'¹⁷¹ It was reported that Deo Narayan had 'been touring the villages, telling villagers to pay no subscription to Khalil Ahmad.'¹⁷² The clash between these two leaders occurred when the life sentences were passed on Ajudhya Das and Nageshwar Lal. Their sacrifices evoked no reaction. Deo Narayan might have felt that Khalil Ahmad was becoming too powerful. Khalil Ahmad removed a market from village Hirapur and brought it to village Rasulpur. The zamindar of Hirapur was a Hindu whereas that of Rasulpur a Muslim.¹⁷³

A clash of leadership led to a Hindu-Muslim clash. After his release from jail on March 30, 1925 Muhammad Nasir had 'taken up the question of defending the Muslim religion against Hindus.'¹⁷⁴ Hardly a week passed that there was reaction. Kedar Nath was 'lecturing in Ajudhia with an anti-Muslim bias.'¹⁷⁵ He is well-known to the Awadh historians. And Muhammad Nasir too became known to the people of Fyzabad because of his association with the kisan struggle. When he was released from jail on March 30, 1925, he was received not only by Khalil Ahmad but also by Deo Narayan, Mani Lal and so many other Hindus. He came back from jail with new ideas. The same may be true about Kedar Nath. As early as March 30, 1923 Muhammad Nasir 'described the zamindars of the villages as tyrants, said that the English had reached their zenith and that their downfall was certain.'¹⁷⁶ How could the English leave India when Muslims and Hindus think about their own religions?

Jalalpur observed a communal violence on August 15, 1925. Jagat Singh and Lachman Singh, the two reputed kisan activists of '42 villages movement' were arrested by showing their involvement in the riot. Their struggle against Raja Abu Jafar was converted into a struggle of Hindus against Muslims. Instead of continuing their fight against the tyrannical rule of the Raja, Ganpat Singh and others who were not in jail got busy in raising

fund for fighting the cases of their fellow fighters. Jalalpur riot was used as an instrument to suppress the agitation of 42 villages. Perhaps it was created for no other purpose except to kill the Biyalis Gaon agitation in particular and the kisan agitation of Fyzabad in general. Muslim grass-root leaders started withdrawing from the kisan agitation, and by the beginning of 1929 their withdrawal was nearly complete. Only the enlightened Muslims remained associated with the kisan struggle. It was reported that on August 3, 1929 'Maulvi Anwar-ul-Haq delivered a lecture in village Ainwan, police circle Tanda, advising kisans not to attend meetings of Congress workers and to help Congress as it had so far done nothing for the good of the kisans.'¹⁷⁷ Tanda was the birth-place of the revival of tenant struggle in 1922. Khalil Ahmad and Wazir Husain belonged to Tanda. They, along with Gudar Kurmi, Ajudhya Das and Jagmohan Singh, revived the kisan agitation in Tanda. How different became Tanda in 1929!

Ram Chandra arrived at Fyzabad in the beginning of January 1925 when the non-cooperation and khilafat movements were already dead. He arrived with his band of city intelligentsia, the prominent among them were Deo Narayan and Mani Lal. Since vakils were required to fight the kisan cases in the law courts, he brought with him a new vakil 'and he put forward proposals that Mani Lal should be supported financially by them (kisans)'.¹⁷⁸ He already introduced some vakils to the tenantry of Sultanpur and Pratapgarh, who were becoming prominent by fighting the cases of kisans. Vakils were not only improving their clientele but they were also appearing as kisan leaders. This was one important contribution of Ram Chandra to the kisan struggle of Awadh.

Ram Chandra calculates before entering into the region of kisans. He enters only in those regions where the kisans are already organised. He converts the organised kisans into the well-organised kisans. He simply cleans and polishes the organisation. Thus Ram Chandra, Deo Narayan and

Mani Lal settled down in '42 villages', where the tenants were already organised.¹⁷⁹ After a gap of nearly three months Ram Chandra 'started touring in Tanda and Akbarpur'.¹⁸⁰ He addressed three meetings, one of which was attended by 'Jamna Lal Bajaz and Kripalani'.¹⁸¹ At a meeting at Gyaspur 'Ram Chandra said that Colonel Wedgewood was coming out from England to hold enquiries into their grievances and he asked the audience to relate their pathetic stories to him.'¹⁸² Reference to Colonel Wedgewood might have impressed kisans about Ram Chandra. He knew something which no other leader knew. No other leader told them that Colonel Wedgewood would be coming. Ram Chandra succeeded in creating hopes in the minds of tenants that there would be hearing of their pathetic condition. And the hearing would be done by some very high official of the British Government, higher than the lot sahab.

Though the kisan sabha activity was observed in Jalalpur, Akbarpur, Tanda, Ahrauli and Bhaskari circles large audience could not be secured for hearing Ram Chandra.¹⁸³ Therefore, a big rally was announced to be held at Gauhana on May 6, 1925. 'To secure a good audience, he (Ram Chandra) advertised that the Deputy Commissioner would be present at this rally.'¹⁸⁴ The presence of Deputy Commissioner would certainly attract crowds of kisans. They knew that neither the non-cooperators and khilafatists nor the kisan sabha leaders ruled Fyzabad. Fyzabad was ruled by the Deputy Commissioner. Gauhana meeting attracted some 3,000 kisans. Some excuse was invented for the absence of the Deputy Commissioner. In the Gauhana meeting Ram Chandra did not attack the Oudh Rent Act or the corruption of the government officials. He simply attacked the 'Tahsildar of Akbarpur'.¹⁸⁵ And he continued attacking the Akbarpur Tahsildar in another meeting at Tanda. This act on the part of Ram Chandra led to the issue of a 'notice under section 144, C.P.C. prohibiting him from addressing meetings in the district up to the end of June.'¹⁸⁶ Thus ended Ram Chandra's kisan sabha activity at

Fyzabad.

However, before his exit, the notice under section 144 magnified the image of Ram Chandra. A big meeting was announced to be held at Akbarpur on May 20. Kisan sabha workers succeeded in bringing about 4,000 kisans to this meeting. And at this meeting Ram Chandra was not allowed to speak. The speakers included Muhammad Nasir, Khalil Ahmad, Lalanji, Mani Lal and Gauri Shanker Misra.¹⁸⁷ All of them condemned the Fyzabad administration for prohibiting Ram Chandra to speak. Though Ram Chandra did not speak he became a superior leader than all those who spoke. The Fyzabad administration helped in building up the image of Ram Chandra.

Ram Chandra appeared again at Fyzabad in 1928. It was reported that 'Baba Ram Chandra and Ram Lal of Pratapgarh addressed the gathering' at Ajodhia on August 25, 1928.¹⁸⁸ There were about two hundred persons in the gathering. Ram Lal is not from Pratapgarh. He is from Sultanpur, a new disciple of Ram Chandra, who became the President of Sultanpur Kisan Sabha in 1928. He introduced 'Ram Chandra as the man who got the tenancy act amended and who is trying to make further improvements in the condition of kisans.'¹⁸⁹ Thus Ram Lal gave a responsibility to Ram Chandra for telling his audience about the further improvements in the condition of kisans he was contemplating. In response Ram Chandra 'assured the audience that he would succeed in securing Dominion Status for India within the next two or three years.'¹⁹⁰ It was through the efforts of Ram Chandra that India was to get the Dominion Status. Ram Chandra had no wish to be restricted to Awadh. 1920-21 revolt of peasants, for which he considered himself responsible, kept him restricted to Awadh. Now he should do something bigger, something for the whole nation. And he informed his audience about the bigger thing he was doing. He was bringing the Dominion Status to India. It seems Ram Chandra got habituated to take credit for the work done by others.

Revival of kisan sabha in Fyzabad in 1925 did not lead to the creation

of any new leader. The new leaders were created by the non-cooperation and khilafat movements. When these movements were over, these new leaders joined the kisan sabha movement. Khalil Ahmad and Mohammad Nasir became well-known kisan sabha agitators. A time came when Khalil Ahmad was opposed by the old leader, Deo Narayan, and Mohammad Nasir by Kedar Nath. Ultimately kisan sabha of Fyzabad gave birth to the Hindu-Muslim riot. Immediate loss was the movement of '42 villages'. All the leaders of this movement were arrested as Hindu fanatics. Fyzabad Kisan Sabha had done more harm than good to the cause of tenantry in the transitory phase. The tenantry lost its unity.

A Comparative Study of Leaders from Pratapgarh, Fyzabad, Rae Bareli and Sultanpur: In the transitory phase there was hardly any grass-root leader in Sultanpur. Therefore, this comparison is restricted to the other three districts. Compare Jhinguri Singh and Kashi of Pratapgarh with Khalil Ahmad and Ajodhya Das of Fyzabad or Kalka Prasad of Rae Bareli. Jhinguri Singh and Kashi were against taluqdars and the taluqdari system, but they were against any kind of violence. They knew that violence could not eliminate the taluqdari system. It could be eliminated only by a united action of tenants against the British who gave birth to this system. They believed in the unity of tenants, mass protest and active resistance. But Khalil Ahmad and Ajodhya Das were different. Khalil Ahmad once got the field of a taluqdar grazed. On another occasion he got shifted the bazar from one village to the other. Do these actions show that he opposed the taluqdari system? Similarly, Ajodhya Das was involved in the murder of an employee of a zamindar. Can such murders eliminate the taluqdari system? In 1920s Kalka Prasad started as a non-cooperator persuading the government servants to resign. In 1930s he ended up as one of the great masters of violent speeches. After he was removed from his paid job as a Congress President of Rae Bareli he rejected the swaraj flag and picked up 'a red flag'¹⁹¹ and formed 'the

Krant Kari Dal'.¹⁹² In one of the speeches 'He expressed his desire to see the taluqdars ploughing their fields and their women preparing dung cakes.'¹⁹³ He was not thinking of improving the condition of rural women who survive by preparing dung cakes. He wished that the women of taluqdars should also live like the women of poor tenants. With Kalka Prasad's ideology, quantity of misery in India requires extension, it should not be restricted totally to tenants; zamindars have also to become miserable. The British could not but appreciate Kalka Prasad's switch from the swaraj flag to the red coloured flag. Swaraj flag signified opposition to the British, but red flag only an opposition to the taluqdars.

Khalil Ahmad and Ajodhya Das cult continued in Fyzabad for a long time. It was reported in late 1930s that 'Khairati, assisted by about fifty Kurmi kisans of village Rasulpur, P.S. Tanda, Fyzabad, followers of Ajodhya Das, a local kisan sabha worker, started cutting the bamboos of R.S. Triloki Nath, a local zamindar.'⁹⁴ Cutting of bamboos and the grazing of taluqdars' fields are forms of 'peasant protest' which have been highlighted by certain group of historians. These forms demonstrate the sickness of peasants. They function like thermometer for knowing temperature of the body. But they are not prescriptions for the removal of temperature. Mere thermometer cannot remove the temperature from the body, it can only record it. One has to take some medicine in order to remove the temperature. So also one has not to remain contented with the peasant protests, one has to take steps to remove the peasants' suffering. Call for swaraj was a prescription for removing the peasant suffering. Unless swaraj was established, the taluqdari system would not be abolished. Unless taluqdari system was abolished bamboo-cutting and field-grazings would continue. Of course if the taluqdars reform themselves, and they become trustees of their estates and look after the welfare of their tenants, the symptoms such as bamboo-cutting and field-grazing would not occur. The mistake of the historians

lies in the fact that they confuse the instrument for gauging a disease into a prescription for removing the disease. Fever cannot be removed by eating a thermometer; so also taluqdari system will not be removed by cutting bamboos and grazing fields. Much more is required for removing the taluqdari system. Rather eating a thermometer for removing fever will lead to more dangerous consequences. So also cutting bamboos and grazing fields will lead to further aggravation of the peasant suffering. Police will join hands with the taluqdars in order to crush tenantry. Of course the British liked such situations in which there was violence between the landlords and tenants. What would happen to the law courts and law-enforcing agencies if such situations disappear from the scene?

Cutting bamboos and grazing fields were not the only forms of peasant protests that occupied the tenant struggle during the transitory phase. Grain rent was prevalent in some parts of Awadh. The taluqdars were not willing to switch over from grain rent to cash rent. Taluqdars or their thekedars earned more by grain rent. So the protest started against the grain rent, particularly in the districts of Bahraich and Gonda. It was reported from Bahraich that 'there has been a good deal of lifting of grain from threshing floors by tenants as a protest against the continuance of grain rent.'¹⁹⁵ Grain lifting covered a wide area. The whole of 'north-east' of Bahraich and several parts of Gonda were effected.¹⁹⁶ But these were the only districts where grain rent was prevalent during 1920s. In other parts of Awadh only certain pockets had grain rent. So it was natural to observe grain-lifting activity in Bahraich and Gonda. Grain-lifting cannot be assimilated to cutting of bamboos or the grazing of fields. Because the latter two forms of protest were not widespread. They were restricted to individuals.

In order to explain the situation take the help of Weapons of the Weak.¹⁹⁷ Cutting of bamboos and grazing of fields can be described as the

'everyday forms of peasant resistance' but the grain-lifting cannot. Not only the issue of grain rent was general, so was the reaction to it general. Bahraich was hit more than Gonda. In Bahraich 'armed police' and 'district authorities' were moving around the district. The agitation would have affected other parts of Awadh if they had grain rent. But they already switched over to cash rent.

The Rure tenant leaders were not interested in everyday forms of protest against the taluqdars. They were not against this or that individual taluqdar; they were against the taluqdari system. This distinguishes Jhinguri Singh and Kashi from Khalil Ahmad and Ajodhya Das. The latter two adopted the weapons of the weak, the cutting of bamboo and grazing of fields. Of course the tenant leaders like Khalil Ahmad and Ajodhya Das thought that they were contributing to the tenant struggle against the taluqdari system in putting the taluqdars to economic loss. They were kisan sabha leaders, and not ordinary tenants. They knew the goals of kisan sabha. Its goal was to eliminate the taluqdari system. Jhinguri Singh and Kashi did not think like them. They thought that their movement would have a setback if they involved themselves in such activities as cutting of bamboos and grazing of fields. The police would crush their movement.

Jhinguri Singh and Kashi were not the products of non-cooperation and khilafat. Their agitation started sometime before the Congress-led agitations started. It was only in October 1920 that the Oudh Kisan Sabha was born, and the Rure leaders were instrumental in giving it birth. But the Oudh Kisan Sabha was dominated by the non-cooperationists. Khalil Ahmad and Ajodhya Das were the products of Oudh Kisan Sabha. Therefore, they should have used their weapon, the weapon of non-violence. How could they become violent? And how could Jhinguri Singh and Kashi become non-violent? There is no doubt that the Rure leaders realised long before the agitation of 1920-21 that violence would not pay any dividend. This is the reason why no

violence occurred in Pratapgarh. Tenants had to give up their weak weapons like cutting bamboos and grazing fields. They were strong and, therefore, they should use a strong weapon, the weapon of ahimsa.

Before we close the tenant struggle of the transitory phase, it would be quite interesting to see the impact of the amended Act of 1921. The Act of 1886 specially hit the low caste tenants. Now the cruelty was also extended to high caste tenants. Consider the U.P. Revenue Reports from 1922 to 1929. Some of these reports incorporate the reactions of Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners which we have already quoted in the last section of the first chapter. Consider first the Revenue Report of 1926 which describes the impact of 'Oudh Rent Act... for three complete years' preceding 1926.¹⁹⁸ According to the Report

main sections to which the criticisms of local officers continue are sections (1) 30A acquisition of land by landlords, (2) section 67(1)(b) disqualifying a tenant who possesses proprietary or under-proprietary rights in the village from acquiring statutory rights, (3) section 62A(1)(b) rendering a tenant liable to ejectment from his entire holding for illegally subletting any part of it, and (4) section 62A(1)(e) referring to Pahi-kasht tenants.¹⁹⁹

The report itself accepts that the 'chief danger arising out of these sections consists in the lever which they supply for extorting nazrana from high caste tenants under threat of putting these sections in operation.'²⁰⁰ This shows that the high caste tenants did not suffer so much from the malady of nazrana before the amendment of 1921. The revised and amended Act of 1921 brought them on the equal footing with the low caste tenants. The high caste tenants could not work with their own hands, and they could not give cash wages to their servants. Cash was a difficult proposal in villages. So they used to sublet land to their servants which became impossible after 1921.²⁰¹

The condition of the succeeding year was no better. The Revenue Report of 1927 draws attention specially to section 30A. The number of cases instituted under this section 'increased from 403 to 427. The greatest in-

crease of 49 took place in Rae Bareilly... Ejectment orders were passed in 186 cases against 113 last year... There is reason to suppose that in many cases the real object is to obtain an enhancement of rent.'²⁰² If not the enhancement of rent, then the real object could be nazrana.

The Oudh Rent Act continued to be attacked by the government officials. The Revenue Report of the year 1928 mentions that the 'section 61 should be more elastic, as cases occurred in which the tenant by mistake paid a sum only nominally less than the amount due and had in consequence to be ejected. Stress has also been laid again on the harsh results of the working of sections 62A(1) and 67(1)(b).'²⁰³

Finally consider the Revenue Report of 1929. It says that the

landlords continue to make use of every opportunity allowed them by the Act to eject their tenants... It is also added that full use is made by landlords of the very harsh provisions of section 67(1) (b)... Landlords prefer to come to court under section 61, Oudh Rent Act, to secure ejectment rather than recover arrears of rent by appraisement or by execution of decrees.²⁰⁴

The Revenue Reports of four years in succession from 1926 to 1929 show that the provisions of the amended Act of 1921 were totally against the tenantry. The report of 1926 covered the preceding three years. The Act came into force from 1922. The Act was amended to help the tenantry. It was a consequence of the revolt against eviction and nazrana. But it did not stop either eviction or nazrana. Instead of decreasing both of them increased. It was not only the view of politicians that eviction and nazrana increased after 1921, the government records also prove the truth of their view. Was not the revolt of 1920-21 by tenants a pure exercise in futility? Yet Ram Chandra continued singing his song about his victory in 1920-21. He might have been victorious but not the kisans. Since he was victorious his interest in kisan cause weakened. But Jhinguri Singh and his associates did not give any importance to the amendment to the Oudh Rent Act. Therefore, they continued with their struggle. They also wished that Ram Chandra

should join hands with them.

The conditions after 1922 became more favourable for a widespread tenant agitation. The amendment to the Oudh Rent Act in 1921 did not spare the high caste tenants. They also started suffering like their low caste brothers. Every tenant was equal before the British laws. These laws were quite secular. Added to all the earlier problems there was a crop failure for three continuous years from 1927 to 1929. And then, at the last stage, arrives the great depression. From the beginning of 1930 the tenants of Awadh were sitting on the mouth of a most powerful volcano, the volcano of suffering caused by the depression, crop failure, nazrana, bedakhli, begar, hari, etc. Gandhi, Jawaharlal and the Congress were perceptive of the situation. How to rescue the tenants from their suffering? They thought that only swaraj could liberate the tenants from their terrible condition. Tenants had to participate in the battle for swaraj. The British had to be physically evicted from India. But the tenants of Awadh already launched their battle for swaraj in 1920 for which they were preparing for a long time. They did not stop their battle. It is the Congress which had to come back to the battle of swaraj which it stopped after the Chauri Chaura incident. Congress had no other alternative but to restart its battle. When Gandhi started his Civil Disobedience in April 1930, he had high hopes from the tenantry of India. He expected that each village would contribute to the success of the salt agitation. The villages did fulfil his expectations.

Notes and References to Chapter 3

1. See File No. 50-3, GAD, 1921, UPSA.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography, New Delhi, 1980, p. 52.
12. Ibid., p. 62.
13. File No. 50-3, GAD, 1921, UPSA.
14. Baba Ram Chandra Papers (BRP), Part-I, F. No. 2-A.
15. Reference to Ajodhia Conference is found both in the writings of Ram Chandra and Jawaharlal Nehru. Conference was held on 20 December 1920.
16. Draft Press Communique dated 12 January 1921 from C.B. Lambert, Chief Secretary to Government, U.P., File No. 50-3, GAD, 1921, UPSA.
17. Farnon's Report, File No. 50, GAD, 1921, UPSA, p. 659.
18. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 60.
19. United Provinces Government Gazette, Extraordinary, February 2, 1921, File No. 50, GAD, 1921, UPSA, p. 6.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.

24. Final Report on the Agrarian Disturbances in Rae Bareli in January 1921 (hereafter mentioned as Final Report), Ibid., p. 10.
25. Ibid., p. 6.
26. 'The Rai Bareli Tragedy--Truth about Sirdar's Firing', Independent, 23 January 1921. Cited in Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, S. Gopal (ed.), Volume One, New Delhi, 1972, p. 212.
27. 'The Rai Bareli Tragedy', Independent, 22 January 1921, Ibid., p. 211.
28. Ibid., p. 10.
29. United Provinces Government Gazette, Extraordinary, February 2, 1921, File No. 50, GAD, 1921, UPSA, p. 1.
30. File No. 50-2, 1921, UPSA.
31. File No. 50, GAD, 1921, UPSA.
32. Ibid., Note on the career of Suraj Prasad alias Ram Chandra.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. File No. 50-3, GAD, 1921, UPSA.
40. Ibid.
41. Leader, 29 July 1921.
42. Final Report, United Provinces Government Gazette, Extraordinary, February 2, 1921, File No. 50, GAD, 1921, UPSA.
43. File No. 358/1920, Police Department, UPSA.
44. File No. 50, GAD, 1921, UPSA, Note on the career of Suraj Prasad alias Ram Chandra.
45. Leader, 23 September 1920.
46. Farnon's Report, File No. 50, GAD, 1921, UPSA, p. 659.
47. Faunthorpe's Report on Eka Movement, U.P. Government Gazette, May 13, 1922, UPSA.

48. PAI, C.I.D., United Provinces, 4 March 1922, p. 460.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., Hardoi, December 1926, p. 616.
53. Ibid., May 1931, p. 457.
54. 'Purna Swaraj, not Dominion Status', Speech of Jawaharlal Nehru at Bombay, 15 March 1931. Cited in Selected Works, Vol. 4, New Delhi, 1973, p. 495.
55. Speech of Jawaharlal Nehru at Ghatkopar, 16 March 1931, Ibid., p. 493.
56. PAI, Pratapgarh, October 1925, p. 425.
57. Ibid., July 1922, p. 1074.
58. Ibid., August 1922, p. 1326.
59. Ibid., February 1923, p. 64.
60. Ibid., Jaunpur 1923, p. 19.
61. Ibid., Pratapgarh, February 1926, p. 111.
62. Ibid., December 1924, p. 409.
63. Ibid., July 1923, p. 377.
64. Ibid., October 1923, p. 432.
65. Ibid., May 1923, p. 275.
66. Letter to Deputy Commissioner, Pratapgarh, BRP, 1st instalment, F. No. 11.
67. Ibid.
68. PAI, Pratapgarh, November 1923, p. 478.
69. Ibid., June 1924, p. 183.
70. Ibid., September 1924, p. 285.
71. Ibid., May 1923, p. 299.
72. Abhyudaya, 24 July 1920. Cited in Kapil Kumar, Peasants in Revolt: Tenants, Landlords, Congress and the Raj in Oudh, 1886-1922, Delhi, 1984, p. 95.

73. File No. 358/1920, Police Department, UPSA, pp. 285-88.
74. '"Babas" on the Brain', Independent, 21 January 1921. Cited in Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 209.
75. BRP, Part I, File No. 2-A.
76. Farnon's Report, File No. 50, GAD, 1921, UPSA, p. 657.
77. File No. 358/1920, Police Department, UPSA.
78. Ibid.
79. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 90.
80. Ibid.
81. Gandhi's call for "Swaraj in a year" was premature. 1920 was too early a stage for such a call. The time was proper in 1942 when he gave a call for the "Quit India Movement". The ball of Swaraj started moving at a faster rate.
82. Leader, 23 September 1920.
83. This is the view of Mr. Imtiaz Uddin Khan whom I interviewed recently.
84. BRP, Part I, File No. 2-C.
85. Nehru, Autobiography, pp. 59-60.
86. Cited in Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol. I, pp. 210-25.
87. Mahatma Gandhi, Collected Works, Vol. 43, p. 37.
88. '"Babas" on the Brain', cited in Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 208.
89. 'The Rai Bareli Tragedy', Ibid., p. 211.
90. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 61.
91. Ibid.
92. Independent, 27 October 1920.
93. Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces. Being the Report of the Committee appointed by the Council of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee to enquire into the Agrarian Situation in the Province, Allahabad, 1931, Appendix XIV, p. 231.
94. Ibid.
95. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 62.
96. Ibid.

97. Ibid., p. 61.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. PAI, Pratapgarh, December 1924, p. 409.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid., p. 9.
104. Ibid., January 1925, p. 29.
105. 'Repression in the United Provinces', Note prepared by Jawaharlal Nehru for Mahatma Gandhi sometime in June 1921. Cited in Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 197 (footnote).
106. PAI, Fyzabad, January 1925, p. 48.
107. Ibid., Pratapgarh, May 1923, p. 275. 'On the next day Ram Chandra Sharma addressed a gathering of 300 people at Sildhaur appealing for volunteers and starting of panchayats'.
108. Ibid., February 1923, p. 63.
109. See BRP, 1st instalment, SW, S. No. 2-D. 'If Kurmis had not helped me in all kinds of ways I would have failed to launch the agitation of 1919-20' (BRP).
110. See Ram Chandra's letter to G.B. Panth, BRP, 1st instalment, F. No. 15.
111. Not one but at several places Ram Chandra makes Jhinguri Singh and the Kurmi caste responsible for the movement of 1920-21. See specially BRP, 1st instalment, SW, S. No. 2-D.
112. '"Babas" on the Brain'. Cited in Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 208.
113. Ibid., p. 209.
114. PAI, Sultanpur, December 1922, p. 1670.
115. Ibid., November 1922, p. 1560.
116. File No. 358/1921, Police Department, UPSA.
117. J.A. Fordham, Sultanpur Settlement Report, 1939, pp. 19-20.
118. Ibid., p. 20.

119. PAI, Sultanpur, October 1923, p. 530.
120. Ibid., Pratapgarh, October 1925, p. 425.
121. Fordham, Sultanpur Settlement Report, p. 19.
122. See Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. xxiii.
123. PAI, Sultanpur, July 1924, p. 221.
124. Ibid., December 1925, p. 544.
125. Ibid., January 1926, p. 33.
126. The U.P. Intelligence reports under its heading "Communism" 'On January 31, 1926 one Baba Ram Chandra, of Oudh, spoke in support of the Akhil Bharti Kisan Mazdoor Sammelan ka Sandesh' which has apparently been started at Cawnpur', PAI, February 1926, p. 108.
127. H.R.C. Hailey, Commissioner, Fyzabad Division, forwarding note on the Report of V.N. Mehta to the Chief Secretary, United Provinces Government, 25 November 1920, F. No. 753, Revenue, 1920, UPSA, p. 3.
128. In his interview Mr. Sripat Misra, a former Chief Minister of U.P., who comes from Sultanpur, maintains that Ganpat Sahai was a first rate Advocate. Kisan activity or any other kind of activity was secondary to him.
129. PAI, Pratapgarh, May 1928, p. 186.
130. Ibid., Sultanpur, September 1928, p. 346.
131. Ibid., June 1926, p. 327.
132. Ibid., Rae Bareli, January 1922, p. 29.
133. Ibid., April 1922, pp. 729-30.
134. Ibid., March 1928, p. 109.
135. Ibid., February 1922, p. 410.
136. See File No. 50/1921, GAD, UPSA, pp. 1153, 1167.
137. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 54.
138. The distinction between kisan sabha from below and kisan sabha from above is derived from M.H. Siddiqi, Agrarian Unrest in North India: The United Provinces, 1918-22, Chapter IV, Delhi, 1978.
139. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 61.

140. Rae Bareli disturbances, File No. 50, GAD, 1921, UPSA.
141. PAI, Rae Bareli, February 1929, p. 61.
142. A.C. Turner, Report of the Third Regular Settlement of the Rae Bareli District, 1929, p. 12.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
146. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Rae Bareli, Vol. XXI.
147. Turner, Rae Bareli Settlement Report, p. 12.
148. PAI, Rae Bareli, December 1924, p. 416.
149. Pratap, 24 February 1929.
150. PAI, Fyzabad, March 1922, p. 543.
151. Ibid.
152. Ibid., November 1922, p. 1628.
153. Ibid., February 1923, p. 67.
154. Ibid., July 1922, p. 1127.
155. Ibid., p. 1216.
156. Ibid., November 1922, p. 1560.
157. Ibid.
158. Ibid., January 1923, p. 31.
159. Ibid., p. 33.
160. Ibid., February 1923, p. 67.
161. Ibid., p. 86.
162. Ibid., April 1923, p. 256.
163. Ibid., February 1923, p. 64.
164. Ibid.
165. Ibid., June 1923, p. 316.
166. Ibid., November 1923, p. 536.
167. Ibid., August 1923, p. 448; October 1923, p. 518.

168. Ibid., February 1929, p. 62.
169. Ibid., September 1929, p. 451.
170. Ibid., March 1930, p. 212.
171. Ibid., July 1923, p. 413.
172. Ibid., October 1923, p. 510.
173. Ibid., June 1923, p. 329.
174. Ibid., August 1925, p. 330.
175. Ibid., p. 338.
176. Ibid., April 1923, p. 256.
177. Ibid., August 1929, p. 399.
178. Ibid., January 1925, p. 48.
179. Ibid., January 1925, p. 29.
180. Ibid., April 1925, p. 164.
181. Ibid., May 1925, p. 184.
182. Ibid., p. 185.
183. Ibid., p. 194.
184. Ibid., p. 202.
185. Ibid.
186. Ibid., p. 210.
187. Ibid., p. 220.
188. Ibid., September 1928, p. 356.
189. Ibid.
190. Ibid.
191. Ibid., Rae Bareli, February 1938, p. 52.
192. Ibid.
193. Ibid., March 1938, p. 58.
194. Ibid., Fyzabad, January 1938, p. 17.
195. Ibid., Bahraich, January 1922, p. 137.

196. See PAI reports of Bahraich and Gonda, particularly in the months of January and February 1922. Balrampur estate was specially hit.
197. 'Everyday forms of peasant resistance' has been studied by James C. Scott in his Weapons of the Weak, Delhi, 1990.
198. Report of the U.P. Revenue Administration, 1926, p. 6.
199. Ibid.
200. Ibid.
201. Amended Act helped the tenants only in one way that the high caste tenants started touching the plough.
202. Report of the U.P. Revenue Administration, 1927, p. 3.
203. Ibid., 1928, p. 10.
204. Ibid., 1929, p. 6.

CHAPTER 4: THE TENANT STRUGGLE: SECOND PHASE

This phase of the tenant struggle began in 1929 and continued till the passing of the U.P. Tenancy Act in 1939. The struggle was intensified in 1930 and again in 1931. The struggle was certainly not given up in the "truce" period, and so also it was not given up after the withdrawal of no-tax campaign in 1934. It was the continuity of the struggle of tenants that led to the victory of Congress in Awadh in the elections of 1937. Once the Oudh Rent Act was withdrawn the tenants had no reason to continue their struggle. Rather their struggle merged with the struggle of the Congress to fight for Purna Swaraj.

It can hardly be doubted that the non-cooperation and khilafat movements of 1919-20-21 intensified the tenant struggle. Without these movements the districts like Fyzabad and Rae Bareilly would have never seen the revival of tenant struggle in the transitory phase. The grass-root tenant leaders like Kalka Prasad, Gudar Kurmi, Ajodhya Das, Nageshwar Lal, Khalil Ahmad and Mohammad Nasir, to name a few from these districts, would have never taken their birth. Withdrawal of non-cooperation hardly did any harm to the tenant struggle. For its withdrawal did not lead to the withdrawal of the grass-root leaders. Once created they could operate on their own. But the withdrawal of khilafat movement did some harm to the tenant struggle. Some grass-root leaders created by khilafat movement were not so much interested in saving the tenants of Oudh as in saving the Caliph of Turkey. Once the khilafat movement was withdrawn, they lost interest in the tenant struggle. Tenant struggle of Biyalis Gaon suffered a great loss because of the consequent Hindu-Muslim riot in the Jalalpur circle of Fyzabad about which reference has already been made earlier. Tenant-landlord struggle was

converted into the struggle of Hindu tenants against their Muslim landlord in the Biyalis gaon area.

There is a sense in which the result of non-cooperation was not in favour of the Congress. For Congress wanted a united action against the British. But non-cooperation resulted into the violence of tenants against landlords in Rae Bareilly, Fyzabad and Sultanpur. Taluqdars were thrown into the lap of the British. They were allies of the British since 1857, the violence of 1920-21 made these allies into the bosom friends of the British. Tenant violence only helped the British. So long as the landlords remained with the British there was no question of stopping the tenant-landlord struggle. Oudh Rent Act was devised to create this struggle. So long as this struggle remained, the taluqdars would remain allies of the British. The tenant-landlord struggle did not harm the British, it only harmed the tenants, and in some cases the landlords. What could possibly harm the British was the tenant-landlord reconciliation. Gandhi wished the landlords to come on the same platform as tenants. He considered the tenant-landlord struggle of Awadh as an exercise in futility. In spite of the Oudh Rent Act, he made a plan to bring taluqdars and zamindars under the flag of the Congress, the flag which had already accommodated the tenants. In doing this he was trying to amend the mistake committed during the days of non-cooperation.

The Fury of Nature against Tenants and the Onslaught of Depression: The tenants had to face not only the fury of taluqdars and the British Government, but they had also to face the fury of Nature. Since 1927 Nature was consistently unkind to them. As Purushottam Das Tandon remarked 'the peasantry has been afflicted with a series of bad harvests since 1927.'¹ Even in earlier years Nature had not been very kind.

Referring to the United Provinces, the report of the Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces, 1931, rightly points out 'Agriculture is a precarious industry, and in these provinces the fate of the agriculturists depends, every year, on the monsoon, which is very often erratic and capricious. In addition, several unforeseen causes, such as drought, hail, frost, locusts, may balk him of the fruits of his hard labour.'² The report of 1936 Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee adds,

In 1924 heavy floods did damage to 29 districts. Thousands of bighas of kharif crops were destroyed. In 1925, both the winter and summer monsoons were inadequate. The year 1927 was a year of heavy rains, storms and cyclones. Crops all over large areas were affected. In 1928, the Rabi crop was greatly damaged by the frost and the Kharif was adversely affected by inadequate rains. The hordes of locusts invaded the fields and did severe damage. If in one place it was inadequate rain, in another floods worked havoc.³

Floods affected not only men but also their cattle. As the Revenue Administration Report of 1927 points out concerning the cattle of the flooded areas, they 'suffered severely from rinderpest and foot and mouth disease. There were also similar outbreaks of anthrax and other epidemics.'⁴ So not only the crop but also the cattle of tenants were gone.

An urban dweller, be he a businessman or a servant of some kind, cannot understand what the destruction of a crop means to a tenant. The payment of his rent and nazrana, if any, depended on the crop. So also he had to return the seed which he had borrowed from the mahajan, and the money which he took for maintaining the family till the harvest. His payment to the barber, the sweeper, the washerman and the pandit, who helped him on occasions, depended on the crop. And if this crop was destroyed who would advance him seed and money for the next crop? The rent imposed by the British was so high that in order to clear it the tenant had no other option but to borrow money from the moneylenders. The temporary employment in the construction of railways or canals or

roads or even in the fields of rich peasants was not a permanent solution. After the periodic engagements the tenant had to fall back on his land. If the tenants did not pay their rent and nazrana, however high they may be, they were evicted from the land. The British land-tax increased the indebtedness of tenants. As Elizabeth Whitcombe points out, 'The working of the British revenue system created further incentive to borrow.'⁵ The incentive to grow depended on the incentive to borrow. The tenants borrowed money simply to satisfy their basic needs as cultivators. Elizabeth Whitcombe quotes from the Indebtedness Enquiry of 1869 conducted by R.H. Davies, the then Chief Commissioner of Awadh,

Cultivators... provide their own farming stock, bullocks, ploughs, tools, gear, manure. They are mostly too poor to store seed for the better sorts of produce, or maintain themselves on poorer grains from harvest to harvest... Therefore, they are very generally... dependent on extraneous aid.⁶

Thus without having extraneous aid the survival of the cultivator was impossible. And this extraneous aid ultimately led him to his bondage. What would happen to the tenant if both his crop and the bullocks are gone? What remains with him even for his property to be attached?

The creditors, be they the village mahajans, the city merchants or the local zamindars and taluqdars, introduced the system of advances for the crops. They encouraged the production of 'valuable crops' or 'cash crops' like cotton, sugar-cane, indigo, opium, wheat, for which there was more earning. But what remained with the cultivator at the end of the cultivating season was only his ability to cultivate, the earning part was pocketed by his creditors. As Eric Stokes points out, 'Middleman agency... siphoned off the enhanced value of agriculture which resulted from increased cash-cropping and the price rise from the late 1860s.'⁷ The system of giving advances for the crops was started to guarantee the varieties of produce required. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries European traders started giving advances to the wea-

vers to control the weaving products, their quality and quantity, through the local agents. Without giving advances they thought that they could not obtain the desired result.

In the case of agriculture too the advances were given to control the production of valuable or exportable or cash crops. Through the system of advances the British succeeded in getting those crops which they needed for their trade to China and Europe. For example, in Awadh by the last decade of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century the export of raw cotton and indigo started rapidly, and at a later stage opium was added to it. When the export of raw cotton from Awadh declined, because China did not require it, the export of opium was substituted. Thus during this period there was more emphasis on the production of opium plus the other exportable crops. The system of advances introduced by the Europeans was picked up by the Indian merchants too. Sometimes the Indian merchants were found acting as agents for the British merchants. Referring to the nature of the system of advances Tom G. Kessinger points out that 'the advances... gave merchants, processors, and zamindars control over the type, amount, price and the sale of commodities produced.'⁸ So the system of advances completely bonded the cultivator. He lost his freedom to sell his produce in the open market. So also he was not having the freedom to decide about the price of his produce or the type of crop he was expected to produce. All the profit of the cultivators went into the pockets of merchants and zamindars. And hardly anything was left with cultivator except the process of his cyclic poverty. We can see this more clearly from the following remark of Elizabeth Whitcombe:

A cultivator borrowed his grain for sowing or to feed his household in the thin months of the year, when the stocks were lowest and prices were consequently at their highest level. At the harvest, when his creditor demanded repayment, the situation was reversed... with the result that the cultivator might pay back

two or three times the amount of grain originally loaned.⁹

If we convert the produce into its cash value, then the cultivator had not paid much interest, but compared with the original grain borrowed he had paid three times the amount he originally borrowed. And this high rate of interest had occurred within a short time, roughly six months, i.e. between the time the cultivator had sown his seed and the time he harvested the crop.

