

CIVIL REBELLION  
IN THE  
INDIAN MUTINIES  
( 1857 - 1859 )

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( 1857 - 1859 )

BY

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wilful suppression of the details of the rebellious proceedings and a little inflation of the figures of the rebel forces to show the enormity of the danger they confronted, but the account of Indian rebellion furnished by the British themselves has at least this saving feature that it automatically rules out the charge of biased sources. The mutiny again is the subject of innumerable books and it cannot be pretended that the author has gone through the legion 'Histories' of the great revolt. Sufficient notice has been taken only of those works which directly or indirectly touch upon the subject and have sought to attain impartiality of judgement. The valuable works by Kaye and Malletson, 'a sort of literary duet,' are the acknowledged authorities on the subject of the Indian mutinies. The contemporary newspapers of both India and England have also been copiously quoted to throw light on the piquancy of situations as they developed and to depict the trend of thought of the two peoples engaged in this mortal conflict. Rice Holmes in his history of the Indian Mutiny indicated the importance of this source material. The contemporaries whether journalists or officers who watched day after day the throbbings of the vast continent in its convulsions could possibly conceive with a considerable degree of thoroughness the extent, character and variety of this great revolt. But the opposite view is equally plausible that for those who were living in the midst of those scenes it was not improbable that they would fail to realise in its fullest measure the interest and importance that posterity would attach to them.

The authorities used are indicated in the footnotes with considerable fullness and a list of them in the alphabetical order has been appended. The spelling of place names like Cawnpore and Benares has been retained advisedly as mutiny at 'Kanpur' misses much of the flavour of the subject. It has been deemed desirable to place the grouping of chapters on a regional basis as such a treatment has the effect of drawing attention to the characteristic features of the rebellion, province by province.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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To my revered teacher, Dr. Ramcschandra Majumdar I am indebted for the help and direction I have received from him. Even a perusal of the manuscript of the last chapter of this book failed to deflect him from his sense of tolerance for refractory students and opposite views. He was unfailing in his encouragement of the publication of a book of this type at an early date. I should like here to express my sincere gratefulness to Professor Susobhanchandra Sarkar for critical comments on many an important point and for several useful suggestions and to Dr. Subodhchandra Sengupta who was kind enough to go through some typescripts. I must also acknowledge the help I received from Mr. F. C. Sutton, of the India Office Library, who had the kindness to send some valuable records for my use. The facilities extended to me by the librarian and the staff of the National Library, Belvedere, Calcutta, where I carried on the work, can hardly be over-emphasized.

Finally, I take this opportunity of offering my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Nihar-ranjan Ray for the unstinted help I have received from him in all my investigations.

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## FOREWORD

Dr. Sasibhusan Chaudhuri of the Presidency College, Calcutta, and by now well-known as the author of *Civil Disturbances during the British Rule in India*, has followed up his researches by another book which goes out into the world under the name of *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies*. That our national celebration of the Centenary of the revolt of 1857 would call forth a spate of publications on the subject, popular and scholarly, was only to be expected. But what seems to be the chief characteristic of Dr. Chaudhuri's book is the academic detachment that he brings to bear on the mass of documented facts he has collected and presented to enlighten the readers on an otherwise neglected aspect of the revolt of 1857.

Now that we have had the fortune of freedom for the last ten years we cannot afford to forget the inspiration which the lives of those who struggled, suffered and fell for the achievement of freedom offer us. The death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 hastened the disintegration of the Moghul empire. The Rajputs, the Sikhs and later the Mahrattas resisted the Moghul rule. In many parts the people could not bear either their vices or the remedies for them. Several European Powers came in for purposes of trade and after the battle of Plassey in 1757 the British established themselves as the Paramount Power in the country.

There was a general belief among many Indians that the Company's rule would come to an end, as it did, one hundred years after the battle of Plassey in 1757. The two years 1857-1859 were characterised by chaos, terror and violence. The Sepoys fought grimly and gallantly with incredible courage believing that the stars in their courses were fighting with them. Thousands dared everything and sacrificed everything. The magnificent feats of heroism and valour of the Rani of Jhansi, Queen Hazrat Mahal, Nana Sahib, Tantia Tope, Bahadur Shah and his queen Zinat Mahal, Kunwar Singh and many others do honour to human nature and its love for freedom. Their deeds are celebrated in song and story. The uprising was a great political event which left a deep mark on the minds and hearts of the Indian people. It became an important part of

our movement for national liberation. The resistance was, however, broken though the rulers lost confidence and nerve and realised how near to the surface the peril to their rule was and what unsuspected powers of self defence Indian society had. It may be true to say that the year 1857 marked the beginning of a new era which ended in the transfer of power in 1947.

If the resistance was suppressed, it was not only because of the superior technical power and discipline of the British, it was also because of the defective and divided leadership, of personal jealousies and intrigues on the Indian side. Communal differences were not pronounced. As a matter of fact the Id festival fell that year on the first of August and the Emperor Bahadur Shah ordered that no cows were to be killed within the city during the festival. He himself set an example to his subjects by sacrificing sheep. The revolt did not take a communal character but princes, landlords and sepoys fought on both sides.

Not being a student of history I am not competent to judge the merits or demerits of Dr Chaudhuri's book. But I have felt impressed by the attention he devotes to the various forces and factors of discontent that lay outside of the orbit of immediate causes of the so called Sepoy war. To this aspect of the problem some attention was necessary. Dr Chaudhuri's two books provide the answer. His conclusion that the movement expressed a profound desire for freedom on the part of the people of India and that it was not merely a feudal movement but had within it the germs of progress, seems to be fully sustainable.

*The one lesson which our past history gives us is this, that the country has not been conquered from without, it has often been defeated from within. Religious differences, regional differences, social differences, economic differences, have often stood in the way of our unity. When we were united and strong, we went out to the Far East, South-East Asia and West Asia to spread the message of truth and love. We had the*

vigour and the dynamism, keen intelligence and deep humanity to inspire the art and literature of many other countries. Borobudur and Angkor Wat are standing witnesses to the spirit of India. A blight fell on us and all sorts of taboos were imposed and we became small in mind and narrow in outlook; subjected women to inferiority and millions of men to social degradation.

Freedom is not fulfilment. The country is not to be an old curiosity shop of ancient monuments; nor can dams, hydro-electric projects and tractors, essential as they are for feeding our millions, make a people great. Governments come and go and nations change and lose their faces. We are now living in the midst of exciting transformation. Internally we effected the integration of the States which had a population of 80 millions who were governed by the Princes, introduced land reforms and are striving to raise the standards of the people. We are trying to tackle the problem of poverty with limited resources and through democratic processes. We have succeeded to some extent. Many of our critics did not feel that we would travel so far and so fast though we have yet a long way to go. We should not become rootless. It is for the sake of preserving the soul of our country that we demanded and struggled for freedom and achieved it. We should not forget the profound thought of our sages and the serene light of our art. We should not lower our moral standards in our public life, national and international. We must shake off the factious spirit which threatens to become a national disease. We think that we are open-mined because we criticise one another furiously.

We are today at the cross-roads. Whether we take the path which leads to triumph or that which ends in abysmal failure depends on us. We make our own history though we may not be able to make it as we please. Only stupidity and selfishness are in the way. The size of the task, the challenge of the situation, the heroic qualities they demand, require us to adopt the principles which Gandhi insisted on, service, sacrifice and dedication. This is not a time for annoyance and aggressiveness; it is a time for humility, dedication and social discipline. We must sacrifice our personal interests, loyalties and attach-

ments for the national good Let us all work together in this spirit, free from fear, hatred and selfishness, to make our country strong and united; for only a strong India can help humanity.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

*New Delhi*

*The 7th September, 1957*

## APPROACH TO THE SUBJECT

The mutinous proceedings of the Bengal Army are well-known and have been the subject of many trite remarks. From the military point of view, we find every extreme of indiscipline and insubordination. The infection of revolt which seized regiment after regiment is equally obvious. From the political point of view, the mutiny has been often described as the first war of Indian independence in which all classes of people of a vast portion of India joined, ranging from the ryot to the king, from the primitive tribes of the forest to the polished gentry. That large bodies of people became martyrs to over-excited political sentiment, became more sensitive to the alarm produced by alien rule, was largely the cause of rendering more prominent the total rebellion which characterised the Indian mutiny. From the social point of view, it has been regarded as a war of the expropriated feudal classes who had suffered, owing to the introduction of the British rule, loss of property and had experienced diminution of their importance and of the arbitrary power which they possessed. The crowd of landed chiefs who joined the fray supported by the delusive strength of their huge levies gave the movement a unity of purpose transcending the innumerable diversities of India's life. Again, the rumours that the government meditated a general conversion of the people to Christianity had exasperated large communities not otherwise hostile to the government and the later proceedings of the government gave rise to a feeling of hatred of the English name, a deep-rooted sluggish hatred which developed into a war of extermination. The sepoys fighting for fear of castes, the chiefs for their kingdoms, the landlords for their estates, the mass for fear of conversion and agrarian grievances, and the Muslims especially for restoring their old sway, yet all in their own way against the common enemy, the English, all this may be said to have given the events of 1857-59 a national colouring,—what began as a mutiny seemed to assume the proportions of a rebellion. And the marauding activities of a number of tribal communities such as the mcwatis, gujars, ranghars, Jats, palwars, bhogtas and a host of other tribes, prompted more by motives of

plunder than by seditious ideas, collaborated to produce a scene of general uprising against the British power.

The difficulties, arising from the manifold aspects summarily indicated above, are real and present serious obstacles both to the writer and to the reader of histories of sepoy mutinies. A treatment of all these features, and of many contradictory impulses and communal tension and promiscuous fighting with which the history of the Mutiny abounds, is manifestly impracticable in a book of limited ambition like the present work. Yet the broad fact of the Indian mutiny, which stands on official admission, is that it was actually a rebellion. The so called sepoy mutiny of 1857 has an internal consistency if we regard it as both a mutiny and a rebellion, unmistakably united, the mutiny resulting in popular disturbances. The underlying rebellion being less obvious than the military excesses, its nature and limitations merit exposition. The mere fact that the government establishments were destroyed, records burnt, and telegraph lines cut off did not help to raise the mutiny of troops to the rank of a civil rebellion any more than the application of the name revolution to the events of 1857-59 could make a history of that movement feasible. The rebellion of the civil populace which existed must have been of a nature more fundamental than that implied in the currency of a political term.

Articulate expression of political and social theories by the Indian leaders and their determination to fight for their implementation would, of course, have been sufficient to make smooth the path of the historian. But such theories were never clearly placed before the masses nor very perfectly understood, excepting those appealing to religious feelings. Yet many civil disturbances of a serious nature did take place in the pre-mutiny period which pointed to some settled disaffection of the people against the foreign system, some acute grievances of the landed and agricultural classes against the ruling authority, and of other classes as well, which found expression in clashes and conflicts. These civil disturbances of the earlier period afford a welcome foothold to the historian in evaluating and estimating the civil rebellion of the mutiny period, and in discovering that the latter are connected in a long chain of

causes with the former and in some cases are even a continuation of them.

The link that connects the civil rebellion of the pre-mutiny and mutiny periods is furnished by the fact that these were primarily anti-British, anti-colonial movements running through feudal channels. The landed chief in the earlier period took up arms to resist the encroachment made upon his position and purse, in the mutiny period he fought in defence of his title to the land, and all throughout the first century of British rule in India, the zamindars remained the targets of attack of British administration excepting those who were living in areas under permanent settlement. The position of the inferior agricultural classes however changed. The surrender of the field-proprietors to the tender mercies of the zamindars under permanent settlement provoked the cultivating classes to rebel against the latter and their protectors in the early period, and this condition of social restiveness remained a chronic feature of the land-economy of Bengal. In the North-West provinces, however, the village system, that was introduced in complete reversion of the talukdari system, and also in Oudh immediately before the mutiny, secured the rights of the peasant-proprietors as against the zamindars. But the results were equally disastrous. The liquidation of the talukdars and the exaltation of the village proprietors produced a kind of social imbalance and caused grave economic dislocation which mingled with the religious discontents and fears of the mutiny period. Nor were the fieldowners of upper India satisfied. Apparently the situation was baffling which in some way indicated that the British administrators could not formulate, for any practical purpose, a plan of land economy in which the large proprietors and village proprietors could co-exist on the soil. The new set of village landowners had many grievances to complain of in respect of taxes, impositions, and imposts; they also certainly shared the general anxieties of the public with the result that eventually they landed on the side of the dispossessed talukdars and rallied round them. Thus both in the pre-mutiny and mutiny periods it was the class of the landed chiefs who led the struggle against the British. The feudal framework of these movements indeed cannot be doubted though they were not



of the reactionary type directed mainly for the preservation of the rights and privileges of an obsolete aristocracy. The distinction between baronial and popular risings against the ruling power, the one for *status quo ante*, and the other for a future, had no special import in the Indian situation as the factor of foreign rule impinged on all alike and this blurred the edges of purely feudal motives. Moreover, nearly all classes and disaffected communities thronged round these landed chiefs, they being regarded as the natural leaders of their respective localities which lent these movements a representative character. The rebels also adopted the British mode of war, the artillery and the enfield, and not the obsolete feudal methods, and railways and telegraphs which were burnt in the fury of the revolution would not certainly have been discarded, on the contrary, they would have been widely used, along with other innovations, had the movement succeeded.

Along with these changes which a huge revolt ushers in, the feudal spirit of these anti British movements was likely to have faded before long. So basically, the rebellions of the mutiny period were not without their social and political content and their anticipations of progress.

Great convulsions of history usually bear manifold aspects and this particular aspect may be permitted to be taken up for investigation and scrutiny in the following pages. It was Disraeli who said that the rise and fall of empires was not an affair of greased cartridges. A few years later, J. W. Kaye, the celebrated historian of the sepoy war in India, in course of a dissection of the 'moral anatomy' of this great revolt against the white man similarly recorded his impression that there were fears and discontents which had no connection with the greased cartridges and uprisings not motivated by the spoils of the treasury. The first symptoms of the revolt of 1857 were undoubtedly of a military character, but in many places the first attack came from the disaffected communities while still the sepoys were outwardly staunch and in quite a few cases rebellion of a violent type broke out without the aid or presence of sepoys and also simultaneously with their movement. Generally, however, the risings of the chiefs and the people were subsequent in date to the mutiny of troops. This led to a confu

sing situation in so far as the origins and connections of the mutiny and rebellion were concerned and contemporary newspapers both in England and India commented that the rising of the chiefs was a thing quite apart from the mutiny of the soldiers. It was even reported that after Havlock's entry into Lucknow the sepoy dispersed in different directions, but simultaneously, the talukdars rose as one man against the British force.<sup>1</sup> In the southern Maratha country there was no military *emeute* on a grand scale to incite the people to fury, yet the landowners who were worse affected by the *Inam* Commission stirred up commotions. The government despatch, stating that the North-West provinces were lost for the present, was obviously prompted by the deeper and more malignant circumstances of the blaze of ravage and riot that had taken root in the soil of upper India than what was outwardly manifested in the professional insurrection of the sepoy confined to scattered military cantonments. What Kaye says gives an approximately correct version of the situation:

The fears and discontents of the powerful classes, who felt that they had been downtrodden by the English, that their old dynasties had been subverted, their old traditions ignored, their old systems violated.....that everywhere the reign of annexation and innovations commenced, and was threatening to crush out the very hearts of the nation, struck deep root in the soil.<sup>2</sup>

To a certain extent these were exactly the causes which provoked the civil disturbances of the pre-mutiny period. Kaye admitted that this was the legitimate line of approach to the occurrences of 1857 which struck him as a revolt and not a military insurrection. Similarly Malleson expressly stated that the disturbances of 1857 were primarily excited by men who were not soldiers.<sup>3</sup> Though fully convinced of the possibilities of a detailed study of this aspect they did not develop and treat it as such. Rice Holmes, while professing to deal with the accompanying civil disturbances of the sepoy war, deals more with military movements than with the other

<sup>1</sup> John Malcolm Ludlow, *A Pamphlet on the War in Oudh*, Cambridge, 1858, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Kaye (J. W.), *A History of the Sepoy War in India* (1880), iii, 306.

<sup>3</sup> Malleson (G. B.), *History of the Indian Mutiny, 1857-1858* (1878, 1879, 1880), iii, 399.

exertions of the Indians, and not even one single chapter is devoted to this aspect of study. Nevertheless, he uses the expression 'Civil rebellion' in connection with the mutiny and states that, from the point of view of the historian, it is more important to investigate into the former than to analyse the phenomena of the mutiny itself<sup>1</sup>.

But this trend of study was not followed up in later works. The 'monumental work' of Dr R C Majumdar throws new light on the activities of the famous leaders which he has discussed in detail in order to ascertain how far the rising of 1857 can be called a struggle for freedom. Dr S N Sen's justly celebrated work—*Eighteen Fifty-Seven*—gives a brilliant account of the political and military movements of the great revolt but neither of these great historians has given to the civil rising the stress it deserves. Dr Majumdar recognises the importance of the subject, as the title of his book shows, but his line of study led him to a different conclusion. Dr Sen's book which contains a vivid and vigorous account of military activities is less than just to the part played by the general masses of the Indian people in the great upsurge.

It is a question of emphasis. The revolt of 1857 was in a sense the most formidable which had ever broken out against a foreign domination. Deep sympathy was felt for England, 'the cradle of liberty and its invincible bulwark' as well, in the continent and in America, in her hour of trial, fighting in defence of her immortal honour. Relations of Christian Europe with the rest of the world of the time of the crusades seem to have been revived. Pope Pius IX made a liberal and paternal subscription on behalf of the English sufferers in India and other countries of Europe offered the help of men and money to England. The American press was equally warm and sympathetic to her cause. It is impossible not to own that the *English fought in the mutinies with a passion and determination* as though they were fighting for the defence of their own country and struggling for the right. The rebellion was being sternly put down, but reprisals against the property of Indians as would be permitted against alien enemy were not generally

<sup>1</sup> Holmes (T R) *A History of the Indian Mutiny* (and of the disturbances which accompanied it among the civil population), 1913, p. 141. See also Holloway, *Essays* etc. 271.

resorted to. The denial of the claim of the Indians to the country which belonged to them rested not merely on the conviction of the superiority of British arms, *certaminis gaudia*, but on the tremendous energies which they had brought to bear on India to make it as much as possible their own land. The British had a strength, in the strength of their civilization, and so when challenged, the nation was stung to the quick and reacted sternly. The new *Ironsides* marched with an *elan* that was irresistible; the spirit that had animated and inspired Raleigh, Drake and Cromwell, that had laid to dust the power of Napoleon, lived on in Nicholson and Campbell, in Havlock and Rose. Maude and Sherer, Mowbray Thomson, the Red Pamphlet, Forbes-Mitchell, Malleeson and even Kaye—some of the classics of mutiny literature—abundantly reflect this spirit, that, being Englishmen, they were bound to suppress the mutinies and reconquer India.<sup>1</sup>

But the sympathy felt for England and her attitude is more easy to explain than justify. The political theory of the need for suppressing the mutiny was a little confusing. What sympathy could England justly bestow on Lombardy, and Poland, whilst in India they were following the example of their foreign oppressors? Besides, the revolt of the Indians, even if they were a subdued race, was produced by causes not exterior to their immediate interests and as such they had a right to demand the respectful attention of British observers and historians. But very few thought of them in a way as would be just and proper, and in all the works cited above there are not even fifty names of Indian rebels who confronted the English. Forrest, in particular, considered it worthy of historical attention to take extreme pains in collecting the names of even the lowest subalterns who took part in the mutinies, a 'noble epic' which spoke to every Englishman. The same might be said of the Indians, but no notice was taken of them, of their ideas and activities, if only to complete the history of this epoch. And no souvenir of the deeds performed

<sup>1</sup> Many other writers on the mutiny had manifested this spirit—cf. Col Mackenzie of the 3rd Light Cavalry at Meerut (*Mutiny Memoirs*, 35); John Holloway of the Civil Service (*Essays of the Indian Mutiny*, 73) and Cooper of Amritsar (*The Crisis in the Punjab*, 244-5).

by them has been preserved in the 'pleasurable reminiscences' of the mutiny.

This attitude was quite in keeping with the views of the average Englishman who did not believe in the general participation of the people in the mutinies. The comments of the *Saturday Review* are typical of this feeling.

The civil government having in some places been entirely swept away for the time, by the overwhelming tide of military insurrections, it was inevitable that many of the inhabitants should be willing to fraternize with the mutineers and to take advantage of the disorganisation attendant on the revolt by glutting themselves with plunder, and running riot in unchastised crime.<sup>1</sup>

Even *Tablet*, an Irish paper very hostile to England, wrote that it had been a pure military rebellion, the civil population had taken no serious part in it.<sup>2</sup>

The following pages, therefore, aim, so far as it is possible to bring within a convenient compass, at presenting the history of the civil rebellion in the Indian mutinies in a connected and indisputably authentic form, its scope and character, the class of people participating in it, and the effect produced in the direction and dimension of this vast conflagration and in the prolongation of the conflict and its consequences. It is a work on perspectives, on emphasis and interpretation of a great subject. It is not a work on the sepoy mutiny, and it does not presume to enter into any discussion of the multitudinous causes of the mutiny of the Bengal Army, or to expatiate on theories of its origin or to discuss whether it was the result of a pre-concerted plan worked out by the civil and military leaders in collaboration among themselves. However essential that enquiry might be in any estimate of the leadership of the revolt, the attitude of the more famous leaders, it appears, had nothing much to do with the causation of the civil rebellion which broke out spontaneously on the rising of the sepoys or even earlier. The leading object throughout has been to show, in its true proportion and colour, this important aspect of the convulsion, the relative share that the civil communities

<sup>1</sup> 14 August, 1857

<sup>2</sup> 31 July, 1858

had in the conflict generally, and utmost care and research have been taken to draw from all sources any information tending to throw light on the part played and the influence exercised by the people of the countryside and other men of consequence in changing the course of the revolt from mutiny to rebellion.

82°

84°

MAP OF NORTH - WESTERN  
AND CENTRAL INDIA

THE RAILWAYS SHOWN IN THE MAP  
THE LINE BETWEEN ALLAHABAD AND  
BENARAS WAS AVAILABLE FOR THE  
USE OF GOVERNMENT IN 1858.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The causes of the mutiny in the army were in part purely military, in part a discontent shared by the general population. That a spirit of disaffection was lurking in many of the sepoy regiments had long been known to a number of officers who communicated their impression to others. Sir Charles Napier, G.C.B., prior to leaving India, warned the government that a great portion of the Bengal Army was disaffected,<sup>1</sup> and offered several suggestions intended to check the discontent then prevailing, but Dalhousie paid no heed to these suggestions and no officer even dared to speak out his real impression to the governor-general if he had any regard for his commission.

The history of the early mutinies shows that the discontent of the sepoys may be attributed either to an impolitic or unjust cutting of pay or an interference with the religious prejudices of the soldiers. It is from the time of the Afghan war that Indian officers like Sheikh Hedayetali dated the marked disaffection of the army. The Mahomedans were displeased because they were employed against another mahomedan power and the Hindus for living in a foreign country and under conditions which offended the rules of caste. One Zalim Singh of the 71st regiment was even tried by court-martial and dismissed from service for having criticised the government for violating his caste. The Sepoys silently nursed their discontent and only waited for a suitable opportunity.<sup>2</sup> So when in 1850, the fourth and sixty-fourth were ordered to march to Sind they showed a most mutinous spirit. But Dalhousie, as the *Bengal Hurkaru* wrote, was the first governor-general to succumb to the mutineers: when the 38th regiment declined to go to Burma, he gave in. 'From that moment', says the *Red Pamphlet*, 'a revolt became a mere

<sup>1</sup> For the Mutiny predicted by Sir Charles Napier, see Keith Young *Delhi*, 1857, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Lawrence had the prescience to observe even before the outbreak of 1857 in respect of this situation: 'How unmindful we have been that what occurred in the city of Kabul may some day occur at Delhi, Meerut or Bareilly' (Quoted in Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War in India*, i, 453n.).



question of time and opportunity'.<sup>1</sup> This temporizing policy was calculated to change the attitude of the sepoy towards their masters.<sup>2</sup>

But the most singular instance of the sepoy revolt having a definite bearing on the future took place at Barrackpore even earlier than the Afghan war. It originated in the refusal of the government to allow two rupees each per month as travelling expense while under orders to march to Burma. On 2 November, 1825, when the mutinous regiment mustered as usual, they were ordered to communicate their willingness to march on pain of death. They were given ten minutes to consult,—ten minutes expired. A Calcutta letter dated 3 November, 1825, published in the *Glasgow Herald* gives a graphic description of what followed

about 450 held out. Sir Edward Paget gave orders to fire. In a moment after, grape shot and cannon bullets played upon poor fellows from all quarters, they then threw down their arms and ran; some escaped by running into Hooghly—some were taken prisoners—upwards of 60 lay dead upon the field, and this afternoon about a dozen or two are either to be hanged or shot. By the accounts received yesterday from Rangoon we have received a check, the sepoys did not fight with the same spirit as formerly, they lay down before the enemy, and would neither fight nor run away.<sup>3</sup>

This military revolt was a disastrous event remotely forecasting the spirit of 1857, a matter of the 'blackest hue and the most awful omen', as one of the ablest statesmen then in the East observed.<sup>4</sup> Barrackpore thus became the historic camp where so many sepoys died in vindication of their discontent and in defiance of the ruling authority. The blood the sepoys shed was not spilled in vain, their spirit survived and encouraged and exalted others. From Barrackpore flowed influences which moulded the sepoy mind in far-off Lahore, where the Bengal Army was posted.

In the early months of 1857, the sepoys of Barrackpore exhibited the same mutinous spirit. The contemporary view

<sup>1</sup> *The Mutiny of the Bengal Army* (By one who served under Sir Charles Napier), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Norton, *The Rebellion in India*, 176.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *The Englishman* (Calcutta), 20 July, 1857.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* 14 August, 1857.

was that the commanding officer of the regiment, lieutenant-colonel Wheler, was responsible for this state of disaffection. He was openly charged—and the charge has not been refuted—with having distributed religious tracts among the sepoys and addressed them with a view to proselytization. It was further alleged that he was in the habit of beguiling sepoys to his bungalow and there attempting to convert them to the christian faith. In the public discussion of the fifties it was revealed that for similar attempts to convert soldiers, Wheler was violently expelled by the sepoys of the old 34th from their lines and that for the same reason he was ordered off the parade of the 53rd regiment at Delhi. That Wheler was culpable to a high degree was clearly manifested in his letter to the Christian Tract Society published in a Calcutta paper of the 25th July, 1840. It runs:

You will be happy to hear that I have had several applications from different officers for native tracts in order to distribute to the villages through which they were about to march; and I do hope and trust... would prepare the minds of the people to listen to a missionary....<sup>1</sup>

Seventeen years before the mutiny, lieutenant-colonel, then captain Wheler, combined religious duties with his military pre-occupations, and, as the *Englishman* commented, 'unless we are vetry greatly misinformed he continues the practic even with increased zeal to the present day.' It was no wonder, therefore, the daily added, that the men should be in this excited state specially when such efforts at conversion are openly avowed and that they would discover what they considered a plot to betray them into loss of caste.<sup>2</sup>

Referring to the doings of such tract-distributing officers, Sir Thomas Munro, one of the most sagacious rulers that ever swayed the destinies of a people, bitterly wrote that it was the declared intention of the government that the people of India should be permitted to enjoy their ancient laws and institutions and that it was never intended to employ collectors and magistrates as teachers of morality and to act as a missionaries. He added:

In every country, but especially in this, where the rulers are so few,

<sup>1</sup> *The Englishman*, 2 April, 1857.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Also Holmes, *op. cit.*, 78.

and of a different race from the people, it is the most dangerous of all things to tamper with religious feelings, may burst forth as at Vellore set in motion by the slightest casual incident <sup>1</sup>

The mutiny at Bolnrum was also caused solely by the military missionary major Mackenzie. Even with this experience before them, the government hardly moved to make examples of these offenders in the 'tract distributing and seed-sowing lines', which naturally confirmed the suspicion of the sepoys that there was some foul play in this business. The government came out repeatedly with overt assurances in respect of religious belief, but the sepoys looked upon these assurances as mere eyewashes, and pointed to the tract-distributing officer as a complete refutation of them. In fact, it was known that a brigadier was not dismissed for gross interference with religious ceremonies, and Wheeler was not punished either <sup>2</sup>

The adequacy of this religious thesis as one of the contributory factors of the mutiny of 1857 cannot be doubted, and this spirit of disaffection in the army was reinforced by similar feelings of the civil population in respect of religion arising from the ever increasing pressure of western civilization including the whole series of progressive measures from the establishment of the railways to the legalisation of widows' marriages and the dissemination of female education—all being calculated, so the conservatives argued, to serve the same purpose of converting Hindus and Mahomedans alike <sup>3</sup>. The missionary activities against early marriage and the purdah system,<sup>4</sup> the messing system in jail, the compulsory system of shaving, and the enlistment order of 1856, compelling the sepoys to go wherever ordered—all these ruffled the feelings of caste and strengthened the suspicion that the government intended to force them all to embrace christianity <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Englishman*, 30 May, 1857

<sup>2</sup> The inquiry into the conduct of colonel Mitchell was not instituted until after the 19th had been punished and that of Wheeler after the disbanding of the companies of the 34th (Urquhart, *The Rebellion in India*, 5)

<sup>3</sup> Syed Ahmed Khan Bahadur *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* [1873] 20

<sup>4</sup> Norton, *op cit*, 199

<sup>5</sup> A letter published in the *Hindu Patriot* (30 April 1857) by a 'Native', apparently a very well informed critic probably gives us a glimpse of the Indian mind

The actual interference was not alarming enough but it was supposed to foreshadow more. Under these conditions, it was not unnatural that the sepoys should think that the greased cartridge was only the beginning of that great object of the government.<sup>1</sup>

The disaffection caused by the cartridge question extended far and wide.<sup>2</sup> The *Englishman's* correspondent of the North-West provinces reported on 1 May, 1857, that 'the most absurd stories are rife amongst all classes of Indians throughout the country of our determination to seduce them by fair, if not compel them by foul means to christianity.' A number of

in those critical days. After referring to the many acts of oppression committed by English officers he adverts to the judgments of the Supreme Court of the three Presidencies of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay by which young inexperienced Hindu converts who ought to have been placed under the guardianship of their parents, were forcibly made over with their wives to the missionaries against their will. In one such case when a similar judgment was awarded, a large concourse of people surrounded the court house and began to sling stones at the judge. The Army had to be called in to save the judge and the court. "One such instance" he comments "and not ten thousand false rumours circulated by the Native Press is sufficient to disaffect a whole nation towards their rulers."

<sup>1</sup> It appears that a warning was transmitted from the military authorities at home to those in India not to serve out the enfield cartridge to the native troops. Major-General Tucker's letter published in the *Times* throws light on the culpable ignorance of the authorities in this matter. He says that the existing disaffection among the troops would never have arisen if what he said in 1853 had not been disregarded and comments that it is truly wonderful that it should not have occurred to any of the authorities in Calcutta that tallow made of the fat of . . . would seriously outrage (*The Englishman*, 10, 15 August, 1857) the feelings of the sepoys (See also colonel Keith Young, *Delhi*, 1857, p. 3). Crawshay similarly remarked that the suspicions of the sepoys were right because the cartridges had been greased in this manner in the arsenal in Calcutta. He refers to the Blue book and the official documents which were laid before the House of Commons in July 1857. The evidence of lieutenant Curry of the Ordnance, on the trial of Salikram Singh indeed refers to the proportion of tallow which entered into the compositions of the grease (*The Immediate Cause of the Mutiny*, 7). The officers of the Ordnance department also could not deny that fat of kine and swine had been used (*Ibid*). The statement of captain Martineau that so far as the cartridge question went the mahomedan sepoys laughed at it and that it was only the Hindus that made complaints is entirely contradicted by many recorded instances of the attitude of the Mahomedans and the nature of the ingredients actually used (six parts of tallow and one of bees-wax) in making the grease. The opinion of the judge-advocate-general stated in connection with the trial of Bahadur Shah (*Trial of Bahadur Shah*, 107, 141) that the objection to greased cartridges was only a subterfuge as the sepoys were found using the cartridges at Meerut and Delhi with eagerness and alacrity is not borne out by the practice of the mutinous sepoys in general who were mostly using 'Brown Bess' and the usual musket ammunition against the English (Crawshay, *The Immediate Cause of the Mutiny*, 22).

<sup>2</sup> The *Lahore Chronicle* of 1 April, '57 stated that a paper has been found in the lines occupied by the sepoys calling on them to resist the attempt to break their caste and to act like their 'Bhaics' at Barrackpore.

sedition letters intercepted by the government during this time make it abundantly clear that the sepoy and others really did believe that the British intended to destroy their caste by various devices, of which the induction of the impure cartridge was one<sup>1</sup> William Edwards, the collector and magistrate of the district of Budaun in the province of Rohil khand in 1857, had special opportunities of becoming acquainted with the situation He recorded

and I most solemnly declare my belief, that with the mass of our soldiery, the dread of these cartridges was the immediate and most powerful cause of their revolt Again and again have I discussed this subject with natives, before, during, and subsequent to the rebellion, and I am, that the cartridges formed the real and proximate cause of the mutiny The rural classes, who afterwards broke out into rebellion, had other causes which moved them, <sup>2</sup>

This is the genesis of the mutiny The sepoys revolted because they sincerely believed that their religion had been wantonly insulted, and under this impression which was never before more clear to them than on the present occasion, they revolted with a vehemence and combination which was of a far different nature from all former ones having for its object nothing short of the extermination of the *firinghis* It was under this fanatical feeling that the sepoys of the 19th appear to have acted and this religious horror of beef appeared quite systematically as an exciting factor in all insurrectionary activities in the early phase of the mutiny from Berhampur to Meerut Acute discontent in the army undoubtedly existed A consciousness of power had also grown up among the sepoys,

<sup>1</sup>Report on the Administration of the Punjab (1857-1858) in Townsend *The Annals of India and Administration* vol. iii 1859 pp. 123-141 George Le Grand Jacob on the causes of the crisis of 1857 58 (Madras Government Records—Home Miscellaneous No. 725 pp. 807-14) A Money the magistrate of Gaya in his famous letter dated 11 March 1858 offered a similar analysis of the situation (*District Gazetteer Gaya* 42-43) Cf. the views of Maude and Sierer (*Memoirs of the Mutiny* 19) the greased cartridges—at least the match which fired the smouldering discontent even if it was not the sole and original cause Also Cavenagh *Reminiscences* etc. 245 Urquhart *op cit* 7 Crawshay *op cit*, 1 *Trial of Bahadur Shah* 106-152 Keith Young *Delhi—1857* p. 17 Shepherd's experience of Cawnpore sepoys (*Narrative of the Mutiny* 14-15)

<sup>2</sup>*Facts and Reflections on the Indian Rebellion* 11 See also the statement of Sankar Tewari a sepoy old enough to know the thoughts of his brethren (Quoted in Nash *101 Years in India* 106-112) they were suddenly seized by a superstitious panic and rushed like frenzied demons

as reported by colonel Gicathed who was asked to make enquiry from deserters regarding the origin of the disaffection. A general order by the governor-general also referred to this feeling which found encouragement in the idea that India was weakly guarded by England.<sup>1</sup> William Muir, secretary to the government of the North-West provinces also believed this to have been the case with the main body of the sepoy.<sup>2</sup> But it is very doubtful if this latent spirit of revolt would have been more openly displayed than it had been for many years previous to the outbreak of the mutiny had not the cartridge question occurred to inflame the disaffected elements in the army. It was the only one question which by arousing religious prejudices produced the unanimity necessary for united resistance, no other cry being sufficient to bring together the Hindus and the Mahomedans.

The attack made by Mangal Pandey at Barrackpore, which in a large measure was imitated by the cavalry corps at Meerut, had given the sepoy movement a new turn; and yet neither the Barrackpore nor the Meerut leaders had possibly anticipated that what they considered to be an *emeute* of a limited character, directed mainly at the preservation of caste and religion was going to put the whole of North India and the Bengal presidency in particular, in one terrible cauldron, exposing in its extreme form the festering discontent nursed against British rule in India. The vast upsurge of 1857 was something more than a purely military insurrection, it had more than one source which fed its revolutionary stream, the economic and political motives being no less articulate than the threat to religion which was the immediate cause. The general condition of the Indians during the British rule, was not, on the whole, particularly intolerable, but that was not

<sup>1</sup> FP. iv, 290 Cf the statement of general Nicholson I have watched the army, and felt sure they only wanted their opportunity to try their strength with us (Quoted in Bourchier, *Eight Months*, etc 2).

<sup>2</sup> FP. iv, 148; Muir, *Records of the Intelligence Department*, etc ii, 120, 122, 125, 131f. Cf also the views of Cooper. From Delhi to Calcutta lay a clear field for mutiny and insurrection. The sepoy army had been intoxicated with their sense of power (*The Crisis in the Punjab*, Preface, p vii). But Mamuddin Hasan Khan, the Delhi rebel and a contemporary observer doubts whether the weakness of the British position first suggested a plan to tamper with the army or whether the tampering followed as a sequel to disaffection which existed (Metcalf, *Two Native Narratives*, etc. 8).

the point at issue. The question is whether their social happiness and personal security were large enough to outweigh the sense of degradation which must always accompany the domination of a foreign race. That they were not large enough (or rather were very low), was established by nothing better as a result than misery and disaffection which prevailed in the country at the end of hundred years of British rule. The grievances under which the population laboured, the hatred of the British amongst the higher classes, the fears and anxieties of the lower classes, the restiveness of the agricultural classes as manifested in the disturbances of the earlier period,<sup>1</sup> and not any one cause, singly considered—must be regarded as the true source of the revolt. The materials of disaffection, produced by long suffering, were ready to be ignited by the slightest spark that fell upon them.<sup>2</sup>

The political and social factors making for the revolt of 1857 were very much interrelated. While wars and conquests led to the extermination of the Indian powers, the settlement operations which accompanied them for the adjustment of revenue and rent in the ceded or conquered provinces were proving fatal to the interests of the landed gentry of the country. Settlement and resumption were the two processes of the British revenue administration by which the aristocracy of the land was obliterated. This subversion of the supremacy of the old landholders involved a grave social disorder. The civil disturbances of the pre-mutiny period demonstrate the strength of this thesis.<sup>3</sup>

The government's dislike for the 'Native Gentleman' and its predilections in favour of the inferior agricultural classes found its practical exposition in the settlement of the North-

<sup>1</sup> Chaudhuri, *Civil Disturbances During the British Rule in India*, 219f, Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives*, etc. 8, Thornhill *The Personal Adventures*, etc. 331

<sup>2</sup> Keith Young writing to Colonel Henderson on 2 May says 'there is no little uneasiness felt in India on the subject for the disaffection appears so universal that I am quite prepared to see it show itself at any of our stations' (Delhi—1857, p. 9) Cf. Disraeli in the House of Commons 'for a considerable period of time the State of India was one of menacing combustion and all that was wanted was the occasion and the pretext' (Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, vol. cxlvii, (1857), 444)

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed study of the revenue measures and their connection with anti-British movements in the pre-mutiny period, see Chaudhuri *Civil Disturbances*, 17-42

West provinces. Inspired by the genius of James Thomason and the ideas of Robert Mertins Bird of extending a system of protection to the masses of the people who were supposed to have suffered great wrongs in the past, the British challenged the titles of the landed gentry and their rights and privileges allowed to them by the former government. After a series of brief engagements with holders of different kinds which led to grave commotions of an agrarian nature,<sup>1</sup> attempt was made during the time of Lord William Bentinck to revise the settlement of the North-West provinces on the basis of a detailed survey and ascertainment of rights. According to the new theory of land tenure adopted by the government, the proprietorship of the soil was taken as vested in the cultivators, and the so-called proprietors were regarded merely as agents through whom the rents of the cultivators were to be paid to the government. The government justified its policy on the ground that in this part of the country, the proprietary right of single families and village communities survived in more recognisable forms than anywhere else. Thus the talukdars or owners of groups of villages were deprived of their estates which in many cases were held for ages. In lieu of their revenues they were to receive allowances of money like mere life-pensioners. The other class of proprietors, the zamindars or owners of villages in regions where the talukdars did not exist, were allowed to continue. The government also laid down a principle that the assessment should be such that the zamindars might derive extra profits of the good season in order that they might balance the losses on the bad seasons. But in practice the settlement of the revenue was fixed at an amount that the zamindars were not long able to pay and they were soon reduced to the position of mere agents, like the talukdars, for the collection of the village rental. Drastic as the tenure was, it teemed, too, with difficulties in respect of the location of landed rights. Land was held direct from the government by large proprietors, with a succession of smaller proprietors holding leases from them. In this context of land-tenure in India, the position of the proprietor was not different from that of a hereditary tenant but this position was

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* 21-24.



converted into one of ownership in many instances by purchase, favour, or by regularity of payment. Thus the talukdars had also proprietary right in many small estates, perhaps centuries old. Further it was not very easy to detect that the zamindari or proprietary right of the peasant proprietors had its foundation in good many cases in a pre-existing talukdari right of settling people in stretches of lands. The talukdars also possessed, quite in keeping with the genius and tradition of the country, all the dignity and power of feudal barons and though they often misused their power, this landed aristocracy constituted itself into a recognised institution of the country, and was not, by any means, regarded as 'impostor'. The abolition of the patriarchal authority of the landed gentry tended to weaken the bond by which order was maintained in India when the government succumbed to disruptive forces apart from the fact that it destroyed the attachment of the aristocracy to British rule. This is what G. J. Christman, commissioner of Sitapur actually complained of when the movement had started.

The village system which makes all men equal in their poverty, is now fairly on its trial in the disturbed districts, and the government has hardly a single man of influence, to look to in them.<sup>1</sup>

Warnings were given,<sup>2</sup> but the government proceeded to drive out the talukdars who stood between the rulers and the village proprietors and only the latter were recognised as the legitimate inheritors of the soil. The raja of Mainpuri was the talukdar of a large estate comprising nearly two hundred villages but it was held that he was the proprietor of only fifty-one villages<sup>3</sup> and so in 1846 the village proprietors were left to engage with government and not with him for all the remaining villages.<sup>4</sup> This vicious generalising system broke up large estates into minute fractions and almost destroyed the entire aristocracy of the country. As estates became divided, and subdivided into fractions the land could no longer supply adequate food for those who subsisted

<sup>1</sup> Rakes *Notes on the Revolt* etc. 22

<sup>2</sup> Holmes *op cit* 25

<sup>3</sup> Kaye, 1 161 2

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* 1 161 5

on it. G. F. Harvey, whose service extended over a period of upwards of thirty years in all parts of India, while recording his opinion as to the causes of the mutiny and the attendant popular disturbances observed that in several properties, of from two to three hundred acres each in Fatchgarh, the number of sharers had increased to half a thousand.<sup>1</sup> A large number of persons like the raja of Mainpuri were similarly situated throughout the country who naturally desired a total subversion of government in the hope of recovering their estates. The case of Walidad Khan of Malaghar in Bulandshahr, one of the most active and violent leaders of the rebellion, is another instance in point. The vicissitudes of such cases hanging on for a long time for ascertaining every conceivable form of responsibility and liability in an estate were no less distressing than the anxiety of losing an entire property. Since the time of Sir David Ochterlony every Resident of Delhi had periodically re-opened the question of the disposal of the property of Walidad Khan and it was hardly closed finally when Harvey held the office of agent in 1855.<sup>2</sup>

In the districts of Rohilkhand where mahomedan influence was very strong, the social conditions were nearly the same. Numbers of dissolute, desperate and distressed Mahomedans who had lineage to boast of, and old traditions to excite them, as in Furrukhabad and Bareilly, were easily disposed to rebellion. In general the Mahomedans of Rohilkhand entertained, too, the old hatred of the Englishman, the old desire to extirpate him root and branch.<sup>3</sup> The social state of Rohilkhand was rendered still more grave by the operations of the British revenue system which had ruined the land owners of the country. William Edwards, an officer of longstanding experience had marked how during the fifteen years preceding the mutiny discontent was growing to a point making the country ripe for revolt. The landed rights and interests sold for petty debts to strangers who had no sympathy with the people brought the government into hatred. The dispossessed

<sup>1</sup> Narrative of Events etc. and the Restoration of Authority in the Agra Division by G. F. Harvey, commissioner, Agra Division (No. A, p. 41).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Kaye, iii, 292.

landowners smarting under the loss of their estates were in complete understanding with the peasantry with whom they were connected for centuries. This combination of the disaffected social communities spelt danger for the British.<sup>1</sup>

In the fifties of the nineteenth century the British in India gave the impression of a ruthless people whose only principle seemed to be to seize everything of value that fell within their grasp. The spoliation of kingdoms and the absorption of vast estates were carried on with impunity. After the third Maratha war camel loads of silver and jewels were taken to British camps. Nor was this the only act of larceny and villainy. The lapse of Nagpur was made more infamous by the sale by public auction at Calcutta of the jewels of the royal family.<sup>2</sup> These proceedings naturally rendered the British rule odious to the people. But it was the policy of confiscation which more than anything else loosened the hold of the British on the Indians.<sup>3</sup>

The rent free tenures were of different kinds, they varied no less in the circumstances of their acquisition than in their intrinsic character, having had their origin mostly in the transition period following the assumption of the Dewani. In the early period the British upheld these rights. But as their power increased, they ventured to question those titles. Even in England as Disraeli said, attempts to examine such titles would be attended with danger. But the government in India wanted to do away with this system which exempted these 'worthless sinecurists' from payment of direct taxes. A plan of investigation of titles was undertaken under the operation of the act xi of 1852, by which the tribunal that was set up was empowered to call upon all landed proprietors to produce the title deeds of their estates. Thus they acquired arbitrary jurisdiction over a vast mass of property. Those who failed to make out a legal claim to immunity were deprived of their free holds. Evidence taken in the committee of 1853

<sup>1</sup> Malletson *History of the Indian Mutiny* : 321-2

<sup>2</sup> Norton *op cit* 98. Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates* vol. cxlv (July 1857) 456

<sup>3</sup> For a sharp criticism of the government policy in respect of resumption and absorption of states see Disraeli in *Parliamentary Debates* July 1857 (Hansard *op cit* 440-81)

showed that large portions of the land in India were free from land-tax. No documentary proof of the validity of possession could be adduced owing to depredations of insects, climatic conditions and other factors, the only proof being the proof of actual incumbency. These *lakhirajdars*, after so many years of undisturbed possession, were threatened with extinction, and a reign of terror commenced in consequence. The titles of no less than thirty-five thousand estates in the southern Maratha country alone were called for by the Inam commission during the period of five years 1852-7 and in twenty-one thousand cases sentences of confiscation were pronounced.<sup>1</sup> This policy of resuming every patch of unregistered land led to immense results. The amount obtained in this manner from the estates of ousted proprietors amounted in Bengal alone to not less than £5,000,000 a year. The commission was also at work in Bombay and there the amount arising from the like source was £370,000 per annum. The government defended its policy on the ground that a social revolution had been accomplished without any popular discontent, and yet to the manifest advantage of the state, but the critics were full of alarm. As Disraeli said:

I ask the House for a moment to pause and consider what a revolution in property has been going on . . . in India, when a sum exceeding two-thirds of a million of pounds sterling per annum has been obtained by the government as rental of land absolutely taken from individual proprietors.<sup>2</sup>

Thus a wave of indignation spread over the country, and with the annexation of Oudh the attitude of the Indian mind became definitely hostile to the British and to their government.<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly it was the most important auxiliary cause

<sup>1</sup> Malleson, iii, 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. cxlvii, (1857), 459. For the evils of resumption, see Chaudhuri, *Civil Disturbances*, 28-29; Townsend, *The Annals*, etc. (1859), vol. iii, p. 416.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. The speech of a Satara rebel while being led to the gallows: Listen all! As the English people hurled the Rajah from his throne, in like manner do you drive them out of the country (Quoted in Norton, *op. cit.*, 97). Malleson attributed the revolt to this bad faith (iii, 472). For the views of Munshi Mohan Lal of Delhi on the subject in his account dated 8 November, 1857, see Madras government Records, Home Miscellaneous, No. 725, pp. 389-422.

of the outbreak of 1857. Disraeli called it the 'starting event'<sup>1</sup> and the *Red Pamphlet*<sup>2</sup> characterised it as something nearly approaching the seizure of Spain by Napoleon, quickly followed by retribution in both cases. The Indian opinion on the causes of the mutiny was equally emphatic on this point. The Anglo-Indian paper, the *Athenaeum* of Madras charged Dalhousie with having culpably ignored the following paragraph in the report of Sir James Outram on the state of Oudh 'every agricultural family in Oudh, perhaps without exception, besides many other occupations, sends one of its members into the British army'<sup>3</sup> And when the news leaked out in February 1857, that the Court of Directors had declined taking into consideration the petition presented by the agent of the king of Oudh 'all Oudh has been up in arms against' the British<sup>4</sup> The immediate reaction was that a fatal attack was made on the life of Boileau, the deputy-commissioner of Gonda in Oudh by Fazlali<sup>5</sup> William Edwards, an able and discerning British officer of the North-West provinces, noticed a *feeling of irritation*—a marked change in the demeanour of the Mahomedans since that time<sup>6</sup> Malleeson's estimate of the situation possibly based on Lord Stanley's despatch, is more empirical. He says it alienated the territorial aristocracy who were stripped of half of their estates by the action of the newly introduced system, the mahomedan aristocracy, the military classes, the British sepoys and the peasantry, which converted the country into a hotbed of discontent<sup>7</sup> Mainuddin Hasan

<sup>1</sup> Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, *op cit*, 466-9, Ball *The History of the Indian Mutiny*, 1 625-6 Norton (*op cit* 96), quotes the *Bombay Times* to show the repugnance of feeling of the sepoys at the unfaithful conduct of the company in annexing Oudh. See also Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny*, 9, and Mainuddin Hasan Khan's views (*Ibid* 31, 37f)

<sup>2</sup> *Op cit*, 82-83

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *The Englishman*, 11 July, 1857, and also in Norton *op cit*, 135

<sup>4</sup> *Red Pamphlet*, 82

<sup>5</sup> It will be interesting to quote here the remarks of the Lucknow correspondent of the *Englishman* on this political crime (18 March, 1857) 'You will by this time have seen that the policy of Lord Dalhousie in Oude is commencing to bear the fruit that might be expected from it, poor Boileau is the first victim, to say nothing of his four poor orderlies' See also Bonham, *Oude in 1857*, 15 16

<sup>6</sup> *Facts and Reflections*, 10

<sup>7</sup> Malleeson 1, 349, in 478 81, Lord Stanley's Despatch quoted in Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny* (App x, para 22, p 324), Wilberforce, *An Unrecorded Chapter*, etc 23

Khan, the contemporary narrator draws attention to the fact that the 19th and the 34th regiments which later on revolted were at Lucknow at the time of the annexation.

The diabolical nature of the annexation of Oudh was only matched by the way in which it was administered. The first undertaking of the British government in the newly annexed province was the summary settlement based on the existing statistics of the past few years. But unfortunately no records of this settlement were available as they were all destroyed in the sepoy war and later district officials knew nothing of it beyond the bare knowledge of its occurrence.<sup>1</sup>

On 4 February, 1856, the instruction was issued that a summary settlement should be made with existing occupants for three years. It was specially emphasized that the settlement should be made as much as possible in accordance with the system which had brought the North-West provinces to a state of prosperity; an effort should be made to consolidate the popular institutions of the country by maintaining the village coparcenaries. Accordingly, settlement was made with the actual occupants of the soil, the village proprietors, as the officers would not suffer the interposition of 'middlemen', whether talukdars or farmers. Not even the wildest Irish Tenant Right Bill came near to the agrarian revolution thus attempted. Thus Lord Stanley observed:

....but it appears to me from papers at my.... That officers were not sufficiently regardful of the interests of the great landed proprietors ....but did in many instances ignore their acquired rights, and overlooked them altogether in the three years' summary settlement, although unquestionably persons actually in possession at the time of the annexation of the country.<sup>2</sup>

The policy was to crush the talukdars but it would have been better to tolerate for a time the possible injustice rather than to initiate fresh injustice.<sup>3</sup> It was no doubt difficult on the part of the government to find out the party with whom the settlement could be made with justice. Captain Hutchinson,

<sup>1</sup> DG. Lucknow, 111-2.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Stanley's Despatch of 13 October, 1858, reviewing the treatment of Oude after the annexation: To the Governor-General of India in Council (quoted in Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, App. x, p. 323, para. 19).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* para. 20.

that their claims were dismissed or decided against them by *ex parte* decrees. The objectionable feature of Jackson's administration was that the right to landed property was wantonly violated. Leading men of society possessing estates through several changes of government and for successive generations were made to surrender their estates to village occupants whose rights to land would not stand the test of a judicial investigation, and yet the *ipse dixit* of such occupants of the soil was taken to be judicial evidence in their favour against the proprietors in hereditary possession, for the settlement of revenue under the injunction of the government meant that the administration should deal with no one but village occupants, and that it was not bound to respect the rights of possession. The policy of the government<sup>1</sup> was clearly directed to win popularity by elevating the agricultural masses by the extinction of the upper orders, but the wrongful mutations made in the most arbitrary manner to implement this policy furnished the ground for alarm and insecurity and brought into existence a revolution in the laws of property in Oudh. As one contemporary observer wrote

By these illegal dispossessions, an insurrectionary feeling is fast taking hold of the agricultural masses in our own older provinces, a newly acquired country like Oude is but too likely to catch the infection. Let Canning do justice to the landed aristocracy of Oude.<sup>2</sup>

These observations were borne out by the mutinies of Oudh, the movement merging into an upsurge of the dispossessed landed chiefs. Many warnings had been given by officers engaged in the work of settlement that the measures were sowing seeds of future trouble. As early as 1832 Tucker wrote that the way to improve the condition of the peasantry was not by dissolving their connection with the superior talukdars for the former would be invariably ranged under the standard of the latter in the event of any agitation against the government.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the estrangement sought to be effected between

<sup>1</sup> In defence of this policy Martin Gubbins the financial commissioner (*An Account of the Mutinies in Oudh* 488-91), exaggerates the importance of the village owners and refers to the case of Kunwar Singh as an instance of the failure of the former system.

<sup>2</sup> *The Englishman* 25 March, 1857.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Kaye 1, 165.

the agricultural classes and their landlords had very little effect in strengthening the position of the government during these critical days. The cultivators showed an increasing tendency to come under the protection of their chiefs to settle accounts with the government. The rebellion showed that the village proprietors preferred subordination to the talukdars to the independence they gained by the summary settlement. Thornhill of Mathura observed that it was undeniably true that the peasant cultivators who had specially benefited by the British rule voluntarily returned to the previous condition of semi-serfdom.<sup>1</sup> Edwards of Budaun also detected the flaw in this assumption of the government that there must be a necessary antagonism between the landlord and the tenant in India and that the former was to be abased in order to make the latter an independent and useful member of society. He supports his contention in these words:

During the rebellion, society in the N.W. Provinces righted itself, the two classes—the proprietor and the tenant—resumed their natural relative positions by mutual agreement, and thus practically shewed that we had been wrong in considering that government interference was necessary for the protection of one against the other.<sup>2</sup>

These considerations apart, the assessments were far too heavy and all the agricultural classes were in such a state of increasing destitution that a great convulsion of society was considered highly probable even before the actual outbreak. The antipathy of the people to the judicial and revenue system of the British<sup>3</sup> was clearly manifested by their systematic destruction of the revenue records not only in the district towns, but also in the interior. As Kaye says, almost all that the English had decreed had been wantonly destroyed as though the British settlement was purposely done in violent scorn of the genius and instincts of the people.<sup>4</sup> The greatest

<sup>1</sup> Thornhill, *The Personal Adventures*, etc. 115; Townsend, *The Annals*, etc. (1860), vol. iv, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Facts*, etc. 20.

<sup>3</sup> For the corruption and venality of British law-courts and the complexity of the English legal procedure, see Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, 213; *From Sepoy to Subadar*, 127-8.

<sup>4</sup> Kaye, ii, 412-3.



joy of all these disaffected elements seems to have been to reverse the decision of the English courts<sup>1</sup>

The sale of real property in execution of decrees issued by the British courts which reduced whole families to ruin was a potent factor in producing social restiveness in the period immediately preceding<sup>2</sup> The process continued The bigger proprietors as well as the peasants were hard hit Every year large numbers of estates were put up to sale under the decrees of the courts in satisfaction of arrears of revenue and sometimes even for simple contract debts This latter feature assumes special significance when it is found that in many places the inducement to revolt was the chance to burn and destroy buniya houses and property Three district officers, Edwards of Budaun, Robertson of Saharanpur and Thornhill of Mathura observed that the first proceedings everywhere were to take revenge on the buniyas The buniyas were mostly outsiders and purchased with avidity the proprietary rights of the zamindars and peasants when they came under the operations of the sale law 'By fraud or chicanery, a vast number of the estates of families of rank and influence have been alienated, either wholly or in part, and have been purchased by new men' chiefly the buniyas who could not command any influence over their tenantry As village money-lenders they also practised unmitigated usury Naturally they became the targets of attack Their account books and their household property were thrown into the flames The English courts which offered facilities to the most oppressive money-lenders in executing a decree for the satisfaction of an ordinary debt against an ignorant peasantry produced the greatest resentment amongst the agricultural population and a dangerous dislocation of the social structure<sup>3</sup> The Santal insurrection showed the great extent to which the British government incurred the hatred of the toiling masses, who were easily ruined in a strange judicial process, the sale of land, in the interest of the money-lenders and mahajans<sup>4</sup> The protection

<sup>1</sup> Kaye, III, 250

<sup>2</sup> Chaudhuri *Civil Disturbances*, etc 18 19 23 26, Thornhill, *Personal Adventures* etc 33

<sup>3</sup> Edwards *Personal Adventures during the Indian Rebellion* 14 Thornhill, *Personal Adventures* etc 34 35

<sup>4</sup> *From Sepoy to Subadar*, 111

thus afforded to this class through the medium of English courts is the sole reason why the peasants and other inferior classes of wage earners, to whom borrowing was the only resource, were so vindictive and uncompromisingly hostile against the English during the rebellion.<sup>1</sup> Thus the sale of land not merely uprooted the ordinary people from their small holdings but also destroyed the gentry of the country, and both the orders being the victims of the operations of British civil law were united in the revolutionary epoch of 1857-8 in a common effort to recover what they had lost. This attitude was indeed very marked in the activities of rebels in every district.<sup>2</sup> Sherer at the end of his long narrative of the revolt at Cawnpore also expressed his opinion quite emphatically that the selling up of estates was the principal cause that gave the rebellion its popular character.<sup>3</sup> Similarly Thornhill of Mathura recorded that the new zamindars were everywhere ejected and order was only maintained in the towns and in a few isolated areas in the country where the ancient proprietors still had possession of their villages.<sup>4</sup> It was not cartridge or bone mixed flour and the usual cry of religion which provoked the rural classes and the landed chiefs to revolt in all cases (as in Budaun):

It is question involving their rights and interests in the soil and hereditary holdings, invariably termed by them as '*Jan see azeez*'—dearer than life—which excite them to a dangerous degree.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly religion had little or nothing to do with the risings in the trans-Gangetic parganas. There the people naturally sided with the zamindars in their hatred of the auction purchasers who had replaced the former to whom the outbreak was a grand opportunity for recovering their position.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. D. Robertson, *District Diaries during the Revolt*, 135-137.

<sup>2</sup> NE. I, 431. Report by G. P. Monev.

<sup>3</sup> Chick, *op cit.*, 620.

<sup>4</sup> Thornhill *The Personal Identities*, 35-36, 332.

<sup>5</sup> Edwards quoted in Kaye, iii, 282, 287n.

<sup>6</sup> Chick, *op cit.*, 820. Report by F. Thomas, magistrate of Allahabad, 9 November, 1858. Cooper's analysis of the great causes which operated in keeping the people of the frontier provinces well affected towards the government shows that there the people had not much to complain against assessment and rights and interests in the soil. The Doonances grounded the people to dust, the Sikhs levied annually twelve lakhs from Swat alone, while the British collected only six lakhs (*The Crisis in the Punjab*, etc. 73). Religious discontent, if any, was not sufficient to produce a rebellion of the people in those parts.

Meanwhile the Court of Directors in a letter on the assumption of the government of Oudh by the Company could hardly conceal their glee at the measures taken which were likely to swell the amount of their revenue and 'expressed their delight at the peaceable manner in which the change has been effected and the tranquility that they thought prevailed in Oudh. But the *Englishman* which knew more about the situation in India than the parasites of the India Office entered a caveat months before Oudh flared up.

We remember that shortly before the occurrence of our disasters in Afghanistan the unfortunate Sir W. Macnaughten and his equally infatuated colleague Sir A. Burns used thus to express themselves on the tranquility and good feeling towards their conquerors that existed in the hearts of the natives in and about Cabul.<sup>1</sup>

Even before the outbreak at Meerut on 10 May, events had occurred which clearly indicated that the excited state of the sepoy mind was the result of a spontaneous evolution of seditious sentiment which was so worked up that it wanted but the slightest incitement to set in motion gigantic forces of destruction. The statement of hakim Ahsanullah, an associate of Bahadur Shah that the sepoys would have mutinied even though Oudh had not been annexed<sup>2</sup> receives support from well known instances of sedition and contumacy. The facility with which the murderers in the 40th regiment at Dinapur were screened by the whole army was a significant prelude to the more open manifestation of the spirit of insubordination among the sepoys at Barrackpore on 29 March. The 19th at Berhampur similarly showed their teeth a month before the outbreak at Barrackpore. So great was the tension that, suspicion from the minds of the sepoys could not be possibly removed even if all the cartridges in the stores of Bengal were destroyed in their very presence. Their officers had been disbelieved, their assurances treated with contempt and the government proclamation of 27 March on the cartridge question did not carry the slightest conviction. Meanwhile a message from Benares indicated that the country swarmed with bands of sepoys of the 19th and the 34th.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 30 March 1837

<sup>2</sup> *Trial of Bahadur Shah*, 168

<sup>3</sup> Urquhart, *The rebellion in I. d. a.* 5

If, as the Anglo-Indian Press maintained, the country was seething with discontent, it was natural that the situation would be exploited to the full by the dispossessed political elements to their advantage. It is impossible to look upon the quick succession of the risings that had assailed the British in the months of May and June 1857, without entertaining a vague idea of some all-pervading cause which set in motion the forces of revolt. This would further favour the supposition that the sepoys contemplated a simultaneous rising on a particular day, probably 31 May, as investigated by Cracroft Wilson, the special commissioner, and that the ill-advised severities at Meerut caused the outbreak to take place there before the plot was ripe.<sup>1</sup> The form and manner in which the mutinies were inaugurated also point to an understanding or an intended co-operation among the sepoys of the Bengal army in scattered areas.<sup>2</sup> Even Dr. R. C. Majumdar who has confounded the theory of conspiracy as a cause of the mutiny admits:

It is likely that some secret negotiations were going on between the leading sepoys of different cantonments, though the exact nature of this cannot be ascertained. It is probable that the object of these negotiations was to organise a general mutiny, but for this we have got no definite evidence.<sup>3</sup>

So these presumptions, though highly plausible, lack convincing and numerous evidence for their support.<sup>4</sup> Dr.

<sup>1</sup> Bouchier, *Eight Month's*, etc. 2; Rotton, *The Chaplain's Narrative*, etc. 5; Kaye, ii, 108-10.

<sup>2</sup> In the trial of Bahadur Shah, the judge-advocate-general Harriott went to the extent of asserting on the basis of evidence placed before him that there was perfect understanding between the Delhi and the Meerut sepoys before the latter revolted (*Trial of Bahadur Shah*, 141). For the theory that Persian influence was at the bottom of the mutiny see Martin, ii, 118. Harriott in particular develops the thesis that all through it was a conspiracy (*Trial of Bahadur Shah*, 72f, 101, 153-60) of the mahomedan powers of India and Persia in which Hasan Askari and the Abyssinian Sidi Kambar played a great part in bringing it to a head. Muir of the government of the North-West provinces is more emphatic in his belief that the mutiny was an attempt to establish the ascendancy of Islam, (*Records of the Intelligence Department*, etc., i, 35, 46-47, 106, 183, 188, 190, 203, 343) and so also was F. Williams, the commissioner of Meerut (*Narrative of Events of Meerut*, pp. 64-65; NE. i, 286). In the latest edition of the work of Holmes, John Lawrence is quoted to show that there was no evidence of any connection between the intrigues of the Shah of Persia and the mutiny itself (*A History*, etc. 91n).

<sup>3</sup> R. C. Majumdar, *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857*, 207, 218.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the opinion of Sankar Tewari. 'If ever an army mutinied without premeditation that army belonged to Bengal'. Nash of the Bengal Yeomanry cavalry

Majumdar concludes, after an exhaustive study of available official and non official records that by no stretch of imagination could the revolt be considered as a premeditated one. According to him the mutinous proceedings were certainly calculated to preclude the idea of conspiracy among the sepoys themselves and the engineering of the mutiny by outside agencies. Bahadur Shah could hardly claim any credit either for organising the mutiny or contributing to its success or failure. The statement of Sitaram Bawa, that Nana Sahib organised a big conspiracy was unreliable in character, the adopted son of Baji Rao seems to have played a part for himself alone. The available evidence also does not justify the view that the rani of Jhansi instigated the sepoys to mutiny and to a certain extent this was also true of Kunwar Singh of Bihar. The outbreak of 1857 was also not inspired by any political party in India or by any foreign power, Persia or Russia, hostile to England. Nor does it appear quite feasible that a conspiracy was conducted through the circulation of the *chapatts*.<sup>1</sup>

While, therefore, it is difficult to say whether the country powers or the dispossessed political elements like the Nana were making secret preparations either among themselves or with the collaboration of the sepoys to overthrow the British from India,<sup>2</sup> it cannot be denied that the readiness to join the revolt on the part of the people after the sepoys had broken out, sets forth in clear light the latent spirit of sedition

while quoting the above view opposes the theory that the revolt was a premeditated one (*Volunteering in India* 104-05 108). Innes was convinced that the Meerut outbreak was not a pre-arranged part of any concerted plan (*Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny* 14, 21f). Colonel Sykes the late chairman of the East India Company also held that the mutiny crept so slowly from station to station (26 February, 29 March and 10 May) that it does not suggest any previous combination (Urquhart *The Rebellion in India* 7-8). Halim Ahsanullah an associate of Bahadur Shah emphatically stated that the native army mutinied of their own accord and not at the instigations of any chiefs (*Trial* etc 166).

<sup>1</sup> Majumdar *op cit*, 180-211.

<sup>2</sup> Cooper refers to many conspiracies of a local nature from intercepted correspondence (*The Crisis* etc 7-8 30-01). Malletson however writes without referring to sources that abundant proofs were obtained that a conspiracy had been formed with its ramifications all over India by some influential people in Oudh in the interval between the annexation and the outbreak of the mutiny to overthrow the British in which the Fyzabad maulavi took a leading part (11 485). Dr R. C. Majumdar has however shown that there is no reliable evidence in support of the maulavi's participation in a conspiracy, nor is there any evidence that he was in league with the Nana or the rani of Jhansi. (*op cit*, 180-03).

and disaffection which they harboured. Nothing illustrates more strikingly the spirit of contumacy and revolt which seized the people than the speech which Sarfarazali, the Gorakhpur maulavi, was said to have delivered at Shahjehanpur on 1 May. The authenticity of this seditious speech cannot indeed be vouched for but it agrees quite well with the rumour of rebellion that was in the air of India in 1857.<sup>1</sup> He addressed the gathering with the words *Hazrat-i-majlis*, and 'brothers in the common cause' and after describing the way in which the *firanghi* had become masters of the country harangued:

The question for debate is 'Shall they continue to be our masters any longer? ... By the last prophet, they shall not defile our native soil any longer. I am here to devise ways and means to accomplish that object. Consider what instruments they used to acquire this country? ... It is the *sipahi* army which conquered India for them, and by the sword of Ali! that very instrument shall be employed to destroy them.

But you will perhaps ask, 'what have they done to receive this treatment?' I answer: If *suar gadha* in the public streets, and 'damn your eyes' in the public courts is a form of compliment acceptable to you, then they have deserved well at your hands. Have you never seen a fellow-countryman of yours being kicked by the whites, and sometimes the cane laid across his back?.. You will say: 'this is our natural lot as a subject-race, and we have no right to complain.' Well, let it be so. But *ai bhai*! our religion is now in danger. Having lost the sovereignty of the land, having bowed in subjection to the impure *Kafir*, shall we surrender the inalienable privileges which we have received from the prophet, upon whom be peace?

Then referring to the usual stories about defilement of caste he turned to the Hindus:

O brothers of the Hindu race! the purity of your caste is threatened, and the religious distinctions so much prized by you invaded by the

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was arranged at the house of Mazhar Karim and there were assembled the following persons:

Qadarali Khan Nizamali, Qudratali Abdurrauf Khan, Sital Singh, Daulat rai Kalkaprasad, Ghanshyam Singh Mangal Khan. It may be noticed that all of them are referred to in the official report on the disturbances in the district (See Shahjehanpur). The entrance to the door of the room where the meeting was held was closely guarded. Mazhar Karim who played the host welcomed the maulavi and said that he had come to them again with intelligence that their cause was gaining new friends in every city. The situation described in that book clearly reflects that a strong movement was afoot to shake off the incubus of British authority. (Mariam, 8-9)

proselytizing and annexing *Firangi*! Rise in arms! Do you forget how over and over again our countrymen have beaten these so-called invincible British—in Maisur, in Central India, in Kabul, in the Punjab, and elsewhere? Their whole armies have been cut up, not one being left to tell the tale. And *insha-allah*! it will be so again. Just a hundred years ago the rule of the infidel began, and I declare to you that it must now end. The centenary approaches, my friends, and have I your unanimous vote to declare that the *Kafir* brood shall be stamped out on that date?

The whole assembly with one voice cried out. No! sooner than that. The subadar major Ghanshyam Singh was so much excited that he sprang to his feet and drawing his falchion exclaimed. By the sacred cord which I wear as a *chatri* of *chatries*, this blade shall lick up the blood of him who dares to bring the greased cartridge to my mouth. A frenzy seized the whole assembly. The Hindus cried out *Jai Sri Ram Lachmanji*! while the Mahomedans yelled *Ek nara Haidari, ja Hussein*!

The over excited political sentiment as reflected in the above speech was typical of the attitude of the general body of the rebels who naturally demanded the expulsion of the faithless *firinghis* because in addition to the injury they had inflicted on public life they had also encompassed the ruin of the landed classes in the ensnaring system of English law,<sup>2</sup> ruined Indian trade and industries by an unrighteous monopoly of all lucrative trade such as indigo, opium and cloth<sup>3</sup> and had despoiled the people by heavy taxation, odious imposts, and through the medium of stamp papers and court fees.<sup>4</sup> Thus the mutinies became the means of an upsurge of the civil populace. The revolt of the army was accompanied, as a contemporary British officer said, by a rebellion of the country.<sup>5</sup> The extent and magnitude of this aspect of the mutiny can best be described by a reference to the main course of sepoy war which may now be attempted with the greatest possible compression.