The textbooks of economics moralise that the cultivator should not have borrowed from the mahajan. Once he borrowed he could not avoid the cycle of poverty. But could he avoid the borrowing? Could he manage without borrowing? On this issue it is quite relevant to quote from the report of Royal Commission on Agriculture in India which says:

If wages were paid monthly instead of weekly, only a very small proportion of the working classes in the world could exist without credit; but the cultivator has to wait for half a year before he receives the return of his labour, and in far too large an area, where there is only one crop a year, the interval between successive receipts may be full twelve months.¹⁰

If the cultivator goes for sugar-cane then he has to wait for twelve months. And his holding being small he may have no piece of land spared for growing coarse crop for his own consumption. In such a situation he has to depend on borrowing for buying his food for the whole year. The Royal Commission on Agriculture accepts borrowing as a necessity of the cultivator's situation.

The worst feature of the cultivators' situation was that the British Government encouraged the mahajan to exploit the cultivator. According to them without the mahajan the cultivator would starve to death, so he was the saviour of kisans. Since he was the saviour he should not be disturbed. The attitude of the British towards the mahajan becomes clear from a remark of Patrick Carnegie of Oudh Enquiry quoted by Elizabeth Whitcombe that '... anything like official interference

in the interests of the cultivator would only lead to ill-will between him and the mahajan, who often stands between him and starvation.¹¹ So the mahajan was considered by the British as the saviour of the cultivator, perhaps because the British themselves came to India as mahajans and later took up the role as the saviour of the Indian people. The British perhaps saw the Indian mahajan in their own image. Therefore, they were not interested in framing legal rules against him. This attitude is well expressed by the Royal Commission Report. Referring to the moneylender the report says '... his calling will not be abolished by making it illegal. He alone is in a position to provide the bulk of the capital required for current agricultural needs.'¹² Continuing the defence of the moneylender the report further points out that when the cultivator's land 'has passed into the possession of his creditor, no legislation will serve his need; no tenancy law will protect him; for food he needs land and for land he must plead before a creditor to whom he probably already owes more than the total value of the whole of his assets.'¹³ The report clearly accepts that the tenant is bonded, he is a bonded tenant, not very unlike a bonded labourer. The tenant is working on the land which has already slipped into the hands of his creditors.

Any legal proceedings against the moneylender would only be harmful to the tenant. How could the courts of law do anything against the lender of money? He keeps his papers of credit in order. By going to the courts of law the cultivator only adds to his economic miseries. And if the moneylender is the same as the zamindar or taluqdar, there is no question even of entertaining the idea of going to court. As Moreland points out, '... no ordinary cultivator can sue his taluqdar, and the Kurmi or Chamar holding land from a resident thakur zamindar or pukhtadar is perhaps in even worse case: he could not possibly stay in the vil-

lage after taking his thakur into court.'¹⁴ Thus the picture which emerges of a tenant is that of a small cultivator, clinging to the piece of his land in spite of all odds against him. He considers his bondage as the result of his past karmas, and just goes on surviving till the next famine.

A little deviation at this stage is essential. Was the position of a tenant better than the position of a bonded labourer? Both of them were bonded. If one was a bonded labourer, the other one was a bonded tenant. But in the technical sense the tenant was free whereas the labourer was bonded. However, there are instances which show that the state of bondage was preferred to the state of freedom. This might be so because the state of freedom is not the state that guarantees food. The readiness of the agricultural landless labourers to bondage in Bahraich district can be seen from the fact that there were

... instances of Saunk in which men had been turned adrift by their masters who, owing to the drought, had either no employment or no food for them; they professed at any rate their willingness to return whenever their masters' circumstances allowed it, and admitted their right to recall them.¹⁵

Saunk means one who belongs to the sewak system, i.e. the system of bonded labourers. From the above remarks it becomes clear that a sewak was willing to return to his master any time he wished to recall him. This does not mean that he has become a natural slave. What it means is that a bonded labourer had not to face starvation. He preferred bondage to freedom, because freedom had no guarantee of food.

Regarding the wages of bonded labourers it is mentioned in the Oudh Gazetteer that 'such men receive nominally one sixth of the crop, whatever it be, on which they have laboured as ploughmen and reapers.'¹⁶ So also the wife of a bonded labourer was paid for doing such works as the grinding of grain and making the cow dung cakes in the house of her master. Of course the whole earning of a bonded labourer was just for

the sake of subsistence. He could not save anything for the future. He simply stops his starvation.

It seems that Bahraich excelled even Gonda in having the number of bonded labourers. As it is mentioned in the Oudh Gazetteer, 'every second man met within the fertile plains of Hisampur is a sewak.'¹⁷ Hisampur belongs to Bahraich district. The Gazetteer connects the issue of the overcrowding of sewaks with the issue of the density of population. It is maintained that 'the rapidly increasing population reduces competition of the labour employers.'¹⁸ Labour employers in this context means the employers of sewaks. But the density of population alone cannot explain the sewak market. Population of Bahraich was quite low according to the Census of 1911 as compared with other districts of Awadh. Bahraich had 396 persons per square mile, Gonda 503, Lucknow 790, Fyzabad 666, Sultanpur 612, Pratapgarh 624 and Bara Banki 616.¹⁹ The sewak system did not have operation in the whole of Awadh except the two districts, Bahraich and Gonda. The density of population, therefore, could not be the cause for the emergence of sewak system. Its source lies elsewhere.

One may think that the emergence of sewak system depends on the wealth of a district. Concerning Gonda district it was reported that 'all the wealthier cultivators own... sewaks.'²⁰ But wealth alone was not sufficient to explain the evolution of sewaks. The districts of Lucknow, Fyzabad, Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, etc. were not deprived of wealthier cultivators but they did not own sewaks. Why the sewak system was evolved in Gonda and Bahraich but could not extend its roots to other districts of Awadh deserves a serious attention. Social sanctions and social prohibitions were perhaps responsible for the birth of this system. This system was looked down by the Hindu society and, therefore, Brahmans and Rajputs would never opt for becoming sewaks in spite of

their poverty. Only the lower castes like Kurmis, Ahirs, Koeries, etc. were found serving as sewaks. There was a reaction from Ahirs against those who became sewaks. An attempt was made to remove them from the caste of Ahirs.²¹ It is possible that the caste panchayats were not so powerful in Gonda and Bahraich as in the other districts of Awadh, so the sewak system could not extend its roots to other districts.

The bonded labourers existed not only in Awadh but also in several other parts of India. In Bihar and Orissa this system was known as the system of Kamiauti. Kamiauti prevailed 'in the north of the Hazaribagh district and in the Palamau district of Chota Nagpur and in some parts of Bihar.'²² Though the Kamiauti is similar to the sewak system, the position of a kamia (a member of the system) was inferior to that of a sewak. Kamia was paid by his master a very low wage: 'The wages represent only one third of the day's wage for free labour hired... If the Kamia's wife also works for his master, she receives a slightly smaller remuneration... The Kamia never sees any money... A Kamiauti bond, therefore, involves a life sentence.'²³ A kamia was employed only in the season, so he was deprived of any means of subsistence out of the season. The worst situation was that he was not allowed to leave his village even when he was not working for his master. In those seasons when his master did not have any work, others too did not have work. The report further adds 'the master takes the kamia's labour at a sweated wage for the most of the year.'²⁴ The kamia was exploited so much by his master that the Governments of Bihar and Orissa passed the Kamiauti Agreement Act in 1920. But no such Act was passed against the sewak system of U.P. Perhaps the Government of U.P. did not think that the sewaks were as much exploited as the kamias.

Compare the economic situation of a sewak with the economic situation of a tenant. If there was any dividing line between the two then

it was very thin. We should not forget that the majority of tenants of Awadh were bonded. They were bonded through the system of advances. Sewaks were just a few drops in the ocean if we compare them with the huge mass of bonded tenants of Awadh. Bonded tenants were spread out in the whole of Awadh whereas the sewaks, i.e. bonded labourers, were restricted only to Gonda and Bahraich. There is only one sharp distinction between the two. A tenant paid the rent and nazrana on the piece of land which he cultivated. He was also subjected to hari, begari and so many cesses because of his land. But no rent and nazrana or any kind of cesses were paid by the sewak who cultivated a piece of land, for the reason that the piece of land cultivated by the sewak did not belong to him. In other respects the tenants were similar to the sewaks. A sewak produced what his master decided him to produce. He only got a fixed share out of it. A tenant produced what his moneylender decided him to produce, and he was really fortunate if he got any share out of it. Most of his produce was taken away by the moneylender and the village officials and non-officials like chaukidar, barber, dhobi and pandit. There is a strong similarity between a sewak and a tenant. Both of them became bonded by borrowing money. And liberation from bondage in both the cases was difficult to achieve. Can we decide who is economically in a better position? One suffered because he had no land of his own, and the other because he happened to have land of his own.

Thus the tenant of Awadh was not strong enough to face the fury of Nature. He had bad harvest for three continuous years, 1927, 1928 and 1929. He was living in the state of famine. After visiting the interior villages of Awadh, one Ram Swaroop Misra of Samrota, Rae Bareilly, reported to Pratap that '60 per cent of population lives on one meal after one day gap, 20 per cent on one meal after two days' gap, 10 per cent on one meal a day and only 10 per cent are in a position to afford

more than one meal a day.²⁵ These figures would certainly disturb an Irwin and a Sanders. Only 10 per cent remained their ideal tenants. 10 per cent lived above their expectations and 80 per cent lived beyond their imagination. Ram Swaroop challenged all those who thought that the situation was not as bad as he described. Since there was no fodder, the cattle was becoming useless for agricultural purposes. Tenants started selling their cattle to the butchers. And the butchers bought the bullocks for their weight, and not for their efficiency in cultivating soil.

Starvation deaths are well known during drought. But there were reports of suicide from Awadh. Tribhuvan Tripathi from Tiloi, Rae Bareilly, reported that an 'Ahir tenant committed suicide in the village Khalis Baharpur because his total harvest from three bighas land was less than a maund.'²⁶ This was not only the case of a three-bigha plot giving the yield of less than a maund. Three bighas might have been the total holding of the Ahir tenant in question. And on his total land he had the yield only of one maund. To avoid starvation the tenant committed suicide. Suicide is illegal, starvation is not. No one catches a tenant and puts him in jail if he is found starving. But he would be put in jail if he is found committing suicide. Not only suicide but starvation should also have been made illegal. This would have solved some difficulties of tenants. There would have been no deaths because of famines.

V.N. Mehta, in his report on Pratapgarh, made kanya vikryia as an important consequence of Oudh Rent Act.²⁷ In order to pay their rent and nazrana the poor tenants of Pratapgarh were led to sell their daughters. But neither kanya vikryia nor suicide was restricted to Awadh; for Awadh did not monopolise poverty. In its fury Nature did not care for the distinction between the Oudh Rent Act and the Agra Province Rent Act. In the Agra Province in 'the village Sopur near Tirwa poverty and

hunger led a Thakur to sell his daughter to a Punjabi.'²⁸ Referring to the case of a suicide Pratap further writes that 'in a village near Jalalabad a family as a whole consisting of husband, wife and two daughters consumed poison after facing hunger for three days.'²⁹ Suicide was preferred to death starvation.

There is no doubt that the tenants of Awadh suffered more than the tenants of Agra Province because Awadh evolved the taluqdari system. The officials of the taluqdars like ziladars, tahsildars, darogas and peons were quite cruel. Perhaps they were appointed by the taluqdars because they passed the cruelty test. Whatever the consequences of Nature's fury, the taluqdar must have his rent and nazrana. He was assisted by the government machinery for the realisation of his dues from the tenants. Unless the rent was realised, the taluqdar would not be in a position to pay his revenue. Thus for the sake of revenue the government machinery helped the taluqdar. Tenants were terrorised, their property looted, their women molested. The quality of Nature's fury was different from the fury of taluqdars. Taluqdars committed those sins which the Nature failed to commit. And they could commit those sins because they had the blessings of the British Government.

The U.P. Revenue Administration Reports of 1928 and 1929 provide a picture of the deteriorating condition of tenantry of Awadh. The important issue is not the number of ejectment notices, which are generally demonstrated by the history writers, but the total acreage from which the tenants were evicted. The report of 1928 says 'The area from which ejectment was actually ordered was higher than in the preceding year (74,010 against 60,025 acres). The increase was in both the divisions, the higher being in Fyzabad division (50,264 against 39,971.04 last year).'³⁰ Fyzabad division includes Pratapgarh, Sultanpur and Fyzabad which became notorious for the agitation of 1920-21. In Lucknow divi-

sion Bara Banki and Rae Bareli might have suffered more than the other districts. The former saw the Eka movement and latter the kisan sabha agitation.

The situation in 1929 worsened. 1929 Revenue Administration reports 'The area from which ejectment was ordered increased from 74,010 to 125,569 acres during the year. The increase in Lucknow division was nominal 24,701 against 23,746 acres last year, while in Fyzabad division it was more than double (100,868 against 50,264 acres last year).³¹

If we take the ejectment figure of 1927 for Fyzabad division, then it stands as 13,128 acres. But within the span of two years the figure of 13,128 was expanded to 100,868 acres. Tenants were not in a position to pay rent, and it was quite easy to get ejectment on the basis of those arrears. This kind of ejectment was restricted to those areas where Nature played havoc with tenants. In 1930 'there was again a large increase in the number of suits for ejectment on account of arrears. It was confined to Fyzabad, Sultanpur, Pratapgarh and Bara Banki.³² What led these districts of Awadh specially to have arrears of rent? The government had no other explanation except to accept that the ejectments on account of arrears were the 'result of adverse economic conditions of 1928-29.'³³ And Nature, not the government, was responsible for the adverse economic conditions.

The tenant was crushed by the monsoon, and then came the depression. The tenant started feeling the impact of depression from the very beginning of 1930. U.P. Revenue Administration reports 'After a succession of bad harvests the year started well with the prospects of a good rabi, but the sudden fall in grain prices detracted much from the benefits of a good harvest.'³⁴ So the government accepts that there was a succession of bad harvests. This succession refers to the years from 1927 to the end of 1929. The depression had its onslaught on the tenants who were

trying to recover from their experience of bad harvests. It is said that the depression affected not only the tenants but also zamindars and mahajans. Of course all of them suffered in their own ways. It was reported that the

continued fall in prices aggravated the distress of both zamindars and tenants and reduced their paying capacity to a minimum. The fall in prices brought severe losses to merchants, with the result that they did not have the money to buy the cultivators' produce. Money became tight all round and established bankers and moneylenders stopped advancing loans on personal security.³⁵

There was a risk in advancing money during 1928-29. The tenant might not be in a position to return money on account of bad harvest. But the good harvest proved as bad as the bad harvest. For the tenants' produce had hardly any value in terms of money. The landlords suffered because there was hardly any chance for them to obtain their rents from the tenants. And moneylenders suffered because their business came to a standstill. Depression appears to be a classless category, for it allowed all classes of people to suffer. Of course the urban wage earners did not suffer, rather it helped them. They could buy all the provisions by spending very little amount. But the rural scene was very different. People did not have money to buy food-grains.

It is totally wrong to say that the food-grains were in abundance during the depression but people did not have money to buy them. So also it is wrong to think that the depression is a classless category. There was a wrong picture created in the minds of people, academicians in particular, that the depression began with the overproduction of food-grains and continued till there remained overproduction of food-grains. Production of food-grains remained at a low pitch throughout the depression period. The rabi in 1929-30 was undoubtedly better than the preceding year, but kharif was poor. The government accepted 'Unfortunately the September rainfall, on which so much depends, was short, causing

considerable damage to the kharif crops.³⁶ A similar fate awaited 1930-31. Now was the turn of rabi. For the year it was reported 'The rabi nearly everywhere suffered from hail, frost, rust or insect pests, yielding much proper harvests than in the preceding year. The wheat and barley yields each fell by 20 per cent. Oil-seed was seriously damaged by green fly.'³⁷ In the year 1931-32 the acreage of kharif declined. But it was reported that 'a deficiency in the kharif area is more than counterbalanced by the extensive rabi sowings.'³⁸ However, the extensive sowing did not bear extensive results: 'The yield of rabi crops, though below average owing to the failure of winter rains, was better than that of last year in all cases except wheat which fell short of the normal by 18 per cent.'³⁹ The situation hardly improved in the year 1932-33. It was reported that 'the outturn of all principal crops was somewhat poor. Both early and late rice suffered heavily, yielding only 60 and 50 per cent of the normal respectively over the province as a whole. The outturn of wheat, bajra, oil-seeds, and cotton though better than in the preceding year was 20 to 25 per cent below what has hitherto been treated as "normal".'⁴⁰ Do these reports show that there was overproduction of food-grains during the months of depression? If rabi was normal in 1930 then the kharif was poor. And in 1931 rabi was poor and the acreage of kharif declined which shows that it too was not good. In 1932 again the production of rabi was below the normal production. And finally in 1933 all the principal crops were hit. Rice yield was worst. How could one imagine that there was overproduction of food-grains during depression? Of course the buyers might not have been there because of the scarcity of money. But this merely points out towards the misery of tenants.

It is again totally wrong to think that the zamindars and tenants suffered equally. The low caste tenants who had no subsidiary profes-

sion suffered more than even those low caste tenants who had subsidiary professions. Depression affected the price of food-grains more than the prices of other goods. Therefore, the producers of food-grains suffered more than the producers of other goods. For example, Kurmis, Koeries (specialists in large-scale wheat production) and Lodhs (specialists in rice production) suffered more than the Ahirs and Muraos. The Ahirs had the subsidiary profession of milk and the Muraos were producers of vegetables, opium, etc. The prices of milk, vegetables, etc. did not come down to the level of food-grains. The low caste tenants in general lacked education and, therefore, their family members were not employed in the city offices drawing substantial salaries. So also they were not encouraged in the army. The higher caste tenants suffered less than the low caste tenants, because of their access to the urban offices, army, etc. Of course all tenants suffered to whatever caste they belonged because they were producers of food-grains. Depression was specially unkind to the prices of food-grains, specially to the price of wheat because wheat was an exportable commodity. There was no international trading of wheat during the months of depression; so it was the worst hit food-grain. Depression was certainly not unkind to zamindars, if their suffering is compared with the suffering of tenants.

Consider the economic suffering of tenants caused by the depression preceded by three years of bad harvesting. The history of suffering had not suddenly appeared in the beginning of 1930, it went back to the year 1927. It can be studied under three heads: (a) arrears of rent (b) arrears of debts of the moneylenders and (c) rent for the depression year 1930. However, before we take up these issues a small clarification concerning a government statement is essential. Such statements have misled the economists and historians of our country who started talking about the overproduction of food-grains during depression:

'Money has appreciated largely because of the overproduction of wheat which is one of the most important commodities entering into trade and to a smaller extent because of the world monetary changes.'⁴¹ There is no doubt that wheat was one of the most important commodities entering into international trade. Therefore, fall in its price was natural with 'the world monetary changes'. But wheat was certainly not 'overproduced' during depression. Its production in 1930 was not below normal, and after 1930 its production continued lowering till 1934. Price of wheat came down simply because of the international market, and not because it was overproduced. And when wheat price came down the prices of other food-grains too came down. Rice production was lower because of monsoon, but the price of rice could not go up because of other food-grains.

Consider how "the economic friction" worked against the tenant. The government accepted that 'the economic friction, in respect of the sale price of grain is that in relation to the appreciation of money, grain represents the commodity of the lowest value and the sympathetic fall in the value of other commodities is nowhere near it.'⁴² In relation to grain the prices of other commodities were very high. So the tenant had to depart with the huge quantity of grain if he wished to have any produce other than the grain. He was not a pure consumer of grain, he wished to have a roof to shelter him and dresses to hide his body. The requirements of his wife and children were different from him. In short, a tenant was not just an animal, he was a man. But the successive bad harvests and then the depression did not allow him to live as a man. While referring to the condition of Moradabad tenantry in 1930-31 it was reported that 'there are individual tenants in every village with arrears outstanding for three years, while on an average nearly all tenants have arrears for at least one year.'⁴³ "Arrears"

mean the arrears of rent. The condition of Awadh villages was quite inferior to that of Moradabad which was a district of the Western U.P. Even in the Awadh districts the 'suits for arrears of rent was most marked in Bara Banki, Bahraich and Pratapgarh.⁴⁴ How could a tenant avoid the arrears of his rent when there was successive failure of crop? But how could he pay those arrears now when the depression had brought down the value of the crop he produced? 'These arrears which belong to the period of unappreciated money have to be paid in terms of appreciated money, that is to say, that the tenant has to pay a far larger share of his crop to the zamindar than he would have done if the rent was paid when it was due.'⁴⁵ Economic friction worked against all those tenants who had arrears of rent. But hardly any tenant was free from these arrears.

Take the case of loans now. As has already been pointed out, if the food-grains are harvested every week, or at the most every month, then the tenant perhaps would have managed without borrowing. His position would not have been different from the employees who get their monthly and weekly wages. But there is a long gap between the sowing of seeds and harvesting of crop; so a tenant could not live without borrowing. He had to be indebted to the moneylender. And he was highly indebted because of successive failure of crop since 1927. The coming of depression totally crushed him.

As a consumer of loans and a payer of interest economic friction works in no uncertain manner against the tenant. Interest on loans if anything is higher than what it was before and as regards the capital of the loan itself, the tenant had to pay in terms of the appreciated money what he had borrowed of unappreciated money.⁴⁶

Arrears of loans are not unlike the arrears of rent.

The government praised herself for the rent remissions on the rabi of 1931: 'The rabi remissions to a large extent mitigated the economic

friction, while the kharif remissions were designed to eliminate the whole of it.'⁴⁷ But how? After remissions the rent level reached only to the level of 1915 whereas the prices of food-grains in 1931 were reduced to the level of 1901.⁴⁸ Remissions were quite insufficient to remove the economic friction. The only solution to the tenant problem was to write off all his debts, arrears of rent and arrears of loans, and to reduce his rent to the level of 1901. This was the only way in which the tenants could face the depression. But the welfare of tenants was not the business of the British.

How can one imagine that the zamindars suffered in the same fashion as tenants? The economic friction certainly did not work against them so far as the current revenue was concerned. They were given revenue remissions matching the level of 1901.⁴⁹ If they lost one third of their income by rent 'remissions and the bad collections for the last rabi' they were partly compensated by the revenue remissions.⁵⁰ And the phenomenon of bad collection was shortlived. In order to crush the no-tax campaign government gave them full help to realise rents and their arrears. On account of the depression 'selling value of zamindari has fallen to half.'⁵¹ But this could create economic friction only when a zamindar was forced to sell his zamindari. Zamindars sold their estates, not because they borrowed money for their necessities but because of their pomp and show, their luxurious existence. The quality of zamindar's indebtedness was very different from the quality of tenant's indebtedness. One's borrowing for "the dancing girls" was different from one's borrowing "for seed". To cite from the U.P. Banking Enquiry Committee Report, 'Pratapgarh is a district of Rajput talugdars and the petty Rajput zamindars feel that they must maintain the same social status as their richer brethren, with the result that they spend freely on marriages and other social customs to keep up their prestige.'⁵² This

infection pervaded even the Rajput tenantry. To equate the tenant's loans with the loans taken by the zamindars is to add insult to injury.

One can understand the tenant's difficulties if one compares the notices for relinquishment and ejectment in 1929-30 with 1930-31 for Awadh. In the year 1929-30 there were 5,204 notices for relinquishment and 32,801 for ejectment.⁵³ But in the year 1930-31 relinquishment went up and the ejectments came down. There were 17,609 relinquishments and ejectments were only 23,455.⁵⁴ When the tenants were themselves relinquishing their lands then ejectment was not required. But where would the tenants go after relinquishing their land? The market of landless labourers was already overcrowded. There were only two alternatives. Either face the devil or drown in the deep sea. The tenants were afraid of the devil, so they opted for drowning in the deep sea.

In spite of depression zamindars had not to face the issue of subsistence. They subsisted well and cheaply. Their only worry was how to get rent and its arrears from tenants. If they got their rent then there was no economic friction against them. The government did come to their rescue. They started getting the government help from the middle of the 'truce'.

Scenario on the Eve of Civil Disobedience Movement: The year 1929 was the eve of Civil Disobedience. With the excuse of propagating khadi Gandhi started his tour of mass contact. A new feature was added to his khadi propaganda, the feature was public burning of foreign cloth. The burning of foreign cloth symbolised the burning of foreign rule. The propagation of khadi symbolised the propagation of swaraj. But how could the foreign rule be burnt if people from all classes did not join the struggle for freedom? Thus Gandhi wished not only the poor to come forward but also the rich. The landlords and the businessmen should

come on the same platform as the tenants and the landless labourers. Only a united action could turn the British out of India. In this section the scenario of Awadh on the eve of Civil Disobedience is presented. The scenario is restricted to the three districts of Awadh, Pratapgarh, Rae Bareli and Sultanpur. We have to see how these districts were preparing for the battle of swaraj, and what kind of contribution was made by the tenants for this battle. The scenario includes Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malviya, Congress workers and the tenants and their grass-root and non-grass-root leaders.

After his tour of Lucknow and Sitapur, Gandhi reached Bachhrawan (Rae Bareli) on 13 November 1929.⁵⁵ At Bachhrawan he obtained Rs. 168 for Congress fund. From Bachhrawan he proceeded to Rae Bareli city where he got Rs. 508 cash and some jewellery. The jewelley included a very precious piece, a gold ring. It was precious not so much because of its value, for it could fetch only Rs. 55, but because of the person who presented the gold ring. The gold ring was presented by the Raj Kumar of Shivgarh estate. When he received the gold ring Gandhi commented 'My eyes were on your gold ring since Mussoorie. Today I succeeded in getting it.'⁵⁶ Gandhi's eyes on the jewels of the princes were directed since 1916, if not earlier. In February 1916 he was invited for the inauguration ceremonies of Banares Hindu University. This was the time he just entered the Indian political scene. He was asked to address a meeting. His audience consisted of princes who were exhibiting their jewels. Jawaharlal Nehru gave a graphic description of Gandhi's reaction:

Earnestly and with a prophet's fire he addressed them and told them to mend their ways and give up their vain pomp and luxury. "Princes! Go and sell your jewels" he said; and though they may not have sold their jewels, they certainly went. In great consternation, one by one in small groups, they left the hall, and even the president trooped out, leaving the speaker to carry on by himself. Mrs. Annie Besant, who was present, was

also offended at Gandhi's remarks and withdrew from the meeting.⁵⁷

Gandhi learnt his lesson. Not only the princes, but even his own political colleagues would oppose him if he attacked the property of those who own it. Gandhi was never with the rich, he was with the masses. But he adjusted himself with the Indian situation. He never asked the princes again to sell their jewels, but expected that they would contribute them for the sake of India's freedom. He wished to mobilise not only the poor but also the rich. And the mobilisation of the poor to some extent depended on the mobilisation of the rich. In due course this would be revealed.

Some fifteen years later Gandhi faced a situation similar to the one he faced at Banares Hindu University. Now the scene was Bengal. He himself tells about this scene: 'In Bengal some years ago I was the guest of a zamindar who served me my milk and fruit in gold bowls and plates.'⁵⁸ But Gandhi was tolerant. He did not tell his host to go and sell his gold bowls and plates and distribute the money among his tenants. Yet he could not stop himself from reflecting:

'Where did he get these golden plates from?' I was asking to myself, and the answer I got was: 'From the substance of the ryots.' How then could I reconcile myself to those costly luxuries? I would not mind your using gold plates provided your tenants were comfortable enough to afford silver plates, but where their life is one long drawn-out agony, how dare you have those luxuries?⁵⁹

But Gandhi did not express his thoughts to his host. Experience taught him how to adjust to an unpalatable situation. But he was driven to compare the two situations, the situation at Benaras with that of at Bengal:

You will remember, how, fifteen years ago, on the occasion of the opening of the Hindu University, I shocked the Rajas and Maharajas by a reference to their glittering pomp and glory, and raised quite an uproar. My views are the same today; only experience and life among the humble folk have confirmed them all the more.⁶⁰

Gandhi was the same in 1931 as in 1916. He moved and stayed with the taluqdars and zamindars, yet his sympathies were with the poor. He had used the rich for the sake of the poor.

With this deviation come back to Gandhi's tour of Awadh in 1929. Other than the gold ring of Shivgarh estate Raj Kumar, the District Board Engineer, Mr. Shivnarayan Das offered the jewellery of his wife who died. On 14 November Gandhi reached Lalganj where he addressed the audience of about 25000. He was also given donations. Gandhi secured the donation of Rs. 6385 plus several items of jewellery from Rae Bareilly. On 14th itself Gandhi moved to Pratapgarh where he was given a very impressive welcome by the Raja of Kalakankar. At a public function Raja presented to Gandhi the purse of Rs. 4000. Rani separately presented the purse of Rs. 1000. The biggest event of Kalakankar was the burning of foreign dresses of the Raja's family. Gandhi himself lighted the flame. From Kalakankar Gandhi reached Bhadri estate where the taluqdar of Bhadri presented him a purse of Rs. 2500. Kalakankar and Bhadri are the richest estates of Pratapgarh. Bringing these estates under the fold of Congress was not an ordinary achievement on the part of Gandhi. By burning his British dresses, the Raja of Kalakankar burnt his relationship with the British for ever. Congress, after 1929, could establish itself in Pratapgarh because of Bhadri and Kalakankar. On 15 November Gandhi left for Sultanpur. It seems that the Sultanpur taluqdars kept themselves away from Gandhi. He stayed in a dharamshala at Sultanpur. However, he addressed a huge gathering of about 50000 persons there. He was also given the donation of Rs. 3000 by the District Board and Municipal Board of Sultanpur. On 15 November itself he left for Prayag. Thus within the three days of November Gandhi covered three districts of Awadh and secured the support of three big taluqdars of Awadh.

Smaller taluqdars have a tendency to follow the big taluqdars. Both Kalakankar and Bhadri were big taluqdars who could create the following of smaller taluqdars and zamindars. During 1857 only five taluqdars of Awadh joined hands with the British. Soon the others followed because all the five taluqdars were holding big estates. By bringing Kalakankar and Bhadri to their side the Congress could expect other taluqdars to follow. And both Kalakankar and Bhadri were thakur estates. Therefore, the following of thakurs was assured. Pratapgarh, according to the Settlement Report of 1930, was dominated by thakurs. They 'still occupy decidedly the first place in the district, as they hold about 83 per cent of the total area.'⁶¹ As cultivators also they held 'about 19.5 per cent' of the total cultivated area.⁶² The concessional rent of the thakur cultivators depended on the taluqdars. It was the concessional rent that prohibited the thakur cultivators to join the Rure Sabha. Rure Sabha was as good as Kurmi Sabha. Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Pryag were Kurmis, and they could succeed only with Kurmis. Though Sri Harakh was a Brahman and Jhinguri Singh a thakur, their following too was restricted to Kurmis. Both social and economic factors did not allow the higher caste tenantry to join hands with Kurmis. Only the lower caste tenantry consisting of Muraos, Koeries, Ahirs, Lodhs, etc. could join hands with Kurmis, because they too were not given concessional rents and were subject to hari, begari, etc. The situation became very different when the taluqdars became the leaders of tenantry, and when those taluqdars came from higher caste. Higher caste tenantry would naturally join hands with the higher caste taluqdars. There is no doubt that the tenant struggle acquired a wider shape when Kalakankar and Bhadri joined the struggle for freedom. With them came the higher caste tenantry. Thus from 1929 onwards the Pratapgarh tenantry as a whole, composed of higher and lower castes, got involved in the struggle

for swaraj. As a matter of fact the amendment to the Oudh Rent Act in 1921 did more harm to the higher caste tenantry than to the lower caste tenantry. The Revenue Administration Report of 1926-27 accepted that the sections 62A(1) and 67(1)(b) were specially harmful to the higher caste tenantry:

Under the former section ejectment is decreed even though only a small portion may be sublet and the inequity is intensified by the definition of sub-tenant which hits the high caste tenant particularly hard because the traditional method of paying a ploughman is to give him a field for his own cultivation. Under the latter section a substantial tenant may be ejected as the result of having owned an infinitesimal under-proprietary right in the village at the time of the passing of the Amended Act.⁶³

This shows that the higher caste tenantry had a greater reason to fight against the Oudh Rent Act, particularly its amendment of 1921, than the lower caste tenantry. However, the social reasons did not allow them to join hands with the lower caste tenants. But once the green signal was given by the higher caste taluqdars, the higher caste tenantry joined the tenant struggle. The mobilisation of tenantry was near its completion.

The mass of Awadh treated Gandhi very differently from other leaders, including Jawaharlal. No other leader would be heard if he did not speak against the taluqdari system or against the Oudh Rent Act or against eviction and nazrana. Gandhi was in a class by himself. The mass of Awadh used to come to his meetings, not so much to hear him as to have his darshana. And even if they failed to see him, because of the distance at which they were from Gandhi, they returned happy and satisfied. For they were those fortunate beings who attended the meeting addressed by Gandhi. But the darshana of other leaders was not sufficient, because they were earthly creatures. They were to be judged by what they said. Thus Jawaharlal Nehru spoke for the tenants when on May 13, 1928 he addressed the kisans at Patti, Pratapgarh: 'A man should

own his land and should work with his own hands... The zamindari tribe is harmful and a burden on the country.'⁶⁴ It is because the tenant was not working on his own land, his land was owned by the zamindar, that he faced eviction. Not the eviction of tenant but the eviction of zamindar was required. His tone remained the same when in October 1928 he addressed the kisans of Kheri saying 'once kisans were united they could bring the most powerful taluqdar to his knees.'⁶⁵ What mattered was the bringing of taluqdars to their knees. His attitude towards taluqdars remained the same when he came to Pratapgarh nearly after one year. On July 10, 1929 at a meeting at Hadi Hall, Pratapgarh, Jawaharlal 'denounced those who, without working themselves, lived on the earnings of others.'⁶⁶ The obvious reference is to taluqdars and zamindars who lived on the earnings of their tenants. Jawaharlal Nehru's socialistic thoughts which he expressed before the tenants of Awadh were in favour of the abolition of taluqdari system.

While appearing before the kisans of Awadh, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya said that 'there were two things dear to his heart—cows and kisans—and he was always making plans for their improvements.'⁶⁷ Malviyaji was giving expression to the Hindu view of life, to the spiritual value accepted by Hinduism. But he was not the only national leader who loved cows and kisans. Gandhiji loved both, and found a spiritual connection between the two. Cows and kisans are similar. As Gandhiji said, 'Cow worship means to me worship of innocence. For me the cow is the personification of innocence.'⁶⁸ So is the kisan personification of innocence. Both these innocent creatures deserve protection: 'Cow protection means protection of the weak, the helpless, the dumb and the deaf.'⁶⁹ Are not the kisans too weak, helpless, dumb and deaf? They are certainly not better placed than cows. For Gandhiji service to cow 'includes the service of the entire afflicted humanity,

of "those who toil and suffer and are weary and need rest", the service of Daridranarayana.⁷⁰ Protection of cow is the protection of kisan, the worship of cow is the worship of kisan, i.e. the worship of Daridra-narayana. This is the connection between cows and kisans. This is the Hindu view of life beyond the reach of a fanatic economic mind.

Not only the national leaders even those who were the product of the taluqdari system, the new converts to national struggle, had to condemn the taluqdari system in order to be heard by the kisan mass. For example, take the case of Brijish Singh, the younger brother of Raja of Kalakankar. In May 1929 he circulated a notice which 'begins with an invocation to peasants to awake and arise as they are being destroyed.'⁷¹ Who was destroying the kisans? Obviously the British and the taluqdars. Taluqdars were using the British created Oudh Rent Act to destroy the tenants. In his next meeting he became more explicit:

He accused the taluqdars of wishing to suck the blood of tenants in every way and said that when a Governor visited a district money was taken. He asked whether there could be friendship between a lion and a sheep, and said that the taluqdars looted the people of what they got. He exhorted the people to die for their rights and said that the English were the cause of famine. More than once he accused the English for sucking the blood of the country.⁷²

Brijish Singh found both the English Government and the Indian taluqdars as blood-suckers. Was not Gandhi a kind of circus manager trying to bring a lion (talukdar) on the same platform as a sheep (tenant)? Perhaps the taluqdars were only paper-lions; they appeared as lions because of the British. English Government was the real lion. So long as the English stayed, taluqdars would remain the real lions. Brijish Singh attacked only the Indian lions when he 'denounced the taluqdars and apparently said that the blood of the kisan was drawn to satisfy their craving.'⁷³ Though a new convert to the cause Brijish Singh jumped in to the freedom struggle with all sincerity. All his speeches were of

the same type, attacking the British and the taluqdars, and asking people to join Congress. It was reported that in November 1929 Brijish Singh 'took a leading part in a demonstration at Brighton (England) by Indians against the recent British Labour Party Conference.'⁷⁴

In order to attract kisans to the Congress a big kisan sabha conference was held at Rae Bareli on 14 and 15 February 1929. Kisans from the neighbouring districts also participated in the conference. According to the Intelligence source 'about 10,000 persons attended' the meeting.⁷⁵ But Pratap estimate goes to 14,000.⁷⁶ 'Kalka Prasad and Ram Bharose, two local agitators, were unable to attend as they had been committed to jail in connection with section 107 proceedings by tenants of Tiloi estate.'⁷⁷ However, the five committed followers of Ram Chandra from Pratapgarh were participants in the conference. They were Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Pryag. Pratap had highlighted the speech of Jhinguri Singh. Jhinguri Singh used the Ramayana verses to express the grievances of kisans. He specially attacked the section on Pahikasht of the Oudh Rent Act. Quoting from Jhinguri Singh's speech, Pratap writes 'We are Pahikashtkar. But what should be the description suitable for the English who have come to India after crossing the seven seas? Are they not Pahikashtkars?'⁷⁸ Jhinguri Singh was haunted by the issue of pahikasht. He was evicted from his land in the village Bharokan, because he belonged to Rure. Therefore, he was a pahikashtkar in the village Bharokan. The Oudh Rent Act harassed the tenants in various ways, and pahikasht was one of the ways in which the tenants were harassed. Ganesh Shankar Vidiyarthi, the editor of Pratap, and a national leader of repute, was one of the participants in the conference.

Kisan conference at Rae Bareli became the immediate cause for the emergence of the differences between the Rure leadership and Congress in

the district of Pratapgarh. Ram Chandra developed a desire to have a similar conference at Pratapgarh. He wanted to have the credit for organising a big kisan conference, and the credit should be given exclusively to him. So he declared the holding of kisan conference at Pratapgarh on March 15, 1929. Ten thousand copies of the notice were printed at the Purnendu Press, Pratapgarh. The notice included the names of Mahatma Gandhi, Moti Lal Nehru, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Dr. Ansari and the Raja of Kalakankar. Not only the old grass-root leaders of Rure Sabha, Jhinguri Singh and others, but also the new grass-root leaders like Sri Harakh of Anapur and Guru Saran of Pipartali started propaganda in villages. However, seeing the kind of propaganda, the Police Superintendent predicted that 'the meeting will be attended by Kurmis only.'⁷⁹ His prediction became true. No national leader came to the meeting of 15 March. Only 'about 800 Kurmis assembled on March 15', '500 Kurmis from tahsil Patti, 150 from Kunda and 150 from Pratapgarh.'⁸⁰ The widely advertised meeting of Pratapgarh kisan sabha by Ram Chandra was a total failure. Those who assembled 'demanded Mahatma Gandhi and others', and 'to delude them a decorated cart was sent to the railway station but it came back empty.'⁸¹ 'Half the crowd went home that night and Jhinguri Singh again addressed the remaining half on the following day. They expressed dissatisfaction at the attitude adopted by Jawaharlal Nehru and others.'⁸² So the consequence of the meeting was not the extension of influence of Congress over kisans, but a section of kisans went against the Congress.

So far we have not considered the most interesting part of the drama. Though Ram Chandra issued the notice for the meeting, and included the names of several important national leaders, he himself disappeared from Pratapgarh in the first week of March itself. He left Awadh as if the kisan sabha of March 15 was not his affair. It was exclusively

the affair of Rure Sabha leaders, Jhinguri Singh, Sri Harakh and others. It was reported that 'Ram Chandra wired from Bilodi, Buxur on March 4 and again from Bilaspur, C.P. on March 14 to Ram Hit inquiring about the prospects of the meeting.'⁸³ He might have got the information that the prospects were not good.

What was Ram Chandra's motive in calling the kisan sabha meeting at Pratapgarh on March 15? Was it simply to create a rift between the tenants and the Congress? If so, then he certainly succeeded in his mission. For Jhinguri Singh clearly expressed his dissatisfaction at the attitude of Jawaharlal Nehru and others. Did Ram Chandra contact any national leader before giving his name in the notice? Only he knew. Then, was Ram Chandra interested in discrediting the whole national leadership in the eyes of tenantry which was affiliated to Rure Sabha? Was Ram Chandra interested in the kisan cause or only creating a rift between the Congress and the kisans? Announcing the meeting of kisan sabha at Pratapgarh, and then running away from Pratapgarh speaks volumes about the character of Ram Chandra in the later period of his life. Jawaharlal Nehru considered his promises 'vague and nebulous'. According to him Ram Chandra 'had no programme of any kind and when he had brought them (tenants) to a pitch of excitement he tried to shift the responsibility to others.'⁸⁴ This time the responsibility was shifted to Jhinguri Singh and Sri Harakh. He created a telegraphic distance between himself and the Rure leaders.

Though failed, the meeting of 15 March 1929 makes many things clear. The Rure Sabha had its hold only on Kurmis. Though Sri Harakh was a Brahman and Jhinguri Singh a Thakur, they could not mobilise Brahman and Thakur tenantry. In such a situation the role of Kurmi grass-root leaders becomes quite significant. The list of Kurmi grass-root leaders is very long. Kahla produced such reputed leaders as Janaki Baba

and Matacharan. In 1930s Debi Din and Deota Din were very active. The list is not restricted to the old four names.

The conflict which resulted after the meeting of March 15 can be seen as a conflict between the old tenant leadership and the new tenant leadership. The Rure leadership of tenantry in Pratapgarh was older than the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements. The emergence of Congress leadership in the district posed a challenge to Rure leadership. The old leadership had no wish to give up its identity. This identity could be retained by them if they kept themselves away from the Congress. The failure of the national leaders to appear in the kisan sabha meeting on March 15 gave to the Rure leaders an excuse for keeping themselves away from the Congress. The two factions came to the surface quickly. In the month of July the U.P. Intelligence started considering 'that so long as these two factions exist neither kisan agitation nor Congress activity can assume formidable proportions in the district.'⁸⁵

Rure leaders formally departed from the Congress when on July 18 Jhinguri Singh and Sri Harakh announced 'to rename the local kisan sabha the Praja Sabha'.⁸⁶ Formation of Praja Sabha, however, does not mean departing from Gandhi and his ideology. Rure leaders would have burnt their boats if they had departed from Gandhian ideology. They were departing from the Congress only at the district level, because it was the Congress at the district level that posed a challenge to their identity. Even Jawaharlal Nehru was rejected because he controlled the activities of the Pratapgarh Congress. He was responsible for deputing Shyam Sunder Shukla to look after the affairs of Congress at Pratapgarh. And Shyam Sunder Shukla's exclusive concern was to expose Ram Chandra and to remove his influence from the kisans of Pratapgarh. In the July 18th meeting Sri Harakh announced that 'Mahatma Gandhi would visit Pratapgarh on September 20, and asked his audience to join the sabha before his vi-

sit.'⁸⁷ Without the lie concerning Gandhi's visit it was not possible to attract kisans to the Praja Sabha. According to the Intelligence Department source 'It was significant that although Baba Ram Chandra was present in a village three miles away, he did not attend the meeting.'⁸⁸ Perhaps he wished to show that he had nothing to do with the formation of Praja Sabha. Praja Sabha was not his creation, it was the creation of Jhinguri Singh and Sri Harakh.

Though the Praja Sabha was formed on July 18, 1929, Ram Chandra wished to take credit of forming it. Therefore, on August 18, just after one month, he announced that he 'intended to start a Praja Sabha. The first meeting of this new association was held under the direction of Jhinguri Singh, on August 20.'⁸⁹ However, there was a gap of two days between the announcement of the formation of Praja Sabha and its first meeting. Within these two days Ram Chandra decided not to take any responsibility of forming this sabha too. On 20 August 'Ram Chandra failed to appear and the meeting fell flat.'⁹⁰ There is consistency in the behaviour of Ram Chandra. His actions have a certain pattern. He announced the kisan sabha meeting on March 15 in which the national leaders were supposed to take part, and disappeared from Pratapgarh long before the date of the meeting. Similarly, he announced the formation of Praja Sabha on August 20, but did not attend its first meeting. So also he was certainly not ignorant of the meeting of July 18, but he did not attend it. Jawaharlal Nehru was absolutely right when he thought that Ram Chandra was not a responsible man; he totally lacked sincerity about the kisan cause. He was sincere only to himself. What a surprising situation, he continued his charm over the Rure leaders.

Ram Chandra did succeed in creating confusion, however shortlived the confusion was. In the month of August 1929 Shyam Sunder 'openly complained that Ram Chandra is responsible for the wholesale resignation

of newly enlisted Congress members.'⁹¹ Perhaps newly enlisted members left Congress and joined the Praja Sabha. Ram Chandra posed a big challenge to the unity of tenants in Pratapgarh.

From the beginning of 1929 Congress started preparing for a big offensive. It started penetrating into villages with the help of volunteers. According to the U.P. Intelligence Department, three kinds of volunteers were contemplated, 'the first class would be given full regimental training and would be taught how to die and bear the hardships of Government; the second class will help the Congress and work when necessary, but will not be trained; the third class will also work for the Congress and will look after outside affairs.'⁹² The report further adds 'During 1929-30 those volunteers will be sent out to villages to encourage the non-cooperation movement in 1930.'⁹³ The government officials did not yet know the real name of the movement, that it would be called 'Civil Disobedience Movement'. Therefore, they continued using the old name with which they were quite familiar. Perhaps they did not expect that what would happen in 1930 would be something very different from what happened in 1921-22. But they were sure that the non-cooperation of 1930 would be wider than that of 1921. Congress has now penetrated deep into the villages which it could not do in 1921. Everywhere in the rural areas Congress was trying to establish its Committees and Panchayats.

Quality of Congress propaganda in 1929 was very different from what it was a year ago. Earlier the leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, used to remind tenants about their revolt of 1920-21. The tenants were asked to organise again and strike the government as they did in 1920-21. But what did they gain in 1920-21? They were put in jail and their families were tortured in all kinds of ways. And the revised Rent Act

was no good. What was the use of reminding tenants about their failures? It was only their success which would impress them. The victory of tenants in Bardoli in 1928 worked like magic. The tenants of Awadh were electrified by the news. The tenants of Bardoli succeeded, the Awadh tenants would also succeed.

The years of 1928 and 1929 had also observed the movement for the upward mobility of the castes of the middle-class cultivators like Kurmis, Ahirs, Kacchis, etc. They wished to be considered as Kshatriyas. We have already written about Kurmis. Consider the case of Ahirs. In Rae Bareilly they had a huge gathering and 'about four thousand Ahirs were presented with sacred threads.'⁹⁴ A similar Ahir conference was held at Jaunpur where 'the Ahirs were declared to be Kshatriyas and 300 put on the sacred thread for the first time.'⁹⁵ Like the Ahirs, Kacchis of Rae Bareilly too started considering themselves as Kshatriyas. Kacchis who gathered at the police circle Bachraon 'insisted that all Kachhis were Kshatriyas, and so should wear the sacred thread.'⁹⁶ These examples of upward mobility are sufficient.

What led the middle caste cultivators to consider themselves as Kshatriyas? This is certainly their new discovery that they were Kshatriyas in the past. What led them now to discover that they were Kshatriyas in the past? Whatever status they had in their past, they must now be recognised as Kshatriyas. Because such a recognition would help them in reducing their rent. In Awadh Kshatriyas had a favourable rent. So once the middle caste cultivators were recognised as Kshatriyas they would also get their rent reduced. It has already been pointed out in the Chapter 2, Section 4, that the Kurmis represented to the Simon Commission to be considered 'both as Kshatriyas and advanced agriculturists in the matter of concessional and favourable rents.'⁹⁷ How can it be ruled out that all those who were striving for the upward mobility of

their castes had an economic consideration in their mind? It is the economic base that led to the formation of caste sabhas. And like the kisan sabhas, the function of caste sabhas was also to fight for the reduction of rent. Rent was the paramount issue of cultivators of Awadh on the eve of Civil Disobedience Movement.

Tenant and the Breaking of the British Laws: Common salt is consumed by all classes of people except the high blood pressure patients. If we overlook high blood pressure patients, then the common salt is a classless category. Gandhi wished to start his battle against the British Raj in which he wished to involve all classes of people, be they tenants, taluqdars and business people. Thus Gandhi took up the issue of common salt to start his Civil Disobedience Movement. Breaking of the salt law symbolised the breaking of the British laws. His Dandi March electrified the whole nation. Tenants too were electrified.

Though Jhinguri Singh and Sri Harakh formed the Praja Sabha in July 1929 and were angry with the Congressmen of Pratapgarh, they were doing work for the Congress. Their anger against Jawaharlal was a temporary phase. They were angry with him simply because he did not come to their meeting of 15 March, announced by their beloved leader Ram Chandra. Since Ram Chandra too disappeared before the meeting they had no reason to be specially angry with Jawaharlal. On February 13, 1930 Jhinguri Singh, Ajodhya, Kashi and Bhagwan Din 'paraded the streets of Banda with a national flag.'⁹⁸ Ram Chandra called them to Banda. But they did not succeed in Banda, and in March Jhinguri Singh and Bhagwan Din returned 'home in disgust'.⁹⁹ It was reported on April 5, 1930 that 'Baba Ram Chandra has now been deserted by his two remaining helpers, Kashi and Ajodhya, both of whom have returned to Pratapgarh.'¹⁰⁰ April was the month for breaking the salt law. It seems that Jhinguri Singh, Bhagwan Din, Kashi

and Ajodhya had better attraction, the attraction to break the salt law. Ram Chandra those days was busy in very different kind of activities. His concern was cleanliness of villages: 'He began to remove village rubbish with his own hands. The villagers eyed him with satisfaction.'¹⁰¹ The cleaning of village rubbish is good. But every activity has its time. Perhaps the Rure leaders considered it more important to break the salt law than to involve in cleaning the village rubbish. It was reported that 'on March 27 Jhinguri Singh, recently returned from Banda, addressed a small gathering of about 50 persons at village Rur and told them to prepare themselves for satyagraha in connection with the salt laws.'¹⁰² How could Jhinguri Singh afford to remain in Banda when he could mobilise the tenantry of Patti for a nobler cause? It was reported 'Jhinguri Singh has been busy enlisting volunteers. On April 18 he enrolled fourteen including two women and on April 20, 33 including three women. All these volunteers were obtained from the Patti circle.'¹⁰³ When Jhinguri Singh was enlisting volunteers, other grass-root leaders of tenantry already started breaking the salt law. On 25 April salt was made in village Kahla by 'Debi Din Kurmi in the presence of about 300 persons, some of whom were residents of the Allahabad and Jaunpur districts.'¹⁰⁴ Though Jhinguri Singh group was not in good terms with the leaders of the Pratapgarh Congress Committee, it seems to have connections with the Allahabad Congress Committee. Sakal Narayan Singh of the latter Committee met 'Jhinguri Singh on April 18'.¹⁰⁵ It was only in May that Jhinguri Singh and his associates broke the salt law: 'Seven persons including Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya and Bhagwan Din have been prosecuted for breach of the salt laws. Salt is still manufactured by their supporters.'¹⁰⁶ The four leaders mentioned in the report came back from Banda deserting Baba Ram Chandra. Not Ram Chandra but Gandhi was their supreme leader. They had to do what Gandhi asked

them to do. The place of Gandhi in their psyche was very different from the place of any other leader.

Pratap discloses the names of two more leaders who broke the salt law. They were Sri Harakh and Mata Charan.¹⁰⁷ Mata Charan was a Kurmi belonging to Kahla. He was later responsible for what is known as Kahla-riot in 1931. According to Pratap the seven persons were the key leaders of salt satyagraha of Pratapgarh, i.e. five old leaders and the two new leaders. All of them were tenants, and all of them were associated with Rure Sabha leadership. It seems that in their Civil Disobedience movement the Rure leaders took a more forward step than the one suggested by Gandhi. The key leaders were committed to six months' imprisonment for breach of salt law.¹⁰⁸ In their absence their followers interpreted Civil Disobedience in their own way. It was reported that 'Babu Ram Dube and Payag Din Kurmi, followers of Jhinguri Singh, advertised a meeting of kisans for July 11 in the Patti circle, at which they proposed to urge kisans to surrender their leases.'¹⁰⁹ It was understood that no tenant would take the land on lease of which the lease was surrendered. Let the taluqdars have their land, tenants would not have those lands. This is class struggle. This is the struggle of tenants against landlords, and not the struggle of tenants against the British Raj. Civil Disobedience too gave scope for divergent interpretations. Some grass-root leaders continued to have a narrow vision about their struggle.

Consider now Rae Bareli which presents a contrast. In Pratapgarh salt satyagraha was under the grass-root leaders of tenantry. Therefore, the villages, Rure and Kahla came to prominence. Salt satyagraha had a rural orientation. But in Rae Bareli this satyagraha had an urban orientation, for the reason that it failed to give birth to tenant leaders with tenant background. 1920-21 agitation gave birth to sporadic

leaders who disappeared from the scene, leaving a vacuum. Of course vacuums have no obstruction, and, therefore, the Congress decided to introduce itself into Rae Bareli. By the time salt satyagraha was declared Congress succeeded in reaching villages, not with the help of grass-root leaders, but with the help of volunteers. Since a volunteer is a paid person, he is no substitute for a grass-root leader. Yet this situation suited Congress better than the situation in which there were grass-root leaders. Pratapgarh grass-root leaders of tenantry did not allow Congress to have its independent hold over tenantry. No such obstruction existed at Rae Bareli. Not only the district level Congress leaders, but the provincial and the national leaders initiated the salt satyagraha at Rae Bareli. 'The United Provinces Satyagraha Committee at a meeting held at Rae Bareli on April 7, directed the Agra, Rae Bareli, Allahabad, Cawnpur and Banares districts to start breaking the Salt Act.'¹¹⁰ Earlier on 29 March Jawaharlal addressed a meeting at Rae Bareli persuading all 'the Congressmen of U.P. to make Rae Bareli satyagraha a success.'¹¹¹ According to the Intelligence Department report Rae Bareli was 'selected as the principal theatre of the Congress offensive.'¹¹² On March 19 Sitla Sahai arrived from Allahabad and got settled in Rae Bareli.¹¹³

On the eve of salt satyagraha at Rae Bareli arrived the Raja of Kalakankar, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Sri Prakash and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. 'The manufacture of salt was started in the city on April 8 and on the following day 55 volunteers arrived from the Salon tahsil to take part. Pandit Moti Lal Nehru was present with his daughter and son-in-law.'¹¹⁴ It was also reported that 'there were only 300 spectators' and 'Sat Narayana, Secretary of the Congress Committee, who made salt was arrested.'¹¹⁵ What a different picture Pratapgarh presented from Rae Bareli? Pratapgarh was not blessed by the Congress leadership for starting salt

satyagraha. Therefore, no leader of repute was present when Debi Din Kurmi broke the salt law at Kahla. Pratapgarh tenantry jumped into salt satyagraha because of Gandhi's call. There was a rift between the Rure leadership and the D.C.C. leadership. Thanks to the Intelligence Department of U.P. that it has preserved the names of grass-root leaders of tenantry. The names such as Debi Din, Mata Charan, Sri Harakh, Deota Din, Kashi, Bhagwan Din, etc. would have never occurred even in a history seen from below without the Intelligence source. C.I.D. has now become the only valid source for unearthing the subaltern leaders, the leaders who escape the notice of elitist historiography. The construction of a genuine subaltern history is no more a distant dream.

Consider further the scene of the breaking of salt law in the villages of Rae Bareli. Referring to the salt manufacturing activity of the first week in May it was reported 'During the week salt has been manufactured mostly in the Sareni and Mustafabad circles, and a number of arrests have been made. The Kalakankar Party of volunteers also prepared salt at Mohanganj on April 20.'¹¹⁶ Those who manufactured salt are nameless, so also those villages are nameless where the salt was manufactured. Only the names of areas occur and the name of Kalakankar party has occurred. Lal Suresh Singh, the younger brother of Kalakankar Raja, brought the party of salt law breakers from Pratapgarh who afterwards left for 'Lucknow'.¹¹⁷ British officials hardly gave any importance to 'volunteers'. They gave importance to "grass-root leaders" and the "national leaders". They considered the grass-root leaders as dangerous. And when a grass-root leader broke salt law his name was given. Rae Bareli had a vacuum of grass-root leaders. Such reporting was common as 'Salt was made at five places during the week by villagers in the Sreni and Mustafabad circles.'¹¹⁸ and 'during the week contraband salt was manufactured by volunteers at

two places in the Mustafabad circle.'¹¹⁹ Of course this did not go against Gandhi's call for salt satyagraha. He wished to involve all classes of people in this satyagraha, from a well-known taluqdar to an unknown Congress volunteer or a villager.

Civil Disobedience however switched over from the issue of salt to the issue of tax. Awadh tenants welcomed this switch-over. They had been agitating against the Oudh Rent Act for a long time. If one is required not to pay rent then one is obviously breaking the Oudh Rent Act. So the Congress call for no-tax appeared to Awadh tenantry as a call for breaking the Oudh Rent Act. Breaking of the Salt Act was a small matter. Breaking of the Oudh Rent Act was a big matter. Salt was not so important as rent. However, Jawaharlal had not given a right picture about the salt agitation. Concerning the shift from salt to tax he remarked 'It shifted the centre of gravity of our struggle from the urban to the rural areas.'¹²⁰ This has led scholars to propagate the view that salt satyagraha was an urban affair whereas the no-tax was a rural affair. How wrong is this conclusion? Pratapgarh exhibits how wrong it would be to say that salt satyagraha had an urban base. It clearly had a rural base, and was more effective in villages than in the city. Of course in Rae Bareilly it started as an urban affair. For this lack of tactics Congress was responsible. To give a mass orientation to the satyagraha it should have started from villages. Yet in Rae Bareilly too salt satyagraha later picked up momentum through the agency of its volunteers. To call salt satyagraha as urban is to neglect the role of tenantry, not only of Pratapgarh but of the Awadh as a whole.

Pratapgarh salt satyagraha shows that the grass-root leaders of tenantry were against the British Raj. Salt satyagraha was not launched to amend the Oudh Rent Act. It was launched to obtain swaraj.

Therefore, the old Rure leaders jumped into the salt satyagraha leaving Ram Chandra in Banda for completing his village cleaning operation. Ram Chandra did not manufacture salt, and, therefore, he escaped arrest. His way was different from the way of Rure leaders. Breaking of salt law was one of the ways in which one showed one's anger against an alien rule. How wrong would it be to conclude that the tenant struggle of Awadh was only a class-struggle; it was only a struggle against the taluqdars and not a struggle against the British. If it was not a struggle against the British then why did Jhinguri Singh and others participate in the salt satyagraha? For the grass-root leaders of tenantry their struggle was a part of the national struggle.

Like salt the appeal for no-tax was also not restricted to a class. As Jawaharlal writes, 'Our appeal had been addressed both to zamindars and tenants not to pay; in theory it was not a class appeal.'¹²¹ In practice however it resulted into a class appeal, 'most of the zamindars did pay their revenue'.¹²² 'The tenantry, however, stood firm and did not pay.'¹²³ And they stood firm partly because they were not in a position to pay. The successive failure of crop since 1927 and then the onslaught of depression in 1930 made the payment of rent impossible. Though depression started at the closing stage of 1929 its impact was felt only in 1930, particularly when the rabi crop was harvested. No-tax was converted into a village issue. So was salt agitation converted into a village issue. At the final stage salt was manufactured only in villages. It was a rural affair. But Jawaharlal called it an urban affair, and the historians and other social scientists started calling it an urban affair without troubling themselves with the statistics of the situation. For them Jawaharlal became the source of statistics of the situation; they did not try to study police files and other government and non-government records in order to know the truth. For the te-

nants it was easy to switch over from salt to no-rent. They had seen the Congress support for breaking the salt law, so they were assured of Congress support for breaking the Oudh Rent Act. Had they not been fully aware of the impact of salt satyagraha, they would not have jumped into the no-rent agitation. Suffering was not new to the tenants of Awadh, so also agitations were not new to them. They agitated in 1920-21, so they were not shy of agitating again in 1930. What they wanted was the firm support of a body which had established its credentials, a leader who was reliable. For the tenants Gandhi was a reliable leader, the most reliable leader in the country. And Congress was the only Party. There existed no other party in 1930 to look into the affairs of kisans. Congress adopted kisans, and the kisans adopted Congress. National freedom was the ideal of kisans, and the freedom from taluqdari system, freedom from the Oudh Rent Act, became the ideal of Congress, at least of those who followed Jawaharlal. By participating in the salt agitation kisans showed their credentials. Now the Congress had to show its credentials by solving the complicated issue of rent.

On June 14, 1930 the resolution moved by Sunder Lal and supported by Moti Lal Nehru in the U.P.C.C. 'was passed for the introduction of no-rent campaign in the Rae Bareli district or other suitable area.'¹²⁴ Rae Bareli was again favoured. The preparation for salt satyagraha was to be utilised for the non-payment of rent. The call for no-rent satisfied all the three, the Congress, the tenants and the British administrators. Only the taluqdars were not happy. The politicians as well as the historians have written a lot how it satisfied the Congress and the tenants. But they have not tried to know how it satisfied the British administrators. They have not tried to study the colonial mind. No agitation, even if it is non-violent, can stay for a long time. Salt

was becoming stale, so the Congress was in need of revitalising the Civil Disobedience Movement. It succeeded in revitalising it by connecting it with the "agrarian distress", as Jawaharlal comments, 'The two merged into each other.'¹²⁵ According to him with salt satyagraha 'our city people became bored and tired, and our middle class workers stale.'¹²⁶ So the cities and middle-class workers were abandoned and villages and their tenants were brought into the focus. Economic distress coupled with the unsympathetic treatment by the taluqdars and the British Government drove the tenants into the lap of the Congress. The tenants had no other alternative. Neither the taluqdars nor the British exhibited any sense of intelligence and drove the tenants to no-rent campaign. Bhavishya published a story by Bishwambhar Nath Kaushik in which the tenants of a village asked an old man whether they should participate in the no-rent campaign or keep themselves away from it. The old man reacted

If you seek my opinion, I shall advise you not to pay even a shell as rent. From where will you pay it? If you sell your cattle and utensils you will die. If you do not pay rent, even then you will die. Therefore, die like brave men. Why die like cowards? If the Government had remitted the revenue we would not have listened to the Congress but the Government cares only for its dues. It does not care whether one lives or dies. The zamindar harasses us and the Government listens not. Whom, then, are we to look for help? We shall perforce have to seek the protection of the Congress even if in doing so we are beaten and have to suffer imprisonment. If we undergo all this in the name of the Congress we shall become famous and secure the sympathy of the Congress.¹²⁷

The old man's advice was so touching that 'the whole village resolves not to pay rent.'¹²⁸ This story is sufficient to show the condition of tenantry and its decision to participate in no-rent campaign.

The British also, and not only the tenants and the Congress, welcomed the switch-over from salt to no-rent. For salt was a secular agitation, but no-rent was not. No-rent would lead to a class-struggle, to a clash between the tenants and zamindars. In this struggle the Congress

would side with the tenants. Therefore, to avoid blood-shed, the British would side with the taluqdars. Thus the no-rent would ultimately prove as an end of the Congress. Congress would be crushed and wiped out from the scene once for all. Colonial mind could not think in terms of new strategies. Class-struggle between the landlords and tenants had helped the British since 1857. And even in 1930 they did not consider it as an outdated weapon. They wished the tenants to clash with the taluqdars, and in their clash the tenants should be supported by the Congress. To the suppression of tenants would be added the suppression of the Congress. The Pioneer gives an expression to the British view by pointing out in its editorial that

the no-tax campaign in the United Provinces means a conflict between zamindars and occupancy tenants. The loss, unless effective steps are taken, will not all be suffered by the farmers. If the Congress movement makes headway, there will be blood-shed.¹²⁹

The reference to "occupancy tenants" is a mistake. Their percentage was nominal in Awadh, and in the Agra Province also they were not in a dominant position. 'Tenant' is a safer word; the struggle was expected to be between zamindars and their tenants. Once the Congress movement makes a headway effective steps would be taken against it, because the government would like to avoid blood-shed. Thus the government welcomed the no-rent, for it had a remarkable opportunity to crush the Congress. Congress welcomed it because they were going to have a mass support. And tenants welcomed it because now they had support of a large national body. Tenants were interested in rent relief, Congress in the freedom of India and the British in retaining their rule.

When the war of nerves was going on between the Congress and the British Government and the important national leaders and the grass-root leaders were in jail, Civil Disobedience was given diverse interpretations by the followers. Some thought that the land was not to be culti-

vated. Not only that the landlords should be deprived of rent, but they should also be deprived of the land produce. In Pratapgarh there was a movement to surrender leases. In Rae Bareli it was thought proper to destroy the standing crop if the seed had already been sown. Before his arrest Chandra Mul Misra provided this new form of protest: 'Tenants were promised support if they would refrain from cultivating their fields and destroy by grazing the crops which were already coming up. In some villages growing crops have actually been grazed.'¹³⁰ The tenants reached a stage where having the crop and not having the crop hardly made any difference. He obtained nothing after harvest; therefore, it made no difference if his crop was grazed. Tenant's refraining from cultivating his field or allowing his crop to be grazed exhibited the faith of the tenant in the Congress. This was a unique kind of "peasant protest". 'Suffer yourself instead of injuring others'. But the tenants also continued with a variant of their old form of protest. 'In a few villages Congress workers have grazed the newly cultivated fields which were formerly used for grazing purposes but have been leased for cultivation by taluqdars during the year.'¹³¹ The taluqdars were wrong in leasing lands which were kept free for grazing. But those tenants were also wrong who took leases on those lands. Therefore, those tenants must be punished. The propaganda for non-cultivation of land might be spreading. To counter it a meeting was called at Patti, Pratapgarh, on July 1, 1930 in which '6,000 villagers assembled to listen to warnings against the futility of the non-cultivation propaganda current in certain parts of the Rae Bareli district.'¹³²

Congress workers were always in search of new tactics for spreading their no-rent campaign. It was reported that Congress

in some localities adopted a new line of action and instead of risking arrest by urging non-payment are persuading the tenants

and petty zamindars to petition the district authorities for a substantial remission of their dues. This move is particularly astute; if the remission is granted Congress takes the credit for it and, if refused, Congress will be enabled to take the fullest advantage of the refusal in urging upon the cultivators the justification of the non-payment campaign.¹³³

Though the prices were coming down the issue of remissions was not at all in the mind of the government. Consider the following figures representing seers per rupee:

Month & Year	Wheat	Barley	Gram	Rice
December 1929	7.25	10.25	7.25	5.25
January 1930	8.00	10.50	7.75	5.50
February 1930	9.00	11.50	8.25	5.75
March 1930	9.50	13.50	9.25	5.50
April 1930	9.50	14.50	10.00	5.75
June 1930	11.25	15.50	10.50	5.75
December 1930	15.14	25.04	15.34	10.23
May 1931	17.00	25.05	18.13	9.30

(Source: Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces, p. 5.)

Every month there was fall in prices. Every month the producer of food-grains was suffering losses. Yet no relief to the tenant was declared. Why was this so? The Pioneer remarked: 'The Government obstinately stuck far too long to a policy of "wait and see" whether there is to be an upward trend in prices.'¹³⁴ But the government was certainly not waiting and seeing whether the prices would go up 'when there was not the slightest prospect of such a development.'¹³⁵ Government was waiting and seeing the development of landlord-tenant tension, it was waiting to see how the Congress was moving towards the tenants and parting away from the landlords. Government was waiting for a tenant violence against the landlords like the one that occurred during 1920-21. When such a violence occurs the government would have an opportunity to

intervene on behalf of the taluqdars. Waiting for the rise of prices was only an excuse. The prices were falling with a speed that could not be imagined, yet the government was not moved. Its actions were political rather than economic. It was least concerned with the welfare either of tenantry or of the taluqdars. This was the difference between an alien government and the government of one's own people. When the tenants were dying with hunger, committing suicide and selling their daughters the government was waiting for a tenant-landlord tension to grow. Instead of providing relief to the tenants, it was waiting for tenants to revolt against their landlords, waiting for the loot and arson to occur. Seeing the callous attitude of the government towards the suffering caused by depression, Abhyudaya wrote in November 1930:

Today we are clearly seeing the difference between national and foreign governments. Howsoever harsh a national government may be it is sure to have some sympathy for its kith and kin but what can an alien government care for the hardships and sufferings of the people beyond filling its own pockets.¹³⁶

Government might have been terribly disturbed. If the situation of 1920-21 is compared with that of 1930-31-32, then the former situation was far better than the latter. Indians are strange creatures. In spite of better conditions they revolted in 1920-21, but they were not thinking of revolting when the condition had deteriorated. Gandhi perhaps made them extremely non-violent. Within the time of ten years all their militancy was lost. The British preferred militancy, and the militancy was not occurring.

The government lost its patience. It decided to strike and strike at those places which were the source of tenant agitation in Awadh. Though Congress started its no-rent campaign in Rae Bareilly, the government was more concerned about the tenantry of Pratapgarh, particularly the tenantry of Patti tahsil, For it was this tenantry that gave birth to remarkable grass-root leaders who were responsible for establishing

the first kisan sabha in Awadh and the consequent agitation of 1920-21. The grass-root leaders of Patti never gave up their struggle against the British, and had continuously been raising voice for swaraj throughout the transitory period. They jumped into the salt agitation and were now in 1930-31 busy with the no-rent campaign. Kahla since 1925 became the centre of kisan sabha activities. Kahla Sabha was the creation of Rure leaders, and not of the Congress. It was dominated by Kurmis, and Matacharan Kurmi became the leading spirit of tenant organisation. He was helped by Ramjatan, another Kurmi of the same village. Patti tenants did not care for the government repression and they announced a meeting to be held on February 16, 1931. According to a note by Ramjatan the government prohibited the meeting of 16th. On 14th itself the government announced firing if the meeting was held, yet the preparation for the meeting went on. Jawaharlal was contacted for presiding over the meeting. Gandhiji was present when Jawaharlal was contacted, and according to Ramjatan's note, 'Gandhiji advised them to have the meeting and consider themselves as leaders. Every peasant is a leader.'¹³⁷ The armed police surrounded Kahla meeting place, yet thousands of the tenants reached Kahla. This was the best opportunity to teach lesson to the Patti tenants. They developed a habit of not listening to the government orders. They were listening only to Gandhi. Now they must be taught to listen to the government. When the meeting started on 16 February they were warned to disperse, but they did not listen and continued with their proceedings. The police resorted to firing in the air. Even the air-firing could not disturb the meeting. So the police had all the excuse for direct firing. The result was three persons died on the spot and several injured. This was clearly a case of violence by the government on a non-violent gathering. Those who were killed on the spot were Ramdas, Mathuradas and Kalka Prasad.

More than fifty persons got bullet injuries. Tavarak Husain, Sub-Inspector of Police, was responsible for the firing.¹³⁸ Matacharan reached Anand Bhavan at 11 in the night. Immediately Jawaharlal reached Kahla in the morning of 17th. Later Kamala Nehru, Purushotamdas Tandon and Baba Ram Chandra reached the spot, and so many leaders and journalists followed. Kahla exhibits the government method of crushing the no-rent campaign. Not the tenants but the government was violent. The whole of Awadh became proud of Kahla. Kahla eclipsed Rure.

Following is the Intelligence Department reporting of the Kahla violence of government:

In Pratapgarh a no-rent meeting in defiance of an order under section 144, Criminal Procedure Code led to an attack upon the police by a large mob. A few rounds were fired, and through the coolness and pluck of the circle inspector and the sub-inspector more serious trouble was avoided. Two persons were killed, 17 wounded, and 22 arrests have been made. Parsotam Das Tandon and other leading Congressmen visited the scene and instigated the villagers to continue their lawlessness.¹³⁹

Later 19 more arrests were made and the total reached 41 arrested.¹⁴⁰

There is no doubt the Sub-Inspector remained cool; otherwise, he would have failed to do cold-blooded murders. But why these murders? There was no other reason but to suppress the kisan agitation led by the Rure leadership. Kahla was the strongest hold of Rure leadership. Therefore, the government decided to terrorise the tenants taking part in the Kahla meeting. A few days after the firing it was reported that 'the villagers round Kahla are now inclined to pay their rents.'¹⁴¹ What a remarkable achievement on the part of the government! Their affectionate treatment through bullets changed the heart of the people. Mere arrests did not satisfy the government. Killing of the no-rent campaigners was the only alternative left. Kahla was the spot where this alternative was tested.

Salt agitation was started at Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh followed.

So also no-rent started at Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh followed. But Pratapgarh was the first to face a large-scale violence by the police. Till February 16, 1931 nowhere in Awadh such a violence was observed. Three persons killed and several wounded. Nothing happened except a few arrests when a policeman was beaten in Rae Bareli and a thana was stoned just after a week of the Kahla violence. It was reported from Rae Bareli 'A sub-inspector, who went to note speeches at a meeting near Bachhraon, was struck on the head from behind by a lathi and again beaten after he had fallen to the ground... he was saved from further injuries by a village chaukidar.'¹⁴² The story did not end here. After the sub-inspector was removed to the thana the crowd gathered round the thana 'throwing stones and shouting, burn the thana'.¹⁴³ Yet there was no firing on the mob. Was it not a Chauri Chaura phenomenon? Police perhaps preferred firing on the non-violent mob as was the mob at Kahla. But no firing occurred on the violent mob near the Bachhraon thana. Incident of Kahla occurred on February 16, 1931. The incident of Bachhraon was reported in the week ending February 21, 1931. Strange were the ways of the government to act.

Tenantry, Swaraj and the Section 12(a) of the Oudh Rent Act: Just after a fortnight of police violence at Kahla and the tenant violence near Bachhraon, Irwin had a pact with Gandhi, known as "Delhi Pact", or more popularly as "truce". How different was Gandhi from Mao? Several brands of historians are one in condemning Gandhi. The most powerful argument given by them is that through this pact Gandhi saved his friends, the landlords (counterpart of Chinese 'war lords') from the wrath of tenantry. Stoning of a thana, beating of a ziledar or a chaprasi and abusing the landlords are given as examples of a nation's preparedness for a large-scale militancy. A storm in a tea-cup is given the colour of a

storm in the world. Then how is the comparison of Awadh taluqdars with the rakshas different from the comparison of these taluqdars with the Chinese war lords? One is popular with the tenants and the other with historians. Both exhibit ignorance of context. But the ignorance of tenant can be excused, not that of the historian. For the tenant is not a scientist of any kind, but the historian is a scientist. As a scientist one has to be careful about misplaced contexts. Gandhi was not Mao and his Congressmen were not red army soldiers. There were no war lords in India and so also there were no opium wars in India. India was not a semicolonial country but a fullfledged colonial country.