The burst of mutinous feelings<sup>1</sup> at Meerut had been succeeded by explosions at many other cantonment towns. Nothing

<sup>1</sup> *Manam* 10-18

<sup>2</sup> *Civil Disturbances* 7, 17L.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 216-7

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 53. Cf. the proclamations issued by the Azamgarh rebels quoted in Sen, *Eighteen Fifty Seven*, 36

<sup>5</sup> Thornhill *The Personal Adversities* 123

could assuage the sentiments of the infuriated soldiery. Anson's proclamation of 19 May and that of Colvin bearing the date 25 May, were scarcely noticed by them. The latter manifesto amounted to an admission on the part of the government of the gravity of the situation—the compact mass of rebellion which was infecting all alike and the loss of every means of control in many districts of upper India. The proclamation was of course forthwith repudiated by the governor-general intent on vindicating the strength of the government, but this measure neither frightened the rebels into giving up arms nor checked the progress of the rebellion. During this time the mutineers at Delhi were extending their influence over a large circle and were holding the city in a manner to keep at bay a complete British *corps d'armee*. They also attempted the conquest of Meerut and sent an expedition to seize the city, but were met by Wilson's field force on the Hindan bridge, fifteen miles from Delhi, and completely routed on 31 May. But in the other fronts the rebellion was raging furiously. The situation as described by lieutenant-governor Colvin was that the belief in the permanence of the British rule being shaken, parts of upper Doab were in a convulsion.<sup>1</sup> In the month of June, India was in the midst of an epidemic of revolts, and it appeared as though not a regiment in the service would persevere in their loyalty to the government. Almost all the remaining stations lying scattered over half a million square miles felt the shock of the mutinies which were inaugurated in the same manner in all places with much the same effect on the masses in the interior who were fast rising. The movement was increasingly becoming, as Malleson said, more national.<sup>2</sup> Like the call of destiny the rising tide of mutiny and rebellion was encircling the British on all sides—no human hand could prevent it.<sup>3</sup> By the end of June, the general state of the country from Allahabad to Ferozepur and from the foot of the hills on the borders of Oudh to the southern confines of Rajputana and the Sagar districts may be described as more or less under the influence

<sup>1</sup> Kaye, iii, 233-5, 245.

<sup>2</sup> Malleson, i, 165.

<sup>3</sup> Kaye, ii, 407-8; Sherring, *The Indian Church*, etc. 231.



of the rebels. In the course of a month, the British empire had melted away from the frontiers of Bengal to those of the Panjab<sup>1</sup>

As, however, the revolt was spreading the financial position of the British became desperate in the extreme. When R. H. Dunlop took charge of the Meerut district on 12th June, he found that no revenue had been paid by any of the zamindars since the outbreak, and that the cash balance in the treasury amounted to three and one fourth lakhs which also was rapidly disappearing and stood at something less than a lakh by the end of the month.<sup>2</sup> Politically again the situation was so very grave, and the necessity of concentrating British forces on Delhi for its recovery was of such magnitude that Sir John Lawrence was prepared to abandon the Peshwar valley, leaving it in the hands of Dost Mohammed of Kabul 'in free and friendly cession',<sup>3</sup> in order that the Panjab though denuded of troops might still be held with the help of the latter. The 'inner certainty' was that, as Malleeson says, if general Wilson were to retreat from Delhi, the Panjab would rise in insurrection.<sup>4</sup>

The month of July opened with the surges of revolt flowing in the directions of Indore and Mhow in the south, Sialkot and Lahore in the north, but more alarming was the spread of revolt in the east, the discovery of a conspiracy at Patna which eventually found expression in a rising in the city on 3 July. It did not stop there. Sagauli in Champaran, ten miles from Dinapur, fell on 21 July. It was an insignificant cantonment, and so isolated was its position that it seemed beyond the reach of fanatical emissaries and seditious proclamations. The fall of Sagauli was followed by the mutiny at

<sup>1</sup> Thornhill *op cit* 123. Keith Young otherwise very critical could not always assess the situation correctly. His estimate of the situation on 29 May that it was merely a gathering of the disaffected sepoys and that the people were not with them is an instance of faulty observation (Devin—1857 p. 28). Holmes quotes Cave Browne to show that the downfall of the Englishraj was taken for granted and civil rebellion followed as a result (*op cit* 116-141-2).

<sup>2</sup> FP ix 894. In Delhi the British asked for a loan of 25 lakhs from Seth Luchmichand and collected 3 lakhs from the bankers of Panipat and Karnal and 5 lakhs from maharaja Narendra Singh of Patiala. Jyotiprasad had also advanced Rs. 3,000 to the English (Metcalf *Two Native Narratives* 112-115-143-174).

<sup>3</sup> Kaye ii 608ff.

<sup>4</sup> Malleeson iii 300-01. Cooper *The Crisis* etc 191.

Dinapur on the following day, which threw the whole country into a ferment, leading to the disaster of Dunbar's expedition at Arrah and the mutiny at Ramgarh. All these had disturbed the country to within two hundred miles of Calcutta but it might have been far worse if the Dinapur mutineers had marched upon Patna and Gaya. In the west, severe battles were raging outside Delhi where the mutineers were fighting like 'devils'<sup>1</sup> and practically besieged the besiegers. Rotton, the chaplain to the Delhi field force, had no hesitation in stating that the English were not really strong enough to capture Delhi. The paucity of Europeans was so keenly felt by the army before the imperial city that it was suggested and even recommended by general Wilson to abandon the cantonment of Meerut and to withdraw from it all the European troops to replenish the strength of the besieging army at the ridge.<sup>2</sup> This serious predicament was only matched by the imposing victory of the sepoys at the battle of Shahganj near Agra on 5 July. It was not unlikely, therefore, that the government should consider the situation grave and accordingly admitted that the North-West provinces were for the moment (first week of July) *lost*.<sup>3</sup>

Yet in some ways the month of July saw a setback in the progress of the revolt. The recapture of Cawnpore and the occupation of Bithur gave a death blow to the plan which promised to resuscitate the great Maratha confederacy laid low forty years ago by the Marquess of Hastings. Further, with Cawnpore as a base of operations on the Doab, the British forces could march to Oudh and effect the release of the beleaguered garrison at Lucknow. But the most cheering prospect was considerably dimmed by the frustration which attended the repeated efforts made by general Havelock to reach the city. Havelock crossed the Ganges on 25 July and proceeded upto Unao where he encountered a desperate conflict on 29 July, and another further up at Bashiratganj, a strongly fortified place, eight miles distant from Unao on the same day, but on hearing from Neill the gloomy news of

<sup>1</sup> Keith Young, *Delhi*—1857, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Rotton, *The Chaplain's Narrative*, etc. 61, 72, 150-01.

<sup>3</sup> Government of India to the Court of Directors, 4 July, 1857, quoted in Kaye, ii, 413.

road being so difficult, the alternative proposal of reaching the city by the Jaunpur road was seriously discussed in official quarters. In any case, the British position in Cawnpore appeared to have been untenable and the governor general was constrained thus to instruct the officer in the field.

It is not probable that the relief of the Lucknow garrison will be facilitated by the abandonment of Cawnpore, but if this be the case, do not hesitate to abandon it. The political importance of it, the cost of recovering it, are not to be weighed against the risk of Lucknow.<sup>1</sup>

While this was the situation in the Gangetic valley, an outbreak at Kolhapur which took place at this time not merely led to the extension of the revolt, but significantly pointed out its political contents particularly to the resentment generated by the lapse of Satara.<sup>2</sup> More alarming was the situation in the east, where Kunwar Singh held sway at Shahabad, and consequently the means of protecting Bengal were also found to be altogether inadequate.<sup>3</sup> The 5th irregular cavalry, the districts round Bhagalpur mutinied on 14 August and commenced their march to Arrah. Thus the scene of mutiny and rebellion raged in the country<sup>4</sup> along the course of the Jumna from Delhi to Agra, from Agra to Allahabad and thence to Dinapur and Arrah, spreading over the mid-provinces of Bengal, where martial law was proclaimed, unlike anything that was recorded in the history of India. From Arrah to Raniganj a line could be drawn through a completely disorganised country and in fact taking the disturbed districts from Calcutta to Hissar and from Mhow to Meerut we shall find the revolt to extend over a tract of country averaging one thousand miles in breadth, and five hundred miles in length. Alike in extent and intensity, the revolt, therefore, assumed a huge dimension at least for some months, which could scarcely have been accomplished by a few thousand sepoys without the aid of the people. Not merely

<sup>1</sup>Forrest *Selections* II 219 (Intro.)

<sup>2</sup>Haye III 407

<sup>3</sup>FP II 188 R. J. H. B. Rich, secretary to the government Fort William 31 August

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Lieutenant Majendie who saw the condition of these regions in July 1857, mutiny and rebellion stalked in bloody triumph (*Up among the Pandies* 299)

politically, financially also the government was faced with a crisis. The lieutenant-governor of Agra in his letter dated 5 August to the officer commanding at Allahabad disclosed the state of affairs in terms which could hardly be exaggerated. He wrote:

We have laid up stores largely, but our funds are becoming very limited; we hold no country, and scarcely collect anything, therefore it is essential that funds come with the force in some degree for our own use here: our wants may be taken at one lac and a half, . . . We can scarcely carry on beyond three months more.<sup>1</sup>

Even early in the month of September this financial stringency could not be removed; and Colvin complained of the pressing need of money which was to a considerable extent relieved by taking a loan in the city of Agra at a high rate of interest and by raising a sum by supplying bills.<sup>2</sup> This financial bankruptcy was only matched by the alarming political situation in the Doab, where the rebel power was being organised with a rapidity that spelt danger.<sup>3</sup> The report of 8 September indicated that the Oudh insurgents were pressing down to the country to the north of the Ganges in the Allahabad district and had arrived within some four or five miles of Jhusi which is opposite Allahabad. The encroachments of the Oudh talukdars continued unopposed with the result that towards the end of September they were reported to be occupying the whole country between Gopiganj and Allahabad and even threatened to control the grand trunk road. Intelligence was also obtained that a person calling himself the nazim of Allahabad had seized Phaphamow, a village about five miles on the east side of the Ganges. The gravity of the danger was underlined by the fact that the place was to Allahabad what Howrah was to Fort William.<sup>4</sup> The move was not merely a predatory raid, for the rebel government even made attempts to consolidate these possessions in an orderly way. The Allahabad parganas to the north of the

<sup>1</sup> FP. iv, 142: Fort. Agra, 5 August.

<sup>2</sup> FP. iv, 114; Muir, *Records of the Intelligence Department*, etc. i, 73-74.

<sup>3</sup> FP. iv 114: Narrative of Events.

<sup>4</sup> FP. vii, 34, 42: Lieutenant-governor, Central Provinces, Benares, 30 September.

Ganges were allotted to talukdars and the Oudh territory including the northern districts of Benares were divided into *chacklas* each of which was placed under a chackladar. All through this area, the ex zamindars remained in a state of acute tension, and in open defiance for the purpose of retaining possession of their estates. They came from the parganas of Soraon, Nawabganj, Secundra, Jhusi, Meh and Kewar.<sup>1</sup> Official correspondence gives us a glimpse of the way in which the rebellion of the talukdars was initiated. The magistrate of Gopiganj writes on 24 September

The two parties appear to have united for the one common object of driving out and destroying the British government. Their proceedings are by no means hurried, but are conducted in the most systematic manner, they summon the zamindars of village after village by letter, and exact from them submission and tribute, if the zamindars refuse to come, their estate is visited by a party of match-lock-men their united forces are daily increasing, and they daily advance in the occupation of the country. They collect revenue, destroy crops, appoint their own police, and are making arrangements for an Abkarree settlement.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile in the east the activities of the rebels and the unopposed march of the mutineers kept the Bihar districts in a very unsettled state. British prestige was being rapidly destroyed with alarming consequences for the future.<sup>3</sup> It was apprehended that the price of the opium crop in Bihar would be in jeopardy if the rebels were not checked.<sup>4</sup> The district of Gaya in particular was completely ravaged by the insurgents. A. Money, the magistrate of the district, in his letter of 17 September strongly argued that the district should not be denuded of its troops, as the government was not in full possession of a large part of the district. All the country to the west comprising the parganas of Arwal, Uncha, Goh Manowra and part of Sirsi was in the hands of the rebels. Rujwars and rebels were committing excesses with

<sup>1</sup> FP VII, 145-146. F.O. Mayne, joint magistrate, Gopiganj, 25 September.

<sup>2</sup> FP VII, 144.

<sup>3</sup> FP V, 67. W. F. Macdonnell, magistrate of Saran, 13 June.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 69.

impunity in Noada to such an extent that the magistrate wanted to make examples of them.<sup>1</sup>

The tension of the revolt was to a certain extent relaxed by the fall of Delhi on 14-15 September. Never since the commencement of the mutiny had the cause of the British been better or the prospects of the rebels worse. The mutiny indeed received a great blow, but the ecstatic feelings with which the public at that time, especially of Bengal, received the intelligence of the fall of Delhi were completely darkened by the events of the succeeding months and an influential daily was obliged to make the following admission:

Upon the fall of Delhi we ventured to express a hope that mutinies would thenceforth cease. We miscalculated the depth of the infatuation under which the sepoys are labouring.<sup>2</sup>

Even in the last part of September the troops mutinied at Nagode and Jabalpur. The fall of Delhi only marks the dividing line of the revolt of 1857,—what began as a mutiny was now assuming the proportions of a rebellion of the people, in a sense more shattering and more portentous than the military insurrection and the partial civil rebellion of the earlier period. In the early period it was Delhi, now it was Lucknow. Delhi was defended by the sepoys, in the Indian offensive at Lucknow the talukdari levies preponderated over the regular soldiers.

In September Outram joined Havelock and Neill at Cawnpore. Havelock's force again crossed the Ganges and fought an action at Mangalwar on 21 September with success and proceeding up captured Alambagh on 23 September and then entered the Lucknow residency. It was the first relief of Lucknow effected just in time, 'to anticipate', as Innes says 'the arrival of the Delhi mutineers'.<sup>3</sup> But the struggle was severe, as many as five hundred and thirty-five officers and men on the British side were killed up to 26 September,<sup>4</sup> and though the opposition of the Indian rebels was overcome, Outram and Havelock remained besieged in the residency.

<sup>1</sup> FP. vii, 106: A. Money, magistrate of Gaya, 17 September.

<sup>2</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 8 October, 1857.

<sup>3</sup> Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, Preface, p. vi.

<sup>4</sup> Malleson, i, 542; Forrest, *Selections*, ii. (Intro.), 245.

Even those who were inclined to moderation believed that the safety of the British was at stake at Lucknow. Reliable intelligence was received that the city was surrounded by thirty thousand rebels. Outram maintained his position at Lucknow till the arrival of Campbell in November, by the most daring acts of bravery and carrying on risky sorties now and then.

The government also did not mince matters in respect of the position at Lucknow and candidly expressed its helplessness. When major Erskine, the commissioner of the Jabalpur division, pleaded for strengthening his position in Sagar and Narbada territories where he felt powerless to cope with the tide of revolt surging all around him, Cecil Beadon, the secretary to the government of India, cautioned him that interests of still greater value were at stake at Lucknow. He proceeded to inform Erskine that Outram's force found itself in a precarious position in the beleaguered city with a stock barely sufficient to last three weeks even with reduced rations and with no prospect of replenishing it by procuring supplies. The position became still more unhappy because of the inability of the government to send a force of more than four thousand in all against Havelock's demand for two brigades of two thousand five hundred men each, which was abundantly justified by the desperate struggle by which Havelock reached the residency. The circumstances were such that the governor general in council considered the sacrifice of the garrison in Lucknow as a far greater calamity and reproach to them than an outbreak of the Rewah and other states.<sup>1</sup> Official and non official reports of October confirmed the impression that a storm of a serious nature was brewing amongst the zamindars of Oudh, and that it would burst upon Lucknow, Jaunpur and Azamgarh.<sup>2</sup>

While the Indians kept up an incessant fire upon their enemies in Lucknow in October, in other theatres their supremacy was effectively maintained and even extended. From different sources, intelligence was obtained by the government that a great and increasing fermentation was

<sup>1</sup> FP vii 84-85. C. Beadon, secretary to the government of India, 30 October.

<sup>2</sup> FP vii 73. Intelligence received from the magistrate 13 October. *The Englishman* 28 October 57.

going on among the chiefs in the Oudh border on the Jaunpur and Azamgarh sides and that the leaders were contemplating an invasion of the districts on many points to extend the rule of the rebel government of Lucknow. The authorities felt no doubt that the forces of Mehndi Hasan were being daily recruited by talukdari men, villagers and sepoy and that pressure had been steadily applied to induce him to advance against the British. P. Carnegie, who was entrusted with the duty of watching the principal line of enemy activities, confidently reported that the plan of a combined attack against Jaunpur and Azamgarh was well under way, one force was to move from Sultanpur and the other to march from Fyzabad along the Gogra, and to be supported by a simultaneous invasion from Gorakhpur. Zamindars were constantly coming and going along with their retainers who numbered nearly two thousand. Circulars were sent to them promising a remission of two years' revenue if they would help the expedition to Jaunpur. Reports of such movements were found to be too consistent to be lightly dismissed. The scheme of such a planned operation was not eventually carried out in the month of October but extensive preparations were made obviously under the belief that major operations would have to be undertaken soon. Nazims and chackladars were geared up into activity. At Fyzabad workshops were established for the repair of heavy guns; at Dilkhus House, a quantity of lead had been dug up, made into bullets, and distributed between Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Sultanpur, and vigorous efforts were made to enlist, on the side of the rebels, the talukdars and their followers.<sup>1</sup>

To the south of Jaunpur lay Gopiganj where the effects of the revolt were more sweeping. Various parties of rebels were plundering and collecting revenue in the name of the king of Oudh in the month of October. It appears that the nephew of Kunwar Singh was present there with about one thousand seven hundred followers.<sup>2</sup> The self-styled nazim and the naib-nazim were also there with a large force within twelve miles of Mayne's encampment at Hanumanganj, continuing

<sup>1</sup> FP. vii, 71: R. Strachey, secretary to the government, Central Provinces, 15 October, '57.

<sup>2</sup> *The Englishman*, 24 October, '57.



to raise border talukdars against the British.<sup>1</sup> The report of F. O. Mayne, the joint magistrate of Gopiganj of a date in October is a document of great importance, for it shows that the fall of Delhi had hardly any effect on the rebellious multitude whose activities in that area probably reached their peak in that month. The collapse of the British authority, which was thus brought about, could have resulted only from the rebellion of the people and not from a mere mutiny of sepoys. He writes

The civil administration of these parganas is virtually at a standstill. We hold the Grand Trunk Road, and keep open the communication

but the villages on both sides, to the extent of four or five miles only, can be said to be in our possession and even they yield only a divided obedience. Little or no revenue comes in, and the services of the tahsildars and their establishment are made use of as police.<sup>2</sup>

The communication of the governor general to the Court of Directors in the same month also adverted to the same subject of the occupation of the country by the Oudh talukdars who were systematically acquiring village after village, collecting revenue and forming settlement papers.<sup>3</sup>

Cawnpore during this revolt had assumed special significance on account of its central position—it linked Lucknow and Kalpi and because it was the base of operations in the far flung theatres of war. The possession of this city by the contending parties provides the clue to the many important operations of the war. It was the nerve centre of the British army and so the tension of the situation was reflected in the fluctuating conditions of the city. Towards the end of October great excitement prevailed there. It was reported that large bodies of men—portions of the Gwalior or Indore brigade were advancing within sixteen miles of the place. The district was in a ferment as the people fondly believed in the declaration that the British rule was approaching its end and even *rassads* were being collected for the Gwalior contingent by the rebellious zamindars of Akbarpur and Bhognipur.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FP ix 218-9 Narrative of Events to 14 November

<sup>2</sup> FP ix 227

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* 226 v. 34

<sup>4</sup> FP vii 121 ix 234 C. Chester commissioner of Allahabad 31 October

The position of Allahabad and the neighbouring countries became still more ticklish by the middle of October. British rule broke down to a point of utter helplessness. The police was totally disorganised, the country was daily ravaged by rebel bands and even the military position was threatened. The government admitted in a tone of utter mortification:

The news of the fall of Delhi is understood to be generally disbelieved in this division. The reason of this incredulity is, that the people here have seen no results from that success.

Portions of the district passed completely under the rule of the rebel nazim of Salone Fazl Azim whose naib Rahulamin encamped at Soraon, at a distance of about fourteen miles from the fort across the Ganges,<sup>1</sup> where large numbers of insurgent forces were constantly being accumulated.<sup>2</sup> These raised revenue with impunity and kept the grand trunk road entirely under their mercy. The condition in the neighbouring district of Fatehpur was equally bad and frequent acts of open rebellion, such as the rising at Khajwa,<sup>3</sup> undermined the security of the British. Further at Khakhru, about sixteen miles from Fatehpur, a large body of rebels were committing depredations and havoc.<sup>4</sup> In the Benares division, Gorakhpur remained in the hands of the rebels.<sup>5</sup>

What gave cause for still more anxiety was that rebellion and disaffection were daily gaining strength in the trans-Jumna tracts which had hitherto been well-disposed.<sup>6</sup> In October there was found concentrated strong bodies of armed rebels, ready for action in Banda, Rewah and the adjacent countries. Rewah had considerable strategic importance since it commanded three of the Gangetic districts, Cawnpore,

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 216: Narrative of Events to 14 November.

<sup>2</sup> The Allahabad reporter of the *Englishman* stated that it was Mehdi Ali Khan who styled himself as the nazim of Allahabad, was encamped at Soraon along with Sangram Singh, the zamindar of Shahpur and Beni Bahadur Singh of Nasratpur. They jointly commanded force of from, four to six thousand armed men and six guns and were ravaging the country and exacting from all a tax of four annas on the rupee (24 October, '57).

<sup>3</sup> See section on Fatehpur.

<sup>4</sup> *The Englishman*, 24 October, '57.

<sup>5</sup> FP. ix, 217.

<sup>6</sup> FP. vii, 72: Report by Strachey, secretary to the government, Central Provinces, 14 October.

Allahabad and Mirzapur Its frontier was less than thirty miles from the fort of Allahabad and little more from the town of Mirzapur Further, it formed always the only convenient link of communication between Benares or Allahabad and the Sagar and Narbada provinces and the postal road between Bengal and Bombay also lay through it Naturally on the tranquillity of Rewah depended the security of British possessions in the whole expanse of country stretching from Mirzapur to Nagpur But there were uneasy stirrings in Rewah and the whole of the population was hostile It was apprehended that the fifth irregulars having left Sasaram to join Kunwar Singh would pass through Rewah<sup>1</sup> Portions of the district were entirely under the possession of the rebels The official report of the first week of October stated that the whole of Sohagpur, Shahpur and Ramgarh was in open rebellion and Jabalpur was in ferment<sup>2</sup> Banda on the west was already under the control of the rebels Until up to the middle of October, Kunwar Singh was still at Banda with about four thousand men Erskine's report of 16 October, gave a very unfavourable opinion of the feeling of the chiefs in Bundelkhand towards the British and he strongly represented the view that unless military measures were taken at once, the whole country would be lost Numerous thakurs were up in arms with their followers plundering villages and their ravages extended up to Narsinghpur on the north of the Narbada where a number of them and pathans after combining their followers had taken possession of villages and police posts<sup>3</sup> Similarly Hoshangabad to the south of the Narbada was thoroughly disorganised and the police were beaten out of their posts Major Erskine admitted with regret that his three Bundelkhand districts—Jalaun, Jhansi and Chanderi—were not at that moment in his possession He also added that Sagar and Mandla regions were in a state of anarchy, but all these were the outward symptoms of a deeprooted feeling of sedition which had taken possession of the minds of the people at the total abasement of the British authority As in

<sup>1</sup> FP vi 89

<sup>2</sup> FP ix 272 Report by W. C. Erskine, commissioner

<sup>3</sup> FP vii 82 Report by R. Strachey 22 October

Allahabad so also in the Narbada territories, the peoples and chiefs appear to have taken, as Erskine despairingly recorded:

Little notice of our successes in Delhi and Lucknow, indeed it is questionable if they believe the reports....<sup>1</sup>

During this time the mighty wave of rebellion was surging into the eastern region. A good deal of disorder prevailed in parts of Bihar, especially in Gaya and in large portions of Shahabad. The lieutenant-governor of Bengal stated in his letter of 30 October that it was occasioned partly by the attitude of the villagers and the police who were unwilling to lay their hands on the mutinous sepoys lurking in the district and partly by the influence of Kunwar Singh, and a general belief that he was soon to return to his estate victorious. The rise of Kunwar Singh and the civil rebellion that followed in its wake completely disorganised Shahabad, and other parts of Bihar were affected in the same manner so that all factories were plundered and the Europeans were compelled to fly away. The abandonment of Gaya and Noada in pursuance of Tayler's questionable order excited disturbances all through the district, which had scarcely subsided when the mutinous fifth irregular cavalry commenced their predatory activities. Once again a devastating march was repeated over nearly the same ground by the companies of the 32nd regiment from Deoghar. The authority of the government was subjected to humiliation by the repetition of these mutinous proceedings. During the month of October the districts to the north of the Ganges in Bihar also remained exposed to the inroads from the Oudh rebels who were masters of Gorakhpur. Yet nothing could be done, as the lieutenant-governor confessed, to relieve this tension in Bihar owing to the urgency of suppressing the rebellion in upper India in Lucknow, which needed all the available military resources of the government. But the circumstances of rebellion in Bihar caused serious anxiety because of the importance of the opium cultivation and should this fail it would most surely affect revenue. The government failed to restore normal conditions with the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* 82-83.

result that the usual opium advances could not be made in many parts of Bihar<sup>1</sup>

The defeat of the Ramgarh battalion at Chatra Pass on 2 October<sup>2</sup> effectively checked the rebels and secured the district, but Shahabad was still kept in ferment by Amr Singh and more specially by Judhar Singh who had taken up a position in the west of the Bihar district and was instrumental in crossing the 5th irregulars over the Son. In the early part of October Judhar Singh was still reported to be plundering and harassing the portion of the district of Gaya around Arwal. An expedition was sent against him to effect his capture but his house at Khamini was found to be surrounded by lofty mudwalls loopholed and the place garrisoned by six or seven hundred retainers armed with guns and matchlocks. The attempt to force open an entry into the building was repulsed and the assailants were compelled to fall back and retire to Arwal<sup>3</sup>. Though an isolated affair, the disaster would have set the whole province in a flame if the Oudh rebels had marched into Bihar<sup>4</sup>.

The overall picture of the situation was anything but encouraging to the government and was not likely to inspire confidence in it. It meant the triumph of rebellion up to a point, although the mutinous soldiery failed to consolidate the advantage. It was now more than five months since the mutiny broke out at Meerut and Delhi. Though at the early stages full scale military exertions could not be directed owing to the paucity of troops, the military position was entirely different by October when troops from Madras, Bombay, the Cape, China, Persia and other places were rushed to the battle area and yet the British remained besieged in isolated pockets despite the capture of Delhi and the relief of Lucknow. Basically, therefore, there was some strength in the character and organisation of the rebellion which baffled every demonstration of superior arms to suppress it. All seemed to be closing on the English, and the contemporary view could

<sup>1</sup> FP vii 89 Minute by Lieutenant governor of Bengal 20 October, NE ii 74 75

<sup>2</sup> FP vii 17

<sup>3</sup> FP vii 20 Narrative of Events to 31 October

<sup>4</sup> *The Englishman* 26 October 57

hardly exaggerate the inconvenient fact that there was more violence, more anarchy 'now than there was a fortnight or a month ago'. Whatever the reason, the British government could not by any means form a correct estimate of the danger and adopt measures to crush the rebellion then raging over Lucknow, Cawnpore, Fatehpur, Allahabad, Bareilly and Bihar.<sup>1</sup>

The situation, as it stood in the early part of November, was that the revolt till then had met with no mighty and moral check. Its strongest convulsions were still felt in Oudh and until Oudh was subjugated, the rebellion in the bordering districts could not be suppressed. From Lucknow flowed influences which encouraged the struggling spirits to persevere in the death-grapple. From Lucknow with one line stretching up to Gorakhpur in the east, and another to Cawnpore on the south, two other great centres of revolt, it looked like a cordon thrown off round the English. The menace threatening the British at Cawnpore reached its climax in the month of November. The occupation of Gorakhpur by the rebels and the apparent inability of the English to cope with Mohammed Hasan also tended to destroy confidence and order in the neighbouring area. As the commissioner of Patna wisely observed:

all the prestige we ought to have acquired from the capture of Delhi and our numerous victories in the North-West...

have been rendered fruitless. He further recorded his impression—other British officers could not fail to notice this in different centres of authority—that even the fall of Delhi has not been an event of any consequence in checking the progress of rebellion, and so its continued success naturally strengthened the assertions of the disaffected, who endeavour to persuade the people that Delhi has not fallen, and that we are in no better position now, than we were two months ago.<sup>2</sup>

In much the same strain and in the same month the Azamgarh officer was constrained to inform the authorities<sup>3</sup> that a

<sup>1</sup> *The Englishman*, 24, 26, October, '57.

<sup>2</sup> FP. vii, 222: Report by E. A. Samuels, Patna, 18 November.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 286: Letter of F. M. Bird, joint-magistrate of Azamgarh, dated 18 November, '57.

sepoys,<sup>1</sup> were pouring down to the attack of Jaunpur. The attacks were effectively countered by Longden assisted by Colonel Franks but they remained practically besieged in the last week of November with two large armies in their close vicinity in Lucknow, and in Cawnpore, outnumbering them in men and guns, and a huge force threatening them in the east at Jaunpur. It was evident that the Indians were acting in concert and not without some degree of organisation.

Thus both at Lucknow and Cawnpore the rebels had assumed a posture of strength. It was one of those moments when with better leadership and with a planned effort to combine, the Indian rebels could have turned the scales against the English. The whole of Oudh was in arms and Rohilkhand was disaffected. The trained soldiers of the Gwalior contingent, numbering nearly five thousand, were approaching Cawnpore and Cawnpore was only fifty three miles from Lucknow on one side, and only forty miles from Kalpi on the other. The defence of Cawnpore and Lucknow demanded the attention of Sir Colin at one and the same time. Outram who was a man of courage communicated to his chief that the relief of Lucknow should be a secondary consideration, but Sir Colin saw the danger of Lucknow becoming another Delhi: the relief of the residency should be all important—important because

All accounts from Lucknow show that Sir James Outram is in great straits. The whole country has arisen around him and the most trifling supplies cannot be obtained from the country.<sup>2</sup>

From a military point of view, as Forrest says, Campbell should have secured his base and line of operation previous to his advance upon Lucknow, but political considerations dictated otherwise.<sup>3</sup>

Lucknow was relieved for the second time on 17 November, but it was evident that the struggle was a severe one

<sup>1</sup> *The Englishman* 24 November and 10 December 57.

<sup>2</sup> Forrest *Selections* 1 (Intro) p. 277. See also the letter of Frederic Arthur Willis (Maude and Sherer ii 537) diary of Mrs Bartrum (*A Widow's Reminiscences* etc 21-22) and Lady Inglis's Journal (*The Siege of Lucknow* 16-18) for the hardships the Europeans endured in the residency during this time. Servants and sepoys were deserting daily. Also Rees *A Personal Narrative* 205.

<sup>3</sup> Forrest *op cit* 278-298-9.

—eleven hours' street fighting of the most determined character had to be gone through—"running the gauntlet through streets against guns in position and houses loopholed and garrisoned."<sup>1</sup> The number of the Indians slain at Sikan-darbagh was estimated at about three thousand, and the most revolting brutalities were committed. Forbes-Mitchell of the Ninety-Third who participated in the struggle admitted that the war of the mutiny became a horrible one, 'a demoralising war for the civilised men to be engaged in', but he condoned the conduct of the 'Jacks' on the ground that they did not 'begin this war of extermination'.<sup>2</sup>

Lucknow was relieved, the gain was great, but it proved to be a pyrrhic victory. While Outram intended to hold the town, the commander-in-chief found that his resources were inadequate against the overwhelming numbers of rebels in arms surrounding the country. He was convinced that the garrison would be again besieged if it was not withdrawn. So after extricating the garrison at Lucknow, he decided to fall back as speedily as possible on Cawnpore, 'the key of all future operations',<sup>3</sup> leaving Outram at Alambagh with four thousand men confronting the Indian force estimated at over a hundred thousand.<sup>4</sup> The march to Cawnpore with women and children commenced on 27 November under the most exciting conditions. Meanwhile general Windham had been attacked by the Gwalior contingent and his force had been obliged to retire within the fort at the head of the bridge of boats. The situation was the gravest of its kind the British had so far confronted in the war of the mutiny. If the bridge fell into the hands of the Indians before Sir Colin and his troops reached Cawnpore, they would be cut off in Oudh with fifty thousand rebel forces in their rear, a well-equipped army of forty

<sup>1</sup> Letter of captain Frederic Arthur Willis in Maude and Sherer, ii, 45, 53. Also letter of H. D. Willock in ii, 544, 547.

<sup>2</sup> Forbes-Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 70; *Hindu Patriot*, 26 November, '57. Similarly Mackenzie of the 3rd Light Cavalry said that fearful was the revenge which the maddened British troops wreaked on the Indians (*Mutiny Memoirs*, 71). Lieutenant Majendie also characterised the war as a war of extermination, the skin was black and that was all (*Up among the Pandies*, 196).

<sup>3</sup> Forrest, *Selections*, ii (Intro.), p. 309. Cf. the message of the chief of the staff to colonel Campbell on 22 October, 1857: Recollect the vast importance of Cawnpore, as a depot for supplies for Lucknow (FP. vi, 32).

<sup>4</sup> Case (Mrs. A.), *Day by Day of Lucknow* (1858), 210, 218.



presence of a considerable number of the insurgents with guns at Calpee, and the surprising and increasing audacity of the rebels on either side of the Doab in the Allahabad district, all combine to prevent the improvement of public feeling. Trade is checked, and in several places, away from the immediate neighbourhood of our garrisons, disorders prevail, which the civil officers are powerless to remedy.<sup>1</sup>

The flame of rebellion flared up in a virulent form in the division of Allahabad. The ousted zamindars of the trans-Jumna parganas encouraged by the success of rebel forces at Cawnpore rose in revolt and threw the whole country into confusion. The leader of a village, Hanuman by name, collected a following of two thousand men and started a commotion.<sup>2</sup> In the parganas to the north of the Ganges, the nazim Fazl Azim was holding sway over Soraon, and all the villages of the Secundra pargana, north of Phulpur, were occupied by the rebels. This portion of the Allahabad district lying between the Ganges and Jaunpur had been for months past under the undisputed power of the usurping government. A rebel leader Rajabali established a permanent post at Phaphamow.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the rebels of Fatehpur were excited to fresh outrages by the long continued occupation of Cawnpore by the mutineers. They plundered the tahsils of Kalyanpur and Jahanabad and committed other excesses.<sup>4</sup> So great was the commotion which resulted from the debacle that during that week, the postal communication with Cawnpore was entirely cut off, and the telegraph having been interrupted, all intercourse was stopped.<sup>5</sup>

The political condition of the countries to the south east of Oudh between the Ganges and the Gogra remained unchanged. The instruction received by brigadier-general Franks from the authorities in the middle of December refers to the presence of powerful popular leaders who were marshalling their forces for attacking British territories. Gorakhpur was in the hands of the rebel nazim Mohammed Hasan. With his huge force which was estimated at twelve or fifteen thousand

<sup>1</sup> FP ix 603 Narrative for the week ending in 26 December

<sup>2</sup> FP ix 599 Narrative of Events to 19 December

<sup>3</sup> FP viii 43-44 Report by R. Strachey

<sup>4</sup> FP ix 593

<sup>5</sup> FP ix 594

men he was spoiling for action and holding out the threat of his intended invasion of the Azamgarh district. Equally powerful, but more influential, was Mehndi Hasan, the leader of the Oudh rebels on the eastern frontier, the self-styled nazim of Sultanpur, who was in close touch with Fazl Azim at Soraon and ready for the offensive. The palwar chief Madho Prasad of Birhar was similarly engaged in making preparations and advancing like a lowering cloud upon the district. The rajcoomar leaders, Udresh Singh and Chandresh Singh, were actively hostile. In fact, most of the chief landowners or talukdars of this area were in arms against the British,

each with a body of matchlock-men, and the more important with their complement of light field artillery.<sup>1</sup>

Thousands of rajcoomars and palwars under their respective chieftains together with hundreds of sowars and sepoys on the borders of Azamgarh and Jaunpur were scouring the country and threatening the frontier line from a chain of outposts which they had built up at Lohra, near Mahul and the Gogra and in the vicinity of Singramau.<sup>2</sup> The scene of rebellion thus presented opened a new phase of the mutiny which the British found it difficult to suppress.

The position in the central Doab towards the end of December became highly intriguing. The doab districts down to Ali-garh came under British possession in October, the Ganges having formed a dividing line between the British troops and the rebels, with the result that brigadier Grant's column moved freely from Agra to Cawnpore coercing Mainpuri and Etawah to submit and carrying his avenging army to Farrukhabad and cutting up the nawab's forces at Kanauj on 23 October. But with the withdrawal of Grant's column, the state of things in all these districts were altered very much for the worse. British claims were openly repudiated. The raja of Mainpuri allied himself with the nawab of Farrukhabad. The position of Mainpuri caused anxiety as it lay close to the junction of the Agra and Delhi roads with the road to Cawnpore. Towards the end of the year Farrukhabad became the chief centre of

<sup>1</sup> FP. viii, 43-44.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 600: Narrative of Events to 19 December.

rebellious activities in the trans Gangetic tract, and was visited by the nawab of Malaghar, Firuz Shah and others. Under such circumstances, and gaining accession of strength from the rohilla rebels, the people of Farrukhabad even planned an invasion to Etah to occupy the district, for here the British influence had practically ceased. This synchronised with the partial occupation of Cawnpore by the Gwalior mutineers so that,

in the beginning of December the whole of the middle Doab was more completely than ever in the possession of the enemy

During the time Agra was also threatened and though the invaders of Cawnpore were driven back the intermediate districts towards Agra were so much in danger of falling into the hands of the Indian rebels that reinforcements from Delhi had to be sent to the fighting lines. The people of Farrukhabad became restive and carried out their scheme of conquering British territories to the west and north. Large bodies of pathans and rohillas assembled on the opposite bank of the Ganges and crossed it. They were scattered by colonel Seaton at the battle of Kasganj in the north of Etah on 14 December but the Farrukhabad rebels continued their incursions. All these led to intensive military operations and the grip of the rebels over this whole area was only relieved by Seaton's imposing victory at Patiali in the north of the Etah district and the reconquest of Mainpuri on 27 December. These successful campaigns were followed by the commander in chief's smart victories in the beginning of the next year.<sup>1</sup>

While this was the situation in the north, the Sagar and Narbada territories were entirely isolated in the early part of December. The dak communication with Nagpur and Mirzapur was cut off which gave rise to deep apprehensions about the extent of the rebellion. The chiefs and the people were excited to fresh activities under the impression that the British army nowhere existed or was of no consequence.<sup>2</sup>

After driving back the invaders from Cawnpore on 6 December, Campbell turned his attention to the Doab. The success

<sup>1</sup> FP ix 896 7 Report of the commander in chief's field operations.

<sup>2</sup> FP ix 591 592 594 598 601

of the Gwalior forces, though it was only for a brief period, had, as has been noticed, completely discredited the government and strengthened the position of the disaffected. Contemporary British opinion was emphatic on this point that the heart of every Indian was against them.<sup>1</sup> They were surrounded on every side by desperate rebels. It was no longer the mutinous soldiers against whom they were fighting, but a mixed body of people, the masses of the Gangetic valley who had come out to take up arms and also disaffected sepoys. This broad fact had to be considered in any calculation of military plans to be pursued, and Campbell's policy was shaped accordingly. What he wanted was not merely an invasion of the Doab, but a military grasp of the country, 'to keep the ground line of communications thoroughly safe' for future operations further up the country. As he saw it, the British garrisons at Delhi, Agra and Allahabad all on the line of the Jumna did not by themselves provide the necessary bases for the complete military domination of the great plain unless a strategic station in the north, along the line of the Ganges, was secured. This consideration pointed to Fatehgarh, the cantonment town of Farrukhabad, on the Ganges nearly opposite to Agra as a convenient base where Oudh and Rohilkhand territories meet. The success achieved by the Farrukhabad rebels in crossing the Ganges with a view to interrupting the British line of communication both with Agra and Delhi and in ravaging the Doab was due not a little to the strategic importance of the town and cantonment now in arms against the English.<sup>2</sup> So Sir Colin marched towards Farrukhabad and reached the Kali Nadi (twelve miles from Fatehgarh) where he repaired the bridge on 2 January and in doing so had to face a scuffle with the rebels. They again resisted the advance of British forces at Khodaganj but were overpowered and on the next day Campbell occupied both the town and the cantonment.<sup>3</sup>

The rebels being driven across the Ganges into Rohilkhand, the commander-in-chief would have moved north to effect the

<sup>1</sup> *The Englishman*, 17 December '57.

<sup>2</sup> Forrest, *Selections*, ii (Intro.), 347-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 351-5. Captain Oliver Jones was surprised that the rebels should have waited till the British had time to repair the bridge and had not even cared to destroy the stores which fell into their hands (*Recollection of a Winter Campaign*, etc. 82-83). Also Cosens and Wallace, *Fatehgarh and the Mutiny*, 162-3.

subjugation of that country. But the governor-general had his own considerations in giving priority to Oudh as the object to attack, for here Outram was precariously holding out against multitudes of rebels.<sup>1</sup> Besides, by that time the rebellion was collecting itself at Lucknow which offered a standing temptation to all—the sepoys, people and the chiefs to persevere in their rebellious attitude. Lord Canning's analysis of the situation that there could not be any real quiet on that side of India unless Lucknow was reconquered showed the intensity of discontent and the nature of the revolt which could no longer be regarded as a mere military insurrection.<sup>2</sup> Sir Colin's arguments against this projected invasion were as follows

after the experience lately gained of the stubborn spirit of the people of Oudh, the reduction of that province could not be attempted with an army less than 30,000 men

This agrees with the governor-general's analysis in considering the dimension of the revolt of Oudh as something approximating a rebellion on a vast scale. It is again precisely for this reason that Canning over-ruled the objection of Campbell who procrastinated and represented that for military reasons Oudh ought to wait till the autumn of 1858. The political situation was such as would force the government to undertake another operation for the relief of Lucknow before long. In his letter of 8 January, 1858, the governor-general expressed his apprehension that the loss of Lucknow would be an event of such huge significance to the Nana and the rebel cause that no measure of success of British arms elsewhere would counter-balance this shattering disaster. The shock of it would be felt in Hyderabad 'the most formidable of all lurking places of danger and revolt', and even in distant Ava.<sup>3</sup>

Of colonel Colin Campbell, it was said by Dalhousie that he carried 'caution to the confines of cowardice'. Nevertheless Campbell's policy of marching into Rohilkhand in 1858 had its justification in the increasing strength displayed by the rebels

<sup>1</sup> Malletson says that this was comparable to the defence of Plevna by the Turks which neutralised for four months two Russian armies (i, 440)

<sup>2</sup> Forrest *Selections* ii (Intro), 356

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* 357

of that country. There had been a decided improvement in the districts between Aligarh and Etawah but in the upper districts of the Doab public confidence was greatly shaken and there was a widely prevalent feeling of insecurity consequent on the frequent attempts of the rebels and mutineers from western Rohilkhand to invade that country. They raided those districts, cut off the police and prevented the British from governing. The tactics adopted by the Rohilkhand rebels was not to meet their enemy in the open battlefield but to cut off their supplies. The official report stated that they made no stand anywhere, and were careful not to irritate the people by plunder and rapine but returned to their haunts, the moment they finished their work. As the Ganges was very low in January and was reduced by the diversion of the water into the canal, Dunlop, the magistrate of Meerut, even suggested that the stream of the river might be deepened to increase the difficulties of the Rohilkhand rebels crossing into the Doab.<sup>1</sup> But the position of the British was greatly retrieved in eastern India by the rescue of Gorakhpur on 6 January, 1858 which was likely to cut off the way of the Oudh rebels in the lower country. Its great advantage to the British was that they got the principal bases of operation against Oudh which was soon taken advantage of by brigadier-general Franks. The general who had already established himself in full strength in the south-west corner of the Jaunpur district now began to make preparations to carry reinforcements to Lucknow. The chance of the Indian leaders lay in opposing the march of Franks which indeed was strongly contested at Chanda (19 February) and Sultanpur (23 February).

In Bundelkhand, the influence of the British, as the official narrative of 16 January ran, was sinking on account of the unopposed possession of Kalpi by a large force of rebels.<sup>2</sup> In fact proper military mutiny was lingering only in Kalpi where the guns of the Gwalior contingent formed a nucleus round which the Gwalior and Dinapur mutineers gathered, but it was difficult to say in what proportion the mutinous troops divided

<sup>1</sup> FP, ix, 774.

<sup>2</sup> FP, ix, 834: Narrative of Events to 16 January.

themselves between Lucknow on one side and Kalpi on the other <sup>1</sup> Similarly at Sambalpur the state of affairs was becoming more and more serious in the early part of January. There it was purely a rebellion of the people, of the local tribes, who being of an impressionable nature, were instigated to fury and violence by persons who had many grievances to complain of. Large bodies of men were assembling in different directions and attacking the establishments of the former administration <sup>2</sup> Difficulty was also felt in getting the revenue to pay the large number of troops who had been summoned there. It was suggested that the salt merchants passing through Sambalpur should be encouraged to deposit money there in exchange for drafts on Cuttack <sup>3</sup> The serious nature of the mass uprising at Sambalpur may also be judged from the fact that troops were despatched from different quarters, the Madras troops from Cuttack, a column from Nagpur, and the Shekhawati battalion marching from Raniganj <sup>4</sup> to quell the rebellion. The January reports from Chaibasa showed no change in the situation at Kolhan. The ex-*raja* of Porahat and his brother had by that time thrown the whole of Singhbhum into a welter of disorder and chaos. The rebels made a successful attack on Chakradharpur and surprised and routed captain Hale's troops at a place called Mogra <sup>5</sup>

The political confusion left by the mutiny and rebellion in the whole country from the Narbada to Delhi was startling in the extreme, but the tide at last had turned, and the surges of revolt after ravaging the best part of India were showing signs of subsiding. Yielding partly to exhaustion, and partly to external force it was flowing back and collecting itself in a few central situations such as Jhansi, Kalpi, Bareilly, Lucknow. By the month of February, 1858 the war was confined to a closer compass, and with Bengal, the sub-Himalyan countries the Panjab and the Doab and Central India under British arms the rebellion was checkmated and put out of action. In fact, it was Lucknow only which held out defiantly against the

<sup>1</sup> FP ix, 897

<sup>2</sup> FP ix, 347

<sup>3</sup> FP ix, 368 Special Narrative of Events to 6 February

<sup>4</sup> FP ix, 902

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter III

combination of all British forces. All through the month the rush of the rebels towards Lucknow continued. But an official report of 10 February, 1858, also refers to the concentration of rebel soldiers and their leaders in different outposts along the course of the Ganges; they were obviously moving to attack the Doab. At Sandi in Fatehgarh there was a force of four thousand men with several guns hovering about a nearby ghat on the Ganges. At Bilgram opposite Fatehgarh on the Ganges, and in the neighbouring ghat at Meorah several chiefs such as the Kutra raja, Mainpuri raja, Musumali Khan had assembled with a strong force of cavalry and infantry and some guns. Further down there was also another force at Sheorajpur, and the Nana was possibly at Nawabganj (Cawnpore) on the 10th of the month. Apa Sahib was recruiting at Sitalganj, and in the Ramganga there were about two thousand men with four guns. A regular chain of communication was kept up by the rebels between Bareilly and Lucknow via Shahjehanpur, Bilgram and Sandi. Mention is also made of other concentrations—for example one of two thousand at a place called Nana Mau and of another commanded by Nirtul Singh.<sup>1</sup> At a time when the war at Lucknow was in the offing, the deployment of rebel forces, as detailed above, would indicate a move towards a simultaneous attack on the Doab.

The rebellion that had been raging so long now reached its climax in the war for the third relief at Lucknow, preparations for which were being made on both sides for a long time past. In many ways the events of March 1858, epitomized the forces engaged in the revolt. The conquest of Lucknow and the Oudh Proclamation 20 March, 1858, the operations against Jhansi, and the capture of Azamgarh by the Shahabad leader are among the most remarkable episodes of the Indian rebellion each representing an aspect of it, yet typical of the social and political issues involved in the struggle.

The fall of Lucknow was not attended with the desired result. Kunwar Singh flying from Lucknow entered the northern part of Azamgarh. The Azamgarh expedition of the Shahabad leader was a great triumph of the popular cause. The concentration of troops in Lucknow provided an opportunity to

<sup>1</sup> FP. viii, 99-100: Narrative of Events to 18 February.



Kunwar to renew his offensive in the east especially with a view to making a diversion. He occupied the town on 24 March, but eventually he retreated before the advancing British arms and effected his passage of the Ganges by outwitting his pursuers. At many points on the way the villages voluntarily helped him and were almost without an exception in his favour.<sup>1</sup> The popular character of the sepoy war was also reflected in the defence of Jhansi which fell on 3 April before the onslaught of Sir Hugh Rose. No one could help being moved by the determined resistance put forward by the people of Jhansi, which must have been caused by influences other than external stimulants. Rose himself admitted

The reason was sufficiently clear, the people of Jhansi fought for the queen and the independence of their country. Even after the city had fallen her bounty and liberality rendered her an influential and dangerous adversary.<sup>2</sup>

In all his operations in central India Sir Hume organised flying columns to move from the main body of the force, previous to its general dispersion,<sup>3</sup> which indicates that vast numbers of country people were up in arms on every side who had to be scattered before the main column could move. Towards the north, the fall of Lucknow did not immediately lead to the pacification of the country, on the contrary it only instigated the rebels to renew their exertions to regain the ground they had lost. Gorakhpur, Azamghar and Jaunpur were again in danger, and alarm was felt for Saran and other districts of Bihar where the visit of Kunwar Singh would rake up the embers of rebellion. Higher up, the British authority was maintained only under the shadow of the bayonet and the central Doab districts of Agra, Meerut and Farrukhabad were infested by swarms of insurgents. In the east captain Le Grand's expedition against Kunwar Singh's force at Jagdispur met with a disastrous end on 23 April, similar to the ill fated expedition of Dunbar nine months back.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FP vii 150

<sup>2</sup> The despatch dated 30 April 1858 quoted in Martin *Ind an Empire* i 485n

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* 487

<sup>4</sup> FP viii 148 ix 828

The complexion of the war of the mutiny was, however, gradually changed. Since the capture of Lucknow and Jhansi it had taken a decidedly predatory turn. The organisation of the rebel forces had broken down and swarms of rebels were over-running the whole country from Bihar to Rohilkhand and in the south up to the Narmada. They disappeared before the smallest force sent against them, but the area of their depredations extended. Their headquarters seem principally to have been located at Jagdispur, Fyzabad, Bareilly and Kalpi. Of these the rebels operating from Fyzabad under the leadership of the royal begam of Lucknow extended their influence from the north of Oudh to the borders of Allahabad. But despite these refractory manifestations, the country as a whole had fallen under the grip of the British punitive forces in the month of May, 1858. Campbell, Rose, and Lugard, each in their respective regions, were maintaining their winning sequence, the first one defeating Khan Bahadur Khan, the second driving away Tantia Topi before him at Kunch and Kalpi which fell, and the third vanquishing the forces of Kunwar Singh since dead. Yet the revolt could not be wholly crushed and the success of Tantia and rani Lakshmibai in Gwalior on 1 June, raised echoes in other parts of India, as in Nawabganj where the zamindars fought a smart action on 13 June to prevent British forces moving up in the north,<sup>1</sup> and in the Doab where Liakatali, the maulavi of Allahabad, and his followers were excited to fresh outrages and attacked and plundered Bilgram. The whole line between Cawnpore and Allahabad was distracted by rumours of the ascent and descent of rebel forces who crossed and recrossed the Ganges with facility.<sup>2</sup> The rebels of Jagdispur were skulking in the jungles, but Lugard was making considerable advance in that direction and Rowcroft sent Mohammed Hasan of Gorakhpur flying into the jungles. He was defeated at the battle of Amorah on 9 June and a few days after, the Fyzabad maulavi was killed in action at Powain on 15 June. The death of the rani of Jhansi on 17 June and the defeat of Tantia Topi and the recovery of Gwalior in the third week of the month gave the final blow to the cause of the rebels

<sup>1</sup> See Section on Lucknow (chapter II).

<sup>2</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 3 June, 1858.

and though Tantia, Firuz Shah and the Nana were still at large carrying out forays here and there, the Indian rebellion of 1857 as an organised movement collapsed since then. The Oudh and Shahabad rebels, however, remained in the field for a long time yet. It is only after the Queen's proclamations of 1 November, that the leaders of Oudh, Bihar and Central India with their followers surrendered to the government though quite a few of them fled to Nepal and met a glorious death which they would have disdained to exchange for a life with dishonour.

## CHAPTER TWO

### UPPER INDIA

The main drama of the great rebellion was enacted in upper India, the country lying between Bihar and Rajputana, touching the Himalayas on the north and the river Jumna on the south. It thus comprised a portion of the North-West provinces which consisted of eight administrative divisions.<sup>1</sup> The three central towns of this wide area, Delhi, Agra and Cawnpore, had each a distinct role to play in this scene of mutiny and rebellion. Delhi was the rallying point of rebels from Rohilkhand and the upper Doab, Agra of the rebels from the districts and stations to the south of the Jumna and Cawnpore was the meeting ground of the rebels of Oudh from the north and of the central Indian tracts from the south. But the conflagration started from Meerut, the name of a city as well as of a division.

#### MEERUT DIVISION

The mutiny at Meerut is said to have saved India, for it brought to a head the catastrophe, which, had it been delayed for a few weeks, would have taken the British unawares. Colonel G. C. Smyth received thanks for his famous parade on 23 April, which eventually resulted in the outbreak.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the situation might be, the revolt of the sepoys on 10 May possibly could have been averted had not the authorities rubbed the matter too much. The observations made by colonel Sykes, the former chairman of the East India Company, on the circumstances of the revolt, which were not contradicted by the government and his letter to the *Times* of 8 October, showed that the sepoys were willing to make many concessions.<sup>3</sup> They, it is said, begged

<sup>1</sup> The North-West provinces were divided into eight commissionerships, those of Benares, Allahabad, Jabalpur, Jhansi, Agra, Rohilkhand, Meerut and Delhi. In the whole extent of these provinces only Agra and Meerut were garrisoned by European troops.

<sup>2</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 90-92: Report by G. C. Smyth.

<sup>3</sup> Crawshay, *op. cit.*, 3f.

the authorities that the matter of using cartridge should not be forced to a crisis,<sup>1</sup> as they would be exposed to the danger of loss of caste. But the apprehensions of the sepoys were more easy to explain than justify unless they were meant for other purposes. It was revealed that there was not a single greased cartridge in the magazines of any one of the three native regiments of Meerut.<sup>2</sup> The cartridges which were supplied were also not new ones, but the old unanointed cartridges that had been used so often.<sup>3</sup> Further, colonel Smyth's statement shows that he had explained to his men that they could now load the cartridges without biting them, and he made a demonstration of the process. Still they all refused to take them. Obviously it was due to fear of public opinion only, but according to Rotton, 'it was used to serve an occasion'.<sup>4</sup> An investigation was conducted on 25 April, by major Harrison, which ended in the sepoys promising ready obedience to the use of the cartridge, but when major general Hewitt ordered a parade of the 3rd cavalry for 6 May, eighty five sowars refused to take the cartridge. A court of enquiry was immediately ordered, they were tried, condemned, and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment with hard labour. This is a position which the sepoys could not tolerate. The local authorities seem to have made a representation to the military command, to the effect that the attempt to enforce the judgement of court-martial would result in mutiny, but this was disregarded.<sup>5</sup>

On 9 May, some eighty-five men belonging to the 3rd light cavalry stationed at Meerut were sent to jail in pursuance of the sentence of a court martial, for having refused to use their cartridges.<sup>6</sup> The prisoners were put in irons, and they were marched off and led to jail before the whole body of troops and other sightseers. The crowd which included even women jeered at them. The indignity of the situation could only be imagined. At about noon on the day following (10 May) the sepoys of the

<sup>1</sup> Urquhart *op cit* 78

<sup>2</sup> *Trial of Bahadur Shah*, 141

<sup>3</sup> Chick, *op cit*, 103. Account of Rev. T. C. Smyth

<sup>4</sup> *The Chaplain's Narrative* 1

<sup>5</sup> Crawshaw, *op cit*, 23-28. Dodd *The History of the Indian Revolt* 51

<sup>6</sup> Thackeray, a young subaltern at the time of the siege of Delhi, says that 89 troopers of the 3rd received punishment (*Reminiscences*, etc. 29)

3rd rose up *en masse* and burst open the doors of the jail and set their comrades at liberty. The 3rd light cavalry were at once joined by the 11th and 20th regiments, by the people of the city and of the bazars, and the adjoining villages. This formidable body of insurgents fired the cantonments and civil lines, and commenced pillage. Before the European troops, the 6th dragoon guards, queen's 60th rifles, and the horse artillery, could reach the principal scene of disturbance, night had fallen and under the cover of darkness, the mutineers effected a safe retreat out of Meerut. But during the brief hours of that fateful day the pent up fury and discontent which must have been long smouldering, burst out in a bloody carnage. Mixed crowds of soldiers, sepoys, policemen, servants, convicts, villagers and townspeople dispersed to plunder and to slay every Christian that they could lay hands on. At Meerut the strength of the European force was greater than at any other station in India, numbering altogether about two thousand and two hundred men.<sup>1</sup> They had won many a decisive battle on the plains of Hindusthan, but the entire militia remained paralysed for want of proper direction as also for some fatal flaws in the military organisation. It can be maintained, in the light of the events of the mutiny, that the rifles and carabineers at Meerut, if properly and enthusiastically directed, could have easily overtaken the mutineers before they reached Delhi, only forty miles distant. This was indeed the immediate cause which helped to spread the rebellion throughout upper India. Or even if they had reached Delhi sometime after, the imperial city might have been saved and the conflagration arrested. Mackenzie, a young subaltern officer of the 3rd light cavalry stationed at Meerut, says that the troops were paralysed by the irresolution of their chief.<sup>2</sup> The European brigade bivouacked for the night and even remained inactive on the day following—very fateful moments in the course of this memorable rebellion. While, therefore, it cannot be denied that the unpreparedness of the military authorities at Meerut was responsible for the spread-

<sup>1</sup> Dodd, *op. cit.*, 50.

<sup>2</sup> Mackenzie, *Mutiny Memoirs*, 32f. See also Gough, *Old Memories*, 40f; Wilberforce, *An Unrecorded Chapter*, etc., 10.

ing of the conflagration, it cannot be accepted even as a reasonable proposition that the mutiny could never have occurred had the Meerut insurrection been localised like other explosions at Berhampur, Barrackpore and Lucknow, for, all these explosions were, beyond doubt, presages of the dark cloud that was gathering silently and ominously and would have taken its natural course under any pretext <sup>1</sup>

In Meerut the populace took a more prominent part in the slaughter of Europeans than in any other place Fleetwood Williams, the then commissioner of Meerut, wrote in his official report

Generally, the ruffians seem to have been too intent upon the destruction of Christians, too eager to kill, to think of any other atrocities till life was extinct <sup>2</sup>

And repeated inquiries through different sources even confirmed the report that in many cases atrocious indignities were inflicted on the dead bodies of Europeans as a mark of diabolical racial hatred What the soldiers, who had started the mutiny, did to sustain the rebellion appears trifling when seen in the light of the mass upsurge that followed as a sequel to it The official report runs

The whole country (Baraut) was rising, native drums the signal to the villagers to assemble, were being beaten in all directions, and crowds were seen moving up to the gathering place ahead <sup>3</sup>

The surrounding country was soon ablaze, gujars rose up with diabolical fury, the tahsil of Sardhana was attacked and escaped prisoners murdered their money lenders

In the tahsil of Banawar, Qalandar Khan set himself up as a raja, <sup>4</sup> and Bishen Singh, the kotwal of Meerut, joined the rebel Tularam of Rewari <sup>5</sup> Shahamal, the Jat leader of Baraut in the western confines of the district, turned out to be a fire

<sup>1</sup>Holmes *op cit*, 111 Dr S N Sen however thinks that the mutiny would not have occurred and the general discontent would have caused only some minor outbreaks here and there (*op cit* 65)

<sup>2</sup>NE : 255

<sup>3</sup>*Ib id* 265

<sup>4</sup>NE : 256

<sup>5</sup>NE : 260

brand of the rebellion against the British. He destroyed the bridge of boats at Baghpat and scoured the country with a festering body of nearly four thousand Jat insurgents. The British offensive against them at the battle of Baraut on 18 July, developed into a hand-to-hand fight with Shahamal, who could not be overtaken, though struck by a bullet, and was only finished by the sword.<sup>1</sup> His head was exhibited to induce the people to return to normal activities but all males found in the hostile village of Gurhi were killed.<sup>2</sup> The mantle of Shahamal fell on Lujjram, his grandson, who continued the struggle.<sup>3</sup>

Another leader, Kadam Singh of Parichitgarh,<sup>4</sup> proclaimed himself king<sup>5</sup> and collected his gujar clansmen for hostile purposes. Equally hostile was Nazim Khan<sup>6</sup> and Narpat Singh, the rajput chief of Akulpur, who was killed when his village was stormed in July. The spirit of rebellion infected many villages especially in the western and south-western part of the district where grain was stored up, supplies collected and sent to the fighting lines, and the people openly transferred their allegiance to the king of Delhi. When Dunlop's punitive force passed through Busouda, a village to the north of Deolah, large crowds of armed men issuing from nooks and corners fired on them. Disaffection had spread far and wide, many of the villages having determinedly entered on rebellion.<sup>7</sup> The ingenuity of the civil population to meet the demands of the war was abundantly reflected in the use of guns and ammunition of an improvised character.<sup>8</sup> But the rebellion at Meerut ended with the fall of Delhi.

The Meerut cavalry rode into Delhi, which was forty miles away, on 11 May, having first broken the telegraphic communi-

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 884-5, 887-8, 893; NE. i, 265. A Tunnochy writes: 'I gave him the second shot which went through him, having entered his back upon which he at once dropped, but recovering himself at a moment... he wounded me in two places... I then had, time... to draw my sword and give him a gashing wound in the neck.'

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 266.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 267.

<sup>4</sup> FP. ix, 893.

<sup>5</sup> NE. i, 262.

<sup>6</sup> FP. viii, 149.

<sup>7</sup> FP. ix, 886-7.

<sup>8</sup> NE. i, 268.



cation between Delhi and Agra, and also between Meerut and Aligarh. A previous understanding between the regiments of Delhi and Meerut can only explain the swift reaction that followed.<sup>1</sup> All the Delhi regiments, as also the populace, joined them and being combined with the mutinous 11th and 20th from Meerut, which presently followed the cavalry, proceeded to slay the Europeans and plunder their quarters. The imperial city, which was above all the grand arsenal of that part of India, fell into the hands of the rebels. A regular government was organised with Bahadur Shah at its head and summons was issued to all mutinous regiments to repair to the city and to fight for the king of kings. In fact, for nearly four months, Delhi remained the centre of revolt, a beacon to the struggling spirits to flock there for the great holy war lying ahead, very much as the faithful would react on hearing the call of the *muezzin*. The contest at Delhi began on 8 June, with the battle of Badli-Ki-Serai, a fiercely fought action, in which the sepoys failed to check the British offensive. Since that time the English were encamped for many weary weeks in the low ridge of hills that faces the city on its north. It was only with the coming of Nicholson and particularly with the arrival of a siege-train on 4 September, that the tide turned and eventually Delhi passed into the hands of the English by the middle of the month. Meanwhile, however, while Delhi held out, it gave a fillip to the spirit of diffidence already in the air and as a consequence the mutiny drifted into a revolt aimed at destroying the British power in India.

The Indian account of the mutiny and rebellion, otherwise so very scarce, comes into prominence in the case of Delhi and Cawnpore outbreaks. The diaries kept by Mainuddin Hasan Khan, Munshi Jivanlal and Chunilal furnish a good account of the sepoy war and the attendant disturbances at Delhi, as does the diary of Nanakchand of the occurrences at Cawnpore. Mainuddin Hasan Khan was a rebel, but only in a technical sense, he was at heart in sympathy with the English, and so also was Jivanlal, but the latter was not a participant in the conflict and suffered much at the hands of sepoys. Taken

<sup>1</sup> Dodd *op cit*, 51, 54. Dr R. C. Majumdar refers to the statement of Munshi Mohanlal and observes that the mutineers at Meerut had not at first any idea of going to Delhi (*op cit*, 51).

together, their diaries give us a glimpse of the condition of the besieged city, which is not found in other sources.

In the month of May the condition was extremely chaotic. The depredations of the sepoys could not be checked, they plundered the shops and extorted money from the wealthy people.<sup>1</sup> King Bahadur Shah had to go out in procession to pacify the people, urging them to carry on their normal activities. The shop-keepers were particularly requested to keep their shops open. The violence of the sepoys rose to such a height that the king and his advisers, Mohammed Bakr and Abdul Kadir, became anxious to keep them out of Delhi. Jivanlal says that the attempted expedition of the sepoys to Meerut to fight the English was a device of hakim Ahsanullah Khan to rid the city of the mutineers.<sup>2</sup> In their mad fury to consolidate the results of the bloody *emeute* the sepoys spared none; whoever was suspected of disloyalty to their cause was hunted out and dealt with ruthlessly. They threatened to kill hakim Ahsanullah and nawab Mahabbubali Khan and even dared to take away Zinatmahal and keep her as hostage on the ground that she had given shelter to the Europeans. The fugitives had to be surrendered, and they were murdered to the horror of the whole city.<sup>3</sup> The hakim, as Chunilal says, was exculpated only when the king pleaded on his behalf on 17 May, and assured the sepoys that he was associated with them in a common cause.<sup>4</sup> This, too, did not disarm their suspicion, and on many other occasions they charged Ahsanullah and the nawab with having maintained an understanding with the English. The former, it was affirmed, had sabotaged the military preparations of the rebels and collected stores for enemy destination in collusion with Zinatmahal and Sadurali Khan.<sup>5</sup> Even the king was not regarded as wholly loyal to their cause. He was anxious to save the life of Davis, who was in charge of monthly payment to the royal establish-

<sup>1</sup> *Trial of Bahadur Shah*, pp. 11, 12, 16, 25: Petitions of Jugal Kishore, Sheo-prasad and Imam Baksh.

<sup>2</sup> Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives*, etc. 94, 99.

<sup>3</sup> Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, 59, 93. Sherring says that the queen Zinatmahal had some fifty Europeans concealed (*The Indian Church*, etc. 51).

<sup>4</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 158-9.

<sup>5</sup> Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, 103, 104, 107, 180, 186, 190; *Trial*, etc. pp. 138, 139.

ment and of others of his party but failed to save their lives. He was subjected to indignities and insults and the sepoy placed their own guard over the royal couple, took possession of the king's private office and attended on his person.<sup>1</sup> They even elected Abu Bakr as their king in his place but he, too, was accused of disloyalty<sup>2</sup> like many others, and Mainuddin says that the houses of a large number of people who were reported to be friendly with the English were plundered.<sup>3</sup>

By the first week of June the confusion and anarchy of the preceding month had considerably abated and the rebel government settled down to work after various changes of personnel in the administration. The financial position of the government was desperate in the extreme from the very beginning and so the treasury had to be replenished more often by forced loans, extortions and impositions than by voluntary subscription which was shy.<sup>4</sup> Orders were issued to the rajas personally to attend or to send soldiers, which were responded to by those living in the vicinity of Delhi such as Bahadurjang Khan of Dadri, Walidad Khan of Malagarh, nawab Abdurrahman Khan of Jhajjar, Akbarali Khan of Pataudi, Hasanali Khan of Dojana and raja Nahar Singh of Ballabhgarh.<sup>5</sup> Nahar Sing was so very devoted to the cause of Islam<sup>6</sup> that he seems to have embraced the faith.<sup>7</sup> Raja Tularam of Rewari paid forty thousand rupees to the king's treasury and obtained a patent conferring Rewari in perpetual jagir on him. The nawab of Khurjapur preached sedition and incited the king to war. Mirza Haidar was the medium of communication between the king of Delhi and Oudh. A delegation was received from Akhund of Swat and many other chiefs professed allegiance,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* 60-61, 87, 89

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 95.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* 58-59.

<sup>4</sup> *Trial*, etc pp 41-42, 46, Metcalfe, *op cit*, 99, 113, 164, 188 (Bankers under arrest), 200, 209, 211, 225

<sup>5</sup> Chick, *op. cit*, 155 ff

<sup>6</sup> *Trial*, etc. p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Keith Young, *Delhi*, 262 He was hanged as also the chief of Jhajjar and nawab Ahmed Ali Khan of Faruknagar Dadri was confiscated (Metcalfe, *op. cit*, 73).

<sup>8</sup> *Trial*, etc. pp 147, 168, 171, 177, Metcalfe, *op cit*, 179

such as Umaro Bahadur, a talukdar of Aligarh, Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly and Mirza Abbas Beg, agent of the court of Lucknow, and Bahadur Khan chief of Bahadurgarh.<sup>1</sup> Many messages were received from mutinous regiments of different places intimating their intention to proceed to Delhi to fight for the king.<sup>2</sup> They were numerous, indeed, and so were the petitions received from among the general population of Rewari, Badshapur, Rohtak, Hissar, Karnal, Sirsa, Bijnour, Bareilly, Mathura and Mainpuri.<sup>3</sup> Hundreds of villages in the holdings of hindu talukdars of Meerut declared their intention to fight for the king.<sup>4</sup> The rebel government in its turn issued circulars to the rulers of Cutch, Jaisalmer and Jammu to intercept the movements of the English and kill them.<sup>5</sup> By the middle of June the rebel army at Delhi was daily receiving addition and war preparations were going on in full swing. Two-hundred fifty men were employed in the manufacture of gun powder<sup>6</sup> and the percussion caps were well made.<sup>7</sup> The arrival of the Bareilly force on the 1st and 2nd July and the victory of the rebels at Shahganj near Agra gave a great incentive to the Indians who were daily being reinforced by bands of jehadis and wahabis repairing to Delhi from different quarters. Early in July Mohammed Bakht Khan was appointed commander-in-chief and Mirza Moghul, adjutant-general, and arrangements were made for delivering a concentrated attack on the English camp.<sup>8</sup>

One very significant feature of the rebellion at Delhi was that from the very beginning Bahadur Shah set his mind definitely against communal tendencies disrupting the offensive against the English. On 19 May, when the standard of holy war was raised by the Mahomedans he condemned this move and declared that the *Holy war was against the English*.

<sup>1</sup> Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, 65, 71, 140, 148, 229.

<sup>2</sup> *Trial*, etc. p. 168-71.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 173-4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 66.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 151f.

<sup>6</sup> Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, 64.

<sup>7</sup> Keith Young, *Delhi*. 203.

<sup>8</sup> Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, 115, 128, 133-4, 152; *Trial*, etc. pp. 176-7.