With "truce" the prestige of Gandhi enhanced in the eyes of tenants. Swaraj was striking at the door if not already reached the house. From January 1930 till 'truce', i.e. March 5, 1931, the country started observing an unprecedented economic depression. But the government took no steps to remove the economic difficulties either of the tenants or of the landlords. It was busy with its political game, a political gamble. The moves of the government were clear. Taluqdars would somehow realise their rents through repression and then like other years they would hand over their revenue to the government. So why worry about depression? Why worry about revenue and rent remissions? But this was a miscalculation. A total failure of British intelligence. Mass mobilisation of Congress did not allow the repressive tactics of the taluqdars, so no rents were realised and, therefore, no revenue reached the government treasury. Switch-over from salt to no-tax was a remarkable strategy of the Congress. A stage was reached when Irwin had no other alternative but to have pact with Gandhi to stop his Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi was intelligent enough again. He only suspended the movement. Perhaps Irwin would have saved his pact with Gandhi if he had contemplated about immediate relief to the tenants a year ago. Like the smaller

Irwin, who was an ordinary British official, Lord Irwin too discounted the tenantry. In spite of depression Lord Irwin might have thought that the tenants could manage their one meal a day and would deposit their rents to the taluqdars. So he waited and allowed the situation to go out of his hands. "Waiting and seeing" was wrong, but the Delhi Pact, the consequent step, was no better. Congress was accepted as the future ruler of India. Congress would replace the British became obvious to the people. British Raj would be replaced by Gandhi Raj. People started preparing to welcome the Gandhi Raj. Sooner the British Raj goes it would be better for the people. Congress exhibited a far superior wisdom than the wisdom of the British who were supposed to be the best politicians of the world. One year of waiting and seeing the situation led to the fall of British Empire in India. Who could doubt the intelligence of Gandhi's moves?

It was not only the no-tax campaign that started in depression, the salt agitation too started in depression. The history of the Civil Disobedience coincided with the history of depression. The producers of food crops suffered a great loss when the prices of rabi in 1930 came down and there was no remission on rent given by the government. Gandhi's call for salt agitation in April 1930 coincided with the fall of price of rabi crop of that year. There is no surprise that the tenants were attracted towards the salt agitation. The depression brought misery to the tenants and the government gave no attention to it. So the tenants developed anti-feelings for the government, and they gave expression to those feelings by joining the salt agitation. When the condition further deteriorated Congress added "no-rent" to their Civil Disobedience. Congress was undoubtedly making a capital out of depression, and all the time the intelligent British Government was only "waiting and seeing", waiting to see the class struggle between tenants

and landlords. Though Gandhi might have given his call for salt in April 1930 only as a political move, depression might not have been in his mind; his call coincided with the economic deterioration. In Awadh the prices of food-grains came down so much that a rupee which could buy only one kilogram of food-grain just four months ago, i.e. in December 1929, could buy one and a half kilogram in April 1930. And the year was preceded by successive bad harvests. No Congress propaganda was required to spread anti-government feelings. They were already there before the call for salt agitation. Not the city but the village people suffered more because of depression.

The British wished to save their lost prestige by replacing Irwin with Willingdon. On April 17, 1931 he became the Viceroy of India. 'On April 29 the local government issued a communiqué announcing their decision to grant extensive remissions of revenue, which would involve large reduction in the rent of tenants, during the Rabi crop.'¹⁴⁴ The attitude of Willingdon towards the tenantry was the same as that of Irwin. The taluqdars had to be backed against tenantry, and a class tension between the two must continue. Thus the economic issue of remission was converted into a political issue by Willingdon by providing considerable remission on revenue without a matching remission on rent. The disparity in revenue and rent would keep the class tension alive. If rent remissions matched revenue remissions, then there would be a great loss to the treasury, and support of taluqdars would be lost. For the taluqdars could support the British only when they were favoured over the tenants. Willingdon came to save the British position without giving up the basic policy of divide and rule, keeping the taluqdars as enemies of the tenantry. They should not come on the same platform.

Gandhi too had to make his position clear. Through the Delhi Pact only the no-tax campaign was suspended, and the tenants were asked to

pay rent. But what percentage of rent was to be paid was not made explicit by Gandhi. In his announcement of remissions Willingdon gave primary importance to the government treasury, secondary to the taluqdars and hardly any importance to the tenantry. Gandhi made his position clear in his "Manifesto to the kisans" and 'Appeal to the zamindars'. He reverted Willingdon's order. He gave primary importance to the tenants, secondary to the taluqdars and hardly any importance to the government treasury. 'The Congress expects every tenant to pay as early as possible all the rent he can, and in no case as a general rule less than 8 annas or 12 annas as the case may be.'¹⁴⁵ The remission of 8 annas was suggested for the statutory and non-occupancy tenants and 4 annas for occupancy tenants. Gandhi further added that 'there may be cases in which less than 8 annas or 12 annas can only be paid. In such cases I hope the tenants will be treated liberally by the Zamindars.'¹⁴⁶ In his appeal to the zamindars he pointed out that 'if the kisans pay according to the suggestion made in the manifesto, the zamindars and the local Government will accept the payments in full discharge of the kisans' liability.'¹⁴⁷ He further added 'I am hoping, that the Government will grant proportionate relief to the Zamindars who accept the tenant's terms.'¹⁴⁸ Gandhi clearly gave secondary importance to the taluqdars and hardly any importance to the Government treasury. Tenantry was his primary concern. How could one imagine that Gandhi was anti-tenant and pro-landlords? Of course he accepted the taluqdari system. But it is doubtful whether the Awadh taluqdars would have liked to stay in the taluqdari system imagined by him. In his taluqdari system the tenants would have fixed tenure and there would be no bedakhli, nazrana, etc. There would be hospitals, schools, etc. Perhaps the Raja of Kalakankar gave expression to Gandhi's view when he 'advised the zamindars and taluqdars to compromise with the cultivators, as the estates belonged to

the people and the taluqdars are their servants.'¹⁴⁹

Gandhi's manifesto did have its impact on the kisans. According to the Deputy Commissioner of Rae Bareilly his manifesto 'has created the impression among the tenantry that they need not pay more than they think they can.'¹⁵⁰ He further pointed out that 'another pernicious effect of the manifesto has been that the tenants are now insisting on obtaining a receipt for the entire rent on making part payment, which according to the latest formula is not to exceed eight annas in the rupee.'¹⁵¹ But paying eight annas was not making a part payment. It was making full payment according to the manifesto. Therefore, the tenants were right in asking for full receipts. So also Gandhi mentioned that the tenants should pay what they could. The limit of 8 annas was flexible. It could go up or come down. A tenant should not sell his bullocks and utensils in order to pay rent. So also a tenant could pay more than 8 annas in a rupee if his position was better. Jawaharlal did not like Gandhi's condition of flexibility of rent. He interpreted the manifesto a little differently. 'He took the view that what Gandhi had asked the tenants to pay was not the minimum but the maximum and this need not be paid if it entailed debts and sale of cattle and ploughs, or if the kisans were ill-treated.'¹⁵² Gandhi's flexibility condition is more logical than its rejection. Suppose a tenant's economic condition does not allow him to pay more than 2 annas in a rupee, then the economic condition becomes the criterion for deciding the legitimacy of rent. And if the economic condition of a tenant is better than the economic condition of that tenant who pays only 2 annas in a rupee then the former should pay more, say, 6 annas or 8 annas or 12 annas in a rupee. It is the economic condition of a tenant that led Gandhi to recommend reduction of 4 annas in a rupee to an occupancy tenant.

Gandhi's critics overlook the flexibility of 8 annas limit imposed

by Gandhi. Gandhi introduced no rigid boundary; one could pay less than 8 annas, so also one could go above it. Gandhi has been criticised by many, including Gopal, who thinks 'that Gandhi had been sufficiently won over' by Hailey.¹⁵³ Gopal is disturbed by 'Gandhi's half-hearted support of kisans.¹⁵⁴ Gandhi was certainly not won over by Hailey or any other British official. He gave full support to the kisans. But he wanted to be logical and rational rather than emotional. In order to support the poor kisans, in order to let them pay, say, only 2 annas in a rupee, or not to pay any rent at all, he had to make the boundary of 8 annas flexible. Gandhi was clearly sold out to the kisans, and not to the British or to the taluqdars or to his zamindar Congressmen colleagues like Sherwani and Sri Prakasha. His manifesto was welcomed by the kisans of Awadh. As a matter of fact the psyche of tenantry was very different after "truce" and the consequent "manifesto" than what it was before 'truce'. There was a feeling 'that the Government has been defeated.'¹⁵⁵ Congress would replace the existing government. Villagers started believing that

If they support Congress sufficiently they will escape having to pay rent for the whole of this year. They are thus induced to provide money and food for wandering agitators, believing that Congress funds are a good investment and a form of insurance against the time when the present Government will cease to exist.¹⁵⁶

They were expecting swaraj to come soon, and were postponing payment of rent 'in the hope of more remissions and sometimes in the expectation of the establishment of swaraj within two or three months.'¹⁵⁷ And when swaraj comes the 'Government officials will suffer and the cultivators will be all powerful, able to dismiss any official from Governor down to thanedar.¹⁵⁸ 'In Bahraich a large number of volunteers have been enlisted' with the hope that the 'volunteers have not to pay rent.'¹⁵⁹ "Truce" made Congress the future ruler of India. Therefore, the villa-

gers were trying to become Congress volunteers. Since Gandhi intervened on behalf of the tenants for rent remission, they thought that the volunteers of Congress were not required to pay rent. Membership drive of Congress gained momentum. In a single meeting at Salon, Rae Bareli, eighteen hundred persons were enlisted as Congress members.¹⁶⁰ For their problems the tenants stopped approaching the taluqdars and the government. It was reported that 'there is very general idea that Congress is now Government, and tenants are refusing to deal with zamindars or with officials and are referring everything to Congress.'¹⁶¹ Gandhi's manifesto seems to have revived the Eka spirit in Hardoi. 'The doctrine of "pay rent only if you can afford to" is having a bad effect. Instances of violence and intimidation on the part of tenants when called upon to pay rent are more common.'¹⁶² Tenants started waiting for the instructions from the Congress and not from the government in order to pay rent. It was reported that 'in Hardoi some tenants have sent in a statement of their assets and liabilities to the Sandila Congress Committee, asking for orders regarding payment of rents.'¹⁶³ This was restricted not only to Hardoi, but it was a general condition of Awadh. Take one more example from Rae Bareli. It was reported that 'large number of cultivators are referring their cases to the Congress and are not paying their rent without receiving instructions from Congress.'¹⁶⁴

Perhaps the references given above might have clarified the situation created after the truce and the manifesto. Congress became a big attraction. No-rent in a new form appeared on the scene. Tenants were not now talking of giving no rent. They were now talking about 'giving as much rent as they could'. They had no wish to pay more than 8 annas in a rupee, and in some cases not to pay at all. Though Jawaharlal was in constant touch with tenantry of Awadh, Gandhi's name was on every lip

in villages. Gandhi defeated Viceroy. Gandhi was bringing swaraj. He instructed the tenants not to pay more than what they could. Gandhi was their saviour. For the tenants of Awadh he became their future hope. He would liberate them from the taluqdars and the British.

Consider now the mistaken analysis of those historians and sociologists who think that the tenant struggle was only a class struggle, it was a struggle against the taluqdars, and not a struggle against the British. It has already been shown that the well-known grass-root leaders of Pratapgarh tenantry jumped into the salt agitation on the call given by Gandhi. Salt agitation was not directly connected with nazrana and bedakhli. But it was indirectly connected with these issues. It was assumed by the grass-root leaders that nazrana and bedakhli would go only after the British left India. These leaders did not have cordial relationship with the Congress leaders of the district. At a meeting attended by Uma Nehru and Krishna Kant Malviya where local Congress leaders Thakur Prasad Singh and Venkat Rao were present, 'Jhinguri Singh said that Congressmen did no work and only led a life of luxury and comfort at the expense of taluqdars.'¹⁶⁵ This was a direct attack on Thakur Prasad Singh and Venkat Rao who were local Congress officials. It seems that Jhinguri Singh did not relish the union of tenant leaders and taluqdars. In that meeting Ram Chandra behaved like the follower of Jhinguri Singh. He 'abused Government and urged the people to pay half rent and report their grievances to Congress.'¹⁶⁶ So Ram Chandra was following the policy of "manifesto". But he took a bolder step than the one taken by Jhinguri Singh. 'He concluded by declaring that he would cease to work for Congress and left the meeting in a rage.'¹⁶⁷ For whom would he work if not for the Congress? Obviously for the tenants. Working for the welfare of tenantry did not necessarily mean working for the Congress. This was the spirit in which the grass-root leaders of

tenantry worked in Pratapgarh district. They continued supporting Gandhi's moves, yet had no intimate relationship with the Congress except attending their meetings. The Rure leaders were wholeheartedly devoted to the no-rent campaign, which was now the campaign for the payment of half the rent. There was no alternative with the government except to arrest the Rure leaders. They did not allow rents to be collected in Patti tahsil. It was reported that 'Jhinguri Singh, Sri Harakh, Kashi, Pryag, Ganpat Singh and Bhagwan Din have been sentenced to one year's imprisonment under section 107, Cr.P.C.'¹⁶⁸ This happened in the third week of July 1931. This shows that the Rure leaders were as active in the truce period as before the truce. They had no deviation of any kind. Rents were not coming because of their impact. Referring to the action taken against the Rure leaders 'Deputy Commissioner thinks that as a result of action there is a distinct improvement in the agrarian situation.'¹⁶⁹ Deputy Commissioner's remark shows the importance of these leaders. But no action was taken against Ram Chandra. Why was Ram Chandra allowed freedom when all his disciples were imprisoned for one year? He escaped salt agitation, now he has escaped the no-rent. Does it mean that his presence made no difference to the tax collection? Does it mean that he had no hold over tenantry? Then how could he be called a grass-root leader of tenantry?

Congress in July 1931 was having its own internal problems in Pratapgarh. Both Thakur Prasad Singh and Venkat Rao resigned from their positions in the Congress Committee. Lal Brijesh Singh, the younger brother of Raja of Kalakankar, had been elected as 'president of the local Congress in place of Venkat Rao.'¹⁷⁰ And Thakur Prasad Singh 'has been engaged as a teacher in the English school at Kalakankar on Rs. 50 per mensem.'¹⁷¹ The internal troubles of the Congress in Pratapgarh can be judged from the fact that no enquiry about Pratapgarh could be conduc-

ted by the Committee appointed for the Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces. Simply a note is given in the Appendix x 'Two days before the Committee's visit to the district the old office bearers had resigned and new ones were elected in their place. They had not till the Committee's visit taken over charge. No material was collected, no witnesses were summoned and no records were produced to enable the Committee to make any enquiry.'¹⁷² Thus the Congress at the Provincial level could not bring about those facts which it unearthed about the other districts of U.P. It is a loss to the researchers.

The affairs of Pratapgarh Congress reached a stage when an enquiry committee was set up to know the state of Pratapgarh Congress. Gopi Nath Srivastava and C.B. Gupta were members of the enquiry. 'They criticised some of the activities of Brijesh Singh of Kalakankar and Baba Ram Chandra in connection with the kisan movement and recommended that they should be called to account by the provincial Congress.'¹⁷³ This shows that Baba Ram Chandra had some connection with the Pratapgarh Congress, howsoever distant that connection might have been. But after the arrest of Rure leaders Ram Chandra migrated to Jaunpur and visited Pratapgarh very rarely. It was never reported that he addressed any meetings of the no-rent type. Like him Matacharan of Kahla too was not arrested for sometime. But he was very active in Raniganj circle. 'Mata Charan Kurmi is moving about secretly and addressing informal meetings.'¹⁷⁴ Again it was reported in December that 'Matacharan Kurmi has been advocating non-payment.'¹⁷⁵ The Kahla violence of police in February did not demoralise Matacharan.

In May 1931 fall in prices reached its peak. Wheat, which was selling at the rate of 7.25 seers a rupee in December 1929, was selling at the rate of 17.00 seers a rupee in May 1931. Tenants earned nothing on their rabi crop. The cost of rabi production was more than its return.

After collecting statistics from different sources the Agrarian Distress Committee remarked 'the unprecedented fall in prices leaves no margin or surplus in the hands of even the best of tenants for the payment of even a fraction of their old rents.'¹⁷⁶ Instead of giving remission in rent there should have been no rent for the rabi crop. But the government gave them nominal remission. To the present suffering was added the future suffering. Tenants had to wait for six months for obtaining their kharif crop. They required seed for kharif sowing and then money for maintenance. The report of Revenue Administration accepts 'The prices of the principal foodgrains reached their lowest pitch in June 1931.'¹⁷⁷ How could one expect the improvement of the tenant's condition between June 1931 and December 1931? Tenants had no money to pay rent, and the government was insisting for the payment of rent. Jawaharlal realised the gravity of the situation. The condition of U.P. tenantry was never so bad as in the middle of 1931. And there was no chance for it to improve till the beginning of 1932, if at all it improved. Therefore, the second call for no-rent was given which came in operation from December 1931. Congress was perceptive of the situation and wanted to take full advantage of it. The political moves of the Congress were attached to the economic situation. But the British were pure politicians without caring for the economic situation. They were interested in their treasury and, therefore, they satisfied themselves by magnifying the small amount of remission they gave to the tenantry. As the report of Revenue Administration said,

The remission of rent and revenue on account of the slump in prices has afforded considerable relief to the agricultural classes and has given them breathing space to adjust themselves to the changed conditions. The relations between landlords and tenants have improved and the confidence which had been threatened by the civil disobedience movement has been restored.¹⁷⁸

Have the tenants got a breathing space? Have the relations between

Awadh landlords and tenants improved? Then why should they use the section 12(A) of the Oudh Rent Act? The Revenue Report of a year back says, 'On account of the slump in prices and the local calamities, difficulty was experienced to the end of June 1931, in collecting revenue and Government had to sanction extra staff in many districts.'¹⁷⁹ Was it Civil Disobedience or slump in prices or the local calamities or all of them which created difficulties in rent collections? But the use of section 12(A), i.e. the use of force, removed all those difficulties. As the Revenue Report says,

Wherever it was found necessary Government assisted the zamindars in realising rent. Owing to a general refusal on the part of the tenants in Rae Bareilly, Gonda, Bahraich, Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, and Bara Banki districts to pay arrears of rent section 12A of the Oudh Rent Act was applied to recover the arrears of rent as revenue. The application of the section was, to a great extent, successful in breaking down the recusancy of tenants.¹⁸⁰

Does the use of section 12(A) exhibit that the relations between the tenants and the zamindars were good? Does it even show that the tenants had no difficulty in paying rent, i.e. they were in good economic position? Earlier the taluqdars themselves used to terrorise tenants. Now the government was helping them to terrorise their tenants. It was reported from Pratapgarh that the 'collections of rent under section 12(a), Rent Act, with police assistance, have been successful.'¹⁸¹ Success of rent collection depended on the police force. Thus by establishing police raj the British Raj was succeeding. Where the tenants failed to pay rent by begging and borrowing their property was attached. The attachment too was not a simple affair. It was reported from Rae Bareilly 'The revenue staff, under the protection of strong police parties, are going out to realise rent by attachment of property. There was a collision on June 13 in Sheoratanjanj, crowds being dispersed by lathi charges.'¹⁸² The tenant-landlord struggle was converted into the tenant-government struggle. Gandhi's struggle was against the government.

No-rent agitation converted the struggle of tenants into the struggle against the government. This was what Gandhi wanted. And he succeeded in getting what he wanted. He had given the ahuti of tenants in the yagna of swaraj.

If Congress meant business Willingdon too meant business. Though Gandhi was not, Jawaharlal was certainly impatient for bringing swaraj. He did not wait for Gandhi to come back from England, perhaps because the departure and arrival of depression did not wait for Gandhi's physical movements. If Gandhi had arrived in India and the depression departed from U.P., then Jawaharlal would have lost his chance to declare the re-starting of no-rent campaign. December month of 1931 is historically important for the U.P. Congress, its tenant supporters and the British Government: 'On December 6 the Provincial Congress Committee authorised the extension of the no-rent campaign to the districts of Cawnpore, Etawah, Rae Bareli and Unnao.'¹⁸³ This happened three weeks before Gandhi's landing in Bombay. Willingdon was quick to act. He had been waiting for such an opportunity. He wanted to crush the Congress, but not on his own initiative. The initiative had to come from the Congress, and it had come. Jawaharlal gave him chance to act. Hailey 'promulgated the United Provinces Emergency Powers Ordinance, which was extended immediately to the Allahabad, Cawnpur, Etawah, Rae Bareli and Unnao districts and later in the month to Bara Banki, Farrukhabad, Pratapgarh and Sultanpur.'¹⁸⁴ Peace in U.P. had to be kept. In spite of **truce** Congress continued its penetration into the Awadh villages to the extent that there was no respect for the government laws. In the real sense Oudh Rent Act was broken on a mass scale first time after Gandhi's manifesto. The Awadh tenantry in mass refused to pay rent. The tenants had hardly any respect for eviction. The government law courts evicted tenants, yet the tenants continued occupying their lands and growing

their crop on the very lands for which the landlords brought eviction. And the landlords could not remove those tenants. 'About 46 tenants of village Pandera who were ejected from their fields by taluqdar have tilled the fields without his consent... They are also carrying on propaganda to persuade other ejected tenants to till land without the zamindar's permission.'¹⁸⁵ Pandera belongs to Rae Bareilly. The tenants were exhibiting revolt against the section on eviction given in the Oudh Rent Act. The tenant revolt of 1920-21 was quite inferior to the revolt of 1930-31. The former revolt was marked by the looting of granaries, burning and grazing of fields, beating of a ziledar or chaprasi, looting bazars, etc. The latter revolt was against the British laws. Of course the glimpses of the former revolt were also found in the latter revolt. From Bahraich it was reported that 'one constable and a Kapurthala estate tahsildar were threatened and some Court-of Wards officials were beaten by tenants in Pakherpur circle.'¹⁸⁶ Similarly in Sultanpur 'the tenants of Panchangaon attacked some Mahuna estate chaprasis.'¹⁸⁷ Grazing of fields has already been quoted. In 1920-21 violence was directed against the taluqdars and their staff. This time the violence was directed against the government officials. The British were waiting for a tenant-landlord clash and blood-shed to occur. But they observed that the no-tax campaign, particularly the remission issue, had turned the village mass against the British. The government remission slips were forwarded to the Congress offices to be scrutinised, thus undermining the British authority.

Willington meant business; he wanted to restore the British authority. The only way was to wipe out Congress from U.P. 'A number of prominent Congress leaders were arrested for disobeying orders under the Ordinance, including Babu Purushottam Das Tandon on December 19, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. T.A.K. Sherwani on December 26.'¹⁸⁸

Jawaharlal was treated differently from Sherwani. As Jawaharlal himself later writes,

Sherwani was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 150; I was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500 (in default six months more). Our offences were identical; we had been served with identical orders of internment in Allahabad city; we had committed the same breach of them by attempting to go together to Bombay; we had been arrested and tried together under the same section, yet our sentences were very dissimilar.¹⁸⁹

How could they be similar? Jawaharlal was as much known to the tenantry of the whole Awadh as Sherwani was known to his own tenantry. Willingdon or Hailey might have thought that it would take nearly two years' time to break Congress. Therefore, it required two years' time to keep Jawaharlal away from U.P.

Though Jawaharlal was not arrested and sentenced first time on 20 December 1931, this time his arrest was politically significant. As Gopal writes, 'The arrest of Jawaharlal soon appeared as not just a provincial matter but part of a general offensive against the Congress. Willingdon and his government believed that Irwin had made an error in negotiating with the Congress and signing a truce, and they had no intention to repeating it.'¹⁹⁰ But Willingdon was heading towards committing a more massive error than the one committed by Irwin. In order to crush the Congress he decided to crush the tenants. Tenants form the mass, and Willingdon was preparing masses to go against the British. Grass-root leaders of tenantry were already arrested during the truce by applying 107 Cr.P.C. The remaining ones were rounded up by using U.P. Emergency Powers Ordinance. Thus it was made impossible for the tenants to have meetings and plan their moves. It was rightly remarked 'an open and widespread no-rent agitation, in the face of the Ordinances, appears beyond the power of Congress.'¹⁹¹

Willingdon, Oudh Policy and the Demise of Oudh Rent Act: Willingdon prepared ground for the fall of British empire in India by pursuing the Oudh

Policy. He decided to crush the Congress, i.e. the rising nationalism, with the help of taluqdars. He identified Congress with the tenants; therefore, started punishing the tenants through all kinds of ways. By removing most of the national and grass-root leaders from the scene through Emergency Ordinance, the rents were realised with the help of section 12(A). Tenants were terrorised, their property attached and they were made to pay. They were also made to feel that all this would continue if they continued supporting Gandhi and his Congress.

Pratapgarh was the paradigm case for the policy of divide and rule. In this district, government gave birth to Aman Sabha and patronised the Praja Sangh in order to make Congress ineffective. Because of Jawaharlal's close contact with Pratapgarh, this district produced maximum potentiality to agitate. Aman Sabha was nowhere so active as in Pratapgarh. It was reported from Pratapgarh in January 1932 itself that 'a number of Aman Sabha meetings have been held with excellent results.'¹⁹² Aman Sabha was a body for counterpropaganda against the Congress. By the end of January Pratapgarh had 'forty-two Aman Sabha meetings.'¹⁹³ There is no reference to the number of participants in these meetings. Since the participants in Aman Sabha were paid people the number of participants could not be very high. By March 12, i.e. within the span of two months, 'Over 400 official and non-official Aman Sabha meetings have been held.'¹⁹⁴ This was a remarkable progress on the part of the government. Perhaps at no time in the history of Pratapgarh Congress could hold so many meetings within the span of two months. The Aman Sabha was created to remove the differences between taluqdars and tenants. In reality the function of this Sabha was to create a new kind of class-conflict, the conflict between the supporters of government and its opponents. All the supporters of the government, be they taluqdars or tenants, were brought under Aman Sabha. And all the supporters of Congress, be they taluqdars or tenants,

were opposed by the Aman Sabha. Very few taluqdars were the supporters of the Congress and very few tenants were the supporters of the Aman Sabha. But the taluqdars who supported the Congress in Pratapgarh were its active workers, and not just passive sympathisers. Both Kalakankar and Bhadri worked for the Congress, former more than the latter. Lal Brijesh Singh and Lal Suresh Singh, the brothers of Raja Avdesh Singh, participated in the Congress activities. Their employees and tenantry had a natural sympathy for the Congress. They participated in the salt agitation. Because of his Congress activities Raja Kalakankar's moveable property was attached on the flimsy ground of non-payment of revenue arrears. In a letter to Emerson it is mentioned that 'the Raja has paid Rs. 50,000 towards his revenue, leaving an unpaid balance of Rs. 40,000.'¹⁹⁵ According to the government the attachment of Raja's moveable property was actuated 'in no way by the Congress sympathies of the Raja.'¹⁹⁶ In his talks with Emerson, Gandhi mentioned that the attachment of Kalakankar's cars, elephants, etc. was carried out because 'Raja was a Congress sympathiser.'¹⁹⁷ Not much time was given to Raja for paying the arrears of his revenue. It was reported that 'the Raja of Kalakankar and Rae Sahib of Bhadri have promised to reduce rents to ten and twelve annas per rupee.'¹⁹⁸ The fact that these taluqdars reduced the rents of their tenantry was a sufficient motive for their tenantry to join Congress. Patron/Client relationship helped in promoting the cause of Congress in Pratapgarh. Thus there was a greater necessity of counterpropaganda in Pratapgarh than in any other district of Awadh. Tenants of Kalakankar and Bhadri estates became clients of the Congress. Now the Rure leaders were not alone in fighting against the alien rule. Therefore, it was natural for the government to think in terms of activating the Aman Sabha.

The activities of Aman Sabha started declining from the middle of

1932 and the Sabha became extinct by the end of that year. From 1933 a new Sabha was born which continued for a longer time, for nearly three years. The sabha was known as Praja Sangh. A sabha, named Praja Sabha, was created by Jhinguri Singh in the end of 1929. But that sabha disappeared after the arrest of Rure leaders in connection with salt agitation and later in connection with no-tax agitation. Now in 1933 a sabha with a similar name arises with the second coming of Ram Chandra. During the days of salt and no-rent Ram Chandra used to make only flying visits to Pratapgarh. After the release of Rure leaders from jail, Ram Chandra's visits to Pratapgarh became frequent. It was reported that the 'Baba has opened an office in Pratapgarh and has asked the kisans to refer their grievances to him. He is seeing the Deputy Commissioner in connexion with payment of nazrana to zamindars.'¹⁹⁹ The Baba wished to be near the city intelligentsia and the Deputy Commissioner's office. His second coming was the coming of an intelligentsia and not that of a rustic sadhu. At a meeting addressed by him 'A printed Hindi pamphlet entitled "Meri Samajh" by Baba Ram Chandra has been distributed freely to kisans' and the kisans of that meeting were asked to 'report their grievances to him.'²⁰⁰ And just after a week in another meeting he 'circulated a Hindi leaflet "Ham lagan ka rupia kisko den".'²⁰¹ These Hindi pamphlets were not sufficient to bring him city respectability. For the sake of city respectability at a 'meeting of 800 kisans including 100 women' he 'distributed an English pamphlet published by him entitled "My Thoughts or Kisan Hit".'²⁰² Kisans and baba fit well. But kisans and English pamphlet do not fit, yet Ram Chandra wished to impress his kisans that he was an author of an English piece. He was not unlike the city intelligentsia. Ram Chandra started his Praja Sangh with a big bang.²⁰³

Those who formed the nucleus of Praja Sangh were Pandit Munishwar

Datt Upadhyaya, Vakil of Pratapgarh; Ganpat Sahai, Vakil of Sultanpur; Kunwar Satrunjaya Singh of Amethi; Jhinguri Singh, Kashi and Bhagwan Din. Then there were those who were on the periphery such as Pandit Ram Raj, Pandit Bhagwati Prasad Shukla and Ram Adhar Tiwari. A big meeting of Praja Sangh was held in the Court compound of Pratapgarh on 15 November 1933 in which about 7,000 tenants from Sultanpur, Jaunpur and Allahabad also participated. Ram Chandra was responsible for the show though the vakils dominated. Ram Chandra functioned as a link between vakils and tenants. An enquiry committee was formed which included (1) C.Y. Chintamani (2) Satrunjay Singh (3) Munishwar Datt (4) Bhagwan Din and (5) a Deputy Collector, to be appointed by the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh.²⁰⁴ The fact that a Deputy Collector is included as a member produces doubts about the credentials of the Praja Sangh. There is not one fact but a series of facts which show that the Praja Sangh was not very unlike the Aman Sabha, a body patronised by the government. Since the Rure leaders in block joined the Praja Sangh, makes it easy to understand the government patronage. For government was interested in creating division among the tenantry. If Rure leaders remained away from the Congress then Congress influence over the tenantry would decrease.

The question arises how could the Rure leaders join Praja Sangh? First reason is that Ram Chandra had a remarkable influence over them. Though Ram Chandra did not participate in the salt agitation and no-rent campaign, he continued having his hold over them. Secondly, Praja Sangh introduced the issues of eviction, nazrana, begar, etc. in its programme. Oudh Rent Act was attacked by the Sangh. They were made to believe that Praja Sangh was for the struggle of tenants against the taluqdari system. They found a continuity in their struggle. Rure leaders did not believe in sitting idle. Since the Congress activity was

as good as stopped, they joined Praja Sangh which was active. The struggle of Rure leadership during the transitory phase exhibits the kind of nature they developed. Their struggle should not discontinue. They found the continuity of their struggle in Praja Sangh. They could not believe that Ram Chandra was playing the game of the government. Referring to the Praja Sangh movement the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh remarked that the movement was 'strictly constitutional'.²⁰⁵ Therefore, he allowed the meeting of 5 March 1933 'in the Court Compound'.²⁰⁶ When Congress meetings were not allowed even outside the Court Compound, the Praja Sangh meeting was allowed in the Court Compound. 'It was also proposed to hold a meeting every week.'²⁰⁷ The next meeting of 12 March was also held in the Court Compound.²⁰⁸ In the beginning Ram Chandra and Jhinguri Singh were prominent, spreading their influence from Patti to 'Kunda and Pratapgarh tahsils'.²⁰⁹ Munishwar Datt came into picture at the end of the year, in November, and dominated the scene till the disintegration of Praja Sangh sometime in 1935. He entered the Praja Sangh to 'improve his clientele'.²¹⁰ Later he became the leader of tenantry, outsmarting Ram Chandra. At this stage also entered 'two taluqdars, Lal Rameshwar Prasad Singh of Amargarh... and Raja Amar Pal Singh.'²¹¹

Praja Sangh attracted large audience. A 'meeting attended by 12,000 was held at Dalibpur on December 24.'²¹² This meeting was addressed by Jhinguri Singh, Bhagwan Din, Munishwar Datt, Aziz Ahmad, Bhagwat Prasad, Baba Ram Chandra, Udit Naran Singh, Brij Mohan Upadhyaya and the Raja of Dalibpur. But these meetings were constitutional. Baba Ram Chandra emphasised 'the necessity of keeping on the right side of the law'.²¹³ He was inducing recalcitrant peasants to pay rent to their landlords.²¹⁴ His moves were in favour of both landlords and the government. However, the matter was different with Kalakankar who was a

Congress taluqdar. At a meeting both Munishwar Datt and Ram Chandra 'complained about the taxation imposed by the Kalakankar estate.'²¹⁵ Does not all this show that the Praja Sangh was created to oppose Congress? Therefore, government supported it in all kinds of ways.

Praja Sangh was not restricted to Pratapgarh; it was quite active in Sultanpur. Ganpat Sahai, vakil, and Satrunjay Singh of Amethi were responsible for spreading its influence. It was opposed to the Congress is proved by the report 'On September 3, Ganpat Sahai presided over a meeting of 200 kisans. Some Congressmen attended but later left the meeting when a tenant opposed Congress interference.'²¹⁶ Ganpat Sahai is the old associate of Ram Chandra. In 1933 he drifted towards Praja Sangh. Pratapgarh leaders were going to Sultanpur to give moral support to Ganpat Sahai and his band. It was reported from Sultanpur 'Baba Ram Chandra addressed a meeting of kisans which was presided over by Ganpat Sahai, advocate.'²¹⁷ This was the meeting of Praja Sangh. To mention one more meeting 'Kunwar Satrunjay Singh of Amethi presided over a Kisan Sabha meeting of 3,000. Baba Ram Chandra and Ganpat Sahai delivered speeches.'²¹⁸ Satrunjay Singh was the Vice-President of Sultanpur Praja Sangh, its President being Ganpat Sahai. Both participated in the Praja Sangh meeting of November 15, 1933 held at Pratapgarh Court Compound in which Munishwar Datt made a mark.

Praja Sangh, however, could not stay before the tide of Congress. If its leaders were to survive for a longer time then they had no other alternative but to join the Congress. They had to wipe out their past, they had to forget that they were at any time government agents. The possibility of elections in the country turned the wave in favour of nationalism. Most of those who were active Praja Sangh leaders became active Congress leaders in 1936. A unique case was that of Pandit Munishwar Datt, who became one of the most influential leaders of the

Congress, by burning down his past and totally forgetting that he was a constitutionalist at one time and preached the tenants to pay their rent when they were not in a position to do so. He took advantage of factionalism in the Pratapgarh Congress, and joined the Congress and became its leading figure.²¹⁹ It became clear to the people, including Praja Sangh men, that the days of the British were numbered. In September 1935 'Munishwar Datt, vakil, Shyam Sunder Shukla, Jhinguri Singh and Brij Pal Singh held an electioneering meeting at Sampatganj, police circle Lalganj.'²²⁰ Elections brought Muneshwar Datt to the Congress. Through Praja Sangh he became close to the tenantry, now he wanted to have support of the Congress. He could build his new image by destroying his old image.²²¹ In the month of August 1936, nearly after one year of the dissolution of Praja Sangh, Muneshwar Datt, Jhinguri Singh, Shyam Sunder Shukla and Venkat Rao had a meeting 'in connection with the approaching Council elections. Muneshwar Datt vakil canvassed for himself, while Munshi Singh canvassed for the taluqdar of Bhadri.'²²²

By the time the nation was preparing for the Faizpur Congress, Praja Sangh was a totally forgotten affair. Mention may be made of the Pratapgarh Kisan Conference which was held at Bela on 27 and 28 September 1936. This conference was attended by Mohan Lal Gautam of Allahabad and Bishambar Dayal Tripathi of Unnao. 'Muneshwar Datt opened the meeting by warning the peasants against the machinations of such men as Munshi Singh' whom he compared with a "demon".²²³ However, the grass-root leaders had a different occupation. Brij Pal Singh and Jhinguri Singh related 'the misdeeds of the servants of taluqdars and zamindars who realised rent by force.'²²⁴ Deota Din said that 'they would gain their demands by agitation alone.'²²⁵ And Matacharan 'recited a dialectic poem which referred to the cancellation of the debts, cut in the salaries of government servants, the abolition of the police and the cancellation of

12-A.'²²⁶ The problems of the grass-root leaders were different from those of the District, Provincial or the Central level leaders. Grass-root leaders were worried about nazrana, eviction, 12-A, debts, police, etc. Similar views were expressed by the grass-root leaders in the tahsil Kisan Congress held a month ago at village Lalpur, Kotwali, Pratapgarh. Kesho Deo Malviya was present in that conference. The President of the conference asked 'Kashi Kurmi of Patti to speak, saying that he had worked for the peasants during the last twenty years and had suffered imprisonment and other hardships for their sake.'²²⁷ Kashi was one of the Rure grass-root leaders who started their struggle before Ram Chandra reached Rure. 'Kashi Din Kurmi recited a poem relating to the poverty-stricken condition of the peasants, the produce of whose labour was taken by the zamindars and money-lenders.'²²⁸ Next came Deota Din Kurmi who urged the kisans 'to become members of the kisan sangh and to organise in order to abolish the taluqdari and zamindari systems. Finally he appealed to them to follow the advice of Congressmen who were their true leaders.'²²⁹ Thus the grass-root leaders were one and all interested in abolishing the taluqdari system. They expected that once the Congress won elections it would abolish the taluqdari system. They were ready to vote for the Congress.