On the last day of the *ramzan* when order for a *jihad* was pressed, the king and his council remonstrated against it, the king stating emphatically that the two communities should not quarrel.<sup>1</sup> Apprehending trouble on the ensuing *Id* festival, he proclaimed on 9 July, that any one killing a cow would be blown away.<sup>2</sup> The British camp on the ridge was jubilant that a 'grand row' between the Hindus and the Mahomedans would invariably follow the celebration on the first of August, but the false prophets came to grief and Keith Young recorded with dismay that instead of fighting amongst themselves they all joined together to make a vigorous attack.<sup>3</sup>

Gradually as the mutiny expanded into a rebellion of the civil communities, Bahadur Shah adjusted himself accordingly. He checked the soldiers, demanded of them why they were not doing anything to drive the English and sternly rebuked those who were suspected of sending supplies to the English. He attended *dewanikhas* almost every day and showed vigour and resilience in attending to the business of the day which was striking.<sup>4</sup> On 2 August, he is said to have exclaimed in anger 'You will never capture the ridge.'<sup>5</sup> The many proclamations supposed to have been issued by him sufficiently demonstrate that he was the main spring of the holy war against the English.<sup>6</sup> Mainuddin's remarks on this point are significant.

It is quite true that the rebellion actually broke out on the excitement caused by the use of the new cartridge, but the real cause of the rebellion was an old enemy who, long vanquished, still existed.<sup>7</sup>

The skeleton had lingered on and it stalked out for liberty. Daily the city became more and more the centre of the rebellion,

<sup>1</sup> Metcalfe, *op cit* 98 100

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 144

<sup>3</sup> *Delhi 1857*, pp 160 171

<sup>4</sup> Metcalfe, *op cit*, 113 120 01, 128 150

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 177, 208. The royal begam of Lucknow made the same complaint against the sepoys.

<sup>6</sup> *Trial*, etc 71 116. Cf The arguments of Harriott that the conspiracy was not confined to the sepoys but had its ramifications throughout the place (*Ibid* 145 148).

<sup>7</sup> Metcalfe *op cit*, 60. Cf The observation of M Thornhill of Mathura 'There was something weird in the Mogul Empire thus starting into a sort of phantom of life after the slumber of a hundred years' (*The Personal Adventures*, 7).

the army also expressed a wish to be led against the English.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the English at the ridge found that there was no prospect of entering the city in June and little chance of blowing up the magazines of their enemies. The city was much stronger and much better fortified than was anticipated by them. The desperate nature of the war in Delhi, the heavy and sharp firing by the Indians reminded general Barnard of Crimea.<sup>2</sup> Thackeray, a subaltern of engineers at the time of the siege of Delhi, writes that the total casualties in the two actions (10 July and 15 July) having risen to nearly five hundred men, it was decided to abandon all idea of any active operations against the city. The attack of the mutineers on 1 August was such that Rotton, the chaplain to the Delhi field force never remembered anything like it in the whole course of his experience.<sup>3</sup> Colonel Bouchier of the 17th light battery accompanying Nicholson to Delhi found that the Delhi field force was very similar in position to the allied armies before Sebastopol. Even on 16 September, major-general Wilson doubted his ability to succeed and talked of withdrawing from the walls of Delhi to the camp.<sup>4</sup> The actual number engaged in the final assault of Delhi was near three thousand seven hundred of which sixty-six officers and one thousand and one hundred four were killed, but the loss of the defenders of the city was even less.<sup>5</sup> Colonel Mackenzie, who participated in the struggle, admitted that no quarter was ever given or taken before Delhi.<sup>6</sup> Terrible retribution was inflicted upon the fallen city. Mainuddin Hasan Khan could not help recording, his allegiance to the English notwithstanding, that the slaughter of the English was revenged in a manner that no one ever anticipated.<sup>7</sup>

According to Innes, the rising failed to develop into a great rebellion on account of the aggressive action of the Moghul party

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* 149.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Young, *Delhi*, 60, 69-71, 91; Cooper, (*The Crisis*, etc. 184.

<sup>3</sup> *Reminiscences*, 24; *The Chaplain's Narrative*, 177.

<sup>4</sup> Bouchier, *Eight Months' Campaign*, etc. 37; Rotton, *op. cit.*, 303.

<sup>5</sup> Wilberforce, *An Unrecorded Chapter*, etc. 155, 172-3.

<sup>6</sup> *Mutiny Memoirs*, 71, 87f. 95.

<sup>7</sup> Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, 71-73. See also Krishnalal in *The Bengal Past and Present* (vol. Lxxiv, Pt. II, pp. 106-07): The Sack of Delhi, 1857-58, as witnessed by Ghaliib.

at Delhi, their indiscreet haste to recover their rule.<sup>1</sup> This statement is obviously based on the supposition that Bahadur Shah and the members of the imperial family were in alliance with the sepoys to overthrow the British government. If, as is now clear from the investigation carried on in the light of authentic British records, he was devoted to the British and opposed to the sepoys and was willing to surrender the city to the former on certain conditions,<sup>2</sup> he cannot be credited with any such intention as Innes and major F. J. Harriott, judge-advocate general,<sup>3</sup> would attribute to him. His own defence in his trial that he was compelled to play the part of a rebel<sup>4</sup> receives support from the deposition made by Ahsanullah that the king did not even know of the mutiny till after the arrival of the Meerut troops at Delhi.<sup>5</sup> Mainuddin, himself a participant in the struggle, says that parwanas were extorted from him calling on regiments to flock to Delhi. A European discharged soldier, who was converted to the faith under the name of Abdulla Beg, is said to have coerced the king to adopt such measures.<sup>6</sup> There was also a rival party in the court, as appears very plausible, headed by syed Ghulam Abbas (alias Saifuldaulah), who advised the king to be friendly with the English. Mirza Ali Baksh even advised him to open negotiations with them. The king also was seized with a fear that the English would capture the city and kill him.<sup>7</sup> The excesses committed by the sepoys on their entry into the imperial city, though they tended to the recovery of his position, could not but be viewed with anger. Three days after the arrival of the Meerut mutineers he wrote a letter to Colvin, the lieutenant-governor of the North-West provinces, forwarding the intelligence that the fort and the city of Delhi were in the

<sup>1</sup> *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, 21

<sup>2</sup> Dr R. C. Majumdar's investigations into the part played by Bahadur Shah show that the king of Delhi was unfaithful to the cause of the mutiny (*The Sepoy Mutiny* etc., 116-27, 195-7)

<sup>3</sup> *Trial of Bahadur Shah* etc. pp 145, 148

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* 138-9

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 93-91

<sup>6</sup> Metcalfe, *op cit*, 49 60-61

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid* 88 164 180

hands of the insurgents.<sup>1</sup> This transmission of a message of information and warning to the chief British authority shows where his sympathies lay—at least in the early phase of the struggle. Dr. R. C. Majumdar has brought to light new records bearing on the subject which indicate that in the month of June when the sepoys were fighting for the defence of the city, the king was offering to admit the British troops there by a secret gate.<sup>2</sup>

Nor was the conduct of the other associates of Bahadur Shah above suspicion, which might justify the violent measures adopted by the sepoys against them. Keith Young refers to the letter of the raja of Ballabgarh which contained the most 'humble protestations of fidelity' to the British government.<sup>3</sup> Further, in the entry under the date 9 August, he writes that the sepoys are not far wrong in their assumption that hakim Ahsanullah was in treacherous correspondence with the English. The conduct of Tularam of Rewari was also not above suspicion.<sup>4</sup> The accounts given by Mainuddin and Jivanlal of the large number of persons of Delhi who suffered indignities at the hands of the sepoys<sup>5</sup> tend to indicate that a section of the people maintained an understanding with the English. Butchers and bakers were also found supplying their respective commodities to the English camp.<sup>6</sup> The success of the British emissaries<sup>7</sup> in disrupting the strength of the rebels was reflected in the blowing up of the gun powder manufactory, in the spiking of the guns and in the digging up of mines within the fort.<sup>8</sup> The conduct of the sepoys provoked

<sup>1</sup> Dodd, *op. cit.*, 75.

<sup>2</sup> R. C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, 122f.

<sup>3</sup> *Delhi-1857*, p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 174, 186, 190.

<sup>5</sup> They were besides those already mentioned, Aminuddin Khan (*Metcalf*, *op. cit.*, 66), nawab Hamudali Khan (*Ibid.* 85), Subhachand Kayet (*Ibid.* 100), Mir Mohammed Lal (*Ibid.* 104), Mir Hasanali, Wakil of the maharaja of Patiala (*Ibid.* 108), Makhanlal and Lakhu Singh (*Ibid.* 114), Piamal Maswari (*Ibid.* 117), Piyaarilal (*Ibid.* 120), Baldeo Singh (*Ibid.* 121), Lalprasad (*Ibid.* 124), Kulikhan and Lachman Seth (*Ibid.* 126), Munshi Chotanlal and Sultan Singh (*Ibid.* 192), and Man Singh Mahafiz (*Ibid.* 205).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 121, 143, 162.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 131. An espionage and intelligence department was organised through Indian agents (Cooper, *op. cit.*, 195-6).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 68, 104, 130-01.



the people to resist them, and it was not unlikely therefore that the disaster of the sepoy force at the Hindan bridge was welcomed by them, specially by the Hindus.<sup>1</sup> The people of Delhi, nearly about one hundred thousand,<sup>2</sup> had also no specific grievance as was the case in other parts of India. Ahsanullah stated in his evidence that he never heard of any complaints from them regarding the resumption of *inams* or rent free grants.<sup>3</sup> The soldiers became unruly, there was no chief official to command or to issue orders. The royal treasury was empty. Misappropriation of funds was also frequently complained of, the king himself was offering the crown jewels for meeting the demands and even his personal assets, and the royal begam offered her own jewels.<sup>4</sup> It appears that no thought was given to store up commissariat supplies for a prolonged siege as the English did at Lucknow, and this produced extreme dislocation. Towards the end of August it was reported that no more sulphur could be purchased and the manufacture of gun powder must cease.<sup>5</sup> Later on, a great exodus from the city of all classes of people took place as they were in great fear of being impressed to work in the guns.<sup>6</sup>

All these would seem to indicate that the failure of the movement at Delhi was not due to the aggressive policy of the Moghul party. The old feeble emperor was in two minds,<sup>7</sup> and there was none to guide his faltering hands. Bahadur Shah, it is said, despatched appeals to the rajas of Jaipur, Bikaner and Alore to come to his help to organise the rebellion by forming a confederacy of states.<sup>8</sup> The spurt of activity he showed towards the last phase of the struggle was the outcome of his fear of the sepoys rather than of any political motive. Besides, the prospect of the re-establishment of the Moghul empire had not had any

<sup>1</sup> *Ib d* 108-9

<sup>2</sup> Keith Young *op cit* 143. But the other estimate is 60 000 men (Metcalf 181).

<sup>3</sup> *Trial etc* 166-7

<sup>4</sup> Metcalf *op cit* 179, 207, 216-7, 223

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 214

<sup>6</sup> *Ib d* 216, 218, 226, 228. Also Dr Sen (*op cit* 107-3) for new materials on this point.

<sup>7</sup> On 22 July the king was reported to have said that he had no cause of enmity against the English (Metcalf *op cit* 161).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid* 219

effect in evoking enthusiasm among the Rajputs, not even among the Oudh chiefs,<sup>1</sup> and those living to the south of the Jumna. No communication was received by the rebel government from Nana Sahib, Kunwar Singh, and the rani of Jhansi. The champions of Bahadur Shah were ploughing a lonely furrow.<sup>2</sup> But this does not by any means indicate that the objective of the Indians was anything less than the overthrow of the British rule. The movement in Delhi was directed to that end and achieved its purpose for the time being despite individual apathy or even opposition which counted very little in the surging tide of revolt that swept over the country in the glorious days of 1857.<sup>3</sup>

Meerut lighted the tinder-box, and though there was a halt of three weeks in the spreading of the mutiny, its effects were quickly felt in the whole of the North-West provinces and especially in the Doab which became the scene of a succession of mutinies excited by the same impulse. These uprisings did not occur all at the same time or in the same manner owing to local conditions and other pressures, yet in type and pattern these were much the same. The government threatened by the defection of the Bengal Army was brought to the brink of destruction or nearly destroyed in many places by the disaffected populace who followed the soldiers in their train. The infection of civil rebellion which now spread over the whole of upper India had a more enduring character than the violence committed by the sepoys.

In Muzaffarnagar, for instance, a station about midway between Saharanpur and Meerut, civil rebellion preceded the mutiny of the 4th irregular on 21 June. An explosion occurred at Muzaffarnagar on 14 May; the people plundered the tahsils, bungalows and destroyed the jail, and baniyas and mahajans were despoiled. By September the rebellion in the district

<sup>1</sup> Excepting Kudrat-ali Khan, raja Hirat Singh and raja Khan Singh (Metcalf, *op. cit.*, 182 and others, p. 221).

<sup>2</sup> See the long list of persons and chiefs who either did not respond to the *Shukkas* addressed to them by the rebel government or send petitions signifying their intention to join Bahadur Shah (*Trial of Bahadur Shah*, 170-05).

<sup>3</sup> Cooper's description of the state of things in the city during the revolt which is based on the daily bulletins furnished by the spies, is typical of the attitude of the Anglo-Saxon rulers of that time. He finds only squalor, mock monarchy, fanaticism, bloodshed, treachery and the like (*op. cit.*, 196-213).

became so general that the local government maintained only a precarious existence and its officers were put to the sword <sup>1</sup> An expedition against Khairati Khan Pindari, the noted rebel of the Kandhla pargana, was sent on 2 September Initial reverses of the British troops turned the rising into a vast upsurge of the people of several villages of the southwestern part of the tahsil <sup>2</sup> Khairati Khan even captured the fort of Budhana to the east of Kandhala Simultaneously in the north, Inayetali Khan headed a mahomedan rising in Thana Bhawan, which was joined by all classes of people, especially the disaffected Sheikhzadas <sup>3</sup> The rebels were found to be armed to the teeth and obstinately defended themselves against the British storming party Disaffection prevailed widely from the line of the Hindan going westward as far as the Jumna canal, including many parganas Another leader, kazi Mahabbubali inflicted severe losses on British troops During this time a struggle ensued for the possession of Samli Mohir Singh, the Jat zamindar of the place was on the side of the rebels who took the station by assault The action which took place was a fierce one, one-hundred and thirteen men were killed in the defence of the tahsil and the thana of Samli The rebel insurgents were so furious that they did not even spare those of the defenders who fled to the mosques for shelter The country was soon recovered, but tension continued, and one Reza Khan was even found collecting troops in the name of the king of Delhi The British punitive forces were continuously kept on the move by the rapid movement of the masses of rebels <sup>4</sup>

As in Muzaffarnagar, so also in Saharanpur, civil rebellion preceded the mutiny The population of the town amounted to about forty thousand many of whom were Mahomedans The mutiny of troops was less in evidence than the risings of the gujars and Ranghars which broke out on the news of the Meerut outbreak and bad tidings from Delhi and Muzaffarnagar The sepoy of the 5th regiment bolted later on 2 June and all throughout this period the turbulent elements robbed the

<sup>1</sup> NE 1, 237-43 Report by F Williams, commissioner

<sup>2</sup> NE 1, 244

<sup>3</sup> NE 1, 245-247

<sup>4</sup> NE 1, 358-362, 364 Report by R M Edwards magistrate

bankers and money-lenders, extorted blackmail from them and sacked the police stations and tahsils. Umrao Singh, the headman of the village of Manakpur in Mangalaur tahsil declared himself a raja, levied money, though he failed in the long run.<sup>1</sup> The tahsil and the thana of Nakur was completely gutted. The magistrate, Robertson, proceeded to punish the refractory villages on 20 June, but the country around rose up to effect the release of the prisoners. It was a war of the villagers—parties with the beat of *dhols* assembled on 22 June,<sup>2</sup> and showed a grit and determination in the fight. Buddhakheri was a strong centre of gujar disaffection where one Fatua proclaimed himself king<sup>3</sup> of the gujars. A reward of rupees two hundred was offered for his apprehension. The Ranghars on this part of the district were hostile. They were generally wealthy so that plunder could hardly be their inducement to disaffection.<sup>4</sup> On 26 June, the British offensive was resisted by a huge Ranghar gathering spreading over about half a mile area. The whole of this area was covered with rebels, in some places ten and twenty deep, which would number not less than three thousand.<sup>5</sup> In Deoband the resistance on the part of the townspeople was more determined and the rebels more numerous.<sup>6</sup> In all five hundred and four of the population were punished by court-martial and seventeen offending villages were burnt.

The rising at Bulandshahr came in the wake of the mutiny of a detachment of the 9th regiment on 21 May, and continued with fury<sup>7</sup> for a long time until Greathed's flying column had cleared the country towards the end of September. Mixed crowds of rebel forces, gujars, villagers and townsmen took part in wanton destruction of civil and military establishments. Offices were gutted, records destroyed and former proprietors ousted. Many other excesses were committed

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 227: Report by F. Williams, commissioner.

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 228, 485: Report by H. D. Robertson.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 229; H. D. Robertson, *District duties during the revolt*, 221.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 231.

<sup>5</sup> NE. i, 230.

<sup>6</sup> Robertson, *op. cit.*, 158.

<sup>7</sup> NE. ii, 274f: Report by Sapte, magistrate.

culminating in the temporary disappearance of the British rule by 29 May

In the town of Sikandarabad which was only eight miles from Bulandshahr, lay the fort of Malagarh, headquarters of the rebel leader Walidad Khan<sup>1</sup> His levies were drawn from the disaffected gujars of Dadri and other areas The fort itself lay four miles to the north of Bulandshahr and at a distance of nine hundred yards from the grand trunk road The outpost at Gulaothi at the northern end of the road, nine miles from Hapur, which the Khan commanded, enabled him to intercept British communications on the Agra-Meerut road<sup>2</sup> He also enlisted fresh bands of mutinous troops, constantly passing up and down this main highway of the Doab As the sepoy war progressed he occupied Khurja on the high road to Aligarh In the actions at Gulaothi, he resisted British arms in the first two encounters on 29 July, and on 10 September, but eventually colonel Greathed defeated the rebels on 27 September and two days after took the fort of Malagarh Colonel Bouchier says that the fort was destroyed on 1 October and guns of 'native' manufacture were taken<sup>3</sup>

The other noted leaders who took part in the action at Gulaothi<sup>4</sup> were Ismail Khan and Munir Khan<sup>5</sup> Another noted rebel, Rahimahi of Khylea, is mentioned in official correspondence in this connection<sup>6</sup> Harmut Khan of Pundrawal, a near relation of the rebel Rahimahi Khan, was fortifying his stronghold with hostile intention and was in touch with the Malagarh rebels<sup>7</sup> Abdullatif Khan, a talukdar of about one hundred villages in Barraha Basti aided the rebels in every way and his uncle Azim Khan who joined Walidad, was executed<sup>8</sup> The people of the pargana of Bunawar who were excited to

<sup>1</sup> FP ix 889 For Walidad Khan see Gough, *Old Memories*, 116 Malletson ii 89f

<sup>2</sup> FP iv, 96, 140

<sup>3</sup> NE i, 268 70 71, Bouchier, *Eight Months Campaign*, etc 85-89

<sup>4</sup> FP ix, 889

<sup>5</sup> NE i 268

<sup>6</sup> FP viii 156 160, ix, 864

<sup>7</sup> NE i 281

<sup>8</sup> NE i 280

rebellion by Sujja and Bhugta of Shahamal's family, joined the rebels of Muzaffarnagar.<sup>1</sup>

The same scene was enacted at Aligarh. A brahman named Narayan belonging to a neighbouring village of Aligarh was found tampering with the loyalty of the sepoys on 20 May. He was hanged on the evening of the same day and instantaneously the army broke out.<sup>2</sup> Though the station was recovered on 29 May, rebellion raged all throughout the district for long since then. The Rajputs combined with the Jats to plunder and pillage. Rao Bhopal Singh of Khair, at the head of his chauhan followers, proclaimed a rajput government but was taken by surprise at his place and executed. As a reprisal the whole village stood in arms.<sup>3</sup>

The most formidable rising was the insurrection of the Mahomedans of Koil who raised the green flag, fought for the revival of Islamic glory, and swore to kill Europeans. A rebel government was established with a panchayat headed by Gausemohammed Khan of Sikandra Rao, who proclaimed himself subadar for the King of Delhi, collected revenue and exercised the prerogatives of royalty.<sup>4</sup> Others who occupied important positions in the new set-up were Nasimullah Khan who was placed in charge of the city, Mahabbub Khan, the tahsildar and Hasan Khan, the kotwal.<sup>5</sup> There was indeed rivalry between the leaders and some tension between the communities, which weakened the revolutionary command, yet the Koil rebels fought desperately at the battle of Aligarh on 24 August,<sup>6</sup> under the leader Gausemohammed Khan. The Khan brought to the field insurgents numbering five to six thousand besides a mixed body of sepoys and zamindari levies amounting to six or seven hundred men.<sup>7</sup> The ghazis of Aligarh played a great part in the rebellion by exciting the people to fury and

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 269.

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 212: Report by W. J. Bramly, magistrate and collector of Aligarh.

<sup>3</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 502: W. Connor's narrative.

<sup>4</sup> *The Bombay Times*, 1857, p. 163.

<sup>5</sup> NE. i, 215.

<sup>6</sup> According to one contemporary officer the British army could not proceed farther than the town of Hathras, ten miles on the Agra side of Aligarh (Thornhill, *op. cit.*, 267).

<sup>7</sup> FP. vi, 155-7; iv, 143.

if permitted to remain, allowed to remain on mere sufferance, the Bunjahs were plundered, new proprietors ejected and murdered and the King of Delhi proclaimed.

When the Nimach mutineers entered the district after their victory at Shahganj (5 July) the conflagration spread far and wide. One Debi Singh declared himself as raja of fourteen villages and set up a government of his own. In a circle of a few miles five to six zamindars made themselves independent and assumed the title of raja: the impression 'that the English rule had ceased was universal'.<sup>1</sup> Another leader Deokaran sacked the tahsil and the thana of Saidabad.<sup>2</sup> Anarchy was rampant in the northern and western parts of Mathura. Towards the end of September the rebels set up an improvised government with Keramatali as the governor of the king of Delhi. Meanwhile the offensive resumed by Greathed was found to be too strong to be repulsed. At Chhata, on the north-west of Mathura on the main line to Delhi, some of the rebel zamindars could indeed stubbornly hold out against the English but they were effectively countered and the bastion was blown up. By the end of 1857 the country returned to normal conditions.

The early part of June was a critical period in the history of British rule in India: regiments after regiments were falling out in quick succession, as in Nimach on 3 June, Jhansi on 6 June, Nowgong on the 10th and Gwalior on the 14th. When, therefore, the 44th and the 67th regiments were disarmed at Agra on 31 May, it came not a moment too soon. The surrounding country was ablaze and the victory of the Nimach troops in the action at Shahganj<sup>3</sup> outside the city on 5 July, became the signal for the outburst of popular fury. The British ran the danger of being besieged like the Europeans at Cawnpore.<sup>4</sup> The common people who were awaiting the issue of the fight now joined the soldiers. Government offices were plundered and burnt, wealthy people were robbed and no trace of

<sup>1</sup> NE i, 94. Report by M. Thornhill, magistrate; Thornhill, *The Personal Adventures*, 100-06.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 95.

<sup>3</sup> Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt*, etc., 57-58. For the battle of Shahganj see NE i, 62-64. Report by A. L. M. Phillips, magistrate.

<sup>4</sup> Thornhill, *op. cit.*, 273.

British rule remained. The police to a man were found to be disaffected; for example, Muradali, the kotwal<sup>1</sup> and Bashratali, the superintendent of police,<sup>2</sup> openly proclaimed the rule of the king of Delhi. The turbulent elements like the gujars and mullahs rose up in all directions and directed their attack particularly against tahsils and police stations which were burnt and sacked, and against Christians nearly twenty-two of whom were murdered.<sup>3</sup> The gujar leader of Dholpur, Deohans by name, mustered an army of nearly three thousand men from his clansmen, and sacked tahsils and treasuries of Iradatnagar on 9 July and carried away spoil of two lakhs of rupees. His compatriot, Bhavani Sankar, indulged himself in similar excesses.<sup>4</sup> The different tahsils fell off one after another, Firozabad in the north was abandoned to the villagers, Khairagarh in the south was completely plundered, Fatehabad in the west was denuded of British authority. The pargana of Pinahat early fell into disorder, and was usurped by the villages headed by Lachman Singh, the gujar zamindar of Khera.<sup>5</sup> The same condition prevailed in the tahsils of the trans-Jumna tract.

In Itimadpur Zorawar Singh of Himmatpur became powerful. Early in July he attacked the tahsil which was sacked but he was restrained as soon as the civil administration was restored.<sup>6</sup> In the pargana of Fatehabad two villages—Dhanaula and Khandar were in ferment, collecting ammunition and guns. Towards the end of November, Phillips, the magistrate and major Hennessy, led a full scale military expedition against them with success.<sup>7</sup> In Akrabad, Jaydayal, Mangal Singh, and Muthab Singh organised the villagers to fight against the government.<sup>8</sup> One Ganga Singh was in open rebel-

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 65.

<sup>2</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 767. The tahsil of Farrah was plundered by the daroga Wazirali who joined the rebels (NE. i, 67).

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 66.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 68.

<sup>5</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 771-2: The *Hindu Patriot* of 8 April, '58 features an article on the internal discord of the landed chiefs of the pargana and its connection with the revolt.

<sup>6</sup> NE. i, 69.

<sup>7</sup> NE. i, 76-77.

<sup>8</sup> FP. viii, 120, 140.



lion in the villages of Lakshmanpur and Narah<sup>1</sup> At no period till the capture of Gwalior by Rose in June 1858 was Agra free from the peril of an attack in force from the rebels

The adjacent district of Mainpuri in the Doab was similarly affected The outbreak occurred on 23 May, and in the early part of June, the surrounding country was ablaze The thanas, tahsils, schools, bungalows and chaukis were burnt and all Mustafabad was in rebellion<sup>2</sup> Raja Tej Singh<sup>3</sup> who had been shorn of three fourths of his estate by the settlement of 1840 threw his whole weight into the rebel cause to secure his hereditary dignity With his levies he came to the support of other rebel formations against the British power in the neighbouring districts<sup>4</sup> and allied himself with the nawab of Farrukhabad<sup>5</sup> He surrendered on 11 June 1858 and was removed to Benares where he lived on an allowance<sup>6</sup>

Etawah lay on the road to Cawnpore at a distance of seventy three miles from Agra The rebellion in the district presented a remarkable feature The official report was that the district was known for the loyalty of its inhabitants, but in few districts the revolt of the people assumed such a proportion In one of the early incidents of the mutiny, when Jaswantnagar in the west of Etawah was besieged by the mutineers from Meerut, and Allan Hume, the magistrate and collector, had to beat a hasty retreat in relieving it on 19 May, the townspeople showed unequivocal signs of sympathy with the mutineers<sup>7</sup> A wing of the 9th regiment cantoned at the station mutinied on 22 May, following the evacuation of the herd-

<sup>1</sup> FP ix 865 The list of murders in the city of Agra and punishment given during July 1857, includes one Urjullah fakir who was transported for life and many other respectable men (Chick *op cit* 788 9)

<sup>2</sup> NE i 162 Report by J Power, collector and magistrate

<sup>3</sup> FP vii 161, viii, 9 25 26 81 143-4

<sup>4</sup> FP ix 847

<sup>5</sup> FP ix 896

<sup>6</sup> Sen *op cit* 363 The *Hindu Patriot* of 8 July 58 featured an article on the trial of Tej Singh the deposed raja of Mainpuri pleading his acquittal on the ground that he was a victim of circumstances that he had spilt neither white blood nor black blood and that he had been reduced to this state by his rival in the estate who has been unrelenting in his efforts to compass his ruin Another leader of the district was the rebel thakur Akbar Singh (FP ix 924)

<sup>7</sup> Kaye iii 220n

quarters by the officials. The rising became general: mixed bodies of soldiers, city rabble, mewatis, julahas, and Rajputs commenced plundering the country.

Many local chiefs broke out in different parts of the district, the most important of whom were Rana Mahendra Singh of Sakrauli, the raja of Ruro in Belah, Rup Singh of Bharih (near the junction of the Chambal with the Jumna), Raja Bhao of Sikandra, Niranjan Singh of Chakarnagar and Ramprasad and Pitam Singh, who were alleged to be brigand chiefs.<sup>1</sup> Some of them offered help to the Gwalior rebels who appeared on the south-eastern frontier of the district in October, 1857, and others invited the rebel nawab of Farrukhabad. The nawab's nazim reached Etawah on 3 December 1857, with a force of five thousand men and twelve guns and inflicted a crushing defeat on Kunwar Zohar Singh who espoused the British cause.<sup>2</sup> Though Etawah was recaptured on 6 January, rebel chiefs were hardly subdued. Rup Singh, the uncle of the minor raja of Bharih took forcible possession of Auraiya and here he could not be ousted even after a fierce encounter on 7 February 1858, at Anantaram in which one hundred and fifty of his rebel forces were killed.<sup>3</sup> His troops guarded the bridge of boats at Shergarh ghat and maintained communication with the mutinous troops from Kalpi. While he built up his power in Auraiya, the Chambal-Jumna tract passed under the control of Chakarnagar raja Kushal Singh and his son, Niranjan.

In March, 1858, a deadly struggle ensued for the recovery of Ajitmal which was near Auraiya and twenty-five miles from Etawah. The people of the neighbouring villages formed the bulk of the army and defended the place from the attacks of the English. Drastic measures were adopted. Many of the villages were burnt down, but in every case, the British troops were fiercely attacked by isolated parties of insurgents. On 11 April, the rebel forces drew round Ajitmal from all directions

<sup>1</sup> NE. ii, 171: Report by A. Hume, magistrate and collector. The raja of Ruro poisoned himself to death (FP. ix, 862). For the resistance offered by the old zamindars at the village fort at Sampther, see Hume's Report quoted in Kaye iii, 223.

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 172.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 193-4. For details of the battle of Anantaram, see report of Hume, offg. magistrate and collector of Etawah.

and completely encircled it in a concerted scheme in which Niranjan Singh, Ganga Singh, Pitam, Bankat and Rup Singh participated, but they were put to rout, Niranjan with his crowd of matchlockmen falling back to Gohari across the Jumna where he strongly entrenched himself by building a number of *murchas* or posts<sup>1</sup>

Struggle for the possession of Ajitmal continued intermittently. It was renewed in May under the leadership of Lalpuri Goshain, Nana's *purohit*<sup>2</sup> and Rup Singh and Niranjan. The rebels, it is said, increased in strength rapidly. Lieutenant Chapman sent to reconnoitre the position found a strongly posted force of some six hundred cavalry, and one thousand two hundred regular infantry. Niranjan Singh in an auxiliary movement crossed the Jumna and taking up his quarters at Nandgaon plundered Phaphund<sup>3</sup>. The country was fast passing away under the domination of the Indian chiefs who held the Lakhna pargana and controlled all the ghats on the Jumna. Various skirmishes took place but the fall of Kalpi on 23 May 1858 somewhat damped the revolutionary spirit<sup>4</sup> but not that of Rup Singh. Niranjan and his followers, Pitam, Bankat and Ganga Singh who led numerous futile expeditions in the months of July and August, and surprised various British outposts on many occasions till the Jumna Chambal Doab was re-occupied by lieutenants Graham and Allan in September-October 1858<sup>5</sup>. The struggle continued. The arrival of Firuz Shah on 7 December, 1858 stirred up discontentment. His huge force which included fourteen hundred cavalry attacked the British army at Harachandrapura on 8 December, and in spite of the magnificent charges made by Doyle, the position of the British army on the whole became weak, and Doyle himself was killed. After a sharp engagement which lasted three and half hours Firuz Shah was obliged to retreat.

Farrukhabad, bounded on the north by Shahjehanpur and Budaun was a district in the Agra division but though

<sup>1</sup> NE i 173-4

<sup>2</sup> NE i 196-7

<sup>3</sup> NE i 174-196-7

<sup>4</sup> NE i 175

<sup>5</sup> NE i 175-7 202 FP ix 974 Malletson ii, 308

separated from Rohilkhand by the Ganges, it was more allied to it in social conditions than to the Doab. The adjoining cantonment town of Fatehgarh on the Ganges was about six miles from the district town. It was the seat of a gun-carriage manufactory. The inhabitants of the district numbered upwards of a million. The condition of the country in the early part of 1857 was anything but peaceful. The thakur zamindars were dissatisfied, the pathans were turbulent and the nawab discontented. By the end of May the roads leading to Agra were closed by rebellion in the intervening districts and most of the villages were up in revolt. In the early part of June it was an open secret that the nawab was turning against the government. The tenth regiment of Farrukhabad, the 'Christian regiment' as it was called, persevered in their loyalty even when the neighbouring countries were ablaze and it is doubtful if they would have revolted at all as they did on 18 June, had they not been instigated by the 31st from Sitapur. The murder of Europeans in cold blood on 23 July, in which Ghulamali Khan, the rebel kotwal took the lead, in one outhouse of the nawab's palace, in Farrukhabad was witnessed by a large crowd.<sup>1</sup> The formation of a rebel government had been taken in hand at the beginning of June. Tafazzal Hussain, the nawab, now set to consolidate the newly gained power. His was a broadbased government. Ashrat Khan, Multan Khan, Hyderabad, Mohammed Taki formed the nawab's privy council.<sup>2</sup> Of these Ashrat Khan who styled himself nawab was the soul of the rebellion. He was appointed *musheer khas*, principal councillor. Mohammed Taki and Hedayetali became the chief officers of the nawab's court. Mahsumali<sup>3</sup> and nawab Ahmed Yar Khan, 'an incompetent savage', were appointed nazims,<sup>4</sup> and the two together enlisted a force of about eight thousand men.<sup>5</sup> Tarutali was made the chamberlain.<sup>6</sup> The court was

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 134-5, 155-6: Report by C. R. Lindsay, offg. magistrate and collector and the decisions by H. D. Robertson. Also Cosens and Wallace, *Fatehgarh and the Mutiny* (1933), 2, 20, 33, 59, 113-20.

<sup>2</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 584.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 865.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 135.

<sup>5</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 574.

<sup>6</sup> NE. i, 138.

composed of Ganga Singh, Sheoghulam Dikshit and Pandit Pitambar. The court of the mufties consisted of Ahmedali, Abdul Wahid and a kazi.<sup>1</sup> All the kanangoes, collectory sircars, record keepers, muhuris, nazirs, chaprasis of the former government tendered their services to the nawab. Three of the six tahsildars, six of the eleven thandars and five of the nine peshkars of the former administration gave their support to the rebel government. Revenue accruing from ferries was left to soldiers. The excise revenue realised was small, and poppy cultivation was forbidden. Cosens and Wallace attribute this to the nawab's desire to secure the sale of the large stock of opium which he had seized in the government storehouse.<sup>2</sup>

Outside this circle many others espoused the cause of the rebellion. Lika Singh of Alahganj and Polandar Singh of Bhowanipur conveyed the Sitapur mutineers across the Ganges,<sup>3</sup> Jasa Singh, the rebel leader of Fatehpur chaurasi, fired upon the fugitives,<sup>4</sup> the thakurs of Belowa under the command of Ganga, Chatr Singh and Aman Singh attacked the British.<sup>5</sup> Some of the chief leaders of the Indian revolt such as Bakht Khan, Firuz Shah, Walidad Khan paid visits to the countryside encouraging the people to keep up their spirits.<sup>6</sup> In the adjoining town of Fatehgarh the rebels were numerous and were mostly engaged in hostile demonstration and murderous assaults on the refugees fleeing by boats.<sup>7</sup> Official despatches refer to the disloyal attitude of many disaffected chiefs such as the nawab rais of Fatehgarh,<sup>8</sup> maulavi Siakatali,<sup>9</sup> Ismail Khan,<sup>10</sup> Masimali Khan,<sup>11</sup> Nirtul Singh<sup>12</sup> and others. The

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* 135

<sup>2</sup> NE i, 137. For a detailed description of the nawab's administration see Cosens and Wallace 164-75.

<sup>3</sup> NE i, 129. Lika Singh was later on transported for life (Cosens and Wallace 57).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* 133

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 156-8

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid* 145

<sup>7</sup> They were Bhunmar Singh zamindar of Ukri, Ram Saha of Hatgaon, Sitabaksh and Palwan Singh of Bargulla and Nurlusta, Kamaruddin Hussain of Patta (FP iv 261).

<sup>8</sup> FP vii 64

<sup>9</sup> FP viii 163

<sup>10</sup> FP viii 140, 144

<sup>11</sup> FP viii 115, 124

<sup>12</sup> FP viii, 99, 100

famous Apa Sahib seems to have been living in Sitalganj and harbouring hostile designs.<sup>1</sup> Yet the communal tension was high which culminated in a fierce conflict between the two orders at Bhojpur, and Pokhar Singh held an independent sway in his castle at Thatia.

Four times the forces of the nawab encountered the English, first at Kanauj on 23 October, 1857, then at Kasganj, and the third time at Patiali and finally at the action of the Kali Nadi on 2 January '58. At this battle the renowned Thakur Pandey was killed and the British force entered Fatehgarh on 3 January 1858.<sup>2</sup> A rebel chief named Nazirali Khan who, as colonel Bouchier says, was the chief instigator of all cruelties, attempted to make a stand in Farrukhabad but surrendered soon after.<sup>3</sup> Nawab Tafazzal Hussain and his party fled away.<sup>4</sup> Even after the capture of Fatehgarh, the rebel general Niaz Mohammed<sup>5</sup> entered Kampil in the north of the district but was routed by Hope Grant on 18 January, and before long Mahsumali also was defeated.

#### ALLAHABAD DIVISION

Being situated at the confluence of two great rivers, Allahabad was a most important strategical point, and its three great natural divisions of land contained more than one thousand villages and towns and a population of nearly a million. The mutiny at Allahabad, in its purely military aspect, one of the most memorable in the whole history of the sepoy war, was rendered still more so for its immediate popular results. The great city,

<sup>1</sup> FP. viii, 99.

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 143.

<sup>3</sup> Bouchier, *Eight Months' Campaign*, etc. 182.

<sup>4</sup> Martin, (*op. cit.*, ii, 476) says that two other nawabs whose identity could not be established were hanged along with 200 rebels. Towards the end of the year (1858), one Nawabuddaulah of Farrukhabad was said to have been condemned to death but was eventually saved (*Hindu Patriot*, 16 December, 1858). Later on early in January nawab Tafazzal Hussain also came voluntarily to surrender. A price of £10,000 was set upon his person and he was shut out by proclamation from all favour of amnesty. He was sentenced to be hanged, which was later on commuted to banishment from India for life. He was sent to Mecca, his self-chosen place of exile (Martin, *op. cit.*, 499-500).

<sup>5</sup> FP. viii, 130; ix, 416.

as Kaye says, rose in an instant. The sixth regiment stationed there remained loyal till 6 June when being excited by the news of the Benares mutiny and the repressive measures adopted by Neill, it revolted. This was followed by a tremendous upsurge of the city populace who first inaugurated a religious war by hoisting the flag of the prophet in the *chouk*. They then joined the sepoys in pillage, railway works<sup>1</sup> and telegraphic wires were destroyed, the treasury plundered and records burnt. After a short period the universal rapine with all its confusions began to take the shape of an organised rebellion and culminated in the assumption of power by maulavi Liakatali, a common school master, a weaver by caste, who proclaimed the rule of the king of Delhi and passed himself as his governor.<sup>2</sup> His reign was of short duration, but he was actively supported by a wide circle of eminent Mahomedans,<sup>3</sup> who were held together by the common bond of animosity against the British.<sup>4</sup> A great crowd joined the fakir, and on three several occasions fight took place.<sup>5</sup> The maulavi was obliged to leave the station at the success of British arms on 17 June.<sup>6</sup> Even at that time he commanded three thousand followers<sup>7</sup> who joined the rank of the rebels at Cawnpore.<sup>8</sup>

There were undoubtedly many loyal elements in Allahabad but to all appearances the rising at Allahabad was general. The fearful retribution that was inflicted on the city was an index to the enormity of the civil rebellion that succeeded the

<sup>1</sup> The destruction of the railway store house was frightful. It appeared that thousands of men had been systematically engaged for many days in wanton destruction (Chick *op cit* 416. Narrative by an eye witness, Kaye, II 256.)

<sup>2</sup> NE II, 12. Report by H. D. Willock, joint magistrate. FP VII, 149.

<sup>3</sup> The following talukdars, officers and champions of faith joined the maulavi—Sheikh Nizam-ut-Ashraf Ghulam Ismail Mohammed Hussain Chaudhuri, Miran Baksh, Maulavi Syed Ahmedali, Maulavi Ghulam Hyder, Maulavi Amjadali, Hussainali Khan Sher Khan, Sheikh Lutfali, Sheikh Fattahali, Sheikh Nazafali (naib-kotwal), Sheikh Nazaf Khan (naib-thanadar) [NE I 22. Supplement to the Narrative of Events].

<sup>4</sup> Chick *op cit*, 406, 826.

<sup>5</sup> NE I, 22.

<sup>6</sup> NE I, 12.

<sup>7</sup> Chick, *op cit*, 411. Report by lieutenant colonel Neill.

<sup>8</sup> Even in July '58 the maulavi seems to have retained a position of strength. He was reported to be posted on the other side of the river close to Allahabad with some thousands of rebels. His headquarter at Soraon (near Allahabad) was not attacked till then (*Hindu Patriot* 22 July, '58).

mutinies. Hundreds were arrested on suspicion of complicity and dealt with most sternly. Many were even shot down by soldiers. The gibbet became a standing institution at Allahabad, nearly eight hundred men were hanged between 6 June and 16 July.<sup>1</sup> The reign of terror resulted in complete desertion of the city and the consequent absence of all means of transport hampering even the military operations of Neill. The people developed a horror for the Englishman.

In the Doab parganas, the outbreak was 'worse' and more widespread particularly in the pargana Chail inhabited mostly by Mahomedans, who, to a man, were disaffected. They raised the green flag and fought under its banner. The pragwal brahmans of Allahabad also involved themselves in the conflagration and influenced the hindu population to support them. In the parganas to the north of the Ganges, the revolutionary urge originated from economic motives, religion had little or nothing to do with it,<sup>2</sup> as in Secundra where the clashes between the ex-zamindars and the auction purchasers were more extensive than in any other part of Allahabad.<sup>3</sup> The excited peasantry and the dispossessed zamindars made a common cause in ousting the auction purchasers and decree holders and in plundering everything they could lay their hands on. To the south of the Jumna the country was comparatively quiet.<sup>4</sup> The recovery of Allahabad by the British did not lead to the suppression of the rebellion in the district, Mchndi Hasan, the nazim of Sultanpur<sup>5</sup> extended his sway as far down as the city itself. Zamindars, refugees and religious fanatics flocked to his standard and he actually held Phaphamow by force.<sup>6</sup> Another rebel leader, Fazl Azim, the naib-nazim of Salonc (Rae Bareli)<sup>7</sup> held charge of the Allahabad

<sup>1</sup> Dodd, *op. cit.*, 157; *Hindu Patriot*, 10 September, '57. See also *Travels of a Hindu* by Bholanath Chanda quoted in Kaye, ii, 668.

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 8-9: Report by F. Thompson, offg. magistrate.

<sup>3</sup> FP. vii, 67.

<sup>4</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 820.

<sup>5</sup> He is also described as nazim of Allahabad and Aga Ujimali figures as his naib (FP. viii, 34, 42, 144, 147).

<sup>6</sup> In October, 1857 he was reported to be at Phaphamow ghat, 6 miles from the British outpost across the Ganges (*The Englishman*, 9 October, 1857).

<sup>7</sup> FP. vii, 150.



pargana<sup>1</sup> occupied Soraon, fourteen miles north of Allahabad. He was served by his adherents, Ghulam Martuza, his dewan, and Sheodat Singh, Diarjan and Dakul Singh of Chaurasi.<sup>2</sup> He engaged the British forces in January 1858 in an action at Mansetha, some eight miles from Allahabad. Though defeated, he evaded the vigilance of military pickets and effectively challenged the British offensive by guerilla tactics. This obliged brigadier Berkeley to storm the fort of Dahain on 14 July 1858, in which, according to a contemporary estimate claimed to be very correct, more than one thousand rebels were killed.<sup>3</sup> Even after this disaster, Dhakan Singh, zamindar of Dharwal<sup>4</sup> who had camped at Atharban held out, and headed the most desperate insurgents like Hanuman Singh<sup>5</sup> and Wilayat Hussain. Hanuman had his headquarters at Koran close to the line of the railway where he fortified himself.<sup>6</sup> The rebellious proceedings of this village leader who tampered with the railway track are frequently mentioned in the official despatches.<sup>7</sup> Mention is also made of the hostile activities of Belour Singh who scoured, with his twelve hundred followers, places in the vicinity of the grand trunk road.<sup>8</sup> Rahulamin, the naib-chackladar of pargana Nawabgang,<sup>9</sup> held sway over a confederacy of disaffected chieftains including Golab Singh, Beni Bahadur Singh of Nasratpur and Madho Singh of Bhognipur. He had two thousand men, besides the levies contributed by Shyampur rani, the thakurani of Budri and Sugram Singh, the zamindar of Singraur in the pargana of Nawabganj, Fakir Baksh and other ex-zamindars. He also held the fort of Kalakankar and intercepted the river passage between Allahabad and Cawnpore. An order from Lucknow called upon all talukdars and zamindars to attend on the naib-chackladar

<sup>1</sup> FP ix, 229-30, 232-593. Narrative of Events, October to December.

<sup>2</sup> FP ix, 232-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 29 July, 58, Malletson iii, 280.

<sup>4</sup> Chick, *op cit*, 821.

<sup>5</sup> His name is variously written as Humain Singh (FP viii, 104) and Hummut Singh (FP ix, 235).

<sup>6</sup> Chick *op cit*, 821-2.

<sup>7</sup> FP ix, 599, 603, 792.

<sup>8</sup> PP 1857, vol 30 p 49.

<sup>9</sup> FP vii, 260-262 ix, 232, 236.

Rahulamin and to assist him in the subversion of the British government.<sup>1</sup> Mirza Agaullah of Hanumanganj styled himself as naib-nazim,<sup>2</sup> Bakshisullah, the kanango of Manikpur<sup>3</sup> and Ayodhya Singh and Dunan Singh the ex-zamindars similarly stood against the government.<sup>4</sup> In Chaurasi in the trans-Jumna paragana of Khairagarh, disaffection was fast spreading towards the end of December.<sup>5</sup>

F.O. Mayne, the joint magistrate of Gopiganj to the east of Allahabad in the Benares division, submitted a report in respect of the deployment of rebel forces in the first part of October, which tends to show the extent of the civil rebellion in the Gangetic tracts. The chart<sup>6</sup> on pages 94-95 will make it clear.

Lying contiguous to Bundelkhand, Oudh, Azamgarh and Jaunpur and posing as a key to Bihar, Allahabad naturally felt the shock of the rebellion to a great extent and the embers of disaffection continued to glow there for a long time.

In Cawnpore Baji Rao built a large place, ten miles away at Bithur. There he resided in a regal state with a retinue of sixteen hundred men. He died in 1851 leaving no issue but he had adopted Dhundu Pant, better known as Nana Sahib. Nana tried in vain to secure his adopted father's pension, salute and other honours, but he built up a position and influence by wide contacts. He secured the allegiance of a number of Maratha courtiers and agents but the man who guided him and yet loved and respected him like a devoted follower was a Mahomedan of great talent named Azimullah Khan. This gentleman of great fame had begun his life as a table-servant and rose to be a diplomat of the day. It appears that Tantia Topi was also living in the court of Nana Sahib as one of the numerous 'hangers on', as Lang says.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a long list of the ex-zamindars who were a party to the forcible seizure of the villages see FP. vii, 77, 261-3; ix, 239.

<sup>2</sup> He is also associated with Secundra (FP. ix, 237, 239, 282).

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 236f. 717.

<sup>4</sup> FP. ix, 581, 599. Many of the rebels were hanged by orders of the military authority for their hostile activities (FP. iv, 144).

<sup>5</sup> FP. ix, 603.

<sup>6</sup> FP. ix, 226.

<sup>7</sup> NE i, 98-99: Report by J. W. Sherer, magistrate. For a contemporary account of the above leaders see, *Hindu Patriot* (11 November, 1858); Mowbray Thomson, *The Story of Cawnpore*, 44f., 52-53; Maude and Sherer, i, 220-01n; Lang, *Wanderings in India*, 116, 140; Gough, *Old Memories*, 184-5; Shepherd, *Narrative of the Mutiny*, etc. 45-56. Also Majumdar, *op. cit.*, 164-5; Sen, *op. cit.*, 123

Parganas	Locality	Situation	Chief	Force	Remarks
Soraon and Nawabganj	Singraam and Shabhpore	5 cross west of Soraon	Zamindar of the villages Naibnazim Rafiulmin	300 men 3 guns	
	Soraon	Headquarters of the tahsil	Raja Golab Singh, Raja Hunmut Singh, Sharn pore Rani, Budri Thaku ran (ousted zamindar of Allahabad), Mewatees of Allahabad, Sultanat Bahadurs of taluk Baurpore	400 men	
				2,000 men 5 guns	
			Raja Biji Bahadur Singh	30 men	
Secunder, Jhoon	Ismailgunge	2½ miles south-east of Soraon	Karinda of talukdar Kalka Baksh	700 men	
	Mirzapore chauhan	5 cross north of Soraon	Bani Bahadur Singh, ousted zamindar of Okrouara	2,000 men 4 guns	He has fortified his house in Nasratpur This man fights with a halber round his neck and will fight to the last He supplies to the forces at Phulpore <sup>1</sup>
	Nasratpur	4 cross from Phulpore			
	Phulpore	Headquarters of the tahsil	Makdum Baksh, Karinda of Raja Biji Bahadur Singh of Pratabghar, Babu Bulbhadar of Soojakur, Busna Buretha ex-zamindars	800 to 1,000 men  200 men	

<sup>1</sup> At Nasratpur Beni Bahadur Singh engaged three or four golundazes. He collected 132 muskets and 19 carbines, with pouches of ammunition. It was also reported that he had made ready 1,000 cannon balls, and was making powder and shells (FP ix, 230)

Parganas	Locality	Situation	Chief	Force	Remarks
Secunder Jhoosi — <i>Contd.</i>	Mobarackpore	2½ cross north of Phulpore	Dewan Ranjit Singh		
	Mitybun	2 cross north of Phulpore	Rao Prithpal Singh		
	Silbut	3 cross north of Phulpore	Ranadhir Singh	300 men	
	Baurey	½ mile west of Phulpore	Prithpal Singh	250 men 2 guns	
Meh and Kewai	Buana Baretha	2½ cross east from Phulpore	Ex-zamindars	400 men	
	Bibipur	4 cross northeast of Phulpore	Ditto.	250 men 2 guns	
	Junglye	9 cross east of Phulpore	Ex-zamindars, and Jhoorey Singh of Pargana Bhadohee Zillah Mirzapore.	300 men	1

<sup>1</sup> Mayne's list of ex-zamindars who seized villages includes, in addition to the above, raja of Kaloja, raja Kalka Baksh, and ex-zamindars of Jalainpur, Kalakunkar, Sia Dili, Kunchar, Karamico, Singraur, Dhooba, Oopura Patigard, Tulsi in the parganas of Meh, Jui, Nawabganj, Soraon, Kewai (FR. vii, 261-3).

Outwardly Nana was on the best of terms with the British officers. It cannot be definitely asserted that he and his counsellors were busy in exploiting the political situation in Oudh so as to preach sedition though they seemed to have paid a visit to Lucknow early in 1857 as stated by Gubbins, the financial commissioner and as quoted by Martin.<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant-colonel Williams, military secretary to the government of North-West provinces, who carried on an investigation regarding the outbreak at Cawnpore found no traces of conspiracy prior to the arrival of Nana Sahib at Cawnpore on 22 May.<sup>2</sup> The troops, however, had become very restive in the month of April, and the disbanded sepoy of the 19th regiment passing through Cawnpore in the same month and the news from Meerut in May provided much excitement. Even so, Nana Sahib does not appear to have committed himself against the government: the letters of the wife of the magistrate and collector of Cawnpore written to her friends in England in the month of May reveal the existence of an understanding between the two parties to take the mutineers unawares.<sup>3</sup> The mutiny at Cawnpore commenced on the morning of 4 June at 2 a.m. when the 2nd cavalry and 1st regiment left their lines,<sup>4</sup> but recent researches go to the point of indicating that Nana Sahib was unaware of the mutiny of the sepoy until it actually broke out.<sup>5</sup> Shepherd of the commissariat department who was one of the few to survive the massacres and record upon paper his experience says that at the outset the sepoy planned to start for Delhi and did not contemplate attacking the English and

<sup>1</sup> Gubbins, *op cit*, 30-31, Martin, *op cit*, 250. Cf. the views of Metcalfe of Delhi who says that the historians have not taken adequate notice of the part Nana had taken in stirring up the Hindu population (*Two Native Narratives*, 10). Holmes writes that he had long been trying to stir up native chieftains (*op cit*, 91-92). Dr S. N. Sen doubts whether Nana was so engaged in his tour programme in 1856-7 (*op cit*, 128-9). The whole question of Nana Sahib as organiser of the conspiracy has been discussed in great detail in the light of the evidence of Sitaram Bawa by Dr R. C. Majumdar. The results of his exhaustive investigations show that Nana did nothing to bring into existence an organised confederacy against the English (*op cit*, 183-91).

<sup>2</sup> NE, 1, 112.

<sup>3</sup> Dodd, *op cit*, 126. On a scrutiny of all the available evidence Dr Sen considers that neither Hillersdon nor Wheeler had any reason to distrust Nana at that moment (*op cit*, 132-3).

<sup>4</sup> NE, 1, 99.

<sup>5</sup> R. C. Majumdar, *op cit*, 131.

in fact they marched to Nawabganj where they were received by Nana Sahib and feted by him. They then marched to Kalyanpur, nine miles from Cawnpore on the way to Delhi. About this time the Oudh horse battery represented to Nana the advantages likely to be derived from attacking the English at the entrenchment and Nana Sahib entertained the proposals.<sup>1</sup> The official reports of Sherer, Freeling and Thornhill give the same account of the troop's march on the Delhi road, heedless of any obligation to support Nana Sahib at Cawnpore. It was not long before they had left that he and his advisers seemed to have decided to embark on an enterprise of founding a new Maratha dynasty and bought over the troops with lavish promises to that interest.<sup>2</sup>

The current accounts of the mutiny at Cawnpore are quite plenty, but the true history of all the secret proceedings, as Kaye said, could not be satisfactorily extracted. The evidences bearing on the subject are so contradictory that it cannot be ascertained with any degree of certainty how Nana Sahib reacted to the situation, excepting his own confessions which are for the first time known from his letter of 20 April, 1859, as reproduced by Dr. Majumdar.<sup>3</sup> Shepherd and Tantia Topi clearly do not agree as regards Nana's presence at Cawnpore at the time of the outbreak. The former says that the mutineers went to Nawabganj where they were sumptuously entertained by Nana Sahib but the latter deposed that the sepoys forcibly took Nana from Cawnpore along with them and marched on the road to Delhi.<sup>4</sup> Further, Tantia does not say anything about the Kalyanpur affair where according to Shepherd a decision seems to have been taken. The official reports as mentioned above support the version of Shepherd that the sepoys were prevailed upon to turn back to Cawnpore by Nana Sahib but it is not clear whether he accompanied the rebel regiments to Kalyanpur. The above official reports also make out that there was

<sup>1</sup> Shepherd, *op. cit.*, 20, 22-24; Chick, *op. cit.*, 602; Narrative by Sherer.

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 96-97, 100; Report by C. B. Thornhill, commissioner; Dodd, *op. cit.*, 130; Holmes, *op. cit.*, 227-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, xiii-iv (Preface).

<sup>4</sup> Malleson, iii, 575-6.

absolutely no understanding between Nana Sahib and the disaffected sepoys in regard to a plan of action—a contention which receives support from other sources as well. But if, as seems clear, the troops returned on the 6th, then all this march and counter-march of the mutineers from Cawnpore to Kalyanpur covering a distance of eighteen miles and all the complicated negotiations of winning over the sepoys to the side of the Nana or of the latter to the cause of the former have to be placed within the short period of one day which does not appear to have been practicable enough unless the parties were previously disposed to come to an understanding. Tantia states that Nana Sahib had been compelled to join the sepoys. This does not appear to be very convincing. Shepherd's reference to the deputation and Nana's acceptance of the proposal probably at the instance of Azimullah and his attempts to persuade the sepoys to turn back are altogether incompatible with Tantia Topi's deposition. Tantia gives the impression that the part played by Nana in the early phase of the struggle was of a passive nature.<sup>1</sup> But the statement of Holmes that he swore to lead the troops to Delhi<sup>2</sup> shows that he was really not so indifferent to the situation around him which is also reflected in the account of Shepherd.<sup>3</sup> The authenticity of the statement of Holmes may be questioned but Shepherd's narrative cannot be ignored. Tantia does not say that the mutineers returned to Cawnpore at the instance of Nana Sahib yet this was probably the actual situation which cannot be contradicted. But whatever it was, whether induced by threat or temptation, Nana made a common cause with the sepoys

The letter received by Wheeler early in the morning of the 6th, from Nana Sahib, warning him to expect an attack is interpreted as 'a piece of quixotry' in conformity with the code of hindu chivalry,<sup>4</sup> and also 'as the last friendly act of Nana towards the British',<sup>5</sup> but Holmes who refers to this epistolary

<sup>1</sup> Majumdar, *op. cit.*, 131

<sup>2</sup> Holmes, 227-8

<sup>3</sup> *Op cit.*, 130

<sup>4</sup> Sen, *op cit.*, 139

<sup>5</sup> Majumdar, *op cit.*, 132.

performance does not quote the exact text.<sup>1</sup> It was a strange gesture indeed for the author of the Cawnpore atrocities. Was it in the nature of an ultimatum? It can be safely established that Nana had no hand in planning the mutiny of troops as hinted by Holmes<sup>2</sup> and that it was not till they had actually broken out that he joined them. His own letter 'completes the chain of evidence' which receives strength from other contemporary observers.

The evidence of Nanakchand is no less valuable on this point.<sup>3</sup> Nanakchand was a loyalist and was not particularly well-disposed to Nana, yet he also observed that Nana had been instigated into revolt by his brothers and advisers.<sup>4</sup> This is confirmed by Williams who also found no evidence to support the theory that Nana Sahib organised the conspiracy. He further says that in the matter of organising the revolt of the sepoys, his brother Bala Sahib took no less prominent a part than Nana and that two sowars, Rahim Khan of Bishnupur

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, 228.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, 227.

<sup>3</sup> Nanakchand does not conceal his feeling of hostility towards Nana nor does he disguise the fact that he was keeping the journal from 15 May, 1857 to establish his claim to the attention of the government which he valued most. This to some extent reduces the importance of his diary as a source book of the rebellion at Cawnpore, but it certainly deserves the same consideration as the diaries of Jivanlal and Mainuddin Hasan Khan who also wrote on the affairs at Delhi from the same motives. Dr. S. N. Sen (*op. cit.*, 162-71) takes a serious view of Nanakchand's ignorance of the case of Chinnaji Appa, his occasional lapses in the circumstantial narrative of the military incidents of the war, wrong entries in regard to dates, and other minor details which obviously could not have been rectified, and for all these reasons the whole account of the lawyer-diarist is dismissed as a tissue of fabricated reports. It is ignored that the details of the social war he furnishes could not possibly have been concocted. Dr. Sen quotes Lance (G.E.), the collector of Cawnpore to suggest that the 'tout' made money by entering a person's name as a rebel or well-wisher. This is a baseless insinuation for it passes one's comprehension to understand how he could have taken money from those who had been declared rebels, and there were so many of them that very few 'well-wishers' were left to contribute to Nanakchand's fund. Would the magistrate like a 'native' record where the whole body of the talukdars and the masses of people have been represented as rebels? There cannot be any objection if Nanakchand had constituted himself the 'Censor of Public Morals' for he had at least the sense to admit that an account like this should be corrected after 'minute enquiries.'

<sup>4</sup> Forrest, *Selections*, iii, App. A. p. cclxxxiv: Nanakchand's Diary. Dr. R. C. Majumdar has not considered this part of the statement of Nanakchand or also he would not have stated that no reliance can be placed on the evidence of Nanakchand (*op. cit.*, 189-90). Dr. Sen repeats the same statement that Nana was in league with the sepoys (*op. cit.*, 138).



and Madudali of Banda were employed to tamper with the sepoys <sup>1</sup>

Shepherd describes the tremendous excitement of the early days of June when the Mahomedans assembled under the green flag and the Hindus under the *mahabir jhanda* and shouted their respective slogans. They all wanted a revival of the past, the restoration of the old institutions. He speaks of the houses and offices of certain English merchants and traders—Greenway, Crump, Mackintosh, Reid, Marshall, Kirk—that were plundered <sup>2</sup>

The rebels besieged the garrison of the Europeans who bravely defended themselves under the inspiring leadership of general Wheeler till the 26th when they had to surrender. The incident of the Satichaura ghat on 27 June where most of the prisoners were either drowned or fired at, started a chain of reactions marked by bloody duels. After the expulsion of the Europeans, Nana's dream of establishing the Peshwah empire came very near to fulfilment. Nanakchand says that he was enthroned at Bithur, and that all the great zamindars were present at the installation <sup>3</sup>. The synopsis of evidence prepared by lieutenant-colonel Williams from numerous depositions gives us details of the government established by Nana. The revolution was sustained by the levies extorted from the bankers and merchants like Badridas Agarwala, Lala Iswaridayal, Fatamal and many others. Nana was declared the sovereign, Bala Rao, his younger brother, became the governor-general and Jawalaprasad the commander-in-chief. Ramlal, the deputy-collector, took an active part in attempting to organise Nana's government as also Pandurang Rao, his nephew. The consultative committee presided over by Nana was usually attended by Baba Bhat, his elder brother, Azimullah, Ahmedali Khan, Akbarali, Ahmedullah, Shahali, brigadier Jawalaprasad, general Tikka Singh and the Allahabad maulavi. But an inner council of this committee consisting of Bala Rao, Tantia Topi, and Azimullah was summoned on emergent issues.

<sup>1</sup> Chick, *op cit*, 668-70. Synopsis of Evidence of the Cawnpore Mutiny by lieutenant-colonel G. Williams.

<sup>2</sup> Shepherd, *op cit*, 27-28, Dodd *op cit*, 132.

<sup>3</sup> Forrest *Selections* iii. Nanak Chand's Diary, p. cccxii-viii.

The court to decide criminal cases was composed of Baba Bhat, Azimullah, Shahali, Jawalaprased, Ahmedali Khan (vakil) and the mahajan Fatchram Singh. Many appointments were made. As for example, Chaudhuri Chuni Singh was made the thanadar, Holas Singh the city kotwal, Sheoprasad the treasurer, Gayaprasad the tent maker, Jugalkishore the jeweller, and kazi Wanuddin the police officer. The press of Mustafakhan was utilised, shells were prepared by Imamali, son of Jungli, an invalid subadar and Shahali, the late kotwal, was appointed the head of the intelligence department. Buddhoo, the commissariat boat contractor, supplied boatmen from Bithur in the Satichaura ghat.<sup>1</sup> Azim Beg and Karimali served as record-keepers and nineteen newswriters were appointed in nineteen different places.<sup>2</sup> Apadhik Dhari was the collector, Narayan Mirt public officer, and Dewan Rao the superintendent of magazine.<sup>3</sup> Others who played a conspicuous part in the rebellion were Lalpuri Goshain who marched with a flag borne on an elephant,<sup>4</sup> Kuber Singh of Gangaganj who caused disturbances in the suburbs,<sup>5</sup> maulavi Salamatullah, the city kotwal, who raised the green flag and held a parade in which the favourite courtesan Azeezun appeared on horse back,<sup>6</sup> and Reazali who first fired at the entrenchment.<sup>7</sup> Kalka, the kanango, collected armed men from Oudh on the other side of the Ganges. Hati Singh and Chandi Singh of Bunchtur did the same<sup>8</sup> and Satiprasad of Sheorajpur (on the grand trunk road, twenty-one miles north-west of Cawnpore) deeply committed himself on the side of the rebellion.<sup>9</sup> One Mohammed Tahur is also noted for his hostile activities.<sup>10</sup> Nana had also a number of attendants who helped

<sup>1</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 617, 671-81.

<sup>2</sup> Forrest, *Selections*, iii: App. A. pp. cccxxviii-ix: Nanakehand's Diary.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. cccl, cccxxviii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. ccxcv.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. ccxcix.

<sup>6</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 676.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 678.

<sup>8</sup> Forrest, *op. cit.*, p. cccx-xi: Nanakehand's Diary.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. ccc.

<sup>10</sup> FP. viii, 136, 139.

him in various ways Nanakchand gives a list of seventy such people, mostly Marathas<sup>1</sup>

The revolt of Nana Sahib gave a new turn to the mutiny of the sepoys. What began as a military insurrection, gradually appeared to have merged into a social war. The disaffected landlords made common cause with Nana to preserve the elements of their social life, their power and prestige by overthrowing the British yoke. The official reports make it clear that in Cawnpore the civil rebellion that followed the mutinies was very extensive in character. Bithur, Jajamau, Sheorajpur, Narwal and Rasulabad were in ferment and in the peak period the conflagration spread to the farthest parts of the district. Nanakchand's description of the zamundars breaking into rebellion and joining the rebels was hardly an exaggeration.<sup>2</sup> In Bithur almost all the chaudhurs and zamundars under the influence of Nana, such as Chuni Singh, Bahadur Singh, Muni Singh and Kishori Singh and also others including the gangaputras were the first batch of chiefs to turn rebels. Subsequently the Rajputs of Kakadeo broke into rebellion. Their example was followed by the Rajputs of Sasamau (Muthri Singh, Bhudar Singh, etc.) and Jajamau. In the latter pargana Duno Singh, Parjori Singh, and Rup Singh and many others (Rambaksh, Bhoj Singh, Debi Singh, Baldeo Singh and Bhawani Singh) took a leading part in instigating the people to rise. The gatum tribes of Sewanchpur in a body joined Nana's standard and collected revenue in his name. Deep Singh, an employee of Nana, instigated the inhabitants of Sonarampur and also Madho Singh of Akri and Kishori Singh to take up arms. Two notorious chiefs, Lachaman Singh and Bijay Singh similarly instigated the people of Sadasalimpur to follow their example. Nanakchand says that the revolt of the chauhans followed as a sequel to the rebellious proceedings of Behari Singh of Kurmu.

<sup>1</sup> Forrest *op cit* p cccxcix. Local people of lower professions such as kulye ghurs, tumkheras, chooriwallahs, leather dealers numbering about 5,000 joined the standard (*Ibid* p ccxiv). People of notorious character volunteered to find supplies. When the British forces were marching on Cawnpore in the middle of July as many as 134 of Nana's immediate attendants accompanied the sepoys to oppose the army of Havelock (*Ibid* cccxxxiv v). See also Maude and Storer (i 114-5) and Shepherd (*op cit* 132) for an account of Kanpur during this time.

<sup>2</sup> Forrest *Select ons in App A* p ccclxlvf. Nanakchand's Diary.

who was one of the foremost rebels of the time.<sup>1</sup> Raja Satiprasad caused the insurrection in Seoni and Bulhur. He was supported by the chief of Sakhrāj. Mati Singh of mauza Nanamau turned a desperate rebel, as also Duno Singh of mauza Nar and many others.<sup>2</sup> Taking example from them all the *gaur* Rajputs followed by the inhabitants of the entire area of Dera Mangalpur presented themselves at the rebel camp. Mukunda Singh, zamindar of Mulgaon, joined the insurrection, and Sachendi, fourteen miles from Cawnpore, also rose up but Durgaprasad, the raja of that place, only attended the court of Nana for fear of the confiscation of his property and did not assist him in any way. But raja Kuber Singh of Gangaganj was a constant counsellor to him. The revolt of the chauhans had thrown Bhognipur and the whole country lying along the Jumna into a great ferment and prompted the rising of the other rajput communities. The gos-hains of Sikandra, especially Kalindargir of Rasdhan and another zamindar Raja Bhao threw the country into confusion.

Nanakchand was convinced that these persons were actually rebels as they joined the standard of Nana and continued the rebellion even after the restoration of British rule in the district.<sup>3</sup> It was a widespread rebellion of the disaffected chiefs and it was impossible for his informants to ascertain all their names. It is possible the government could have suppressed the mutinous troops but for the support of the zamindars and the supplies received from them. He further says that all the rajput chiefs of Bhagtiapur, Jajamau, Dera Mangalpur, Rasulabad, Pali and Ghatampur assisted in the attack on the entrenchment which was so completely surrounded by zamindars on every side that provisions could not be carried there.<sup>4</sup> Nanakchand also gives a long list of nearly fifty other zamindars who with

<sup>1</sup> The more important of the chauhan leaders were Bhavani Singh of Khursa, Hira Singh of Rasulabad, Lalman Singh of Gajnur, Sheobaksh Singh and Hira Singh of Pyasi, Ganesh Singh, Kunhur Singh and Manik Singh of Khanpur and Isri Singh (*Ibid.* p. cccxlv).

<sup>2</sup> Pem Singh of Dulbub, Jawahir Singh of Susi and Umrao Singh (*Ibid.* p. cccxvi). One Umrao Singh of Aligarh offered his services to the King of Delhi and another leader of this name was conspicuous at Saharanpur (*supra*, p. 77). It cannot be stated with certainty if they were the same person.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. cccxvii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. cccxvi-vii.

their attendants, all armed, presented themselves at the rebel batteries<sup>1</sup> on 7 June. The raja of Chikani who had his head quarters near Kalpi demanded of the landowners of the Jumna tract to furnish recruits for the service of Nana.<sup>2</sup>

Statements of British officers that about the 10th of July there were near upon twenty thousand armed fighting men of all classes in Cawnpore<sup>3</sup> appear to be rather an under-estimate. Nanakchand puts the number much higher as shown below.

Zamindars of the chauhan tribe about	20,000 men <sup>4</sup>
Dariya Singh, raja of Nar and others of the gaur tribe about	15,000 „
Zamindars of the powar tribe about	10,000 „
Zamindars of the chandela tribe about	8,000 „
Ranadhir Singh, son of Rao Ghanasyam Singh about	5,000 „
Zamindars of Pali (paliwallahs)	800 „
	<hr/>
	58,800 men <sup>5</sup>

Besides Kalindargir Goshain alone commanded<sup>6</sup> as many as forty sub chiefs and hundreds of peasants from villages, all armed.<sup>7</sup> According to Nanakchand, Nathi Singh and Chandu Singh, residents on the other side of the Ganges came with five hundred matchlock men. Kalka, the kanango of Hara, landed with eight hundred armed men on 11 June while Mansabali, the chaudhuri of Rasulabad, in collaboration with his sub chiefs, Punahali and Mirbaksh Ali, brought three thousand

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* p. cccci

<sup>2</sup> Malleison, II 448

<sup>3</sup> Chick *op cit* 643

<sup>4</sup> It was reported that the chauhan rajputs had sworn to Nana that they could send him armed men from all the twenty six villages of which they were owners (Nanakchand's Diary, p. cccx). Nanakchand furnishes another account of the contributions of the chauhans (*Ibid* p. cccxix).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* p. cccxvii. There is another detailed list showing the contributions of Debi Singh Peshwa Singh Bhavani Singh Rambaksh and many others (*Ibid* pp. cccxi ff). Dariya Singh in particular is said to have assured Nana that his huge force and all his twelve villages are at his disposal. Nana being pleased granted him full liberty to take possession of all his zamindari villages (*Ibid* p. cccxiv).

<sup>6</sup> Chick, *op cit*, 618

<sup>7</sup> Nanakchand's Diary, p. cccvii

men for Nana on the next day.<sup>1</sup> Nearly two thousand men, it is said, were enlisted at Bithur on 13 June,<sup>2</sup> and the number of ring leaders of the landed classes on a territorial basis was computed at not less than one hundred and forty-one.<sup>3</sup> Of the eleven tahsildars, Shahali of Jajamau, Maharaj Baksh of Sadasalimpur, Lachmanprasad of Akbarpur, Mohammed Nuzur of Bulhur, Ahmedullah of Bithur actively helped Nana. The last one had taken a prominent part in organising the rebellion by compelling his subordinates to attend the rebel court.<sup>4</sup>

Even after the reoccupation of Cawnpore, the rebel leaders refused compliance with the orders of the government and persisted in their hostile activities. Bhavani Singh of the gatum tribe of Sewanchpur put himself in the place of Nana and organised the opposition to British rule. Other chiefs namely Madho Singh,<sup>5</sup> Isri Singh, Kunhur Singh and in fact many others of the gaur tribe were not less aggressive. Golab Singh of Seoni raised an entrenchment in his village and other leaders of the rajput communities and Raja Bhao of Sikandra were equally refractory.<sup>6</sup> Nanakchand was convinced that it was this revolt of the gaur and chauhans that excited the Gwalior contingents to march to Cawnpore. He further says that it was Nanak Singh, a brother of Kunhur Singh of the gaur tribe, resident of Khanpur, who approached Nana Sahib then residing at Fatehpur-Chaurasi about twenty five miles north of the Cawnpore road, on the bank of the Ganges, and invited him to try conclusions again. In that case he assured that the whole of the thirty-six villages inhabited by the chauhans would flock to his standard.<sup>7</sup> This actually came to pass.

Major-General Windham was left in command at Cawnpore

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. cccix.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. cccx.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. cccxvii-ix.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* cccxi-iii.

<sup>5</sup> *FP.* ix, 334. Madho Singh the kanango of Bhognipur was an active and influential rebel. The report of 7 November indicates that later on he fled to Kalpi (*Ibid.* 239). On 11 January he at the head of the Kalpi rebels crossed the Jumna and attacked the tahsil post at Sikandra.

<sup>6</sup> Forrest, *Selections*, iii, App. A. pp. cccxvii: Nanakchand's Diary.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. cccxviii.

to watch closely the movements of the Gwalior contingent In the journal of Sir Colin Campbell it is stated—

The Gwalior contingent with 38 guns of English manufacture, manned by trained artillery men, had driven general Windham's force within the entrenchment, had destroyed a quantity of clothing and grain on which the army had depended, and were in full possession of the town of Cawnpore and of our communication with Allahabad Their guns commanded the bridge of boats across the Ganges into Oudh, the destruction of which appeared in their power, an event which would have cut off the communication with Sir Colin Campbell's army <sup>1</sup>

On 27 November, 1857, when the British forces were beaten back to retire within the entrenchment, there were present with the Gwalior troops many rebel leaders of Cawnpore and Kalpi They were Holas Singh, Jawalaprased, Tantiya Topi, Durgaprasad, Kunhur Singh, Baldeo Singh, Bhudar Singh and the retainers of raja Satiprasad and also agents of many other zamindars, and indeed many zamindars of the chauhan and gatum tribes of the thirty-six villages, viz Ujut Singh, Bhavani Singh, Jodha Singh and Jawahir Singh <sup>2</sup> According to Nanakchand, 'Kooer Singh' of Jagdispur with three mutined regiments from Dinapur participated in the engagement in which brigadier Wilson was wounded and the British rushed into the entrenchment He is said to have forced raja Durgaprasad of Sachendi to join him <sup>3</sup> Most of them including 'Raja Kooer Singh,' the rajput chief of Jagdispur who served as a divisional commander, <sup>4</sup> were also present in the battle of Generalganj (6 December, '57) Other notables namely Kalindargir Goshain, Kuber Singh, Bhopal Singh and Narpat Singh, son of Jasa Singh, chaudhuri of Fatehpur-Chaurasi, Dariya Singh of Nar, Ujab Singh and Jodha Singh also joined the battle The inhabitants of Akbarpur along with the chauhans attended the rebel batteries <sup>5</sup> But the Indians could not

<sup>1</sup> Forrest, *Selections* iii App D p x

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* iii, App A p cccxixf Nanakchand's Diary

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* pp cccliii iv

<sup>4</sup> Forbes Mitchell *op cit*, 139 For the battle of Generalganj see Malleson ii, 268f

<sup>5</sup> Forrest *op cit*, p cccliv, Forbes Mitchell, *op cit*, pp 135f

stand before the attack of the British skirmishers and they fled panic-stricken across the canal. All the same, this indicates the extent of popular support which fed the revolt.

Fatehpur, midway between Allahabad and Cawnpore, was not a military station, but it constituted a scene in one and the same countrywide revolt. In the early part of June symptoms had already appeared to warn the authorities of the existence of much restiveness among the people. Corrigan's report shows that at Fatehpur the townspeople were arming themselves on 6 June.<sup>1</sup> Sherer, the magistrate, too, records his impression that even before the outbreak, certain zamindars were procuring ammunition, and collecting round them bands of retainers.<sup>2</sup> Great excitement was manifest in the city on 8 June, and the intelligence of what happened at Benares, Allahabad and Cawnpore afforded the necessary spark. Excited townspeople and the villagers attacked the treasury, destroyed mission premises and bungalows on 10 June. In consequence the Europeans excepting Robert Tucker, the judge, left the station.<sup>3</sup> After the withdrawal of the British power Hikmatullah assumed the style of chackladar of Fatehpur. The infection of rebellion spread far and near: outlying police stations and tahsils were destroyed by bands of infuriated villagers and auction purchasers and decree holders were hunted out.

Of the rebel leaders of the district Jodha Singh seems to have made a common cause with Rambaksh Singh,<sup>4</sup> the zamindar of Dundiakhara who captured a boat of Fatehgarh refugees near Fatehpur.<sup>5</sup> Bhagavan Singh and Sardar Singh, talukdars of Oudh, with their followers attempted to interrupt the communication between Allahabad and Cawnpore.<sup>6</sup> Gurdatt Singh encouraged the disaffected mewatis to commit violence.<sup>7</sup> A large number of insurgents who had crossed the Ganges fifteen miles north of Khaga on the trunk road,

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 17.

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 23.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i. 25. The crowd which attacked the judge muttered passages from the Koran and fired at him (Maude and Sherer, i, 134).

<sup>4</sup> FP. ix, 231, 234.

<sup>5</sup> FP. iv, 183.

<sup>6</sup> Gubbins, *The Afatinies in Oudh*, 513.

<sup>7</sup> FP. ix, 597.



between Fatehpur and Allahabad were contacted by major V Eyre in an action at Kundunpatti, twenty miles east of Fatehpur on 11 September, 1857, and were repulsed.<sup>1</sup> The object of the party was to sever the communications between Outram and Allahabad.<sup>2</sup> In the action in the village of Khajwa in the interior of the district, twenty four miles north west of Fatehpur, on 1 November, 1857, the rebels numbered about four thousand men of which two thousand were sepoys. The official return of the killed and wounded in the battle shows that the loss on the side of the British was very considerable.<sup>3</sup> Maharaj Singh of Rampur, Zulfiqar Beg of Bindki pargana and Maharajah Khan also took a leading part in the hostilities. Of these Maharaj Singh described as a 'notorious rebel leader' again returned to Khajwa, the scene of victory of British arms, and attacked the village of Gora in the Kora pargana.<sup>4</sup>

#### ROHILKHAND DIVISION

The division consisted of five administrative districts, Bareilly, Moradabad, Shahjehanpur, Budaun, and Bijnour. It had an area of one thousand eight hundred and eighty two square miles and a population of nearly seven hundred thousand souls. The mahomedan population in this area was strong both in number and in influence. The revolt in Rohilkhand was mostly confined to the muslim community who were inflamed by fanaticism to an intense hatred of the English. They raised the green flag, shouted for the revival of the Islamic State and despoiled the hindu bankers and merchants. But these features did not warp the popular character of the rising. Bijnour in Rohilkhand was not a military station, but rumours of the outbreak at Meerut which was about sixty miles distant, led to a spontaneous rising of the people as early

<sup>1</sup> The more important of the leaders who took part in this action were Bannar Singh zamindar of Ukri, Ramsahaya of Hatgaon, Sita Baksh and Palwan Singh of Burgalle and Nurlusta, Kamaruddin Hussain of Patu (Forrest *Select and* Documents) pp 213-6

<sup>2</sup> Malleson i 520

<sup>3</sup> Forrest *op cit* p 321 FP vi 168 Malleson ii 143-6

<sup>4</sup> FP ix 231, 603, 607, 853

as 19 May. The tahsils were plundered and other excesses were committed. The disaffected gujars swarmed all along the Ganges; the banjars on the north, the mewatis on the Moradabad borders and the Jats and chauhans in other parts. The withdrawal of the British party on 8 June was followed by the establishment of the independent government of Mohammed Khan, the nawab of Najibabad. On assuming authority he made the usual proclamation: the people are God's, the country the padshah's and the order Nawab Mohammed Khan's.<sup>1</sup> But he could not restore law and order; far less stop the bloody wars between the Hindus and the Mahomedans in which the former were eventually defeated with great slaughter at the battle of Haldaur on 18 September.<sup>2</sup> The Bijnour rising clearly brought out into prominence the lines of cleavage working to antagonise the two communities, but the rebel cause was strengthened by the participation in it of the noted gujar chiefs Kuddum Singh and Dulal Singh, Inayatoli, the kazi of Thana Bhawan, Raza Hasan, an outlaw, the Delhi princes and Sirdar Khan. They stopped the daks and placed guards at all the ferries. Inayatoli pillaged a number of police outposts and on 5 January burnt the thana at Miranpur and carried his raids as far as Kanakhal. Ahmedullah, the nawab's nephew, made a proclamation on 16 January that all rent-free holdings resumed under British rule would be released, and several changes were also made in the internal government to strengthen the rebel cause.<sup>3</sup> The commotion in the country continued till 21 April, 1858, when Jones inflicted a crushing defeat on a huge rebel force comprising one thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry.<sup>4</sup>

The tension among the landed chiefs as well as the people of Moradabad was heightened by the rising of the sepoys which acted like a spark on an ignited substance. Symptoms of rebellion first appeared in Amroha (twenty one miles from

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 511: Report by A. Shakespear, magistrate and collector. There seems to have been one Jalaluddin, the younger nawab of Najibabad, who along with his brother-in-law was captured (*Hindu Patriot*, 29 April, 1858).

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 513; Malleon, iii, 410-13.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 514.

<sup>4</sup> Even the hill people of Kumaon woke up. The banjars reacted to an excitable position under Dhun Singh (NE. i, 518: Report by Major H. Ramsay, commissioner of Kumaon).

Moradabad) swarming with the disaffected syeds Gulzarali, a syed of ruined fortune, proclaimed himself viceroy of the king of Delhi. One of his first measures was to denounce the Company's rupees and to bring into use the old coins. In the interior the thakurs, pathans and weavers combined to swell the tide of rebellion. The 29th regiment which mutinied on 3 June, proclaimed Mujoo Khan governor, while the artillery chose Asadali Khan, father of Abbasali Khan as the chief. Another candidate was Abdulali Khan, the uncle of nawab Yusufali Khan of Rampur who came down to Moradabad early in June and received salute and held darbars. On the return of the nawab to Rampur, Mujoo Khan was appointed the nazim assisted by Sadatali Khan, Neazali, Musa Kuza, Abul Fazl and Ayub Khan. On 17 June, proclamation was made in favour of Mujoo Khan.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the mahomedan nobles of Moradabad such as Alaali Khan, Subirali Khan, Ahidali Khan, Sajidali Khan were on the side of the rebel government. Another dignitary of the country nawab Niamutul Khan died as a ghazi in Delhi. Zainul Abedeen proclaimed jihad against the English and sedition was preached against them in the mosques every Friday. Other popular leaders who helped the rebel government were Hafizali, Ahmedazuh Khan and Akbarali.<sup>2</sup> Maulavi Mannu collected two hundred and fifty jihadis. Wazirali Khan, the Agra doctor, and Miharbanali joined the battle of Bareilly. Zaminali, the imam of the ghazis of Fatehghar, distinguished himself in the above battle by his initial success against the Sikhs but he was killed.<sup>3</sup> Another prominent revolutionary was the Gorakhpur maulavi, Sarfarazali who sat on tribunal over the suspected royalists.<sup>4</sup>

The principal station in Rohilkhand was Bareilly, where the christian population somewhat exceeded one hundred in number. The Bareilly rising took the same form. The mutiny of the 18th and 68th regiments on 31 May was followed by a rebellion supported and continued mostly by

<sup>1</sup> NE 1 405 7 Report by J. C. Wilson commissioner on special duty. See also Dunlop's report on the occurrences at Moradabad.

<sup>2</sup> Mutiny and Rebellion in the district of Moradabad by J. C. Wilson p. 27

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* p. 2

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* p. 18

the Mahomedans. A large section of the civil populace appears to have been disaffected in this part of Rohilkhand. On 22 May, maulavi Mohammed Ashan of the government college gave a discourse or *wauz* on the subject of lawfulness of a rise against the English. This resulted in an excitement which was not probably intended by the speaker. On 25 May, however, maulavi Rahimullah Khan preached antagonism to the English.<sup>1</sup> Maulavi Kulab Shah, a syed teacher of Persian in the Bareilly College,<sup>2</sup> took a similar part in the proceedings of the time and circulated seditious letters from the Bahaduri press.<sup>3</sup> Yet there is no sufficient evidence to assume that there was an organised conspiracy for the overthrow of the existing government prior to the outbreak on the 31st. Khan Bahadur Khan, the grandson of Hafiz Rahamat Khan, the last independent ruler of Rohilkhand, who placed himself at the head of the rebel government as viceroy on behalf of the king of Delhi appears to have been carried away by the rising tide of rebellion.<sup>4</sup>

When Khan Bahadur Khan established himself in power many joined his standard including Madarali Khan, Ahmedshah Khan and Mubarakshah Khan, his rival. The scope of the rebel government was extended to widen its basis in which the following chiefs occupied positions of trust: Munirkhan (naib-kotwal), Sobharam (dewan), Haralal (paymaster), Dindayal (superintendent of roads), Shaifullah Khan (superintendent of jails), Rujauddaulah (body-guard), Misr Baijnath (banker), Kunjatlal (treasurer).<sup>5</sup> The committee for the trial of all cases was formed by Keramat Khan, Akbarali Khan, Kazi Ghulam Hanza, Pandit Ojharnath, Muzaffar Hussain Khan, Jaffarali Khan, Jaymal Singh and Kulab Shah.<sup>6</sup> Kanumal, the banker, Ramprasad, the mahajan, Ramlal, Durgaprasad<sup>7</sup> and Narayan Singh<sup>8</sup> served as members in the

<sup>1</sup> Narration of Events (Bareilly) by R. Alexander, commissioner, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 347. The name is also given as Kooruh Shah.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 852.

<sup>4</sup> Sen, *op. cit.*, 347-8.

<sup>5</sup> NE. i, 368-70: Report by J. F. D. Inglis.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 370.

<sup>7</sup> NE. i, 371.

<sup>8</sup> FP. ix, 852.

In the official narrative it is stated that Khan Bahadur fled to Pilibhit and thence to Oudh. Martin says that Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly held out in the Terai until the close of 1859.<sup>1</sup> Forbes-Mitchell of the Ninety-Third, however, says that the rohilla chief was captured by the Bareilly police early in July 1858 and was hanged in his presence in front of the kotowali in Bareilly a few days after his capture. He gives a long account of how his capture was effected by one Tahir Beg of doubtful nationality in the employ of colonel W C M'Donald.<sup>2</sup>

Another notable leader of Rohilkhand was the rajput chief Narpat Singh of Ruya, fifty-one miles west by north from Lucknow. He was determined to dedicate his life to the country and stood aloof from 'proclamation and amnesties'. His father Jasa Singh was a friend of Nana and was killed in one of the combats with Havelock.<sup>3</sup> His jungle fort near the village of Rhodamau was invested by the Ninety-Third Highlanders without carrying out proper reconnaissance under the command of general Walpole on April 14-15, 1858. The result was that some of the flowers of the British army were killed, the total casualty on the British side being a hundred. Thus did Narpat Singh repulse his enemies but finding his position untenable, he fled on the night of the 15th 'after beating back the best-equipped movable column in India'.<sup>4</sup> Narpat is said to have fled to Terai where he might have joined Rana Beni Madho Baksh and died in November, 1859.<sup>5</sup>

Popular agitation was progressing in Budaun towards the

<sup>1</sup> NE i, 379, Martin ii, 500. Similarly Malleison says that he fled towards Nepal (iii 531). Dr Sen also says that nawab Mammu Khan, Khan Bahadur Khan and Jawalaprased who were in Nepal were delivered to the British authorities in December 1859 (*op cit*, 368, 371). There is another statement that he was hanged on 2 March 1860 (Vincent *Dictionary* 566).

<sup>2</sup> *Reminiscences* 263-5. Malleison's statement (iii 274f) that towards the end of August Khan Bahadur Khan, Nizamali Khan, Wilayat Shah and the nawab of Farrukhabad united their forces which numbered about 15,000 men and made a determined attack on Neoria Husainpur but were completely routed up by captain Browne for which he won the Victoria cross is at variance so far as Khan Bahadur is concerned with the statement of Forbes Mitchell. Dr Sen also refers to Khan Bahadur Khan as an active rebel in December, 1858 (*op cit*, 361) and so also Dr Majumdar (*op cit* 78).

<sup>3</sup> *Infra* p 131.

<sup>4</sup> Forbes Mitchell *op cit*, 245-8.

<sup>5</sup> Martin ii, 498 fn. Malleison says that he had not the 'smallest' intention to risk his life (ii, 504).

end of May and when the mutineers from Bareilly reached there on 2 June disturbances broke out in every direction. The rule of Khan Bahadur was also established over Budaun. The administration was conducted by Abdur Rahaman Khan and Fasahatullah and most of the leaders of that district came from the muslim community which was particularly hostile to British rule and though internal dissensions between the different communities weakened the basis of the movement, the popular fury was there to feed sedition. Blackmail was freely levied from all the banyas and mahajans, and valuable indigo factories were gutted and even the iron boilers were melted down for shot and records were burnt extensively.<sup>1</sup> While the masses had done everything to efface all traces of British rule, the talukdars took the opportunity of expelling the auction purchasers, and resumed possession of their hereditary states.<sup>2</sup>

The pressure of circumstances led to official changes later on. Mubarakshah Khan became the nazim and Ahmedshah his deputy. Others who occupied positions of trust were Munir Khan (superintendent of ghats), Farak Khan (resaldar),<sup>3</sup> Wazir Khan, the Agra doctor (naib-general), Mansur Beg,<sup>4</sup> Rahimali, Makdam Baksh and Ramnarayan.<sup>5</sup> Many government servants, mostly Hindus, took service under the rebels. Mention is also made of Azizahmed of Rampur and Mohammed Yar Khan, naib-nazim who supported the rebel government. Niaz Mohammed Khan, the rebel general and Multan Khan of Mau made a determined effort to check the advance of Hope Grant on 27 January 1858, but the former was captured.<sup>6</sup> The ghazis were generally responsive to the call and organised a defence under the Agra doctor, Wazir Khan, but surrendered the field at Kakrala on 27 April, 1858.<sup>7</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 460f, 466: Report by C. P. Carmichael, offg. collector and magistrate.

<sup>2</sup> Kaye, iii, 287.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 464.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 465.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 466.

<sup>6</sup> Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt, etc.*, 111-2.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Sen refers to the letter of Wazir Khan addressed to the officer commanding at Nimach in which he stated that he was neither a rebel nor a mutineer but was compelled to leave Agra under peculiar circumstances. In 1859 he was negotiating for terms of surrender and also prayed for amnesty on behalf of Firuz Shah (*op. cit.*, 375).

the last phase of the struggle the hindu chief named Rām narayan, formerly a government vakīl, held out at Islamnagar but was eventually overcome. In the interior a large number of chiefs took part in the scene of rapine and violence that was let loose.<sup>1</sup>

The 28th at Shahjehanpur caught the infection from Bareilly but they had been previously excited by the circulation of reports about the new cartridges and manifested a mutinous disposition. The maulavis and ghazis played a conspicuous part in the rebellion at Shahjehanpur. Sarfarazali, the seditious maulavi of Gorakhpur, excited the sepoys which culminated in the massacre of the Europeans in the church on 31 May. The maulavi's chief disciples in the city were Qudrat-ali and Niaz-ali.<sup>2</sup> Among the city people who joined the sepoys were Mungal Khan and Ujjo Khan, Nasir Khan and Amir Ali. In the interior the villagers broke out into rebellion, tahsils were plundered, records were destroyed and police stations sacked. Valuable materials connected with the sugar refinery and rum factory of Messrs Carew and Co were gutted by the people of the neighbouring villages nearly twenty in number.<sup>3</sup>

On 1 June, a procession proclaiming the overthrow of the British rule was led by Hamid Hasan Khan and Nizam-ali Khan. The rule of the rohillas under Khan Bahadur Khan was announced with Qadir-ali Khan and Ghulam Hussain Khan as local chiefs. But the mutual jealousies of the mahomedan rulers and the resistance to their exactions by the ryot chiefs who were killed in large numbers by Mardanal Khan in a fierce encounter, led to an indifferent situation. No less depressing was the hostile attitude of Ghulam Kadir Khan who replaced Qadir-ali Khan as nazim and appointed his own men as officers. They were Nizam-ali Khan (sub-nazim), Khanali Khan, Hamid Hasan Khan, Abdulrauf Khan (commander),

<sup>1</sup> They were the zamindars of Gunour Kot, Bilsakhos Ujhani, Budaun, Dataganj, Bisouli, Suheswan, Islamnagar. In all more than fifty landed chiefs as reported in official correspondence (NE. 1. 461).

<sup>2</sup> NE. 1. 440-05. Report by G. P. Money, magistrate and collector. Sarfarazal later on went to Moradabad and then to Delhi where he was appointed chief of the ghazis. The maulavi was a tall lean muscular man with lantern jaws long thin lips high aquiline nose deep-set large dark eyes (Mafiam 9). For the activities of the maulavi and the speech he delivered see *supra* pp. 25-26.

<sup>3</sup> NE. 1. 444. Kaye III. 279.

Sital Singh (dewan), Shammad Khan (sherestadar), Wajidali, Najib Khan (naib-nazim) and many others.<sup>1</sup> A large number of government servants, nearly one hundred and four of the dewani and seventy-one of the fouzdari, took service under the government,<sup>2</sup> of which Zahurahmed and Raufahmed took an active part in the rebellion.<sup>3</sup> Ahmed Yar Khan, the tahsildar of Jalalabad, called in the aid of Ismail Khan of Bareilly to crush the Rajputs.<sup>4</sup> The other new tahsildars, Kaifayutullah and Hedayetali of Tilhar and Faiz Mohammed Khan and Ghulam Kadir Khan of Kutra raised armies and took part in the expedition to Haldiwani (10 February, 1858). As many as forty-nine principal chiefs were on the side of the rebels.<sup>5</sup>

The fall of Delhi produced consternation, but maulavi Sarfarazali tried to bolster up the faith of the people by raising the green flag and by other pompous demonstrations.<sup>6</sup> Very distinguished was the service rendered by the Fyzabad maulavi whose ingenious attempts to check the British offensive in the early summer of 1858 were some of the wonderful military feats of the sepoy war. He was helped by the raja of Mohamdi and Mian Sahib, one of the chiefs of Lucknow, and carried on his head a price of fifty thousand rupees for his daring acts of hostility to the British. When the British army reached Shahjehanpur on 30 April, the Fyzabad maulavi as a counter offensive beleaguered lieutenant-colonel Hale's troops<sup>7</sup> in the local jail from 3 May to the 11th,<sup>8</sup> with such pressure that Sir Colin Campbell was obliged to send brigadier-general Jones to his relief. Jones overcame the maulavi's resistance on 11 May, 1858, and repulsed him. Malleeson says that the position in all respects was formidable as every house in the

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 446-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 453-7.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 446.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 449.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 448, 458-9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 450.

<sup>7</sup> NE. i, 451.

<sup>8</sup> Forbes-Mitchell's statement that Firuz Shah was in Shahjehanpur on 7 May when the jail was attacked (*op. cit.*, 261) appears improbable as the Delhi prince was supposed to be in the neighbourhood of Bareilly at that time (NE. i, 450; also Malleeson, ii, 532f).



south-west of Fyzabad<sup>1</sup> The same source again indicated that in February 1858, Man Singh with his four thousand men was entirely neutral and that he might be excluded from the list of the opponents of the British<sup>2</sup> It was not before July, 1858 that he actively joined the British when besieged by Mehndi Hasan<sup>3</sup> and all through this period he and his brother Ramdin Singh had played a winning game

But the talukdars and other landed chiefs of Fyzabad, especially the palwars of Birhar, the bachgotis of Hasanpur, joined the rebellion in large numbers The bhale sultans the chauhans of Ghatampur, Ramswarup of Khapradih and Tafazzal Hussain of Samanpur were among the rebels who scoured the country with impunity Uditnarayan Singh a zamindar of Birhar and a palwar chief plundered the fugitives from Fyzabad at Naurani in the Birhar pargana But the more noteworthy was Madhoprasad Singh another Birhar talukdar who was friendly to the British in the early stages but subsequently rose in arms<sup>4</sup> and excited other chiefs of the neighbouring places like Kishanprasad, Sheopra kash and raja Prithvipal Singh to join him The last mentioned one collected a large force and took possession of all the villages of which he had been deprived of by the government<sup>5</sup> The palwar chief Madhoprasad,<sup>6</sup> the leader of this confederacy whose fort and estate lay beyond the Oudh frontier assumed the title of chackladar and early in July led an expedition to Azamgarh which he plundered<sup>7</sup> The raj coomars under Chandresh Singh and Udresh Singh of Akbar pur in the district joined the rebel formation with a view to

<sup>1</sup> Unpublished Papers in the Commonwealth Relations Office Whitehall London (abbreviated as CRO) The description of the fort given shows that it was several miles in circumference and had two deep ditches earthen outworks and a *pukka* citadel There was a large bazar within it plentifully supplied (Secret Letters from India 1858 volume 163 (No 844 p 403) 4 to 8 March)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* No 158 p 349

<sup>3</sup> Martin ii 498 Malletson iii 269-71

<sup>4</sup> Gubbins *op cit* 154-5

<sup>5</sup> *The Englishman* 2 October 1857

<sup>6</sup> For his activities see FP iv 13 28 v 87 vii 84 268 271 viii 43 ix 255, 258 586

<sup>7</sup> NE i 38

attacking Jaunpur, and Gurubaksh Singh<sup>1</sup> of Ramnagar also ranged himself against the government. They also fought a smart action against the forces of Jang Bahadur in February, 1858. Agha Hasan, syed Ghulam Hussain, chackladar of Aldamau, and naib Ismail Khan were similarly reported against for their subversive activities. The troops of the different rajas who assembled in October in the district exceeded ten thousand men.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that by February 1858, a month before the final British offensive had started against Lucknow, there was a large concentration of rebel forces at Fyzabad. A private letter from general Macgregor to the governor-general furnishes a detailed tabular statement, as given on the next page, of the strength and resources of the prominent leaders of the revolt, altogether amounting on a modest calculation to sixteen thousand active rebels in the field. The strength of the rebel leaders who in most cases were supported by a large number of sub-chiefs as furnished in the same statement<sup>3</sup> may as well give an idea, accurate enough, of the proportion of the civil population taking part in the war of 1857, and demonstrate the untenability of the theory of Innes that the Oudh leaders did not participate in the conflict until after the confiscation proclamation.<sup>4</sup>

In Partabgarh no rebellion on a vast scale occurred, but the rebels entrenched themselves strongly in the fort of Rampurkasia and held it out under the leadership of Ramghulam Singh. The fort was protected by eighteen guns, but it was captured on 3 November, 1858.<sup>5</sup>

Sultanpur lies on the right bank of the river Gomati, almost

<sup>1</sup> FP. vii, 74.

<sup>2</sup> FP. vii, 74-75. Malleison's list of principal talukdars of Fyzabad includes besides Man Singh, Udres Singh, Thakur Narain, Raghunath Kunwar, Mir Bakir Hussain and Nadir Shah (ii, 398), who according to Hutchinson eventually turned against the English though at the beginning they seem to have been friendly (*Narrative of the Mutinies*, 70-1). Innes refers to the loyal conduct of Rustam Shah, the raja of Amethi, Hanuvant Singh, Bhow Begam, Hardeo Baksh and Mohants of Hanumangarh (*op. cit.*, 87. 94, 267).

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A: Memorandum of Rebel forces in Fyzabad district.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C: The Behaviour of the Talukdars of Oudh during the Mutiny.

<sup>5</sup> Hope Grant, *op. cit.*, 309-10. For a description of the fort see Malleison, ii, 289-90.

Name	No of troops	No of guns	Remarks
Raja Maun Singh	4,000	Not accurately known	
Babu Madho Persad of Burhur	1,000	2 guns	
Baboo Odit Narayan of Burhur	1,000	2 guns	
Adres Sing and others of Dhorun	5,000	5 guns	Opposed Brig Franks over the Goomtee
Bagur Hosain and Ghazniffer Husain	5,000	5 guns	This includes the followings of numerous smaller zamindars chiefly Rajpoots.
Raja Abbas Ali of Tanda	500	2 guns	Has furnished a strong contingent also to Mahd. Hasun.
Mahd Hasun	5,000	4 guns	Furnished by Abbas Ali and the small Rajput chiefs near Fairabad.
Koor Singh of Arrah	6,500	21 guns	These are mutinous sepoys chiefly Bhoj-poreans—the guns are mostly bad ones used as gate posts before the mutiny—they have been repaired in some imperfect manner
Raja Jeylal Singh and Beenee Madhu Singh	2,000	3 guns	
Dev Bux Singh Raja of Gonda	4 000	7 guns	
Raja of Bhunga	2,000	Not accurately known	These are zamindars of the Gunda District and will remain there.
Raja of Manikpoor	1,500	4 guns	
<b>TOTAL<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>37,500</b>	<b>59 guns</b>	Exclusive of Raja Man Singh.

<sup>1</sup> The large total includes, it will be remembered, the forces of the rajas of Gonda who will not be opposed to us/7,500 men/also those of Raja Maun Singh, and Bagur Hosein, numbering 9 000 men, who are neutral—and those of Oares Sing about 5,000, who are beyond the Goomtee-leaving about 16,000 active recruits in the field —

20th Feb 1858

Sd/- W. Mill Forbes, C.S

(CRO Secret Letters from India, Vol. 163, No 158, p 349)

in a direct line between Fyzabad and Allahabad. The troops in the station mutinied on 9 June, but it was not followed by any upsurge of the people. The chiefs of the district, however, contested the passage of British arms marching for Lucknow in a series of stiff engagements. Nazim Mehndi Hasan, 'a fine tall and portly man', formerly a chackladar in the service of the king of Oudh, played a very significant role in the wars of the mutiny. He had his headquarters at Hasanpur, twenty miles from the Jaunpur frontier, and was actively supported by all the talukdars of Sultanpur and Fyzabad. With about fifteen thousand men the nazim dominated over the western portion of Sultanpur and even extended his influence so far down as Allahabad.<sup>1</sup> In the battles at Chanda, a town thirty-six miles from Jaunpur, on the direct road from that station to Sultanpur, a severe contest was raging for the control of the Lucknow road lying across Sultanpur. In the first action at Chanda on 31 October, 1857, the rebels were found in 'an excessively strong position.' They numbered at least five thousand with five guns. The battle, as Malleson says, was obstinately contested, but terminated in the defeat of the rebels.<sup>2</sup> On 19 February, 1858, general Franks marching from Singra-mau, close to the Oudh frontier, encountered a strong opposition at Chanda, thirteen miles from the former. The force opposing him consisted of ten thousand men under Mehndi Hasan and eight thousand men under Banda Hasan of whom two thousand and five hundred were sepoys.<sup>3</sup> The passage was stormed by overthrowing Banda Hasan, the lieutenant of Mehndi Hasan. The nazim then occupied the fort of Budhayan, nine miles ahead on the Lucknow road from Chanda to prevent Franks from adding his strength to the British garrison at Lucknow; but the general seized the fort by a stratagem on the 21st. Thus out-manceuvred, Mehndi Hasan proceeded by a long detour for the town of Sultanpur where he took a determined stand with a force numbering twenty five thousand men, of whom five thousand were sepoys and one thousand and one hundred cavalry. The position he occupied at Badshaganj,

<sup>1</sup> FP. v, 87, vii, 71-2, 74-77, 276; viii. 43, 101; ix, 244, 586.

<sup>2</sup> Forrest, *Selections* (Intro.) ii, p. 360; Malleson, ii, 319-20.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 710; *Hindu Patriot*, 4 March, 1858.

two miles beyond the town, was formidable. Mirza Ghafur Beg of the Oudh nawab's military establishment commanded the troops. The battle of Sultanpur (23 February) fought with passion and patriotism and in correct military order did not, however, lead to the desired result. The road to Lucknow was now open but the passage was again disputed by Mansabali, the noted rebel chief, who occupied a position some miles off the high road on the banks of the Gomati. He was beaten by lieutenant Aikman, and Franks pushed on. But the fort of Deyrah, within eight miles of Lucknow and two miles to the right of the road was so strongly defended by the rebels that they could make no impression upon it and had to withdraw.<sup>1</sup> At last on 4 March, after thirteen days of incessant campaign, Franks joined Sir Colin at Lucknow. All these would indicate that the rebel leader organised a systematic plan to oppose the passage of British forces marching for the relief of the beleaguered garrison at Lucknow.

Other leaders of the district who had actively joined the rebellion were Lal Madho Singh of Amethi<sup>2</sup> and raja Hussain-ali of Hasanpur. The former held out till 10 November, 1858, when his fort was invested and carried by Lord Clyde, formerly Sir Colin Campbell.<sup>3</sup> The nazim Mehndi Hasan in the meantime joined the rebels of the Basti district in the struggle at Amorah eight miles from Fyzabad. The rebels were defeated in the battle of Amorah in June 1858, but the nazim held his own at Belwa.<sup>4</sup> When Hope Grant crossed the Gogra after storming the passage at Nawabganj on 27 November, 1858,<sup>5</sup> and started his operations in Gonda and Basti, Mehndi Hasan was driven away from Belwa<sup>6</sup> but eventually he surrendered on 7 January, 1859, with his uncle Mir Dostali and several other Oudh leaders.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Forrest *Selections* II (Intro) pp 364-9. Malleon, II 329-38.

<sup>2</sup> FP II, 299. The Amethi raja had his fort twenty-five miles distant from Sultanpur in the direction of, and eighty miles from Pratabgarh. Grant says that it was one of the largest in Oudh, being seven miles in the circumference (*Incidents*, etc 302-03).

<sup>3</sup> *Incidents*, etc 309-11, *Hindu Patriot* 18 November, '58. Malleon III, 290-01.

<sup>4</sup> *Infra* pp 145-6.

<sup>5</sup> Hope Grant *op cit* 313-4.

<sup>6</sup> Malleon, III 292.

<sup>7</sup> Martin, II 498. Dr Sen writes that Mehndi Hasan was granted a pension of Rs 200 per mensem but he was not permitted to return to his home in the Fyzabad.

## LUCKNOW DIVISION

The contagion of the cartridge question had reached Oudh early in April. At Lucknow itself were quartered many regiments the actual number being seven thousand to seven hundred and fifty. But the newly annexed province was garrisoned by other troops, stationed at Sitapur, Malaon (to the south of Sitapur on the high road to Farrukhabad), Sultanpur, Dariabad, Fyzabad and Bahraich. By the first week of June, the whole of Oudh was ablaze. The flame of rebellion spread from cantonment to cantonment, to Sitapur, Fyzabad, Sultanpur and Gonda, and no trace of British rule remained for long. In Oudh, the civil rebellion took the form of a talukdari movement in the sense that the landholders, as a rule, took advantage of the situation for the recovery of their lost estates and in some cases for feeding fat their ancient grudge. They also had taken part, in some cases, in isolated acts of plunder, and in overt acts of rebellion against the government, but in general their attention was confined to the reversal of British land settlement which they could not effect but with an attempt at forceful seizure of their property. The other feature was that these movements were directly connected with the fate of the city of Lucknow.

Sitapur was the headquarters of the Khairabad or north-west division of Oudh. It lay about fifty one miles from Lucknow. In Sitapur no vestige of British authority remained after the mutiny of the 41st on 3 June and the rising became general throughout the province. The nazim of Khairabad, Bakshi Harprasad, represented the civil power, and Maholi in particular remained the centre of acute disaffection. The chiefs like the rajas of Mitauli and Oel, Banda Hussain of Tambauz, raikwars of Chahlari, and raja Nawabali Khan of Mahmu-

district (op. cit., 363). Another noted chief of Sultanpur was Rustam Shah whose fort was at Deyrah on the bank of the Gomati. He had suffered greatly in the Oudh settlement and had lost many villages, yet as Gubbins says he received the refugees. It appears that an order for a fresh enquiry into the title of the villages he had lost was intended in January 1857 but the mutiny found him supporting his family by the sale of the jewels of his ancestors (Martin, ii, 234). He was undoubtedly in a state of contumacy during the rebellion, but later on contacted P. Carnegie sent by the governor-general in April, 1858 to negotiate terms of surrender with the rebel chiefs. Rustam's disaffected brother, Burjar Singh, also submitted to the above officer (CRO: *Secret Letters*, etc., vol 163, p. 315 (No. 14). For P. Carnegie, see Malleon, ii, 339-41.

darbad manifested their rebellious attitude in various ways, specially the last one who collected a force of one thousand men and effectively helped the Fyzabad maulavi in his brilliant attempt to checkmate the British offensive of Hope Grant on 14 April, 1858, in a village, four miles to the south of Bari. Another leader Khanali Khan also collected a force of three thousand men but fled away before Grant.<sup>1</sup> Even after the death of the maulavi, Sitapur remained under the control of rebel leaders like the royal begim of Lucknow, Mammu Khan, Narpat Singh of Ruya and Firuz Shah. In October 1858, Harichand the nazim mustered an army of six thousand men against brigadier Barker, but was routed out.<sup>2</sup>

In Bari Banki, the rising was not general after the mutiny of 9 June, but the landholders as a body were thoroughly disaffected and maintained an attitude of determined resistance down to the very end. From the disaster of British force at Chinhath on 30 June, 1857, to the relief of Lucknow in the middle of March 1858, the refractory chiefs maintained their position undisputed. The Oudh proclamation of Lord Canning and the desert of Sindhura at the hands of Tantia Topi had their reaction in Oudh where the rebels who were fifteen thousand strong had taken a strong position at Nawabganj on the Fyzabad road eighteen miles from Lucknow. Their object was to prevent access of the British troops to the northern part of the district. This battle of the landlords at Nawabganj, one of the most memorable battles of the sepoy war, showed the intensity of the spirit of revolt animating the zamindars. Brigadier Hope Grant himself had never witnessed anything more magnificent than the conduct of these zamindars, their determination to conquer or die, their splendid military exertions and their handling of guns which did marvellous work.<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant Myendie, an eye witness of the series of determined conflicts that took place there, says that a body of desperate fanatics planted the sacred green flag on the ground, gathered round it, and prepared to die beneath its

<sup>1</sup> *Incidents in the Sepoy War* 267

<sup>2</sup> *Infra* p. 141

<sup>3</sup> Hope Grant, *op. cit.* 289ff

sacred fold.<sup>1</sup> Nawabganj was occupied on 14 June, 1858, and the revolt burrowed its head.

The Unao leaders took a prominent part in checking the progress of Havelock's march across the district to Lucknow. Rao Rambaksh of Dundiakhara as also the janwars of Bangarmau who were led by Jussa Singh of Taraf Sarai openly fought against Havelock's forces.<sup>2</sup> The sengars of Kantha, namely Barjor Singh, Hati Singh and Chandi Singh also actively joined the rebellion. The gauris of Banthar including Debi Baksh offered a determined resistance to the passage of British arms. The baiswara rajputs of Parwa Ranabirpur were thoroughly disaffected, their noted chieftain Beni Madho Baksh eluded British vigilance for a long time and Mansabali, the head of the Rasulabad family, remained in hostility till the end.<sup>3</sup> In the battles of Bashiratganj in July-August, 1857, Burhia-Ka-chauki (12 August, 1857), a mile and a half from the former, and at Mangalwar (21 September), Havelock's forces had to confront large concentrations of village people armed to fight the avenging army.<sup>4</sup>

In Kheri the complete overthrow of British power was followed by the rule of the talukdars who openly espoused the rebel cause. Mohamdi on the frontier of Rohilkhand and at a short distance from Shahjehanpur in the south-western part of the district remained sensitive to the insurrectionary feeling of the neighbouring areas and was the stronghold of the Fyzabad maulavi. The maulavi used it as the base of his operation drawing recruits from the disaffected chiefs of which raja Loni Singh was one.

The rising at Lucknow was the central event of the rebellion in the mutinies. Both in dimension and character it embodied the revolutionary urges of the time. Towards the end of May, on the 27th, the long smouldering discontent of the Mahomedans of Malihabad, a place about eight miles distant from

<sup>1</sup> *Up among the Pandies*, 294-6.

<sup>2</sup> Havelock's letter to his chief, dated Bashiratganj, 30 July, 1857, quoted in *The Englishman*, 3 August, 1857.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ii, 416; iv, 91, 211.

<sup>4</sup> Forrest, *Selections*, ii (Intro.) pp. 195ff. The story of Mohammedali Khan, the chief engineer of the army at Lucknow, as related by Forbes-Mitchell gives an insight into the spirit of the rebels. (*Reminiscences*, etc., 173-93).



Lucknow, burst into a flame Captain Hutchinson who was the military secretary to the chief commissioner says that their march through Malihabad on the following day was watched by armed villagers which struck him as extraordinary for the place was very near to Lucknow where in the recent past none had dared lift a finger<sup>1</sup> Three days after, on the night of 30 May, the 71st infantry regiment broke out Captain Anderson who was assistant commissioner at Lucknow when the outbreak took place noticed great excitement among the people seditious placards were found stuck up in all the principal streets calling upon the Hindus and Mahomedans to kill the Christians Processions were taken out in which effigies of Europeans were struck off with swords He also heard that the rajas were collecting all their forces to attack Lucknow<sup>2</sup> This tension culminated in the rising that took place in the city on the afternoon of 31 May The standard of the prophet was raised and some six thousand people rallied round it Evidence was obtained of an extensive conspiracy in the city in which the high as well as the low were in league with the army against the British<sup>3</sup> The result of this explosion was that the authority of the government collapsed in practically all the stations in Oudh Rees, a Calcutta merchant, and an eye witness to these developments says that the whole of Oudh passed out of the hands of the British Villages followed the examples of the towns and even banyas were found to be acting as agents of the mutineers There was a general restiveness in the very air of the country<sup>4</sup> These conditions were further reinforced by the disastrous defeat of the British forces on 30 June, at the hands of the Indians at Chinhath a village on the Fyzabad road within eight miles of the residency One hundred eighteen Europeans and one hundred seventy five Indians were killed on the British side<sup>5</sup> This 'calamitous affair', as Lady Inglis characterised it,<sup>6</sup> brought the rebels nearer the

<sup>1</sup> Hutchinson *Narrative of the Mutinies etc* 35

<sup>2</sup> Anderson *A Personal Journal of the Siege of Lucknow* 9-11

<sup>3</sup> Hutchinson *op cit* 46

<sup>4</sup> Holmes *op cit* 256-260 Rees *A Personal Narrative etc* 21-26

<sup>5</sup> Joyce *On the Siege of Lucknow* 31

<sup>6</sup> Mrs Inglis *The Siege of Lucknow* 16

residency which was then laid under siege by swarms of assailants. The residency was converted into an entrenched camp, and the circumstances generally were highly favourable to the besiegers from a military point of view. Thus Lucknow became the magnet of attraction to by far the greatest portion of those who had revolted against the British. The rebels organised a plan of regular government with Birjis Qadr as the head who was declared king. Their policy was supposed to be to annex the adjoining districts to their newly formed kingdom.

Even towards the end of May 1857, some of the disinherited talukdars began to repossess themselves of the villages which they had lost, specially the zamindars of Malihabad and the neighbouring parts. Bisram Singh, a noted rebel leader, and raja Man Singh of Shahganj were in a state of contumacy.<sup>1</sup> Many other ex-zamindars had taken forcible possession of their respective estates. By 12 June, as Henry Lawrence reported, the talukdars had all been arming and some had already regained possession of the villages from which they had been dispossessed by Gubbins.<sup>2</sup> But overt act of hostility against the government was demonstrated even earlier. On 22 May, nine-hundred rebels under Abdullah Khan, Akbar Khan and Ramnarayan threatened Chandausi.<sup>3</sup>

The mutiny at Lucknow merged into a war of the talukdars. The Oudh talukdars who joined the rebel force or sent contingents to fight the British were numerous. As Forbes-Mitchell watched it:

it needed no great powers of observation to fully understand that the whole population of Oude was against us.<sup>4</sup>

Secret letters from India preserved in the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, show that a large number of taluk-

<sup>1</sup> Gubbins, *The Mutinies in Oudh*, 38, 81. About this time several state prisoners were in the custody of the government, such as Mustafali Khan, brother of the ex-king of Oudh, nawab Ruknuddaulah, one of the surviving sons of Sadatali Khan, the former nawab vizier of Oudh, Mohammed Humayun Khan and Mirza Mohammed Shekoddh, two princes connected with the Delhi family and the young raja of Tulsipur (*Ibid.* 186). Also Rees, *op. cit.*, 43.

<sup>2</sup> FP. vii, 262; Malleon, i, 410.

<sup>3</sup> FP. viii, 157. For Rasul Baksh who tampered with the cavalry, see Gubbins *op. cit.*, 195.

<sup>4</sup> *Reminiscences, etc.*, 26.

dars were actually fighting against the English at Lucknow in the month of October. Some of them had also sent their agents to add to the strength of the rebel forces which had assembled there. Copies of intelligence received by R. Strachey, the secretary, adverted to the fact that in the month of October and in the preceding period Man Singh, Hanumant Singh, Beni Madho Baksh, Biswanath Baksh and Sugram Singh were fighting against the English. The same source indicated that the Fyzabad maulavi, the Atrauli raja (Beni Madho Singh) and Amethi raja (Madho Singh), raja Debi Baksh, and one Chaudhuri Sahib (the name unknown) were all in arms but they seem to have been working under the general direction of Man Singh, their chief<sup>1</sup> Rana Beni Madho Baksh, Raghunath Singh and his son Biswanath, Bishan Singh, Bhagavan Baksh of Nain entrenched themselves at Lucknow with their respective levies and had received *khilluts* binding them to march to the attack of Alambagh<sup>2</sup> Similar *khilluts* were received by raja Bakht Singh's son and the Miler raja<sup>3</sup> Even Nana was reported to be at Lucknow sometime in October<sup>4</sup> The total strength of the levies contributed by the different chiefs could not be correctly estimated as the numbers were being daily reinforced, but official intelligence obtained from Lucknow, the general accuracy of which was proved by other sources, made the following estimate of the rebel forces as they stood by the middle of December, 1857

(a) Regiments of captains	7,950
(b) Oudh regiments	5 600
Cavalry	7,720
(c) Talooqdar's men	32,080 <sup>5</sup>
	<hr/> 53 350

The estimate detailed above brings to light that in the war of the mutiny at Lucknow, the forces of the talukdars prepon

<sup>1</sup> CRO *Secret letters from India* vol 163 pp 403 05

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* p 404

<sup>3</sup> *Ib d* p 429

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* p 409

<sup>5</sup> This included the levies contributed by such notables at Hardat Singh Bahadur of Bahraich Raghunath Singh of Ra pur Hardat Singh of Churda

derated over the mutinous soldiery. The list prepared by the British Intelligence service in November, 1857, of the contributions of other chiefs also supports this contention.<sup>1</sup> The same source indicated that in the month of January, raja Jaylal, raja Balkishan, raja Guru Baksh Singh, Raghunath Singh, raja Beni Madho Singh and Mansabali had deeply implicated themselves in the war at Lucknow.<sup>2</sup> Gubbins gives a list of other rebel leaders who distinguished themselves by the most active and unprovoked hostility in the early phase of the war. They are Mansabali, the talukdar of Rasulabad (Parwa), and the heirs of Jasa Singh, the talukdar of Fatehpur-Chaurasi. Jasa Singh was killed in an action with general Havelock. Raja Digbijaya Singh, talukdar of Muhonah in Lucknow, was the first to throw off the yoke of British rule. Raja Nawabali Khan, talukdar of Mahmudabad in the district of Sitapur, was, as Hutchinson says, the first of his class to raise the standard of revolt. Raja Guru Baksh Singh, the talukdar of Ramnagar in Lucknow, was the first to join the mutineers in the siege of the residency.<sup>3</sup> Raja Loni Singh of Mithauli in the Sitapur district gave shelter to Europeans, but very grudgingly, and even fired a royal salute in honour of Birjis Qadr, 'the supposed son of Wajidali' when he was placed on the throne after the battle of

Shyamsankar Singh of Jorapur, Beni Madho Singh of Atrauli. Madho Singh of Amethi, the subordinate chiefs of Man Singh, the Changapur men, the Coomars, Bbinga men, Tulsipur men and Nanpara men (*Ibid.* pp. 411-13). In January '58 Man Singh was reported to be at Lucknow with 5000 men, and the Amethi raja with 3000 men (*Ibid.* p. 444). Another official list furnished by Probyn of the zamindars and talukdars who with their retainers were in arms at Lucknow in October, '57 shows that the total amounted to 76,335 men and 40 guns (FP. ix, 231). Outram's estimate of the rebel forces at Lucknow towards the end of January (96,000 men) did not include artillery men, and the talukdari forces estimated at 20,000. Malleson says that there could not have been less than 120,000 men at Lucknow at that time (ii, 360n). Holloway writes that the total strength of the rebels, from all sources could not have been less than sixty thousand at the time when Havelock reached Lucknow (*Essays*, etc. 169). Dr. Sen says that the talukdars' men were commanded by Khanali Khan, the lieutenant of the raja of Mahmudabad (*op. cit.*, 197).

<sup>1</sup> CRO. *op. cit.* (19 Nov. 1857), p. 419. See Appendix B: *List of Rebels*. Forbes-Mitchell writes that the strength of the enemy was computed at 60 thousand regular mutineers and 70 thousand irregulars making a total of 130 thousand fighting men (*Reminiscences*, 195). The number, according to Maude and Sherer (ii, 449), gradually swelled to over 100,000.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* (CRO.) p. 449.

<sup>3</sup> Gubbins, *The Mutinies*, etc. 487. For Mansabali's activities see Malleson, ii, 336, 347.

Chinhat Hutchinson accuses him of diabolical conduct.<sup>1</sup> Raja Razzak Baksh of Jahangirabad in the district of Lucknow took advantage of the war in ejecting those village proprietors who had gained in the summary settlement. He was found in possession of three guns and a number of treasonable papers when he surrendered to Sir Hope Grant.<sup>2</sup>

The palwar chief Prithvipal Singh, Ranadhir Singh of Daudpur, Ranjit Singh, Ilakadar of Goorwa, Kalka Baksh, talukdar of Dullipur, Sita Baksh, the party of Beni Bahadur Singh of Nasratpur, raja Biji Bahadur Singh of Pratagarh, Ajit Singh, Sultanat Bahadur of Baispur, Iswari Baksh, raja Satiprasad of Sheorajpur, Sewal Singh of mauza Bindu, Sarabjit Singh of Dharupur in pargana Bilkur in Oudh helped the rebel forces in some form or another in the protracted struggle that was going on at Lucknow.<sup>3</sup> Some of them, as it has been noticed, served the cause of rebellion at Cawnpore and obviously turned to Lucknow after the fall of the city.<sup>4</sup>

But no chief, as the governor general said, had been more open in rebellion than the rajas of Churda, Bhinga and Gonda. The young raja of Nanpara fought against the British at Lucknow. The raja of Deyrah and Ushraf Baksh Khan, a talukdar of Gonda, were also actively hostile.<sup>5</sup> The ghazis of Lucknow were similarly conspicuous in their determination to fight and set their mind on a jihad.<sup>6</sup> Prominent among them were Maulavi Masseeoos Zaman, Ujrali Khan and Babarali.<sup>7</sup> Intelligence was also obtained that there were five hundred habshees at Fyzabad ready for the fray.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CRO *Secret letters* etc. vol. 163 p. 405. Hutchinson *op cit* 143-53.

<sup>2</sup> *Incidents* etc. 268-70.

<sup>3</sup> FP viii 82-83, 152 ix 224, 226, 228, 30, 232, 3, 235-6.

<sup>4</sup> Nasratpur, the stronghold of Beni Bahadur, was one of the most difficult of approach. It was taken possession of and destroyed on 23 January 1858, but the talukdar retired across the frontier (FP viii 85). Satiprasad seems to have crossed over to Kalpi (FP viii 152).

<sup>5</sup> Sessional papers, House of Lords, vol. xi (Fresh return). For the activities of the raja of Deyrah, see Hutchinson *op cit* 180. An official communication dated 2 December 1857 furnishes a list of the Indian chiefs killed in the late engagements (Forrest *Select ones* (Documents) ii p. 363).

<sup>6</sup> FP iv 185.

<sup>7</sup> FP v App. B 8-11.

<sup>8</sup> CRO *Secret letters from India* 1858 vol. 164 p. 231. Joyce refers to the Afridis from Malihabad (*Ordeal at Lucknow* 81).

The part played by the begam of Oudh in mobilising the forces and directing their activities cannot be over-estimated.<sup>1</sup> Her prime minister Sharafuddaulah co-operated with her in every respect.<sup>2</sup> Other important positions were filled up by Manuruddaulah as general, raja Jaylal Singh as collector, Man Singh as chief of the field force, Mammu Khan as daroga of the dewan khana, raja Balkishan and Jawalaprased as superintendents of supplies.<sup>3</sup> Mention is also made of Muzaffarali as a general.<sup>4</sup> The orders of Mammu Khan, alias Mukhlaruddaulah, alias Alimohammed, were regarded as paramount which were carried out through his naib Wajidali.<sup>5</sup> It seems that Hasan Khoda Baksh was appointed later on as chackladar in the post of Jaylal who was accused by Mehndi Hasan of favouring the English. Doetali and Sadunlal are also mentioned as officers.<sup>6</sup>

Begam Hazratmahal<sup>7</sup> had undoubted qualities of leadership and organisation. She was able to attach to herself the loyalty of all sections of people both Hindus and Mahomedans. They upheld her cause<sup>8</sup> and had sworn to fight for her

<sup>1</sup> FP. viii, 99, 102.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 927. He was murdered for his alleged complicity with the British (Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, 47).

<sup>3</sup> CRO. *Secret letters from India*, 1858, vol. 163, p. 414.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 441.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 444.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 453; Innes, *op. cit.*, 117.

<sup>7</sup> In connection with the welcome given by queen Victoria to the queen of Oudh, the *Morning Chronicle* which described the scene gave the name and style of the queen as Jenabi Auleah Mootaleah nawab Tajaura Begum Saheb and the young prince whom the Oudians called heir apparent bore the name Welles Auhad Mirza Mahammad Hamid Ali Bahadur. (*The Englishman*, 10 September, 1857). The British intelligence service also reported that Janab Alliah or Begam mother of prince Brijio Kudder was the chief at Lucknow (CRO. *Secret letters*, etc. vol. 163, p. 449). But this is obviously a mistake for Jenabi was in London when the mutiny broke out. She submitted a petition filled with protestation of loyalty to the queen on behalf of Wajidali. She had three sons, of whom one died, one was an imbecile and the other was Hamidali. Birjis Kadir was the son of Hazratmahal (Dodd, *op. cit.*, 162). Hutchinson says that Hazratmahal was originally a dancing girl and lived in intimacy with Mammukhan (*op. cit.*, 161). For private relations existing between Wajidali, Hazratmahal and Mammu Khan. see Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, 161-2.

<sup>8</sup> Martin says that some of the bravest and best chiefs have fallen victims to their uncompromising fidelity to the begam of Oudh (ii, 483, also *supra*, p. 119n), and refers to the case of Rana Beni Madho of Sankarpur who rejected all offers of amnesty to join his lawful sovereign, the begam (*Ibid.* 497). Malletson is of the opinion that a great body of landowners in Oudh was not bound by any sentiment of loyalty towards the deposed dynasty. They hailed the mutiny not from any

son, Birjis Qadr, whom the mutineers had proclaimed the king of Oudh.<sup>1</sup> The reports received at the British quarters at Lucknow in November 1857 show that the begam was the soul of the opposition, collecting together Sharafuddaulah, Mammukhan, Manuruddaulah (the general), Man Singh and Jaylal and others who were asked to work for the overthrow of the English.<sup>2</sup> In the middle of November when severe fighting was going on, a shell hit severely the palace gate, a panic seized the garrison and the soldiers fled away but the begam would not move. Her order to her chiefs to cut her head off and then run away<sup>3</sup> brought them to their senses. Still the desertion of the troops continued and on 19 November, she was obliged to appeal to the chiefs in the name of *khoda* to help her.<sup>4</sup> The position, however, changed towards the end of November, when Sir Colin evacuated the residency and made for Cawnpore with all the Europeans of the beleaguered garrison. She took advantage of the situation in bolstering up the morale of her fighting forces. At once she ordered for the immediate occupation of Benares and Allahabad (25 November). Councils of war were held frequently and on the next day she sent instructions to nazims and talukdars to march on to Azamgarh and Jaunpur.<sup>5</sup> In a meeting of all the chiefs held on 22 December she severely harangued the leaders and denounced them for their indifference. She is reported to have said

Great things were promised from the all powerful Delhi and my heart used to be gladdened by the communications I used to receive

affection towards the royal family. If the king of Oudh had been king Log the British rule was the rule of king Stork (iii 264). But this is hardly a true estimate of the situation. Mohammed Hasan of Gorakhpur similarly expressed himself in no uncertain terms about his undeviating loyalty to the king of Oudh. He stated 'We servants and dependants of the king of Oudh consider it essential to our prosperity in both worlds to display devotion in protecting the kingdom and opposing the efforts of the invaders who seek to gain a footing in it' (Quoted in Sen, *op cit* 360).

<sup>1</sup> Forbes-Mitchell *Reminiscences* 196. Rukes drawing his account from an Italian says that Birjis Qadr was the son of Wajidali Shah (*Notes on the Revolt*, etc. 96-97). *Chick op cit* 837.

<sup>2</sup> CRO *Secret Letters* etc. vol. 163 p. 491. But Mammukhan and his naib Wajidali and Man Singh were kind to the English captives at Lucknow. Man Singh wrote on several occasions to general Outram and Wajidali risked his life to save Mrs. Orr (*Hutchinson op cit*, 162f).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* (*Secret Letters from India*) p. 433.

<sup>4</sup> CRO *Secret Letters from India* 1858 vol. 163 p. 430.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*. pp. 434-5.

from that city but soon the king has been dispossessed and his army scattered. The English have bought over the Sikhs and Rajahs, . . and communications are cut off. The Nana has been vanquished, Lucknow is endangered—what is to be done? The whole army is in Lucknow, but it is without courage. Why does it not attack Alumbaugh? Is it waiting for the English to be reinforced and Lucknow to be surrounded? How much longer am I to pay the sepoy for doing nothing? Answer me now, and if fight you won't, I shall negotiate with the English to spare my life.

The chiefs answered:

fear not, we shall fight, for if we do not, we shall be hanged one by one, we have that fear before our eyes.

The party swore to stick by one another and then dispersed.<sup>1</sup>

The speech contains a spirit of despair and frustration which followed as a consequence of the defeat of the rebel forces at Cawnpore on 6 December at the hands of Sir Colin. Regiments fled from Cawnpore and reached Lucknow where they confessed that their loss had been very great—sixteen guns, magazines and supplies,—which increased the general consternation.<sup>2</sup> On 12 December, rumour spread that Lucknow was to be attacked from all sides and supplies cut off.<sup>3</sup> The ray of delusive hope raised by the withdrawal of the British garrison was dimmed by the disaster at Cawnpore, yet in this period of unrelieved gloom the royal begam tried in her own way to buck up the people and appeared on the field on 25 February mounted on an elephant.<sup>4</sup>

The operations at Lucknow took the form of a great war of liberation. It marked the climax of India's struggle against Britain, '*a guerre a la mort*', a war of the most cruel and exterminating form, in which no quarter was given on either side.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 443, 445.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 441: 'When the Nana fled how could they fight?'

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Malleson, ii, 356-7, Martin, ii, 477.

<sup>5</sup> Forbes-Mitchell, *Reminiscences*, etc. 31. Exactly similar were the views expressed by colonel Mackenzie of the 3rd Light Cavalry that no quarter was given on either side (*Mutiny Memoirs*, 107). It was a 'war to the knife' as Nash of Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry said (*Volunteering in India*, 63).



Forbes-Mitchell, himself a participant in the war and a critical observer of the events going on round him, wrote.

The camps and bazars of our force were full of reports of the great strength and determination of the enemy. All Oude was therefore still against us, and we held only the ground covered by the British guns.<sup>1</sup>

Scraps of intelligence obtained from Lucknow, as preserved in the *Secret Letters*, give us a glimpse of the pluck and resources of the Indians fighting for their freedom. Twelve hundred 'pasees' of a 'low but plucky caste in Oudh' were engaged on contract for a sum of six thousand rupees to exterminate the English in Alambugh, by shooting them at sight with bows and arrows in which they were experts.<sup>2</sup> The information refers to the preparations made in October and November. There was actually a large body of archers, as Forbes-Mitchell states, in the force defending the Shah Nujeef, who darted their arrows with great force and precision and took a heavy toll.<sup>3</sup> Percussion caps were being made in Lucknow and artisans from Delhi came for this purpose. Shells too were being made and large supplies of arms and ammunition received from the *mofassil*, and revenue remitted from the same. Gold and silver ornaments were being carried to pay the troops and district appointments were ordered.<sup>4</sup> To replenish the financial position, nawab Ali Naki Khan's house was dug and thirteen lakhs of rupees were obtained,<sup>5</sup> three lakhs were found in the house of Agha, a former nazim of Sultanpur, and voluntary contributions came from many wealthy individuals and disaffected chiefs.<sup>6</sup> The Lucknow bankers were called on to pay

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* 195

<sup>2</sup> CRO *Secret Letters*, etc. vol 163 p 409. Michael Joyce writes that the Pases were a low caste Dravidian tribesmen and served as retainers under many talukdars (*Ordeal at Lucknow*, 47). Hutchinson gives an elaborate description of these people and of the part they played in the mutiny (*Narrative of the Mutinies*, etc. 14-15).

<sup>3</sup> Forbes Mitchell, *Reminiscences* etc. 76-78. Cf. One Penny of the 93rd got an arrow right through his brain the shaft projecting more than a foot out at the back of his head, and in case of another an arrow was sent right through the heart passing clean through the body.

<sup>4</sup> CRO *Secret Letters*, etc. vol 163 p 415

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* p 421

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid* p 423. Mohammed Hasan sent two lakhs of treasure from Gorakhpur in December (*Ibid* p 443).

twenty lakhs,<sup>1</sup> and the begam herself paid five lakhs to have a wall built round the city in the month of December.<sup>2</sup> The neighbouring forts were repaired and strongly fortified.<sup>3</sup> A very important work was undertaken in the same month. A deep ditch was dug round the king's palace so as to admit water from the Gomati in which five thousand coolies worked. The old canal which was originally intended to let the Ganges pass into the Gomati was also repaired and four thousand men were engaged on this. Guns were being mounted and ornaments melted to pay the soldiers,<sup>4</sup> who were treated with care and attention. Orders were given that the heirs of the sepoys who might be killed were to have a hundred rupees each and the wounded fifty rupees each.<sup>5</sup> The sepoys, on their part, did not behave as professionals but 'agreed to serve on a reduced salary of nine rupees'.<sup>6</sup>

In January 1858, the tempo of war was rather high. As the rebellion gained ground vast numbers were added to its ranks—the population of the city and of the province of Oudh.<sup>7</sup> The army then at Lucknow was little short of a lakh of persons. And there were a hundred serviceable guns, every street and every lane was barricaded, all the houses loopholed. There were about one hundred and fifty military chiefs who supervised the work of defence, provisions were stored and magazine and treasure were kept in Kaisarbag.<sup>8</sup> The preparations made on an extensive front and on a wide scale reflect the totality of effort on the part of all the chiefs and their followers which a few thousand of mutinous soldiers, left to themselves, could have scarcely completed. A war in which most of the landed nobility agreed to contribute towards the expense<sup>9</sup> and conduct

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 429.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 439.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 443. See also Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt*, etc. 116-7. Cf. the report of 30th December that a fair was going on, 400 of the pilgrims had been seized as spies and sent to work at the entrenchments in Lucknow (*Ibid.* p. 451).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 444.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 453.

<sup>7</sup> Holloway, *Essays*, etc. 164, 167.

<sup>8</sup> CRO. *Secret Letters*, etc. vol. 163, p. 449. But Innes observes that there was no organisation, discipline, or military spirit on the part of the investing force (*Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, 118).

<sup>9</sup> CRO. *op. cit.*, p. 444.

it by the addition of their own levies and their personal service, and a war in which each part of the country, every village and every house was transformed into a miniature fortress,<sup>1</sup> could hardly be called a military insurrection. In Lucknow it was a war of the people of all classes.<sup>2</sup> They fought from street to street—from house to house and the work of destruction and butchery went on for several days<sup>3</sup> till Lucknow was finally conquered on 21 March. The capture of Begam Kotli, which was the key to the rebels' position on 12 March, was, as Sir Colin wrote in his despatch, 'the sternest struggle which occurred during the siege' the horrors of the hospital at Sebastopol were far exceeded by what was witnessed here.<sup>4</sup> Yet the fate of this once magnificent city moved nobody to tears, and no Scipio repeated the lines of the *Iliad* over the flames of Lucknow.<sup>5</sup>

But the fall of Lucknow had no immediate effect on the re-establishment of British rule in the whole extent of the province. Innes says that Colin's failure to prevent the escape of the rebel troops and the confiscation proclamation of Lord Canning led to an outburst of hostility of the country population.<sup>6</sup> The rebellious talukdars with their levies now carried the social war into the interior and accomplished the project more basic than other factors which marked the passage of the Indian mutiny. They were purging their country of the British system, almost burning it out. Their marches and counter-marches kept alive a spirit of war and the whole country population of the province was in 'dogged rebellion'.<sup>7</sup> The position

<sup>1</sup> Holloway *Essays* 273-278.

<sup>2</sup> For the behaviour of the talukdars during the mutiny see Appendix C.

<sup>3</sup> *S. pra.* p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Forrest *Selections* (Intro.) vol. II, p. 412. For an excellent description of the siege of Lucknow see M. Forgnés in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st and 5th July 1858. Also his book *La Révolte Des Cipayes*. Martin says that Gubbins's account of the siege is less circumstantial. According to him, Rees carries weight because he had access to and permission to use the journal kept by the wife of brigadier Inglis (II, 234).

<sup>5</sup> Forbes Mitchell humorously added that even Charles the Ninth of France to whom the smell of a dead enemy was always sweet would have had cause to modify his opinion had he had experience of the streets of Lucknow in March 1858 (*Reminiscences* 230). For the booty and loot see Maude and Sherer I, 458 and Russell quoted in Malletson II, 394.

<sup>6</sup> Innes *op. cit.* 290f.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 298.

of the British during this time, as Malleson says, was very peculiar. They were in possession of a belt of country right across the centre of the province from east to west, but the northern and southern portions were held by various rebel parties led by the royal begam, Hardat Singh, Firuz Shah, Beni Madho, Debi Baksh, Hanumant Singh, the Fyzabad maulavi and many others such as Rambaksh Singh, Behunath Singh, Chandabaksh, Golab Singh, Bhopal Singh and Narpat Singh.<sup>1</sup>

The British forces directed against the rebel parties moved on a systematic plan carrying on their military operations simultaneously in different sections, thus preventing the talukdars and other leaders from combining and uniting their forces. Walpole at the head of the column marching for Rohilkhand attacked the jungle fort of Narpat Singh of Ruya and drove him away on 15 April, after suffering initial reverses.<sup>2</sup> In about the same time Hope Grant contacted the Fyzabad maulavi at Bari, twenty-nine miles from Lucknow, and defeated him.<sup>3</sup> The maulavi was the leader of the north-western front of rebels and was acting as a focus of mahomedan hostility. He became such a force in the opposition to the British offensive at Shahjehanpur that Sir Colin had to march there to dislodge him.<sup>4</sup> His death on 5 June led to the collapse of the movement in the north-western part of Oudh. In the middle of April Khanali Khan was at Manidabad with a force of three thousand men and the royal begam who was acting in close contact with Mammu Khan was reported to be residing in an island called Bitauli between the rivers Gogra and Chokra.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile the rebel confederacy of the baiswara communities led by the famous chief, Rana Beni Madho of Sankarpur, had become very formidable. Their gathering was threatening the Ganges and the Lucknow-Cawnpore road. Hope Grant marching against them did not find it advisable to attack Beni Madho but turned against Rambaksh, another

<sup>1</sup> Malleson, iii, 270-01, 286-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> Hope Grant, *op. cit.*, 263-4.

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, pp. 117-8.