There is a world of difference between the grass-root leaders of tenantry and the professional leaders who were not tenants of any kind, whose contact with tenantry was through the grass-root leaders. The leaders such as Munshi Singh, Venkat Rao, Shyam Sunder Shukla, Munishwar Datt (Pratapgarh), Ganpat Sahai, Sunder Lal (Sultanpur), Sitla Sahai, Kalka Prasad, Mata Prasad (Rae Bareli) and finally Baba Ram Chandra were professional leaders. Sometimes the retention of leadership was necessitated only by economic considerations. This happened with Kalka Prasad of Rae Bareli. He was not a vakil or a merchant or a landowner,

leadership of the Congress was the only profession he had. He lived 'on a salary of Rs. 50 per mensem' as Congress President of Rae Bareilly.²³⁰ So once he was removed from the post of his Presidentship he went against the Congress and even criticised Gandhi. Grass-root leaders like Jhinguri Singh, Bhagwan Din, Kashi, Mata Charan and others like them were so very different from Kalka Prasad. Grass-root leaders were not interested in holding posts at the district or provincial level. They were tenants and were trying to earn their living by cultivating land. They were troubled because they were evicted from their lands and were charged nazrana, etc, so they jumped into the tenant struggle. To call Kalka Prasad and the leaders like him as grass-root leaders is to degrade the status of a grass-root leader. The position of Ram Chandra was better than that of Kalka Prasad. He was not a paid officer of any party. The tenants maintained him. Like Kalka Prasad he was not in need of a pacca house, a hut was sufficient for him, and that too was required when he got married to Jaggi. For Jaggi too was only the daughter of a tenant.

Political rivalry at the district or provincial or central level is a phenomenon common to all struggles of the world. India was not an exception. The struggles in the colonial and semicolonial countries sometimes take a dirty form. Parties are started and the intellectuals are bought with the money of the colonisers. Intellectuals are the cheapest commodity to work against the nationalistic forces. Their silly arguments are given the weight of profound scientific research. During the freedom struggle more amount of published writing appeared against the struggle rather than in its favour. The press was under colonial control. The people were taught that they had not achieved maturity enough to rule. Self-rule is suicidal. Even religion was used against Civil Disobedience. All India Santan Dharam, Kashipur, U.P. published

a booklet in August 1930, predicting that the British would rule India for seven generations more. Their prediction was based on the interpretation of something called 'Bhavishya Puran'.²³¹ Seeing with the Marxist eye also it was too early to remove the colonial rule. There could not be a sudden jump from the Asiatic mode of production to the capitalistic mode of production. It was for the welfare of India that the British decided to stay and continue their rule through all kinds of propaganda.

Rivalry is not a phenomenon restricted to the field of politics. We who are in the academics are well acquainted with the academic rivalry. Students oppose each other. Teachers are not behind in this respect. Teachers oppose each other. Character assassination is more common among teachers than among politicians. Yet it does not imply that there is no academic progress because there is academic rivalry. So is the situation of politics. There is nothing surprising if the politicians of the district level quarrelled. In Sultanpur Ganpat Sahai had rivalry with Sunder Lal. Kalka Prasad was against Sitla Sahai in Rae Bareilly. And Shyam Sunder Shukla wanted to remove Munshi Singh. So also it is natural for one to criticise the other if their joint leadership misfires. Praja Sangh was a misadventure of a joint leadership of Ram Chandra, Munishwar Datt and Ganpat Sahai. Both Munishwar Datt and Ganpat Sahai became dedicated Congressmen, became more vocal against the British. But Ram Chandra was too big to be accommodated by the Pratapgarh Congress. His way of freedom from the misadventure of Praja Sangh was to put all the blame on Munishwar Datt. His criticism carries some weight because the whole record of Praja Sangh disappeared in the thin air. Munishwar Datt kept those records.

Ram Chandra did try to have Congress acceptability. Just after the elections in February itself 'Baba Ram Chandra opened a Congress office

at Patti for collecting information regarding the highhandedness of landlords against tenants during the elections.'²³² The landlords attempted to get votes from their tenants by force. Not even two months passed Ram Chandra and Jhinguri Singh led one thousand kisans from Patti to Allahabad to see Jawaharlal who was ill:

On the morning of April 14, Baba Ram Chandra led the kisans to Swaraj Bhavan, Allahabad, where he was reprimanded by J.B. Kripalani for bringing kisans there unnecessarily. Subsequently Baba Ram Chandra, Jhinguri Singh and three others were allowed to see Jawaharlal Nehru.²³³

The action of Ram Chandra misfired. But it can hardly be doubted that he carried a large following in Pratapgarh. Whatever he did the Rure leadership did not desert him. They were always ready to come his rescue.

Tenantry suffered from the taluqdari system so much that any leader who opposed this system would obtain a following. The British too obtained the following of tenantry through Ram Chandra in 1933-34. His pamphlet entitled "Hum Lagan ka Rupia Kisko Dain" does not oppose the payment of rent. It only opposes the taluqdars and the government servants. Through this pamphlet Ram Chandra informed the government that the tenants were loyal to the King. He further emphasised that his views were also the views of Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Priyag. His words would have carried no weight without reference to the grass-root leaders of tenantry.

The British were sure of their supporters winning the elections of 1937 and thereby retaining their rule over India. They thought that Congress might reject participation in elections because of the Communal Award attached with the Act of 1935. Even if Congress decided to participate in elections, there was no chance for it to be victorious. The Congress symbolised a divided house. Every Congress leader at the district level was against the other Congress leader. Elections are fought

and won, not by sitting in Delhi, Bombay or Calcutta. They are fought in the districts, in the villages attached to the districts. And the district Congress Committees were full of dissensions. Willingdon's Government might have thought that the election would be a remarkable step to remove Congress from the scene. It would be a democratic step, unlike the step which he took by imposing all kinds of Ordinances in 1932. But the result of elections was very different from what Willingdon and his government might have thought. The villages of Awadh, the vote banks, went against the British rule. They were for Gandhi and his party. For Gandhi preached the reduction of their rent. Gandhi was more of a spiritual head of tenantry till his manifesto, now he became their political head, he became their guide in the matters of rent. Tenants wanted Gandhi's party to win elections. It did not matter to them who got the Congress ticket for the Council elections. Congress Committee dissensions were not their concern. Whosoever got the Congress ticket was sure of victory. For the tenants Congress ticket became Gandhi's ticket.

When Willingdon decided to crush Congress in 1932, he was crushing the voters. When he introduced all kinds of ordinances and acts to eliminate Congress he was only penalising the tenants. The remissions in rent announced by him amounted to less than 3 annas in a rupee when the tenants were not in a position to pay any rent at all.²³⁴ The tenants of Awadh made Congress victorious in Awadh, and the whole responsibility for this victory goes to Willingdon's policies. Oudh Policy was defeated. Though India did not get freedom from the British rule, the victory of Congress in 1937 paved the way for its freedom. This was an occasion to remember the deeds of tenants and their leaders in 1857 and then in 1921. On both the occasions tenants revolted against the British. Oudh Kisan Conference was held in Munshiganj, Rae Bareilly on

January 6 and 7, 1938. This was the place where firing was done and tenants were killed. It was reported that 'a procession of about 2,000 kisans marched from the city to Munshiganj shouting such slogans as "Inqlab Zindabad", "Mazdoor and 1857 A.D. Zindabad", "Talukdari Satyanash" and "Angrezi Raj Barbad".'²³⁵ Tributes were also paid to Rana Beni Madho, who stood against the British in 1857.²³⁶ Attempts were also made to remove the differences between the Kisan Sabha and Congress. After his removal from Congress Presidentship, the only source of his livelihood, Kalka Prasad became an opponent of Congress. 'Pandit Anjani Kumar regretted the way in which Kalka Prasad was attempting to spread dissensions between the Congress and the Kisan Sabha.'²³⁷

The greatest victory of Awadh kisans was the demise of Oudh Rent Act. This Act was given to the kisans in 1868, and its whole history was the history of the suffering of kisans. Its amendment in 1921 was a farcical affair. It was for the first time in 1939 that the Oudh Rent Act was removed. In its place the U.P. Tenancy Act was introduced. The Awadh tenants were not specially favoured or disfavoured. For the first time nazrana was made illegal and heritable rights were given to the tenants. Though the talukdari system could not be abolished because of several constraints, it was made harmless. There was the Upper House and the Governor; therefore, no drastic steps could be taken towards the total abolition of talukdari and zamindari systems. According to Peter Reeves the Bill for U.P. Tenancy Act 'made no radical change in the antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems.'²³⁸ If there were no radical changes then why did the British wait for those changes to be made by the Congress? If they had made those changes then they would have avoided the music of tenant agitation. Congress failed in making revolutionary changes. But were they free to do so? British were completely free to make those changes. But the changes were revo-

lutionary; therefore, the British did not make them. The position of Congress ministers in 1937-39 was well depicted by Jawaharlal when he took the help of a cartoon 'in which India was represented as an elephant, one of its legs having been secured by means of a rope to a tree. Congressmen sat on the elephant and the Viceroy stood by its side egging it on to move forward and saying that the rope was elastic.'²³⁹

Tenants of Awadh realised that the taluqdari system could not be abolished without the elimination of British from India. After 1939, the time was not for promoting the kisan sabha movement, but for diverting all energies to obtain freedom. Kisan sabha movement was totally converted into the freedom movement. Jhinguri Singh was sent to jail on 8 January 1941 for one year for participating in the Individual Satyagraha. He was again put in jail on 10 December 1942 for participating in the Quit India Movement.²⁴⁰ Rure leaders stood for the freedom of the country and not only for the removal of taluqdars,

Notes and References to Chapter 4

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19. Census of India, 1911, U.P., Vol. I, Chapter III, p. 103, appearing as the subsidiary table-VI.
20. Oudh Gazetteer, Vol. I, p. 515.
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25. Pratap, 17 March 1929.
26. Ibid., 2 April 1928.
27. Several references to this report were made in Chapter 2, Section 3 of this thesis.
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29. Ibid.
30. Report of the U.P. Revenue Administration, October 29, 1928, Appendix B, p. 6.
31. Ibid., October 18, 1929, Appendix B, p. 6.
32. Ibid., August 7, 1931, Appendix B, p. 10.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p. 1.
35. Ibid., December 14, 1932, Appendix B, p. 2.
36. Ibid., August 7, 1931, p. 1.
37. Ibid., December 14, 1932, p. 2.
38. Ibid., August 26, 1933, p. 3.
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40. Ibid., August 9, 1934, p. 2.
41. Ibid., December 14, 1932, Appendix C, p. 22.

42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., p. 7.
45. Ibid., Appendix C, p. 22.
46. Ibid., p. 23.
47. Ibid., p. 22.
48. See Leader, 15 May 1931.
49. Ibid.
50. Report of the U.P. Revenue Administration, December 14, 1932, Appendix C, p. 23.
51. Ibid.
52. Report of the United Provinces Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee, 1929-30, Vol. I, Allahabad, 1930-31, p. 36.
53. Report of the U.P. Revenue Administration, December 14, 1932, Appendix B, p. 9.
54. Ibid.
55. The information about Gandhi's tour of Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh and Sultanpur has been taken from Pratap, 24 November 1929. Of course its analysis is my own.
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58. Mahatma Gandhi's 'Speech at zamindars' meeting, Naini Tal', May 23, 1931, Young India, 28 May 1931. Cited in Mahatma Gandhi, Collected Works, Vol. XLVI, April 16-June 17, 1931, p. 204.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid. The two situations, the situation of Benares Hindu University and the situation of Bengal were compared by Gandhiji in his speech at zamindars' meeting in Naini Tal on May 23, 1931, the day he issued his 'Manifesto to the Kisans of U.P.'. A couple of days before, i.e. May 20, 1931, he already issued his 'Appeal' to the zamindars of U.P. He warned the zamindars in that meeting that,

'the Congress will stand by you certainly. But you will have to make your life correspond to your surroundings.' In spite of what Gandhiji said and did to zamindars, Rajas and Maharajas, the subaltern historians continue calling him as the supporter of the rich against the poor.

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63. Report of the U.P. Revenue Administration, October 29, 1928, Appendix B, p. 7.
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65. Ibid., Kheri, October 1928, p. 411.
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68. 'Save the Cow', Young India, 8 June 1921. Cited in Mahatma Gandhi, Collected Works, Vol. XX, April-August 1921, p. 194.
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72. Ibid., p. 277.
73. Ibid., p. 289.
74. Ibid., November 1929, p. 666.
75. Ibid., Rae Bareli, February 1929, p. 61.
76. Pratap, 24 February 1929.
77. PAI, Rae Bareli, February 1929, p. 61.
78. Pratap, 24 February 1929. There was no exaggeration in reporting as the editor himself was one of the participants.
79. PAI, Pratapgarh, February 1929, p. 52.
80. Ibid., March 1929, p. 100.

81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 53.
85. PAI, Pratapgarh, July 1929, p. 332.
86. Ibid., p. 352.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid., August 1929, p. 432.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid., Lucknow, January 1929, p. 18.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., Rae Bareli, January 1928, p. 7.
95. Ibid., Jaunpur, June 1929, p. 235.
96. Ibid., Rae Bareli, March 1928, p. 90.
97. Simon Commission Report on India, Vol. XVII, Delhi, 1988, p. 537.
98. PAI, Banda, March 1930, p. 152.
99. Ibid., p. 226.
100. Ibid., April 1930, p. 287.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid., Pratapgarh, April 1930, p. 288.
103. Ibid., May 1930, p. 498.
104. Ibid., p. 470.
105. Ibid., p. 502.
106. Ibid., p. 521.
107. Pratap, 4 May 1930.
108. Ibid.

109. PAI, Pratapgarh, July 1930, p. 1129.
110. Report on the Administration of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh in 1929-30, p. iv.
111. Pratap, 6 April 1930.
112. PAI, Rae Bareli, April 1930, p. 308.
113. Ibid., March 1930, p. 247.
114. Ibid., April 1930, p. 363.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid., May 1930, p. 470.
117. Ibid. Perhaps Jawaharlal's call for concentration on Rae Bareli brought Lal Suresh Singh to Rae Bareli, leaving Pratapgarh behind to be managed by others.
118. Ibid., May 1930, p. 579.
119. Ibid., June 1930, p. 808.
120. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 238.
121. Ibid., p. 237.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
124. PAI, C.I.D., S.B., U.P., June 1930, p. 851.
125. Nehru, Autobiography, p. 237.
126. Ibid., p. 238.
127. Cited in Note on the Press of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Week ending December 20, 1930, p. 278.
128. Ibid.
129. Pioneer, 22 October 1930.
130. PAI, Rae Bareli, July 1930, p. 969.
131. Ibid., August 1930, p. 1307.
132. Ibid., Pratapgarh, July 1930, p. 1028.
133. Ibid., Congress Miscellaneous, November 1930, p. 2269.
134. Pioneer, 26 July 1931.

135. Ibid.
136. Cited in Note on the Press of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Week ending November 29, 1930, p. 262.
137. Late Ramjatan's son gave me a copy of the note prepared by his father on the Kahla riot.
138. The names of the murdered people and the sub-inspector who murdered them are on the lips of everybody in Kahla.
139. PAI, Pratapgarh, February 1931, p. 170.
140. Ibid., March 1931, p. 201.
141. Ibid.
142. Ibid., Rae Bareli, February 1930, p. 155.
143. Ibid.
144. Pioneer, 24 April 1932.
145. Mahatma Gandhi's Manifesto to the Kisans of the United Provinces. Cited in Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces, Appendix XIV, p. 227.
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid., p. 229.
148. Ibid.
149. PAI, Pratapgarh, June 1931, p. 545.
150. Ibid., Rae Bareli, June 1931, p. 524.
151. Ibid.
152. S. Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, 1889-1947, Vol. I, Bombay, 1976, p. 159.
153. Ibid., p. 157.
154. Ibid.
155. PAI, Rural Agitation, April 1931, p. 306.
156. Ibid., May 1931, p. 423.
157. Ibid., July 1931, p. 604.
158. Ibid., May 1931, p. 372.

159. Ibid., April 1931, p. 306.
160. Ibid., p. 323.
161. Ibid., pp. 289-90.
162. Ibid., Hardoi, April 1931, p. 352.
163. Ibid., p. 330.
164. Ibid., Rae Bareli, April 1931, p. 352.
165. Ibid., Pratapgarh, May 1931, p. 410.
166. Ibid.
167. Ibid.
168. Ibid., July 1931, p. 630.
169. Ibid.
170. Ibid., June 1931, p. 569.
171. Ibid., August 1931, p. 701.
172. Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces, p. 197.
173. PAI, Pratapgarh, September 1931, p. 768.
174. Ibid., November 1931, p. 927.
175. Ibid., December 1931, p. 999.
176. Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces, p. 8.
177. Report of the U.P. Revenue Administration, August 26, 1933, p. 3.
178. Ibid., p. 15.
179. Ibid., December 14, 1932, p. 6.
180. Ibid.
181. PAI, Pratapgarh, July 1931, p. 611.
182. Ibid., Rae Bareli, June 1931, p. 569.
183. Pioneer, April 24, 1932.
184. Ibid.
185. PAI, Rae Bareli, November 1931, p. 908.
186. Ibid., p. 906.
187. Ibid., p. 947.

188. Pioneer, April 24, 1932.
189. Nehru, Autobiography, pp. 322-23.
190. S. Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, p. 170.
191. PAI, Rural Agitation, May 1932, p. 297.
192. Ibid., Pratapgarh, January 1932, p. 45.
193. Ibid., p. 63.
194. Ibid., March 1932, p. 164.
195. D.O. No. 3720-S, March 27, 1931, Home Political File 33/XI & K.W., 1931.
196. Ibid.
197. Note by Emerson of an interview between himself and Gandhi on the 20 March 1931, Home Political File 33/I - K.W., 1931.
198. PAI, Pratapgarh, May 1931, p. 378.
199. Ibid., April 1933, p. 207.
200. Ibid., p. 211.
201. Ibid., p. 223.
202. Ibid., May 1933, p. 259.
203. The name 'Praja Sangh' started occurring from November 1933. Earlier the organisation was called with the old name 'Kisan Sabha'.
204. I found a description of the meeting in print in the District Collectorate, Pratapgarh. The proceedings of the meeting were supposed to be forwarded to the Government, Commissioner of Fyzabad and to the newspapers. Praja Sangh meetings were not secret and they were not only allowed but encouraged by the government. How could government encourage a body of tenants unless that body in some way helped the government? Praja Sangh certainly kept the tenants divided.
205. PAI, Pratapgarh, March 1933, p. 153.
206. Ibid., p. 141.
207. Ibid.
208. Ibid., p. 153.

209. Ibid., April 1933, p. 223.
210. Ibid., December 1933, p. 623.
211. Ibid.
212. Ibid., January 1934, p. 9.
213. Ibid., p. 45.
214. Ibid., July 1934, p. 381.
215. Ibid., June 1934, p. 370.
216. Ibid., Sultanpur, September 1933, p. 456.
217. Ibid., p. 468.
218. Ibid., October 1933, p. 490.
219. See BRP, specially S. No. 1. In his notes Baba Ram Chandra has charged Muneshwar Datt with casteism and factionalism. His success in the Congress depended on these vices. So also he used character-assassination of his opponents. He was an opponent of no-tax before coming to Congress and helped the British Government. Responsibility of starting Praja Sangh goes to him. Perhaps Ram Chandra means that Muneshwar Datt used him, Jhinguri Singh and others. But then Ram Chandra praised Muneshwar Datt in the beginning and converted him into a great leader. The office activity of Praja Sangh depended on Muneshwar Datt.
220. PAI, Pratapgarh, September 1935, p. 466.
221. I contacted Mr. Kranti Kumar, son of Muneshwar Datt, for the copies of Vikas, the organ of Praja Sangh, published every week, and other papers but he provided me with no material. I was told by the Rure people that Muneshwar Datt destroyed all the papers. So the picture of Praja Sangh can be constructed only on the basis of the Ram Chandra Papers and PAI of U.P. And this picture is certainly not rosy.
222. PAI, Pratapgarh, September 1936, p. 534.
223. Ibid., C.I.D., S.B., U.P., pp. 728-29.
224. Ibid.
225. Ibid.

226. Ibid.
227. Ibid., August 1936, p. 568.
228. Ibid.
229. Ibid.
230. Ibid., Rae Bareli, August 1931, p. 682.
231. Bulletin--"British Rule in India is established by the Order of God Rama" by Pandit Durga Datt Pant, All India Sanatan Dharam, Kashipur, U.P., 1 August 1930 (obtained from a private source).
232. PAI, Pratapgarh, February 1937, p. 185.
233. Ibid., April 1937, p. 294.
234. According to Gopal 'the remissions were only 17 per cent or 2 annas 7 pies in the rupee', Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Vol. I, p. 165.
235. PAI, Rae Bareli, January 1938, p. 10.
236. Ibid.
237. Ibid.
238. Peter Reeves, Landlords and Governments in Uttar Pradesh: A Study of their Relations until Zamindari Abolition, Oxford, 1991, p. 231.
239. 'On the Difficulties of the Congress Ministries', Speech of Jawaharlal at Bombay, 13 May 1938, Bombay Chronicle, 14 May 1938. Cited in Selected Works, Vol. VIII, New Delhi, 1976, p. 389.
240. I obtained this information from a jail certificate in possession of Jhinguri Singh's family.

CHAPTER 5: RECONSTRUCTING HISTORY FROM BELOW: A NOTE

The discussion of four preceding chapters can easily help one to reconstruct history from below. If one goes through these chapters one may find the kind of relation which Congress had with the tenant struggle. Tenant struggle in Awadh was certainly not going in a different direction from the national struggle for swaraj. Tenant struggle was a form of national struggle. The goals of both the struggles, the Congress struggle and the tenant struggle, were the same. Historically the tenant struggle preceded the Congress struggle. The former was rooted in the Oudh Rent Act of 1868. And the tenant struggle was certainly not parochial and limited as many historians tend to believe. Nazrana and bedakhli were not limited issues as salt was not a limited issue. Gandhi made salt into a major issue to raise voice against the British. Grass-root leaders of tenantry made nazrana and bedakhli as the major issues to raise voice against the British. If opposition to the salt law cannot be considered as parochial and limited, opposition to Oudh Rent Act cannot be said to be parochial and limited. Long history of the Oudh Rent Act made the tenants to realise that bedakhli and nazrana would go only after the British left India. Amendment to the Oudh Rent Act in 1921 further confirmed this belief. Its amendment was not in favour of the tenantry, it was in favour of the taluqdars. So long as the British stayed in India they would continue favouring taluqdars. Before Gandhi's launching of the Civil Disobedience Jhinguri Singh attacked the British, their Rent Act and the taluqdari system in a subtle way. He referred to section 62A(1)(e) of the Oudh Rent Act. This section refers to Pahikasht tenants who own a piece of land in a village to which they do not belong. Such tenants are evicted by using

62A (1)(e). The British had come to India from Britain; therefore, following the provisions of the Oudh Rent Act they should be evicted from India. Jhinguri Singh was asking British to quit India. Civil Disobedience got itself attached to the tenant struggle.

Gandhi withdrew Non-cooperation Movement in 1922, but the tenants of Awadh, particularly those of Pratapgarh, the birthplace of tenant struggle, continued with their struggle. They were not the product of Non-cooperation; hence they were not morally bound to stop their struggle. The tenant struggle was for swaraj, fought under the swaraj flag after this flag was invented. But the immediate issues of this struggle were nazrana and bedakhli, the issues which preceded the invention of swaraj flag. In the transitory phase of their struggle from 1922 to 1929 the grass-root leaders of Pratapgarh tenantry behaved very differently from the grass-root leaders of Rae Bareilly, Fyzabad and Sultanpur. Grass-root leaders of these three districts were products of Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movements. They became violent in 1920-21, and continued with their "militancy" throughout the transitory period. Their militancy and radicalism were expressed when they harmed the taluqdars by cutting their bamboos, grazing their crop, lifting their grain, beating their servants, etc. Congress opposed this kind of radicalism and militancy, and so did the grass-root leaders of Pratapgarh tenantry and the tenants who were influenced by them. The goal of tenant struggle was not to remove this or that taluqdar but to remove the taluqdari system. The system was tied to the British rule and, therefore, the British rule had to be removed.

Sumit Sarkar thinks that the Awadh tenantry had 'fairly limited objectives' such as 'reduction in cesses and begar and resistance to bedakhli or eviction in Awadh.'¹ But these objectives were certainly not limited, they were bigger than the objectives of salt agitation. There would have been no political change, the change in the administrative sys-

tem, if salt law had been withdrawn. But the withdrawal of Oudh Rent Act would have introduced a change in the administrative system. Withdrawal of eviction presupposes the withdrawal of the Oudh Rent Act. Salt is a non-issue if compared with the issues of eviction, nazrana, begar, hari and so many illegal cesses. Awadh was as good as a tenant country, and a very small fraction of tenants had occupancy rights who were free from nazrana and bedakhli. Large population of Awadh was suffering from the curse of taluqdari system, yet Sumit Sarkar thinks that the tenant struggle had a fairly limited objective. Awadh tenantry was fighting against a system imposed by the British, and in no sense their fight was limited. There is a sense in which even the fight for freedom was fairly limited. It was only for the replacement of white rulers by the black rulers. But the fight for freedom was not limited, and so was the tenant struggle not limited. The tenants were struggling for freedom, freedom from those who imposed misery on them.

Sumit Sarkar himself accepts that the struggle of poor peasants was imperialistic, but Gandhi restrained it: 'Gandhian restraints inhibited the process of mobilization for the anti-imperialist cause of large sections of the poorer peasantry.'² How far Gandhi restrained it has to be looked into. Gandhi has been painted as the supporter of the rich against the poor:

The Congress 'umbrella' was clearly tilted in favour of more propertied sections, for after all it was not always possible to please landlords and tenants, capitalists and workers, at the same time. Gandhian Congress mobilization, perhaps, was not 'imperfect' so far as 'middle class' urban and rural propertied interests were concerned.³

Translated in crude language Sumit Sarkar means that Gandhi's sympathies were with the rich rather than the poor. Since this thesis is not concerned with the industrial workers, it would be better to restrict this discussion to taluqdars and tenants. Gandhi favoured the taluqdars over

tenants is the thesis of Sumit Sarkar. In his work The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh Gyan Pandey calls the Congress mobilisation of tenantry imperfect.⁴ Following Gyan Pandey, Sumit Sarkar maintains that there was no imperfection in the Congress mobilisation of landlords, only the mobilisation of tenantry was imperfect. It is difficult to understand what Pandey and Sarkar mean by 'mobilisation'. 'Mobilisation', as this word is commonly used, clearly shows that the Civil Disobedience certainly succeeded in mobilising tenants perfectly well, and failed totally to mobilise the landlords. The conversion of 'no-tax' to 'no-rent' was a proof of it. Since the taluqdars were not mobilised for refusal to pay taxes, the no-tax was as good as given up. No-rent was adopted because the tenants were mobilised for refusing to pay rent. Tenants were already mobilised during the salt agitation. At the last stage salt activity was restricted only to villages, cities gave it up. It was reported from Rae Bareilly that 'salt had been manufactured simultaneously in 4,500 houses.'⁵ Tenants' involvement with salt was their involvement with swaraj. Therefore, it was easy for the Congress to switch over from salt to no-rent. How could the Congress mobilisation of tenantry be imperfect?

The answer to the last question lies with Pandey and not with Sarkar. According to Pandey the 'hesitant approach of the Congress to peasant problems and mass agitation' in U.P. in 1931 lies in 'the class composition of the party leadership'.⁶ 'The UP Congress counted among its more important leaders a number of substantial landlords, Sri Prakasa and T.A.K. Sherwani being the most prominent among them.'⁷ Thus the mass agitation of peasants was checked by the landlord Congressmen. But was the issue of rent in their hands? The issue of remission of rent was in the hands of Gandhi, because he was a party to the 'Delhi Pact' and not Sherwani or Sri Prakasa. And all the delay was caused by the government

to settle the issue. However, this delay did not stop the no-rent agitation. Throughout the "truce" period no-rent continued, and continued with greater vigour. And when finally Gandhi came out with his "manifesto", which was nothing but his declaration about rent remissions, it fell heavily on landlords, including his own colleagues like Sri Prakasa and Sherwani. Willingdon's remissions were restricted to only 2 annas and 7 pies in a rupee which was nothing if depression and successive failure of crop since 1927 was taken note of. After studying the situation Gandhi announced the remission of 8 annas in a rupee keeping the scope for 'less than 8 annas' in the cases where tenants were not in a position to pay even 8 annas.⁸ Gandhi knew that his terms would fall heavily 'upon the zamindars'.⁹ He shifted the responsibility to government announcing in his "appeal" 'that the Government will grant proportionate relief to the Zamindars who accept the tenants' terms.'¹⁰ Gandhi was not just tilted towards the tenantry, he was wholeheartedly with it, and only halfheartedly with the taluqdars and zamindars and was not at all in favour of the government treasury. Willingdon's position was the opposite of Gandhi's position. His primary concern was the government treasury, secondary the taluqdars and hardly any concern for the tenantry. This was the Oudh Policy and Willingdon followed it. To maintain the view that Gandhi was tilted towards the landlords in 1931 is to distort history, is to remove the distinction between truth and falsehood.

According to Sumit Sarkar 'the consequences of truce were much more ambiguous.'¹¹ And he derives this ambiguity from 'the studies by Pandey of U.P., Hardiman of Gujrat, and Stoddart of Andhra.'¹² All these historians 'agree that the Truce had adverse consequences so far as the Congress political base among the peasantry was concerned.'¹³ Sarkar quotes with approval 'The Gandhi-Irwin Pact broke the spirit of the Patidar peasants far more effectively than the lathis of the police.'¹⁴

Since this thesis is not concerned with the Patidars of Gujrat or the Andhra peasants it cannot be verified whether the Pact broke the spirit of peasants in those provinces. But in spite of Pandey's studies, the Pact could not even ineffectively break the spirit of U.P. tenants. They rather became more spirited after the Pact than before the Pact. And it is just false to say that 'the Congress political base' was adversely affected after the Delhi Pact. Congress in the villages got its position firmly settled after the Delhi Pact.

There is no doubt that just after the 'truce' villagers 'were dissatisfied with truce'.¹⁵ Truce did not make the position of rent clear. The matter of rent 'could not be discussed in detail with the Government of India as it was a provincial matter'.¹⁶ However, Jawaharlal made the position of truce clear in the second week of March 1931 that if the tenants were not in a position to pay then 'they should not pay or pay less'.¹⁷ In another meeting 'Krishna Kant Malviya declared that Congress is negotiating with Government to reduce rents and revenue to half and they should not pay until the matter is decided'.¹⁸ Neither Jawaharlal nor Malviya was breaking the terms of the truce since the terms of rent were not settled in the truce. Before the end of March it was reported that the rural agitation led by 'the left wing of the Congress' reached all the districts.¹⁹ Before Gandhi's "manifesto" the cultivators were 'forming the idea that they have only to pay half rent'.²⁰ Before Willingdon replaced Irwin it was reported that 'there is very general idea that Congress is now Government, and tenants are refusing to deal with zamindars or with officials and are referring everything to Congress'.²¹ Is it not a remarkable impact of Congress on tenants? Tenants have appeared on the stage, and zamindars and government servants have receded to the background. This is the achievement of truce. Not even one month passed for truce.

Till the middle of May 1931, during the truce period, it was reported that the rural agitation 'is still widespread. Certain districts in Oudh have been badly affected, and collections have almost ceased.'²² Meanwhile the government declared its remissions. But the remissions were so meagre that the government accepted that 'in many places it will be difficult to collect even the reduced amounts.'²³ Gandhi issued his manifesto on May 23, 1931, but the Congress workers started applying the 'manifesto' before it was published. On 16 May it was reported

Congress now tell the kisans to pay up as much rent as they can after making due provision for everyday amenities of life. This equivocating phrase can be construed to mean that those tenants who are left with nothing after making due provision for themselves should not pay any rent.²⁴

There was no equivocation in Gandhi's words. He meant that they need not pay if they were not in a position to pay. The Deputy Commissioner of Rae Bareilly noted that 'the political situation has further deteriorated, and the collection of rent and revenue is practically at a standstill.'²⁵ By the beginning of June Gandhi's 'manifesto' became popular with the tenants, and the government was now in real difficulties. It was reported that 'collections of rent had re-opened after the announcement of Government remissions, but since the dissemination of the Hindi version of Mr. Gandhi's manifesto, collections have practically stopped.'²⁶

Though Congress succeeded in mobilising tenants it miserably failed in mobilising the taluqdars. The cases of Kalakankar and Bhadri were exceptions. If the taluqdars too had behaved like their tenants, the situation of country would have been very different in 1931 itself. But Willingdon succeeded with taluqdars by giving them heavy revenue remissions. He decided to give them police protection for realising rent. If Gandhi's Congress succeeded in mobilising the tenantry, Willingdon's Government succeeded in mobilising taluqdars and zamindars. However,

the government waited for situation to aggravate. It waited for the tenant-landlord tension to culminate in violence, a situation similar to 1920-21. Once the situation of 1920-21 occurs the government would have excuse to intervene. Willingdon was unlike Irwin. The former did not have patience like the latter. Irwin waited for one year for the tension to grow. Instead of such a tension, both landlords and tenants were turned against the government. Neither tenants had money to pay rent nor taluqdars to pay revenue. Irwin was forced to have Pact with Gandhi in March 1931. But Willingdon was different. He wanted to act and act quickly. As soon as he assumed his office, he made the first political move, the remission of rent and revenue. He converted an economic issue into a political issue. He made heavy revenue remissions to bring landlords with him. Remissions on rent were nominal. Gandhi countered the move of Willingdon by issuing his "manifesto" in which he recommended heavy remissions on rent. Gandhi had economic justification for his recommendations, Willingdon had no justification for his favoritism. Thus Gandhi left no alternative with the government except to become violent. Non-violent movement had to be crushed with violence. Since Rae Bareli was chosen by the Congress for starting no-rent campaign, the same place was chosen by the government to strike.

Willingdon assumed charge in April, and in May second week the Deputy Commissioner of Rae Bareli writes that the tenants' grievances 'are being exploited by the Congress, as in 1921, and it is like history repeating itself. There is a real danger that the undermining of respect for law and order and the intoxication of power might culminate in agrarian disturbances.'²⁷ Congress was intoxicated with power, the kisan power. Again in the second week of May the same Deputy Commissioner writes that 'the cessation of revenue collections apart from its effect on the finances of Government, is leading to propagation of the idea of

Congress or kisan power and the paralysis of Government.'²⁸ Thus by May 1931 the government officials started identifying "Congress" with "kisan power". And what turned Congress into kisan power so quickly was Gandhi's "truce" with Irwin in March 1931 and his "manifesto" in May 1931. Yet Sumit Sarkar, following Gyan Pandey, writes that 'Truce had very adverse consequences so far as the Congress political base among the peasantry was concerned.' If Congress had any political base it was the base of peasantry. And the peasantry was not imperfectly mobilised. It was perfectly mobilised; otherwise, the government officials would not have described it as kisan power. Of course when Congress was intoxicated with kisan power, British were intoxicated with taluqdar power. But the historians of modern India are blaming Congress of the Civil Disobedience days as a taluqdar party, as a party which supported the taluqdars over tenants.

Willingdon wished to crush the kisan power, the Congress power, by supporting the taluqdars. Since no revolt of the type of 1920-21 occurred in Awadh, the government started helping the taluqdars with its police force for realising rent. No-rent campaign was to be crushed by realising rent. Government started helping the taluqdars for rent collection. Most of the grass-root leaders of tenantry were arrested within a couple of months. Section 107 was used against them on the ground that they were instigating tenants not to pay rent. Section 108 was used against those who broke Section 144. And the section 12A of the Oudh Rent Act was a big help to taluqdars. It is specially used for rent collection. Not the taluqdars but the police was collecting rent. Taluqdars accompanied the police. Owners of land became auxiliary figures. After the publication of Gandhi's "manifesto" the taluqdar system was existing only on the paper. Taluqdars lost courage to go directly for rent collection. In order to keep the system alive, the

government of Willingdon came to the rescue of taluqdars.

Actions of Willingdon's Government from mid-1931 to the end of 1933 to establish its rule firmly in Awadh prepared a ground for the departure of the British from India. The signal for departure was given by the Congress victory in the elections of 1937. Within the span of three years Willingdon made the tenantry (voters) totally anti-British. In order to wipe out Congress from Awadh, it took extremely harsh steps against the tenantry. There was so much repression of peasantry that the peasants totally lost their faith in the British. As a result faith in the Congress developed. Gyan Pandey, however, presents a very different picture. He thinks that the peasants were let down by the Congress in mid-1931. Therefore, they did not support the Congress in the Civil Disobedience of 1932. Referring to June-July 1931 Pandey remarks 'The UP Congress refused at this juncture to lend its support to peasant actions against landlords and the Government. For the peasants this was clearly a let down. For the Congress too it was a costly mistake.'²⁹ What was so special about this juncture, the period of June-July 1931, that escaped the notice of Congress or Congress knowingly avoided to notice it? On the basis of several authoritative sources Pandey writes 'In June-July 1931 the situation was considered particularly dangerous in Bara Banki, Rae Bareli, Unnao and part of Allahabad, and in Bara Banki gatherings of armed villagers were reported to have become common.'³⁰ Pandey suggests that the Congress should have supported and encouraged the "tenant militancy" and "radicalism" that were growing during the mid-1931. This was also the wish of the British administrators of those times. They wished the history of 1920-21 to repeat so that they would be in a position to crush both, the Congress and the militants. But there was no militancy of any consequence in mid-1931 or earlier during the Civil Disobedience. Stray cases in Bara Banki or

any other district of Awadh cannot lead one to generalise that there was mass militancy. The villagers did resist to pay rent, but this kind of resistance did not lead to loot and arson as happened in 1920-21. The villagers were armed only with lathis, and they used them for self-defence. Militancy during 1931 is an imaginary phenomenon and Pandey expects that the Congress should have supported this imaginary mass militancy. Therefore, by not helping the imaginary mass militancy Congress lost nothing. Congress remained a peasant power in the mid-1931 like the earlier part of 1931 and the whole of 1930. Not the tenant-militancy but the faith of tenants in Congress that led the Government of Willingdon to use repressive tactics against the tenantry. In punishing the tenants Willingdon was punishing the Congress. For the reason that the tenants were as much part of the Congress as Jawaharlal and Sherwani were parts of the Congress. Willingdon did not consider Congress as any kind of body existing independently of the tenants. Tenants were body of the Congress and Gandhi and Jawaharlal functioned as its brains. Willingdon wished to make the body of Congress totally crippled. What would the brain do once the body is crippled?

The Civil Disobedience call of December 1931, i.e. the second call, failed to make any progress, according to Pandey, because the peasants did not support it. As he writes,

Quite unlike the Civil Disobedience agitation of 1930, the campaign of 1932-33 was limited to the big cities and their surroundings, and here it was mainly the financial resources and the strong organisation of the Congress that kept the movement alive. Hailey observed in early 1932 that, except in two districts of the Allahabad division, Kanpur and Allahabad, the 'no-tax' campaign 'does not exist any more'. A.A. Waugh, the Settlement Officer of Meerut, put it more pungently: 'When at the last Congressmen definitely launched their 'no-rent' campaign in the autumn of 1931, they found, not for the first time that they had 'missed the bus'.³¹

Pandey has quoted with approval the remarks of Hailey and Waugh without providing convincing grounds why the no-tax campaign failed, if at all

it can be said to have failed. Pandey does not even commit that the agitation of 1930 succeeded, he simply says that it was not limited to big cities. Perhaps he means that it was also extended to the small cities, towns and villages. But the campaign of 1932-33 was only restricted to the big cities without extending to small cities, towns and villages. Thus Pandey's views lead to the questions: (1) Whether the no-tax campaign of 1932-33 was limited to only the big cities. Whether it failed to reach the villages. (2) Whether it is true to say that the Congress did not support the tenants in mid-1931. (3) Whether Congress can be looked at as a body distinguished from the tenants. Whether Congress can be restricted to those who are members of AICC, PCC, DCC, etc., i.e. those who are its "official leaders". (4) Whether the no-tax campaign of 1932-33 failed. If failed, what was the 'quality' of its failure? (5) Whether in 1932-33 the Government won over the tenants against the Congress.

Questions (1) and (2) require a detailed discussion and, therefore, first take the question (3). British perception of Congress and its relation with tenantry in 1931 were very different from Pandey's perception. Congress functioned like the human body. Gandhi and Jawaharlal were its brains, and AICC PCC, DCC and TCC were nerves and tenant mass functioned as the cells of the body. When Willingdon assumed his office he decided to destroy the Congress, and he got the chance when the second call for no-tax was made in December 1931. Cells of the body had to be cut off from the brain and the nerves, artificial brain and nerves could be created to keep the body cells alive. The British brain was to replace the natural brain and its supporters the natural nerves. The British perception of the Congress was the same as Gandhi's perception. In his "manifesto" Gandhi reminded the kisans that 'In the ultimate end you are the Congress.'² Human body cannot function without

the human cells. Low writes about the action of the government:

At 12 noon on Monday 4 January 1932, an extraordinary Gazette of India promulgated the first comprehensive Emergency Powers Ordinance the British ever issued in India, and under the Unlawful Association Ordinance, which along with a prevention of Molestation and Boycotting Ordinance and an Unlawful Instigating Ordinance was reissued at the same time, both the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee, were declared unlawful associations, and the long prepared plan for the immediate arrest of the Congress leaders, beginning with Gandhi himself, was put into operation.³³

Low adds 'By February 1932 there were 17,000 Congressmen in gaol; by May, 36,000.'³⁴ The process of arrests did not stop in May, it was a continuous process. It continued throughout the years of 1932 and 1933. It stopped in 1934 when Gandhi called off the movement. Jawaharlal was arrested in December 1931 itself and was not allowed to receive Gandhi at Bombay. Cells of the body were cut off from the nerves and the brain. The cells must switch over from "no-tax" to "pay-tax". The zoo of ordinances was shown to the people to demonstrate the government power. Artificial brain started functioning through the plastic nerve roots. Counterpropaganda was instituted at the same time as repression. As if it was only a propaganda of the Congress that the tenants were not in a position to pay rent. So also it was only a propaganda that the tenants suffered on account of depression and the successive failure of crop. Tenants were prosperous enough to pay rent, only the Congress, i.e. AICC, PCC, DCC, TCC, etc., were involved in the propaganda against the government. Therefore, Aman Sabha was instituted to counter the propaganda of the Congress. And when Aman Sabha failed to bring about any useful results the services of Baba Ram Chandra were used. Praja Sangh was started, and Ram Chandra succeeded in bringing Rure leaders with him, thus breaking the unity of tenantry against the government. Thanks to Ram Chandra that the Rure leaders who raised the voice of swaraj against the government since 1917 were with him in 1933. How different

was Ram Chandra from Rure leaders! Ram Chandra participated neither in salt agitation nor in the no-tax campaign. Rure leaders were imprisoned for six months in the salt agitation and one year for no-tax in July 1931. These freedom fighters were enticed to join Praja Sangh which was simply another name for Aman Sabha. Tenant struggle of Pratapgarh had a setback in 1932-33, not only because of repression but also because of the dubious moves of the elite leaders, Ram Chandra and Muneshwar Datt.

Now consider the question (1) whether the no-tax campaign of 1932-33 was restricted only to big cities. The situation was very different from how Gyan Pandey describes it. Gandhi's agitations had this quality, that one and all of them resulted into rural agitations. Salt agitation ultimately became a rural agitation. And the fact that the no-tax campaign of 1930 was converted into a no-rent agitation itself shows that the Civil Disobedience had switched over to villages. Civil Disobedience of 1932-33 is no exception. Rent-payers do not reside in cities, they reside in villages. And the fact that the Civil Disobedience of 1932-33 was nothing but a no-rent agitation should have prohibited Pandey from saying that it was only an urban affair. After the introduction of so many repressive ordinances against the agitation of 1932-33 there was no chance for it to survive in cities. It survived, in whatever form, only in the villages. Even in villages it became an underground activity. In the third week of January 1932 it was reported 'Agitation is carried on secretly, often at night, and the audiences collected by agitators usually disperse on the arrival of the police.'³⁵ In the last week of the month it was reported 'Many local leaders have gone to jail and others are carefully avoiding arrest and are confining themselves to secret organisation. Successive district dictators have been arrested.'³⁶ As soon as a dictator was appointed he was arrested. So Congress became an underground party. It started gaining

experience concerning the underground work. This experience later helped the Congress during Quit India.

After establishing the police raj in Awadh and everywhere in U.P. the government was intoxicated with power and started making loose statements to be quoted by the historians of modern India. Low writes,

As early as January 1932 the Chief Secretary of UP remarked of the UP Emergency Powers Ordinance that its 'bare promulgation seems to have had a very damping effect on the local Congress organisers'. Special precautions did not seem to be necessary against the celebration of Independence Day on 26 January.³⁷

Of course the Ordinance had a damping effect but it could not stop the hoisting of the National Flag on the Independence Day. Even the women were active in this respect. To take one example it was reported that 'Lachhmi Devi organised a procession of 16 volunteers at Bilgram on "Independence Day"; all were arrested.'³⁸

Pandey is absolutely wrong in maintaining that 'the campaign of 1932-33 was limited to the big cities,' but it is true that this campaign was also extended to the big cities. Since it was no-rent campaign, and not any other sort of campaign, it was expected to be restricted to villages where rent-payers live. And no meetings and processions were allowed, except those of the Aman Sabhas in 1932 and of the Praja Sangh after the middle of 1933 to the end of 1934. However, in villages the no-rent campaign of 1932-33 became an underground activity. Therefore, the propaganda was carried on through printed pamphlets and leaflets. The printing work was done by the underground presses which generally existed in the cities. So this was the contribution of cities that the literature concerning no-rent was printed in those cities and then it was transferred to villages and village bazars. One of the methods of this propaganda is reported 'Their method of work is shown by one volunteer who entered the bazaar, threw down a number of no-rent leaflets and then bolted.'³⁹ But sometimes arrests were prefer-

red. If the arrest would have better impact then there was no need to turn away. As it was reported, 'Congress activity has been confined to the distribution of highly objectionable no-rent leaflets... Twenty-two distributors have been arrested.'⁴⁰

Since Pandey postulated Congress as the body of capitalists he inferred that the agitation of 1932-33 survived in cities because of the "financial resources". But in June 1932 it was reported that 'Congress is short of money and efforts to replenish its coffers have so far proved fruitless. There is consequently, after the demands of local leaders have been met, practically nothing left to pay ordinary volunteers.'⁴¹ However, self-supporting volunteers came out in support of the Congress. Government accepted that 'no-rent movement as well as the swedeshi league propaganda is self-supporting; active agents can make their own living, and possibly occasionally raise money for the general Congress funds.'⁴² Therefore, the agitation continued, and in the month of July it increased in several Awadh districts. 'There has been an increase in activity in the rural areas. Leaflets have been distributed and wandering agitators have tried to enlist recruits and have spread no-rent ideas.'⁴³ Needless to go on citing cases for the no-rent campaign in Awadh villages. It did not stop at any time till Gandhi stopped it in 1934. And it was not an urban but a rural agitation.

Now consider the question (4) whether the no-rent agitation failed in 1932-33. One can hardly doubt that it failed, and failed in the month of January 1932 itself. And it failed both in the cities and the villages. It failed in villages because the tenants paid their rent. And it failed in the cities because it was a non-issue in cities. But once the tenants started paying rent, then what was the sense in continuing with no-rent agitation? The clue to answer this question depends on the quality of failure. Did the no-rent campaign fail because of the

poor quality of Congress propaganda or because of the superior counter-propaganda by the government or because of the police repression?

Congress propaganda was certainly not poor, because it was not a propaganda. Congress simply pointed out through its various leaflets and pamphlets that the tenant was not in a position to pay rent because of depression and successive failure of crop for three continuous years. Government remissions did not solve any problem. Tenant was not in a position to pay any rent at all. Gandhi's manifesto was not only a political move, but it exhibited the truth about kisans' ability to pay.

The government propaganda on the other hand was of very poor quality.

Most of the pamphlets issued by the government talked about the (insufficient) rent remissions and harmful consequences of Civil Disobedience.

What moved the tenants to pay rent was not the government propaganda but repression. If the tenant did not pay rent then his property was attached and he was evicted from his land. Ordinances broke the tenant:

'The application of the Ordinance has had a good effect. It has been welcomed by zamindars and respected people of the district.'⁴⁴ Tenants were not zamindars and they did not belong to the respected class. The twin instrument of Ordinance and counterpropaganda started from the

month of January 1932. Functioning of the artificial brain required the backing of Ordinance. In the second week of January from Rae Bareilly

'most of the important local leaders have been dealt with under the Ordinance.'⁴⁵ The condition of Pratapgarh is described in the same week:

'The Ordinance was extended to Pratapgarh on December 29. Rents are being paid more freely and counter-propaganda has had some effect.'⁴⁶

Were the rents paid because of Ordinance or because of the counterpropaganda? The value of propaganda could be judged only if it had no backing of Ordinance. Rents were paid not because of propaganda instituted by the government but because of the use of police. Yet it was reported

that 'so far the zamindars have not had the courage to come out against the no-rent campaigners and they wish the police alone to take action.'⁴⁷ This is in spite of 'the power of arrest' which was 'conferred on landlords'.⁴⁸ Through this power the landlords were themselves converted into policemen. They were no more mere landlords, they were also policemen because they were given the powers of the police. Police powers were given to landlords so that they could terrorise their tenants.

To deviate a little, the issue of rent was certainly not disconnected with the issue of swaraj. Tenants were convinced that they would be free from eviction and nazrana only when the Oudh Rent Act was abolished, which was possible when the British left India. Therefore, they were as enthusiastic about the Independence Day celebrations as about not paying rent. Government on its own turn was also as much interested in crushing the voice of swaraj as in realising rent. Referring to the January 1932 Independence Day celebrations it was reported 'attempts were made to celebrate "Independence Day" in most of the towns and in a number of villages. Prompt police action was taken.'⁴⁹ Prompt police action means arrest of the people who participated in these celebrations. Ordinances which were introduced to realise rent were also used to crush the voice of swaraj. The Semaria incident of Hardoi on January 26, 1932 would remind one of the Kahla incident of February 16, 1931 about which reference has already occurred. It was reported that 'on "Independence Day" a procession was taken to the Semaria cattle fair and twelve arrests were made. A large crowd followed the arrested volunteers, made hostile demonstrations, and eventually attacked the police with bricks and other missiles. The police were compelled to fire, killing three and wounding 19.'⁵⁰ Attack on the police with bricks, etc. is a readymade excuse. The reason is to give exemplary punishment. Kahla was meant for frightening those who were involved in no-rent campaign. Semaria was for

those who were involved with the Independence Day. And in both the incidents it was the tenants who died. The Ordinance to stop no-rent was used to stop the Independence Day celebration. While reconstructing the history of Indian freedom struggle, Low writing on the "Civil Martial Law" gave a different colour to the incident of Semaria. His description begins: 'at a cattle fair at Simaria in Hardoi district in U.P. on 6 January a Congress procession carrying flags was stopped by the police, and twelve of its leaders were arrested...'⁵¹ According to PAI report Semaria incident was an Independence Day celebration, but according to Low it was a "Congress procession" of the usual type. For convenience of interpretation, Low has brought back the date from 26 January to 6 January. Low is the editor of the beautifully printed work 'Congress and the Raj'. Very eminent historians have contributed articles to this volume. They may not be free from Low's style of history writing.

Independence Day celebration was not the only activity which was connected with the no-rent agitation of 1932-33. Dramatic Association became active. A meeting was reported on March 24 in which 'Jainti Prasad Chaube recited a poem "A Bania of Bharat Shook England".'⁵² From April 6 a National Week was celebrated, beginning with the boycott of British goods and ending with the Jallianwala Bagh day. Since the celebration of the National Week was not an underground activity, this was considered by the U.P. Government as an "open subversive activity". 'Congress hopes to obtain fresh martyrs by compelling the authorities to take vigorous steps to suppress subversive movement.'⁵³ Government accepted that 'there was considerable activity during National Week.'⁵⁴ Hartals and protests of all kind were organised, particularly when the national leaders were arrested. Even in May 'Hartals were observed in many districts to protest against the arrest of Pandit Madan Mohan

Malviya in Delhi.' On account of Ordinances 'active support for Congress' decreased. But the government accepted that 'the latent sympathies of a great majority' were with the Congress.⁵⁵ Gandhi Day was observed on 4 May.

Thus the no-rent agitation of 1932-33 both failed and succeeded. It failed in the sense that the tenants paid rent. But it succeeded in the sense that the tenants became quite convinced about the sincerity of Congress for their cause. Gandhi's manifesto created a picture in their minds that a tenant should pay rent according to his ability and not according to any fixed rate. Rate should be flexible. Depression and crop failure demanded that there should have been no rent in the years from 1930 to 1933. Total remission of rent was required. But the government gave insignificant remission and then it used repressive methods to realise rent. By sending all key leaders to jail, Willingdon and Hailey magnified the images of those leaders. Gandhi became tenants' "own man" not because of his dress but because of his "manifesto" which became as popular with kisans as the Ramayana and the Geeta. Gandhi remained no more a spiritual being, he became a being who was trying to solve their rent problem. And Jawaharlal was their own man from the beginning of the struggle. Congress again defeated Willingdon's move. The situation had been very different if Congress had called off its no-rent agitation in 1932. Since the tenants started paying rent, there was every reason to call it off. But it was not called off. And so also its activities continued in spite of repression and use of Ordinances. The years from 1930 to 1934 are extremely important in the freedom struggle. Congress got established in the U.P. villages. It was fighting for the cause of rural masses. Its leaders, to whatever rank belonged, from AICC to the mandal level, were sent to jail. Willingdon's policy totally surrendered tenants to the Congress.

Now consider the question (5) whether in 1932-33 the government won over the tenants against the Congress. Tenants paid rent. Does it imply that they were won over by the government? Does it imply they were opposing Congress? Only a colonial mind could imagine that the tenants were won over by the government. Government was least interested in winning over tenants, it was interested only in its revenue from taluqdars which it could get only after getting rent from the tenants. Could repression win the heart of tenants? Arrests were going on not only throughout 1932, but they continued throughout 1933 too. To take one example of August 1933, it was reported 'Nine arrests were made in police circle Bachhraon on August 21 and 25 for preaching non-payment of rent and boycott of foreign cloth.'⁵⁶ When Congress was preaching no-rent government was realising rent through attachment and eviction. Government was committing mistakes after mistakes, and converting the wave of the country in favour of the Congress. Consider the series of mistakes it committed within the span of 3 years. The depression started its impact from the beginning of January 1930. But Irwin did not think in terms of giving any relief to the tenants. Salt agitation was started and converted into no-rent agitation. Yet Irwin waited. He was waiting for tenant-landlord tension to become violent and then to act. But he got no chance. Then the mistake of the Pact with Gandhi was committed. After more than a year's suffering Willingdon came out with his remissions. The remissions were so meagre that Gandhi's manifesto of May 1931 won the hearts of tenants. Finally imposing all kinds of Emergency Ordinances to crush Congress in 1932-33 really led Congress to be firmly established in villages. Willingdon, through his actions, was mobilising tenantry in favour of the Congress. Both Irwin and Willingdon helped Congress in their own ways. The U.P. elections of 1937 were not won by the appointment of 'Congress Mass Contacts Committee' in the middle

of 1936.⁵⁷ Freedom is not won by appointing 'Freedom Committees'; one has to fight for freedom and that takes time. So is the case of "mass contact". The Civil Disobedience Movements of 1930 and 1932-33 already established the contact of Congress with the masses of Oudh, and the result of 1937 election was already decided in 1934. Concerning the overwhelming success of the Congress in the elections Jawaharlal accepted that 'it was not the election campaign so much as the previous work and contacts with the masses that helped us.' Mass contact that started in 1920 passing through 1930-31 culminated in 1934. During 1932-33 the leaders were in jail which did not stop the Congress contact with masses. Those who went to jail inspired the tenants more than those who remained outside. If Congress had dropped the agitation in 1932, then it was sure to be doomed.

Now consider the question (2) that the Congress did not support the tenants in June-July 1931, and as a result the tenants did not support the no-rent campaign of 1932-33. This is the time when Congress came out with its remarkable support to the tenants. Gandhi attacked the government for its remissions of rent. Gandhi's manifesto was published in the end of May, and its Hindi copies were distributed. June and July were the months when the realisation came to the tenants that the government remissions were quite inadequate to meet the challenge of depression and bad harvesting. Gandhi gave a proper recommendation to the government. Gandhi's recommendations were against both, the government and the taluqdars. Therefore, the government helped the taluqdars for their use of the section 12A of the Oudh Rent Act. All the grass-root leaders like Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Bhagwan Din were rounded up in July. They were sent to jail for one year. The process of repression that started on a mass scale from January 1932, already started in a piece-

meal fashion from July 1931. Instead of increasing remissions, which the situation demanded, the government increased repression.

How wrong is Pandey in thinking that the tenants rejected the no-rent campaign of Congress in 1932-33 by paying rent. Consider the case of a man who declares fast. Suppose the government subjects him to forced feeding. The food is forced into his stomach against his wish and will. Would you say that this man has broken his fast? He has certainly not broken his fast though his fast has certainly been broken. The tenant was in a similar situation. He had no desire or wish to pay rent; rent was realised from him by force. "Forced realisation of rent" was like "forced feeding". Since the no-rent campaign of 1932-33 was stopped by repression that the government lost all sympathies of the tenants. Tenants became doubly interested in the Congress which was fighting for them. Why arrest Jawaharlal again in February 1934? Certainly not only for his speeches in Calcutta. His stay in U.P. out of prison was dangerous. Of course Jawaharlal's stay in prison during 1934-1935 gave us the Autobiography. It was a big gain to the academic world, particularly to those who wish to know something about the Freedom struggle of India till 1935.

Jawaharlal himself did not know the magnitude of the impact of Civil Disobedience on the masses. No-rent campaign of 1932-33 which was supposed by Gyan Pandey to have failed, mobilised the tenants in favour of the Congress. Referring to his election tour he writes to Cripps:

My extensive touring has been a revelation to me of the suppressed energy of the people and of the passionate desire to be rid of their burdens. The Congress is supreme today so far as the masses and the lower middle class are concerned.⁵⁸

Congress was supreme not because of its Mass Contact Committees, but because of the grass-root leaders who kept the masses attached to the Congress. These leaders supported themselves, particularly during

1932-33.

Pandey has used the term "mobilization" in such a sense that whatever Congress did, or could have done, its mobilisation would have remained imperfect. It is owing to the imperfect mobilisation that the nationalist leadership was frustrated because it 'was unable to retain Muslim support'.⁵⁹ Not only it failed in mobilising Muslim support, but it also failed in mobilising the support of taluqdars in Awadh. But Pandey does not refer to it, because he too, like Sumit Sarkar, thinks that the taluqdars gave full support to the Congress. But the British counted the taluqdars as their own supporters, and therefore, they were set up against the Congress in the elections of 1937. Congress victory, according to Peter Reeves, 'completed the humiliation of landlords'.⁶⁰ And the humiliation was conducted by the tenants of those landlords. The election victory showed the mobilisation of tenantry against the landlords, yet Pandey and Sarkar think that the mobilisation of tenantry by Congress was imperfect.

"Perfect mobilization" of Pandey is something that is laid up in Plato's world of ideas. Its realisation in this world is impossible. Mao failed to mobilise KMT. Before Mao the Bolsheviks failed with Mensheviks. In our own time Mandela failed with Inkatha. Thus Gandhi, like Mao, Lenin and Mandela, failed in having perfect mobilisation. Can Pandey give even one example of a struggle where perfect mobilisation has occurred? Then why blame Congress for its imperfect mobilisation? Human leaders can have only imperfect mobilisation, and there is no necessity of giving any tragic significance to this fact. As a matter of fact the mobilisation of Muslim support was greater than the mobilisation of the support of landlords. The imperialist forces never leave without making the last minute effort to retain their colonies. Creating Hindu-Muslim division or the landlord-tenant division was the stra-

tegy of the British. But the struggle could not be stopped because of these divisions.

The other instance in which Congress exhibited an imperfect mobilisation is that of the U.P. peasant. Congress leadership 'suppressed in part' the 'profound energy and will to change' of the U.P. peasant.⁶¹ Pandey observed this "profound energy" in the tenants in their militant and radical actions during June-July 1931. Perhaps Congress mobilisation would have been perfect if Gandhi and Jawaharlal had come out in support of the tenant militancy. But unfortunately these leaders were cold. The situation demanded mass militancy rather than pacts and settlements with the taluqdars and government. Congress believed in pacts and settlements rather than revolution. The British wished the Congress to become militant. Once it became militant it would have been crushed. The Congress survived through pacts and settlements. Perhaps Pandey wishes that Gandhi should have formed a peasant army. It is only by forming such an army that the "profound energy" of the peasants would have been properly utilised. Or, Gandhi and Jawaharlal should have taken lathis in their hands to attack the taluqdars. They should have been with the tenants when tenants were lifting the grain of the taluqdar or grazing his field. Pandey does not at all make explicit the mode in which Congress would have supported the tenants. Does he mean that Gandhi should have been another version of Mao or Lenin in India? Does he mean that he should have behaved like Bhagat Singh or Chandra Shekhar Azad? Does he mean that he should have been like Rahmat Ali or Ram Ghulam of 1920-21? Congress won the elections in 1937, and then they launched a successful Quit India Movement. It is the profound energy of the tenants and their will to change the government that the elections were won and the Quit India Movement succeeded and ultimately the British left India. If tenants behaved otherwise than how they behaved

things would have been different. So also if the Congress had behaved differently than how it behaved things would have been different.

When the postmortem analysis of a vast movement is conducted, it is very easy to find out faults with the movement. There is no such thing as a perfect start and a perfect ending of this movement. Congress was involved in a vast movement, the movement of freedom of a vast country. The country was enslaved in a piecemeal fashion, but freedom could not be achieved in a piecemeal fashion. The whole country had to become free at one stroke of time. Concerning a political movement Bernard Shaw remarked 'When a great political movement takes place, it is not consciously led or organised: the unconscious self in mankind makes its way through the problem as the elephant breaks through jungle.'⁶²

Jawaharlal quoted this from Shaw in September 1931, the peak period of Civil Disobedience. Congress was breaking through the jungle. No one at that time could predict the future consequences. Now while doing the postmortem analysis six decades after the movement we should try to imagine that situation and place ourselves in that situation, not like a British official but like a tenant or a cultivator of some kind. By converting Congress into an elite body Pandey has made Congress as much a foreign body as were the British administrators. Did the tenants feel that Gandhi and Jawaharlal were foreigners? Certainly not. Congressmen were not alienated from the masses. Therefore, mass contact was possible. But the landlords were totally alienated from the masses, they were closer to the government officers than to the tenants. Taluqdars became one of the alien powers to rule Awadh. Therefore, Awadh required freedom from two alien powers, the taluqdars and the British. Perhaps this was not the situation in other parts of the country.

What Sumit Sarkar and Gyan Pandey have done is not a history from below but a total war against the Congress, a kind of propaganda war

against the Congress. It may be totally wrong to look at history through the eyes of Gandhi and Jawaharlal. History should be looked through the eyes of the people. But Sumit Sarkar and Gyan Pandey have not looked at history through the eyes of the people, they have looked at it through the eyes of the British administrators and their historians. It is not the people of Awadh, the masses of Awadh, who have looked at the Congress with hostile eyes, it is the British administrators and their own historians who have looked at the Congress with hostile eyes. The British were defeated by the Congress. Now in the name of "peoples History" the historians are trying to convert that victory into a defeat. Tenants of Awadh looked at truce with fascination. They started expecting the arrival of Gandhi raj. But the subaltern historians paint a different picture. Truce was an attack on the ability of the Irwin administration, but it has been shown as an attack on the peasantry. The primary purpose of the "manifesto" was recommendation concerning "rent remission", but this issue is suppressed. Only the 'trusteeship' idea is highlighted, and Gandhi is attacked for retention of zamindari system. Again, Gandhi's conditions for the retention of zamindari system are suppressed, because those conditions make zamindari system a non-functional system. The worst part of the game is treatment of no-rent campaign of 1932-33. It has been shown as if the tenants paid their rent out of their sweet will and not as a consequence of repression. Their payment of rent has been shown as their opposition to Congress. Masses of Awadh opposed the Congress, so they paid rent. This is how the British administrators painted the picture. The subaltern historians have been propagating the same picture. All what the subaltern historians are doing is falsification of people's history. When Congress totally failed to mobilise taluqdars, its mobilisation is declared perfect. When Congress totally succeeded in mobilising te-

nants, its mobilisation is declared imperfect.

Both Sumit Sarkar and Gyan Pandey have highlighted the role of Ram Chandra. Awadh tenant struggle has been looked through the eyes of Ram Chandra who had hardly any role in the tenant struggle of Awadh after 1922. Rather in 1933-34 he tried to divert the struggle in favour of the British by forming the Praja Sangh. Somehow the subaltern historians got the idea that Ram Chandra opposed the Congress and was an indirect supporters of the British. Therefore, they made him an ideal subaltern leader. He was converted into a grass-root leader of tenantry irrespective of the fact that he never touched a plough. A leader is subaltern or grass-root if he opposed the Congress. Pandey has come out to defend Ram Chandra against Jawaharlal's calling him "irresponsible". According to Pandey "irresponsible" person meant essentially one who disagreed with the Congress High Command.⁶³ So Ram Chandra was declared by Jawaharlal irresponsible simply because he opposed the Congress High Command. How wrong is Pandey. Ram Chandra, after 1922, exhibited no commitment and no ideology. If he had any ideology and any commitment it was temporary. He kept himself free from the anti-British charges by keeping aloof from the Civil Disobedience Movement. He was not in Pratapgarh when the Rure leaders made salt and were imprisoned for six months. He again disappeared from Pratapgarh when these leaders were sent to jail for one year in connection with no-rent campaign. But in the middle of 1933 he suddenly appeared in Pratapgarh and established an office to enter the complaints of kisans to forward to the Deputy Commissioner. He started with a big bang by publishing and distributing three printed booklets free of cost. Government banned Congress meetings but Ram Chandra's Praja Sangh meetings were held, on occasions, in the Court Compound of Pratapgarh. Success of the Congress in 1937 again changed Ram Chandra. He immediately established a Congress office at Pratapgarh

to register the complaints of kisan voters against the taluqdars. He took one thousand kisans to Anand Bhavan, with the help of Jhinguri Singh, to impress upon Jawaharlal that he was a committed Congressman. It is not Ram Chandra who rejected Congress. It is the Congress that rejected Ram Chandra for his pro-government activities. Jawaharlal's Autobiography is restricted to the events till 1935. It has not recorded the activities after that year. It has not recorded the fact that Ram Chandra tried his best to come back to the Congress after the elections of 1937. But he was unwelcome in the Congress. Pandey has specially objected to Jawaharlal's remarks that after bringing the tenants to a 'pitch of excitement he tried to shift responsibility to others' and that 'Ram Chandra continued to take a prominent part in the agrarian movement for another year and served two or three sentences in prison, but he turned out later to be a very irresponsible and unreliable person.'⁶⁴

Formation of Praja Sangh was the best example of his unreliable nature. His jail terms are no less interesting. First time he was arrested along with Rure leaders on the false charge of theft of wood in 1920. This was the occasion when tenants invaded the Pratapgarh jail. Second time he was arrested in February 1921 at Benaras. The government thought that he was an anti-British leader, so arrested him. Then for two decades he was never arrested though all his followers were arrested from time to time. After two decades he was arrested on the eve of Quit India Movement. While in prison he was surprised 'why he who did not oppose the Government should have been arrested. He did not object to the Government policy of recruitment in war or war fund, etc. He requested the Government to grant Rs. 20 per month to his family.'⁶⁵ His letter to the government was full of lamentations, which no self-respecting freedom fighter would have written. None of his three arrests shows that he was arrested because he staged a satyagraha. He had never gone to jail out of his own

free choice like the satyagrahis.

Perhaps Jawaharlal had first hand information about the irresponsible nature of Ram Chandra. Ram Chandra called the Kisan Sabha, Pratapgarh, meeting on 15 March 1929. Ten thousand notices were distributed in which the names of all the national leaders were mentioned, including those of Gandhi and Jawaharlal. He knew that no leader would come for the meeting, so several days before the meeting he left Pratapgarh, and left the burden of meeting on Jhinguri Singh and Sri Harakh. Ram Chandra created a cleavage between the national leaders and Rure leaders. He had the habit of calling a meeting and then himself disappearing from the meeting. No responsible leader would do all this. Gyan Pandey makes Ram Chandra as an 'important inspiration for the Oudh peasant' in their struggle in 1930-32.⁶⁶ But he lost all his inspiring ability after his jail term in 1921-22. He hardly did any work for the tenantry after 1923. Even he lost hold over the Rure leadership. He could not restrain Rure leaders from participating in salt agitation and no-rent campaign. So also these leaders did individual satyagraha in 1940 and jumped into the Quit India Movement in 1942. Of course the Rure leaders were with Ram Chandra during 1933-34. They would have carried with them this discredit for their whole life if they had not jumped into the freedom struggle again in 1940.

Seeing history through Ram Chandra's eyes is not to see history from below, it is to see history from the middle, for Ram Chandra was neither a national leader nor a grass-root leader, he was a kind of trishanku.⁶⁷ How different was the vision of an ordinary kisan? He considered Gandhi as the saviour of kisans, particularly after the publication of "manifesto". Ram Chandra at an early stage considered V.N. Mehta as the saviour of kisans. During no-rent campaign of 1932-33 he considered Vishnu Sahai as the incarnation of God Vishnu. Perception of kisans could not

be the same as the perception of the leaders like Ram Chandra. Kisans would never consider the Deputy Commissioners as gods and saviours, they could be devils at the most.

A character similar to that of Ram Chandra was Kalka Prasad of Rae Bareli. His area was not the whole of Awadh but a restricted area of Rae Bareli. But at one time he managed Congress Presidentship of the District. The office carried Rs. 50/- per month allowance. So once he was removed from Congress Presidentship he became an opponent of the Congress. This is the problem with offices carrying payment. Once the payment is stopped the ideological commitment is also stopped. Grass-root leaders do not have such offices. Therefore, their ideological commitment is not stopped. Though Kalka Prasad was a minor figure as compared with Ram Chandra, he too attracted the attention of Gyan Pandey to be considered as an important leader of tenantry because he started opposing Congress. While bringing Kalka Prasad closer to Ram Chandra, Pandey writes:

Ram Chandra condemned as shortsighted and inadequate a resolution calling for the fixing of rents in accordance with the rates of a year when prices were at the level of 1931, suggesting that much more radical changes were required in the countryside. Kalka Prasad, like Baba Ram Chandra, had his ears tuned to the 'masses'.⁶⁸

Obviously the ears of Gandhi, Jawaharlal and their Congress for Pandey were not tuned to the masses, they were tuned to the landlords. Masses required rent reduction not only to the level when prices were at the level of 1931. They required more radical changes in the countryside. Granted more radical changes were possible. But bringing down rent rate to the level of prices in 1931 is certainly not a less radical change. It would have led to the nineteenth century rent rate. And the British were unwilling to bring down the rent rate even to the 1901 level. They stuck at 1915 when the rent rate was very high. The no-tax cam-

paign was not for anything else but to bring down rent rate. What was Ram Chandra doing throughout 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934 for the countryside except long-winded speeches and introducing resolutions. Had he put any of those resolutions in practice? Had he gone to jail for his dear tenants?

It is not the case that Awadh lacked grass-root leaders, or that there were no leaders coming from the class of tenants, but that they did not fit into the framework of subaltern historiography. Therefore, their names have been deliberately omitted. Since the subaltern historiography is simply the colonial historiography in disguise, those grass-root leaders who opposed the colonial rule have no place in this kind of historiography. And most of the grass-root leaders, if not all of them, opposed the colonial rule. Therefore, the subaltern historiography is not an attempt to write history from below, it is an attempt to write history from the middle. It is an attempt to write history from the point of view of Ram Chandra and Kalka Prasad, the two, and the only two heroes of the subaltern historiography on Awadh. The third one has yet to be discovered. History from the above is the history of the nationalist historiography in which history has been looked at from the point of view of the national leaders like Tilak, Gandhi, Moti Lal, Rajendra Prasad and so on. The masses are unlimited, but the subaltern historiography on Awadh could discover only two leaders of the masses. The position of nationalist historiography is better than that of the subaltern historiography. If it has the revolutionaries like Subhash and Jawaharlal on the one side, it has the reactionaries like Rajagopalachari and Srinivas Sastri on the other. Gandhi maintained a balance between the two. History from below is richer than the history from above. It is the history looked at from the point of view of such leaders as Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din, Priyag, Sri Harakh, Gudar

Kurmi, Matacharan, Deota Din, etc., to name a few from a very limited area of Awadh. Since the tenants of Awadh have a long list, the grass-root leaders of those tenants have a long list. Thanks to the Intelligence Department of U.P. that their names have been preserved for writing a genuine history of the people, a genuine history from below. This department has given equal importance to a grass-root leader as to a leader of the national importance, because the strength of the latter depends on the strength of the former. A grass-root leader, be he Jhinguri Singh or Gudar Kurmi, in the eyes of the British, was as dangerous as Jawaharlal. They tried to trace the movement of both. If Jawaharlal wished to evict the British from India he could not do it without taking the help of grass-root leaders. For it is these leaders who stood between the national leaders and tenantry.

History from below, history of the people, is the history that has not yet emerged either in the writings of the nationalist historians of Awadh or in the writings of the subaltern historians of Awadh. They have their own reasons for avoiding such a history. If subaltern historiography means the same as the history from below, if this is the very definition of subaltern historiography, then what has been written in the name of subaltern historiography on Awadh does not deserve this name. A genuine people's history of Awadh has yet to be written. History of Ram Chandra and Kalka Prasad is not the history of the people, it is not a history from below, it is a history from the middle.

The British converted the tenant world into a closed world. The immediate worry of the tenant was how to get one square meal a day? His meal depended on the piece of land that he cultivated, and that piece was led to a moneylender. Thus the landlord and the moneylender are two extreme poles between which the tenant's life swung. Evictions and other kinds of civil and criminal cases made the tenant acquainted with the

British law courts and police stations. The tenant's suffering sometimes made him militant and radical. His militancy and radicalism were however restricted to his own world of landlords and moneylenders. The British introduced such a watertight system, the system of zamindari and taluqdari, that the tenant militancy remained restricted to this system. When the subaltern historians talk about the autonomy of peasant consciousness, they are accepting the colonial situation in which the peasant world is a closed world. A tenant had neither the ability, nor the power nor any kind of desire to oppose the British. Thus the tenant struggle was quite unlike the Congress struggle. Congress was struggling for swaraj, it was struggling to make India free from the foreign rule, whereas the tenants were struggling only against their landlords. Congress could not give up siding with the landlords. Therefore, it could not be faithful to the tenant struggle. Swaraj presupposed unity of all classes whereas the tenant situation presupposed the struggle between tenants and landlords. This is the paradox which the subaltern historians have presented for solution. The paradox has only an academic value. If the subaltern historiography is accepted then the status of the taluqdars and other propertied classes becomes quite envious. Not only the British supported them, Gandhi's no-tax campaign hardly touched them. Tenant was demolished by both, the taluqdars and the Congress.