<sup>5</sup> Hope Grant, *op. cit.*, 263, 267.

his chief Rambaksh was an avowed malcontent from the outset and his fort of Dundiahera was taken on 10 May. Two days later Grant had defeated another leader Amruthun Singh at Sirsi five miles in an easterly direction from Nagar.<sup>1</sup> Previous to this expedition Hope Grant went in the direction of Cheoka ghat, on the Gogra (near Fyzabad) hoping to catch the begam but she fled. While the rebels were thus cleared from a portion of the country encompassed by the Gogra and the Ganges Mohammed Husn of Gorakhpur renewed his attack on Amorah on 9 June but it was repulsed by Rowcroft.<sup>2</sup> The western group of talukdars became active again and gathered to a head in large numbers at Nawabganj on the Fyzabad road. Though they were made up of four different parties they united their ranks and fought a stubborn battle against the British army but eventually surrendered the field on 14 June, 1858.<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant Mayendie who took part in the battle says that the battle of Nawabganj had a great effect which was at once made evident by the rapid submission of certain districts. The hope the rebels might have entertained of the recovery of their power also received a check.<sup>4</sup> It was about this period that raja Man Singh openly tendered his allegiance to the government and Hope Grant on coming to Fyzabad relieved the raja then besieged by the rebels in July.<sup>5</sup> Even then, the Lucknow region was not completely reduced to submission. The town of Sandila, situated between the Rohilkhand frontier and Lucknow, but nearer to the latter, was held under occupation by the refractory pathans. The place was stormed on 30 July by Captain Dawson but it hardly tended towards the pacification of the country.<sup>6</sup> All through the summer of 1858, the rebels continued to disturb the country. In Mohanlalganj Musahabali of a family of sheikhs persisted in rebellion and in consequence lost his property of Deyrah. He acted in concert with the kurmi leader Khushal Chand but both were slain in a fight

<sup>1</sup> Hope Grant *op cit* 272-4

<sup>2</sup> *Infra* p. 146

<sup>3</sup> *S. pra* pp. 59, 126-7

<sup>4</sup> Mayendie *Up among the Pandes* 297-8

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 305. Hope Grant *op cit* 291-7

<sup>6</sup> Malleson *ii* 286-7

near Salempur. The kurmis of Nagram also kept up an obstinate resistance. In Malihabad the fakir Laikar Shah kept alive the spirit of rebellion until driven by brigadier Eveleigh.<sup>1</sup> Nor did the eastern part of Oudh return to British allegiance. Hope Grant turned towards Sultanpur where the Indians had concentrated in large numbers, fourteen thousand men with fifteen guns. Innes says that the battle of Sultanpur on 28 August was a real combat, but the rebels were put to flight.<sup>2</sup> Thus by the middle of the year 1858, though the central portion of Oudh was relatively reduced to submission, the country as a whole was dominated by different rebel bands. The more prominent of the leaders, Rana Beni Madho of Sankarpur, Lal Madho Singh of Amethi, Hanumant Singh, Nana Sahib, Bala Rao, Jawalaprasad, Mehndi Hasan, Mohammed Hasan were still in force and the crowd of jungle forts in the northern line remained to be assaulted.

The situation was fraught with unpredictable danger, the embers of rebellion flared up again in the heart of Lucknow. On 3 October, the rebel leader Harichand united his forces with those of other talukdari levies, totalling twelve thousand men and fell upon Sandila. A desperate battle now raged for the possession of that city from the 4th to the 8th October. Eventually the rebels dispersed inflicting upon brigadier Barker's forces a loss of eighty-two of all ranks.<sup>3</sup> The different units of the British army led by Barker, colonel Hall and brigadier Troup then formed a ring centering round Lucknow, the one side of it touching the line of the Gogra and another the Ganges. By their forward and flank movements they drove the rebels across the Gogra. Firuz Shah was about to be trapped on this river near Biswah, but he escaped by doubling back south by Sandila to the Ganges and crossed it, and then the Jumna.<sup>4</sup> These measures ultimately led to the pacification of the western part of Oudh.

The operations in the east were conducted by Lord Clyde himself who began his movement by strengthening the Sultan-

<sup>1</sup> DG. Lucknow, 164-5.

<sup>2</sup> Innes, *op. cit.*, 298; Hope Grant, *op. cit.*, 299-302.

<sup>3</sup> Malleson, iii, 286-7; Innes, *op. cit.*, 300.

<sup>4</sup> Innes, *op. cit.*, 301.

pur position and holding in force the line from Fyzabad to Sultanpur in order to prevent the rebels from escaping into Azamgarh. Colonel Kelly drove the rebels before him securing Akbarpur and Tanda. The fort of Rampurkassia, the stronghold of the Khanpurias was stormed on 3 November, 1858,<sup>1</sup> and a comprehensive plan was made to assault the fort of Amethi belonging to the powerful chief Lal Madho Singh who was conspicuously friendly at the outset of the revolt. The raja however surrendered on 10 November.<sup>2</sup> The most powerful of the *baiswara* chiefs Rana Beni Madho, however, did not surrender personally, holding himself a subject of the nawab of Oudh and not of the British government.<sup>3</sup> He and a part of his garrison marched out of the fort on 15 November, but on the way towards Dundiahera they were intercepted on 17 November by Eveleigh who defeated them. Still they managed to escape westward but were pursued by Campbell who bore down on them on 24 November and drove the *baiswara* chief to the north.<sup>4</sup> Other British forces operating on the line of the Gogra cleared the country of all rebels who similarly fled to the north of the river. By the end of November the country to the south of the Gogra was reduced to complete submission, but the triangular tract on the left of the river was still dominated by Debi Baksh, the raja of Gonda who was the recognised head of the rajput community of that part of the country and by Mehndi Hasan. When Hope Grant prepared to cross the Gogra to subdue the country to the north, his passage was fiercely contested at Nawabganj by the talukdars of Chahlarī, the rajas of Churda and Gonda and others.<sup>5</sup> Grant captured the forts belonging to the Gonda raja, subdued the leaders and, as Innes says, again scattered a rebel formation at Nawabganj in the middle of December. Lord Clyde had the intelligence that the fugitive leader, Beni Madho, was on the

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 121

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 124

<sup>3</sup> Innes, *op cit.*, 303-4, *supra*, pp. 119, 133n

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, pp. 118-9

<sup>5</sup> *Supra*, p. 124, and *infra* p. 144. According to Hope Grant the battle of Nawabganj took place on 27 November. But Innes says that the raja of Gonda and Mehndi Hasan surrendered on 25 November (*Innes, op cit.* 304-5). The correct account is that Mehndi Hasan surrendered on 7 January 1858, as noticed (*Supra* p. 124).

other side of the Gogra at its passage at Nawabganj at Bairam ghat.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile Rowcroft captured Tulsipur and Grant met him there. From this point they drove the rebels steadily towards Bhinga till at length in January 1859, they were forced across the frontier and took refuge in Nepal.<sup>2</sup> There they were pursued and operations continued up to May 1859, but Mohammed Hasan surrendered early in January.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously Lord Clyde started his offensive in Bahraich in December 1858, where Nana was reported to be stationed. According to Russell a delicate negotiation was going on at this time for securing the submission of the rebel leaders, the royal begam, Mammu Khan, Birjis Qadr, Hanumant Singh and Beni Madho.<sup>4</sup> But none surrendered. Clyde took Nanpara on 23 December, defeated the rebels at Barordiaha at a short distance on the 26th. Beni Madho who disputed the passage of the British retreated. Lord Clyde then stormed the fort of Musjidia the next day. He advanced as far north as the upper reaches of the Rapti to a place called Banki about twenty miles away from Nanpara where Nana and Beni Madho were reported to have been encamping. Lord Clyde marched on the night of 30 December, 1858, to take them by surprise, but they crossed the river without offering a fight and withdrew to the Nepalese territories. Thus by the end of December 1858, the whole of Oudh was reconquered after its annexation in 1856.<sup>5</sup>

#### GORAKHPUR DIVISION

The contagion of rebellion spread to this division in the month of June. The character of the risings in this part of the country was the same as in Oudh, the chiefs and talukdars

<sup>1</sup> Innes, *op. cit.*, 305

<sup>2</sup> *Infra*, pp. 144-5.

<sup>3</sup> For the circumstances leading to the surrender of Mohammed Hasan and his statement in defence of his conduct see Sen, *op. cit.*, 363-7.

<sup>4</sup> Russell, *Diary*, ii, 359.

<sup>5</sup> Innes, *op. cit.*, 305-06. Haraprasad, chakladar of Khairabad, Debi Baksh of Gonda and Golab Singh of Biswah died in the jungles of Nepal (Sen, *op. cit.*, 366, 368). According to Martin, Prithvipal Singh threw himself on the mercy of the government (ii, 499).



ments On 2 March, Rowcroft moved towards the entrenchment at Belwa near Amorah overlooking the Gogra where the main body of the rebel army was posted He found it so strong and held in such force that he considered it inexpedient to attack it and retired to Amorah Emboldened by this retrograde movement the rebels advanced out of their entrenchment on the night of the 4th and the 5th March and were met by Rowcroft at Amorah when an obstinate engagement ensued The Indians almost encircled the British forces but after some hours of fighting they were totally repulsed and pursued within a mile of Belwa<sup>1</sup> Rowcroft could not follow up his victory by storming Belwa, on the contrary he was practically blockaded towards the end of April and fell back on Captaunganj<sup>2</sup> The rebel army at Amorah had also the intention of attacking the British position in Azamgarh and though baulked by defeat, the failure of the British to take Belwa enabled them to hold their camp there and send a detachment to the south east to Atrauli in Azamgarh This force crossed the Gogra and effected a junction with the Shahabad leader Kunwar Singh at Atrauli at the time when he started his offensive in Azamgarh towards the end of March 1858

The position of the rebels at Amorah was reinforced by Mohammed Hasan of Gorakhpur who joined them later, with four thousand men But on 9 June, Rowcroft returned to the attack of Amorah and after a stiff action captured the place which was followed up by inflicting upon Mohammed Hasan another crushing defeat at Harah on 18 June, 1858, as a result of which he fled away<sup>3</sup> and eventually joined Bala Rao in Tulsipur in Gonda But Belwa was cleared only towards the end of 1858

Gorakhpur had a population somewhat exceeding three millions Mohammed Hasan who had been formerly the governor of the country lost his office after the annexation Symptoms of disaffection appeared there towards the end of May, the chiefs

<sup>1</sup> FP ix 859 For a description of the war by an eye witness and Rowcroft's despatch No 168 dated 6 March 1858 justifying the military execution at Amorah see Nash *Volunteering in India* 63.

<sup>2</sup> Malleson says that Rowcroft defeated the rebels on the 17th and 25th April (ii 453)

<sup>3</sup> Malleson iii 281 2

of Pynah and Naraharpur attacked police stations and ferry ghats.<sup>1</sup> News of the Azamgarh mutiny created great tension specially in the northern and western parganas of the district. The rajputs of Nagar rose up and dispossessed the present proprietors of all their lands, the rajputs of Pynah closed the navigation of the Gogra. One Mirzaali Hussain made himself conspicuous by seditious activities. The rajas of Naraharpur, Nagar, Satsi and the babus of Pandapur too held frequent meetings, and though martial law was proclaimed by the middle of June the mounting acts of violence could hardly be checked.<sup>2</sup> The employment of gorkha troops did not improve the situation. The tahsils of Khalilabad and Captainganj fell into the hands of the rebels on 10 and 12 August respectively, which obliged the government party to leave the station on the 13th. Gorakhpur passed under the rule of Mohammed Hasan who proclaimed himself the nazim<sup>3</sup> and attached to himself the loyalty of the landed proprietors.<sup>4</sup> The whole country was surging with revolt and fortifications or rather loop-holed earthworks, erected here and there, forcibly illustrated systematised rebellion.<sup>5</sup> The rebel leader had no mutinous regiment with him. According to one official report the total number of his force amounted to ten or twelve thousand men of which only five thousand were sepoys.<sup>6</sup>

The government established by the chackladar had the merit of order and progress, the decrees of civil courts were even executed, but the response to the revolution was unbounded; almost all the landholders joined him, received dresses of honour and furnished contingents to his army<sup>7</sup> and internally ousted the auction purchasers and re-entered the estates which had been lost through the agency of the civil courts.<sup>8</sup> An action was fought on 26 December, 1857, at Sohanpur on the Gorakh-

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 52: Report by C. Wingfield, commissioner.

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 53-55.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 56.

<sup>4</sup> FP. iv, 116, 185, 189; v, 59, 68, 84, 88, vii, 20, 70, 212, 220-22; ix, 244, 286.

<sup>5</sup> Nash, *Volunteering in India*, 40, 45.

<sup>6</sup> FP. vii, 222, ix, 138.

<sup>7</sup> FP. ix, 859.

<sup>8</sup> NE. i, 56.

pur frontier on the west bank of the little Gandak between the forces of colonel Rowcroft and the rebels, who by all reports numbered twelve hundred sepoys and four or five thousand other armed men<sup>1</sup> Naib nazim Mushraf Khan who was the most trusted follower of the rebel chakladar<sup>2</sup> was with the rebels in that engagement along with Ali Karim of Patna<sup>3</sup>

Letters found in the possession of Mohammed Hasan show that a large number of disaffected elements joined him Raja Udit Narayan Singh of Satsi has been described to be the worst traitor<sup>4</sup> He was supported by Debidatta and Debisaran<sup>5</sup> He also employed Mushraf Khan as his agent<sup>6</sup> The rebellious proceedings of the raja of Satsi are reflected in colonel Rowcroft's description of his operations in taking possession of the palace As he found it

The Raja had fortified his palace to a considerable extent, the walls within and without being loopholed for musketry, and the buildings connected by galleries and passages, also loopholed, and on one face covered with a very thick thorny bamboo jungle The articles found in the place consisted of 10 or 12 cwt of powder, five large bags of musket balls, five valuable double-barrelled guns, of which one was a rifle, large stores of grains, <sup>7</sup>

The raja of Nigar<sup>8</sup> and the raja of Narharpur<sup>9</sup> deeply committed themselves against the British Rajkumar Amresh Singh,<sup>10</sup> the rajcoomars on the Jaunpur border,<sup>11</sup> Udresh Singh and Chandresh Singh<sup>12</sup> and many others including the raja of

<sup>1</sup> FP ix, 378 Narrative of Events to 15 February 1858 Malleson ii 321 2

<sup>2</sup> FP viii 86 ix 138 356 378 835

<sup>3</sup> NE ii 185 Special Narrative Government of Bengal

<sup>4</sup> FP vii 212 ix 243, 387

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> FP vii 213 ix 220 He was formerly the manager of the raja of Satsi In the official despatches he is described as the prime mover in the revolt and an accomplice of the rebel raja of Mehson (FP ix 835) Mushraf Khan was later on executed (FP ix 838)

<sup>7</sup> FP ix 387 Narrative of Events to 27 February 1858

<sup>8</sup> FP vii, 212, 272

<sup>9</sup> FP ix 248 250 f But one G Osborne an opium agent seems to have been helped by the raja

<sup>10</sup> FP ix 258

<sup>11</sup> FP viii, 43

<sup>12</sup> FP ix 258

Churda<sup>1</sup> joined the revolt. Many government servants specially Wahidali, the deputy-collector, his brother Ali Nasar and Hasanali Baksh and Hafiz Ilahi Baksh, the tahsildars, Fattchali Beg and Zamirali<sup>2</sup> added their strength to the rebel forces. Official reports make casual references to many other leaders who joined in the rising at Gorakhpur.<sup>3</sup> This strength notwithstanding Mohammed Hasan could not organise the rebel elements into a strong force. His followers made but a feeble resistance when Gorakhpur was reconquered by the Nepal army on 6 January.<sup>4</sup>

### BENARES DIVISION

Contiguous to Oudh and Bihar on two sides, the Benares division got the infection of revolt from the former and transmitted the wave to the latter. This tract of country became one vast scene of a countrywide revolt. In Jaunpur the mutiny which broke out on 5 June was of no consequence when viewed in the light of the rebellion that followed. The country was ripe for an upsurge as 'nowhere were the auction purchasers more numerous.' The old zamindars were thoroughly disaffected and in many cases they were near relations of the discontented talukdars of Oudh. In this upsurge, offices were gutted and the treasury was plundered by the mob in which even old women and boys joined, while in the interior not a semblance of

<sup>1</sup> FP. viii, 113.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 220.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 604. They are Shambar Singh, brother-in-law of Bent Madho Singh, Dharma Singh of Karkabari (FP ix, 258-9), the zamindars of Bhavapur (FP. vii, 212), Gobindaballav Singh, the chief babu of Pauleypore (FP vii, 211), the babus of Pandapur, the raja of Chulpore (FP vii, 211), Soowth Singh, zamindar of Seopora, pargana Amora (FP vii, 212), raja Kishan Kishore Chand, raja Raghuraj Singh, rani Dugambhari Koer (FP. vii, 212), Rai Bhunwan Singh (FP. vii, 218), Bhavan Singh of Suhree, babus of Dharmmar (FP. vii, 272), Walid Mohammed Tiljee (FP. ix, 838), Nawab Singh (FP ix, 856), Glusam Sah, Nawab Mohammed of Bansga (FP vii, 212), Seoghulam Singh (FP. vii, 211), Mohammed Nimnaz, Daulatali, Sherah, Reasatali, Bakor Husain, Birjis Kader, Jaffarali, Mir Dostali (FP vii, 213), Narayandayal, Sangramlal (FP. vii, 89), Mansabali of Serai Mir (FP. ix, 253), and Bulli Singh (Gubbins, *Mutines*, etc 81, 152-3) Prithvipal Singh also tendered his allegiance to Md Hasan (FP. vii, 213). The rani of Amora was detected in a treasonable correspondence with the rebels. On learning this discovery she immediately fled to Fyzabad (FP. ix, 863).

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 56; Malleon, ii, 323.

authority remained<sup>1</sup> The dispossessed landholders turned out their rivals and other bolder spirits combined to fight the British Dobhiraghubansis were the most violent, they cut off communications and committed other depredations

Of the popular leaders of Jaunpur, Iradat Jahan, the raja of Mahul, played the most conspicuous part He proclaimed himself the naib nazim<sup>2</sup> and held out in his stronghold at Mubarakpur, but when the British offensive started on 27 September, he was overpowered by colonel Wroughton He and his devoted follower Fazat Jahan<sup>3</sup> who 'was brave enough for anything' were seized, tried by court-martial and hanged<sup>4</sup> Another leader, Amar Singh, had his stronghold at Adampur He fought heroically against the punitive expeditions of colonel Wroughton, but was killed with some fifty of his men on the day following<sup>5</sup>

Even after the re-conquest of the district the country was swarming with rebel leaders and their forces which necessitated a prolonged campaign The high command of the rebels at Lucknow made an elaborate plan for the conquest of Jaunpur in the month of October The expedition was to be led by Mehndi Hasan, the nazim of Sultanpur He had five guns ready for use and was backed by all the talukdars of Sultanpur and Gyzabad Sheikh Ghulam Hussain was appointed chackladar of Jaunpur, tahsildars and sazawals were appointed and preparations were going on in full swing The rajcoomars, Udresh Singh (whose fort was at Deyrah), and Chandresh Singh, and palwars like Prithvipal Singh, Madhoprasad, Kishanprasad, and other talukdars and chiefs decided to join the nazim in his adventure Mansabali of Serai Mir in the district of Azamgarh was appointed commandant of a regiment with Beni Madho the kurmi raja of Atraul The invading party was only waiting for the Gurkhas to leave for Allahabad As for the place of the operation it was decided that the rajcoomar chiefs Udresh and Chandresh would march from Chanda to Singrauli on 12

<sup>1</sup> NE i 34-36 The Rebellion of 1857 in the Province of Benares by Robert Taylor, officiating joint magistrate Jaunpur

<sup>2</sup> FP vii, 258 273 5 ix 256

<sup>3</sup> FP vii 265 6, 269 274

<sup>4</sup> FP v 87, 271, ix 242 Maffeson ii 319

<sup>5</sup> FP vii 273 75 ix 256

October, the rear guarded by the nazim, and the force of Hasan Yar Khan forming an auxiliary to the column. Mehndi Hasan's force at Hasanpur did not exceed six thousand men but later reports indicated that his army swelled to eight thousand to ten thousand men consisting of new levies and villagers. A speedy move on Jaunpur was contemplated and about five hundred villagers were seen collected at Chanda in the middle of October. A simultaneous attack on Azamgarh was also planned under the direction of Mir Mohammed Hussain, the chackladar and Jaylal Singh (the son of Galib Jung), the nazim of Azamgarh.<sup>1</sup> Eventually, however, the invasion was repulsed but official sources refer to the activities of the brave Hasan Yar Khan who styled himself as chackladar of Jaunpur.<sup>2</sup> He entered the district with about twelve thousand men but was repulsed at Kudua near Singramau on 19 October. Undeterred the nazim followed it up by an invasion of more serious character with four to five thousand men which developed into the action at Chanda. Ranadhir Singh, son of Gujraj Singh, talukdar of Singramau, had also assembled a large force in the rear.<sup>3</sup> In the first battle at Chanda on 30 October the Jaunpur rebels joined in large numbers. They were strongly posted and fought well and though defeated they assembled again under the inspiring leadership of Muzaffar Jahan, who 'was much worse than his old father,' Iradat Jahan.<sup>4</sup> On 26 June, Muzaffar proclaimed himself the raja of Mahul.<sup>5</sup> He commanded a huge army of trained men and attracted to his colours disaffected elements from every quarter. Malik Mehndi Baksh and Rustam Shah, the chief of Deyrah were also compelled to join the rebel force which increased from ten thousand on 22 November to sixteen thousand on 28 November.<sup>6</sup> Thus the position of the British was rendered precarious by the systematic

<sup>1</sup> FP. vii 74-75; ix, 219, 701.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 219, 247, 701, 707; vii, 75.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 45-46; FP. ix, 710. Both Ranadhir and Ranjit Singh his dewan, submitted to P. Carnegie in April, 1858 (GRO. *Secret Letters*, vol. 164, p. 314).

<sup>4</sup> FP. ix, 242, 255-6; vii, 265, 275.

<sup>5</sup> NE. i, 38.

<sup>6</sup> FP. vii, 275; NE. i, 46-47.

pressure of the Indian forces in the last week of November. They were almost encircled by the Gwalior troops who raided Cawnpore with impunity and the begam from Lucknow intended to march from the north while the Jaunpur rebels advanced from the east. But the battle of Cawnpore (6 December) did the trick of scattering the rebels if at all they had any plan to combine. General Franks then planned an advance into Oudh from Jaunpur.

After the fall of Lucknow, a party of rebels under Sheikh Ghulam Hussain, the chackladar of Jaunpur<sup>1</sup> and Mehndi Hasan of Sultanpur again collected in the northern and western parts of the district, nearly three thousand men. They were determined to oppose Sir Edward Lugard who was marching through the country for the relief of the Azamgarh garrison, threatened by the daring raids of Kunwar Singh, but on 11 April, 1858, the rebels were again defeated. Even in May 1858, the rebel leader Jhuriya Singh of Mirzapur carried his raids in Jaunpur and Sangram Singh was perpetually reappearing.<sup>2</sup>

Of the other leaders of consequence mention may be made of Hanumant Singh,<sup>3</sup> the brave rajput of Dharupur, who at first was loyally disposed,<sup>4</sup> but later on turned a rebel to avenge the death of his son killed in the Chanda fight, and collected a band of men at his fort at Kalakankar on the Ganges.<sup>5</sup> The fort contained twenty-seven guns of which twenty-two were in position. The report of November showed that he was trying to raise the country against the British.<sup>6</sup> Khodabaksh, the *soi disant* chackladar of Jaunpur,<sup>7</sup> had, it is said, a force consisting of two thousand men of whom two hundred were sepoys.<sup>8</sup> Maulavi Keramatali of Jaunpur<sup>9</sup> who is described as

<sup>1</sup> FP vii, 75, viii, 140, 142-4, ix, 586-9, 854, 866

<sup>2</sup> NE i, 51

<sup>3</sup> FP ix, 285

<sup>4</sup> FP ix, 927, Innes, *op cit*, 86

<sup>5</sup> FP. ix, 281, 569, 927, He along with Buriar Singh the brother of Rustam Shah submitted to P. Carnegy in April 1858 (CRO *Secret Letters from India*, vol 164, p 315).

<sup>6</sup> FP ix, 281

<sup>7</sup> FP ix, 574

<sup>8</sup> His agent Makhdum Baksh was also active during this time (FP. ix, 613).

<sup>9</sup> FP. ix, 50

the leader of the Feraizis,<sup>1</sup> seems to have kept himself in touch with the seditious activities of the Mahomedans of the Lower provinces. Hakim Aga Mohammed, alias Mohammed Hyder, commonly known as Aga Sahib, also entertained hostile designs.<sup>2</sup>

In Azamgarh near the eastern frontier of Oudh the garrison broke loose on 3 June, 1857, and carried on usual depredations and murdered European officers. The rebellion thus started was taken up by the palwar rajputs who throughout this period put up a strong fight against all attempts of Venerables, the plantation officer, to suppress them.

The palwar chief Prithvipal Singh of Bantera, a very influential member of that community who held the fort of Tigra, to the north-west of Jaunpur, came down in great force on the city after the evacuation of the British, and levied a contribution of rupees ten thousand on the baniyas.<sup>3</sup> The report submitted by Horne, the British officer at Azamgarh,<sup>4</sup> gives an idea accurate enough of the rebellion that was raging there. He says that the palwars and the rajcoomars had forgotten their blood feuds to unite against the British. In the Nizamabad tahsil, the government had no power of coercion beyond a few miles and for the period from June to August, the whole of it had been subjected to plunder. The villages in the Sagri tahsil were in a very unsettled and disaffected state and were ready for anything. Even in the month of September when Horne submitted his report, they were found to have been very restive. The zamindar Koel Singh of the place was on the side of order for some time, but he soon joined the palwars and made a common cause with Prithvipal Singh in imposing a levy on the mercantile sections of the populace. The Ghosi tahsil was similarly affected. In the tahsil of Sikandarpur (comprising Nagra thana) almost all

<sup>1</sup> FP. v, 7; App. A. to FP. v, 203-4.

<sup>2</sup> Other stray leaders who took part in the rising at Jaunpur were Phuli Singh (FP. vii, 276), Balavanta Singh of Dhaukalganja (FP. vii, 275-6), Mahipal Singh and Uditnarayan Singh (*Ibid.*), Jagnewar Baksh (*Ibid.*), Banda Hussain, chackladar, raja Hasanali Khan (FP. vii, 101), Fazl Azim, Pandit Kishannarayan (NE. i, 47).

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 255, 859.

<sup>4</sup> FP. vii, 265-9.



the hereditary landholders re-possessed themselves of their former properties. The auction purchasers who mostly came from Ghazipur could seldom obtain any hold on the land. Besides in Sikandarpur property was less sub-divided and was in the hands of a few large proprietors. In Mahmudabad tahsil, great distress prevailed in Mau and Mubarakpur. The landholders of Deogaon and Cheriakot were very turbulent and remained in an excitable condition. Koelsa and Atrauli on the borders of Oudh were full of refractory Rajputs who could not be tackled until Oudh itself was brought into some sort of order. Originally the British had very great difficulty in taking possession of this part of the country. The disappearance of the British rule left Koelsa entirely under the rule of Madhoprasad the palwar chief. But there were other parties in the tahsil who claimed supremacy in this area. Jaylal, the brother of the kurmi raja of Atrauli, put in a claim for the district of Azamgarh. But for the time being Madhoprasad held sway and led the palwars to attack Azamgarh on 12 July. Beni Madho, the kurmi raja of Atrauli, professed friendship for the British, but all the while, he collected his men and made preparations for war. The Mahul tahsil was lost to the government by the end of June when Muzaffar Jahan occupied it, and since that time he fortified that place and surrounded it with earthworks. The fort at Mahul withstood two companies of troops for a month and guns had to be sent for when the British took the place.<sup>1</sup> Rebellious proceedings were also reported from the refractory village of Kookonda where the villagers destroyed the indigo factory. One Phuli Singh who had been in the employ of the planter had taken considerable delight in destroying everything belonging to the factory.<sup>2</sup> Thus the whole country was up and showed no signs of returning to normal condition even after the reoccupation of the district by the British.

Beni Madho, the kurmi raja of Atrauli, was appointed the nazim of Azamgarh and Jaunpur under the rebel government of Lucknow.<sup>3</sup> He fought an action against an army of twelve

<sup>1</sup> His stronghold at Shamshabad and the entrenchment he had formed round Mahul were destroyed. The house of Prithvipal Singh was also burnt (FP ix 242).

<sup>2</sup> FP vii 275-6.

<sup>3</sup> FP v, 87, vii 73 ff, 255. His brother raja Jaylal Singh son of Ghaleb Jung

hundred gurkhas led by captain Boileau on 20 September, 1857, at Mandori, a village, ten miles from Azamgarh, but was defeated. The British party reached Atrauli on the 30th only to find that Beni Madho kurmi and Madhoprasad palwar had made their escape by night. The property of the kurmi raja was confiscated.<sup>1</sup> The victory of the British arms had some effect in subduing the palwars<sup>2</sup> but the country as a whole was far from being pacified. The invasion of Azamgarh which was threatened simultaneously with Jaunpur, as described above, came into effect on 4 November when two of the northern parganas of the district were overthrown by a large force estimated at not less than four thousand men. The invaders were too strong to be attacked by the Azamgarh gurkhas. The government obtained proofs showing the organised character of the movement against these districts.<sup>3</sup> There was no doubt that raja Beni Madho led the attack. The state of emergency existing on the borders of the two districts at that time is reflected in scraps of intelligence forwarded by A. R. Pollock. The rebels retained possession of Atrauli till the 10th when they dispersed.<sup>4</sup> Beni Madho fled to Oudh. Towards the end of

is also described as the nazim of Azamgarh and Jaunpur (FP. vii, 75, 77, 149, 268, 271f; viii, 132, 152; ix, 219, 242, 252, 586). He was said to have been hanged on 1 October, 1859 (Vincent, *Dictionary*, 566).

<sup>1</sup> FP. vii, 270f. ix, 255f; NE. i, 43, For the battle of Mandori see Malleson, ii, 317-8. He says that the fortifications of Atrauli were destroyed after the battle of Mandori, but the Oudh rebels are said to have seized the fort again on 4 November (*Ibid.* 319-20).

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 255: Report by A. R. Pollock, officiating magistrate, Azamgarh.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 701-02: Report by R. Strachey.

<sup>4</sup> The following is the official report :—

November 3, Tuesday—The tahsildars of Atraulia report that immense bodies of rebels are very near and are expected at Atraulia the next day. The tahsildar of Koelsa reports that about 4,000 or 5,000 rebels with 4 guns headed by Beni Madho and Jaylal Singh have arrived at Lohra. The tahsildar of Mahul reports that large bodies of rebels are posted at Shahzadpur, that they were entertaining more men....that goldsmiths are making bullets

November 5, Wednesday—The thanadar of Mahul reports that 2,000 rebels with four guns have arrived at Baskhari, that more are expected from Tandah, that the neighbouring zamindars have joined them and that the whole force are coming upon Azamgarh. He also says that some 2,000 rebels are collected in this place and Akbarpur.

November 10, Tuesday—We remained encamped at Atraulia and the levelling and destruction of the fort of Beni Madho commenced (FP. ix, 586-7).

November 1858 he was driven headlong to Gonda as a consequence of Hope Grant's offensive<sup>1</sup>

Muzaffar Jahan, as already noticed, proclaimed himself the raja of Mahul on 26 June and adopted a posture of strength in the various skirmishes of the rebellion in these areas<sup>2</sup> The rebel Pargan Singh made a successful attack on the thana at Maharajgunj<sup>3</sup> and formulated many schemes of combined action on different occasions Others who took part in the Azamgarh rising were Rajabali who attacked the kotwali with some four hundred followers<sup>4</sup> and syed Mohammed Hussain who passed himself as the chackladar of Azimgarh<sup>5</sup> The nature of the rising at Azamgarh can be judged from the extent of the support it received from landed communities and the populace in general An official source estimated that 2,000 rajcoomars of Bandipore, 7,000 to 8,000 palwars of Lohra, 1,200 sepoys of Gogra and 12,000 irregular levies of Singramau had thrown themselves into the war against the government<sup>6</sup>

The Azamgarh expedition of Kunwar Singh was indeed a great triumph of the popular cause The incursion of the Shahabad leader in the district in March 1858 produced the greatest consternation Meanwhile the reward for Kunwar Singh's apprehension was raised to rupees 25,000 by the government<sup>7</sup> The infection spread to Ghazipur which had been already affected by the outbreak at Azamgarh<sup>8</sup> The successful retreat of Kunwar Singh across these regions to

<sup>1</sup> Between Beni Madho the kurmi raja, and Madhoprasad the head of the palwars of Birhar (Fyzabad) whose fort and chief state lay beyond the Oudh frontier (NE 1, 38) Gubbins differs from the views of Davies and states that the former's contumacious attitude could not be doubted, while the latter was quite undecided early in July though subsequently he was openly in a hostile attitude (NF 1 39) Beni Madho Singh had offered four lakhs to Madhoprasad and invoked his aid to expel the English (FP ix, 588) Papers found in the Atrauli fort show that the kurmi raja was in league also with raja Man Singh from whom he received two guns and some 300 men When his fort at Atrauli was levelled a good deal of property, including 300 English cannon balls, was found (FP ix, 242).

<sup>2</sup> FP vii 73 268, 270f

<sup>3</sup> NE 1, 50-01

<sup>4</sup> FP ix 608

<sup>5</sup> FP vii 75-77

<sup>6</sup> FP ix, 600 Even as early as 18 July three to four thousand palwars confronted a government party outside the town of Azamgarh two miles on the Gorakhpur side (*The Englishman*, 25 July, 1857)

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix D A proclamation regarding the apprehension of Kunwar Singh

<sup>8</sup> NE, 1, 36

Jagdispur stirred up the embers of rebellion in the southern part of Ghazipur and in tracts adjoining Shahabad, especially in the Zamaniah tahsil where government buildings were burnt and sacked and 'loyal' people were hunted out. In June 1858, the Saidpur tahsil was similarly in uproar when the Jagdispur rebels were flying away from the British offensive. The campaigns of general Douglas in October 1858 brought back security in the country. In Ballia too the landholders and village communities whose rights had passed into the hands of auction purchasers attempted to regain their ancestral holdings. The villagers in particular flocked to the standard of Kunwar and facilitated his crossing of the Ganges with tremendous enthusiasm.

In Benares, the revolt of the sepoys had indeed been effectively put down, but no sooner had it become known in the districts around that there had been an insurrection than the whole country rose as one man. The communication with the neighbouring stations was cut off in such a way that it appeared as if the zamindars were about to attempt the execution of the project in which the sepoys had failed.<sup>1</sup> There was of course no organised resistance, and Hindu-Muslim dissension also raised its head, the green flag was hoisted, but auction purchasers and other stooges of British imperialism suffered the same fate as elsewhere. A conspiracy seems to have been afoot in which two bankers were involved. They were Bhyraprasad and Isriprasad who were executed on a charge of treason against the government.<sup>2</sup>

Thus in the first week of June, civil government had been destroyed in Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Benares and a great movement of the chiefs and the people was surging up. Mirzapur was in the same state. On 10 June, the property of the East Indian Railway was plundered in broad day, some four miles from the station. There was no rebellion of a general character in Mirzapur but the rising excited by the seditious chiefs assumed a serious proportion at times. Udwant Singh of Bhudoh pargana declared his independence and continued hostilities till he was captured and executed. This led to a

<sup>1</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 383. See also Kaye, ii, 234.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 218; vii, 299. Cf. *The Englishman*, Monday, 27 July, 1857.

resurgence Rebels vowed vengeance on Moore, the joint-magistrate of Mirzapur Jhuriya Singh led a large body of men, attacked the indigo factory at Pali where Moore had taken shelter He was beheaded and his head was carried off to be sold to the widow of Udwant Singh for rupees three hundred only <sup>1</sup> A similar trouble was brewing in Bijaigarh in the west of the district where the dispossessed claimant to the chiefship, Lakshman Singh, and his chandel malcontents were in open communication with the Shahabad rebels <sup>2</sup> The Dinapur mutineers excited a disturbance of a serious character but they were repulsed at Amoi, seventeen miles from Mirzapur on 15 August The commotion excited by the redoubtable leader Kunwar Singh who arrived with his force by way of Pan-naganj on 24 August, 1857, and encamped himself at Ramgarh, turned out to be a spontaneous movement of the people in general The chandels and other malcontents followed him Later on Amar Singh passed through the district<sup>3</sup> which also provided incitement to rebellion

<sup>1</sup> Ne i, 41-42 Jhuriya Singh of Mirzapur who raised this insurrection (FP vii, 258, ix 229 242 3, 263-4, 281, 283, 582) played a great part in the rebellion of the neighbouring districts He was supported by a large number of Mirzapur rebels such as Sarabdin Singh (FP ix 242) Zabbar Singh and Paddam Singh (FP ix, 263), Ranadhar Singh (FP ix, 281) and Fakir Baksh (FP ix, 282)

<sup>2</sup> NE i 47

<sup>3</sup> FP ix, 281

## CHAPTER THREE

### EASTERN INDIA

In Bihar the troops of almost every station showed signs of disaffection and revolt, but mutinies in Bihar were not followed by widespread civil commotion as in upper India, excepting in some places where the rising developed into a full-fledged mass movement. The local governments in many places held out instead of collapsing, but martial law was declared to be established on 30 July in many districts.

#### BHAGALPUR DIVISION

In the Bhagalpur division, Bhagalpur, Monghyr, and Purnea remained tolerably quiet though in Purnea considerable apprehension was felt owing to the movements of the 73rd regiment. But in the Santal parganas of this division the Santals showed a degree of restiveness which was unmistakable though there was no general flare-up among them.

The attempted military rising at Rohini, a village in Deoghar in the district of the Santal parganas, took place on 12 June, a month after the Meerut mutiny. Though it was suppressed, the unrest of the civil classes remained a menace to peace and order. It was reported that raja Mahatabchand and Govinda babu, his prime minister, were levying contributions upon the Santals and talking treason to them.<sup>1</sup> Another report was that the Santals living between Manbhum and Hazaribagh headed by Kunkura Coomar who had been released by the mutinous sepoys from the Hazaribagh jail were committing outrages.<sup>2</sup> In their own way the Santals threatened the civil power<sup>3</sup> by their usual acts of depredations, and treasonable intentions were also harboured by politically minded chiefs some of whom are mentioned in official despatches.<sup>4</sup> The disturbances

<sup>1</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 25 June, 1857.

<sup>2</sup> *The Englishman*, 30 September, 1857.

<sup>3</sup> FP. iv, 301; v, 8, 47, 52, 74, 80; App. A to FP. v, 161, 271-4.

<sup>4</sup> They are Amanat Kaha (FP. v, 272), Salamatali and Mahtulanarayan Singh (FP. v, App. A. 274; App. B. 444-6; vii, 7, 17; viii, 63). Tibroo Santal alias

excited by the Santals during this period were not essentially of a sporadic character, but presented signs of an organised movement

The second quarterly report for September, 1857 to November, 1857 of the assistant commissioner, Deoghar, refers to the prevalence of tension among the Santals which obliged the officer to disarm the population. It was reported that one *parganai* Kanu Manji had collected a huge military store. The Santals also reacted to the situation at Arrah specially after the ill fated expedition to Jagdispur in which the Arrah party had lost heavily. Then they started as the report goes in bodies of thousands ready for the fray as they had done in the revolt of 1856 but the news of the death of Kunwar Singh acted as a damper and chilled their spirits.<sup>1</sup> Even then it was persistently reported that Amar Singh was receiving support and succour from a number of disaffected Santals.

#### PATNA DIVISION

William Tayler the civil officer of the division a man of independent tone of thought, had reported to the government nearly two years before the mutinies of 1857 that the people of the districts were in a very restless and disaffected state.<sup>2</sup> He had referred in particular to the order for the removal of the *lotahs* which excited a commotion at Muzaffarpur and the universal belief that the order was the first step in the projected attack by government on Indian customs and religion.<sup>3</sup> The situation in the West Bihar division with Patna as its headquarters containing three lakhs of inhabitants, a large portion of whom

Copa Thakuran was charged with murder and suffered transportation (FP v App B 193). See also BPP vol. lxxiv pt. 1 58-59 for sporadic attacks of the Santals and the activities of some of their leaders Rupu Manji Rambani Manji and Arjun. For the part played by the Chuars during this period see FP v 47 App B 445. Jadhur Singh of Sahibgunj is also mentioned as a rebel (*Hindu Patriot* 9 September 1858).

<sup>1</sup> Dumka Records Letter Copy Book II Assistant Commissioner's office Deoghar No. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Kaye iii 70. Holmes's account of Tayler's administration is based on all available sources (op. cit. 178-9).

<sup>3</sup> W. Tayler's letter to W. Grey secretary to the government of Bengal dated the 21st June 1855 recently traced by Dr K. K. Datta and published in the BPP vol. lxxv pt. 1 Serial No. 138 January-June 1953 pp. 1-4.

were Mahomedans was causing anxiety to the authorities even before the actual outbreak of rebellion. Tayler's letter of 14 July to the government indicated that for months past conspiracies had been systematically and extensively carried on and subscriptions raised to finance the projected plot and communications and contacts established with many disaffected centres for the restoration of mahomedan sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> Reports of risings in upper India produced a state of tension and disquiet which eventually culminated in a violent demonstration of the seditious populace, mainly the Mahomedans, who with green flags rushed to the attack of the Roman Catholic Church in the city on 3 July. The rioters, some two hundred men, caused damages, but the attempt was a failure and the ease with which the disturbance was put down showed that the mass of the people of Patna were not yet thoroughly organised.<sup>2</sup> But the incident laid bare the existence of a widespread conspiracy aimed against the Christians. The official version is that the malcontents commenced their activities immediately after the annexation of Oudh but matters came to a head in the wake of the mutiny of the army,<sup>3</sup> and especially under the influence of the Wahabi muslims<sup>4</sup> in which Peerali was actively concerned. He was a bookseller of Patna and was supposed to be in treasonable correspondence with one Musi-uz-Zaman of Lucknow ever since the annexation of Oudh.<sup>5</sup> Forty-three ringleaders were brought to trial of whom Peerali along with eighteen others

<sup>1</sup> FP. v, App. B. 71. For other official correspondence to the state of disaffection, see FP. v, App. A. 12, 20, 62-63. Tayler's official correspondence of the month of June refers to the presence of general apprehension of rebellion. Measures were adopted to intercept rebels by the promise of large rewards and for policing of the grand trunk road. The district officers were even warned against the chamars (scavengers) who were suspected of disloyalty (Patna Collectorate Records Nos. 347a, 376, 377, 428, 435 of 1857). Further, the conduct of the zamindars was watched and an efficient intelligence department was organised (*Ibid.* No. 810 of 1857).

<sup>2</sup> Holmes says that Tayler's vigilance had forced the conspirators to strike before they were ready (*op. cit.*, 185).

<sup>3</sup> FP. v, App. B. 68; Mallison i, 55ff.

<sup>4</sup> For the activities of the Wahabis of Patna during this period, see FP. v, 3ff, 11, 23, 60f; App. A. 20, 21ff, 27f, 35-46ff; App. B. 8-9, 23, 71f. See also Mallison, i, 52ff; Dodd, *op. cit.*, 152-3. Dr. Sen says that the Wahabis as a community did not identify themselves with the revolt (*op. cit.*, 248).

<sup>5</sup> FP. v, 10; App. A. 35, App. B. 7f, 75f; Patna Collectorate Records, No. 473 of 1857.



including Asaf Hussain and Ghulam Abbas were hanged. In the site of his house a wooden pillar with a votive tablet was set up only as a deterrent to conspiracy and combination.<sup>1</sup> Another leader Lutfali Khan, the richest banker in the town, appears to have been at the "bottom" of these conspiracies,<sup>2</sup> financing the organisations, keeping on pay a large number of people for months 'under a conditional compact to come forward when called for' and employing as his jamadar Sheikh Ghasita Khahifa<sup>3</sup> and other rebels in his service.<sup>4</sup> Of Lutfali it was stated that he had been actually engaged in the plot of 1846-7 with Khawaja Hussainali Khan, a police jamadar, in Tirhut.<sup>5</sup> In Patna, the fauzadari nazim, Ali Hussain was taken into custody for having harboured an absconder.<sup>6</sup> Ali Karim, a zamindar of the Bihar district, who had great influence also in Saran and Tirhut, was considered to be the chief instigator of the conspiracy, and two thousand rupees were offered for his arrest. The magistrate of Patna reported on 28 June that if the maulavi intended to make a disturbance he would get plenty of followers.<sup>7</sup> His property was attached,<sup>8</sup> his jamadar, a man named Warisali, went to the gallows in the name of the king of Delhi.<sup>9</sup>

The rebellion at Patna encouraged many people to take sides against the British.<sup>10</sup> The names of many prominent persons who were believed to be disaffected might be recovered from stray references in the official papers. Maulavi Mehadi is repeatedly mentioned as one such.<sup>11</sup> Imamuddin and Kashim Sheikh, zamindars living some twenty-four miles from Patna,<sup>12</sup> Ahmedullah,<sup>13</sup> one of the three wahabi leaders arrested

<sup>1</sup> Patna Collectorate Records 486 of 1857, FP v, App B, 70

<sup>2</sup> FP v, App B, 26 27f, 75f, 86

<sup>3</sup> FP v, 17, ix, 129

<sup>4</sup> Patna Collectorate Records Nos 471, 506, 561, 645 of 1857

<sup>5</sup> FP v, App B 86, 90. For the plot in Bihar in 1845-46, see Dr A. A. Dutta in the Journal of the Bihar Research Society, vol. xl, part 3, 1954

<sup>6</sup> FP v, App B, 21. Patna Collectorate Records Nos 446 470 499 of 1857

<sup>7</sup> FP v, App B, 9f, 68, App A 21 23f, 35f, 50, 90f, FP viii, 88, ix, 378

<sup>8</sup> Patna Collectorate Records No 495 of 1857

<sup>9</sup> *The Red Pamphlet*, 177, Parliamentary Papers (Lords), vol. xii, p. 3

<sup>10</sup> FP v, 2f, 11f, 16f

<sup>11</sup> FP v 3, App A, 28. He came from Saran

<sup>12</sup> FP v, 16; App B, 20

<sup>13</sup> FP v, App A, 46

by Tayler, Sheikhmullah, Mahabatali<sup>1</sup> and Fyazali, whose property was attached, Makun Singh and his son Bisheswar Singh<sup>2</sup> and Jitanlal, are similarly represented as active rebels.<sup>3</sup>

In Saran, in the Patna Division, the factories of Baburam and those of Macleod<sup>4</sup> were plundered and a large concentration of rebels numbering about six to seven thousand strong confronted colonel Rowcroft on 26 December 1857. The commotion felt in the district in anticipation of the arrival of Kunwar Singh indicated the temper and mood of the people. Waves of disaffection also flowed through Champaran and Tirhut. In Muzaffarpur, the chief station of Tirhut, the situation was very tense and though the zamindars, traders and bankers of Tirhut were on the side of order and helped the government in all possible ways, the mutinous sepoy received the direct or indirect support of the people.

Shahabad is bounded on the north by the Ganges, on the east by the Son, on the west by the Karmanasa, and on the south transversely by the hilly districts of Mirzapur. In this country the Bihar rebels found their focus. Here they combined and fought for a long time under the inspiring leadership of Kunwar Singh, the veteran old rajput, and other members of his illustrious house. After the rising at Dinapur on 25 July the mutineers rushed to Arrah where

<sup>1</sup> FP. v, 17; Patna Collectorate Records No. 552 of 1857.

<sup>2</sup> Patna Collectorate Records Nos. 33, 832 of 1857.

<sup>3</sup> The following are also mentioned as rebels:—Maksudali, Md. Munir, Yasufali, Muhinullah, Khoda Baksh, Maulavi Wazul Haq, Mansurali, Kashim Sheikh and many others (FP. v, App. B. 9-10, 20-22, 83, 92; ix, 128f, 400). Very interesting is the case of Sahabalam Sultan or Tumur Mirza who was detained as a prisoner in the Mithapur jail. He passed himself off as a Persian Shahazada. It was ascertained that he was in touch with the *hakim* of the Bettiah raja. The *hakim* was under strong suspicion of disaffection (FP. ix, 401).

Some other rebels of Bihar casually noticed in official papers are Sotoraja (FP. vii, 20), Judhar Singh (FP. ix, 8) and the raja of Nurpur (FP. ix, 139). A long correspondence centres round the attitude of the widow of the late Med-narayan Singh who was adding to the fortifications of Tikari (Gaya) which caused alarm to the government (FP. vii, 91). Tikari lies to the northwest of Gaya on the road across the Son river to Arrah. There was also a road through it to Dinapur. The rani of Tikari, however, justified her action on grounds of defence against marauding soldiers who scoured the country (FP. ix, 136, 344, 397). See FP. ix, 479-82 for a long list of the rebels.

<sup>4</sup> FP. vii, 25-26.

they joined Kunwar on the 27th and completely ransacked the civil establishments.

### KUNWAR LEADS THE REVOLT

On 7 June, W. Tayler, the commissioner of Patna received an alarming intimation from Dinapur apprehending a rise of the sepoys of that station and a descent upon Patna.<sup>1</sup> The Dinapur sepoys actually addressed a letter to the Bihar station guard urging them to seize the treasury and join in a revolt before the Sikh corps had armed. The letter was delivered up by a singular act of fidelity.<sup>2</sup> The situation was critical and according to Tayler it was obvious that excitement prevailed everywhere.<sup>3</sup> By the middle of June the British officers in eastern India, nearly all of them, entertained a vague feeling that the Dinapur troops, who came mostly from the district of Shahabad, would soon follow their compatriots in upper India. They had also a presentiment that such an outbreak would be accompanied by risings in other parts of Bihar.<sup>4</sup> Panic seized the Europeans at Shahabad some of whom even left the station. This conduct on their part was visited with displeasure<sup>5</sup> by the commissioner. But Tayler himself was feeling uneasy about the situation which was very similar in nature to what he had brought to the notice of the government two years back. He adopted various precautionary measures for the defence of Patna and other out-stations.<sup>6</sup> The zamindars were warned of their duties and responsibilities under act xvii of 1857 to bring to the notice of the government all instances of sedition and contumacy.<sup>7</sup> On 18 June he reported to Halliday, the lieutenant-governor of Bengal, that open

<sup>1</sup> FP v (App A), 13. Halls says that the intimation was received on 8 June (*Two Months in Arrah*, 11).

<sup>2</sup> Letter No 223, dated 13 June, 1857. W Tayler to the secretary to the government of Bengal.

<sup>3</sup> Tayler's letter to the secretary, 14 June (FP. v, App A, 117).

<sup>4</sup> FP v, 83 (App A) Report by the magistrate of Tuhut; 57. Report by H C Wake, magistrate of Shahabad, 18 June.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid* 11.

<sup>7</sup> FP. v (App A), 64.

plundering was going on in the Ghazipur Doab, and that the people of all the districts to the west of Chapra also were in revolt. He underlined the gravity of the situation further in these words:

These are not light matters, and if you could but see the daily letters that pour in asking me for instructions...you would see what a difficult game I have to play.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, Tayler's communications of this period leave this impression that the government was forewarned about the impending crisis. The idea was widely prevalent that the English rule was drawing to its close, even the coolies talked of the Shah of Delhi. Captain Rattray's Sikhs while marching through a town were abused as Christians by the people who showed evident signs of sulky disaffection.<sup>2</sup> The condition of Shahabad, Kunwar's home district, was alarming in the extreme. Wake, the magistrate, reported that the district was swarming with insurgents and referred in particular to the population of the country, the Bhojpuri men, who were essentially martial by temperament. As the high road up-country lay straight through Shahabad the situation gave particular cause for anxiety.<sup>3</sup> The people of the sub-division of Barh also were found to be both turbulent and disaffected.<sup>4</sup>

These symptoms of disaffection notwithstanding, Tayler had his own reasons to think differently of Kunwar Singh who was widely suspected to be in a state of contumacy. In various communications, the magistrate of Shahabad repeatedly brought to Tayler's notice the conduct of Kunwar as capable, by his great influence, of giving help or joining the mutinous sepoys in the event of their rise. He was, it was pointed out, liable to particular suspicion from the numerous reports spread regarding him since the beginning of the outbreak. His peculiar position as the ruined owner of vast estates who would become supreme in the district on the occurrence of disorder tended to single him out as the destined leader of the upsurge.

<sup>1</sup> FP. (App. A.), 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

<sup>3</sup> FP. v (App. A.), 57, 63.

<sup>4</sup> FP. v (App. B.), 220.

It was also represented that under the existing system of law or order he could barely find the means to pay the interest of his debts and naturally he was supposed to be interested in the subversion of the present order. Consequently, the magistrate of Shrihabad continued to watch Kunwar narrowly. Wake was quite emphatic in his views. He further observed

I do think that, should these districts be ever the scene of a serious outbreak, he may take it into his head that it is time to strike a blow for his own interests, and his feudal influence is such as to render him exceedingly dangerous in such an event <sup>1</sup>

But Tayler would say that his personal friendship for him and the attachment he had always shown him enabled him confidently to contradict the report.<sup>2</sup> On 23 July, two days before the mutiny at Dinapur had broken out, he stated in a convincing manner that despite the Arrah magistrate's apprehension that Kunwar was in communication with the 40th regiment at Dinapur,<sup>3</sup> he could not, to his knowledge, cast the same imputation, on the 'honourable and straight forward character' of Babu Kunwar Singh. He valued most Kunwar's feelings of personal friendship for him. Tayler admitted that in the present context when the wisest calculations had been baffled and the firmest confidence betrayed, his attitude of abiding trust in Kunwar would be the height of miscalculation, yet he could not help being convinced of Kunwar Singh's fealty and good faith. Moreover, as he judged it

The raja's interests are so much bound up with the British government that there is little fear of his joining in any treasonable designs.<sup>4</sup>

It is, therefore, evident that Tayler disagreed with the views of Wake in considering the ruined condition of Kunwar as a likely cause for the revolt of that chief. Even on 26 July when major general Lloyd informed Tayler that Kunwar at the head of the mutinous troops and thousands of Bhojpurians was advancing to attack Arrah, the latter remained unmoved

<sup>1</sup> FP v (App B) 27-28. Wake's letter to the secretary dated 19 July 1857.

<sup>2</sup> FP v (App A) 11.

<sup>3</sup> Hall's *Two Months*, etc., 27.

<sup>4</sup> FP v (App B) 142.

While acknowledging that it would be unwise to place implicit trust in any Indian at that critical time, he doubted whether Kunwar was at all meditating any such adventure and still believed that he would repair to Patna to prove his loyalty.<sup>1</sup> When, however, no doubt remained as to the participation of Kunwar in the revolt, Tayler expressed the belief that the raja possibly had been compelled to join in spite of himself and also had been encouraged to some extent by the success of the rebels.<sup>2</sup>

Nor was this attitude entirely untenable. From the constant expressions of loyalty received from Kunwar Singh to the very last moment and his known leaning to European society, it was difficult to believe that he meditated treason. Kunwar's letters to Tayler were full of cordial expressions. He was said to have assured him of any assistance that lay in his power.<sup>3</sup>

But the contemporary view of the whole affair according to the Calcutta *Englishman* was that Kunwar Singh was a privy to the mutiny of troops at Dinapur. That Daily sedulously circulated reports that one of the most extensive Shahabad landholders, babu Kunwar Singh who was a bankrupt, had joined the mutineers in the hope of repairing his fortune. For a long time before the mutiny took place, he, it was said, had been in touch with the sepoys, and enticing them to rise and proceed to Arrah where they would receive money and employments. It was also believed that he had assembled a large force of some thousands of his rajput tenants in the Chitaura jungle which was known to the authorities.<sup>4</sup> Nor were the official sources reticent on this point. H. C. Wake of Shahabad shared the current idea of his treasonable intentions, that he was sending emissaries in all directions, and calling on his ryots to be ready to attend him on the first summons. He also referred to one captain Hastings who was reported to have declared on the evidence of a trustworthy agent that Kunwar Singh was

<sup>1</sup> FP. v (App. B.), 149. Rajani Kanta Gupta writes that Kunwar Singh was not at heart a rebel (*Sipahi Tuddher Itihas* vol. iv; pp. 238-9)

<sup>2</sup> FP. v (App. B.), 150.

<sup>3</sup> FP. v, (App. A.), 22, 61.

<sup>4</sup> *The Englishman*, 4 August, 1857.

collecting arms and men<sup>1</sup> The collector of Tirhut was informed that Kunwar was the man who had been selected by the Dinapur sepoy as their raja<sup>2</sup> Gubbins of Lucknow also quotes major V Eyre to establish his complicity in the outbreak According to him Kunwar had taken leading part in instigating the revolt On hearing of the approach of the Buxar force, he, it was alleged, summoned to standard by beat of tom-tom in every village, not only the sepoy, then on leave, nearly nine different regiments, but also the pensioned sepoy of government, several hundreds of whom obeyed the call<sup>3</sup>

But all these were not reliable information against the raja, and Tayler attached no credit to them He could not forget the private assurances that Kunwar Singh had sent him of his great personal regard for the commissioner and attachment to the government To put him to test, however, Tayler sent his agent to him intimating the suspicions entertained against him and directing him to repair in person to Patna to give an account of himself On 19 July syed Azimuddin Hussain, the deputy-collector of Arrah, was at the same time directed to scrutinise everything connected with and about Kunwar and to submit a confidential report regarding it to the commissioner Azimuddin visited him, and found him lying on bed He pleaded extreme sickness, and added that being old and infirm he was unable to take the journey to Patna at that stage He was profuse in his expressions of loyalty and good will and utterly denied having any intention of playing the commissioner false Kunwar was certainly ill, but the repressive measures adopted by Tayler at Patna might have produced consternation and it was possible that his counsellors had advised him not to take the risk Azimuddin's report was favourable to Kunwar Singh, who, however, did not make his appearance at Patna The secret enquiry made in his estate did not elicit information as to his preparations for revolt Nor was there any reason to suppose that his people were particularly disaffected It was of course well known that should he raise

<sup>1</sup> FP v, (App B) 92-93 The letter is undated (Inclosure 227) but it appears to have been addressed on 25 July

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 339

<sup>3</sup> Gubbins *The mutinies in Oudh* 545

the standard of revolt his people would follow him as their feudal chieftain, but beyond this nothing was ascertained.<sup>1</sup>

The whole episode was interpreted by the officials to mean that Kunwar having been guilty to a certain extent of plotting, suspected a trap in the commissioner's summons, and either cajoled or deceived the agent. Some even questioned the bonafides of Azimuddin, stating that he connived at the contumacy of the raja and let him slip out. This aspect of the question assumed considerable significance as many letters were published in the *Englishman* impugning his conduct. It may be remembered that Azimuddin gave proofs of rare fidelity during this time and was one of the besieged in the fort.<sup>2</sup> In defence of his good name the Patna deputy-collector published a letter in a local daily refuting all the charges levelled against him. The letter running to great length shows critical insight and understanding of a difficult question. Very convincingly he exculpates Kunwar Singh of all suspicion of his alleged contumacy on the ground that he made payments to his creditors in the months of May and June, that he did not lay by a supply of war. Besides this Azimuddin was surprised as to how a man who was pennyless could afford to make preparations to go to war. Indeed, as he says,

I could elicit nothing by secret enquiry which might warrant the conclusion that Kunwar was making secret preparations for a revolt.<sup>3</sup>

This view of the situation was entirely at variance with the one held by Wake, the magistrate of Arrah. On 29 January, 1858, he submitted a report to the commissioner of Patna of which the following excerpt is relevant to the issue:

The information I have received leaves no possible room for doubt that Kooer Singh had for some time been planning the rebellion and was only waiting for the Dinapur Regiments. I am inclined to attribute the full to the efforts made by him to keep the Rajputs quiet until the proper moment arrived and the good behaviour of the lower castes to the promise of license held out to them when the

<sup>1</sup> FP. v, 5, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Halls, *Two Months*, etc. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *The Englishman*, 20 November, 1857.



outbreak should occur. This view of the case is not so flattering to myself but I am convinced that this is the right one.

I know that there is an idea prevalent that Koor Singh's treason was not premeditated, but I am certain that for three months at least he was only biding his time. There is or ought to be in the commissioner's office an anonymous petition, from a man who would not come forward by me to Mr Tayler, the late commissioner, detailing the whole of the Baboo's plans and preparations and even the date (the 25th July) on which the Dinapur Regiments would mutiny. This was forwarded by me I think a week before the meetings and every word in it proved true.<sup>1</sup>

The results of any further investigations on the line are not recorded in the official papers. Wake's statement carries the weight of the personal conviction of a very capable official who had seen enough of the mutiny but it does not prove the case against Kunwar. The report which appeared in the papers that Kunwar was exasperated because his Arrah house had been searched, his dewan Kaliprasad apprehended and all his papers seized as a consequence of which he negotiated with the sepoys, does not explain the issue.<sup>2</sup> Azimuddin's statement is more circumstantial and has the merit of an objectivity of outlook. Further, Kunwar Singh is said to have declared at Arrah that he had been compelled to assist the mutineers.<sup>3</sup> Reports about the compulsive means adopted by the sepoys and others to secure the participation of Kunwar were by no means less wellknown.<sup>4</sup> The deposition of Nishan Singh, one of the principal lieutenants of Kunwar,<sup>5</sup> is quoted by many writers on the subject to show that Kunwar was actually forced to join the mutinous sepoys. This supports the theory of Azim-

<sup>1</sup> No. 28 of 29 January 1858 (Patna file). The 'anonymous petition' as mentioned in Wake's report possibly refers to the anonymous communication which Halls says was found on the table in the judges' office on the 17th. The letter stated that Alikarim the noted leader of Gaya had arrived at Jagd-pur and that Kunwar Singh was concerned in the intended rising of the sepoys which was certain to take place on 25 July. On getting the clue the government searched the house of Kunwar's Arrah agent Kaliprasad, but no incriminatory evidence was found (*Two Months, etc.*, 33-34).

<sup>2</sup> *The Englishman*, 14 August, 1857.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Rajani Kanta Gupta, *Sipahi Yuddh Itihas* vol. iv, 214-7.

<sup>5</sup> K. K. Datta in *Patna University Journal* (vol. viii, 1954. *Some Newly Discovered Records*).

uddin that the mutiny took him by surprise. Yet, the way in which Kunwar identified himself with their cause and the suddenness with which his retainers joined him refutes Azimuddin's version of the case. Again Wake's arguments against the theory of Tayler, later on reinforced by Samuells, that financial difficulties lay at the root of Kunwar Singh's revolt have some basis, to be sure. The picture that emerges out of these official exchanges is still very scrappy and does not either prove or disprove Kunwar's complicity in bringing to a head the revolt in Shahabad.

There were signs of mutiny in the three regiments at Dinapur early in the morning of 25 July, but general Lloyd, instead of attacking them at the instant, preferred giving them time (till 4 p.m.) to consider whether they would give up the magazine. The sepoy, however, employed that time in removing their families, and filling their pouches with full ammunition and in sneaking off westward. At 2 p.m. the European pickets observed some extraordinary movement of the sepoy, and immediately gave the signal. The general ordered the advance of the guns, but he proceeded himself on board the steamer, and there was, therefore, no one in the cantonment to give order. The result was that the mutineers walked off quietly and it was not before they were a mile and more away that the guns opened on them with round shot which had no effect. Two companies of mutineers took to boats with the intention of calling in at Patna, but the *Lady Thackwell* which was on her upward trip with the artillery steamed up, and sank five boats. The queen's 37th rifles also did considerable execution from the shore.<sup>1</sup>

The Dinapur mutineers fired everything on both sides of the Son. Burn and Company's bungalow at Sudaspur was looted, their property at Dumrinalla was burnt down and their house at Arrah was later on used as barracks by the rebels. A heap of coal on the west side of the Son, about sixty thousand maunds, was set on fire in several places. The ruin was complete and the conflagration extended over the entire country from Son to Buxar which passed into the hands of the

<sup>1</sup> FP. iv, 20.

rebels<sup>1</sup> The mutineers, the 7th and 8th, carried their colours with them, beating the big drums as they went They crossed the Son on the night of the 25th, and the whole of the next day in small boats which Kunwar Singh, it was said, had in readiness at the Jaunpuria ghat On both sides of the river they burnt all the railway bridge works and marched unmolested onward to Arrah<sup>2</sup> As they went on they were joined by the people of Narainpur and Nasratpur villages and plundered and set fire to Nansagar factory of Drummond

On 27 July at about 8 a.m. the whole of the 7th, 8th, and 40th entered Arrah The official reports state quite clearly that when the troops reached the station they were led by Kunwar Singh<sup>3</sup> and were joined by a number of his men The sepoys repeatedly declared that they were acting under his express orders and he was actually seen on the parade and remained during the siege The insurgents released the prisoners, rushed to the collectorate and looted the treasury amounting to eighty-five thousand rupees The new building for the use of the records and the civil courts along with the whole of the papers and books were destroyed Every bungalow was looted and almost all property burnt They then attacked the bungalow which Boyle, the resident railway engineer, had fortified<sup>4</sup> The defenders numbered sixteen gentlemen and fifty Rattray's Sikh police<sup>5</sup> One redeeming feature of these disturbances which Wake recorded in his report was that except in the case of the soldiers retreating from Arrah there was no cold blooded assassination of Europeans<sup>6</sup>

Intelligence was obtained in the British circle that Kunwar Singh was acting as the raja and that he had levied a contribution of five lakhs of rupees on the mahajans and the rich people In the rebel government established, Harkishan Singh

<sup>1</sup> Dinapur correspondent of *The Englishman*, 3 August 1857

<sup>2</sup> Most of the mutineers carried ten pounds of ammunition each but only enough caps to discharge them It was said that in Arrah they were firing company's copper coinage which they found in the treasury (*The Englishman*, 4 August 1857)

<sup>3</sup> FP iv 21, 23, v (App B) 149

<sup>4</sup> FP v (App B) 227-333 Report by H. C. Wake, *Halls Two Months etc*  
25 According to Hall the insurgents looted the treasury of 70 000 rupees (p. 39)

<sup>5</sup> *The Englishman* 13 August 1857 Letter of Boyle.

<sup>6</sup> No. 28 of 29 January 1858 Patna File

was appointed wazir, and Ghulam Ahya, a vakil of the civil court, superintendent of police. Another vakil Aminuddin occupied a prominent position in the court. He was most active in making great guns and powder for blowing up the Arrah fort. Former employees of the government were appointed to offices of trust.<sup>1</sup> The attitude of the raja of Dumraon was not clearly demonstrated. He was suspected to be an associate of Kunwar, but others believed that he was not guilty.<sup>2</sup> The raja eventually bolted away in panic before the troops arrived at Buxar. He fled with his family to Surajpur on the night of 28 August, for fear of an attack from Kunwar Singh.<sup>3</sup> But the rebellion was universal. No doubt was entertained by the authorities regarding the nature of the upsurge in Shahabad which had affected all classes and so the magistrate recommended wholesale burning and destruction of all villages.<sup>4</sup> Seven to ten thousand men arose as if by magic in Shahabad.<sup>5</sup> The war-like population of the rajput villages headed by brave chieftains were on the side of the rebellion. Wake says that as the mutiny came, every chief on Kunwar Singh's estates as well as numbers of the lower classes, joined his standard. The police fled in every direction and the government remained subverted.<sup>6</sup>

The basic feature of the rebellion in Shahabad is reflected in the wholesale destruction of European property effected by the rebels. The report published in the *Englishman* of Calcutta on the position of the planters during this crisis receives support from the official accounts of the disturbances. Kunwar, it is said, sent orders for the destruction of European property. The indigo planters after having laid out all the expense of the season were at that time just ready to reap the crop, but they were obliged to abandon their property. It was estimated that the expected crop of indigo in the different

<sup>1</sup> *The Englishman*, 4 August, 17 November, 1857.

<sup>2</sup> FP. iv, 407.

<sup>3</sup> *The Englishman*, 11 September, 1857.

<sup>4</sup> NE. ii, 14: Narrative (No. 24) to 12 September, 1857.

<sup>5</sup> Halls, *Two Months*, etc., 77.

<sup>6</sup> No. 28 of 29 January 1858, *op. cit.*

factories in Shahabad would total three thousand three hundred and fifty maunds which at two hundred rupees per maund was worth nearly seven lakhs. And if the value of the factories destroyed and burnt is included, the total loss would come to a very considerable amount, not short of twelve or thirteen lakhs.<sup>1</sup> The number of indigo factories of Shahabad and of the neighbouring areas burnt by the rebels or destroyed or looted in other ways, as can be gathered from the list of compensation offered to the sufferers gives us a clear picture of the extent of the conflagration. They were the Gaya and Tarar factories of R. Solano, the Bucknarr factory in Shahabad of E. Moore, the factory at Buxar of Mathews, property of R. Palin at Kailwar on the Son, Nowlagar factory in Shahabad of G. Drummond, property of C. E. Davies in Shahabad, property of C. A. D. Souza at Arrah, property of W. C. Costley at Sisaram, factory of J. Grundy and I. G. Madzer at Rajpurah, the Patsah factory of Miller and the property of D. Rozario. One R. L. Ewing and Jogendra Das of Arrah also got compensation on account of property lost.<sup>2</sup>

One hundred and ninety men of the queen's 37th were despatched from Dinapur at 5 o'clock on the evening of the 27th in the *Harungata* steamer, a troop boat for the relief of Arrah. They steamed on until 10 o'clock in the night when the vessel got aground.<sup>3</sup> In this position they remained for about thirty six hours when the *Bombay* was sent from Dinapur on the morning of the 29th. The *Bombay* took the whole force now numbering more than four hundred men under the command of captain Dunbar. She steamed up the river and landed the party about twelve miles from Arrah at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Captain Harrison of the party says that they arrived off the point of debarkation and commenced their march towards Arrah at 7 o'clock in the evening and reached without opposition a bridge about one mile and a half distant from Arrah. At this point, the captain represented to Dunbar the expediency of halting for the night but the latter overruled him. He said that he had heard from the magistrate of

<sup>1</sup> *The Englishman* 24 August 1857. Dodd *op cit* 345.

<sup>2</sup> NE ii 83 191 204 233 234 238 243 263 270 277.

<sup>3</sup> FP iv 21.

the improbability of their meeting with any opposition.<sup>1</sup> From the bridge-point they began their march upon Arrah. A false news had meanwhile been received by the commanding officer that the magistrate of Arrah had sent for relief, and relying on this, Dunbar persisted in pushing on. It was eleven p.m. and quite dark when they reached as far as the entrance to the town on Wednesday night, the 29th July. They were at once fired into from both sides of the road; volley after volley was poured into them by the unseen rebels who from an ambush behind a wall, decimated their ranks. The white dress of the British troops provided excellent targets. According to lieutenant Waller of the party the Indians were well aware of the expedition having been sent against them.<sup>2</sup> There they remained all night being repeatedly fired upon by the enemy. The remnants of the British party retreated next morning, but they were hotly pursued. In consequence they miserably escaped to Dinapur at mid-day on 30 July, having lost seven officers and one hundred and eighty four men.<sup>3</sup> The rebels hung the dead bodies of the Europeans to trees, took their enfield rifles, guns and cartridges and all, which many of them used.<sup>4</sup> The work was done mostly by the infuriated villagers who cut up the wounded soldiers into small pieces. Kunwar's presence in this action was also reported in the contemporary papers.<sup>5</sup>

The ill-fated expedition to Arrah had cast a gloom over the whole of eastern India. It was considered a disgrace that with six guns at Dinapur and a European regiment, and Arrah only twenty-four miles off, the English should remain at bay for the moment.<sup>6</sup> Its immediate effect was far-reaching. The whole of Shahabad was thrown into a terrible turmoil and the probability of a rising was openly talked about in the bazars of Sherghati and Dehri.<sup>7</sup> The najibs of Gaya seized the opportu-

<sup>1</sup> FP. iv, 136-7.

<sup>2</sup> FP. iv, 135.

<sup>3</sup> FP. iv, 23-25. *The Englishman*, 6 August, 1857.

<sup>4</sup> *The Overland Bombay Times*, 31 August, 1857, p. 155.

<sup>5</sup> *The Englishman*, 14 August, 24 August, 1857.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 14 August, 1857. There was a great talk of the inefficiency of some of the general officers of the mutiny period of Hewitt, of Ponsonby, of Lloyd as of their counterparts in the Crimean war (*The Englishman*, 14 August, 1857). Also Richard Hilton, *The Indian Mutiny*, 146.