The academic paradox to which we have referred above has been generated simply by looking at the tenant as a windowless creature. His consciousness is autonomous, in the sense that the outside influences do not affect him, and he does not influence the outside world. If he is affected by the outside influences then his consciousness is not autonomous. But it is quite wrong to think that the tenants' world is a closed world. The windows of his world are wide open. Awadh tenant struggle from 1917

to 1939 clearly falsifies both, the British administrators and the subaltern historians. Though the taluqdars forgot, the tenants did not, their war against the alien rule in 1857. The tenants were not fighting for any material gains in that war. They were simply trying to evict the foreigners from their land. Both, the tenant struggle and the Congress struggle, were products of the general mass awakening, to use a phrase from Jacques Pouchepadass. This awakening had its source in 1857, particularly in Awadh and parts of Bihar. The idea of swaraj was not something that was invented by Gandhi or even by Tilak. They only echoed this idea. If anything new was invented, it was the swaraj flag. Swaraj became a common cry of tenants during the Non-cooperation Movement which was the first major offensive of the Congress against the British. The tenants of Awadh interpreted swaraj in terms of Gandhi raj. These tenants solved the academic paradox generated by the subaltern historiography. And it hardly matters that the idea of swaraj was not clear to the nationalist intelligentsia. It might have been quite vague and nebulous idea to them. But for the tenants of Awadh swaraj stood for the removal of two alien powers, the British and the taluqdars. Taluqdars alienated themselves from the tenantry so much that they were as good as the alien power. Since the tenant struggle was not the product of non-cooperation, though it helped this movement, it continued after the withdrawal of non-cooperation. And it continued under the swaraj flag. Jhinguri Singh and his associates after 1922 were found carrying swaraj flag with them. And "swaraj" and "Gandhi Raj" were commonly used by the masses of Awadh when they revolted in 1920-21. The fact that the tenant struggle of Awadh was fought under the swaraj flag shows that the tenant struggle was not parochial and limited. It is quite a fictitious theory to think that the tenants of Awadh lived in a closed windowless world. To talk about the autonomy of peasant consciousness is to humiliate the

peasant. It is to take away from him the capacity to grow. Plato demonstrated long ago the potentiality of a slave-boy to become an abstract mathematician. Awadh tenants were freedom fighters and not just the fighters for their petty interests. Gandhi only reminded them about their strength to fight.

Gyan Pandey is not satisfied with the history from the middle. He wishes to raise its standard to the history from the above. Therefore, he starts backing up the elite opposition to Congress. In late 1930s the Communist and Kisan Sabha opposition, particularly in Bihar, was an elite opposition to the Congress. This opposition, in the nature of its organisation and the method of protest, was a true copy of the Congress. In the Congress opposition to the British, generally the blood did not flow. Only arrests were made. Very rarely the blood flowed as happened in Kahla and Semaria in U.P. Generally the government officers refrained from firing the non-violent mob. If this could be called as a "safe-game" of the Congress, the Communist and the Kisan Sabha agitations were infected with the safe-game tactics. Gyan Pandey refers to the clash between peasants and zamindars in a village of the Saran District of Bihar during the Congress Ministry of 1937-39. Kisan Sabha (Communist) supported the peasants. Gyan Pandey has picked up only one name to mention in his narrative of events, the name of Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayana, who is a paradigm of elitism. Gyan Pandey has referred to him as 'the widely respected old Congress worker-turned-sadhu-turned-Communist'. He has also referred to his 'Russian wife and the child of that marriage'.⁶⁹ But he has not referred to the fact that he was a giant academician, author of several important works and he served in the Soviet Union for several years. He is more known to the academic world than to any other world. Peasant activity was his short-term project, and the project required him to act as a leader. It is because of his elitism that 'a fu-

re broke out over the handcuffing, on his numerous journeys between jail and court.⁷⁰ Ordinary grass-root leaders are handcuffed every day and it hardly matters. They make no news. But it is a news if a person from the elite is handcuffed. The respect of a person is gone once he is handcuffed. He becomes an ordinary convict. How can one imagine that Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayana be treated as an ordinary convict? If he was a convict he was a convict of a higher order. Convicts have their own hierarchy. Ordinary convicts are distinguished from "political convicts". Among the ordinary convicts, there are dangerous ones and those who pose no challenge. Similarly, political convicts have their own hierarchy. The fact that an ordinary grass-root leader becomes a political convict does not mean that he becomes an A-class convict. Rahulji was a respectable convict. The government should have treated him differently from other convicts.

Rahulji was not one of those nameless creatures, called peasants, on whose name several academicians are surviving, on whose name there has been a constant flow of books and articles. They remain nameless even in those books and articles which have been designed to highlight them. Even in those works only the names of persons from the elite society occur. In what sense can Gyan Pandey's article 'Congress and the Nation, 1917-1947' be considered as an attempt to write a history from below? Rahulji, according to Gyan Pandey, was arrested along 'with twenty-five men on the peasants' side'.⁷¹ These twenty-five men remain nameless, and Gyan Pandey is supposed to have written history from below. These twenty-five men are certainly not nameless, their names were recorded in the police station and so also in the jail records. In order to write a history from below one is required to see the police and jail records. It is quite easy to write an elite history and, therefore, Gyan Pandey preferred it to the writing of history from be-

low. What Gyan Pandey has written is not a history from below but a history from the above. His sympathies are with Rahulji and not with the twenty-five persons arrested along with him. He is very much pained to see that Rahulji was handcuffed and he had to walk from jail to the court. He was like Christ suffering for the sake of humanity. Twenty-five others hardly mattered. Gyan Pandey has added one more information about Rahulji's glamorous personality, his Christ-like appearance before the masses.

Consider further the events of Saran as described by Pandey. Perhaps no blood-shed occurred in Amwari; otherwise, Pandey would have recorded it. It was a Communist agitation without the flow of blood, quite unlike the Lenin or Mao-type agitation. If the agitation requires to be typed then it was a Gandhian-type agitation, where people may be arrested, and may be put in the safe custody of the police. Perhaps Rahulji saw to it that no blood-shed occurred. He preferred the path of Gandhi to that of Lenin or Mao. Marxism had to be sacrificed for the sake of Communism in India. Gandhian and not the Marxian Communism fits the colonial situation of India. Rahulji's further activities after arrest exhibit the Gandhian kind of agitational tactics. While in jail 'Rahul and his coworkers had to go on a prolonged hunger strike in order to obtain the status of political prisoners.'⁷² The tenant-landlord struggle was converted into the struggle for obtaining a better status as prisoners. The prisoners of Amwari deserved a better status than the prisoners who commit ordinary crimes. Political prisoners are treated better than the ordinary prisoners. What about the Russian and Chinese jails? Could a prisoner from the Red Army of China expect a better treatment in jail? Could a Bolshevik soldier expect a better treatment in jail? To declare oneself as a political prisoner in the Communist Russia, or Russia before Communism, was to invite hell-fire. So was the case of

China. In India you had a different situation. What about the technique of hunger strike? Is it a Marxian technique? Who invented this technique? Has not Gandhi invented it? And hunger strike is launched, not for the removal of zamindari system, but for obtaining a better political status, the status as a politician rather than an ordinary peasant. Where is the distinction between a Congress agitation and the agitation launched by the Kisan Sabhas of the Communists? If the Congress agitations were deceitful so were the Kisan Sabha agitations deceitful. If the Congress was a body of the elitists, so was the Kisan Sabha a body of elitists. Like the Congress, the Kisan Sabha suffocated tenant militancy.

Taking clue from Rahul's Meri Jivan Yatra Gyan Pandey has described the Bihar Congress as "Zamindar Congress".⁷³ But if one takes clue from Gyan Pandey's present article then one can safely describe Bihar Kisan Sabha as the body of "Marxist Theoreticians Sabha". The sample conviction of Rahul does not destroy his image as a theoretician. If we study the history of the Communist movement in India till India's freedom it was dominated not only by the city intelligentsia but that intelligentsia hardly tried to study seriously the Indian situation. It supported the tenant militancy but in the Congress fashion, therefore failed to evolve the Indian Red Army. Perhaps the colonial strength did not allow any kind of revolutionary army to grow. Ultimately all the possibilities lead to Gandhi. Gandhian way of fighting the British was the only way. What was required was to mobilise an unarmed army. Once the unarmed people wake up, then it is genuinely the people's war. India was not a semicolonial country but a fullfledged colonial country. Communist opposition to Congress during 1937-39 was no better than the Congress opposition to the British, with one difference that the Congress Governments in 1937-39 were under the British Government, they

were not allies of the British, they were in war with the British. The British wanted their allies, the taluqdars, to win elections. If the taluqdars had won elections, then the resultant provincial governments of U.P. and Bihar would have been allies of the British. Not the allies but the enemies of the British ruled over Bihar and U.P. in 1937-39.

Gyan Pandey wishes to show that the electoral defeat of taluqdars and zamindars in 1937 could not be converted into their constitutional or political defeat. The zamindari system was not abolished. He wishes to divert attention from the constitutional difficulties in abolishing zamindari system. He wishes that the people should think that the Congress had no will and wish to abolish the zamindari system, because Congress itself was a zamindar party. Thus the tenants gave electoral victory to Congress, and Congress in return gave nothing to them. This is the view of the subaltern historians. Two and a half years' restricted rule of the Congress was no better than the hundred years' rule of the British. Abolition of the Oudh Rent Act by the Congress Ministry in 1939 was welcomed by the peasants all over Awadh; for it is this Act that distinguished them from the tenants of Agra province and led them to pay nazrana, hari, begari, etc. With the abolition of the Oudh Rent Act was abolished nazrana which was made illegal. And so were hari and begari made illegal. There was no question of taking the bolder step of abolishing the zamindari system, because the representatives of the tenants, i.e. Congress, were not having the Upper House of U.P. in their hands, and so was the Patron of taluqdars, the Governor, not in their hands. Neither the Governor nor the Upper House would have liked their allies to become totally paupers. Abolition of the taluqdari and zamindari systems was an impossible proposal. What was possible was to curtail their powers. If the British had abolished the Oudh Rent Act in

1932, and instituted all those reforms in favour of the tenants which the Congress Ministry did in 1939, then there would have been no necessity of repression of tenants during the no-rent campaign of 1932-33. No-rent campaign would have failed without cruelty, and the electoral defeat of the Congress in 1937 would have been ensured. And if Congress had failed to capture power in 1937, it dared not to start the individual satyagraha in 1940 and the Quit India Movement in 1942. But Willingdon preferred the other course, the course that led to the elimination of the British from India. Not the Congress but the British destroyed their own empire in India. Gandhi's political intelligence consisted in alluring the British to take wrong steps one after the other. Gandhi was far more clever after 1929 than all the British officials of India. He hypnotised the British to commit follies after follies.

Once the Oudh Rent Act was abolished officially in 1939, the grass-root leaders of Awadh tenantry like Jhinguri Singh and his associates jumped into the freedom struggle. Kisan Sabha became defunct. The tenant struggle was diverted towards the freedom of the country. After the abolition of Oudh Rent Act the grass-root leaders of tenants first performed the individual satyagraha and later participated in the Quit India Movement. Yet Gyan Pandey maintains that the tenants were dissatisfied with the performance of Congress Ministry in 1937-39. In support of his position he refers to the Communist agitations of Bihar. One need not take seriously the Communist agitations of that time because the moves of the Communists those days were governed by the Fatherland and not by the Motherland. Of course what happened in Bihar is not the concern of the present thesis. It seems that the Communists obtained a following in Bihar which they failed to secure in Awadh. No doubt the abolition of Oudh Rent Act was not the abolition of zamindari system. But what rights the Congress succeeded in securing for the te-

nants could never be imagined by the British during their rule since 1857. Things would have been very different if those rights were given to the tenants earlier. But rights of the tenants had never worried the British.

Compare the amendment to the Oudh Rent Act in 1921 with its withdrawal in 1939. The amendment of 1921 was a total hoax, but it has been praised by the colonial historians because the amendment procedure was conducted by the British. The colonial historians condemn the abolition of Oudh Rent Act, and the introduction of the U.P. Tenancy Act because it was the achievement of the Congress. If the amendment to the Act in 1921 was worth anything then why did the grass-root leaders of Oudh restart their agitation immediately after returning from jail in 1922? If the U.P. Tenancy Act of 1939 was an useless piece then why did they not restart their agitation in 1940? Why was the tenant agitation diverted to the individual satyagraha? The Rure leaders who started the tenant agitation in 1917, for the first time stopped their agitation in 1939. They were quite satisfied with the achievement of the Congress Ministry in 1937-39. Even Ram Chandra tried to come back to the Congress. Sudden stoppage of tenant agitation was disliked by many leaders who wished to use tenants in the fashion they liked. For example, Munishwar Datt, vakil of Pratapgarh, who was a founder of Praja Sangh in collaboration with Ram Chandra, condemned 'the kisans for their complacent acceptance of the Tenancy Act and their failure to agitate for further reforms.'⁷⁴ There is no doubt that the Tenancy Act of 1939 was full of holes and gaps. The biggest hole was the failure to abolish the zamindari system. But it had also biggest success. Its introduction led to the abolition of the Oudh Rent Act. This gave immense relief to those leaders who were struggling against it since 1917. Munishwar Datt came into politics in 1933, and jumped into the Congress politics only after

disbanding his Praja Sangh. Is it that Munishwar Datt continued to have the hangover of his Praja Sangh, and was trying to divert the attention of Awadh tenantry from their anti-British activities to anti-landlord activities? Since the Tenancy Act of 1939 did not abolish the zamindari, it was very easy for an intelligent leader to divert the attention of tenantry from the British to the zamindars. Congress was busy in its anti-war fund campaign, anti-recruitment campaign and the enrolment of volunteers for satyagraha. Grass-root leaders of tenantry in 1940 got themselves merged with the Congress movement against the British. They perhaps realised more than others that the zamindari would be totally annihilated only when the British left India. Jhinguri Singh wanted the British to be evicted. And he represented the thoughts of that tenantry which had the experience of tenant agitation for more than two decades.

Since the beginning of the Civil Disobedience in 1930 the Rure leaders, who represented the tenantry, were following a different course of action from Ram Chandra. Ram Chandra kept his position safe, Rure leaders did not. Rure leaders were with the Congress without DCC connections. Only for a brief period in 1933-34 Rure leaders were with Ram Chandra. Ram Chandra had an ideological difference with Congress. He perhaps did not believe that freedom could be won, or kisans would benefit, from such agitations as salt and no-tax. So also he did not believe in the efficacy of individual satyagraha. So he did not participate in any of them. But Rure leaders believed in all of them and participated in all of them. Tenant agitation for Rure leaders was harnessed with the Congress agitation. And from 1940 Rure leaders, through their actions, abolished the independent identity of the tenant agitation. Ram Chandra and Kalka Prasad might have continued their agitation in some form. Though the U.P. Tenancy Act was passed the govern-

ment was not free to implement it. It was engaged in War and its opposition by the Indians. It would be a very interesting piece of study to see whether the Tenancy Act of 1939 remained only in the U.P. Government files or it was also implemented. And when was it implemented? For the Act can very well be praised and condemned irrespective of the fact that it was implemented.

The concept of "swaraj" has troubled Gyan Pandey more than it has troubled the Congress intelligentsia or even the British officials. He raises the question

What did the demand for Swaraj in fact signify? Is the idea of liberation from colonial rule to be equated with the narrow vision of the eviction of the white man from India? It is doubtful if a single one of the more important Congress leaders had a notion of Swaraj that was restricted to the simple physical eviction of the British from the Indian soil. Had this been the sum total of the nationalist demand, the British would in all probability have been willing to submit to it long before they did.⁷⁵

This is making too rash a claim on behalf of the British Government. What was the ideal of 1857 revolt? Was it anything other than the physical eviction of the British from India? What was the message of Quit India Movement? Was it not telling the British that they should quit India, and leave Indians to govern themselves. Of course the national leaders disagreed about how the country was to be governed after the British quit India. Gandhi's Hind Swaraj might have differed from Jawaharlal's socialist India. But these matters and these differences did not mean that there was any disagreement about the physical eviction of the British from India. Physical eviction of the British from India was certainly not a narrow vision, it was a vision which presupposed immense sacrifice on the part of the people. Transformation of this vision into reality required a united action of the people. It is not only the national leaders who shared this vision, but the leaders like

Jinnah also wanted the British to quit India. And the peasants of Awadh declared long ago that the British were Pahikashtkars in India and hence should be immediately evicted.

What has led Gyan Pandey to imagine that the British would have probably left earlier if only their physical eviction was desired? What to say of leaving earlier, they had no wish to leave India even in those days when they really left India? They were inventing excuses after excuses to continue staying in India. Dominion Status was one such excuse. Even the announcement of elections in 1935 was an excuse. They were quite convinced that the no-rent campaign of 1932-33 had failed, and that the people were with the government. They were sure that the taluqdars would manage votes of their tenants. Once the elections were won and the taluqdars were installed in Awadh and zamindars and other propertied classes in other provinces, the British would have ruled India in a more democratic fashion than they would have ruled if the Dominion Status had been provided to India. Princely States were already with them. So there was no question of leaving India after 1947. The Government of India Act of 1935 was the result of the wrong reporting given by the government officials about Civil Disobedience. The subaltern historians too have used those reports for writing their own kind of history. Because of those reports Willingdon dug the grave of British rule over India. Reporting about Non-cooperation was no better than the reporting about the Civil Disobedience. If the Civil Disobedience reporting led to the fall of British Empire, the Non-cooperation reporting led to the genesis of this fall. Consider the government reporting 'on the peasant protest movement in Pratapgarh in 1920-21' quoted with approval by Gyan Pandey. He calls this report 'a contemporary observation'.⁷⁶ According to this contemporary observation in Pratapgarh 'in the first instance, it was a movement of tenants for the

amendment of 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 entirely of landless labourers, who were led to believe that they were somehow in the promised swaraj to acquire land and wealth.⁷⁷ If this observation is correct then in the Pratapgarh District in 1920-21, Kisan Sabha agitation started with a cry for the amendment to the Oudh Rent Act. This Sabha did not raise the voice of swaraj. Kisans were not interested in swaraj; swaraj allured only the landless labourers. In swaraj these landless labourers would be provided with land and wealth. Did the tenants own land and wealth, that they were deprived of the dream of swaraj? Majority of the tenants were no better than the bonded labourers. They were subject to eviction, nazrana, hari, begari, etc. What led the observer to prohibit them from the dream of swaraj? Anyway, Pratapgarh Kisan Sabha started raising the voice of swaraj when at a later stage some of its branches 'came to be composed entirely of landless labourers'. How can it be shown that this observation is totally fictitious about the growth of Pratapgarh Kisan Sabha agitation? Pratapgarh Kisan Sabha agitation since 1917 was a purely kisan agitation. And it was strictly under the control of the grass-root leaders of tenantry who never allowed it to pass on into the hands of non-kisans.

Time and again it has been argued by the historians of Awadh that the kisan agitation became violent in Rae Bareilly, Sultanpur and Fyzabad because in those districts it was dominated by the landless labourers and the unemployed village mass. Dhanagare connects the "aggressive form" with the "lowest strata" of village mass.⁷⁸ And in the lowest strata landless labourers form a major constituent. If Pratapgarh Kisan Sabha was degenerated into the sabha of landless labourers, then there should have been violence in Pratapgarh too. But there was hard-

ly any violence in Pratapgarh. Rather the Awadh historians are surprised about the fact that Pratapgarh which gave birth to the tenant agitation failed to observe the tenant violence. It seems that the government observer whose observation Gyan Pandey has quoted with approval might have seen the kisan workers of Pratapgarh in 1920-21 raising the voice of swaraj. Jhinguri Singh and his associates were as much interested in swaraj as in eviction, nazrana, etc. The observer started with the assumption that the voice of swaraj did not touch the tenants, it only affected landless labourers. Therefore, he concluded that the Pratapgarh Kisan Sabha agitation was degenerated into the landless labourers' agitation. Such a degeneration is possible only when the 'kisan sabhas were entirely composed of the landless labourers'. It is more of a constructed hypothesis rather than the result of field observation. If the government official's observation which Gyan Pandey has quoted had been about Rae Bareilly and Fyzabad, where the agitation resulted into an aggressive form, then it would have carried some weight. But the observation carries no weight in the context of Pratapgarh.

Reference to Dhanagare above does not mean that his views are unquestionably accepted. His study of the Awadh Peasant Revolts of 1920-22 and 1930-32 is more of the nature of logical analysis rather than of historical analysis, and is full of unwarranted generalisations. Referring to the first revolt he says that Ram Chandra 'and other local leaders like him, were extremists enough to advocate openly attack on landlords' estates. These village level leaders preached a form of class war which led tenants in Rae Bareilly and Pratapgarh districts into agitation on something approaching a mass scale.'⁷⁹ The situation of Pratapgarh has been equated with that of Rae Bareilly. Of course Crawley is responsible for this equation from whom Dhanagare derives his inspiration.⁸⁰ The two districts, however, stand apart from each other.

Pratapgarh gave birth to Rure Sabha prior to the birth of non-cooperation. It also gave birth to Oudh Kisan Sabha in October 1920. Oudh Kisan Sabha was the product of non-cooperation. And it is Pratapgarh that was chosen as the headquarter of Oudh Kisan Sabha. Being the headquarter of Oudh Kisan Sabha the voice of "swaraj in a year" for the first time was heard in Pratapgarh. Rae Bareli only echoed this voice. Again, the village level leaders of Pratapgarh were very different from the village level leaders of Rae Bareli. It is a totally false charge to call the village level leaders of Pratapgarh 'extremist enough to advocate openly attack on landlords' estates'. Neither Jhinguri Singh nor Kashi, Ajodhya or Bhagwan Din ever attacked the taluqdar estates. They were the village level leaders of Pratapgarh tenantry. Ram Chandra functioned under their patronage. Rae Bareli village level leaders did in 1920-21 preach open attack on landlords' estates. But they were sporadic leaders produced on the spur of the moment, and disappeared from the scene as hurriedly as they appeared on the scene. The Pratapgarh village level leaders were tenants first and leaders afterwards. The sporadic leaders of Rae Bareli tenantry were leaders first and tenants at no time. Majority of them were babas and faqirs, quite unlike Ram Chandra who too was a baba. Jhinguri Singh, Kashi, Ajodhya, Bhagwan Din and Priyag kept Ram Chandra tamed. They did not allow him to go wild. But the leaders of Rae Bareli, like Janaki Das, Ram Ghulam and Rahmat Ali Shah had no grass-root leaders to restrain them. They openly preached violence. They claimed that they were bringing swaraj for the tenants, but they were distancing the tenants from swaraj.

Is it not strange that the cry of swaraj should have affected Pratapgarh differently from Rae Bareli? Suppose it is maintained that the cry for "swaraj in a year" was responsible for tenant violence in

Rae Bareli. It clearly means that this cry fell on the deaf ears in Pratapgarh. But this is certainly not true. Even the government officers maintained, as becomes clear from the contemporary observation quoted by Gyan Pandey, that there was cry for swaraj in Pratapgarh. But this cry did not lead to violence in Pratapgarh. Then how could this cry be held responsible for violence in Rae Bareli? Perhaps the cry for swaraj was heard more in Pratapgarh than in Rae Bareli. Pratapgarh was the headquarter of Oudh Kisan Sabha. And the Pratapgarh cry for swaraj was not stopped even after the tenant leaders were sent to jail. As soon as they came out from jail in 1922 they started raising the cry for swaraj. Tenant leaders of Pratapgarh were more serious about their struggle than the tenant leaders of Rae Bareli.

According to Dhanagare 'in 1921 the poor peasants and landless were doubly alienated and they resorted to direct action and violent resistance.'⁸¹ But his analysis should be restricted only to Rae Bareli. It should not be extended to Pratapgarh. In Pratapgarh there was no direct action and no violent resistance. Does it mean that there were no poor peasants and landless labourers in Pratapgarh? But how can it be believed? According to the government information given by Gyan Pandey several kisan sabhas were entirely composed of landless labourers. Perhaps an answer to the question why there occurred no violence in Pratapgarh lies in the quality of leadership. The leaders of Pratapgarh tenantry were themselves tenants, and knew what was good for the tenantry. The leaders of Rae Bareli tenantry were themselves not tenants, hence they were not interested in the welfare of tenantry. If like the Rae Bareli tenantry Pratapgarh tenantry too had babas and faqirs as their leaders, Pratapgarh too would have observed tenant violence. Having violence and not having violence depends to a large ex-

tent upon the quality of leadership. Rae Bareli demonstrated poor quality of leadership.

While studying Dhanagare's treatment of the no-rent campaign of 1930-32 one's knowledge of history comes to an end. Two pages from his book, i.e. 121 and 122, make history quite difficult. Consider the first paragraph of the page 121:

The 'no-rent' campaign began in Oudh in early 1930; it was a prelude to the nation-wide civil disobedience movement that the Congress embarked upon in April 1930. The campaign, first started in the Rae Bareli district by Rafi Ahmad Kidwai with the blessings of Motilal Nehru, succeeded in rousing the tenantry to withhold rents.⁸²

Does not this passage mean that the no-rent started before the Civil Disobedience of April 1930? And what was started by Rafi Ahmad Kidwai with the blessings of Motilal Nehru in Rae Bareli was a no-rent campaign because it 'succeeded in rousing tenantry to withhold rents'. Perhaps Dhanagare confuses the start of salt agitation in Rae Bareli in April 1930 with the no-rent agitation. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai started the salt agitation in Rae Bareli at that time, so at that time there was no question of asking the tenants to withhold rent. To construct Dhanagare's picture of historical events, in Oudh the no-rent campaign began prior to Gandhi's Civil Disobedience. It was started by Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal. Jawaharlal addressed a 'series of peasant meetings in Rae Bareli district in February to advise tenants not to pay enhanced rents to their landlords.'⁸³ The UPCC 'endorsed Nehru's action subsequently'.⁸⁴

When the no-rent campaign was in progress in Oudh, according to Dhanagare, Gandhi started his salt agitation to make no-rent campaign a secondary affair. Consider the second paragraph of the page:

The civil disobedience movement inaugurated by Gandhi in April 1930 was confined to breaches of the salt law. This symbolic protest was designed to side-track the mounting discontent of

the peasantry, but in U.P. the attempt recoiled on the Congress since as the civil disobedience movement became ritual protest the no-rent campaign receded into the background.⁸⁵

No-rent campaign of U.P. was shunted off to the backstage by the ritualistic activity, called, salt agitation. This ritualistic activity was invented to side-track the no-rent agitation. The paragraph closes

A week after his release from prison in October 1930 Jawaharlal Nehru launched a no-tax campaign but even this saw only 6,249 Congress agitators arrested by the end of November. The first phase of civil disobedience failed to make any impact on the peasant masses.⁸⁶

This shows that Dhanagare distinguishes the 'no-tax campaign' of October 1930 from the 'no-rent campaign' of Awadh which was a 'prelude to the Civil Disobedience of Gandhi that started in April 1930'. Dhanagare's no-rent in Awadh might have started sometime before April 1930 may be in March or February of that year. With Dhanagare's work it would be difficult to distinguish history from non-history.

In order to understand what Dhanagare calls the first phase of Civil Disobedience Movement, one has to go to real history of Gandhi's movements. In real history there was no such thing as a 'no-rent campaign in Awadh which was a prelude to the nation-wide civil disobedience movement.' Civil Disobedience started with salt agitation which was inaugurated by Rafi Ahmad Kidwai in Rae Bareli in April 1930. The Civil Disobedience switched over from salt to no-tax officially in October 1930, but came to be implemented sometime in November of that year. Mohanlal Saksena was made in Charge of Rae Bareli no-tax agitation. By February 1931 this agitation reached its climax in Awadh, leading to the police firing at Kahla, Pratapgarh. The condition for the government became so bad that Irwin was forced to have a pact with Gandhi on March 5, 1931. What led Dhanagare to fix November 1930 as the end of the first phase of the Civil Disobedience? Does he restrict Civil Disobe-

dience to salt agitation? Does he mean that the salt agitation came to an end in November 1930 and, therefore, the first phase of the movement also came to an end? Why has Dhanagare fixed November 1930 as the demarcation line between the first phase and the second phase of the Civil Disobedience?

Concerning the second no-rent call, made in December 1931, Dhanagare maintains that the movement 'lasted in U.P. until mid-1932. This time both town and countryside were drawn into the Congress protest.'⁸⁷ His position is little better than that of Gyan Pandey for whom the movement was restricted only to big cities and their suburbs. Dhanagare follows Sumit Sarkar, Gyan Pandey and other subaltern historians in painting the picture of Congress as an elite body controlled by the urban and rural propertied classes. Since the no-rent campaign was started by the Congress, Dhanagare concludes

Leadership of the campaign this time was in the hands of the urban, middle class professional politicians who had links with the peasants because some of them were themselves petty zamindars or lawyers having vested interests in tenant problems.⁸⁸

Only those classes of people participated in this campaign who were like the leaders of the Congress, i.e. 'substantial landholders', 'rich peasants' and 'middle peasants'.⁸⁹ 'Poor tenants, undertenants and landless labourers' did not participate in this movement.⁹⁰ The latter classes of the people were not so much hit by the economic depression and the fall in prices as the former classes of people. Dhanagare believes in the thesis that the rural rich were hit more by the depression than the rural poor. Therefore, the no-rent campaign of 1930-32 was in the hands of the rural rich who were true copies of the urban rich. We have already argued earlier that the rural poor suffered more than the rural rich, because the economic friction worked more against the former than the latter. Poor tenants and undertenants did not have any staying

power. It would be a fruitless imagination to think that they could subsidise their income by working as part-time labourers. With depression the labour market became precarious. Why should no-rent be restricted to only the rural rich? Poor tenants and undertenants did not suffer less because of the successive crop failure and depression. They lost everything and, therefore, they had every reason to participate in the agitation.

Dhanagare's analysis of depression and the no-rent campaign is not grounded in the study of economic forces working on the people, it is based on the political behaviour of the lowest strata of society. Consider his remark

the economic depression and the fall in prices did not affect poor tenants, under-tenants and landless labourers as seriously as the substantial landholders and tenants. Had there been mass discontent in the lowest strata, it would certainly have manifested itself in a more aggressive form, as it had in 1921.⁹¹

The whole argument is very simple. If the economic condition of the lowest strata, composed of poor tenants, undertenants and landless labourers, deteriorates, they become violent. Since in 1930-32 there was no violence, the economic condition of the lowest strata did not sufficiently deteriorate. This also shows that they did not participate in the agitation of 1930-32. Only the upper strata participated in the agitation. And the upper strata is incapable of becoming violent. Dhanagare did not care at all to see that the situation of 1921 was not the same as that of 1931-32. Willingdon and Hailey were ready with their police force to see that no violence occurred. And Gandhi was preaching all the time not to become violent. Neither the government nor the Congress preached violence. Congress did not encourage leaders like Ram Ghulam, Janaki Das, Rahmat Ali Shah, etc., who encouraged violence in 1921. The fact that there was no violence in 1930-32 has no tendency to show that the depression did not hit the lowest strata more than the highest

strata. So also it has no tendency to show that the lowest strata did not participate in the no-rent campaign. It is just untrue to say that the lowest strata did not participate in the no-rent campaign. As a matter of fact it is this strata that completely refused to pay rent. And it is this strata that made zamindars frightened to collect rent. There are innumerable police reports showing the total involvement of tenantry in the no-rent campaign. And the campaign was crushed through repression.

Though Marx has been rejected Marxism continues to have its hangover on the social scientists. James Scott exhibits this hangover when he announces that 'the peasantry is a political nullity unless organised and led by outsiders.'⁹² Thus the peasantry is capable of only "pre-political actions". Whether an action is political or not is to be decided by seeing whether or not an outside hand is involved. Peasantry has been converted into an "ideal type", and no deviation from this ideal type is acceptable. Its militancy and radicalism, in the Indian context, are restricted to such actions as cutting bamboos of the zamindar or grazing his field. Peasants are capable of only everyday forms of protests. They are capable of thinking only in terms of harming this or that landlord, but not in terms of removing the taluqdari system or doing away with the money-lending system. These are political decisions, and the tenantry is incapable of taking them. Its mass organisation is limited to the village level mobilisation.

Irwin and Sanders have evolved their "ideal type" of peasant in terms of his diet and relationship with the landlord. He was satisfied with one square meal a day and he surrendered himself totally to his landlord. He suffered from feudal submissiveness. His world was limited to landlord and moneylender. He would not think in terms of a na-

tional revolt. It is only an external hand that can lead a tenant to give up his feudal submissiveness. So the Irwin-Sanders "ideal type" is only a variant of the Marxian ideal type of tenant.

To what ideal type of tenant do the subaltern historians subscribe? Do they not praise the tenants who were involved in such militant actions as cutting bamboos of zamindars and grazing their fields? Do they not condemn Congress for its failure to help tenantry for its sporadic acts of violence? The world of the tenant was different from the world of elite Congress. If a tenant talks about "swaraj" he has fallen from his "ideal type". Subaltern historians subscribe to the views of Marx-Scott-Irwin and Sanders.

Theories about the ideal type do not care about the progress and development of the tenant mind. The concepts of progress and development they reserve for their own mind. Their mind can progress from Alice in Wonderland to the Einsteinian Relativity theory. But the tenant mind cannot take a jump from his personal struggle with a landlord to the swaraj of his country. Swaraj is the business of the elite Congress, struggle against his landlord and his moneylender is the business of the tenant. A tenant is permitted to give up his feudal submissiveness, but only to the extent of his struggle against the landlord. Struggle for the national freedom lies beyond the horizon of the tenant mind, for the reason that the village in which he lives is his nation. The idea of "nation" is foreign to his mind. This foreign idea, imported from the West, can catch the imagination of the mind of a Gandhi or a Nehru, but not the mind of a Kashi or a Bhagwan Din. Kashis and Bhagwan Dins can think only in terms of saving themselves from eviction and nazrana. They can think only in terms of adding chabena to their one square meal a day. What have they to do with swaraj? This is a

luxurious concept, meant for the city middle-class intelligentsia. Tenant is satisfied without swaraj. He has achieved his swaraj if he is not evicted from his field and he is allowed his one square meal a day and chabena once or twice a day.

Indian freedom struggle has disproved all those theories which consider the tenant mind as stagnant. The tenant mind is as full of variety as the academic mind. If some tenants were busy in the everyday forms of protests, then the others were busy in the national protests. Irwin's ideal tenant became a rare phenomenon in the twentieth century. He was swept away in the storm of national awakening. We are well aware that the Rure Sabha was formed without any external hand, and it had several branches in the Patti tahsil before Ram Chandra came to stay at Rure. Tenants of Rure lost their feudal submissiveness and wished to come in contact with the external world. Contact with Ram Chandra was one step towards breaking their shell of autonomous consciousness. The second step was going to Allahabad and inviting Jawaharlal to visit them. They were progressing from Alice in Wonderland to Einstein's theory of Relativity. When did their actions become political and crossed the stage of pre-political existence? Is it when Ram Chandra joined them, or, is it when Jawaharlal visited them? No physical change occurred in them, either at the stage when Ram Chandra joined them or when Jawaharlal came to them. However, their mental horizon became different. They developed new hopes. But so is the mental horizon of one who knows Einstein's theory of Relativity different from the mental horizon of one who has only read Alice in Wonderland. Suppose one is a victim of the theory concerning the ideal type tenant. If you ask him the question-- when did the Rure Sabha become political entity? When did it transcend its pre-political existence? If he is very rigid his reply could be-- when Ram Chandra joined the sabha it became a political entity. Ram

Chandra was a Maharashtrian. His involvement with the Rure Sabha was the involvement of an external hand. Though the tenants of Rure and the surrounding villages were organised, there was no external hand, no external leader. Suppose you are taking your meal and the dessert is added to your meal and you are led to say 'now I have a real meal'. Does it mean that you did not have a meal when there was no dessert? Does it mean that you had a pre-meal before the introduction of dessert to your meal? Ram Chandra's coming to Rure was like adding dessert to your meal. And Rure Sabha was certainly not pre-political before Ram Chandra's arrival. It was political, but became more political with Ram Chandra, and was converted into a perfectly political body with the arrival of Jawaharlal on the scene. Rure Sabha had undergone only a quantitative change and not a qualitative change. There was no jump from no-meal to a perfect meal, it was only a jump from an imperfect meal to a perfect meal. Ram Chandra and Jawaharlal were new dishes, additional dishes, to the meal. Why should one expect that the tenants should not grow? Tenant mind is also a human mind. It has all the potentiality to grow.

But what about the Congress before coming in contact with the rural mass? Could it be called political before its messengers like Jawaharlal visited the village masses? Was not the Congress organisation terribly incomplete before the villagers joined it? Then could it be called pre-political because it hardly represented any percentage of the Indian masses? Were its activities not only sporadic when they were restricted to the forewalls of the cities? An activity is sporadic if it is not sufficiently comprehensive. Without the mass support Congress activities were sporadic. How does it matter if some people had demonstrations and hartals in the cities like Bombay, Poona, Delhi or Calcutta? Could freedom be achieved if Congress had remained confined to the cities? Could the British be evicted from India if the Congress had not gone to the

villages? But it would be wrong to think that the Congress was a pre-political body before it entered the villages. It was a political body, only an incomplete political body. It acquired completion when the villagers joined it. Non-cooperation gave an opportunity to Congress to become a complete political body. Champaran and Rowlatt gave Gandhi a chance to become leader of the masses. His movements were faster than the movements of the Congress to reach the people.

The current subaltern historiography is a backward step in political thinking. It has stopped at that mental stage of a tenant when he was not fully grown up, when he was busy in his petty quarrels with landlords and moneylenders. At times he was unable to secure food for his family, then he used to get involved in stealing and loot. His militancy was restricted to getting grazed the field of his zamindar or beating his servants. Subaltern historians look at these acts of the tenants with fascination. A stage came when the mind of the tenant grew to a wider horizon; he started entertaining the ideas of swaraj. Much before Jawaharlal's call for Purna Swaraj and Gandhi's call for the Civil Disobedience tenants of Awadh wished the British to be evicted from India. And they wanted physical removal of the British from this land. Yet the subaltern historians continued sticking to the old and outdated picture of tenantry. For them Congress was an elite body, perhaps because the idea of swaraj was an elite idea. Congress stood for swaraj and the tenant for his one square meal a day. There was no meeting point between the two. Congress struggle was for the national freedom whereas the tenants' struggle was for changing the rent law. The tenant struggle was parochial and limited. How wrong are these views? Not only that the tenant struggle was a national struggle, it started long before the invention of the national flag.