<sup>7</sup> FP. iv, 24.

nity, released all the jail birds and looted the town. Taylers' memorandum of 31 July depicts a scene of countrywide commotion, the rebels strengthened from their late success were in full force, and there was no protection whatsoever for the English residents.<sup>1</sup> Canning's estimate of the disastrous results which followed the attempt to relieve Arrah indicated that the crisis was the gravest of its kind the British had faced in eastern India.

The peace of the lower provinces along the valley of the Ganges from Berhampur to Benares and in the neighbourhood of the grand trunk road south of Benares was seriously threatened and the chief sources of revenue in Bengal were also in jeopardy.<sup>2</sup>

Fears were entertained for the residents of Bhagalpur where the fifth irregulars were known to be shaky. The mutineers were likely to make a descent on Gaya and Patna.<sup>3</sup> Great alarm was felt for the capital city. If the rebels were only to recross the Son after Arrah was taken and make a dash at Patna marching along the railway line, thus avoiding Dinapur, they would have easily annexed the city, for the commissioner was known to have decided to leave Patna to its fate and withdraw at once to Dinapur. Providence protected the British from that danger for the majority of the mutineers took the western road. Had Patna fallen, all channels of communication with the upper provinces both by land and river would have been permanently cut off and all prospects of supporting the army in the North-West provinces would have to be given up.<sup>4</sup> The piquancy of this situation drove the commissioner to adopt the policy of concentrating (31 July) all the British strength at Patna and Dinapur. This policy of concentration was much criticised by the public and also by the government but to the man on the spot it appeared to be the only means of saving isolated bodies of Englishmen from the surging tides of revolt. The impact of the Arrah disaster shattered all feelings

<sup>1</sup> FP v (App B) 218

<sup>2</sup> Forrest *Selections* ii (Document). Minute of the governor general of India in council dated 2 August, 1857 pp 168-9, Also FP iv, 12

<sup>3</sup> The official report of 2 August stated that the troops were inadequate to cope with Kunwar who meditated an attack on Patna (FP iv 29, App B 226)

<sup>4</sup> *The Englishman* 14 August, 1857

of complacency and brought the English to realise the intensity of the real situation:

That the present war is a war of extermination, deliberately planned and unscrupulously carried out, it is now impossible to deny.<sup>1</sup>

For the time being Kunwar was supreme. He had his spies at every ghat and had early intelligence of all the movements of the British troops. He also took over all boats to his side of the river and set a watch over them.<sup>2</sup> But Wake's defence of Arrah had greatly improved the position of the British. They were shut up in a small house, from which the mutineers tried to burn them out and to blow them up, but all ended in a fiasco. Hall truly says that few events were more productive of immediate result during this time of crisis than the successful defence at Arrah.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile the British offensive party under major Eyre left Buxar on the evening of 30 July and pushed on to Shapur, the next day, where intelligence of the Dinapur disaster was first received. From Shapur, Eyre marched to Bullowtee, and repaired the bridge which had been cut through by the rebels. Then he advanced to Gujrajganj. The rebels were encountered about a mile from the latter place. They endeavoured to attack on both flanks but skirmishers armed with the enfield rifles being sent out, they were put off. The Indians then hurried round Bibiganj and took up a strong position on the other side of the river behind extensive earth-works. Major Eyre made a detour to the right which was kept concealed by the fire of his guns. But it was soon discovered, and the rebels who had mustered about two thousand and five hundred sepoys occupied a wood through which the British forces were to pass. The sepoys advanced to the assault with unexpected vigour and rushed for the guns. They were received by showers of grapes. But the Indians launched a vigorous assault all along the British line. Consequently a charge was ordered and they were speedily driven from the wood. The country beyond was now all open and Eyre

<sup>1</sup> FP. v (App. B.), 226: Tayler's letter of 1 August. There is a similarity of situations between the cases of Tayler and Hastings. Both were reprimanded and both languished in concealed sorrow.

<sup>2</sup> FP. v (App. B.), 232.

<sup>3</sup> FP. iv, 28; Halls, *Two Months*, etc. 75.



reached Arrah Kunwar with the mass of his followers evacuated the place and scattered themselves in different directions,<sup>1</sup> mostly towards Jagdispur Terrible retribution followed The relieving party of Europeans from Buxar was entirely occupied in hanging the rebels On 4 August two hundred Sikhs had been sent up by the steamer to torture the villagers freely In Arrah gallows were permanently set up and well supplied with victims as fast as they could be apprehended<sup>2</sup> Wake reported on 7 August that they had burnt every village close to the town<sup>3</sup>

On 7 August, the Shahabad magistrate reported that Kunwar Singh was determined to hold out at Jagdispur jungle twelve miles distant from Arrah The jungle was fifteen miles long and two miles wide Kunwar had still a large force there He had good hope of the 65th joining him and the irregulars from Sagauli might also repair to his assistance So Eyre planned to move into Jagdispur<sup>4</sup> and preparations were well under way for the intended attack<sup>5</sup> On 12 August Eyre completely routed the rebel force under Kunwar According to official estimate about three thousand men, of whom one thousand and five hundred were sepoys, mustered strong The action commenced at the village of Dullaur about two or three miles from Jagdispur, at eleven a.m. There the rebels made a resolute stand for about an hour They then fell back upon dense and formidable jungle A running fight was kept up to Jagdispur which was secured at 1 o'clock This was followed by immediate occupation of Kunwar's residence<sup>6</sup> The loss of the Indians in killed and wounded in the battle at Dullaur on the 12th, exceeded three hundred<sup>7</sup>

On the 13th it was ascertained that Kunwar had evacuated his stronghold only one hour before the entry of the British force and had

<sup>1</sup> FP n, 75-76 Major Eyre to colonel Cumberlege, Camp near Arrah, 3 August, 1857

<sup>2</sup> *The Englishman*, 14 August 1857

<sup>3</sup> FP v (App B), 334-5

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 418, iv 86.

<sup>6</sup> FP iv 91 Report by major Eyre, Koor Singh's palace, Jagdispur, 12 August, 1857

<sup>7</sup> FP iv, 95

fied in the direction of Jutoora, seven miles south, where he had a favourite resort in the midst of the jungle. Captain L'Estrange was despatched with 80 men. On reaching Jutoora they found that Kunwar had hurried on towards Sassaram with the remains of the 40th N. I., those of the 7th and 8th having proceeded westward in a state of complete disorganisation. Meanwhile, Major Eyre had undermined every principal building in Kunwar's stronghold, including a new Hindu temple whereon large sums had recently been expended. At 2 p.m. on the 15th of August, the mines were sprung; and the whole was reduced to a heap of ruins. Kunwar had collected within his walls, stores of grain sufficient to have subsisted 20,000 men for six months. This the neighbouring villagers were allowed to remove. . . . . Large stores of ammunition and material of war were also found and much miscellaneous property. On the 16th Major Eyre marched in pursuit of Kunwar in the direction of Sassaram as far as Peeroo, . . . . . it was ascertained that Kunwar had proceeded via Bijegurh towards Rewah.<sup>1</sup>

The act of vandalism committed by the British may best be described in terms of official correspondence. From Jagdispur Eyre wrote to the authorities on 14 August to the effect that he was destroying the town and preparing to blow up the palace. Further,

To-day I partially destroyed a new Hindu temple on which Kooer Singh had recently lavished large sums; I did this because it is known that the Brahmins have instigated him to rebellion.

The other officers of the party had destroyed Kunwar's new palace at Juturah and set fire to the residences of Amar Singh and Dayal Singh.<sup>2</sup> But the destruction of a temple was considered to be impolitic at that time and Sir Colin hastened to write severe reproofs in the following words:

. . . . . but regrets to have to disapprove of the destruction of the Hindu temple at Jagdispur by Major Eyre, under a mistaken view of the duties of a commander at the present crisis.<sup>3</sup>

The imperial interests of the British demanded that they

<sup>1</sup> Account of the Relief of Arrah, dictated by major V. Eyre and quoted in Gubbins, *The Mutinies in Oudh*, 545-7. For other official accounts of the expedition see FP. iv, 92-94.

<sup>2</sup> FP. iv, 95.

<sup>3</sup> FP. iv, 111.

should be more careful now than ever before, not to wound the susceptibilities of the Hindus. Orders for the procurement of bullocks by local officials in compliance with the demand of the commissariat were similarly visited with extreme annoyance by the government.

Being thus, expelled from the jungle fastness of Jagdispur in the middle of August, Kunwar Singh left Bihar and eventually attacked Cawnpore<sup>1</sup>. But the rebellion of the people of Shahabad continued under the inspiring leadership of Amar Singh who instilled fresh vigour and enthusiasm into the masses and attracted to his colours people from across the Ganges. Protected by dense jungles they carried on a long desultory war with varying degrees of intensity, and even obtained temporary possession of Sasaram, Rhotas, and raided Gaya and Arrah in the period from June to October 1858. The country returned to normal conditions after more than a year's strenuous struggle<sup>2</sup>.

Besides Amar Singh the brother of Kunwar Singh, and Harkishan Singh, his tahsildar, the other members of his family who threw in their lot with him were his nephews, Ripubhanjan Singh and Mahabirprasad Singh and his friend, Nishan Singh<sup>3</sup>. Some unpublished letters of Brodhurst, the magistrate, refer to Sheoparshan Singh, Judhar Singh, Udit Singh, Bhanjan Singh, Bhola Singh as rebels for whose apprehension rewards were offered<sup>4</sup>. Another such letter refers to Dilwar Khan and Sarnam Singh<sup>5</sup> as close associates of Kunwar<sup>6</sup>. Some zamindars of Shahabad named Narhan Singh,

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix E. The Historic March of Kunwar Singh.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter v.

<sup>3</sup> For a description of these leaders by H. C. Wake the magistrate of Arrah see his correspondence dated 12 January, 1858 in Appendix F. The account he gives of Nishan Singh completely agrees with that given by the rebel himself in June 1858 in the statement taken before he was thrown away from a gun on 4 June (K. K. Datta in *Patna University Journal*). For the part played by Ranadalan Singh and Hare Krishna Singh in exciting Kunwar to revolt see Rajani Kanta Gupta *Sipahi Yuddher Itihas*, iv, 215f.

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Commissioner of Patna, No. 113 of 17 August, 1858.

<sup>5</sup> FP vi, 193, ix, 344.

<sup>6</sup> Kunwar's relatives were also prominent rebels. His daughter was married to the son of Rana Benimadho of Sankarpur (Martin *op cit*, 497), and Lala Jagannath Sai the eldest son of Thakur Kapilnath Sai of Sulgi (Lohardaga) married the daughter of Dayal Singh, his brother (Appendix F. House of Kunwar Singh).

Juhan Singh, Bisheswar Singh also made common cause with him.<sup>1</sup> The followers of Kunwar Singh at Shahabad were not of the military classes, city rabble and the refuse of the jail only but mostly the warlike population of rajput villages, feudal retainers, and government pensioners.

### GAYA

There was a general feeling of disquiet in Gaya even before the actual outbreak. The mutiny at Dinapur and the subsequent rebellion at Shahabad threw the whole country into a ferment. The peremptory order of Tayler, the commissioner of Patna, on 31 July, directing the magistrate of Gaya to withdraw to Patna was panicky and the people readily took advantage of this. They raided the record rooms and cutcheries. The re-occupation of Gaya on 16 August did not improve the situation, for the British were left without anything to fall back upon in the event of a combination of strength.<sup>2</sup> A large part of the district passed out of the control of the government; the western parganas such as Arwal, Uncha and part of Sirs were forayed with impunity by the Bhojpuri rebels who held the out-posts and controlled the roads. Noada in the east was also similarly affected; rujwars and zamindars combined to destroy British rule utterly, the pathans of mahal Marundapoa of Gaya took part in the plunder and seven hundred of them were imprisoned.<sup>3</sup> The magistrate faced a grave situation and he was instructed to draw upon raja Hitnarayan Singh for current expenses.<sup>4</sup>

Several leaders arose whose subversive activities caused

<sup>1</sup> A writer in BPP. (vol. lxxiv, Part ii, p. 114), refers to Nishan Singh and Jai Kishan Singh as nephews of Kunwar.

<sup>2</sup> Samuelli's letter dated 20 August, 1857. The magistrate of Gaya was instructed to retire, in case of emergency by a route deemed safe by military authorities. He was warned not to issue any proclamation unless he was in a position to enforce compliance with his order (Papers of the Gaya Collectorate, No. 812 of 1857).

<sup>3</sup> *The Englishman*, 17 November, 1857.

<sup>4</sup> Gaya Collectorate papers, No. 775 of 1858.

consternation to the authorities. They were Namadar Khan of Amruthu, Mawa Singh of Amama, Bishan Singh and his son Rambahadur Singh and maulavi Sultan Hussain<sup>1</sup> The disturbances created by Hyderali Khan to take possession of the Rajgir pargana were of great import and resembled a rebellion in the opinion of A. Moncy, the magistrate. In his trial under act xvi of 1857, prosecution evidence showed that he had collected a large body of armed men, proclaimed himself raja and driven away all government servants.<sup>2</sup> The force sent to overpower him met with a stiff resistance from his followers who fought fiercely crying, 'Hyderali raja' evidently recalling the glory of the rule of the Mysore king. He was hanged and many of his followers punished with hard labour.<sup>3</sup> Another leader, Judhar Singh of Arwal too on the north-western boundary of the district, played an important role. When the fifth irregular attacked Gaya on 8 September, he joined hands with them. Captain Rattray suffered a defeat at their hands. The sepoys then marched west towards the Son and Judhar Singh helped them in crossing the river. With the aid of his Bhojpuri men, he held a dominant position in the north and west of the district. He set up his own rule making grants of land and even whole villages to his followers.<sup>4</sup> His own house at Khamini was strongly fortified and adequately garrisoned and attempts to take it in the early part of October were repulsed.<sup>5</sup> British rule in that part of the district was seriously threatened when in June 1858, the Shahabad rebels crossed the Son with the intention of attacking the fort of Tikan.<sup>6</sup> They plundered the villages near Arwal and also the factories belonging to the Solano family. The city of Gaya was also threatened, but depredations were confined to the north of the thana of Jahanabad which was sacked. Judhar Singh who joined hands

<sup>1</sup> Gaya Collectorate papers, No. 852 of 1857

<sup>2</sup> FP v, 62, vii, 4

<sup>3</sup> FP ix, 23. The followers were Md Baksh, Puran Padhya, Daudali, Dhanta, Sidhhali, Bhuttodosad, Shoria Rajwar, Jangh Bahar, Sheikh Jinat, Sukun Padhya, Deyan Rajwar

<sup>4</sup> FP vii, 14, 20

<sup>5</sup> See *supra*, p. 42

<sup>6</sup> See chapter v. The report of A. R. Young that Judhar Singh was killed in the skirmishes at Hetampur in Shahabad in the early part of May 1858 (FP ix, 564) is misleading

with the Shahabad rebels, maintained himself in power for a considerable time but he was overthrown on 4 July, 1858. Later on, towards the end of the year, he moved to Palamau in aid of the rebels and caused dismay in the British circles.<sup>1</sup>

The movement at Wazirganj, fourteen miles to the east of Gaya, was led by the villagers themselves. Some fourteen villages of that area were united under Kushal Singh, a *ticadar* of many villages who assumed a position of independence and raised a flag. The report of Bayley, the assistant magistrate of Bihar, from the camp on 4 January, 1858, shows that an organised attack was made on the British power, by all the villagers in the union, a combination of some two hundred men. There were other leaders besides Kushal Singh, namely Jamuna Singh and one Indra Singh, the rebel leader of Wazirganj who proclaimed the fall of the 'English raj' and prevailed upon the *dukandars* (shop-keepers) and banyas to sign a bond (*sarkhatt*) not to pay dues to their erstwhile masters. The village of Khuaka was the strongest centre of disaffection where Kushal Singh proclaimed his rule.<sup>2</sup>

#### CHOTANAGPUR DIVISION

This mountainous country lies between southern Bihar, western Bengal, Orissa and Central provinces. It was inhabited by aboriginal tribes such as kols, mundas, bhumij and others. Its chief military stations were Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Chaibasa and Purulia. The infection of revolt spread to all these places as a sequel to the rising at Dinapur. The military at Hazaribagh revolted on 30 July, 1857, the Ramgarh battalion on 1 August, the infantry and artillery at Lohardaga on 2 August, and the detachment of the Ramgarh troops of Purulia on 5 August. The cycle was complete and the whole country to the south of Gaya was up in arms.

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<sup>1</sup> *Infra*, pp. 185-6.

<sup>2</sup> DG. Gaya, 38-39; BPP, vol. lxxiv, part II, pp. 127-9. Many landed chiefs of Gaya such as Reazali Khan, the raja of mahal Murapur, raja Mehdali Khan of Summi pargana (FP. ix, 552), raja Husainbaksh Khan of Nurhat pargana and raja Harmutali Khan also committed themselves against the government.

## PALAMAU

Palamau took the lead in the civil upsurge. It was a formidable stronghold of two brothers, Nilambar and Pitambar, the *ilakadars* of tappa Chujmulamu<sup>1</sup> They were *bhogtas*, a class of the kharwar tribe noted for its turbulent spirit The two brothers had an account to settle with the government which had dispossessed them of the proprietary claims to their own estates owing to the contumacious conduct of their father who died as an outlaw To carry out their designs, they employed the Ramgarh mutineers in their service<sup>2</sup> When marching north towards Shahabad to effect a juncture possibly with Amar Singh these mutineers were confronted by major English at Chatra to the north of Hazaribagh on 2 October The rebel troops numbering three thousand were completely routed This defeat no doubt prevented the combination of the Indian forces but the progress of the rebellion was not checked<sup>3</sup>

A government report of 27 October indicated that the kharwars and the chero is, the two aboriginal tribes of Chotanagpur, had coalesced and made common cause under the direction of Pitambar and Nilambar They assembled near Champur in Shahabad where they were marauding<sup>4</sup> Their number was estimated at two thousand men But in the next month the commissioner of Patna reported that Palamau was threatened by these rebel tribes numbering five or six thousand They were armed and very powerfully disposed<sup>5</sup> In the early part of November Pitambar Sai was again reported to be at Ranka in Palamau with four thousand *bhogtas*<sup>6</sup>

The successful assault on the fort of Palamau on 21 January, 1858, by captain Dalton had not the desired effect The papers seized therein showed that the rebels were sustained in their struggle by assistance from Amar Singh and his redoubtable

<sup>1</sup> FP ix, 123, 172, 182 3, 186, 371, 553

<sup>2</sup> FP ix 371, 381, 390, 395, 402 3

<sup>3</sup> Malleon, II, 140-01, FP v, 76, vii 103, 105

<sup>4</sup> FP ix, 377

<sup>5</sup> FP ix, 136

<sup>6</sup> FP ix, 183

brother Kunwar.<sup>1</sup> In other operations of February 1858, the headquarters of the rebel brothers were captured and full retaliation was exacted for all their proceedings, their villages being totally destroyed, their estates confiscated and their supporters captured and executed. In the middle of March 1858, offensive was resumed against Pandey Ganpat Rai of Bhaunro, the former dewan of the maharaja of Chotanagpur, and Thakur Biswanath Sai of Barkargarh, an important landlord of Lohardaga.<sup>2</sup> They entrenched themselves with their followers in the Nawagarh hills, and closed the ghats to obstruct military movement. They carried on plundering activities in Chotanagpur, burning the thana at Barwa but when they started an attack on the town of Lohardaga they were haulted in their attempt. Thakur Biswanath Sai was hanged on 16 April and Pandey Ganpat met a similar fate on 21 April,<sup>3</sup> their estates comprising ninety-one villages each were attached.

But the chief leaders, Nilamber and Pitamber, managed to escape<sup>4</sup> with their families. The *Old English Correspondence* in the office of the commissioner of Ranchi,<sup>5</sup> gives us a detailed picture of the arduous struggle that followed between the rebels and the British offensive led by Davis. Davis commenced his march towards the end of October, 1858. In November he found the rebels quite strong collecting provisions which they secured in safe places. Early in December a leader, Bhaikumar Sai, was apprehended and his uncle who had helped the rebels with provisions was arrested. The report of 3 December runs that on 26 November Judhar Singh with nine hundred men

<sup>1</sup> NE. ii, 189: Special Narrative, Government of Bengal, Judicial Department, No. II, dated 15 February, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> FP. v, 49, App. B, 476; ix, 171f, 173, 186, 403, 413, 431.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 555. Biswanath Dubey and Mahipnarayan Sai were the principal agents who caused the two leaders to be captured. It was proposed that they should be rewarded with a jagir in perpetuity. But Dalton's correspondence shows that the parties who produced Ganpat Rai would not touch the reward offered for his apprehension (*The Old English Correspondence* in the office of the commissioner of Ranchi, No. 95, & No. 14, 1080-R41D).

<sup>4</sup> NE. ii, 218.

<sup>5</sup> *The Old English Correspondence* in the office of the commissioner of Ranchi contains the reports of J. S. Davis, senior assistant commissioner, submitted to the commissioner of Chotanagpur regarding the military movements undertaken to suppress the rebellion (1080-R41D).



was threatening the bhogta country and attempting to enter it<sup>1</sup> This invader was none other than the famous Judhar Singh of Gaya who, with his followers, rebel sepoys and others, according to the intelligence received on 7 December, had entered Palamau and been proceeding rapidly towards Sunni This struck the British circle with consternation Captain Norton and lieutenant Graham were alerted to take measures for the protection of Palamau, but it was thought expedient not to risk an open engagement with them<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of December, Davis had to admit that despite his occupation of some outposts, he had failed to cope with the situation, and his report confessing this (bearing the date 23 December, 1858) is quoted below *in extenso* as an evidence of original value in respect of the extent and depth of the civil rebellion of the mutinies of Eastern India<sup>3</sup>

I regret that I cannot report any satisfactory progress towards the permanent tranquillity of this district—the causes which militate against it—with the small force at my disposal its speedy pacification cannot be looked for

I have from time to time reported to you that various bands of rebel sepoys driven out of Shahabad and Mirjapore have joined the insurgent Bhogtas or have taken up a position in the adjoining district of Sirgoojah ready to do so at any favourable moment These additions to the numbers of rebels enabled them to take up strong positions in their hills and jungles whilst at the same time they send out parties to plunder the adjacent villages

As you are aware the extent of the country occupied by the rebels comprises some 40 miles square of intractable hills and dense jungles, so dense that until the approach of the hot season when it becomes practicable to burn the grass etc an enemy might be within a few hundred yards of troops without being discovered

To add to the difficulties of such a country the whole of the inhabitants without exception are, if not openly, on the side of the rebels who receive every information of our movements whilst it is with the utmost difficulty that we are enabled to trace them, and then not perhaps till they have plundered and burnt some villages in their vicinity

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* Nos 117, 120, 127

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* No 128

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* Nos 129 130

Since occupation of Sunnea on the 17th instant no precise information obtained until today when I hear that the rebels are in great force, one march only from Chynpore—it is necessary to follow them up at once to prevent the plunder of the open country (if attacked) they will immediately make a retrograde move and seek the protection of their jungles and on our return they will resume the same tactics, while owing to their intimate knowledge of the country and the fact of the people being in their favour they can do with utter impunity as they never will fight, their object being only plunder.

The causes of the rebels having the country so entirely with them are many, the inhabitants generally are a wild race fond of marauding; they are held together by a clannish feeling and the common one of self-preservation as they have no sufficient confidence in the power of the government to protect them, should they act contrary to the wishes or orders of the rebel chiefs; this feeling has been increased by the facts of European troops having on two occasions since the late disturbances entered the perghunna merely to leave it immediately afterwards and the inadequacy of the troops hitherto stationed in Palamau to protect those who really were favourable to Government.

The members of the rebels with the Bhogta chiefs are certainly not less than 1,000 men—I will submit to Government that a force of not less than 1,000 men is required here. To confine the rebels to their own hills four points must be guarded i.e. Checharce, Burghur, Munka and Chynpore with 200 men at each place—I have caused the erection of a substantial wooden stockade at this place.

Towards the end of December 1858, Nilambar at the head of the insurgent bhogtas and rebel sepoys plundered the villages of Bansdhi, Chunga and Ranka, and the large and wealthy village of Satbarna and carried away 'supplies of every kind including two hundred laden bullocks' while the British were helplessly standing by, unable to overtake them, 'as they would proceed to one of their hiding places in the jungles when all traces of them would be lost till they emerge in other quarter.' Davis reported that the conduct of the government was reviewed with alarm by the loyal zamindars who would not face the rebels unless supported by troops and in many cases they were quite at their mercy and were compelled to furnish supplies. Thus towards the end of the year 1858, Palamau region passed 'entirely under the possession of the rebels.' They dominated it without any hindrance; and as Davis

reported, the area of rebel occupation would extend 'still more if assistance was not rendered'<sup>1</sup>

Even in January 1859, the bhogta country still remained to be subdued, the rebels came out of their dens by paths known only to themselves and were plundering the district<sup>2</sup> Cartridges made up with 'native powder' and government percussion caps found in the possession of some of the sepoy killed showed that they were still supplied with ammunition<sup>3</sup> In the middle of January, captain Norton and lieutenant Graham combined their forces and chased the rebels and their leader Nilambar Sai escaped<sup>4</sup> and was reported to have passed to Porahat through the hills on 29 January, 1859<sup>5</sup> By the middle of February Palamau and Chotanagpur settled down<sup>6</sup> to normal conditions

Many eminent persons of Palamau threw their weight on the side of the rebels The long correspondence of Davis on the subject of Thakur Kapilnath Sai of Sulgi, a government pensioner and a zamindar residing near Lohardaga,<sup>7</sup> shows that his eldest son, Lala Jagannath, helped the Doranda mutineers<sup>8</sup> of Chotanagpur and accompanied them in their march to Jagdispur Jagannath was the son in law of a brother of Kunwar Singh of Shahabad and acted as the medium of communication between the mutineers of the Ramgarh battalion and the Bihar leaders<sup>9</sup> Thakur Kapilnath, it was presumed, supplied the mutineers of the 8th regiment with food and provisions at Sulgi at the expense of the mahajans and was in communication with Chuma Sai, a convicted rebel and Ganpat Rai<sup>10</sup> Another noted rebel leader, Tikayat Omrao Singh and his dewan Sheikh Bhukhari of Kuttunga were

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* No 131

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* No 136

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* No 139

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* No 143

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid* Nos 145, 149

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid* No 137

<sup>8</sup> FP v, 80

<sup>9</sup> FP ix 172-3 176-7

<sup>10</sup> *Old English Correspondence Ranchi op cit*, No 137

charged with having attempted to prevent the passage of government troops to Chotanagpur. They were tried and executed on 8 January, 1858, as soon as the sentence was passed.<sup>1</sup> Other important leaders who resisted the British offensive of this period were Debibaksh Rai, *ilakadar* of Kunda, a leader of the kharwar tribe who had a large following. He was suspected of being the real prompter of the rebellion.<sup>2</sup> Raghubir Singh, the raja of Singrauli near Palamau, had assembled one to two thousand men with the intention of marching on Sarguja.<sup>3</sup> Nakhaut Manji,<sup>4</sup> Gopal Sai, a son of the maharaja of Chotanagpur, and Lalkhoda Sai who held office under him were also suspected to be hostile. Official correspondence also reveals the name of Rambahadur Singh and Shada Singh as rebel chiefs. Srikrishna Bera, the zamindar of Gurpali was victimised for his hostile activities. The conduct of Dhiraj Singh, the raja of Udaipur roused the distrust of the government,<sup>5</sup> and maharaja Samblunath Singh Bahadur, the zamindar of Ramgarh, was also suspected to be disloyal. The followers of Bhola Singh, *burai* of Churia in Chotanagpur successfully opposed colonel Fischer at Opghat.<sup>6</sup> The rajas of Kulkura and Bowmunda were similarly reported to be disaffected.<sup>7</sup> One Kurbanali,<sup>8</sup> a jamadar, was found guilty of rebellion and causing proclamation of the 'Padshahee Raj'. A long correspondence hangs round the subject of recusancy and treason imputed to Bhai Kumar Sai and Sil Sai of Chichari, jagirdars of Palamau. The Chichari estate was under attachment for realisation of the fine imposed on it. Bhai Kumar was convicted of having taken a conspicuous part in the hostile activities of July 1858, when many acts of plunder and illegal seizure of loyal persons had been committed by them. He was

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 371, 403, 413. Omrao Singh was the great grand-son of raja Sri Bhyaram. The estate was confiscated and was made over to the Thakur of Govindapur (*Old English Correspondence*, letter of A. R. Young, pp. 59-60).

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 353, 371; Malletson, ii, 438.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 367, 410, 604, 613, 663.

<sup>4</sup> NE. ii, 189.

<sup>5</sup> FP. vii, 7, ix, 185.

<sup>6</sup> FP. vii, 6.

<sup>7</sup> FP. vii, 245.

<sup>8</sup> BPP. lxxiv, Pt. i, 54.

ordered to leave Palamau, compliance with which was enforced by a sentence of fourteen years' imprisonment with labour and irons in the event of refusal to carry out the order of banishment. Kumar Sai and his family were permitted to reside near Dorandi<sup>1</sup>, the civil station adjoining Ranchi. The son of Nilambar Sai was not found to have taken any leading part in the acts of the rebels, he was kept in the background, it was believed, 'as a matter of policy' so that 'one of the family might be preserved as a leader'<sup>2</sup>.

The long lists of persons convicted of rebellion as found in the old correspondence volumes in Ranchi, show that the infection had spread far and wide among all classes of people and was not confined to the army alone. Large numbers of village headmen called *manjis* such as Lusa Manji, Jadu Manji, Donga Manji, in all thirty-seven, were reported against for plundering Jaipur, Kaspal and Gola parganas in the districts of Manbhum and Hazaribagh.<sup>3</sup> Not only villagers, but also a large number of military pensioners were suspected to be disloyal and they were ordered to present themselves within a given period before the officers on pain of forfeiture.<sup>4</sup> Others again were tried on a charge of rebellion against the government for having closed the ghats and obstructed the passage of British troops and were punished with imprisonment and execution.<sup>5</sup> Many also were tried and punished under act xvi of 1857 for destroying and plundering the Sitagarh coffee plantation, about three miles from Hazaribagh, the property of Messrs Haworth and Co of Calcutta.<sup>6</sup> European factories had been destroyed without any exception and examples had been made of all such properties as fell into the hands of the

<sup>1</sup> *Old English Correspondence, Ranchi op cit* No 142 150 170 185 (1077 R-41D)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* No 185

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* (Guard File No 1074-R-41D) No 7 Military Department 31 August 1857 No 1434 Mention is also made of one Kokur Gomar of Chandi Pir of Manbhum and his fifty other comrades

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* No 1283

<sup>5</sup> *FP ix* 175 530-01 Other rebels of note mentioned incidentally in the official papers were Thakur Tilakdhari Singh (*FP ix* 177) Lala Indranath Sai of Doomri Lala Shamsundar Sai of Hessul Tikayat Kamal Rai of Olato Tikayat Lodhar Singh of Ormanjee in the Hazaribagh district (*FP ix* 172 73) and Ujjal Sai (*FP ix* 566)

<sup>6</sup> *FP ix* 74

rebels and full retaliation exacted for all the acquisitive tendencies of the factory owners. The German mission at Chotanagpur had suffered a loss of property appertaining to the church and school attached to the mission, greatly in excess of rupees ten thousand, the amount applied for as compensation.<sup>1</sup> J. Grundy and I. G. Madzer were given compensation for the losses sustained by them in consequence of their property having been plundered and destroyed by Palamau insurgents in their attack on the Rajurah factory. For similar reasons R. L. Ewing, the indigo planter, received compensation, and also Miller and Rozario of the Putsah indigo factory which had been destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

The popular character of the movement at Palamau brooks no doubt. The mutiny resulted in a civil rebellion of a country-wide character in which all classes of people from the landed gentry to the village chief joined with the sole aim of stopping European exploitation and wiping out all traces of British rule. It was not, therefore, a military insurrection, as it has been represented in earlier works, nor a rising confined to a small and discontented section of the primitive tribes as dismissed in '1857,'<sup>3</sup> but a people's war fought with the passions roused up by deeply stirred political sentiment. The landed proprietors of Chotanagpur, excepting a few, did not come to the help of the British. They remained passively loyal, as E. T. Dalton, the commissioner of Chotanagpur stated to the secretary to the government of Bengal. He admitted, however, that though 'as a body they did nothing' yet they 'secretly aided and encouraged' the rebels. The opinion was also expressed that had the chiefs of Garjat mahals co-operated with the government the disturbances would have been suppressed with the re-occupation of the district. What rendered the situation grave was that the springs of rebellious exertions lay at the bottom of the society. Dalton was at pains to communicate to his chiefs:

It is a singular fact that in not one instance has the offer of the reward had the desired effect. Many of the delinquents had been captured

<sup>1</sup> *Old English Correspondence*, Ranchi, *op. cit.*, No. 23 (1080-R-41D).

<sup>2</sup> NE. ii, 233-4, 238.

<sup>3</sup> Sen, *op. cit.*, 409.

it is true, but by Military Force or by the Police, not by the people not a soul will move in the matter even with the additional temptation of a large reward for doing so

This being the case, Dalton urged that the government had the evident necessity for a highly penal act like the act x of 1858, which should be introduced without hesitation into all the districts in the division, specially at Kolhan and Sambalpur, where the people should be made to feel that hearty co-operation in the suppression of a crime was a duty the government was bound to exact.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the ruthless measures adopted for the suppression of the movement<sup>2</sup> were a reflection of the extent of the disaffection for the British rule. Religious mendicants, vagrants and other men of suspicious character were very closely watched as they were likely to convey letters concealed about their persons or in the hollow of their 'latties' (sticks), clothes and other articles.<sup>3</sup> Every class of people came in for suspicion as the authorities found that it was a mass uprising which they must quell.

#### SINGHBHUM—SERAIKELLA

In Singhbhum, Seraikella and Kharsawan, the rebellion of the kols raged furiously. Arjun Singh, the raja of Porahat, residing in Chakradharpur played the most significant part in this upsurge in eastern India next to that of Kunwar Singh of Shahabad. The report of the commissioner, captain Dalton, dated 13 February, 1858,<sup>4</sup> makes out a case against the raja—that he was all along in a state of insubordination and committed many treasonable acts. This, however, does not agree with the circumstances of his revolt. It is found that on 5 August, major Sissimore issued a parwana through the raja of Seraikella to Arjun Singh calling upon him to send troops for the protection of the station. To this he did not react and possibly paid scant attention. During this time Chaibasa was in ferment, one

<sup>1</sup> *Old English Correspondence, Ranchi* op cit No 67 Letter from captain E T Dalton to A. R. Young (1074 R-41D)

<sup>2</sup> BPP Lxxv Pt. 1 55 56

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> NE 11 182 3 Special Narrative Government of Bengal (Judicial) No 10, dated 13 February 1858

Nakfourī Muktar was openly preaching sedition, saying that the English had left the country and that it had become the property of the raja.<sup>1</sup> The kols were summoned to arms. It was further reported that at Chakradharpur, the residence of the raja, and at Ajudhia, one of the villages in his area, several mankees and mundas were called in and were made to swear to remain faithful to him and not to side with the raja of Seraikella. It transpired that he even sent an emissary, Mukunda Roy, to Biswanath Sai, the rebel leader of Palamau who reciprocated by helping the mutineers to proceed to Chakradharpur.

The fact was that Arjun Singh had been offended when the principal assistant commissioner, panicky at the mutiny of troops at Hazaribagh (July 30) had left Singhbhum committing the care of the district to the raja of Seraikella who was the rival of the raja of Porahat and was in an inferior position. Even so, when the detachment at Chaibasa consisting of the Ramgarh battalion eventually mutinied in the beginning of September, Arjun Singh kept the part of money that had been looted from the treasury, though he had to shelter a section of the mutinous soldiery from the hostile attacks of the kols who demanded the treasure for themselves.<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant Birch came as assistant commissioner at Chaibasa on 16 September and strengthened his position with the support of the raja of Seraikella. The raja of Porahat being confronted made numerous professions of his loyalty; nevertheless he was declared a rebel. This drove Arjun Singh to approach Dalton, the commissioner at Ranchi, to deliver himself up to him with the spoil of the treasury and the mutineers under his custody. The commissioner, however, directed him to appear before Birch for trial. The raja procrastinated, probably under the influence of his dewan Jagu, who was already in the bad books of the government for previous acts of disobedience and especially for his attempts to excite the kols to rise. Jagu was charged with treason and a reward of fifty rupees was offered for his apprehension.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 376.

<sup>2</sup> DG. Singhbhum, Seraikella, Kharsawan, 39.

<sup>3</sup> *Old English Correspondence*, Ranchi (Guard File, No. 1074-R-41D), No. 7: Order of the assistant commissioner, dated Chaibasa, 3 October, 1857.



So Arjun Singh made himself scarce and persevered in his attitude of indifference alternating with contumacy. To put a stop to this state of affairs, Birch captured Jagu in a surprise march towards the end of November. He was summarily tried, sentenced and hanged.<sup>1</sup> An attack was also made on the raja's stronghold in order to arrest Arjun Singh but he had escaped. It follows, therefore, that raja Arjun Singh was forced to rise by the policy followed by Birch. He was declared a rebel and a reward of rupees one thousand was offered for his apprehension by the lieutenant, a step which, as Dalton remarked, should not have been so hastily resorted to. The rebellion commenced and its flame spread around rapidly. Arjun Singh is said to have circulated his arrow, symbolic of his preparedness for war, among large numbers of disaffected kols who were determined to fight for him, and caused the revolutionary slogan, a sort of *khutba*, recited in the Chaibasa bazar

that everything belonged to God, that the country belonged to the king and that the ruler thereof was Arjun Singh

By the end of December the condition of the country deteriorated, the whole of Kolhan was in revolt. Lushington, the special commissioner for the districts, reported the existence of widespread insurrection and he himself was dangerously ambushed on 14 January, 1858, at the deep bed of a dry *nullah* near the Mogra river while returning from Bar Pir with his Sikh soldiers. The rebels, a body of kols numbering about three to four thousand, stole a march on the English party which suffered a disaster.<sup>2</sup> This synchronised with the defeat and flight of the British agent, the raja of Serakella from Chakradharpur. Then followed a series of smart encounters for the possession of the place by the kols and the capture of Arjun Singh by the British. Colonel Foster's Sheikhwati battalion devastated the whole area round Porahat in January, scattered a concentration of the rebels south of Siringsella Pass, but they continued their plundering raids and kept the English at bay in the jungles.

<sup>1</sup> FP vi, 171, ix, 341, 376-630. Bagho Deo was another officer who instigated the Porahat raja (FP ix, 431, 535).

<sup>2</sup> FP viii, 63-64. For a long description of this surprise attack see FP ix, 372.

As the kols still clung to the raja of Porahat, the proclamation for the confiscation of his estate was issued on 9 February, but in order to win over the ryots the rent was decreased much more than what was demanded by the ex-raja. The new assessment was made on the basis of a previous rate when the estate had been under the management of the court of wards in 1845.<sup>1</sup> But this had hardly any effect. On 25 March, the position of captain Moncrieff at Chakradharpur was made precarious by the rebel followers of Arjun Singh who were supposed to be about two thousand strong. They surrounded the three sides of the encamping ground,<sup>2</sup> and though repulsed, they continued to attack intermittently. The official communication of May ran to the effect that Chakradharpur and Chaibasa regions were dangerously threatened and an offensive was expected daily from the ex-raja who had assembled a force of some six thousand men in order, as he boasted himself, to sweep away the *firinghi kafirs* out of the 'mangoe grove'.<sup>3</sup> The government was obliged to offer Arjun Singh terms of amnesty, that his life would be spared and that he would not be subjected to indignities should he surrender and take his trial at Ranchi.<sup>4</sup> This also produced no result. Towards the end of May, a British party of the naval brigade was again completely surrounded by the insurgents in overwhelming numbers at a place of about four miles from Chakradharpur from which they escaped by a running fight for about three miles.<sup>5</sup> Again on 9 June, the kols surrounded the naval brigade camp at Chakradharpur and kept up a smart fight on the days following under their leaders Raghu Deo, Barkumar and Shyamkumar.<sup>6</sup> An official communication makes it clear that the Porahat rebels were supplied with matchlocks from Jhalda and that Raghu Deo in particular had thirty such conveyed to him by special messengers.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NE. ii, 224.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 231.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 262; FP. ix, 566.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 266: Offg. Commissioner's letter dated 21 May, 1858.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 270.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 280-01.

<sup>7</sup> *Old English Correspondence, Ranchi* (1074-R-41D), No. 95.

Down to the end of the year 1858, the kols fought desperately from their mountain fastnesses and rushed to the attack of the British outposts. In December 1858, the British detachments moved to the rear of the raja's stronghold in the hills, and in the scuffle that followed many of the important rebels were captured, but Arjun Singh escaped through the cordon of posts. He, however, could not hold out for long and was obliged to surrender to the commissioner on 15 February, 1859, after a struggle of a year and a half. He was banished to Benares and the Porahat estate was escheated. With his incarceration the rebellion in Singhbhum burrowed its head. In a letter dated 3 November, 1859, Dalton the commissioner wrote to his assistant, J. S. Davis that arrangement might be made to pay the ex-raja of Porahat and his brother<sup>1</sup> (Bijay Nath Singh Kunwar<sup>2</sup>) rupees 1-6 each daily with effect from the 1st instant. Incidentally, this is an instance of how the British honoured their fallen rivals in the mad fury of the revolt.

### SAMBALPUR

The spate of rebellion of the year 1857 was, in many cases, a continuation of the civil disturbances of the pre-mutiny period; the revolt of Surendra Sai of Sambalpur is an instance in point. From the close of 1857 to the commencement of 1862 he remained in a state of war, ran a parallel government of his own, and kept the whole country in a dangerous state of excitement. During the insurrection of troops at Hazaribagh, when the prisoners were released, Surendra Sai, the claimant to the Sambalpur raj, his brother Udhwant Sai and his son Mitrabhanu Sai escaped; they proceeded straight to Sambalpur, occupied the old fort and raised the banner of revolt.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* (1077-R-41D) No 196

<sup>2</sup> FP ix, 358. For references to the raja of Porahat in Parliamentary Papers see FP v, 81, vii, 627-32, ix, 169, 341, 348, 376-77, 391, 396, 399, 413, 431, 535, 553, 625-28. The government was determined that not an acre of the confiscated estate should be restored to the ex-raja. The trial of Arjun Singh had to be dropped eventually and the Porahat estate was split up and given to other chiefs as rewards for their service. On 4 October 1895, Kumar Narpat Singh, the only son of Arjun, was granted the unalienated portion of the original Porahat raj (P. C. Roy Chaudhuri in A. B. Patrika, Calcutta 28 October, 1936).

When Sambalpur had been finally ceded to the British by the treaty of 1826, they placed on the throne rani Mohankumari in total disregard of the claims of Surendra, who was descended from Madhukar Sai, the fourth raja of Sambalpur. Surendra challenged this measure by raising an insurrection of so formidable a character that the government was obliged to remove the rani to Cuttack and place Narayan Singh on the throne. But the refractory chief continued the struggle, the conflagration spread, to which fuel was added by the gonds rising under Balbhadra Sai. In 1839 Surendra and his party murdered the chief of Rampur, an associate of the British, as a consequence of which they were serving their life sentence in the Hazaribagh jail as already noticed. In 1849 on the death of Narayan Singh who died childless, Sambalpur lapsed to the British government according to the doctrine of lapse.

The revenue measures of the new government were neither judicious nor conciliatory. The revenue demand was raised indiscriminately by one-fourth along with the reckless resumption of free-hold land, religious grants, and assessment of rent-free lands at half-rates. Besides the English were not able to conduct the settlement themselves, and left the business to the advice of the ministerial officers to whom the settlement brought profits in the shape of bribes. The English also helped themselves to nazars which were lavishly offered with consequent starvation and ruin alike to the peasants and the proprietors. Serious commotion was apprehended, and the brahmans of Sambalpur even went on a deputation to Ranchi though nothing came out of it. The second settlement of 1845, instead of rectifying the error made the assessment even more odious resulting in an enormous rise in government revenue amounting to rupees seventy-four thousand as against rupees eight thousand and eight hundred, the tribute paid by the State previous to 1849. In these circumstances, as O'Malley remarked, it was perhaps not altogether surprising that when

Surendra Sai headed a revolt during the mutiny of 1857, he was joined by a number of chiefs who feared further losses under British settlements.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> DG. Sambalpur, 30-01.

From Hazaribagh Surendra proceeded straight to Sambalpur and established himself with a large force of one thousand four hundred to six hundred in the old fort, but he was induced to give himself up to captain Leigh. But soon he escaped and joined his brothers and other rebels at Khinda. Surendra Sai started a parallel government with the support of the *feudatory chiefs* and the people. Meetings of the malcontents were held in Sambalpur where the recovery of the estate by violent means was *deliberated upon*. An official letter of Sir Richard Temple to the deputy commissioner of Sambalpur stated that Surendra successfully defied all attempts on the part of the British troops to capture him and kept the whole country in a perfect state of anarchy from the close of 1857 to the beginning of 1862.

Two companies of the 40th Madras regiment were ordered up posthaste for the offensive. Meanwhile the principal zamindars collected their *praks* and organised strong defences round their strongholds. The rebel forces threw up a cordon of outposts of considerable strength at a distance of not more than three or four miles. Punitive expeditions led by British officers were often ambushed in dense jungles with severe loss. By the middle of December the *dak* between Calcutta and Bombay had been stopped, *dak* houses burnt and all traffic communication between Calcutta and Sambalpur was suspended,<sup>1</sup> and bands of festering masses began to scour the country. The British offensive was in the nature of scattering large concentration of rebel forces numbering thousands here and there, and in forcing open the mountain passes blocked by the rebels by skilful deployment of flanking parties, but all efforts at capturing the rebel leaders proved unavailing. The dense jungle, the inaccessible hills, the breastworks, stone barricades and defensive stone blocks of the rebels prolonged the desultory jungle warfare.

In the action at Haldibhum in Bamra on 9 January, 1858, Chubil Sai, the brother of Surendra, was killed.<sup>2</sup> In the same month attempt was made to force open the Jharghat Pass held

<sup>1</sup> NE i 139 Special Narrative Government of Bengal (Judicial) No 1, dated 2 January 1858

<sup>2</sup> FP ix 375 390

by Udhwant Sai. The sortie made by captain Leigh to break through a concentration of rebels numbering about one thousand and five hundred men on a hill protected by jungles was not attended with success. In the action at Singhora Pass on the road to Nagpur, captain Woodbridge was repulsed and killed on 14 February, 1858. On the day following, ensign Warlow returned to the attack on the rebel stronghold at the pass but was dismayed by the strength of the rebels. His report merits quotation as a typical instance of the resourcefulness of the Indians fighting against superior forces. As he found it:

The enemy occupied a strong position in a narrow defile between two steep hills covered with dense jungle, and had thrown up across the defile a loopholed stone breast-work about seven feet high and thirty long, in such a manner as completely to command the narrow path leading up to it. They had also cut down the jungle on either side, so as to concentrate the whole fire on this approach; and about half-way up the hill on the left, they had erected another breast-work . . . . . A considerable quantity of rice and grain were also found concealed among the rocks.<sup>1</sup>

The position was taken and the rebels were scattered. In the meantime the government found it necessary to issue a notification dated 11 March, 1858, under section 1 to 6 of act xxviii of 1857, prohibiting in Sambalpur the use by people of any kind of arms under the belief that it would greatly contribute to the suppression of the countrywide rebellion.<sup>2</sup> Further extension of the act x of 1853 to Sambalpur as urged by Dalton also showed that the authorities were adopting measures other than those necessary for the suppression of a mutiny to combat this civil uprising.

Surendra Sai refused for a long time to surrender when the amnesty was first proclaimed in 1859. In 1861 major Impey was placed in charge of Sambalpur. He adopted a conciliatory policy. He offered a free pardon and restitution of confiscated property to all rebels with the exception of Surendra, and his son and brother, Mitrabhanu and Udhwant respectively. This order induced many rebel leaders to surrender. Some of the most trusted adherents of Surendra such as Hati Singh and

<sup>1</sup> NE. ii, 213: Special Narrative, etc. No. 17, dated 2 March, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 223.

Kunjah Singh of Ghos<sup>1</sup>, Khageswar Deo and Kamal Singh Deo (descendants of Balabhadra Singh Deo of Lakshmanpur near Rampal)<sup>2</sup> refused to surrender unless the rule of Surendra was revived. Kamal Singh sent threatening letters to the deputy-commissioner and commenced burning and plundering villages and murdering such *guntias* and headmen as were known to be favourably disposed towards the British government. A long reign of terror prevailed and none dared to give evidence against the offenders or assist in their capture. When matters reached such a stage, the deputy-commissioner of Sambalpur, in contravention of the amnesty, placed Surendra and his relatives under arrest on 23 January, 1864. Ujjal Sai escaped, but was captured and awarded capital punishment. Surendra was hauled up under charge of treason, tried but the charge could not be proved. He was transported to Raipur in an extra-judicial manner where he was blinded and, probably executed most secretly.

The popular character of the rebellion at Sambalpur can also be judged from the list of the notable leaders furnished in official despatches. All the brothers of Surendra and the sons of Dharam Singh, as well as his son Mitrabhanu joined the revolt.<sup>3</sup> Other rebels were Manour Singh, a chief leader who surrendered with thirty-nine of his followers.<sup>4</sup> The raja of Kolabira or Jaipur is also mentioned for his rebellious proceedings; his estates of Karna Ghartia were forfeited.<sup>5</sup> Srikrishna Bera, head of the Barma khonds joined Surendra Sai.<sup>6</sup> The raja of Patna excited the suspicion of the government for his ill-concealed disaffection and a fine was imposed on him.<sup>7</sup> Nimtshal Thakur, a zamundar of influence aided the mutineers<sup>8</sup> and when the rebels marched from Hazaribagh to

<sup>1</sup> FP ix, 466-7

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>3</sup> They are Udhwant Sai, Dhurup, Ujjal Meduce, Chubilo, Jadup (FP ix, 466-7)

<sup>4</sup> NE ii, 281

<sup>5</sup> FP ix, 168-381

<sup>6</sup> FP ix, 348-375

<sup>7</sup> FP ix, 396

<sup>8</sup> FP v, 72

Sambalpur they were guided by one Gobinda Suliar.<sup>1</sup> The rebel zamindar of Khursal, Dayal Sardar and his brother Chandrasankar, the chief of Magpal, aided by the chief of Bulrana and Karna ghatwals committed excesses and closed the communication between Cuttack and Calcutta for months.<sup>2</sup>

### PURULIA

The rebellion raised echoes in other parts on the border of Bengal and Bihar. In Purulia the mutinous disposition of the detachment of the Ramgarh battalion frightened the government officers so much so that they left the station. The sepoys plundered the treasury and committed other outrages. Nilmani Singh, the raja of Panchet, was suspected to be a privy to the rebel bands who scoured the country and blocked the road to Raghunathpur. It was also alleged that the raja had refused assistance to the government to suppress disorder. His house was searched and military stores and arms of various descriptions were found.<sup>3</sup> In consequence he was arrested and detained in Calcutta until March 1858. A case was made out that the position of Nilmani Singh was similar to that of the rani of Tikari of Bihar and so he was entitled to the same treatment.<sup>4</sup> Nilmani was tried under act xiv of 1857 on a charge of rebellion against the state and acquitted on 21 May, but he was kept in custody as a state prisoner under regulation 3 of 1818, for the lieutenant-governor thought that it would be imprudent to set him at liberty at this juncture while a portion of the Singhbhum district was still in open rebellion.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FP. v, App. B., 390.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 399; NE. ii, 213. Other rebels mentioned in the despatches were Khagu Naik, Dhuriao Singh, Dhun Singh (zamindar of Muchida), Arjun, Manmohan Singh (zamindar of Behndun), Markand Bera, Dunardhun Singh (zamindar of Buhar Singra), Archita Guntia, Ananta Sai (zamindar of Mondomal), Kripasindhu Bera, Sadasiv Manji, Pitambar Singh (zamindar of Palkuruda) and Mahadeb Guntia (FP. ix, 466-7). For a list of persons tried and convicted under act. xvi of 1857 in Sambalpur see FP. ix, 532-3.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 123.

<sup>4</sup> FP. ix, 405, 553, 668-9.

<sup>5</sup> NE. ii, 265. See also *The Englishman*, 5 October, 30 November, and *Hindu Patriot*, 17 December, 1857. 123 persons were tried under act xvi of 1857 in the district of Manbhum during the month of December (FP. ix, 368). To the south of Manbhum, in Dalbhum, the dhuroa tribe of Ghatsila was led by Dayanidhi who committed excesses (FP. v, App. B., 203-6).



## ORISSA DIVISION

In Orissa the rebellion of the people did not take any definite shape, sporadic outbursts and desultory attempts of disaffected leaders only were reported in the official despatches. Even so, the list of persons tried under act xvi of 1857 shows that more than forty persons were charged with instigating and abetting rebellion.<sup>1</sup> Many of the khond zamindars were also tried for contumacy.<sup>2</sup> An official letter from Russelkonda of 21 December, 1857, stated that Chackra Bisayi was as active as ever and that his influence was still strong. The present condition was considered to be a good pretext for stirring up the khonds, as he had done in 1846-7.<sup>3</sup> Seditious and threatening proceedings of an ex-zamindar named Cankissen,<sup>4</sup> and of the raja of Ranpur, and one Madho Gharatia<sup>5</sup> were taken notice of by the authorities.

## BURDWAN DIVISION

No organised rebellion of the non-military classes was reported from this area. In Birbhum Ranjan Sheikh used language calculated to excite disaffection.<sup>6</sup> Another chief Karim Khan manifested a rebellious disposition and was hanged.<sup>7</sup> In Midnapore, Brindaban Tewari, the brahman, was found inciting the people to rebellion<sup>8</sup> and met a similar fate. Mir Jungoo and Sheikh Zamiruddin, two other rebels, were sentenced to imprisonment.<sup>9</sup> Some members of the principal raj family of Bankura were suspected to be disaffected and the

<sup>1</sup> FP ix, 433, 533

<sup>2</sup> FP v, 71

<sup>3</sup> FP ix, 676-8. See Chaudhuri *op cit*, 110-12

<sup>4</sup> App B to FP v, 374

<sup>5</sup> FP ix, 375

<sup>6</sup> FP ix, 57, 187-192

<sup>7</sup> PP 1857-58 (Commons), Pt iv, vol 44, pp 654-5

<sup>8</sup> FP v, App A, 145, 155

<sup>9</sup> PP 1857-58, *op cit*

zamindar of Jamacoondy, it was apprehended, would possibly incite the raja of Barabhum in Purulia to rebellion.<sup>1</sup> The authorities dreaded the combination as the scene of the revolt of Ganganarayan in 1846<sup>2</sup> was still fresh in their minds.<sup>3</sup>

#### PRESIDENCY DIVISION

In Bengal the rebellion found no wide response among the civil population, but here and there disaffected persons raised their heads and were dealt with accordingly. In Maldah, Chuman Singh was accused of seditious activities.<sup>4</sup> The mutineers of Jalpaiguri were joined by a party of two hundred Bhutias with three guns under the direction of a petty raja.<sup>5</sup> The Dacca mutineers also on their entry into Bhutan were protected by the Bhutan Subah and they were helped in particular by a man named Huruk Singh commonly called the Hathea Raja. He was so called because he had for many years farmed the right to catch elephants in Bhutan. Huruk Singh is said to have rendered the mutineers every kind of assistance. A long correspondence on the subject is preserved in the parliamentary papers.<sup>6</sup> In Hugli, a doctor named Kuber Chandra Roy, attached to the jail, behaved politically.<sup>7</sup> In Jessore Pairag Dhobi was charged with conspiracy against the government.<sup>8</sup> The Ferazis, on all accounts, became restive, their previous activities<sup>9</sup> were too recent to be forgotten. They were kept under close watch, yet some of them such as maulavi Abdul Subhan and Reasatali were actively engaged in subversive activities.<sup>10</sup> Dudo Mian, the famous Ferazi leader, was detained as a state prisoner in the Alipore jail. On 6 Feb-

<sup>1</sup> FP. v, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, 101-2.

<sup>3</sup> FP. v, App. A., 139, 280.

<sup>4</sup> FP. vii, 21.

<sup>5</sup> FP. vi, 229.

<sup>6</sup> FP. viii, 59, 69-70; ix, 362.

<sup>7</sup> FP. v, 82.

<sup>8</sup> FP. v, App. B, 102-3, 169.

<sup>9</sup> Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, 112-4.

<sup>10</sup> FP. v, App. B, 9, 181.

ruary, 1858, he submitted a petition for his release.<sup>1</sup> In eastern India the raja of Tippera was proposed to be investigated against for his lukewarm attitude in respect of apprehending the Chittagong and Dacca mutineers.<sup>2</sup> On many occasions in the past the rajas of Tippera had similarly disregarded the request of the government to help them in suppressing disturbances in the British territory.<sup>3</sup> Raja Ishan Chandra Manikya Bahadur, the then ruler of the country (1850-62)<sup>4</sup> must have been following the policy of his predecessors in this respect.<sup>5</sup>

### ASSAM

In Assam, Kandarpesvar Singh, the Sarung raja of Assam attempted to raise the men of the old Assam militia to take possession of Assam.<sup>6</sup> The Jorhat regiment seemed to have been in communication with the raja and offered to retake the province and hold it for him.<sup>7</sup> The dewan of the raja, Maniram Dutta, played an important part in instigating the king and forming widespread conspiracy to oust the British.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the Ferazis during this period and their activities, see FP v and FP ix 369 etc.

<sup>2</sup> NE ii 253

<sup>3</sup> Chaudhuri *Civil Disturbances* etc 108-9

<sup>4</sup> A description of the march of the mutineers to Tipperah will be found in Hunter *Statistical Account of the State of Hill Tipperah* (p 468), Webster *Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers* (on Tipperah p 19). For a contemporary account see Kailash Chandra Sinha, *Rajmala* pp 170 f 325

<sup>5</sup> Many state prisoners were lodged in the Alipore jail during this time. It would be interesting to know their names as that would show how the government looked at the events of 1857. Most of them were the retainers of the ex king of Oudh namely Illahi Baksh Khan, syed Aminul kazi Jesbadali (NE ii 41), Munshi Ahmuddin Muzaffar Khan, Ashan Hussain Khan (FP ix 405-408-415). Another follower of the ex king of Oudh, raja Yusufali Khan, otherwise called Resaldar Sahib (FP vii 19) absconded (NE ii 65). In the above jail was also lodged an interesting person known as the Bishop of Bagdad, alias syed Hussain Shabbur who was in communication with the ex king of Oudh and his minister Ali Naki Khan. His another associate was Muzaffar Hussain, a retainer of the ex king who had taken up his residence in Chander nagar under the assumed designation of Agha Mirza Sahib (NF ii 41, FP ix, 355). Ali Naki Khan, the ex king's able premier, was said to have been one of the main springs of the conspiracy (Maude and Sherer i 6). Sher Singh of Panjab, an ex-sardar, was also lodged in the jail as a detainee (FP ix 303).

<sup>6</sup> FP vii 18, ix 330-350

<sup>7</sup> FP v, 65

<sup>8</sup> FP ix 359-409-638-40

Maniram was convicted of having induced the raja to revolt and waged war against the state and was hanged.<sup>1</sup> Kandar-pesvar was lodged in the Alipore jail and his request for release was not complied with.<sup>2</sup> The princes of Manipur joined the Chittagong mutineers and fought in their ranks. Malleson says that after being defeated at Latu in Sylhet on 18 December, by lieutenant Sherer they entered the Manipur territory and were joined by one of the Manipur princes with his followers. An official report also runs to the effect that Manipur princes were in operation on the bank of the river Barak.<sup>3</sup> Probably as a sequel to this several princes of the Manipur royal family were kept under detention in the Cachar jail. Narendrajit Singh, the chief of the rebel Manipur princes broke his arrest and fled to Manipur. The evidence against the prince having joined the mutineers of the 34th regiment was said to be complete.<sup>4</sup> Rana Singh, the dewan of the state, was also an accomplice in the seditious activities.<sup>5</sup>

The ex-raja of Jaintia with his brother-in-law Oorut Koer was ordered to go to Sylhet owing to their being mixed up in intrigues with the heads of villages in the Jaintia hills.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 409. Dr. Sen says that the evidence on which he was convicted was insufficient. A Bengali named Madhu Mallik was also convicted (*op. cit.*, 408).

<sup>2</sup> FP. vii, 350; ix, 23.

<sup>3</sup> FP. vii, 91, Malleson, ii, 424.

<sup>4</sup> FP. ix, 379, 385, 414.

<sup>5</sup> FP. ix, 450. Several other Manipur princes effected their escape from the Cachar jail on 10 January, 1858 (NE. ii, 246). They were Sangri Thopor, Kanai Singh, Mygher, Howjou, Khan Singh, and Khoirakha (FP. ix, 553). Of these Howjou was recaptured and Khoirakha surrendered. They were tried, found guilty of breaking jail and sent down to Alipore (NE. ii, 276).

<sup>6</sup> *The Englishman*. 25 September, 1857. In Cachar, the jamadar of Kalabar is recorded as a disaffected person (FP. viii, 100), and in Dibrugarh, Hedayetali, the doctor, joined in a plot against the government (FP. ix, 441).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CENTRAL AND WESTERN INDIA

#### BAGHELKHAND—BUNDELKHAND

In Baghelkhand there was no organised rebellion though it was close to Mirzapur and Bundelkhand on two sides.<sup>1</sup> But entirely different was the situation in Bundelkhand where almost all the local chiefs, such as the rulers of Byeraghogarh, Patera, Guahat, Richol, Shahgarh, Banpur,<sup>2</sup> and Jaso<sup>3</sup> were affected by the convulsions of the time. Of these, the rajas of Shahgarh and Banpur were inveterate in their hostility to the British.<sup>4</sup> Bakhtali, the raja of Shagarh, Madan Singh, the raja of Banpur who had also a hold on Chandern were making busy preparations for war even before the actual outbreak of the mutiny in those parts. Banpur is at a distance of six miles from Tikangarh in the Vindhya pradesh and Madan Singh had, it is said, previous consultations with the rani of Jhansi on whose side he fought bravely. By the middle of June he established his own rule in Chandern, raised revenue and established a cannon foundry on the European principle, with an excellent boring apparatus at Banpur. In the first week of July he took possession of the northern part of the Sagar district and remained in possession of it until the arrival of the Central Indian Field Force in January 1858.<sup>5</sup> But being persuaded by his son, raja Nirbhoy Singh, he ultimately surrendered to the British. Both were granted life pensions in Mathura.<sup>6</sup> All the chiefs of Maihar, Nepal Singh and his brothers, were in open

<sup>1</sup> FP iv, 228

<sup>2</sup> FP vii, 224, 259 Securities to the amount of rupees 1,17,400, the property of Surjuprasad thakur of Byeraghogarh were confiscated (*Hindu Patriot* 14 January, 1858). For Nawab of Patera see FP ix 272

<sup>3</sup> FP <sup>his</sup> i,

<sup>4</sup> FP vii, 277, 284 5, viii, 153 157, ix, 269, 836 Their most loyal supporters were Budin Dawa, Lala Doolarch, Julkun Lodhi, Hridaya Sai (FP vii, 285-6) Arjun Dawa Maharaj Singh Dawa and Ramprasad were officers of the Shahgarh raja (FP ix 277) Chutto Dawa was another officer (FP ix, 269)

<sup>5</sup> NE i, 562 Narrative of Events by J. W. Pinkney, commissioner

<sup>6</sup> Martin says that the rajas of Shahgarh and Banpur surrendered and were directed to reside at Lahore (Martin ii 500)

rebellion against the British.<sup>1</sup> Mention is also made of Mukunda Singh as a contumacious chief.<sup>2</sup> In Ajaigarh the rebel Faizuddin Muktear proclaimed Soal Singh as the raja of Ajaigarh.<sup>3</sup> The raja of Panna remained the most faithful ally of the British government in Bundelkhand, but Mirza Rahim Beg and Chaulantia who is described as the dewan, are noted in the official despatches for their rebellious proceedings.<sup>4</sup> Similarly in Charkhari there was no manifestation of the spirit of revolt but one Dabal Singh was executed for his hostile activities.<sup>5</sup> The heroic exertions of the rani of Jaitpur for the recovery of her lost principality were supported by her faithful followers Despat and Kurjaprasad of Datia and raja Hunji and Tet Singh, cousin and nephew of Despat respectively, all of whom took up the cause of the rani.<sup>6</sup> Of these Despat fought to the last and was found alone in the field even when the revolutionary wars were on the wane.<sup>7</sup> The rani was the widow of Parichat, the former rebel raja of Jaitpur who was a pensioner of rupees one thousand and two hundred a month from the government. She set up herself as a ruler at Jaitpur<sup>8</sup> and appropriated the tahsildari funds at the very commencement of the revolt. But she was obliged to leave the station and was believed to be a fugitive at Tehri.<sup>9</sup>

### BANDA

In Banda, the mutiny of the troops was preceded by a vast upsurge of the people. The jail prisoners of Allahabad released

<sup>1</sup> FP. vi, 143; ix, 577.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 609.

<sup>3</sup> FP. viii, 136.

<sup>4</sup> FP. vi, 196.

<sup>5</sup> FP. vi, 169.

<sup>6</sup> FP. viii, 100, 140-1.

<sup>7</sup> The following from the *Hindu Patriot*, Calcutta, 30 December, 1858, merits notice: In Bundelkhand the spirit of rebellion manifests itself in occasional irruptions by local insurgents. A chief named Deesput holds a place named Jeitpur in the province, and as the country round is very jungly, difficulty has been found in dislodging him. The amnesty was sent to this man, but six out of seven messengers who bore it have been murdered by the miscreant. The Rewah contingent have gone against him.

<sup>8</sup> FP. viii, 116.

<sup>9</sup> NE. i, 548: Narrative of Events by G. H. Freeling, collector and magistrate.

by the rising of 5 June, crossed over to Mau in the east of the district and excited the people to fury and bloodshed. Spontaneously the villagers of the tahsil of Mau rose in a body and attacked the thánadar, tahsildar and their *amlas*. Government property was destroyed, buildings gutted, a treasure containing rupees one thousand and two hundred was plundered and even the 'records of the court were torn up and distributed to the winds'. The conflagration spread west-ward, the tahsil of Baberu was sacked. The people of Banda, and a number of other villagers in the tahsil of Pailani rose in arms, the mahomedan villages of Chilla being most conspicuous.<sup>1</sup> When the troops revolted on 14 June, the government party left the station leaving the district in charge of Nawabali, a great dignitary of the country, who eventually made himself independent and joined the war against the British. Meanwhile on 15 June the rebellion spread to other parts. The whole country round Banda was known to be in revolt and the neighbouring districts of Fatehpur, Allahabad, Hamirpur were all in the hands of the insurgents. Mayne, the collector, himself testifies to the complete subversion of the British authority.

In the pergunnahs the news spread like wildfire, and the villagers rose in every direction and plundered and murdered each other promiscuously. Auction purchasers and decree holders were ousted, travellers and merchandise plundered, and the servants of government compelled to fly for their lives, and in all instances government buildings and property were plundered and destroyed. armed with spears and scythes and iron bound lattes, they imagined themselves to be warriors, chose their own Kings, and defied all comers. *Never was revolution more rapid—never more complete*<sup>2</sup>

On the same night, 14 June, when the British officers left Banda, Nawabali Bahadur proclaimed his own rule for that of the British, the revolutionary slogan was adjusted to satisfy his position. *Khulluk Khoda, Mulk Badsha, Hukum Nawabali Bahadur*. The former government employees were maintained, specially Mohammed Sirdar Khan, the deputy collector, who was appointed the nazim of Banda. The feelings

<sup>1</sup> NE : 521 Report by F O Mayne, magistrate and collector

<sup>2</sup> NE : 528 *Italics of the author*

of the Hindus were sought to be pacified by prohibiting the slaughter of bullocks and cows,<sup>1</sup> but the Mahomedans regarded the scene as a holy war to result in the extermination of the *kafirs*.<sup>2</sup> The mahajans were made to contribute to the royal treasury by forced and unacknowledged loans. In the beginning Nawabali was not possibly actively hostile towards the British, but he was entirely in the hands of his councillors who manifested a rebellious spirit. As a measure of government he formed a council in which were included Mirza Willayat Hasan, Mirza Imdadali Beg, Mir Insallah, Mohamed Sirdar Khan, Mir Farhatali, Seth Udaya, the last one serving as banker. Mahomedan dates were introduced and the revolutionary government started on the fullest of impulses.<sup>3</sup> The power of the British government was subverted practically throughout the district except at Kalinjar in pargana Budousa in the south of the district. On 29 September, when Kunwar Singh with two thousand men reached Banda he was received with great honour and hospitality by the nawab. Kunwar Singh stayed there till 18 October when he went away towards Kalpi.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile at Kirwi, Narayan Rao and Madho Rao proclaimed their rule in the eastern portion of the district in November 1857. They were under strong suspicion of disaffection<sup>5</sup> and the troops of the former were said to have acted in concert with the troops of the nawab of Banda.<sup>6</sup> They surrendered to Whitlock but the general on entering Kirwi on 6 June, 1858, found numerous proofs of their preparation for the rebellion, pieces of cannon, immense quantity of shot, shell, and powder. Their gun-foundries and powder-manu-

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 526-7.

<sup>2</sup> NE. i, 524.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 530.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 531-2.

<sup>5</sup> FP. ix, 599, 834; vi, 191; NE. i, 521.

<sup>6</sup> FP. ix, 863. The Raos were the adopted sons of Binayak Rao, a descendant of the well-known Raghoba and a connection of Nana Sahib (FP. ix, 924). His chief manager, Radhagobinda (NE. i, 537, 541) was the real instigator of his proceedings. The two brothers after having been judicially convicted and sentenced to transportation for life for rebellion were recommended for mercy. But the government securities to the amount of 25,55,000 rupees, the property of Narayan and Madho, had been previously confiscated when they were in open rebellion (*Hindu Patriot*, 14 January and 7 October, 1858).



factories had been working in full swing<sup>1</sup> Other rebels, the pandits of Jalaun, took possession of the pargana of Khundeh to the west of Banda and the disaffected populace from Panna, Charkhari, Ajaigarh occupied other parts of the district Thus the rebellion culminated in the complete subversion of the British power<sup>2</sup>

By February 1858, the revolutionary flame was in full blaze The nawab was joined by Wazir Khan and other disgruntled shahzadas, but could not hold on against the British offensive led by general Whitlock on 19 April and left Banda for Kalpi with two thousand followers Banda was occupied the next day The fury of the people was manifested in a spate of anti-British activities like the destruction of the church and the desecration of the christian burial ground Narayan Rao and Madho Rao still maintained themselves with an army of forty guns and fifteen thousand men in the east and styled themselves as Peshwas

The popular character of the rebellion at Banda was reflected in the determination of the masses to exterminate the smallest vestige of their former masters and the policy of the authorities to make 'severe impressions' which would strike terror into the hearts of the people—hanging, flogging and transporting the ring leaders, burning villages and destroying houses The official report disclosed that there was not a single village marked on the map that had not more or less committed itself,<sup>3</sup> and the details given of the hostile feelings of the people of eight disaffected parganas show how the rebellion spread from village to village<sup>4</sup> Some of these rose in arms even before 14 June and set up their own king, closed the roads, others again like the Simri and Wasilpur people in the pargana Simouni sent messengers to the neighbouring villages to join in the destruction of government tahsil records and treasures and many of these remained in open rebellion till April 1858<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Malleon, iii 201

<sup>2</sup> NE : 530

<sup>3</sup> NE : 534

<sup>4</sup> NE : 537

<sup>5</sup> NE : 540 Other rebels of the district using the name of Nana Sahib were Pannab Singh and Der Singh (NE : 539) Martand Rao Tanda the supposed nephew of Nana issued orders for collecting troops at Kalpi (FP viii 71)

## HAMIRPUR

In Hamirpur the landholders of the mauza Ramari manifested a disposition to revolt even before the actual outbreak of the mutiny of troops on 13 June. The mutinous sepoys committed the usual outrages including the murder of T. K. Lloyd, the magistrate, which is considered to be 'one of the worst of the many black crimes' which polluted the rebellion.<sup>1</sup> A general upsurge followed, people rose on all sides and directed their attacks against the bankers, the money-lenders, farmers and specially the auction purchasers 'who had gained possession of half the estate in the district.' The usual *jacquerie* commenced throughout the district and the inevitable war between ex-zamindar and actual purchaser became general.<sup>2</sup> G. H. Freeling, the collector and magistrate, observed:

I need scarcely say that the great feature in the rebellion here has been the universal ousting of all bankers, banias, marwaris etc. from landed property in the district by whatever means they acquired it.<sup>3</sup>

In July the peshwa's rule was proclaimed<sup>4</sup> and Nana's flag was hoisted in most villages.<sup>5</sup> Word, it is said, came from Nana Sahib to Sheikh Wahiduzzuman to rule in his name<sup>6</sup> but official correspondence also refers to Mirza Rahim Beg as an agent of Nana and Bhow Tantia as his dewan.<sup>7</sup> The headman of the nawab of Banda, Rahimuddin was a rebel while the town was held by the raja of Beri.<sup>8</sup>

Janardan Rao (FP. viii, 73, 76), Rao Amree, Miharen Beg, Shamser Khan and Mohammed Irak Mir (FP. viii, 74) were also regarded as rebels by the government. Sikander Khan, the deputy-collector of Banda, was without doubt a rebel (FP. ix, 231). The nawab of Banda surrendered but his life was spared and a pension of 4,000 rupees was allotted for his subsistence (Martin, ii, 500).

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 545.

<sup>2</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 510.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 548.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 547.

<sup>5</sup> NE. i, 548.

<sup>6</sup> FP. vii, 209.

<sup>7</sup> FP. ix, 604.

<sup>8</sup> FP. ix, 834.

## JALAUN

Jalaun, to the north-west of Hamirpur and seventy-six miles from Jhansi, was not turned into a centre of popular commotion, but it became the scene of some of the famous encounters of the wars of the mutiny. At Kalpi which was a most strategic centre over the Jumna, the revolutionary leaders united their forces and sent expeditions across the Jumna and down below. After the revolt at Jhansi, the 53rd regiment at Orai deserted their officers on 9 June which was followed by the withdrawal of the British. Authority was exercised by the gursari chief Kesha Rao and his eldest son Sheo Ram Tantia. The former played a double game and the latter was most flagrant<sup>1</sup> but Nana's defeat and flight from Cawnpore had a sobering effect on the conduct of these chiefs, and later on they were overthrown by Tantia Topi. Tantia reached Kalpi on 29 October, some days after Kunwar Singh's arrival at the same place. He took up the cause of Tarabai, a lady of a royal family whom he placed in power by overthrowing the British agents on 3 November<sup>2</sup>. The principal chiefs of the rebel government who exercised authority in these parts were Pandit Tantia Ganguly and Mohammed Ishaq who exercised joint authority, and Tarabai's agent, Biswas Rao<sup>3</sup>.

Kunwar and Tantia united their forces and advanced in an attack on Cawnpore leaving Bala Rao, Nana's brother, in charge of the magazine at Kalpi. During this time Nana's nephew Rao Sahib also took up his residence at Kalpi which in course of time became the headquarters of the rebel forces coming from different parts. The accumulation of artillery and military stores naturally added to the strength of the fort. After his defeat at Cawnpore Tantia fell back on Kalpi and then he proceeded to Charkhari which he completely despoiled. On 1 April, 1858, Tantia was again defeated in his attempt to reach succour and reinforcements to the rani of Jhansi who was besieged in the fort. He fell back on Kunch, thirty-eight

<sup>1</sup> NE i, 579-584. Report by G. Passanah magistrate.

<sup>2</sup> When the movement collapsed Tarabai of Jalaun, her infant son and her husband Narayan Rao were deported to Monghyr where they resided under British surveillance (NE ii, 272).

<sup>3</sup> NE i, 575, 579.

miles to the south of Kalpi, determined to dispute the passage of the British arms on the Jhansi road marching for Kalpi, but in the action of 7 May he could not take his stand and retreated towards Kalpi with the pursuing British army at his heels. Malleson says that the manner in which the Indians conducted their retreat could not be surpassed, but the defeat sowed great distrust among the rebels.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the rani of Jhansi repaired to Kalpi as also the nawab of Banda and the leaders with Rao Sahib prepared for the defence of the entrenchment against the besieging army of Sir Hugh Rose. The siege and capture of Kalpi<sup>2</sup> is one of the most large scale actions of the mutiny. It is evident that the rebels prepared for a defence at depth but their exertions, unfortunately enough, did not turn out to be as desperate as the intensity of the preparations would permit. Kalpi fell on 23 May, one day after the open assault commenced, and the huge arsenal fell into the hands of the conquerors.<sup>3</sup>

The deputy-commissioner of Jalaun reported that at first the villagers appeared to have taken little interest in the rebel movements but gradually several leaders sprang up from among them. Restoration of the British rule in Jalaun was disturbed by the rising of Barjor Singh, the rebel rajput who plundered Kunch. Gambhir Singh and Debi Singh raided Mote, a tahsil station on the Kalpi road, thirty-five miles from Jhansi, on the very day when Rose took Kalpi.<sup>4</sup> His hands were scattered on 31 May, but the attack on Gwalior and the flight of the Sindhia on the following day led to the collapse of the British authority for the time being

<sup>1</sup> Malleson, iii, 178-9.

<sup>2</sup> Kalpi was the last stand of the sepoys. They made huge preparations for its defence and had sworn to die for it. A contemporary account of the intricate military works inside is furnished in the *Hindu Patriot* of 3 June, 1858: 'A subterranean magazine has been discovered in the fort of Calpee. It contains 500 barrels of powder and immense quantities of ordnance stores. In the town and fort four foundries and manufactories for cannon were discovered, and one 18 pounder brass gun, one brass eight inch mortar, and two brass nine pounder guns, all made in these manufactories were found.' The same account is given in Lowe's *Central India*, that the foundries for casting shot and shell were in perfect order and that in the arsenal there were about 60,000 pounds of gun powder. For the description of the battle see Malleson, iii, 183-5.

<sup>3</sup> Sylvester says that there was no Willoughby on the Indian side to apply the match (*Recollections of the Campaign*, etc., 167).

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 566.

and Jalaun practically fell into the hands of Barjor Singh and Daulat Singh of Indorker. Towards the end of July 1858, they even advanced to the attack of Jalaun and brought Kurch under their control, but they were repulsed and eventually on September 4 and 5 rebels and mutineers were finally routed. There were other leaders of the people namely the raja of Bhudek, the thakur of Bellawan Mohammed Adil, the thanadar of Bungra, also turned a rebel <sup>1</sup>

### JHANSI

Jhansi, a Maratha principality, lay about one hundred and forty miles south of Agra in the heart of Bundelkhand <sup>2</sup> There were many powerful chiefs in Jhansi who for one reason or another bore a grudge against the British rule. On the death of Gangadhar Rao in 1854 Jhansi lapsed to the British territory which along with Jalaun and Chanderni was formed into a superintendency under Captain Skene. The raja's widow, Lakshmibai by name, <sup>3</sup> celebrated in the annals of the Indian mutiny as the rani of Jhansi, the heroine of the war of independence, was deeply irritated by the refusal of the British government to allow her to adopt an heir to Gangadhar Rao. A pension of rupees five thousand a month was granted to her in exchange for the territory containing nearly three thousand square miles and a population of about a quarter of a million which she surrendered. She sent an agent to England to redress the loss but to no effect and despite her objection, slaughter of cattle was now authoritatively allowed in her country which had not been practised formerly <sup>4</sup> Further, the

<sup>1</sup> NE 1, 575 (Report by A. H. Ternan deputy commissioner), 579. Official despatches make references to many other leaders of the neighbouring areas the details of whose activities are not furnished. Nevertheless it is of some use to collect those names as showing the extent of the rebellion. The regent rani of Tehri and the raja of Datia were reported to be in a state of contumacy (FP ix, 271, 572). Biji Singh thakur of Shahpur (FP ix 272), Garur Singh, the raja of Ramgarh (FP ix, 269-70), Murbhan Singh (FP ix 278) are similarly mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> For the early history of Jhansi and the rani see Sen *op cit*, 267-70.

<sup>3</sup> John Lang who saw her at close quarters before the mutiny says that she had a remarkably fine figure but her voice had an unnatural tone about it (*Wanderings in India* 93-94).

<sup>4</sup> NE 1, 549. Report by J. W. Pinkney, captain, commissioner.

two villages whose revenues supported the temple of Mahalakshmi were sought to be resumed. And in addition to it, the usual rumours of defilement of caste must have aggravated her mental discontent and hardened her mind to take a decision when the crisis came. Similarly the raja of Banpur had many grievances to complain of. He had also the hope of gaining the entire kingdom of Chanderi, the ancient possession of his ancestors, on the expected fall of the British rule.<sup>1</sup> Raja Madan Singh of Banpur, it is learnt on good authority, went to Jhansi after the demise of Gangadhar Rao, and had consultations with rani Lakshmibai which contact he kept up at frequent intervals since then.<sup>2</sup> The rani also procured promise from the *puar* thakurs and *obaidars* of Oodgaon, Nonri and Jigna who had lost their *oban* rights in several of their villages, to join her.<sup>3</sup> There were many other disaffected chiefs such as those of Jawahir Singh of Nanikpur and Mangal Singh of Jakhlon whose estates had been in whole or in part resumed. The former along with his son Ganeshjoo commenced plundering even before the military insurrection of 5 June. The British officers had obtained intelligence of an intended attack of the *puar* thakurs of Karcera pargana on the first day of the month.<sup>4</sup>

All these seem to indicate that the rani was in a state of contumacy, and she has been severely indicted by British historians as the organiser of the mutiny at Jhansi. But the statement of contemporary British officers to the effect that Lakshmibai was directly privy to the mutiny of troops at Jhansi, the 12th regiment infantry and the 13th irregular cavalry, and the murder of the Europeans, has not been proved in the light of more convincing evidence. On the contrary, the recent work of an eminent historian establishes on firm ground that the rani of Jhansi had no share 'in instigating the mutiny of the sepoys, in June, 1857, and took no part in the massacre of the Europeans'.<sup>5</sup> The mutiny commenced on 5 June with a

<sup>1</sup> NE. i, 551.

<sup>2</sup> Statement of Asi Duaga Md. Shamsheer Khan of Tilangarh, Orchha, whose father and grand-father served in the army of Banpur, referring to the condition of Jhansi in *Vikrami* 1914 (i.e. 1857 A.D.) and 1915.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 550.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 552.

<sup>5</sup> Majumdar, *op. cit.*, 149, 151, 152. Dr. Majumdar finds that the report of captain Pinkney, the commissioner (dated Jhansi, 20 November, 1858) does not

march for the star fort and on the next day the whole force mutinied in accordance with a concerted plan when one Ahsanali called the musulmans to prayer and murdered their officers in cold blood. The Europeans who took refuge in the fort held out till the day following despite the desertion of Raghunath Singh of Noner, but they had to surrender on 8 June when nearly sixty one of them fell victims to the fiendish cruelty of the troopers initiated by Bakshisali, the jail daroga. All through this period the usual acts of depredation were committed, viz sacking and burning of government buildings, cantonments and bungalows and the jail prisoners were released. The rani assumed the reins of government on behalf of her adopted son, Damodar Rao, a child of eight years and a proclamation was issued to that effect:

The people are god's, the country is the Padshah's, and the Raj is Ranee Luchmee Bae's.<sup>1</sup>

The queen of Jhansi rose to the occasion, she strengthened the fortifications of Jhansi and Karera (thirty miles west of Jhansi), levied troops, and established a mint. Both Malleon and Kincaid testified that she proved herself a most capable ruler. The latter writes that she personally attended to official business and managed her revenues with thrift and prudence. Dressed as a man, she listened to petition<sup>2</sup> in open

refer to the participation of the rani in the procession of 6 June (*Ibid.* 138-9). The report of Scot which was accepted by mutiny historians like Kaye, Malleon and Holmes is also found to be utterly unconvincing in so far as the guilt of the rani was concerned (*Ibid.* 139). Further the evidence of Mrs. Mudlow in regard to the guarantee of safe conduct to the besieged Englishmen by the rani and her participation in the conflict is contradicted by other more trustworthy statements (*Ibid.* 140-4). All such views referring to the guilt of the rani are to a great extent discredited by the letter of colonel Martin in which he asserted that the mother of Damodar Rao took no part whatever in the massacre of the Europeans at Jhansi. The government communication of 18 August 1857 that no positive evidence of rani's guilt was available till then goes to strengthen Martin's contention (*Ibid.* 144-5). Negative evidence in favour of Lakshmibai's innocence are also not wanting. Pinkney's report indicates that she was forced under duress to join the sepoys. The fact that she had to pay a large sum to the sepoys to accept her claims to Jhansi in preference to her rival Sadasheo Rao definitely weakens the theory that the mutiny was the result of a conspiracy organised by the rani (*Ibid.* 145-46). The sepoys also deserted her and left Jhansi for Delhi on 12 June. Cf. also C. A. Kincaid who used most of the points as above to disprove rani's complicity in the mutiny (*Lakshmi Bai Rani of Jhansi* p. 11).

<sup>1</sup> NE 1 555, FP ix, 206

<sup>2</sup> Kincaid *op. cit.*, 7

court and she was an excellent and tireless rider. The rebel government with the rani at its head consisted of Moropant Tambe, the father of Lakshmibai,<sup>1</sup> Lala Bakshi, the paymaster, Lachman Rao, the dewan, Kashinath, the tahsildar.<sup>2</sup> She had five hundred Kabuli pathans in her army and had immense faith in them.

Rani Lakshmibai is said to have entered into close relations with Nana Sahib but her subsequent activities present a different picture of the situation. Kincaid suggests that her attempt at securing a good administration of the country had a purpose behind it: she hoped that the government in the end would sanction her son's succession to the throne. In fact, in the letters she wrote to Erskine, the commissioner and agent of Sagar division, on 12 and 14 June, she assured the authorities that she would hold Jhansi on behalf of the British. Erskine did not suspect the rani's sincerity, authorised her in a formal communication to collect the revenue and even assured her that she would be liberally dealt with.<sup>3</sup>

All these exchanges raise a strong presumption in favour of the rani, that she was not in the early stages of the revolt a determined enemy of the English. The sepoys left her undefended against the English or neighbouring hostile chieftains, the Bundela rana of Orchha in particular, with whom she had a brush. Naturally, she was obliged to turn to the English for help and indeed depended on them up to the early part of 1858 for protection,<sup>4</sup> but being driven by tortuous diplomacy she had eventually to range herself against the English. The

<sup>1</sup> FP, iv, 823.

<sup>2</sup> NE, I, 555. The rani had many other faithful adherents, Bharu Kona, Khoda Bakshi, Gangadhar (*Ibid.*), Ganabhir Singh, Debi Singh (NE, I, 565), Saleh Ahmad the doctor (FP, ix, 296), Junk Bhol and Munshiram (NE, I, 567). The police, the customs peons, and chaprasis joined the revolt.

<sup>3</sup> NE, I, 555; Majumdar, *op. cit.*, 140; Sen, *op. cit.*, 280, 282. But Erskine's exhaustive report of 444 paragraphs, as Kaye says (III, 370-91), does not contain a word about Pakeney's statement that the rani lamented the Jhansi massacres. Rightly enough Dr. Majumdar considers this to be a conspiracy of silence which strengthens the belief that the British historians have not alluded to the points having a bearing on the innocence of the rani (*Ibid.*, 147-9).

<sup>4</sup> Kincaid, *op. cit.*, 5-6; Sen, *op. cit.*, 283-4. For a very critical estimate of the political situation in which the rani was placed see Majumdar, *op. cit.*, 240.



government however, remained prejudiced against her despite her friendly gestures. Dr R. C. Majumdar writes:

The attitude of Erskine and Hamilton must have made it quite clear to the rani that she was already in the list of war-criminals, and her fate was doomed. She tried by all means in her power to remove the suspicion of the government, but failed. In these circumstances the choice of the brave and high-souled Rani of Jhansi was not a difficult one. Many lesser men have chosen to die in the battle field rather than by the hands of a hangman. We need not wonder, therefore, that the noble Rani of Jhansi chose to fight the British rather than submit to a trial. . . . .<sup>1</sup>

During this time Lalitpur and Chanderi rapidly fell into great disorder, the thakurs rose in all directions and collected in 'large bodies principally at Talbahat.' Mardan Singh, the raja of Banpur, at first played a double game negotiating for terms and territories, but eventually became an open rebel, and the master of Chanderi. From Lalitpur, his headquarters, he, along with the raja of Shahgarh, made demonstrations of their strength. Mardan Singh also occupied the ghats, intrigued with the sepoys and opened a private camel *dak* to Jhansi. He is also reported to have extorted money from the trading classes and established a cannon foundry, as stated<sup>2</sup> and indeed the official papers of this time are full of accounts of his rebellious proceedings.<sup>3</sup>

The Central Indian Field Force under Rose captured Rahatgarh and relieved Sagar with a successful assault on the fort of Garhakota. Rose then overcame the opposition of the raja of Banpur and advanced towards Jhansi on 27 February. On the way he cleared the Madanpur Pass held by the raja of Shahgarh by a brilliant charge of infantry on 4 March in the face of the determined defence of the rebels. The army reached Chanchanpur by forced marches, fourteen miles from Jhansi fort<sup>4</sup> on the 19th. The strength of the fort was computed at eleven thousand men composed of mutineers, mercenaries and levies. The siege of Jhansi, the stronghold

<sup>1</sup> Majumdar, *op cit*, 154

<sup>2</sup> NE 1, 558, 562

<sup>3</sup> Malleon, iii, 142f

<sup>4</sup> For a description of the fort see Malleon, iii, 157-8

of rebel power in Central India, commenced on 22 March, 1858. The skill, vigour and energy with which the Indians fought at Jhansi made it one of the most memorable of the wars of the mutiny. Rani Lakshmibai put forward a resolute and spirited defence, personally inspecting the defences and taking part in risky operations.<sup>1</sup> For seven days from the 25th, the British batteries opened fire keeping up an incessant fusillade. The cannonade effected a breach, and the fort was in the danger of falling when Tantia Topi rushed with twenty-two thousand men and twenty-eight guns from the north, for the relief of the garrison.

On 1 April, 1858, Tantia Topi advanced to the attack on British forces whose guns failed to check him. The battle took place in Orchha territory about one mile north-west of Nohat-ghat where the Nowgong road crosses the Betwa. It was a fierce engagement in which Rose was outflanked and was saved only by the sudden appearance of brigadier Stuart who threw into dismay the force advancing right in the direction of Jhansi and compelled Tantia to fly away towards Kalpi in Jalaun. Fifteen hundred rebels were killed. On 2 April, Rose determined to storm the palace, and a dreadful struggle ensued on the next day. The British army gained a footing on the ramparts in the teeth of fierce opposition which indicated a general and determined resistance of the rebel forces. Even the women, as Sir Hugh writes:

were seen working in the batteries and carrying ammunition. The garden battery was fought under the black flag of the fakir.<sup>2</sup>

The stormers of both parties then united and advanced towards the palace. Simultaneously a fierce street fighting was going on. The houses on both sides of the streets had been set on fire, and severe fighting took place in every avenue leading to it. When the palace was gained every room in it was savagely contested. Thus the palace was taken by storm along with the city. No less than five thousand perished at Jhansi. The mode by

<sup>1</sup> Holmes says that on the eve of the final assault, the rani was distracted by conflicting exhortations (*op. cit.*, 509). According to Kincaid the queen wished to meet Rose and state her case personally (*op. cit.*, 7).

<sup>2</sup> Martin, ii, 485; Malleson, iii, 160, 162-5. Holmes, *op. cit.*, 511-4.

on 31 May by major Orr, but the revolt in Gwalior encouraged him to entertain political motives and for the time being he became very powerful in Jalaun. Towards the end of July 1858, Mansiram, an adherent of the rani, took the fort of Mayapur and the rebel bands under Daulat Singh and Barjor Singh brought Kunch under their control. This had a very bad effect, the puars and other malcontents were preparing to rise. They, however, could not hold on against captain Ashburner who drove away Barjor and scattered his followers on 4-5 September. On 6 October, 1858, Tantia's troops nearly eleven thousand men under the command of Rao Sahib, again entered Jhansi near Mayapur and took Pachor and also occupied Talbahat,<sup>1</sup> where he was joined by all the Bundelas of the northern part of the Chanderi district. Tantia also came swooping down and attacked Chanderi on 7 October, but general Michael drove back the invaders on 14 October. Tantia Topi and Rao Sahib then united their forces at Lalitpur, they were also joined by the Bundelas, but Michael again inflicted a crushing defeat on the combined forces at Khajuria near Sindwaha on 18 October. Tantia with his host fled to Sagar with a pursuing British army at his heel. For some time he roamed about in the Narbada territory, and held out 'fighting as he fled and flying as he fought,' until 7 April, 1858, when he was captured while asleep in the Paron jungles, ten miles from Sipri to the west of Jhansi in Gwalior, by the treachery of Man Singh. Man Singh was a vassal lord of Sindhia, a disaffected chief, and a nephew of Ajit Singh of Gwalior, another stormy rebel. Tantia Topi was tried and hanged on April 18, 1859, at Sipri for waging war against the King. His bearing was calm and fearless to the last.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. 568-70.

<sup>2</sup> Martin ii. 498. Russell's description of Tantia published in the *Times* (17 January 1859), will be of interest at all times to all lovers of this great hero of India's struggle for freedom. He marched 30 or 40 miles a day up mountains over rivers through ravines on he goes backwards and forwards evasive as Proteus. For details of the romantic escapades and the heroic exertions of Tantia in the period between June 1858 and April 1859 and the way in which his capture was effected by Meade of Meade's horse see Malletson, iii. 319-387. But Tantia's rushes and forays were not accompanied with disturbances in the civil population. The following are some of the adherents of Tantia—Thakur Narayan Singh, Ajit Singh, Thakur Ganga Singh, raja Man Singh, nawab Adil Mohammed and Imamah. This is known from Tantia Topi's voluntary deposition.

## SAGAR

In Sagar and Narbada territories the disturbances were general. By the end of July 1857, the Sagar district was nearly all in the hands of the rebels. The fort of Rahatgarh, twenty-four miles from Sagar in the western border, was taken possession of by Fazil Mohammed, nawab of Amabapanni in Bhopal, who also styled himself as the Prince of Mandasor. The strong fort of Garhakota<sup>1</sup> about thirty miles from Sagar in the east was occupied by the Shahagarh troops. At the same time the raja of Banpur with more than a thousand men moved down from the north and took up position at Niraoli, about nine miles from Sagar.<sup>2</sup> The whole of Damoh was swarming with rebels led by Kishori Singh, the chief of Hindorea, a place twelve miles from Damoh.<sup>3</sup> By the end of August, all places to the north of the Narbada with the exception of the sadar stations were in flames, police stations were deserted, *malguzars* forced to join the rebels and *daks* and all communications were closed.<sup>4</sup> On 15 September, the Banpur raja even repulsed the expedition of lieutenant colonel Dalyell sent to storm his entrenchment, in which the loss of the attacking party was severe.<sup>5</sup> Other rebels connected with the Sagar rising were Jungah Singh,<sup>6</sup> Bulbhudar Singh, talukdar of Sohagpur, Lachman Singh, the brother of the raja of Shahagarh<sup>7</sup> and nawab Kandar Khan Pindari.<sup>8</sup> The most famous of the Sagar rebels was Daulat Singh who was said to have been the ringleader in the Sagar mutiny and for whose apprehension a reward of

taken on 10 April, 1859, by major Meade (*Ibid.* iii, 514-524). Also see Sylvester, *Recollections of the Campaign*, etc. 197f; 217f. and Sen, *op. cit.*, 371f. Richard Hilton, in his book on the Indian Mutiny, recently published writes that the exploits of Tantia are comparable to those of Christian De Wet at the end of the Boer War, or Von Lettow Vorbeck in German East Africa. (*The Indian Mutiny*, 194).

<sup>1</sup> FP. iv, 4, 15.

<sup>2</sup> FP. iv, 250.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 597: Report by major W. C. Erskine, commissioner of the Jabalpur Division.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 600.

<sup>5</sup> Malleon, iii, 106-07.

<sup>6</sup> FP. vi, 193.

<sup>7</sup> FP. ix, 614.

<sup>8</sup> FP. ix, 850.

rupees one thousand was offered by the government.<sup>1</sup> With his followers he swept through Jalaun, Jhansi, Hosangabad and Rajputana

### JABALPUR

Meanwhile trouble was brewing in Jabalpur. Raja Shankar Shah, the last of the gonda chiefs and a proud descendant of rani Durgavati of Garhamandla and a pensioned chief of the government, residing close to Jabalpur, was suspected to be engaged in plotting with the sepoys to attack and kill the Europeans on the last day of the *maharam*. On searching the raja's house several documents were found, particularly a piece of paper on which the raja had written a prayer invoking his diety to aid him to upset the British government and establish his own.<sup>2</sup> A similar prayer in the handwriting of his son, Raghunath Shah was also found. They were arrested on 14 September and were tried for plotting against the company-raj.<sup>3</sup> The father and the son were tied to the mouth of a cannon and blown away on 18 September.<sup>4</sup> The old man with his snow white hair maintained a haughty bearing to the last. The entire act was made public and people were called to witness this scene. Half burnt remains were collected on behalf of the rani, while European officers 'looked on with a smile of gratified revenge' on their lips.<sup>5</sup>

During this time Jabalpur was in ferment. In Sihora and Sleemanabad, the thakurs plundered in all directions, and Debu Singh, Jagat Singh and Bahadur Singh assembled their forces in Burgi pargana to the south of the Narbada. These three, according to official report, were in league with Shankar

<sup>1</sup> *The Englishman* quoted in the *Hindu Patriot* 3 December, 1858. Sujat Khan Pindari and nawab Adil Mohammed Khan are mentioned as rebels of Bhopal (NE II, 323).

<sup>2</sup> NE I 602. The prayer is very similar in content to the famous hymn in honour of *sakti* composed a few years later by the celebrated Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

<sup>3</sup> *The Englishman* 1 October, 1857.

<sup>4</sup> FP vii, 277, 281 2.

<sup>5</sup> Martin, II, 491.

Shah in his meditated attack on the Europeans.<sup>1</sup> The army they brought to the field at this time was further swelled by the contributions received from the Shahgarh raja, Indra Singh and from many others such as the malguzars and the Ramnagar chiefs. Their main object was to attack Damoh. Extensive preparations were made which received support from Arjun Dawa, Maharaj Singh Dawa, Ramprasad Pulhulwan, officers of the Shahgarh raja, as also from the Lodhis of the district.<sup>2</sup> The young raja of Bijeraghogarh, raja Surjurprasad Singh, raised an army, strengthened his fort and succeeded in closing the Deccan road for months. He was in open rebellion and led a band of three thousand men with some guns. He was sentenced to transportation in the Andamans but he ended his life with a dagger.<sup>3</sup>

The tension in the country to the north of the Narbada continued for a long time. On 30 November, 1857, Debi Singh the burgi leader attacked and burned the Jabalpur thana of Shahpur on the road to Narsinghpur.<sup>4</sup> On 9 January, 1858, about four thousand rebels from Rahatgarh and Bhopal including two hundred and fifty pathans under Adil Mohammed Khan of Bhopal, Bulbhudar Singh of Singpur in Sagar aided by Delan Shah, Narwar Singh and others of Narsinghpur attacked Tendukhera to the north of the Narbada.<sup>5</sup> Malleeson says that captain Ternan defeated the invading rebels at Madanpur in the month of January.<sup>6</sup> Apparently it had no effect, as on 26 April, 1858, nearly five hundred rebels under Ranadhir Singh, Pratab Singh, Debi Singh and Himmat Singh again attacked and destroyed the Mujholi thana in Jabalpur.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 272.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 276-7.

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 578.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 614; FP. ix, 271-2.

<sup>5</sup> NE. i, 618.

<sup>6</sup> Malleeson, iii, 108-09. The other rebels of Jabalpur were Jagat Singh of Berkera (FP. ix, 272-3), Thakur Hindupat (FP. vii, 281-2), Indra Singh (FP. viii, 287), raja Mahipat Singh of Butgaon, Bhup Singh, Nimkhera thakurs, Kuman Singh (FP. ix, 578), Bahadur Singh, Maughar raja (FP. ix, 272, 583), Sheodan malguzar and Murat Singh (FP. ix, 271).

<sup>7</sup> NE. i, 626, 628.

## NARBADA TERRITORIES

The swell of the great wave of rebellion was felt in the Central provinces. In Mandla all the petty chiefs were in rebellion followed mostly by the gonds armed with match locks. They had their headquarters at Ramgarh and Sohagpur. The principal rebels were Bikramjit, the raja of Ramgarh, Bijaya Singh of Shahpur and Kuman Singh of Mhoka<sup>1</sup> and one Asajit<sup>2</sup>. Captain Waddington in a series of operations suppressed the rising of the seditious populace who were headed by the thakurs of Shahpur, Bhao Singh and Himmat Singh, in an action at Mandla in April 1858.<sup>3</sup> He then marched to Ramgarh where the rani, the consort of raja Bikramjit, raised the standard of revolt and prepared to resist the British offensive. The estate of the raja was managed by the court of wards which was resented by the queen of Ramgarh. But she could not hold on and was driven to the point of surrender. Yet she did not give herself up, but like the celebrated rani Durgavati stabbed herself to death in defence of her honour and prestige. On her deathbed she admitted that the country people had been stirred to rebellion by her inducement.

Narsinghpur was attacked by nawab Adil Mohammed Khan of Bhopal and Mirbhan Singh, a noted local leader, in October 1857. The latter came with about eight hundred Bundelas.<sup>4</sup> The burgi gonds were led by Sheo Baksh Lodhi.<sup>5</sup> Mention is also made of one Jodhi of the village of Suniwarh<sup>6</sup> and of others such as Rao Bahadur Singh,<sup>7</sup> Devi Gunter<sup>8</sup> and Ganjan Singh of Singpur<sup>9</sup> who took part in the destruction of the thanas and interrupting communications in the Narbada territories. Ganjan Singh and all his followers including one Dalganjan were killed in the encounter with captains Wolley and Roberts.

<sup>1</sup> FP ix 583 NE i 618 626

<sup>2</sup> FP ix 839 NE i 617

<sup>3</sup> NE i 627

<sup>4</sup> FP ix 571 576

<sup>5</sup> FP ix 579 583

<sup>6</sup> FP ix 571 579

<sup>7</sup> FP ix 609 615

<sup>8</sup> FP ix 615

<sup>9</sup> FP ix 602 609

in the month of November.<sup>1</sup> In May 1858, Himmat Singh and Bhao Singh of Nimkhera still continued their plundering activities and it was suggested that two companies and two guns were to be kept in the Deccan road to keep the *dak* communication open. Delan Shah of Narsinghpur who had been leader of a similar revolt in 1842<sup>2</sup> was still going strong and launched another attack on British outposts on 16 May, 1858.<sup>3</sup>

The district of Hoshangabad passed through a series of convulsions. In the Harda pargana the police broke out and raised the mahomedan standard. Early in the month of October, 1857, Nemawar pargana of the district north of the Nerbada was seized by one Ramkissen, a self-styled agent of the Gwalior darbar, who hoisted the Maratha flag.<sup>4</sup> He had with him a following of three hundred and fifty men and was further aided by a force of mewati rebels, two thousand strong under Daulat Singh, the rebel thakur of Rahatgarh.<sup>5</sup> Ramkissen was seized and executed on 13 October. But Daulat Singh carried on his hostile activities and won over Kalyan Singh, a jamadar of police, to his side. Kalyan with Lal Khan, a mewati chief, held the fort of Sutwas two marches from Nemawar. But they were taken by surprise and hanged on 17

<sup>1</sup> Malleson, iii, 108.

<sup>2</sup> Chaudhuri, *Civil Disturbances*, 177-8; NE. i, 618.

<sup>3</sup> The official papers give the following description of the activities of Delan Shah. In January 1858, the British force made a long march dashing into the rebel village of Mundenpoor (Saugor Nerbada Territories), surprised all, captured some rebels (amongst whom were a son and a grand-son of Delun Shah, the rebel leader of 1842, and also in this insurrection) and killed others (NE. i, 618). About the middle of March 1858, Mirbhan Singh and the rebel leader, Delun Shah met with severe punishment at the hands of the Deputy Commissioner and Lt. Walton of the 28th Madras N.I. who took them by surprise in the jungles somewhere on the bank of the Narmada (NE. i, 625-7).

On the 16th May, 1858, the rebel leader Delun Shah of Nursingpore who had long been hiding in the jungles, attacked Muddunpoor on the right bank of the Nerbudda, his former residence, but was gallantly met by the police, who beat him off, followed him and seized him. He was a leader of note in the rebellion of 1843, and had been released. He was now tried by the deputy-commissioner (as special commissioner) and hanged. This settled Nursingpore for good, I hope; but we still want the other leader Mirbhan Singh, whose father rebelled in 1843, and was hung in jail (Report of major Erskine, commissioner, Jubbulpore Division, 10 August, 1858); [NE. i, 628].

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 608f.

<sup>5</sup> FP. ix, 571, 575.



October, 1857 Ram Singh, son of Kalyan Singh, was sentenced to imprisonment for life in transportation<sup>1</sup> In April 1859, the Bhopal leader, nawab Adil Mohamed Khan supported by one Bhabhut Singh, a jagirdar of Harrakot, stirred up a commotion which called for big engagements of the Madras infantry Bhabhut and his chief subordinate Hol bhai were caught in January 1860<sup>2</sup>

Nimar is famous in the mutiny annals as the place where originated the mysterious cakes, which unsettled the minds of the people, but no organised rising took place there, and in fact the peace of this district as of Betul, Chhindwara and Seoni was scarcely disturbed excepting when Tantia passed through the districts in his usual forays One such march of Tantia in October 1858 across this country to reach Nagpur was fraught with a grave danger of Maratha rising but it was too late A lodhi landholder of Seoni committed himself against the government

### CENTRAL PROVINCES

Nagpur, recently annexed, would have been the scene of a rebellion, but no rising took place there except the revolt of Narayan Singh, zamindar of the hilly estate of Sonakhan in the south western extremity of the district The Sonakhan rajas had always been noted for their hostile attitude to the British occupation of Nagpur R. Jenkins reported against the then noted leader Ramrai which necessitated the adoption of military measures in 1810 Narayan Singh was suffering a term of imprisonment in the Raipur jail at the time of the mutiny He effected his escape and stirred up a widespread disturbance which was joined by many other insurgent elements Narayan Singh was hanged in 1858<sup>3</sup> In other parts, as in Chanda, the gonds manifested a rebellious disposition and along with the rohillas openly remained in a state of revolt

<sup>1</sup> FP ix 580

<sup>2</sup> DG Hoshangabad, 38-39 The raja of Chandghar was reported to be disaffected (FP ix 591)

<sup>3</sup> DG Nagpur 61-62 Another leader Dadal Singh was sentenced to death by hanging (FP iv 46) in Nagpur

They were led by Bapu Rao, a chief Mollampalli who carried on a desultory fight from the jungles<sup>1</sup> and Venkat Rao, a zamindar of Arpalli.<sup>2</sup> In March-April 1858, they assumed a posture of strength at different outposts, but with the capture of Bapu Rao the rebellion died down.

In Hyderabad, the disaffected muslim community were kept in check by the exertions of Salar Jang, the able minister of Nizam Afzaluddaulah. Great commotion prevailed calling upon the faithful to murder Europeans, and the green flag was hoisted. On 17 July, five hundred of the rohilla troops and four thousand of the people of Hyderabad rose in insurrection but they were sent back reeling by a fire of grape. The ring leaders were Torabaz Khan and maulavi Alauddin. One Chida Khan, a jamadar, also took a prominent part in the conspiracy.<sup>3</sup>

#### MARATHA COUNTRY

In general, Bombay did not manifest any symptoms of mass rising during this period though the chiefs in some cases were not well disposed to the government. The sepoys manifested a disposition to revolt, but the situation was saved only by skilful management. The raja of Sholapur was captured.<sup>4</sup> Trouble was brewing in Satara as sympathy was felt for the adopted sons who had been deprived of their estates. Other feudatory chiefs were disgruntled for similar reasons. All the elements of discord existed and a plot was even hatched, but the attempt of Rango Bapuji to seize the government proved abortive.<sup>5</sup> The mahomedan population of Belgaum formed a conspiracy which had its ramifications at Kolhapur, Hyderabad and at Poona.<sup>6</sup> Kolhapur was sixty-five miles distant from Belgaum. Malleeson says that the regiments in these stations and also

<sup>1</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 3 January, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> FP. viii, 169.

<sup>3</sup> *The Englishman*, 27 June and 1 August, 1857. The accounts of Hyderabad disturbances furnished by Malleeson (iii, 120-02) and Holmes (*op. cit.*, 500) seem to have been drawn from the daily.

<sup>4</sup> FP. viii, 100, 106.

<sup>5</sup> Holmes, *op. cit.*, 448.

<sup>6</sup> Malleeson, iii, 32-33.

the one at Dharwar were showing symptoms of mutiny and were in communication for a simultaneous action. They were secretly supported by the discontented chiefs and openly by the Mahomedans. Accordingly, the 27th at Kolhapur rose in arms on 31 July, and though they were effectively challenged, the commotion could not be suppressed. The rising at Kolhapur soon assumed a formidable character and had considerable strength behind it. The Gadkari rising at Kolhapur in 1844 showed the strong feeling of hostility of the people against the British.<sup>1</sup> In the villages within eight miles of Kolhapur about a thousand men collected with arms to resist the enforcement of the disarming act. They were mostly villagers and not sepoys. On the morning of 6 December, 1857, the rebels entered the town of Kolhapur and took it by surprise. They were soon attacked, defeated and thirty six of them were executed in the course of a day. The insurgents appeared, as the *Poona Observer* wrote (December 12), 'no better than a set of half starved villagers and beggars'.<sup>2</sup>

Shorapur on the southern border of the Nizam's territory in the district of Gulbarga was the scene of a political tragedy. The rya Venkatappa Naik who had been sentenced to transportation for treason blew out his brains to escape this dishonour. His family had ruled for thirty generations in that country.<sup>3</sup> The people of the southern Maratha country were excited to dangerous discontent by the action of the inam commission.<sup>4</sup> The emissaries from Nana Sahib also must have worked there to produce convulsions which indeed took place, and in the country both above and below the ghats, the British authority met with resistance.<sup>5</sup> Nargund, a small place in the southern Maratha country, offers the last instance of the bloody reaction against the British policy on adoption. Baba Sahib the chief

<sup>1</sup> Chaudhuri *Civil Disturbances* 165

<sup>2</sup> The *Overland Bombay Times* (5th to 18th December) 1857 p. 234. *Hindu Patriot* 24 December 1857. See also Mallison 11, 237.

<sup>3</sup> Martin 11, 486. For details of the smart action at Shorapur see Mallison 11, 125-9.

<sup>4</sup> Holmes *op cit* 448.

<sup>5</sup> For the disaffected populace and chiefs of the Maratha country the desai of Kattur and the chief of Nargund—see Mallison 11, 29-30. For the rising of the desai of Kattur in the pre-mutiny period see *Civil Disturbances op cit* 153f.

was denied the right of adoption in his family which had held possession of the state for two hundred years. The inam commission had also roused bitterness in his mind. So he declared war against the British government on 27 May, 1858. Malleson's treatment of this episode would show that the revolt of the Nargund chief brought into existence a national rising in the southern Maratha country. Having declared war he commenced his depredations in which he was joined by Bhim Rao, the chief of Kopaldurg, but was captured on 3 June. He was tried on 11 June and in his defence he pleaded that the fear of arrest, as in the case of the Jamkhandi raja, had provoked him to rebellion. He was executed on the next day before a large number of people. His mother and wife had drowned themselves previously on the Malaprabha river, to avoid disgrace.<sup>1</sup> The rebellion at Savantvadi in February, 1858, which was excited by the three sons of Phond Savant was a continuation of the earlier rising.<sup>2</sup> Far in the south, symptoms of revolt among the Moplahs were reported in September 1857; that about four hundred of them had mustered strong possibly under the influence of the moplah priest, Syed Fazl.<sup>3</sup>

#### MALWA

In central India Holkar's troops revolted, religious mendicants made their appearance among the troops on 27 June in Indore, and the mutiny occurred on 1 July. About twenty christian residents had been slaughtered and all public buildings had been demolished.<sup>4</sup> Of the popular leaders, the rebellious activities of the raja of Amjhera were of a very subversive nature. Along with his agent and three officials he was tried, found guilty and sentenced to death.<sup>5</sup> Ajida,

<sup>1</sup> Malleson, iii, 238-246; *Hindu Patriot*, 29 July, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> Chaudhuri, *Civil Disturbances*, 171.

<sup>3</sup> *The Englishman*, 19 September, and 12 December, 1857. The Indian Mutiny possibly raised echoes also in Martaban where act 14 and 16 of 1857 was extended (*Hindu Patriot*, 14 January, 1858).

<sup>4</sup> Kaye, iii, 331n. For the alleged implication of Holkar in the revolt, *ibid.* 338ff. Also Malleson, i, 226-33.

<sup>5</sup> FP. viii, 100; FP. ix, 685. One Baba Apte was also hung during this period (*The Englishman*, 21 June, 1858).

## RAJPUTANA

In Rajputana comprising eighteen 'native' states, the mutinies and rebellions had not taken the same form as in upper India. Nimach was threatened by attacks from the Mandasor rebels who seized Jiran towards the end of October and defeated a party of British pickets.<sup>1</sup> In the preceding month, on 8 September, nearly 4,000 men laid siege to Nimach, which lasted for fifteen days.<sup>2</sup> Many other disaffected chiefs seem to have been engaged in the rising at Nimach. They are the raja of Narwala,<sup>3</sup> Rahimali of Aligarh,<sup>4</sup> Rao Ramkishore the deposed minister of Dholpur,<sup>5</sup> and Seth Amirchand Battia, Sindhia's treasurer.<sup>6</sup> The conduct of the chief of Mewar was not marked by impartial and disinterested devotion to the companyraj, the inducements to shake off the British rule were present.<sup>7</sup>

The revolt of the troops at Kotah in the month of October assumed the shape of the mutinies of the north, but it left no repercussions on the civil population. In Marwar nearly all the chiefs acted in hostility to the government.<sup>8</sup> Kusal Singh, the thakur of Awah, the second noble of Marwar, in conjunction with other thakurs including the Rowa thakur was openly in rebellion.<sup>9</sup> He continued an obstinate struggle for many years. But his quarrel was mainly with his liege lord and not with the British. The population of Amjer gave no trouble to the British and so also the people of Jaipur.<sup>10</sup> There is only the recorded instance of Rawal Sheo Singh, the ex-minister, who was suspected of tampering with the loyalty of the troops.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NE II, 290 Narrative by brig-general, G. St. P. Lawrence, Agent, Rajputana States

<sup>2</sup> NE II, 291

<sup>3</sup> FP VIII, 141-2

<sup>4</sup> FP VIII, 156

<sup>5</sup> FP VIII, 166 Another chief Ram Ahun Singh formerly in the service of the rana of Dholpur was equally disaffected (*Hindu Patriot*, 16 September, 1858)

<sup>6</sup> FP VIII, 169

<sup>7</sup> NE II, 307

<sup>8</sup> NE II, 306.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid* 292-3

<sup>10</sup> NE II, 288

<sup>11</sup> NE II, 283

But the Rajputs in general remained 'a rock of strength' to the British power during these critical days,<sup>1</sup> and the sporadic commotions that occurred during this time seldom took the shape of actual hostility to the government. Throughout the country a feudal system prevailed and the disturbances of the time only excited the feudatories, the thakurs, and hereditary nobles to go against their liege chiefs.<sup>2</sup>

### PANJAB

The position of the government in the Panjab was fairly strong, the sepoy stations there numbered thirty-six thousand, but the national antipathy between the Panjabis and Hindusthanis and the religious antipathy between the Sikhs and Mahomedans helped the government in a general way to check the growth of rebellion in the country districts. Ten thousand British soldiers, gathered in the province along with some thirteen thousand Panjabi irregulars who remained loyal to the core, strengthened the hands of the government to cope with the crisis. And the officers of the Panjab, such as Lawrence, Montgomery, Edwardes, and Nicholson worked upon an integrated policy to crush the revolt wherever it raised its head. The sepoys of the cantonment, of Mainmir, Lahore, Multan and of other stations were adroitly and timely disarmed and the mutinies, as and when they occurred, were promptly repressed by Nicholson's movable column. Even so mutinies occurred as in Mardan, Naushera, Jullundur, Ferozepur and Sialkot and in the last two places the insurrections were of a violent type. In Sialkot, in particular, all the neighbouring villages, roused by the tales of the restoration of the Moghul dynasty and the extinction of the British power, joined in the fray<sup>3</sup> but on the whole the disarmings at Peshawar, Lahore and Multan saved the Panjab and helped the recovery of Delhi.

In the Panjab the risings were mainly of a military nature

<sup>1</sup> NE. ii, 315.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 902.

<sup>3</sup> Cooper, *The Crisis in the Punjab*, etc. 140.

and were not followed by any organised civil rebellion, though in some parts there was extreme manifestation of seditious feeling. In Ludhiana military preparations on the part of the city populace were going on in such a scale that the city had to be disarmed and eleven cart loads of arms were seized. Despite these measures the people joined the Jullundur mutineers in their passage across Ludhiana, in burning the churches and in pillaging the premises of the American mission. The population of Ludhiana was of a mixed character consisting of many turbulent elements, the Kabulis and the Kashmiris, and the mohomedan gujars in particular, who were excited to a high state of fanaticism by a maulavi. All of them were now foremost in plundering the government stores, in destroying the printing presses and in other outrages.<sup>1</sup> In Ambala the threat to the government arising from the intensity of popular disaffection was indicated in the extensive execution of the civil populace by the process of law. In the Montgomery district, the mutiny provided an occasion for the rising of the turbulent Ravi tribes, the khurruls who were led by Ahmed Khan, a resident of Jhama and Sarfaraz Khan of Khumalia. The outbreak in the Gogara jail on 26 July was attributed to the instigation of Ahmed, but more formidable was the insurrection of 17 September which he stirred. All the Ravi tribes and the murdanas of Mohammadpur joined him. Ahmed led many successful forays with a large body of rebels, but was killed on 21 September whence the struggle was continued by Wahidat, and Mir Bahawal Fatwahah leaders of the tribes. But they could not hold out for long and were eventually routed.<sup>2</sup>

In east Punjab where the population was mixed, more akin to the Hindusthanis than to the Panjabis, and more amenable to disruptive influence owing to the influx of mutineers from the east, the military rising was turned into a mass movement, and the country was secured only with the armed assistance of the rajas of Patiala, Nabha and Jhind and of the Sikhs and other loyal elements of the population.

The Haryana light infantry and the 14th irregular cavalry

<sup>1</sup> Kaye II 506

<sup>2</sup> Cave Browne *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857* II 200-23

stationed at Hissar, Hansi and Sirsa broke out into revolt on various dates, at Hansi on 29 May, followed by the revolt at Hissar on the same day in the wake of the former, and in each case it was attended with fearful massacres of the Europeans and the Christians and the destruction of their bungalows. In Hissar after the murder of the collector the uproar became universal, the Indian troops, the sowars and the customs peons all joined, the convicts in the jail were released. In all twenty-three Europeans and Christians were murdered at Hissar and Hansi. One Mohammed Azim, an assistant patrol on the customs line who styled himself Shahzada, put himself at the head of the administration.<sup>1</sup> At Sirsa the European residents found time to escape. The mutineers plundered the treasury of some eight thousand rupees, the hindu inhabitants of the town fled in dismay, and the mahomedan population of the surrounding villages began to plunder the town and the neighbouring villages. The tahsildar of Sirsa and the revenue sherestedar were murdered and the records of the district office were torn and scattered about. The anarchical condition was reinforced by the predatory habits of the ranghars and pachhadas of Hissar and the bhattias of Sirsa. In the military engagements, the rebels could not take their stand though in the encounter that took place at Odhan on 17 June some five thousand bhattias under the nawab of Ranea, a government pensioner, had mustered strong.<sup>2</sup> Even the Shahzada who returned from Delhi with an accession of strength and was aided by Jamalpur rebels and the insurgent ranghars, failed to make any impression on the British army. By the end of September order was restored. Many villages were carried by storm and burnt and altogether one hundred and thirty-three persons were hanged. The Musalmans, in general, took an active part but the Jats, Sikhs and deswalis maintained a defensive attitude, the inferior officials actively combined for plunder but others remained at their posts.

In Karnal the mutinous 5th regiment was disarmed on 14 July. The history of Karnal during this period offers the

<sup>1</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 719. Mention is also made of Kabir Khan, the mewati jamadar of Hansi.

<sup>2</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 714.



singular instance of a civil revolt breaking out spontaneously independently of the military rising and even in opposition to it. In Pampat, sixteen of the largest Jat villages refused to pay their revenue and drove out the government village watchman. Nineteen other large villages, mostly in the Bhausi and Korana, rioted, burnt government buildings and committed various robberies and murders and refused to pay revenue. The gujars plundered generally about the country. In the city of Pampat open sedition was preached specially in the shrine of Bauli Qualandur and an attempt was also made on the collector's camp. Retributory punishments followed, properties were seized, pensions were confiscated and disaffected tahsildars were removed. In other parts of the districts, in Nardak, the position was even more serious. Ranghars of many large villages like Siwan, Asandh, Julmana, Balla broke loose in deeds of violence, but the noteworthy feature is that 'these villages, however, had no sympathies in common with the mutinous soldiers.' This is clear from the fact of their robbing, even to a state of nudity, fugitive soldiers on their way from the Panjab to join the rebel force at Delhi. They also positively refused to pay their revenue which called for the imposition of military restraint.

The Meerut mutiny of 10 May, and the seizure of Delhi on the day following, inflamed Rohtak and when an emissary of the Delhi king, Tafazzal Hussain by name, entered the district with a small force on 23 May, the situation was past control. John Adam Loch of the Bengal Civil Service who was in charge of the district deserted the station on the same night with the result that rebellious elements burnt the court building and record office and committed other outrages. The rebel troops of the Haryana light infantry passing through the district burnt the tahsil of Mehan. The 60th regiment which was mutinous to the core, was escorted to Rohtak under captain Seaton on 31 May. There they found that the Haryana troops had passed through the district the day before. As for the devastations committed by them, Seaton reported

The public buildings, the Judge's Court and offices and Collector's Treasury had been burnt down and were still burning. The rebels had torn up all the public records, papers, and documents, vast rolls

and piles of them, and after breaking up the chests and racks in which they had been kept and piling all up in the centre of each building, they had made huge bonfires of the whole, and then gone off to Delhi.

Even the 60th which was required to suppress the rising broke out on 10 June, it was alleged, partly for want of payment but the *emeute* was general, not a single officer remained true to his colours, all vestiges of British government now disappeared. The mutineers killed Bhurikhan, the thanadar of Rohtak. The ranghars and others of this class set up the mahomedan green flag and round it all the rebels collected. Till the middle of September lawlessness continued, the whole country presented a long scene of mad rioting.

Babar Khan, the chief of the ranghars of Rohtak, fought desperately against the British.<sup>1</sup> Hakim Abdul Haq, one of the foremost rebel chiefs of the Gurgaon district, was executed on November 2, 1857.<sup>2</sup> In Rewari the rebellious proceeding of Tularam caused anxiety to the government. His fort of Rampur near Rewari was equipped with eighteen guns and a good many standard arms and other ordnance stores.<sup>3</sup> Sanad Khan, a near relative of the nawab of Jhajjar, occupied the village of Narnic on 16 November. When colonel Gerrars marched against his entrenchment, the rebels fought fiercely in a gallant conflict but were foiled.<sup>4</sup> The conduct of the nawab Abdur Rahman Khan of Jhajjar<sup>5</sup> was investigated by a military commission presided over by general N. Chamberlain and he faced his trial on the 14 December. It was found that the nawab, on occasions, had offered assistance to the English, but he did not possess sufficient loyalty or courage to render effective help to them. What was urged against him was that while he made professions to Greathed, two hundred and fifty or three hundred Jhajjar troops under his father-in-law,<sup>6</sup> Abdus Sammad Khan, fought

<sup>1</sup> FP. vi, 106; Forrest, *Selections*, vol. i, pp. 353, 462.

<sup>2</sup> FP. vi, 192; FP. ix, 653.

<sup>3</sup> FP. viii, 58; *The Bombay Overland Times* (November 1857, pp. 201-02). He had also a gun foundry in which brass guns were neatly turned out.

<sup>4</sup> Malleson, ii, 109-16.

<sup>5</sup> FP. vi, 30. For the operations against the nawab of Jhajjar, see Mackenzie *Mutiny Memoirs*, 125-33.

<sup>6</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 719-21.

against the British at Delhi. The charges against the nawab were laid under act xvi of 1857 of which he was found guilty. It was one of the most vicious of the mutiny trials for though there were many extenuating circumstances, he was hanged. His treason can hardly be designated as of the worst type. The nawab of Farruknagar,<sup>1</sup> the nawab of Dadri<sup>2</sup> and the raja of Ballabgarh were also executed for their opposition to the British.<sup>3</sup> In Ferozepur a fakir named Shyamdas harbouring political motives was detected. The popular character of the revolt can also be judged by the increase in the number of fakirs and the government's attempt to set in motion an extensive espionage system among all the classes of the civil population.<sup>4</sup> In other neighbouring areas as in the lower Hazara district, the inhabitants were tempted by the prolonged resistance to the British power at Delhi and formed a plot to rise but it was discovered and the leaders were arrested.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FP VIII 59-72

<sup>2</sup> FP VII 125

<sup>3</sup> FP IX 654

<sup>4</sup> Chick, *op cit* 243-4 255

<sup>5</sup> Malleon III 303-4

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SHAHABAD

The return of Kunwar Singh to Shahabad was long expected. It raised the hopes of the rebels and encouraged them to persevere in their struggle. When it was known that he would make an attempt to enter the district, it produced consternation in the government circles and preparations were made for preventing the mischief which was likely to follow should he succeed in his attempt. The collector's catchery at Arrah was fortified and adequate military preparations were made to ensure the protection of that place. Detachments of brigadier Christie were sent down to Arrah, as also the Sikhs from Adhaura; further, two companies of a regiment from Dinapur and one hundred Sikhs from Dehri were ordered to move there. This was not all; a party of seamen was directed to halt there, and the fort of Buxar too was strengthened. The zamindars whose estates were on the banks of the river were made responsible for watching the ghats and roads and were ordered to give instant intelligence of the approach of the rebels. It seems that a report was received that Kunwar was making his way towards Ballia ghat and so the *Meghna* was sent to cruise off that place. The steamer *Agra* had likewise been sent down the Ganges to intercept the rebels and the steamer *Jumna* was moving down the Gogra for the same purpose.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest report as to the way in which Kunwar crossed the river was furnished by a telegram sent by the commissioner of Benares on 23 April. It stated that Kunwar Singh with a party of his sepoys had crossed the Ganges at Sheopur ghat on the 21st instant. He was assisted by the villagers on the right bank of the river who supplied many boats raised from the place where they had been sunk.<sup>2</sup> The weekly report of the government dated 12 May repeated the same statement: after his

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 549, 552; viii, 147.

<sup>2</sup> FP. viii, 147, 150. The spontaneous help which Kunwar received from the people only highlights their disaffection which is repeatedly mentioned in the military despatches of the period. Lugard complained of the extremely scanty information procurable for military reconnaissance.

defeat at Bansdih on 20 April, the Shahabad leader had fled to Sheopur on the Ganges and crossed the river on 21 April with the assistance of the zamindars. It, however, added that so closely had they been pursued by brigadier Douglas, that all their guns and treasure and even Kunwar Singh's own palanquin had fallen into his hands.<sup>1</sup> Another official report also states that he was feasted by the Sheopur babus who provided him with twenty boats but Kunwar Singh, it appears, was attacked in the act of crossing, 'though he was not wounded'.<sup>2</sup>

M. Broadhurst, the officiating magistrate of Arrah, was ordered to enquire into the manner in which the boats had been obtained by Kunwar and his followers to transport themselves across the Ganges at the Sheopur ghat. He reported that an attack was made on Kunwar Singh's party at the time of crossing and that boats had been provided by the people of Sheopur on the opposite bank of the Ganges. Some of the boats which were coming up from the east laden with sugar might have been seized, as stated by a sepoy in his deposition and others might probably have been raised from the water where they had been previously concealed by the people on either side of the river. The rebel leader Nishan Singh who was blown away from a gun at Sasaram on 7 June, 1858, mentioned in his deposition that Kunwar himself crossed over the river on an elephant. As a result of the enquiry, the magistrate, however, could not come to any conclusion as to the particular *ghat* where the rebels had crossed, as the length of the Ganges forming the northern boundary of the Shahabad district being not less than one hundred miles, and the season being dry, the rebels might have crossed over in one of the numerous *ghats* within this distance. Neither could he find fault with the Europeans for their inability to intercept their passage because even in the month of July when the river was full it was found impossible to hinder the Dinapur mutineers from crossing over the Son at Kailwar ghat.<sup>3</sup>

On reaching Shahabad Kunwar entrenched himself at Jagdispur and was burning all villages. It was reported that he deter-

<sup>1</sup> FP ix, 554

<sup>2</sup> FP ix, 828

<sup>3</sup> Letter to the Commissioner of Circuit, Patna, No. 71 of 14 June, 1858

mined to take his stand at Jagdispur or die there if he could not do better. The rebels had their outposts as far south as Piru seven miles south-west of Jagdispur.<sup>1</sup> It was even apprehended that Kunwar would march upon Arrah<sup>2</sup> and various estimates were made of the total strength of his army<sup>3</sup> but soon he died probably from the effects of the wound he received while crossing the river.<sup>4</sup> According to one official source he lost his arm and was wounded in the thigh.<sup>5</sup> The rumour of Kunwar's death was reported on 23 April; more confidently in the official report for the week ending on 1 May. The death of the old chief was carefully concealed from his followers and Harkishan Singh and Nishan Singh were directing their affairs as their leaders.<sup>6</sup> In the next weekly report the death of Kunwar Singh was considered a certainty and it was added that great confusion prevailed in the rebel camp.<sup>7</sup> No doubt however remained of his death soon after, and the official report ran:

Of Koer Singh's death, there was no longer any doubt. He is said to have been wounded by a grape-shot on the wrist while crossing the Ganges, and to have died at Jagdispore very soon after. His body, it was stated, was buried instead of being burnt, and his death was

<sup>1</sup> FP. viii, 148, 152; ix, 831-2.

<sup>2</sup> FP. viii, 148.

<sup>3</sup> Official statements in respect of the troops of Kunwar Singh at Jagdispur were very conflicting in nature. They are tabulated below:—

Beadon's letter from Calcutta, dated 23 April—2,000 men (CRO. *Secret Letters from India*, copy No. 417).

Report from the magistrate of Arrah, dated 24 April—2,000 or 3,000 men of whom 500 or 600 were sepoys.

Telegram of Officer Commanding at Benares, dated 25 April—1,500 sepoys and a rabble of up to 4,000 or 5,000 (FP. viii, 152).

Telegram of the district magistrate of Sasaram dated 27 April—2,000 to 3,000 sepoys and about 400 sowars (FP. ix, 832).

Telegram of the Commissioner of Patna, dated 27 April—1,500 men (FP. ix, 832).

Report from the commissioner of Patna, dated 7 May—5,000 sepoys and 3,000 sowars (FP. ix, 561).

See also Dodd, *op. cit.*, 486.

<sup>4</sup> Report of R. Taylor, joint-magistrate of Jaunpur (NE. i, 50). Malleon says that he might have been wounded in the action at Mannahar (iii, 478).

<sup>5</sup> FP. ix, 824. The *Meghna* steamer met about 200 rebels crossing into Shahabad at Haldea at seven o'clock in the morning of 21 April. One boat with sepoys on board was sunk (FP. ix, 828).

<sup>6</sup> FP. ix, 557.

<sup>7</sup> FP. ix, 561.

kept a secret from his men, a figure being dressed up to represent him, and orders being constantly issued in his name<sup>1</sup>

Kunwar Singh died, as Holmes says, on 26 April<sup>2</sup> He was the first in eastern India to rise against the English Of the great heroes of modern India Kunwar Singh was indeed the first to die for the cause of the country The only foeman of the British worthy of their steel and the foremost of the leaders, a great strategist, he had displayed throughout the revolt both skill and courage<sup>3</sup> When Havelock died an English poet composed a poem in his honour, but the Indian hero fell unhonoured and unsung

The Arrah magistrate, in his letter to the commissioner, dated 24 April,<sup>4</sup> while giving a detailed account of the sad result of the expedition of captain Le Grand states that it was at one time contemplated by the garrison at Arrah to move out in the evening of the 21st instant to Bibiganj, a place *en route* between the *ghats* at which the rebels had landed and Jagdispur, with the object of preventing the enemy from proceeding to the latter place The troops were actually paraded for this purpose, when the officer-in command, Le Grand changed his plan on the ground that the force to be left behind would not be sufficient to hold the entrenchment and protect the town in case the enemy entered Arrah from the north and attacked the station So the expedition was abandoned, but on the following day, 22 April, when it became known that all the rebels had crossed over the Ganges and had fled to Jagdispur, it was decided that the force which was to have marched to Bibiganj should leave Arrah that night for Jagdispur, before the rebels could have time to entrench themselves or strengthen their position The magistrate considered the projected expedition advisable

knowing that there was no likelihood of tranquility being restored to Shahabad district, or in fact to the province of Bihar as long as Koer Singh remained at large

<sup>1</sup> PP ix 564

<sup>2</sup> *Op cit*, 454 Malleon says that he died three days after he had defeated Le Grand (u, 478) Dr S N Sen puts the date on the 24th on the authority of colonel Corfield (*op cit*, 263)

<sup>3</sup> NE i 50 Report by R Taylor offg joint magistrate Jaunpur

<sup>4</sup> Letter No 59 of 24 April 1858

The fact that major Eyre had on the same ground come off victorious against far greater odds was another consideration in favour of the intended expedition and Broadhurst along with his assistant Calvin accompanied the force which left Arrah for Jagdispur on the evening of 22 April. It may be that there was an understanding that Le Grand should wait for brigadier Douglas before attacking Jagdispur.<sup>1</sup>

The attacking force consisted of one hundred and fifty men of queen's 35th regiment, fifty European sailors, one hundred Sikhs of Rattray's police battalion, and five European artillery men with two guns. Their camping ground was not reached till late in the night, and the march was resumed early on the morning of 23 April. After advancing about three miles they arrived at the village of Dullaur where the rebels had thrown up a small entrenchment across the road which was cleared. The troops then passed through the villages without opposition and entered the jungle leading to Jagdispur. They had not proceeded above a mile into the jungle when they were fired upon and nearly surrounded. With a view to extricating his party from this position, the officer-in-command, captain Le Grand, gave the order to retreat. But the men became so panic-stricken that the retreat soon assumed the shape of a precipitate flight which all the exertion of their officers could not check—the rebel sepoys and sowars following them up from Jagdispur to within three miles of Arrah. Broadhurst says that of about three hundred Europeans and Sikhs in the army half the number was killed including captain Le Grand himself.<sup>2</sup> The magistrate thought that the disaster was due to bad tactics. He submitted:

In my humble opinion we retreated when we should have advanced and I cannot but think that if we had done the latter we should have been successful.<sup>3</sup>

The sad turn of the expedition recalled the worst days of

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 824.

<sup>2</sup> The list of the killed and wounded as furnished in another official report puts the figure at 135 (FP. ix, 830). Maddock, the deputy-collector of Buxar, communicated the report of the spies to the effect that only a few Europeans and Sikhs were seen returning to Arrah (FP. viii, 152). The news of the disaster appeared in official communications of the same day (FP. viii, 26, 148).

<sup>3</sup> FP. ix, 828.



the July rebellion of the previous year. It was expected that the rebels would advance from Jagdispur on Arrah at any moment.<sup>1</sup> An express message was sent to Douglas to cross at once and a steamer was sent to assist him.<sup>2</sup> Movement of troops was directed.<sup>3</sup> Sir Edward Lugard arrived at Ghazipur with ammunition and provisions for Douglas who crossed the Ganges on the 25th and by the 30th had already dispatched to Arrah<sup>4</sup> two companies of the 84th regiment with one hundred and fifty Sikh cavalry and two horse artillery guns, he himself reaching there the day following. As his force was not considered sufficient to encompass the enemy he waited for Lugard. Lugard crossed the Ganges on 3 May.<sup>5</sup> Colonel Corfield commanding at Sasaram and brigadier Christie commanding at Dinapur were ordered to co operate with him.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile the rebels were entrenching themselves in different parts of the Jagdispur jungle and established a line of outposts as far south as Piru. They constructed breastworks and other obstructions principally on the road from Arrah to Jagdispur. Parties of them were scouring the whole country to the north of the trunk road, collecting supplies and burning those villages which refused to assist them. The nature of the preparations indicated that the rebels were awaiting an attack in these jungles. The British spies further reported that they were determined to attack Arrah, Buxar, and Dehri in the event of the British making delay in renewing their offensive. Their number when they first arrived at Jagdispur was estimated variously as noticed, and it was reported that they were badly off for ammunition. The position, however, improved when Amar Singh joined them with his followers. Numbers of discharged sepoys and other bodies were daily flocking to their camp from the neighbouring districts, and by the end of April their force was stated to have reached nearly

<sup>1</sup> FP viii 153

<sup>2</sup> FP viii 26, ix 828

<sup>3</sup> FP viii 152 ix 829 30

<sup>4</sup> FP viii 147, 153 ix, 557

<sup>5</sup> FP viii 154

<sup>6</sup> FP ix 555 561

nine thousand of whom three thousand were sepoy, some four hundred sowars and the rest armed rabble—thousands of armed villagers. The disaster of the British forces on the 23rd had the effect of strengthening their stock of ammunition.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of the people of Shahabad, according to official reports, differed at different places. The people of the south were represented to be unwilling to give any assistance or information to the government.<sup>2</sup> The expedition of general Lugard was well planned. From Arrah he had moved to Bihia, a village in the north-west corner of the jungle of Jagdispur, on 7 May. Next day he repulsed the threatened attack of Amar Singh, who issuing forth from the jungle with his followers made a move in the direction of Arrah.<sup>3</sup> On 9 May, Lugard halted at a plain, a little to the west of Jagdispur.<sup>4</sup> He avoided the direct road through the jungles which was strongly defended by the rebels. They calculated that the invading force from Arrah would attack by this route as previously followed by Eyre and Le Grand. Discovering his real intention the defenders threw themselves hastily into the village of Hetampur at the entrance of the space between the two jungles which gave access to Jagdispur from the north-west. For want of time they could not make preparation for the defence of this position. The British forces delivered the attack on a side which was not guarded. The rebels were driven out and pursued to Jagdispur which was captured. In these skirmishes Harkishan Singh and Judhar Singh were said to have been killed along with others. The rebels then evacuated the whole of the northern portion of the jungle and retreated to Chitaura in the southern portion where Kunwar had built a bungalow. Lugard's force attacked and took the place on 11 May. On 12 May, Lugard marched into Piru, and Colonel Corfield marching from the south and storming the rebel position at Burbun united his forces with Lugard's on the same date.

<sup>1</sup> Ball, *op. cit.*, ii, 287. Malleon puts the number at eight thousand (ii, 479). Narrative of Events by A. R. Young (25 April to 1 May), also FP. ix, 557, 832.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 831.

<sup>3</sup> Malleon, ii, 479-80.

<sup>4</sup> FP. viii, 157, 160; ix, 561.

Together they marched back to Jagdispur where they repulsed another attack of the rebels on 15 May.<sup>1</sup>

The above account sketched from official sources is not wholly in agreement with the details supplied by Dodd and Malleson.<sup>2</sup> But both agree that these victories did not crush the rebellion. The rebels dispersed to reunite in nearly the same strength as before. They avoided a regular engagement and retreated into the jungle after desultory skirmishes. A most harassing kind of warfare ensued. The outposts of the rebels at Arrah, Jagdispur, Latawarpur, Hetampur, Bihia, Piru and Chitaura were no doubt controlled by British patrol parties but this could not prevent them from recombining for the purpose of scouring the country in roaming bands and paralysing the hold of the government in those areas. Meanwhile the English soldiers fell in numbers from the fatigue of jungle fighting and sun stroke. Lugard even suggested the idea of withdrawing the troops from the jungle and locating them in distant parts which was countered by Samuells on the ground that it would have all the effects of a defeat.<sup>3</sup>

During the week extending from 16 May to the 22nd the rebels did not abate their vigilance but continued their warfare with success. Lugard attacked a village of Amar Singh named Nirtha situated on the edge of the jungle. The British troops shelled the village for about an hour, but failed to make any impression, as it was found to have been evacuated and the rebels had managed to carry off the guns to Duliapur. A spot investigation showed that the Indian fighters were not even then in want of either ammunition or caps. On the 20th Lugard attacked the rebels at Duliapur and very nearly

<sup>1</sup> Narrative of Events by A. R. Young for the week from 9 to 15 May in FP ix 564. As noted before the death of Judhar Singh as reported is contradicted by the presence in Palamau towards the end of this year 1858 (*supra* pp. 136-7).

<sup>2</sup> Dodd says that after the defeat of the rebels at Jagdispur they retreated to Latawarpur which Malleson reads as Satwarpur (ii 480). The British offensive was then directed against it, and the combined forces of Lugard and Corfield marched through a belt of jungle to Hetampur where the fight took place on the 11th. The government narrative indicates that the battle took place at an earlier date at Hetampur which being taken the access to Jagdispur was secured and on the 11th the British took Chitaura. No mention is made of Latawarpur (Dodd *op cit* 486-7). Dr Sen also says that Amar Singh took shelter in Latawarpur (*op cit* 264).