We have obtained political swaraj, but the writings of the subaltern historians show that we have not yet obtained swaraj in ideas. Political swaraj has a shaky foundation without swaraj in ideas. Long before India's freedom the tenants of Awadh acquired swaraj in ideas. There is nothing wrong if we, the historians, also follow our tenants about whom we are writing. Those tenants led the Congress to victory; they brought to this country the political swaraj. Let them lead us in obtaining swaraj in ideas. Unless we have these ideas we cannot write a genuine history of the people from below. We should not try to undo what the tenant did for our country. We should not try to tarnish his image.

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Interviews with the Kinsmen of Grass-Root Leaders and
their Associates--Representing the Rural Mass

I am grateful to the following persons who have spared their valuable time in telling me about the participation of their ancestors in the freedom struggle. The fine academic distinction between 'tenant struggle' and 'freedom struggle' has no meaning for them. They think that their ancestors were fighting for swaraj.

Interview-- Jaggi, wife of Baba Ram Chandra. When I interviewed her she was in the Pratapgarh Hospital. A Collectorate official took me to the hospital. In spite of her illness she was very active in talking about the tenant struggle and her past.

----- Swatantra Bharat, son of Jaggi and Ram Chandra. He returned to Pratapgarh after 14 years, Jaggi's illness brought him to his home. Earlier he met only one historian of Awadh, namely, Majid Hayat Siddiqi. I was the second one who was trying to write on Awadh.

----- Several kinsmen of Jhinguri Singh, Rure, Patti. Those who specially helped me are Thakur Shiv Shankar Singh, Thakur Ram Lakhan Singh, Thakur Ram Bahadur Singh, Thakur Dan Bahadur Singh, Thakur Shiv Bahadur Singh, Thakur Amar Bahadur Singh.

----- Sons of Sahdev Singh, Rure, Patti. They are Thakur Bharat Singh (Samar Bahadur Singh) and Thakur Rampher Singh (Kunwar Bahadur Singh).

----- Grandson of Sri Harakh, Anapur, Patti. Sri Harakh emerged as a grass-root leader in the transitory phase.

----- Son and grandson of Ramjatan Kurmi, Kahla, Patti. Ramjatan became an associate of the reputed Matacharan Kurmi who became active since Civil Disobedience.

----- Grandsons of Kashi Kurmi, Bisare, Patti. Kashi was an old Rure Sabha activist.

- Son of Bhagwan Din, Bhadraj, Patti. Bhagwan Din was also a Rure Sabha activist.
- Kinsmen of Ajodhya Kurmi, Tibipur, Patti. Ajodhya was also a Rure Sabha activist.
- Son of Priyag Kurmi, Bhaupur, Patti. Priyag was one of the four Kurmi grass-root leaders involved in the tenant struggle since its inception.
- Sri Mahanarayan Pandey, Purebabu, Patti. He was a contemporary of Jhinguri Singh's son who also died. He narrated several events connected with Jhinguri Singh's life.
- Sri Musafir Chaudhry, Chariya, Patti. He was responsible for my contact with the family members of Sri Harakh.
- Sri Sant Prasad Lal, Bharokan, Patti. He preserved the papers of Baba Ram Chandra and handed them over to Professor Kapil Kumar. Hardly anything of significance remains with him now.

Interviews with the City Intelligentsia of Awadh

These Interviews were Taken in September 1992 and March 1993

The following persons gave me valuable information concerning the Awadh tenant struggle because of their direct or indirect association with the struggle. I am thankful to all of them for sparing their time.

- Interview— With Pandit Sripat Misra, a former Chief Minister of U.P. He is from Sultanpur. He gave me valuable information about the tenant struggle of Sultanpur.
- Sri Ravindra Sanatan, a freedom fighter and an old journalist of Pratapgarh. He is originally from Balia. Balia police tortured him during the Quit India.
- Sri Ram Naresh Shukla, an ex-Minister of U.P. The interview was taken before his death when I went to Pratapgarh in September 1992.

- Pandit Ram Raj Shukla, Ex-Minister of U.P. Interviewed in 1992.
- Pandit Ram Adhar Tiwari, Ex-M.L.A. and freedom fighter.
- Comrade Lal Bahadur Tiwari, Advocate, Pratapgarh.
- Mr. Imtiaz Uddin Khan, Advocate, Pratapgarh. He is a litterateur.
- Mr. Krishna Murari Pandey, son of Matabadal Pandey. Matabadal was one of the founders of Oudh Kisan Sabha.
- Sri Om Nirankar Dev Upadhyaya, President of the District Kisan Congress, Pratapgarh.
- Kamla Kant Pandey, Advocate, Pratapgarh. He is the Secretary of Baba Ram Chandra Awadh Kisan Sabha.
- Lal Suresh Kumar Singh, Advocate, Pratapgarh. Associated with District Kisan Congress.
- Mr. Radha Raman Tripathi, Advocate, Pratapgarh.
- Mr. Rajendra Tiwari, Advocate, Pratapgarh.
- Sri Kranti Kumar, son of Muneshwar Datt Upadhyaya, Pratapgarh.
- Sri Jairam Verma, Advocate, Pratapgarh.
- Fateh Bahadur Singh, sale-tax office, Pratapgarh (a kinsman of Jhinguri Singh).
- Sri Rajju Bhai, Bombay Studio, Pratapgarh.
- Sri Harshvardhna Shukla, son of Uditnarayana Shukla, editor of "Awadh Saptahik". I obtained an old copy of the paper from him.
- Bansh Bahadur Singh, Advocate of Patti (a kinsman of Jhinguri Singh).
- Mahendra Kumar Pandey, Advocate of Patti.
- Professor Girish Chandra Shukla, Principal of Patti Degree College, Pratapgarh District.
- Professor K.D. Sharma, Patti Degree College, Pratapgarh District.

An Interview with a Grandson of a Tenant Leader

Excerpts from an interview with the grandson of Sri Harakh. Sri Harakh emerged as a leader of tenantry around 1925. Similar views have been expressed by the other descendents of grass-root leaders of tenantry.

Question — What is your name and what is your profession?

Answer — I am Sitla Prasad Misra and I am a primary school teacher.

Question — What is your relationship with Sri Harakh?

Answer — I am grandson of Sri Harakh Misra. This is the same house in which Sri Harakh lived. The name of our village is Anapur which belongs to the Patti tasil of Pratapgarh District.

Question — What is the name of your father? What was his profession?

Answer — My father's name is Bhavani Bhikh Misra. He was also a freedom fighter like my grandfather. Before his death he was getting the Freedom Fighter's pension.

Question — What is your opinion about the kisan struggle in which your ancestors were involved?

Answer — Kisan struggle was nothing but the freedom struggle. It was to unite kisans for the freedom struggle that the name kisan struggle was given to it. My grandfather was against the zamindari system. It is for abolishing the zamindari system that the kisans were fighting against the British rule.

Question — Do you know anything about Baba Ram Chandra?

Answer — Baba Ram Chandra was a Kurmi. He used to move with Jhinguri Singh. Once Jhinguri Singh contested an election against my grandfather. Baba Ram Chandra supported Jhinguri Singh. My grandfather was defeated.

Interruption— There was an interruption at this stage. I was surpri-

sed to hear that Baba Ram Chandra was a Kurmi. I corrected the impression.

Question — What was the election in which your grandfather opposed Jhinguri Singh?

Answer — The election was for the Presidentship of the Congress Committee.

Question — Can you tell about the caste-composition of tenantry organised by your grandfather?

Answer — The situation was very different those days. All tenants were involved in the freedom struggle irrespective of their caste. Kurmi tenants were in majority, so it was natural for them to dominate the scene. Though a Brahmin my grandfather was followed by the Kurmi tenants. All the villages around Anapur are Kurmi villages.

Question — Were there any groups among the leaders of tenant struggle?

Answer — There were broadly two groups, extremists and moderates.

Question — To which group did your grandfather belong?

Answer — I do not know. But I know quite well that my grandfather started working in the press started by Raja Rampal Singh of Kalakankar. My grandfather also converted my father into a freedom fighter. On some occasions both of them went to jail together.

Notes for the guidance of lecturers and for furnishing hints to
local papers for articles.

I.—Whether Mahatma Gandhi was right in starting the present
movement.

1. According to the wishes of the congressites the Royal Commission was appointed before its proper time.

2. When the selection of the personnel of the Simon Commission caused resentment, the Government appointed an Indian Central Committee consisting of selected members of both the Houses of Indian legislatures, which worked side by side with the Royal Commission, on terms of equality with the Commission, as was announced by the then Prime Minister in the House of Commons.

3. When even this did not satisfy the Indians, His Excellency the Viceroy went to England and advocated the cause of Indians before His Majesty's Government and other prominent politicians there.

4. His Excellency the Viceroy returned from England in October 1929, and on November 1, 1929, he announced that Dominion Status was the ultimate aim of India's constitutional development.

5. He also announced that, with a view to get first-hand knowledge of Indian sentiment, a Round Table Conference would be held in London, in which representatives of all shades of opinion will be invited for free and independent discussion of the problems affecting India.

6. Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and other leaders of the Congress, also leaders of many other political parties in India, welcomed the announcement. The leaders issued a manifesto thanking the Viceroy for the announcement, and expressing their general appreciation of the announcement.

7. On December 23 took place the historic meeting between the Viceroy and Messrs. Gandhi, Moti Lal Nehru, Patel, Jinnah, and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru at the Viceroy's House at Delhi. On behalf of the Congress party the view was expressed that unless previous assurances were given by His Majesty's Government that the purpose of the

Conference was to draft a scheme for Dominion Status, which His Majesty's Government would undertake to support, there would be grave difficulty about Congress participation.

8. His Excellency made it plain that the Conference was designed to elicit the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which will be submitted to Parliament and that it was impossible for him or for His Majesty's Government in any way to prejudge the action of the Conference or restrict the liberty of Parliament.

9. The Congress view presented before His Excellency was certainly not shared by all schools of thought, specially the minority communities, such as Musalmans, Sikhs and depressed classes.

10. The Conference broke down, and on December 31, the Congress, at their meeting at Lahore, formally changed their aim from Dominion Status to Complete Independence.

11. On January 25, the Viceroy addressed the Legislative Assembly, and again on February 7, he addressed the Provincial Darbar at Lucknow, in which he declared "Great Britain can never have any other purpose for India than to bring her to a place of equal partnership with the other self-governing Dominions."

Breaking of salt law.

1. The salt tax is not a new tax. In certain countries it is coming from ancient times. Germany derives a huge revenue from this tax. Italy and Australia also have this tax. In Asia itself China derives two crores of rupees from this tax. The Japan Government possesses a monopoly over the manufacture, purchase and sale of salt. Spain possesses proprietary rights over salt. Brazil, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, and Venezuela also recognize this tax.

2. In India this tax is traceable from the time history was written. In 185 B.C. the Mauriyan Government possessed a monopoly over salt. From the inscriptions about Gupta family and Sila-ba-Han Kings of the Deccan in 500 A.D. it appears that their Governments possessed full monopoly over salt. Artha Shaster also tells us that the Government maintained a monopoly over salt; they also levied a tax on the export and import of salt.

3. The Ain-i-Akbari tells us that the Mughal Emperor also continued this tax. Near and about the Emperor's camp salt was exchanged in return for certain kinds of staple food, and the price so charged was two and a half times more than that at which the salt was sold in the beginning of the twentieth century. It is true this tax was rescinded

(3)

during the reign of Akbar the Great, but, as Vincent Smith in his history of Akbar writes, this order was not given effect to beyond his capital and its suburbs. In other provinces the salt tax continued as before.

4. During the last days of Muhammadan rule the salt tax was levied at 5 per cent. from the Hindus and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. from the Muhammadans in places in the neighbourhood of Hooghly (see ninth report of the Select Committee, 1788).

5. From the records of the Oudh Government it appears that although the receipts from salt were accounted for in the income of the Talukdars, yet the Government had a Salt Agent who was empowered to charge one rupee per maund from the salt factory.

6. When the British Government was established in Bengal the East India Company introduced two kinds of salt tax in 1762, viz, (1) on the land occupied by a salt factory, and (2) an export tax. But in 1782 both these taxes were combined and thirty rupees as tax were levied from each salt factory manufacturing from two hundred and fifty to three hundred maunds of salt. Afterwards this tax was enhanced by ten rupees per hundred maunds, but gradually the method of tax underwent some changes. In 1882 Rs. 2-6 per maund was charged as tax on the entire quantity of salt produced in India. This was gradually reduced and now Re. 1-4 per maund is charged as tax.

7. The expenditure of salt in the whole of India is 25 lakhs of tons annually, out of which ten lakhs of tons are imported and the rest is manufactured in Bombay, Madras and the Punjab. The retail price per maund is about Rs. 2-8 and the tax is Re. 1-4. In 1929 the wholesale price per maund was Re. 1-13, and the retail price per maund Rs. 2-4. The cost price at the factory is 4 annas 3 pies per maund. Therefore its retail price works out to the following:—

					Rs. a. p.
Cost price at the factory	...	...	...	...	0 4 3
Tax per maund	...	...	...	...	1 4 0
Transport charges including profit of wholesale dealers	...	...	...	...	0 4 9
Other expenses including profit of retail sellers	...	...	...	...	0 7 7
Total	...	...	...	...	<u>2 4 7</u>

8. Out of the quantity of salt consumed in India about 35 per cent. is manufactured under the supervision of the Government in India and about the same quantity is manufactured privately, only 30 per cent. being imported. Only 6 per cent. of the import comes from England, about the same quantity from Port Said, and 12 per cent. from Aden. The salt trade in Aden is in the hands of Indians.

9. Investigation proves that an adult consumes five seers of salt in a year. Therefore he spends 4 annas 6 pies per annum or one and a half pice per month on salt.

10. The advantage of Government supervision over salt is that the price cannot be enhanced indiscriminately. This discourages profiteering by the middleman, and ensures that the public gets the best quality of salt at the cheapest price. If Government withdrew their supervision over the manufacture of salt, we would get inferior and impure salt like other adulterated articles of food, such as *ghce*, etc., which would affect the health of the public.

11. The income from the salt tax is spent on things conducive to the public welfare, for instance, the police courts, education, hospitals and services, all of which are for the public benefit. Poor people pay no direct tax yet they derive full benefits from the above.

12. Seven crores of rupees are obtained through the salt tax. If this tax will be withdrawn, other taxes will have to be levied to carry on the public services which will cause hardship.

13. The salt tax is not objectionable for the following reasons :—

- (1) The quantity of salt consumed by each individual in India is very small and therefore the tax paid is negligible, i.e., 3 annas per year only.
- (2) This amount is so small that even if it were remitted there would be no appreciable gain.
- (3) If this tax were a bad tax, it would not be enforced in other countries of the world.
- (4) If it were burdensome, illicit manufacture would be universally resorted to, but we seldom hear of cases of illicit manufacture.
- (5) If the salt tax were unbearably high, there would have been an appreciable reduction in its consumption, but we find, on the other hand, that its consumption has gone up by 50 per cent. in the last fifty years.

Spirit of breaking laws.

1. The law of a country prescribes the limits of the right, privileges and liabilities of the people of a country. Transgressing the laws makes one liable to punishment. It is impossible to contemplate a country without definite laws of its own.

(5)

2. The object of law is the maintenance of peace and order, creating a sense of discipline in individuals and society, raising the standard of morality and carrying on the administration. With the increase of culture and civilization the laws of a country multiply.

3. The first great lawgiver of India was Manu, noted for his conception of law making. Muhammadans were also famous for their laws. In present days British laws are famous throughout the world. One instance will show how British law is conducive to justice. In France in a criminal case the burden of proving his innocence falls on the accused, but in England, as also according to the present law of India made by the British Government, an accused is considered innocent till the case against him is proved, and the burden of proving an accused guilty falls on the prosecution.

4. In olden times there were panchayats in India and they had their own laws. Even now certain castes of Indians maintain the system of panchayats for the administration of their social, economic and other affairs. These panchayats also base their decisions on established codes of traditions. One who disobeys the orders of panchayats is liable to punishment by fine, failing which he is excommunicated. Every member of the brotherhood has to respect the order of the panchayat.

5. Breaking of laws is like the removing of a keybolt from a bridge, dismantling the wall of a house or uprooting the poles of a canopy. If people take to breaking laws, the whole order of society will be upset. Civilization will be retarded, morality will give place to immorality, bloodshed and strife will be the order of the day.

6. The spirit of defiance of law if created among raw youths will become their second nature. It will enter home life and everywhere in society and will affect seriously the harmony and peace of home and society.

7. When *swaraj* is attained this spirit of law breaking will create difficulties at every step.

Non-payment of rent or revenue.

1. If a tenant will not pay rent, the Government alone will not be the loser, but the zamindar will also have to suffer. The result of this will be that there will be clash between tenant and zamindar.

2. The zamindar will have to eject the tenant and apply various methods of harassing him, which will run the tenant into debt and bring untold miseries on his whole family.

3. If revenue will not be paid, the Government will be compelled to take severe measures to collect it.

4. Receipts from revenue and taxes are utilized in two ways :—

(1) Maintenance of peace.

(2) Welfare of people.

5. For the maintenance of peace police, courts, etc., are established. For the welfare of people departments of Education, Public Health, Agriculture and Communications are established.

6. The primary concern of a country is the maintenance of peace, and the work of public welfare is contingent upon its establishment. Both require money, and if there is no peace, the establishment of peace will absorb all money and progress on the work of welfare will be retarded.

7. Participators in the Congress movement are mostly urban people. That is the reason why they do not dissuade the people of urban areas from paying house rent, because most of the Congress enthusiasts will be affected adversely. By dissuading the cultivators from payment of rents they want to win their political object.

8. This movement will deprive the zamindar of his legitimate dues.

9. If the followers of Gandhi have any real sympathy with the tenantry, then those of them who are zamindars should have remitted the rent of their tenants or at least have reduced it. But no example of remission or reduction of rent has been set so far.

10. In the last session of the Congress Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru as President plainly declared that he was against the zamindari right. This shows that the Congress movement is hostile to the zamindars' interest.

11. The Congress has passed a resolution of non-payment of revenue, but has not, in its place, suggested any better constructive scheme to get the necessary funds to meet the multifarious obligations of the Government in the direction of the maintenance of peace and public welfare.

12. The rent and revenue are both indigenous, i.e., "desi" or "swadeshi," as they were in vogue in this country since time immemorial. It is not understood why efforts are being made to discard them. When interviewed by the correspondents of the *Daily Telegraph*

and *The Times* Mr. Gandhi himself said that he did not intend to advocate non-payment of revenue.

13. During the Hindu period revenue used also to be realized. According to Manu one-sixth was the share of the Raja on the produce of the land.

With the development of civilization the incidence of revenue was enhanced. During the early part of the Muhammadan period half of the produce was taken as revenue, but during the reign of Sher Shah this amount was reduced, though this reduction did not endure for long. Akbar took one-third of the produce, but after Akbar the revenue was again gradually raised to one-half of the produce. During the last days of the Muhammadan period the percentage of dues realized from the *ryot* was very high; it was in the shape of revenue and various kinds of *abwabs*. When the British Government took over the reins of this country it adopted the policy of reducing the revenue gradually. From nine-tenths in the beginning, it brought it down to 50 per cent. in 1856. In 1929 by the Land Revenue Amendment Act of 1929 the percentage was further reduced between 40—45 per cent., and in pattidari villages, where the number of zamindars is large and their pecuniary condition unsatisfactory, only 30 per cent. of the entire amount of rent realized from such villages is charged as revenue. Further, it has been ruled that in no settlement will the enhancement of revenue exceed one-third on one's enhanced income. The period of settlement has also been raised from 30 to 40 years.

14. The Government have also framed very beneficial regulations in respect of enhancement of rent, such as in the province of Agra it is a rule that the rent once fixed cannot be enhanced before the expiry of a period of twenty years. Besides, a system of roster years has been established to fix the correct rate of rent and to lay down the basis for enhancement of rent. For this purpose a Roster Officer is appointed after every ten years.

Boycott of foreign cloth.

1. Boycott of foreign cloth is quite different from the wearing of it.

2. Boycott will estrange relations with other foreign countries and will detract their sympathy from India.

3. For the future development of India international trade is essential and boycott will negative that.

4. The population of these provinces is above 47 millions.

The average income of a man in this country has been estimated by some economists at Rs. 50 and by others, of whom Mr. Gokhale was one, at Rs. 30. According to Engel's Law of Averages (i.e., 16 per cent. of one's income) a man should spend on clothing only Rs. 8, when his income is Rs. 50, or Rs. 4-14, when the income is Rs. 30. Taking the figures available in the United Provinces for cloth sales, both foreign and Indian, made by machine and hand, it appears that the average sum spent on this kind of purchase does not exceed one-third or one-half of the respective figures given above. Of this sum no more than one-tenth is spent on hand-woven cloth, in spite of all the efforts of the Congress party to push forward this form of manufacture.

5. India cannot satisfy the barest needs of clothing material with its hand-spun stuff. The effect of the boycott will be that people will get a far less quantity of cloth than is absolutely essential for their needs.

6. The following will show the position of export and import of cotton piece-goods :—

Period.	Imports of piece-goods (millions of yards).	Mill production in India (millions of yards).	Handloom production in India (millions of yards).
Average during five years 1900—1906	1·991*	425†	846†
Average during five years 1924—1929	1·770*	2·036†	1·218†

* Net imports, i.e., total imports *minus* re-exports.

† Includes exports.

Stages of protection accorded to the Indian cotton industry since 1916.

(a) 1917-18.—Import duty on cotton piece-goods raised from $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. *ad valorem* to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. *ad valorem*, the cotton excise duty being retained at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. *ad valorem*.

(b) 1921-22.—Import duty raised to 11 per cent. *ad valorem*, the excise duty being retained at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. *ad valorem*.

(c) 1925-26.—Excise abolished.

(d) (1) Import duty of $1\frac{1}{2}$ anna per pound or 5 per cent. *ad valorem*, whichever is higher, imposed on cotton yarn as a measure of protection against imports of yarn, particularly from Japan.

(2) Import duty removed from machinery and certain mill stores for the benefit, primarily, of the cotton mill industry.

(e) 1930.—(1) Import duty increased for a period of three years from 11 per cent. to 20 per cent. *ad valorem* on cotton piece-goods not of British manufacture, and from 11 per cent. to 15 per cent. *ad valorem* on cotton piece-goods of British manufacture.

(2) The duty on cotton yarn $1\frac{1}{2}$ anna per pound or 5 per cent. *ad valorem*, whichever is higher, continued for another three years as a measure of protection against imports of yarn from China.

The discrimination in duty between British and non-British goods may appear anomalous, but it favours the cause of consumers and is not of much disadvantage to mill-owners. If the duty were raised from 15 to 20 per cent. on British goods, there would be an additional burden on the consumer of about two crores a year, and as only one-eighth of the British imports competes with Indian goods, seven-eighths of this additional burden would give no appreciable benefit to the mill-owners.

6. Boycott of British goods is futile because there is practically very little competition between British-made cloth and Indian cloth. The real competition is between cloth made in Japan and that made in India. Out of nearly 1,500 million yards of goods imported from the British Isles less than 200 million yards or about one-eighth competes with Indian-made cloth. But over 300 million yards of cloth of the value of nearly nine crores of rupees are imported from Japan, and nearly the whole of this competes with Indian goods. In other words, out of every 100 yards imported from Japan nearly every yard competes with Indian goods, but out of every 100 yards imported from England, only about twelve yards compete with Indian-made goods.

7. The method of hand-spinning cannot compete with the productive machine power. As a consequence cloth will not be available to the extent required in India, if a resort is made to hand-woven and hand-spun cloth only, which in turn will tend to raise the price of cloth beyond the purchasing power of the poor.

8. A man by nature looks for a cheaper and nicer thing; foreign cloth is cheap and superior in quality.

9. Want of competition and dearth of cloth will provide a splendid chance to cloth merchants to make money at the expense of the poor. Supposing that big merchants do not raise prices through the persuasion of Congress people, there is no guarantee that retail dealers of cloth would also miss this golden opportunity of adding to their riches. In

any case the evil effects of boycott will bring distress upon the poor, who will have to purchase inferior material at a much higher price.

10. The dearness of cloth will exasperate the people and they will take to looting shops as has been the bitter experience of the days during the Great War.

Students and politics.

1. Political problems are so exacting, intricate and difficult that even those who have grown grey in dealing with those problems commit mistakes. Students are hardly capable of understanding them.

2. Politics require calm thinking and coolheadedness. Young age is opposed to this. Passion often gets the better of a young man's discretion. It is dangerous for students to plunge into politics.

3. Participation in politics deflects a student from his studies. If a large number of students take part in politics, the number of learned men, which is already small, will dwindle.

4. India is still much behind in education, and it is in its interest that all who can afford to get education should devote themselves wholeheartedly to it.

5. India needs people who take to industry and art seriously. Young men should turn their attention to these.

6. The ideas imbibed in young age take root. The spirit of civil disobedience once created among small children will become their second nature. This will foreshadow serious consequences in future.

7. Putting students into the present movement is tantamount to creating in them a spirit of disobedience towards their parents and teachers.

8. During the last non-co-operation movement the education of the students who left their colleges and schools remained incomplete, and even till now a large number of such young men are without employment.

9. The institutions which refused Government aid during the non-co-operation days either closed ultimately or are still in a state of financial embarrassment.

Boycott of British goods, British banks and British ships.

1. The articles made in Great Britain are often better than those of other countries. Their medicines and machinery are especially superior.

2. Of all the banks in India British banks are worked on the best lines and are free from risks. These banks give every guarantee to their creditors of the soundness of their position. Boycotting of these means discarding superior articles and accepting inferior ones for the only reason that they are foreign or *bideshi*. A large number of Indian banks have failed in India and reduced a huge army of Indians to a state of penury.

3. Pressure is laid upon people to boycott British Insurance Companies. The result of this will be that Indian Insurance Companies will enhance their rates.

4. People who have already insured with British Companies will have to forgo all their deposits and the benefits accruing therefrom. Only the rich can do this, but not the poor.

5. The effect of the boycott of British ships will be that freights and fares will be raised for want of competition, and thus the price of imported goods will also go up. Articles exported from India will meet the same fate, and foreign markets will be closed to Indian articles on account of prohibitive prices.

6. The effect of all such movements will hit the labour class hard. Want of work in mills and factories will compel them to close down. Labourers will be discharged and will have to starve.

Hartals.

1. People who depend for their meals upon daily labour and its wages will starve if they do not get food-stuffs.

2. Villagers, both men and women, after a journey, come to a city market with heavy loads of merchandise and when they find markets deserted, tears run down their cheeks, as their inability to sell their goods prevents them purchasing food and so the family have to go to sleep without having had a morsel to eat.

3. When village people come to the city to sell their goods after making a long journey and find the shops closed it is a great disappointment to them. They often rely for their future meals on the sales they expect to make, and naturally have to starve with their family when they return without transacting any business.

Picketing of liquor shops and other intoxicants.

1. During the Muhammadan period in India there was a tax on intoxicants (vide page 470 of "Indian Taxation," by P. Banerji).

2. Government are not in favour of encouraging drink or the use of other intoxicants. Their policy has always been to mitigate the habit of drink gradually, and with that end in view Government have been gradually increasing the duty, lowering the strength of spirits and taking other measures conducive to that end.

3. In these provinces in 1919-1920 the strength of liquor was 25° and 50°, now its strength is from 25° to 35° and 50°. The duty in 1919-20 was 5·77 per gallon and in 1929-30 it was 10·04.

4. The Government have appointed Excise Committees in every district whose members are mostly non-officials and they have been given the option of increasing or decreasing the number of shops in their respective districts. Consequently during a period of ten years there has been a reduction of 1,700 shops. In 1919-20 the number of shops was 3,817 and in 1929-30 it went down to 2,117.

5. Formerly the time for sale of liquor was from morning till 8 p.m., but now liquor shops open in municipal towns, notified areas and towns under Act II of 1914 at noon and close at 7 p.m. from 16th October to 15th March, and at 8 p.m. during the rest of the year. In cantonments and rural areas they open at noon and close at sunset.

6. Formerly liquor shops remained open on all festivals, but now they remain closed on the day following the burning of *Holi* and on the principal *Dussehra* day.

7. The spread of education and the abolishing of certain social customs still in vogue in some Hindu castes will lead to the disuse of intoxicants sooner than the crude and lawless actions of misguided youths in picketing the shops.

8. Picketing of shops cannot stop the habit of drink ; on the other hand, it will find another avenue for the preparation and use of illicit liquor in a larger quantity.

9. Receipts from excisable articles are used on education, public health, and other works of common weal. Consequently, the non-receipt of tax from these articles will affect all work of public welfare.

What some of the scriptures say about loyalty to the King.

Muslim Scriptures.

1. O believers, obey God and His Prophet and the King who is ruling over you.—(Holy *Qoran*, para. 5, *ruku* 7, *sura nisa*.)

2. "Say, O Lord Thou art the Sovereign of the Earth and Heavens, Thou givest Kingdom to whomsoever Thou wilt. Thou honourest whomsoever Thou pleasest and debaseth him whom Thou pleasest. In Thine hand is good and Thou possessest power over everything."—(Holy

Qoran, page 70, translated by Dr. Maulvi Hafiz Nazeer Ahmad Khan, LL.D. of Delhi.)

3. "To God belongeth the Kingdom of the Earth and He giveth the same to whomsoever He pleaseth."—(Holy *Qoran*, page 216, above.)

"Do not make mischief in the Earth after its reformation, for God loveth not the mischief-makers."—(Holy *Qoran*, page 206, above.)

4. "A ruler, even if he be an Abyssinian, should be obeyed."—(*Siyah Sitta*.)

Hindu Scriptures.

1. "That I am in Kings (i.e., Kings, too, are forms of me). So to revolt against the King is to revolt against God."—(Lord Krishna in *Gita*.)

2. "A King is the very life of his people and his personality among the people is the manifestation of God's own personality." The *Shastras* speak of the King's status as next to that of God.—(Holy *Smiriti*.)

3. "He is the shadow and incarnation of God in the form of a human being, and the man who gives trouble to his King will suffer pain in this and in the next world."—(*Mahabharat*.—Bhism replying to Yudhister on a question about the status of Kings.)

S. N. A. JAFRI, B.A.,

BAR.-AT-LAW.

Publicity Officer.

GLOSSARY

<u>Ahimsa</u>	: Non-violence
<u>Aika, eka</u>	: Unity
<u>Angrezi Raj</u>	: British Government
<u>Avtar</u>	: Incarnation
<u>Baba</u>	: Saint
<u>Babu</u>	: Clerk
<u>Bazar, Bazaar</u>	: Market
<u>Bedakhli</u>	: Eviction
<u>Begar</u>	: Unpaid labour, as a custom tenants worked for the zamindar without obtaining any payment for their labour
<u>Bhusa</u>	: Chaffed straw, husk
<u>Bigha</u>	: Measure of land, generally 5/8 of an acre in U.P.
<u>Chabena</u>	: Parched grain
<u>Chakaldar</u>	: Revenue Collector of the Nawabs of Awadh
<u>Chaprasi</u>	: Peon
<u>Charisma</u>	: Magical effect
<u>Charkha</u>	: Spinning wheel, popularised by Gandhi
<u>Chaukidar</u>	: Watchman
<u>Daan</u>	: Gift, having religious implication
<u>Dargah</u>	: Muslim shrine
<u>Daridranarayan</u>	: Lord of the poor
<u>Daroga</u>	: Police Sub-Inspector
<u>Darshan</u>	: Respectful perception
<u>Dharamshala</u>	: Originally residence donated for pilgrims
<u>Dhobi</u>	: Washerman, a caste

<u>Diwani right</u>	: Right to collect revenue
<u>Kamishnaravan</u>	: Cess imposed for the visit of a Commissioner
<u>Ekka</u>	: Horse-cart
<u>Faqir</u>	: Muslim saint, sometimes also used for a pauper
<u>Pirangi</u>	: Englishman, European
<u>Gandharave vivah</u>	: Marriage without involving priests or law courts
<u>Geeta</u>	: An important religious book of Hindus
<u>Gharaowed</u>	: Surrounded
<u>Ghee</u>	: Obtained after boiling butter
<u>Gohanlagwa</u>	: Child of a woman from her former husband
<u>Gorawan</u>	: Cess for buying a horse
<u>Gur</u>	: Prepared from cane-juice with a process similar to that of preparing sugar
<u>Hari</u>	: Levy generally imposed on the low caste tenants
<u>Hartal</u>	: Strike
<u>Hathiwan</u>	: Cess to purchase an elephant
<u>Hitkarni Sabha</u>	: Welfare Association
<u>Jai</u>	: Long live, hail
<u>Jati</u>	: Caste
<u>Kalanki</u>	: A moral stigma
<u>Kamia</u>	: A member of Kamiauti
<u>Kamiauti</u>	: A system of bonded labourers that prevailed in Bihar and Orissa
<u>Kanun</u>	: Law
<u>Kanya Vikray</u>	: Selling of daughters
<u>Karinda</u>	: Landlord's agent
<u>Karma</u>	: Predetermination, destiny, fate

<u>Kashtkar</u>	: Cultivator
<u>Katha Satnarayna</u>	: Religious tale referring to the Lord Satnarayana
<u>Kharif</u>	: Monsoon crop
<u>Khudkasht</u>	: A proprietary cultivator's holding which is cultivated by him
<u>Kisan</u>	: Tenant, peasant, cultivator of land
<u>Kisan Hit</u>	: That which is for welfare of a kisan
<u>Kisan Sabha</u>	: Organisation of kisans
<u>Kisan Sewak</u>	: Servant of kisans
<u>Lambardar</u>	: Village headman, Village Revenue Collector
<u>Lathi</u>	: Long stick, used by villagers in the North for attack or defence
<u>Lathials</u>	: Lathi bearers
<u>Looting</u>	: Arson
<u>Lot Sahib</u>	: Awadh rural mass uses this title for high British officials, perhaps derived from 'Lord'
<u>Mahajan</u>	: Trader, private banker, bania
<u>Mahal</u>	: Territorial unit for revenue
<u>Mahabrahman</u>	: Brahman who performs death ceremonies
<u>Mahua</u>	: An edible cheap fruit, also used for preparing country liquor
<u>Malguzari</u>	: Revenue
<u>Mandal</u>	: An administrative unit
<u>Maulvi</u>	: Refers to Muslim teacher, a degreeholder
<u>Mazdoor</u>	: Daily wage earner
<u>Motorawan</u>	: Cess to purchase a motorcar
<u>Mukhtar, Mukhtiyar</u>	: Lawyer
<u>Nachavan</u>	: Cess for dancing party
<u>Nankar</u>	: A piece of land for subsistence having revenue concession

<u>Nazrana</u>	: Gift payment, extra premium on rent
<u>Oookh</u>	: Sugar-cane
<u>Panch</u>	: A judge of a village court
<u>Panchayat</u>	: A village court
<u>Pandit</u>	: A title used for Brahmans and by the Brahman
<u>Pargana</u>	: Subdivision of a tahsil
<u>Pati</u>	: Sugar-cane leaf
<u>Patwari</u>	: Village official for land records
<u>Praja Sabha</u>	: An association formed by Jhinguri Singh and Sri Harakh in Pratapgarh in July 1929. The expression literally means an association of people
<u>Praja Sangh</u>	: An association formed by Baba Ram Chandra with the help of Muneshwar Datt at Pratapgarh.
<u>Pukhtadar</u>	: Underproprietor with whom a sub-settlement was made
<u>Qanoongo, qanungo</u>	: A revenue official under a tahsildar
<u>Rabi</u>	: Spring crop
<u>Raj</u>	: Kingdom
<u>Raja</u>	: King
<u>Rajauti</u>	: Cess imposed on tenants at the time of landlord's assuming the title of Raja
<u>Rakshasa</u>	: Demon
<u>Ramayana</u>	: A major epic poem of ancient India
<u>Rani</u>	: Queen
<u>Sabha</u>	: Association
<u>Sadhu</u>	: Saint
<u>Sadr</u>	: Cantonment
<u>Sahukar</u>	: Businessman, moneylender
<u>Samaj</u>	: Society
<u>Sanad</u>	: Document of deed

<u>Sankalp</u>	: Gift sanctified by religious rituals
<u>Sarkar</u>	: Government
<u>Satyagraha</u>	: Resistance without involving violence
<u>Satyagrahi</u>	: One who performs <u>satyagraha</u>
<u>Satyanash</u>	: Ruin
<u>Saunk, Sewak</u>	: Bonded labourer
<u>Shikar</u>	: Shooting, hunting
<u>Shikari</u>	: Hunter
<u>Shikmi tenant</u>	: A kind of tenant accepted by the Oudh Rent Act
<u>Sipahi</u>	: Soldier
<u>Sir</u>	: Land under landlord's cultivation
<u>Sitaram</u>	: A salutation by referring to the characters of the <u>Ramayana</u> , Rama and Sita; this salute is common even now in the Awadh villages
<u>Subedar</u>	: Junior Army Officer
<u>Swadeshi</u>	: Indigenous
<u>Swaraj</u>	: Self-rule
<u>Swayamvara</u>	: Marriage ceremony where the bride selects husband of her own choice from the gathering.
<u>Tahsil, tehsil</u>	: Subdivision of a district
<u>Tahsildar</u>	: Highest revenue officer of a tahsil
<u>Taluqa, talooka</u>	: A revenue subdivision of a district
<u>Taluqdar</u>	: Owner of a <u>taluka</u> , i.e. a group of villages in Awadh
<u>Taluqdari</u>	: Highest proprietorial right of land
<u>Thakur</u>	: A title generally used by the Rajputs, master, lord
<u>Thakurain</u>	: Lady <u>talukdar</u> , wife of a <u>talukdar</u> .
<u>Thana</u>	: Police station

<u>Thanedar</u>	: In Charge of a <u>thana</u>
<u>Thikedar</u>	: Contractor
<u>Trishanku</u>	: A character in Indian mythology who hangs between heaven and earth
<u>Vakil</u>	: Lawyer
<u>Zamindar</u>	: Landlord
<u>Ziladar, zilledar</u>	: Landlord's manager.

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