<sup>3</sup> FP ix 564.

succeeded in cutting them off from the jungles, but they could not be cleared. This naturally strengthened their spirit and it was not improbable that other leaders who were watching the scene would come to their rescue. It was rumoured that they were awaiting the arrival of raja Debi Baksh Singh and Davies of Azamgarh also reported that a large body of rebels had collected at Tanda intending to cross over to Jagdispur.<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Corfield's force had in the meantime been removed from the neighbourhood of Piru which gave a favourable turn to the position of the rebels; being free from that restraint they broke out in every direction. The punitive force was billeted there with the object of creating difficulty for the rebels in procuring food which would compel them to abandon the jungle and leave their strongholds. The neighbouring villages had been burnt and grain removed or destroyed. But all these measures, short of war, could not be enforced now, and Corfield's departure was taken advantage of by the rebels to collect large supplies of grain.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime Lugard marched towards Duliapur on 26 May, sending another force under Douglas. The rebels being charged fled and were pursued for several miles. Duliapur, with a large house belonging to one of the chiefs, was destroyed.<sup>3</sup> On the 28th the general shifted his camp to Narainpur, a village on the eastern side of the jungle on the road from Jagdispur to Arrah.<sup>4</sup>

In the month of June the Shahabad rebels still maintained their position in their mountain fastnesses. Though beaten they were able to rally at a distance and return by a circuitous route to the corner of the jungle. General Lugard marched on the morning of 2 June to Keshwa on the eastern side of the jungle, brigadier Douglas advancing at the same time to Duliapur which was on the western side directly opposite to Keshwa. Between these he cut a broad road intersecting the jungles, which he occupied with a line of posts. Using this line as a base he surprised the rebels at Akurwa on 3 June and routed

<sup>1</sup> Narrative of Events (for the week 16 to 22 May) in NE. ii, 265. 268. Malleson assigns the battle of Dalilpur to 27 May (ii, 481).

<sup>2</sup> NE. ii, 267; Special Narrative, Government of Bengal (Judicial), No. 33, dated 16 June, 1858.

<sup>3</sup> FP. viii, 163.

<sup>4</sup> NE. ii, 268.

them. They were pursued next morning on the 4th, and defeated with great slaughter, over one hundred Indians having been killed. That night the rebels led by Amar Singh evacuated the jungle and marched to Surajpur near Buxar. They broke up into small parties and commenced depredations on a wide scale in Gahmaro, a village in the Zamaniah pargana of the Ghazipur district (fourteen miles west of Buxar near the mouth of the river Karmanasa), and in Buxar and Dumraon regions. In the last place an indigo factory was burnt to the ground and the house of the raja's dewan was plundered as also the bungalow of one Mr. Bock. The village of Surajpur near Buxar was completely pillaged, and the railway bridge works at Karmanasa in Gahmaro were destroyed to the minutest detail, with all its coal, wood, and workmen's sheds etc., and the factories of Mr. Coomber.<sup>1</sup>

While the struggle was going on in Shahabad the neighbouring districts were thrown into a ferment. The magistrate of Gaya reported on 15 May the stoppage of all payments of government revenue, partly owing to the doubts of the results of the contest across the river.<sup>2</sup> The rajwars were robbing and looting in the east, and to the south of the district one Fattah Singh was said to be fortifying his house and collecting people.<sup>3</sup> So great was the tension that the commissioner of Patna proposed the complete stoppage of the traffic on the Ganges between Ghazipur and Dinapur to prevent the rebels from crossing over from the northern side of the river.<sup>4</sup>

For the time being the British were successful in driving away the rebels from Jagdispur, but the latter spread havoc in other directions. On 5 June, Amar Singh and his party marched westward from Surajpur, sacked the village of Dhunsuki and passing through Suniya crossed the Karmanasa on 7 June. They then proceeded to the village of Gahmaro, where they were joined by many of the inhabitants of the place together with those of Barh and some other rajput villages. Brigadier Douglas reached Buxar on 9 June, crossed the Karmanasa

<sup>1</sup> Narrative of Events dated 23 June, 1858 (for the week 30 May—5 June) in NE II 274. Dodd, *op cit*, 487.

<sup>2</sup> FP II 565.

<sup>3</sup> NE II 265. Special Narrative (Judicial) No 32 dated 9 June 1858.

<sup>4</sup> NE II 268. Special Narrative, No 33, dated 16 June 1858.

and on the 11th arrived at Gahmaro which was burnt,<sup>1</sup> the villagers having openly sided with the rebels.<sup>2</sup> But Amar Singh with the principal part of his force had left Gahmaro previously eluding the pursuit of colonel Cumberlege, who was at Zamaniah. The whole area on the borders of Ghazipur and Shahabad districts on either side of the Karmanasa river was entirely at the mercy of the rebels who ravaged the country with impunity. Parties of them crossed and recrossed the river, burned down the Chusa thana and another party proceeding to the Mominabad tahsil near Ghazipur raided it. They also went on to Rasra and threatened to attack Ballia. When brigadier Douglas returned to Buxar on 12 June, Ghazipur fell into utter confusion and the whole district was reported to be entirely disorganised, and on the 13th, almost every thana and tahsil was burnt. The official report stated that Ballia was about to be attacked and the government stud depot at Korantadih opposite Buxar in Ghazipur was menaced. In Jagdispur Lugard was at Duliapur on the western side of the jungle and captain Rattray at Rupsagar. They were taking measures to reorganise the police and the thanas and to ferret out the rebels who were still lingering about the villages arms in hand, but before anything could be done Amar Singh and his force recrossed the Karmanasa and returned to Shahabad which threw the country again into confusion. The situation became critical as the rebel Ali Karim was stated to be at a place about eight miles above Tanda with about three hundred men. He is said to have been in regular correspondence with Amar Singh who was reported to have urged Ali Karim to come over to assist him with as many men as he could collect.<sup>3</sup>

By the middle of June the state of affairs in Bihar again deteriorated. Nishan Singh and his brother Buchan Singh, two of the principal followers of Kunwar Singh, were captured by sergeant Nolan.<sup>4</sup> According to one official source dated 12

<sup>1</sup> NE. ii, 279-80: Special Narrative, Government of Bengal (Judicial), No. 35, dated 30 June, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> FP. viii, 165-7.

<sup>3</sup> NE. ii, 279: Special Narrative, etc., No. 35, dated 30 June, 1858. Dr. Sen refers to Gubbins's report about the rumour of Amar Singh attacking Benares (*op. cit.*, 265).

<sup>4</sup> NE. ii, 275: Special Narrative, etc., No. 34, dated 23 June, 1858.

June, Nishan Singh was blown away from a gun at Sasaram four days ago, i.e. on the 8th.<sup>1</sup> This was a great blow to the rebel cause and must have made Amar Singh, the worthy brother of Kunwar and now the only surviving leader, desperate. It has been noticed that he returned to Shahabad and sought the help of Ali Karim, but owing to the increasing pressure of the British forces at Jagdispur, he with his followers turned eastwards, creating great havoc and destruction on the eastern side of the Jagdispur jungle, hunting down and murdering all who had done the British service.<sup>2</sup> A whole line of indigo factories on the bank of the river Son was burnt down and the rebels crossed and recrossed the river at will. Amar Singh himself seems to have left Jagdispur on 14 June towards the river Son to cross into Bihar,<sup>3</sup> and on the next day his party which probably proceeded ahead of him, reached the thana at Bilkran, sixteen miles from Patna which they sacked. Other rebels crossed the Son on their way to Tikari in Gaya and Lugard was requested to cross the river at Arwal at once. But the strain of the jungle war had so much upset Sir Edward that he resigned from bad health on 17 June, and Colonel Longden received orders to pursue the rebels.<sup>4</sup> All these show that by the middle of June 1858, Ghazipur, Ballia, Shahabad, Patna and Gaya districts yet remained to be protected against the incursions of the rebels. Even the coolies who were cutting up the Jagdispur jungles were scared away by the rebel sowars. The situation as described in a Calcutta paper merits quotation if only to convey an impression of how the contemporaries looked at it.

Every part of the province (Behar) is infested by marauders whose special pastime it has become for the time to murder and mutilate the native officials. A number of factories, thanahs and cutcheries have been burnt down. The river for many miles is become impassable except to armed steamers and the post is stopped on

<sup>1</sup> FP viii, 167. He was tried by court martial, convicted of rebellion and blown away (NE ii, 280). But some newly discovered records show that the sentence against him was carried out on 7 June (K. K. Dutta in *Patna University Journal* vol. No. viii, 1954).

<sup>2</sup> FP viii, 170-01.

<sup>3</sup> FP viii, 169.

<sup>4</sup> FP viii, 173.

various routes. Meanwhile the military arrangements for meeting these predatories have been paralysed by the weather, the want of troops, the difficult nature of the country. We repeat this question why Jagdispore has again been abandoned?<sup>1</sup>

The answer is that the indomitable spirit of the people of Shahabad rendered all attempts of the British to suppress it unavailing. They were strong in a conviction of real success in the past. If ever a dead man continued a struggle it was Kunwar Singh of Bihar. The history of the civil rebellion in Shahabad is the history of a long continued conflict with the British power, unlike any the epoch of the mutinies saw. Again on 7 July, 1858, nearly a year after the sepoys from Dinapur had broken into Arrah, the rebels of Shahabad approached the rear of the town and set fire to the house of one Mr. Victor of the railway department which was situated at a distance of about three quarters of a mile from the fort. The rebels being pursued, separated into three parties and went off. Lieutenant Beadon following one such party going in the direction of mauza Surthoa situated at a distance of between five and six miles to the south of Arrah, came up against the main body of the rebels, cavalry, infantry and others gathered near to the village. A British regiment and Rattray's Sikhs went into action and drove them away. The village of Surthoa, as the magistrate wrote, belonged to Amar Singh and his nephew Mahabirprasad Singh and the villagers showed their refractory conduct by siding completely with the rebels for which the village was burnt down.<sup>2</sup> The incursion carried out in the heart of the district town at a time when the British power was re-established with vigour indicates the strength of purpose of the rebels. In fact, soon after they carried out another devastating raid on 3 August. A body of them said to be one thousand strong assembled at Umrain Nowada, twelve miles west of Arrah on the road between Arrah and Belanuta, probably to draw off the British troops from Arrah. Colonel Walter advanced against them on 2 August and proceeded upto the military outpost at the last mentioned place. The party marched back to Arrah next day, but before they could reach

<sup>1</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 8 July, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to the commissioner of Circuit, Patna, from M. Broadhurst, officiating magistrate, Arrah, No. 81 of 8 July, 1858.



the town, it had been attacked by a band of rebels at eleven a.m. The prisoners were released, shops were looted, and the house of a loyal zamindar was burnt. A body of two hundred sepoys and four hundred other *badmashes*, principally residents of Tappa Karan near Arrah, entered the town, but the magistrate learnt that a body of one thousand rebels remained on the outskirts of the town with similar intention and when charged retreated in the direction of Jagdispur.<sup>1</sup>

This impunity to incursions encouraged the rebels to a still more bold act of besieging a body of Sikhs under lieutenant Freeman at a place called Rasara until relieved by Douglas and in the meantime Amar Singh occupied the greater portion of Shahabad, fortified Jagdispur and even established thanas and prisons and his own government. Officers were appointed to carry on the administration of the country and estates were sold for non-payment of revenue. The independence attained raised the Shahabad movement to the dignity of a national revolt which 'was supported', as Samuells observed, 'by many of the minor zamindars' and more or less openly by all the rajput population of the district.<sup>2</sup> Early in September the rebels appear to have been defeated with great loss at a place called Rampur, twelve miles south-east of Arrah, and on 28 September at Suhjance. These harassing skirmishes showed no signs of termination. As however this intermittent struggle was going on the general mass of people must have been suffering beyond endurance. We have no means of ascertaining their reaction but glimpses are afforded here and there in the contemporary dailies of the state of their mind. Finding no escape whatsoever from these chronic disturbances, many labouring families of Shahabad seem to have moved to Mauritius. The series of notifications of the collector of Shahabad advertising a number of zamindars in that district for sale for arrears of revenue point to emigration or desertion of the home country on a pretty large scale.<sup>3</sup>

Suppression of the rebellion was long overdue and so the British offensive was resumed when the weather permitted it in

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* No 100 of 5 August, 1858

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Sen, *op cit*, 264 See also Rajani Kanta Gupta, *Sipahi Tuddher Itihas*, iv, 260

<sup>3</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 26 August, 10 September, 30 September, 1858

October, 1858. The operations were not confined to Jagdispur but extended over the whole of Shahabad. New leaders sprang up who at the head of small bodies scoured the country, waylaid British patrol parties and harassed a few officials. But the initiative had passed into the hands of the British who now commenced a series of roping in operations and netted the leaders here and there. Early in October a smart action was fought near Dumraon in which forty sepoy were cut up, but two officers were lost, captain Mason and captain Douglas. In about the same time, as an express from Garstin, deputy-magistrate of Buxar stated, a strong column marched on the night of 6 October to seize Meghur Singh who for some time had established himself at the village of Khyress twenty miles south of Buxar. The rebel leader escaped, but the government claimed that sixty rebel sepoy had been killed. Another rebel chief was Sidha Singh who with his band was contacted by a strong Buxar column on 14 October at Barkspur on the Arrah road.<sup>1</sup> He was defeated with a heavy loss and repaired to Jagdispur. On the same day brigadier Douglas fell upon another party of the insurgents at Karisat and drove them away and the operation was renewed two days after on the 16th. The rebels hovering round Chewgaon were also compelled to fly to Jagdispur before the British offensive where a portion of colonel Turner's column inflicted another defeat on the rebels at Chuksa, west of Piru, on the 17th. All these were in the nature of mopping operations but in the battle at Kampsagar near Buxar on 16 October, the Buxar wing under colonel Durnford met with a fierce and determined resistance from the rebel fighters. The Indians were posted beyond a *mullah*, some distance farther from which position they opened a heavy fire of musketry. The two guns they used did considerable execution, but when taken proved to be of wood, lined and bound round with iron and copper, and the whole covered with leather. Eventually they were defeated and fled to Jagdispur. Durnford then turned south to meet another rebel formation at Puprodh.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sidha Singh is mentioned in the official report of R. Taylor (NE. ii, 51).

<sup>2</sup> Official Reports as quoted in the contemporary dailies, in particular in the *Hindu Patriot*, October 14, 21, 28, 1858. Malleson's description of these combats is very meagre (ii, 486).

These successful operations were partly the result of a concerted plan made by Douglas to drive away the rebels from different sectors towards Jagdispur and then to hem in the different sides of the jungles. He set in motion seven different columns, the object of all being to drive the rebels before them to Jagdispur. Starting from three opposite points of the district the converging columns should form the outer ring of a circle within which the rebels were to be trapped. He also covered the jungles with roads and sent trusted sepoy in disguise to elicit information from them. Four columns from Buxar, one from Sasaram forming a connected line from the Ganges and the Son, with two advancing from the west would complete the process of encirclement.<sup>1</sup> The plan was put to execution on 13 October and increasingly the ring within which the rebels became confined drew closer, but as one column could not close on simultaneously when they came very near to Jagdispur the rebels rushed out through the gap in the circle and struck eastward towards the Son, with the pursuing British army under colonel Turner, brigadier Douglas, and major Sir Henry Havelock, on their heels. The main body of the rebels fled in different directions 'doubling again and again' but the chase was maintained by mounted infantry armed with enfield rifles supported occasionally by a force of cavalry or an infantry column. Shut out and barricaded in villages, hills and caves, hundreds of them were hunted down, shot or sabred when they darted out in utter despair. At many a place the Shahabad rebels took a last stand.<sup>2</sup> Official reports refer to hectic movements of the punitive force from 19 to 23 October in these confused operations, to Kaelwar, Nonsagar on the bank of the Son, to villages between Jagdispur and Pulwar, and to Buxar, Sheopur and Buneeth six miles west of Nonadi, and Behta on the Son. At Sukreta the rebels desperately fought against their enemies but were overpowered. Thus by the end of October Jagdispur was cleared<sup>3</sup> and Amar Singh left his country. His movable assets to the value of about

<sup>1</sup> Holmes *op cit*, 455-6

<sup>2</sup> For details of the avenging expedition of Havelock, how the rebels were killed like rats see Malleon, II, 488-92

<sup>3</sup> Official Reports quoted in the *Hindu Patriot*, 28 October, 1858

thirty thousand rupees were seized. Messrs Burn and Company of Calcutta were given the contract for clearing the Jagdispur jungles.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the rebels succeeded in escaping into the Kaimur hills. On November 24, Douglas again surprised the main body of the rebels at Salia Dahar in the Kaimur hills.<sup>2</sup> In December a news spread that a body of sepoys under Sidha Singh and Ram Bahadur Singh had taken refuge in Palamau where they would probably be joined by Harkishan Singh and Meghur Singh.<sup>3</sup> Another interesting message was that A. Money going unescorted into the rebel camp carried on negotiations with the Shahabad rebels who wanted an unconditional pardon for them and held back the masses through their influence from accepting amnesty. Ultimately all of them surrendered but Amar Singh appeared to have retaken to the hills with the remnant of his followers.<sup>4</sup>

Though hardly the equal of his brother in military skill 'Amar Singh', as Malleson says, 'was not one whit below him in energy and resolution.'<sup>5</sup> Ubiquitous to a degree, and unbending and firm like steel, Amar Singh also combined personal influence with qualities of leadership without which he could not have conducted the war for a long time from 25 July, 1857 to December 1858. A brother, and a devoted follower of Kunwar, Amar Singh lived up to the reputation of that great Shahabad hero.

<sup>1</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, November 4, 11, 25, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> Malleson, ii, 492.

<sup>3</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 9 December, 1858.

<sup>4</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, December 23, 30, 1858. It is Ramsay's report of October 1859 quoted by Dr. S. P. Singh of Jagdispur had lately (September-October) the Terai and was likely to assume command of :

<sup>5</sup> ii, 478.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THEORIES ON THE INDIAN MUTINY

It will have been noticed that the bifurcation of the subject of the great revolt of 1857 into two distinct historical aspects, the military mutiny and the civil rebellion, has the merit of a new approach and offers the most intelligible clue to a proper understanding and a rational evaluation of the main character of the revolutionary maelstrom. That the sepoys struck the first blow is not denied, that their grievances flowed independently of any external pressure and originated from the conditions of the existing military service also appear quite probable. But their apprehensions and fears about the intentions of the British to destroy their caste and religion were exactly those which troubled the minds of the civil population and the feudal aristocracy as well. This connects the two aspects of the revolt in the historical process. When the sepoys had created the field and attained a certain measure of success, sections of the aristocracy and certain civil elements put themselves at the head of the movement, with the result that the military complexion of the insurrection was changed. The change was bound to take place as the sepoys did not produce a single competent commander who could canalize the activities of the rebellious troops.<sup>1</sup> Naturally enough the initiative and leadership passed into the hands of civilian leaders who turned the movement to their advantage and even led the soldiery to the attack. The sepoys had no plan and resources either, it appears, of carrying on a protracted struggle under their own management, and in many cases they sought the help of the landed dignitaries and even coerced them into leading them if they wavered.<sup>2</sup> After the explosion at Meerut the mutinous troops made for Delhi where resided Bahadur Shah, the emperor according to the Indian legitimists, which gave the movement a traditional countrywide base. The local troops having in a large measure accomplished their plan of overthrowing the

<sup>1</sup> Mowbray Thomson, *The Story of Caumport*, 43, Majumdar, *op. cit.*, 207

<sup>2</sup> FP ix, 171-2. Case of Thakur Biswanath Sai. Cf. the Statement of Nihvan Singh that the sepoys demanded the presence of Kunwar Singh (K. K. Datta, in *Patna University Journal*, viii, 1954) Also the case of Nana Sahib

British authority in their respective regions proclaimed that the *hukumat* or authority belonged now to the country chief who had exercised it in the past.<sup>1</sup>

These are factors which irresistibly toned down the military character of the revolt and produced conditions favourable for the merging of the military rising into a popular rebellion. Few circumstances are more observable throughout the revolt than this ferment in the civil populace accompanying the Indian mutinies. Anything less than this (with so widespread a sepoy war to encourage honest and natural motives of a patriotic and territorial character) would have been extremely improbable in all conditions of political life, ancient or modern. A rumour that the British power was gone unsettled the minds of the people and the tremendous events of the time ignited the embers of all latent discontent.<sup>2</sup> Even as early as 21 May, the *Hindu Patriot* of Calcutta which was known for its moderate views observed:

They mark not the demeanour of the Indian people at the present crisis. . . . There is not a single native of India who does not feel the full weight of the grievances imposed upon him by the very existence of the British rule in India—grievances inseparable from subjection to a foreign rule.<sup>3</sup>

If it was so, it was not unlikely that the British had to face a really national and revolutionary situation growing out of the mutinies. A sense of righteous indignation against the British, whose feelings are so different from those of the Indians and whose gods are so different, must have naturally flowed from the war of the mutinies which gave it the character of a just and righteous revolt, 'in reality a great and formidable rebellion', as Disraeli said in the House of Commons. Instead of being a partial military mutiny, a hectic revolt of the Bengal

<sup>1</sup> The terms are: the people are God's, the country Padshah's and the order or government. . . . This proclamation was made in Cawnpore (Forrest, *Selections*, ii, App. p. xii), Bijnour (NE. i, 511), Moradabad (NE. ii, 18) Banda (NE. i, 526), Jhansi (NE. i, 555), Singhbhum (NE. ii, 182-3), and in many other places.

<sup>2</sup> Cooper, *The Crisis*, etc. 139. Thornhill of Mathura was able to observe that the people in general did not regret the end of British rule. They liked the freedom they were then enjoying and the excitement of the time. Life was now for them full of anticipations (*The Personal Adventures*, etc. 114-5).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the statement of Henry Lawrence: 'Those who are loudest in our praise cannot forgive our victory' (Kaye, i, 14).

Army alone, the outbreak gradually approached the character of a rising of the people<sup>1</sup>

The most immediate factor working out this change was the religious element which actuated the masses to sacrifice their lives. The many references to the jihads and the cry of religion in danger which was echoed and re-echoed in the seditious proclamations of the period<sup>2</sup> entered into the composition of the upsurge<sup>3</sup>. The extreme ferocity of the mutineers at Meerut and in other places may be explained by the belief of the rebels that they were waging a religious war. The insurgents sacked the convents and slaughtered the missionaries, 'just as if they were Anglicans'. Mrg Persico, apostolic vicar of Agra, related that in his vicariat alone the rebels had destroyed a magnificent cathedral, twenty five churches, two colleges, two asylums and five nunneries<sup>4</sup>. Madness produced by fanaticism often outweighed all other feelings. The excesses of Irish rebellions and the French revolution are pertinent in this connection. Very authentic intelligence obtained from Lucknow in the period between 25 November and 2 December runs

The war is now fully believed throughout Lucknow to be a religious crusade and numbers of people are flocking into the capital from the districts to take part in the struggle<sup>5</sup>.

When Lucknow fell finally in March, the British authorities

<sup>1</sup> *The Englishman* 17 November 1857

<sup>2</sup> For the proclamations of Bahadur Shah see *Trist* etc 71 148f 116 176-7 Also Mur *Records of the Intelligence Department* etc 1 329 ii 4 6 175 194 Majumdar *op cit* 228 243

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the proclamation issued by Prince Mirza Mohammed Firuz Shah dated 17 February 1858. Since the real purpose of this war is to save religion (Dodd *op cit* 411) Nana's proclamation breathes the same religious animosity which as Mowbray Thomson says influenced the course of the rebellion (*op cit* 143 7). Shepherd says that Nana's proclamation was widely circulated (*Narrative* etc 50f). For the Bareilly proclamation of Khan Bahadur Khan see *Kaye* iii 290

<sup>4</sup> Montalembert *A debate on India in the English Parliament* (This appeared on 29 October 1858 in the *Correspondent*, a monthly organ of the liberal catholic party in France) p 19n. Sherring estimated that the total losses sustained by the American Presbyterian Missions in the North West provinces was Rs 237 416 (*The Indian Church During the Great Rebellion* 226). The Mahomedans in particular showed a great zeal in converting the Christians (*Ibid* 85 183f 193 208 301f). For the destruction of Church property in Delhi Nagpur Ludhiana Gorakhpur see pp 70 313 320 307. For the desecration of the church property in Indore and Jhansi see Sylvester *Recollections of the Campaign* etc 50-01 86 and for Fatehgarh Bocher *Eight Months Campaign* 183 and Cosens and Wallace *op cit* 65

<sup>5</sup> CRO *Secret Letters from India* vol 163 p 434

were struck by the overwhelming number of placards and pamphlets which were hung up in every nook and corner of the city urging the people to die for their caste and creed.<sup>1</sup>

The religious feeling mingled with the racial issue—the universal hatred of the English aliens which gave the revolt of 1857, a national colouring. By no wisdom, by no system, as one contemporary British officer says, could they have prevented the antagonism of race.<sup>2</sup> This aspect of the revolt, namely, the determination of the rebels to tear the English out of the land, root and branch, explains why the war in the last phases partook of the character of a war of extermination. That some of the Indians gave shelter to the Europeans or harboured good feelings towards them cannot be urged as conclusive against numerous proofs to the contrary. Kaye quotes from a writer of the *Calcutta Review* to show that the genius of the revolt was to destroy everything that could possibly remind one of England; the telegraph posts were dug out, and even the milestones, so decidedly English, were 'defaced'.<sup>3</sup> The innumerable manifestoes offering rewards for the destruction of the English also support this contention.<sup>4</sup> British officials like major Williams of Meerut, F. Thompson of Allahabad and M. Thornhill of Mathura were convinced that as a rule the extirpation of the British was the object which prompted the rebels to adopt ruthless measures.<sup>5</sup> The massacre of the Europeans in the parade ground at Farrukhabad reflects the same sentiment. There was no proclamation to that effect. The day was rainy, yet there was a great assemblage of people to witness the dreadful spectacle.<sup>6</sup> In Delhi too, great crowds assembled to witness a similar scene on Saturday the 16th May.<sup>7</sup>

That the people in general were in sympathy with the rebels

<sup>1</sup> Dodd, *The History of the Indian Revolt*, 427.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson, *op. cit.*, 190; Thornhill, *op. cit.*, 333.

<sup>3</sup> Kaye, ii, 368-9n.

<sup>4</sup> FP, viii, 52; Robertson, *op. cit.*, 21.

<sup>5</sup> NE, i, 4-6, 93. See also the letter of Dr. Russell, headed *Sahib and Nigger* to the *Times*, London, in which he ascribes the resulting popular commotion to the indignities with which the Indians were habitually treated by the Englishmen.

<sup>6</sup> NE, i, 134-5, 156: Report by C. R. Lindsay, officiating magistrate.

<sup>7</sup> Chick, *op. cit.*, 159: Narrative of occurrences by Chunilal, the newswriter; Kaye, ii, 99-100.



may also be judged from the selfless spirit which is seen on a large scale in different regions of India during the epoch. Very few rebels craved for life or seemed to care to purchase it. They often courted death defiantly, like the Spartans<sup>1</sup>. What again was very remarkable was that the villagers did not betray their rebel leaders and very rarely, if ever, they earned 'blood money', even though habitually poor. Military communications bear out the fact that the British punitive forces were constantly misled and misinformed as they went out to elicit information for military reconnaissance. Lugard while pursuing Kunwar Singh was hampered and often troubled by the bellicose and nonchalant attitude of the villagers. A Money, the officiating magistrate of Bihar going in pursuit of Ali Karim, found that the heart of the whole country was with the rebel and consequently could not get any assistance or information from the villagers regarding Karim's whereabouts, although he offered large rewards<sup>2</sup>. Many other officers entrusted with the same mission experienced a similar situation. In fact, from the rarity of the occasions on which the British forces were able to surprise the rebel forces, it seems more than likely that the rebels were helped by the villagers all around them who kept them acquainted with the movement of the enemy troops. It is also a noteworthy fact that during the mutinies the British military command established flying corps. This indicates that they commanded only the spots of ground held by their own troops in different scattered areas while for communication between the disjointed members of their army they depended on flying columns. They could depend neither on their sepoys nor on the countryside to keep the communication lines open between the far-flung military posts. This is what the French had to go through in the Peninsular War.

<sup>1</sup> See Wilberforce's description of how the Panjab mutineers met death with equanimity (*An Unrecorded Chapter*, etc. 42-3). Also Mrs. Coopland quoted in Maj. Umrard *op cit.*, 172-3. For the fighting qualities of the sepoys and individual acts of heroism see Holloway *Essays*, etc. 165, 213, 225, 262, 273, 291, 330. If the fear of the bayonet's point proved a deterrent no less effective was the sharp edge of the Indian sword. The English had the advantage of superior arms. Dr. Sen observes that the ensfield helped to overthrow the mutineers (*op cit.* 207).

<sup>2</sup> *FP v App A 90*. In Lucknow Sir James Outram did all he could to obtain the release of the European prisoners and offered 10,000l for each of their lives, but Rees says that the insurgents wanted terms and not money (*A Personal Narrative*, etc. 268).

in the face of the Spanish national rising. Apart from the fact that this military situation demonstrated the actual insufficiency of the British forces, it also brought into relief the prevalent spirit of disaffection. According to records, flying columns were scouring the Panjab, Rajputana, Central India as well as Oudh.<sup>1</sup> All these are proofs of the fact that a vague feeling of patriotism lay behind the mutiny and rebellion of 1857. Official reports about men wandering in the guise of fakirs and unusual numbers of them appearing in the countryside tampering with the villagers or carrying correspondence between different bodies of mutinous sepoys concealed in their bamboo lathies or employed in other emissary or reconnoitering work are too well-known to require detailed references.<sup>2</sup> The government measures to combat this menace underline the dimension of the peril. Of a station in the Panjab, Cooper, the deputy-commissioner of Amritsar, said that treason and sedition were dogged into the very privacy of the harem, and the sanctity of the mosques. He continues:

As with the detectives of Vidocq, there were spies in the marketplace, at the festival, in the places of worship, in the gaols, in the hospitals, in the regimental bazars, among the casual knot of gossipers.....among the bathers at the tanks, among the village circle round the well, under the big tree, among the stone breakers of the high-ways.....<sup>3</sup>

The magnitude of the rebellion is manifest from the returns of persons tried and punished as furnished by the district officers. On 13 May, when it was known that the mutiny of the sepoys had been followed in many places by rebellion of the populace, the government lost no time to enact act xi of 1857, to try persons guilty of rebellion, of waging war against the queen, and punish them with death. The rigour of the

<sup>1</sup> Hope Grant, *op. cit.*, 281; Martin, *op. cit.*, ii, 487; Nash, *op. cit.*, 122. Letter of Marx dated London, 1857, published in *New York Herald Tribune* and quoted in *India Today*, vol. ii, September, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> Cooper, *The Crisis*, etc. 23-4, 117; Chick, *op. cit.*, 255-6; FP. v, App. A. 89 *ibid.* App. B. 34, 464, 469, 490; Maude and Sherer, ii, 430. Wübenforce records an instance of effective spying by the Indians. The British council of war had settled the final plan of assaulting the Kashmiri gate on 13 September. When it was taken next morning the exact details of the assaulting columns, the plans and points of attack as deliberated secretly by the British were found in the order book of the rebel army (*An Unrecorded Chapter*, 146-7). Also see Cooper, *op. cit.*, 193.

<sup>3</sup> Cooper, *The Crisis*, etc. 24-5.

law was further extended by the act xiv passed on 6 June by which provision was made for capital punishment of persons convicted of exciting mutiny or sedition. The series of acts which followed namely acts, xvi, xvii and xxv of 1857, were in the nature of retributory measures to meet the challenge to the government from the civil populace. Not only mere martial law was not proclaimed but very extensive measures were taken for the summary trial of offending persons of every class of people, civil as well as military. Other severe measures were also adopted. Even burning of offending villages was considered a necessity where the mass of the inhabitants had committed a grave outrage and the perpetrators could not be traced.<sup>1</sup>

Such unlimited powers over life and death for the punishment of crimes, and the administration of law in its utmost severity, were considered unavoidable by the local officials if only to produce the requisite impression when the whole country was seething with opposition. So the work was carried on, to terrorise the teeming millions to submission and to establish fear and awe for the government.<sup>2</sup> Shortly after the outbreak, in the first phase of the revolt, every law of nature and man was set aside by the army of retribution. As Maude and Sherer who fought in the war frankly admitted, their feeling was not so much revenge as a desire to strike terror.<sup>3</sup> Indiscriminate slaughter of men, burning of whole tracts of inhabited country, blowing up of rebels by hundreds became general.<sup>4</sup> Whole lines of villages in the track of the army were burnt down and for miles corpses hung from trees. R. H. Dunlop's punitive forces first killed all the males and then burnt down the village of Akulpur. The same happened in Busoudah,

<sup>1</sup> Sessional Papers of the House of Lords vol xi 1857 58 pp 4-6

<sup>2</sup> NE 1, 269, Kaye, II 403

<sup>3</sup> *Memories of the Mutiny*, I 70 II 526 re Neill's order regarding the blood, Mackenzie, *Mutiny Memories*, 71

<sup>4</sup> Kaye, II 236, 604-6 402 3 605n. A French Catholic who believed in the legitimate and necessary ascendancy of the Christian West over the Indian peninsula admitted that the just measure of suppression has been overstepped and that the executions of the conquered sepoy en masse will imprint an indelible stain upon the history of the English Empire in India (Montalambert, *op cit* 21). See also Bartum *A Widow's Reminiscences*, 86. Majendie *Up among the Pandies*, 274-6, Holmes *op cit* 220

another village of Meerut.<sup>1</sup> Brigadier Neill's course from Benares to Allahabad was marked by corpses of villagers, and the riversides for miles presented an array of demolished houses. As he saw it, the rising was becoming something more than a military mutiny and he had not the tenderness to deter him from striking root and branch 'the people who were rising into rebellion on the ruins of the Native Army.'<sup>2</sup> A message dated 6 July runs: 'The trunk road now passes through a desert, the inhabitants having fled to a distance of four or five miles.'<sup>3</sup> In Arrah, in consequence of the general nature of the rebellion obtaining there, the wholesale burning and destruction of all villages was recommended.<sup>4</sup> Similar atrocities were perpetrated on the villages of Iradat Jahan in Jaunpur.<sup>5</sup> Colonel Forster while moving on to Porahat destroyed over thirty villages and seized all the grain stored there.<sup>6</sup> In Palamau the whole punitive force was fed entirely at the expense of the bhogtas.<sup>6</sup>

Instances of this nature need not be multiplied, but the few given above would show that the war of the mutinies was turned into a war of revenge and extermination. The violence of the British press rose to great heights. *The Englishman* of Calcutta wrote that sufficient vengeance had been taken at Delhi, but a long account of blood yet remained to be settled,<sup>7</sup> and for this inadequate requital the *Times* of London cried out for inflicting a terrible retribution, to destroy the 'whole of this foul, craven mob',<sup>8</sup> that upon the standard of England 'vengeance' and not 'justice' should be inscribed.<sup>9</sup> To the licentious fury of the British soldiers<sup>10</sup> was added the fiendish

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 886-8.

<sup>2</sup> Kaye, ii, 264.

<sup>3</sup> FP. v, 60: Narrative of Events to 12 September.

<sup>4</sup> FP. vii, 275: Magistrate of Jaunpur 9 October. Also FP. vii, 22, and *The Hindu Patriot*, 8 July, 1858, for other excesses committed. See Martin, ii, 288, for the most graphic account of the experience of a Highlander regarding the scene of destruction. With the exception of Mowbray Thomson's *Casnpore*, there is nothing more touching in the whole range of mutiny literature. Also Thompson, *The Other Side of the Medal*. The latest treatment of the subject from Dr. R. C. Majumdar (*op. cit.*, 93-113) is both illuminating and instructive.

<sup>5</sup> FP. ix, 381.

<sup>6</sup> FP. ix, 403-4: Narrative of Events to 20 March.

<sup>7</sup> 8 October, 1857.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in *The Englishman*. 6 October, '57: 9 November, '57.

<sup>9</sup> Parliamentary debates, quoted in *The Englishman*, 17 November, '57.

<sup>10</sup> Kaye, ii, 406n.

spirit of the special commissioners Rajas and nawabs were strung up as also men of less note in large numbers, and no estimate was attempted of the number, as Russell says, who perished by the civil sword<sup>1</sup> This produced disastrous results The wholesale immigration of the Indians overseas commenced from this period Terror stricken, the populace migrated especially for Mauritius In 1850, they numbered twelve thousand, five hundred sixty two, but at the end of 1857, the Indian population of the island was one lakh, seven thousand, and seventy two males and thirty five thousand four hundred and sixty-two females<sup>2</sup> The policy of unreasoning vengeance, the abdication of the government function in favour of a 'committee of butchers', produced other results<sup>3</sup> A sense of exasperation drove the rebels to band together in large numbers with a view to retaliation This brought on a deadlock The people, particularly the agricultural classes were prevented from returning to their occupations<sup>4</sup> In his communication to the Court of Directors of 11 December, 1857, Canning referred to the chronic disaffection of the villagers and the readiness with which they renewed their rebellious activities, attesting the ill effects of this remorseless bloodshed This was confirmed by perfectly trustworthy accounts Some days after, on 24 December, Canning again represented to the Court of Directors that the undue action of the civil authorities could not be checked—indiscriminate hangings and burning and plunder of villages had given colour to the view that the government meditated a general bloody prosecution Consequently, the mutiny which he argued, at the beginning was little more than a military revolt was fast growing into a widespread and implacable feud between the

<sup>1</sup> *Diary* 1 214 Canning refused to publish some papers illustrating the brutality of some of the special tribunals When pressed to publish them he is said to have said 'No I had rather submit to any obloquy than publish to the world what would so terribly disgrace my countrymen' (R C Dutt, quoted in *India Struggles for Freedom* (1945) by H N Mukherjee) For a list of persons condemned by court martial and special commissioners see *Mutiny Record of the Intelligence Department* 1 335

<sup>2</sup> *Hindu Patriot* 29 April 1858

<sup>3</sup> Even the *Times* suggested that the English generals should execute military justice soberly and temperately (Quoted in *The Englishman* 11 December 1857)

<sup>4</sup> FP v App B 309 11 C Bradon secretary to the government of India.

'agricultural classes and their civil rulers'. He referred to many official and unofficial communications on this anarchical condition which besides aggravating the rebellion had brought cultivation to a standstill, and concluded with the expression of a sentiment worthy of the noble 'Clemency' Canning,

(No) Government can punish in anger...and that the Government which has punished blindly and revengefully will have lost its chief title to the respect of its subjects.<sup>1</sup>

All these official missives show that the government of India, at least so far as these records are concerned, did not look upon the events of 1857-58 from a particular racial angle, but in their proper perspective, only in the context of a vast upsurge of people. The assumption that the mutiny was actually a popular rebellion indicated the level at which it was to be tackled. Many officers applied themselves to the task of mitigating the tension by removing the causes of exasperation of the civic communities. William Muir, secretary to the government of North-West provinces, writing to district officers, on the subject of 'means of revenue' on 10 April, 1858, cautioned them to confine their demand to the *kharij* instalment, that is, those for November and December only. This virtually amounted to an admission of the legitimate *de facto* tenure of the usurping rulers in the preceding months, when the landlords had withheld payment to the British treasury. The officers were further advised to take into account the financial condition of the proprietors, who were favourably disposed in the matter of payment of revenue. It would be inexpedient, he emphasised, to 'trench upon their capital' already wasted by plunder and rapine.<sup>2</sup> But on this point a controversy was raging between two experienced officials regarding the propriety of the measure which brings into clear relief some of the issues of the civil rebellion. In the Mathura district over one hundred and fifty villages had been confiscated and transferred to other hands for default of payment of revenue<sup>3</sup> in addition to the usual penalties of death and destruc-

<sup>1</sup> Sessional Papers of the House of Lords, vol. xi, 1857-58, pp. 11-14. A recent writer on the subject, R. Hilton, however, maintains that in actual fact, Canning erred on the side of severity (*The Indian Mutiny*, 203-09).

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 931: W. Muir, secretary, Allahabad, 10 April, 1858.

<sup>3</sup> The *Hindu Patriot* says for offering armed resistance 20 May, 1858.

tion for the commission of revolutionary acts M Thornhill the officer of the district, justified this measure on the ground that this passive resistance to pay revenue to the government was more difficult to deal with than active opposition As a matter of fact he treated this contumacious refusal to pay as rebellion and visited it with confiscation<sup>1</sup> G F Harvey, as already referred to, considered this measure of Thornhill to be indiscreet and imprudent Such transfers of large estates for balances of revenue to quasi loyal landholders who were utter strangers to the land would only generate further feelings of hostility to the government by increasing the number of ousted landowners This coercive process was also considered to be extremely unrighteous having regard to the practical difficulties involved in the matter of payment at a time when the whole country was swarming with rebels, the tahsil offices subverted, and the British struggling precariously in a few beleaguered posts It could not be expected that the unprotected malguzar should become such a 'miracle of loyal devotion as to risk their lives in carrying *kists* to the government camp<sup>2</sup> The fact that many people suffered, and were even punished capitally for the simple reason that they were forced to submit to the rebel authorities, in consequence of the English failing to afford protection, created resentment also in the British circles<sup>3</sup> Better sense, however, came to prevail with the authorities at a later time when the first blast of mutiny was over R H Davies of Azamgarh wrote on 3 February, 1858 that the number of men implicated in the commotion was so great that if law was allowed to take its course the jails would not hold them He suggested some sort of clemency in view of the excitement and temptation born of or brought on by subversion of authority An official circular was issued on 8 March, drawing the attention of the local authorities to the governor general's intention of making a distinction between subversive acts aimed to overthrow the British power and acts of plunder and violence of a non political nature

<sup>1</sup> NE 1 94

<sup>2</sup> Narrative of Events by G F Harvey Commissioner p 25

<sup>3</sup> The *Hindu Patriot* of 17 June 1858 quotes Russell's report on the subject and also refers to the speech of Mr Buxton in the Parliament who censured the government for hanging to death the raja of Ballabgarh.

when the restraining power of the government was in abeyance.<sup>1</sup>

It is notorious that the British were within an ace of losing India.<sup>2</sup> They were at the end of their tether, so to say, and applied all means to survive the crisis. European planters were recruited to run the different services. Serious attention was given to organise the *goalas*, *dosads* and *lathials* and other such rabble into a force of footmen.<sup>3</sup> Nearly ten thousand fighting men of the *ghatwal*, *tabedar* and *jagirdar* class living in the tract between Burdwan and Hazaribagh were proposed to be requisitioned<sup>4</sup> and so also the Kukis of Assam.<sup>5</sup> European sailors of Calcutta were formed into a 'little navy army' and posted in different centres.<sup>6</sup> A number of seamen confined in the jail of the Bombay Presidency were said to have been released on condition of their promising to join the Indian Navy.<sup>7</sup> Influences were brought to bear upon the mahajans and zamindars to form combinations and to counteract the hold of the rebel leaders.<sup>8</sup>

The financial position was extremely desperate as already noticed. The Company begged for loan in different quarters and fell back on contributions received from chiefs and a few interested persons in some periods of the struggle.<sup>9</sup> The revenue receipts in the period naturally fell. A glance at the statement<sup>10</sup> of land revenue demand, collections and balances in the districts of the Agra division (towards the end of October 1858), as given on the next page, will show that the authority of the government was still disregarded with impunity, and was not yet firmly re-established.

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 930.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the serious importance Nicholson attached to the situation (Wilberforce, *An Unrecorded Chapter*, 33).

<sup>3</sup> FP. v, App. B. 64: W. Tayler, commissioner of Circuit, 11 July, 1857.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 286.

<sup>5</sup> FP. ix, 81: R. J. H. Birch, Fort William, 22 December.

<sup>6</sup> FP. ix, 903.

<sup>7</sup> *The Englishman*, 14 December, 1857.

<sup>8</sup> FP. ix, 239: C. Chester, commissioner of Allahabad, 7 November.

<sup>9</sup> *Supra*, p. 28n2.

<sup>10</sup> Narrative of Events by G. F. Harvey, commissioner, Agra Division, p. 43 (App.).



Districts	Demands for October, 1858 (In Rs )	Collections for October, 1858 (In Rs )	Balance for October 1858 (In Rs )
Muttra	4,272- 6- 8	319- 1- 7	3,959- 5- 0
Agra	8,493- 5- 0	1,783- 5- 0	6,710- 0- 0
Farrukhabad	2,25,415- 7-11	7,300-10-10	2,18,114-13- 1
Mainpuri	1,13,596-15- 2	9,770-12- 8	1,02,826- 2- 6
Etawah	1,09,468- 2- 5	13,721- 2- 4	95,747- 0- 1

Making allowance for the difficulties of the time which prevented the loyal elements to send money to the coffers of the government, it cannot but be admitted that a considerable portion of the landed class was certainly influenced by a feeling of uncertainty as to the tenure of the British which kept them back<sup>1</sup> But whatever the reasons, revenue receipts at several treasuries in the Benares and Allahabad divisions during October and November show that the collection was seriously affected by the continuance of the rebellion<sup>2</sup>

Let us turn to the economic consequences of the sepoy war and the rebellion. The immediate reaction of the outbreak was that early in the month of June public securities had fallen exceedingly low at Lucknow, and Gubbins, the financial commissioner, was informed that government promissory notes of one hundred rupees were offered for sale for half that sum, or even at, eighty-five or eighty-eight per cent discount. No merchant could negotiate a *hundi* or bill and all credit was gone, so much so, that the government was obliged to issue orders that officials should not, till things looked up, be paid

<sup>1</sup> FP vii, 267-9 Return of collection in the Azamgarh District

<sup>2</sup> FP ix, 215-6. Narrative of Events to 14 November

in full.<sup>1</sup> Rees further says that no credit was given by Indians to Europeans. The anxious manner in which the former desired to part with Company's paper showed that they had lost all faith in the stability of the government. People laid in large stores to meet the impending crisis.<sup>2</sup> The demand for gold<sup>3</sup> rose as the mutinous sepoys were anxious to exchange silver for gold. Similar effects were produced on the Bombay money market. An immediate panic seized the Indian capitalists, very large sums were withdrawn from the banks and government securities proved unsaleable.<sup>4</sup> Effects of these proceedings were felt also in Bihar about the same time. The district officer of Champaran informed the authorities on 20 June that the indigo planters and others engaged in the trade were in great difficulty as the bankers and mahajans were refusing to make their usual cash advances.<sup>5</sup> As this unsettled condition reacted heavily on cultivation, every endeavour was made by the government to check any tendency towards agricultural depression. The governor-general wrote to the Court of Directors on 16 July on the necessity for encouraging and inducing the people to return to their villages and cultivate their fields.<sup>6</sup> The collector of Allahabad strained every nerve to promote cultivation so as to compensate the loss of grain caused by fire and plunder and stoppage of the import of the commodity from Rohilkhand. Difficulties were enhanced by the fact that cultivation was not possible in deserted villages and even where the people returned, it was too late in the season for a plough to be put to the ground.<sup>7</sup> The inland river trade was entirely suspended as the Oudh talukdars completely commanded the course of the Ganges between Allahabad and Cawnpore. No boats could ply above Allahabad and the usual trade from Farrukhabad and Rohilkhand was sus-

<sup>1</sup> Gubbins, *op. cit.*, 186; Forrest, *Selections*, iii, App. B. p. ix: Letter of G. Couper. See also Anderson, *A Personal Journal*, etc. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *A Personal Narrative*, 29. Similar effects were felt in a far distant hill station of the Panjab (Cooper, *The Crisis*, etc. 116).

<sup>3</sup> Gubbins, *op. cit.*, 191-2.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx, *op. cit.*, *India Today*, vol. ii, September, 1952.

<sup>5</sup> FP. v, App. A. 92.

<sup>6</sup> FP. v, 98.

<sup>7</sup> FP. vii, 67: M. H. Court, collector, Allahabad, 19 September.

pendent <sup>1</sup> Shortage of food came in the wake of these dislocations Already in the month of August reports were received of the great increase in the price of articles of consumption <sup>2</sup> In the month of October scarcity reached the peak and great distress prevailed in Benares and the neighbouring regions of which a report was given by F B Gubbins, the commissioner, in the same month He writes

The price of grain continues to be as high as during the last week and the misery of the lower classes is rather increasing than otherwise Children are now openly sold at one rupee per head to any one that will take them, while many others are abandoned by their parents on the high ways <sup>3</sup>

The government credit remained low, its papers being negotiated at thirty four per cent discount in the Cawnpore market <sup>4</sup> In eastern India opium advances had commenced in October though not in the Shahabad region <sup>5</sup> Towards the end of the year securities were at the lowest ebb It was then well nigh impossible to borrow upon them To make matters worse, nearly five hundred millions sterling were invested in railways A depression in these stocks naturally caused alarm among European and American bankers who held enormous sums therein A Mirzapur report of 7 December indicated that the mahajans had stopped all business and that drafts of the best description could not be placed at four times the usual rate of discount Incidentally, the life insurance companies also passed through a terrible ordeal On a modest calculation four fifths of the officers of the Bengal Army were insured and about one thousand persons perished at Cawnpore alone Naturally, the magnitude of the death claims was beyond the capacity of these institutions to meet <sup>6</sup> Sambalpur experienced another difficulty Salt trade had almost ceased since the outbreak and no funds were available to meet even administrative demands <sup>7</sup> All these features,

<sup>1</sup> FP ix 291 2 Report by M H Court 17 September

<sup>2</sup> FP v App B 448

<sup>3</sup> FP ix 245 See also the report from Bhagalpur FP vii 26

<sup>4</sup> FP ix, 228

<sup>5</sup> FP vii 14

<sup>6</sup> *The Englishman* 4 10 11 December 1857

<sup>7</sup> FP ix 385

though not treated in details, are sufficient to indicate that the economic system was thrown out of gear like the political one. The collapse of authority was also reflected in many other spheres of public life. Education was either stopped or interrupted, civil justice could only be exercised in a few isolated spots, public works absolutely ceased, and the survey had to be suspended.<sup>1</sup>

The scene of alarm, scarcity and distress presented here brings into prominence the revolutionary character of the objectives of the rebels. It was sure enough not a mere wish to humble and humiliate the British government. The total subversion of the British authority in many sectors was only matched by the establishment of a rebel government of a determined character aiming to replace the former rule in all aspects, though many forms were not changed as new ones could not be devised on account of the exigency of the times. Otherwise most of the new governments aimed at justice and equality and embodied to a great degree the spirit of the times. The rani of Jhansi proved herself a most capable ruler.<sup>2</sup> Mohammed Hasan of Gorakhpur was equally forceful in the administration of law and order. In regard to Farrukhabad, W. G. Probyn reported:

The procedure for the criminal court was also detailed, and very great care, it appears, was bestowed on the suppression of crime. A monthly report from the thanadar was ordered to be sent in a prescribed form... and the Register of daily occurrences (*Roznamcha*) was ordered to be despatched each evening from the thanas.<sup>3</sup>

Every article of food and every other thing was taxed, the income from which averaged above rupees five hundred a day, but such impositions, as Probyn ascertained, did not cause the slightest vexation or annoyance.<sup>4</sup> It however appears quite plausible to maintain that nowhere during this period was any attempt made to establish the principles of democracy and self-government in the administration of the country. Ideas of a free and independent government meant nothing further

<sup>1</sup> Holmes, *op. cit.*, 143.

<sup>2</sup> Malleson, i, 191.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 136.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 140, 144.

than the restoration of the power of the local chiefs and were not conceived in the context of the repudiation of the monarchical principle. India in the mid nineteenth century did not possess the material requisites for advanced political ideas and the insufficiency of her economic life rendered impossible any real extension of the revolution. Nor was there any social servile war, an uprising of the lower against the higher classes.

But this does not mean that the people in general were incapable of social and political initiative. The civil rebellion of the mutinies was mainly a talukdari movement. The movement was a challenge to the British system of law, revenue, production and property relations. It repudiated the British policy of transferring the ownership of land to a new set of proprietors, the auction purchasers and the village headmen. Evidence in support of this contention has been profusely noticed in the preceding pages. Kaye quotes Henry Tucker to show that in Benares a few days sufficed to produce a revolution of property—so sudden a rising of the ousted landholders as could never have been thought of. The settlement of the North West provinces, a great triumph of the British administration, had similarly collapsed, suddenly resulting in a revolution of landed property.<sup>1</sup> Most conspicuous in these proceedings were the Oudh talukdars who, as already recorded, ever since Havelock's repeated failures to reach Lucknow, helped themselves in seizing the villages from which they had been wrongfully deprived.<sup>2</sup> By the end of September the whole country between Gopiganj and Allahabad was in the hands of the Oudh talukdars who were acquiring quite systematically village after village<sup>3</sup> and collecting rents.<sup>4</sup> The long list of the forcible seizure of villages by the ex zamindars, as furnished by Mayne,<sup>5</sup> as also many other isolated instances bring out in clear relief much of the social content of the rebellion of the mutinies. In February 1858, G. Couper, secretary to the chief commissioner of Oudh, reported that the

<sup>1</sup> Kaye II 234-412

<sup>2</sup> FP IV 105. Officer Commanding Allahabad 19 August *supra* pp 30-01 33

<sup>3</sup> FP VII 34. The governor general of India to the Court of Directors Fort William 18 October

<sup>4</sup> *Ib id* 261

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 262-3. Gopiganj 3 October

powerful landholders were determined to resort to their posts and carry on a guerilla warfare until they get back their former estates.<sup>1</sup> This is an evidence of great value in that it explains how the war in Lucknow was converted into a war of the talukdars and the renewal of the struggle in a more intensive form against the confiscation proclamation of Canning.

Yet the rebellion of 1857 was not the work of the dispossessed talukdars alone. The war of the talukdars was made possible only by the co-operation of the general mass of people, the country people, the villagers of different social status. A very singular circumstance which was apparent and worthy of consideration was that the low castes and the cultivators who received attention at the hands of the British government displayed the most marked hostility to it.<sup>2</sup> In Oudh the British were fighting not a mutiny, but the revolt of a people under its hereditary chiefs<sup>3</sup> and leaders. In Budaun the mass of the population rose in a body and the work of rebellion after the sepoy had left, passed into the hands of the rural elements.<sup>4</sup> In some parts of Saharanpur, as Kaye was able to find out from the materials at his disposal, even the sepoys were regarded as protective elements by the British as against the inhabitants of towns and villages who turned out fiercely: the British officer could hardly realise this rapid change amongst the peaceful villagers.<sup>5</sup> In Deobund, the resistance offered by the townspeople had been determined and the rebels were numerous.<sup>6</sup> In Mathura the whole country had risen almost instantaneously, immediately after the outbreak of the sepoys.<sup>7</sup> The authorities at Ghazipur were resisted by villagers who were organised in bodies of thousands in

<sup>1</sup> Forrest, *Selections*, iii, App. B. p. x. Notwithstanding this restiveness to seize lands it was to be doubted whether the rebellion had not diminished the value of landed property in its ultimate consequence, as the capitalists were likely to hang back from investment in land from a feeling of insecurity of tenure (See Report by R. Spankie, of Saharanpur in NE. i. 226, 490).

<sup>2</sup> Thornhill, *op. cit.*, 334.

<sup>3</sup> Ludlow, *A. Pamphlet on the War in Oudh*, 50.

<sup>4</sup> Kaye, iii, 286.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 239-41.

<sup>6</sup> Robertson, *op. cit.*, 158.

<sup>7</sup> NE. i, 93.

July 1857<sup>1</sup> Sherer, the magistrate of Fatehpur, while leaving the station and wandering in search of a place of safety, found the peasantry of the countryside in a ferment, in a state of *Jacquerie* of the agricultural type<sup>2</sup> The people of Jehanabad (Bihar) were also in open rebellion<sup>3</sup> All official sources agree in stating that in Allahabad the peasantry rose at once under their old talukdars, specially the rural oppulation of the Doab, and 'all the muscle and sinew of the agricultural races' were arrayed against the government<sup>4</sup> In Rewah the whole of the population was hostile<sup>5</sup> and the country was secured only by the courage and resourcefulness of captain Osborne<sup>6</sup> In Shahabad the rebellion of the people was found to be most determined and protracted of its kind The Sagar and Narmada countries were in a blaze, seditious conspiracies were fomented in Belgaum, Hyderabad and Poona and popular risings took place in far distant Kolhapur, Savantvadi and Nargund The commotion at the last named place took the form of a national resistance<sup>7</sup>

This sample survey taken of this vast and sombre scene of rebellion may confirm the view that the so called mutiny of 1857 has an internal consistency, only if we regard it as both a mutiny and a rebellion unmistakably united<sup>8</sup> In general, popular risings were excited by military disturbances yet sometimes the fermentation appeared on the surface even without them It is, however, not very easy to determine the duration of these occurrences, nor the sequence in which one act of revolt followed another but in most of the districts, as shown in the present work, elements of revolt and embers of disaffection

<sup>1</sup> FP v, App A 66 H C Wake Arrah 11 July, 1857

<sup>2</sup> Maude and Sherer, i 130

<sup>3</sup> FP v App B 427 vii 4

<sup>4</sup> Kaye ii 260

<sup>5</sup> FP vi 87, 89 The Officer Commanding at Benares 11 October

<sup>6</sup> Maude and Sherer, i 170

<sup>7</sup> *Supra* p 230

<sup>8</sup> Cf the remarks of F Williams the commissioner of the Meerut Division who was commissioned to institute an enquiry into the origin and character of the revolt Those who have lived in the midst of it and who should be the best judges cannot but feel that the theory that it was a purely military revolt and the other that it was a national effort to shake off tyrants are equally far from the truth (NE i 288)

continued to smoulder long after their re-occupation by the British. There is no gainsaying the fact that rebellion gripped many parts of India; even where agitation was not violent, there was no mistaking the unrest in people's minds and it is to be doubted if all acrimony was spent quickly. The village people were not certainly properly organised, and too often they broke out into small parties without any competent leadership, yet they fought heroically and even showed capacity for co-ordinated action. Captain Harrison of Dunbar's party in the expedition against Arrah said that the people of the country turned against them.<sup>1</sup> Mention of the villagers being recruited in the rebel army frequently occurs in official papers<sup>2</sup> and increasingly as the revolt progressed, they replaced the sepoys and formed the bulk of the fighting forces. They actively participated in the revolt without bothering much about their destiny and were not dismayed in any way by fear of the coming retribution. Such an attitude cannot be inspired simply by the temptation to take advantage of the disappearance of all authority attendant on the mutinies. The rapidity with which the revolt developed, the preparedness of the villages to accept rebel authority, and the extensive plundering of many places suggest a readiness for revolt,<sup>3</sup> the rebellion of a united people against the state. In Meerut, for instance, as major Williams the commissioner of military police who collected a vast amount of evidence on the subject of the rising reported that the situation was perfectly normal on that fateful day, the shops open, the vendors plying and travellers journeying unarmed, but fearful scenes were enacted the same day 'in the afternoon and soon the country rose.'<sup>4</sup> In Mathura according to official reports the people were in profound tranquility a month before the outbreak but this sudden change to anarchy struck the magistrate as incomprehensible.<sup>5</sup> Similarly in Benares, the suddenness with which the rebellion developed in the interior was astounding. It was not due to the instigation of the sepoys, as Kaye says,

<sup>1</sup> FP. iv, 137.

<sup>2</sup> FP. vii, 75; Report by P. Carnegie (Mehndi Hasan had 10,000 men consisting of new levies and villagers).

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 5.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 295-6.

<sup>5</sup> NE. i, 94.



but a great movement from within was beginning to make itself felt upon the surface of the rural Society, and all traces of British rule were rapidly disappearing from the face of the land <sup>1</sup>

So also in Allahabad, the character of the general rising of the people was such that it could not have been any the stronger and more formidable even if it had been skilfully planned and deliberately matured <sup>2</sup>

In all convulsions popular fury is naturally directed against the institutions of their oppressors and throughout the rebellion the first thing the rebels did on getting a footing in a station was to burn the government offices and property <sup>3</sup> Usually records of every description were destroyed, as these were regarded as the machinery by which the British enforced taxation <sup>4</sup> Police stations tahsils and telegraph poles were also targets of attack <sup>5</sup> but there seemed to be an especial rage against the railway lines which were thrown out <sup>6</sup> and a great fear of the engines which were battered to pieces <sup>7</sup> But it has been sufficiently demonstrated that plunder was not the inducement to disaffection in many cases as the villagers were found to be wealthy and their resources strong <sup>8</sup> In Saharanpur, the zamindars were one with the lower orders and rebellion and not plunder prompted their activities There the rebels were content not merely to burn or destroy the baniya houses and throw the accounts into the flames, but the account books were carried out of the town with them and torn up in the highways The same thing happened at Mathura <sup>9</sup>

There is no indication in the official papers of the role the class of wage earners of Indian society played in the great revolt of 1857 Nevertheless a few details are available There

<sup>1</sup> Kaye II 234

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 256

<sup>3</sup> At some places plunderings were so extensive that they could hardly be regarded as work of men Cf Robert's letter to his wife Katherine (*A H down's Reminiscences* 77)

<sup>4</sup> Thornhill *The Personal Adventures* 87

<sup>5</sup> FP IV 105 VI 200

<sup>6</sup> FP VI 197

<sup>7</sup> Kaye II 257n

<sup>8</sup> NE I 231f

<sup>9</sup> Robertson *op cit* 134 Kaye I 250 Thornhill *op cit* 106

were some factories lying scattered in the whole country and coffee and indigo plantations run by Europeans, where a working class allied to the toiling population must have worked. The dismantling of the factories at Shahjehanpur, Saran and Hazaribagh and the wholesale destruction of indigo factories at Shahabad and in many other places as already noticed,<sup>1</sup> were a challenge to the system of exploitation and the instruments of production—the primitive demand of the nascent proletariat. The fact that a proclamation had to be issued by the government for the recovery of indigo seed only serves to underline the resentment of this class against the planters<sup>2</sup> and the cultivation of cash crop in general. Little is known of the facts relative to the social composition of the rebels. In general they may be classified as people who lived by profession of arms, agricultural workers, religious mendicants and priests, civil servants, shopkeepers, boatmen and other professionals of this type. The commercial and industrial classes, the bankers and mahajans, were on the side of order and government and were the targets of attack in almost every place. So universal was this feature that G. H. Freeling of Banda could not help reporting that in no instance the bankers and traders, the class favoured by them, had been able to keep their own in the struggle.<sup>3</sup> But the influence of the big 'native princes' and chiefs operated in a different direction. They actively sided with the government, and strangled the revolution and utilised only such results of this countrywide upsurge as were of advantage to them. Had they joined the movement, no earthly power, as Colvin said, could have saved the British from destruction.<sup>4</sup> The pillars of Indian feudalism kept aloof from the revolt so often characterised as feudal.

A very significant feature of the movements of the rebel leaders was that they did not confine their activities merely to their respective regions but moved to the neighbouring areas

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 173-4.

<sup>2</sup> FP. ix, 242; Commissioner of Benares, 19 October, 1857.

<sup>3</sup> NE. i, 548; Muir, *Records of the Intelligence Department*, ii, 2, 5-7, 92.

<sup>4</sup> There were also quite a few instances of the fidelity of the sepoys and their contradictory impulses which weakened the strength of the mutinous regiments in some areas (Kaye, ii, 500). Also Mowbray Thomson, *The story of Cawnpore*, 41.

to carry on the general struggle against the English. Not to speak of the military operations of the Fyzabad *maulavi* Firuz Shah Tanti Topi, the rani of Jhansi Rao Sahib and Kunwar Singh, a host of other leaders also made themselves conspicuous in many fronts of the war throughout the whole of upper India. Thus Madho Singh of Bhognipur was reported to have joined the rebels at Kalpi after the re-occupation of Cawnpore by the British. Beni Bahadur Singh of Nasratpur with a halter round his neck fought at Allahabad and later on joined the ranks of the rebels at Lucknow. Mehndi Hasan of Sultanpur dominated over the districts surrounding Oudh and surrendered only when the struggle was nearly over. Rana Beni Madho Baksh of Sankarpur struggled to the last and fled to Nepal rather than accept the amnesty out of his loyalty to the royal begam and the same stand was taken by Mohammed Hasan of Gorakhpur who carried his arms as far as the borders of Fyzabad. Prithvipal Singh covered a wide field of military operations. Mansabali fought many a smart action resisting the advance of British forces all the way from Cawnpore to Lucknow on the one side and on the other in the Sultanpur road. Liakatali of Allahabad stuck to the last fighting in many fields. The *palwar* chief Madho Prasad of Birhar extended his activities as far as Azamgarh. Udresh Singh was present in the fight at Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Azamgarh and similarly, Amresh Singh of Akbarpur came to the support of the rebels at Gorakhpur and Azamgarh and very similar were the activities of another *rajpoot* chief Chandresh Singh. When Kunwar Singh was on his historic march to Kalpi, Amar Singh started out of Shahabad to help him<sup>1</sup> and when the old lion was digging in at Azamgarh Pargan Singh, Indrajit Singh and Rana Beni Madho and others assembled together to take their force over the Gogra.<sup>2</sup> In the country to the south of the Jumna Barjor Singh dominated the entire region from Kunch to Kalpi and the Sagar leader Daulat Singh swept through Jalaun, Jhansi, Hosangabad and Rajputana. There are many other instances to show that the leaders of the rebellion looked beyond their own immediate circle, and showed a combination of wide vision.

<sup>1</sup> FP LX 598

<sup>2</sup> CRO *Secret Letters from India* vol 164 p 339 (NO 81A of 1858)

and patriotic solidarity. Though they were mostly engaged in local rebellion, they frequently united their forces against the English in many sectors of the war to deliver the country as a whole, and not simply parts of it, from the yoke of the British rule.

This combination is all the more remarkable as it cut across all barriers of caste and creed, and of regions and provinces, and united the Hindus and the Mahomedans—despite communal flare-up here and there which broke out during this period—<sup>1</sup> in a common endeavour to shake off the fetters of British rule and demonstrate their hatred of the regime in a perfectly national way. Disraeli's attack against the government in the House of Commons on 27 July was typical of the British imperialists whose motto was divide and rule, yet it was an admission of the fact:

For the first time in the history of your rule, you have the Hindu and Mahomedan making common cause against you.<sup>2</sup>

The numerous proclamations of the time which urged the people to combine and slay the British,<sup>3</sup> added with the measures adopted by Bahadur Shah,<sup>4</sup> the nawab of Furrukhabad and Khan Bahadur Khan of Barielly and many others to placate

<sup>1</sup> For the communal question of this period see Muir *Records of the Intelligence Department*, etc. i, 378, 439, 443, 473, 507, 510, ii 4, 22, 23, 25, 26, 42, 134, 179, Kaye, iii, 288f; Majumdar, *op cit.* 227f *et seq.* pp 89 100 112 115-7, 157.

<sup>2</sup> *The Englishman*, 16 September, 1857. The wellknown fact that Azimullah Khan and Sobharam were the advisers of Nana Sahib and Khan Bahadur Khan respectively highlights this assumption.

<sup>3</sup> An excerpt from a letter issued by maulavi Kootub Shah in respect of joint alliances of the Hindus and Mahomedans ran as follows:

I conjure the Hindus in the name of Ganga, Tula and Salikram and the Muhamedans by the name of God and the *Ketur* to join us in destroying the English, for their mutual welfare. The killing of cows being esteemed one of the greatest sins amongst the Hindus, the Muhamedan chiefs have agreed to abolish that custom from the day the Hindus come forward to kill the Europeans . . . . let not this opportunity pass away (FP ix 851-2). Excepting for the purpose of uniting the Hindus and Mahomedans the different manifestoes of the period put forward by the rebel leaders are characterised by the entire absence of any competent analysis of the evil effects of the British rule which caused this mutiny and rebellion. The proclamation issued by Nana Sahib on 6 July, 1857, quoted in Kaye and in Majumdar (*op cit.* 133) is a type of treacherous propaganda that was carried on. The proclamation issued by the royal begam of Lucknow was of a different sort.

<sup>4</sup> *Supra* p 69. Also the evidence of Mrs Aldwell in the *Trial of Bahadur Shah*.  
p 99

the Hindus, roused to a great extent, a new feeling, a feeling of solidarity which reached its peak during the siege of Lucknow when in the face of a great impending danger the Hindus swore on the Ganges and the Mahomedans on the *Koran* and rushed out, crying *chalo bhai*, to wipe out the English at Alambagh.<sup>1</sup> Similarly at Delhi it was a national defence which the British confronted. Colvin informed Havelock that the spirit in which both Hindus and Mahomedans acted together at Delhi was very remarkable.<sup>2</sup> W. Tayler of Patna communicated to the government that the letters discovered in the house of Peerali Khan disclosed that for the purpose of the successful execution of the conspiracy a common cause was made by merging all religious differences.<sup>3</sup> At Jhansi the Mahomedans were wholly on the side of the rani. Even in Rohilkhand where communal tension prevailed, efforts of all kinds were made to raise the Hindu population against the British.<sup>4</sup> On this question of a common opposition to British rule by the Indian populace in those memorable years the evidence is of so compelling a nature that to Forrest, the historian of the mutiny, the great revolt only pointed to the stark fact that the British dominion rested on a thin crust. He observes

Among the many lessons which the Indian Mutiny conveys to the historian and administrator none is of greater importance than the warning that it is possible to have a revolution in which Brahmin and Sudra, Mahomedan and Hindu, were united against us.<sup>5</sup>

Contemporary sources refer to similar other instances of social brotherhood which was remarkably exhibited in a number of places.

The commencement of the revolt at Meerut and the spread of the infection of mutiny and rebellion with a bewildering rapidity made it evident that the British government had acquired but a slight hold upon the affections of its Indian subjects.<sup>6</sup> England's dominion in India was indeed built by

<sup>1</sup> Forrest, *Selections* ii 377ff Intro

<sup>2</sup> FP iv 140 Fort Agra 22 July 1857

<sup>3</sup> FP v App. B 8 Patna, 15 July

<sup>4</sup> FP ix, 852

<sup>5</sup> Forrest *Select ons* ii 150 (Intro)

<sup>6</sup> Holmes *op cit* 143

the sword and also upheld by the reliance on it. The rule of a century might have produced other strings for its upkeep, but the events of May-June demonstrated that it had no other firm support excepting the sword. That unfortunately was the result of the British policy, for by the end of that period certain trends were emerging out of the confused mass of events which indicated that the mutiny was gradually merging into a rebellion. In a sense all mutinies turn into a mass movement when they attain a certain measure of success but the Indian mutinies of the year 1857 had the peculiar feature that the rebel Bengal Army had from the beginning drawn the sympathies of the countrypeople. 'The sepoys were not so much the avengers of professional grievances as the exponents of general discontent'.<sup>1</sup> They revolted against the authority, which they had sworn to obey, on grounds of national interest. The justification of sacrificing the military obligations rested on a widely based belief that their religion was in danger and, since they were children of the soil, though mercenaries and had not abnegated their obligations to the country, their countrymen viewed them as martyrs to a great cause, holy and national, and as a district magistrate said, willingly supplied their wants in almost all instances.<sup>2</sup>

Macaulay in his last two volumes of English history said that the violence of revolutions is generally proportioned to the degree of maladministration which produced them. The excesses committed by the Indians only explain their frantic attempts to throw off the yoke of their foreign masters whom they considered to be their oppressors. Such observations as the rebels were not actuated by a feeling of patriotism,<sup>3</sup> and that the mutiny was only an outbreak and not a revolt,<sup>4</sup> really do not cover all the issues of this human tempest. Another writer ignores the national content of the revolt on the ground that revolution is easy in a country where the vast majority of the population is agricultural as it was in France.<sup>5</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Disraeli in the House of Commons (Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, July, vol. cxlvii, p. 444).

<sup>2</sup> Robertson, *op. cit.*, 61; Holloway, *Essays*, etc. 260-01.

<sup>3</sup> Forbes-Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 99-100.

<sup>4</sup> Maude and Sherer, i, 160.

<sup>5</sup> Medley, *A Year's Campaigning in India*, 195.

analogy with France does not hold good, as the fact of foreign domination in India gave edge to the grievances of a social nature which widened the basis of the revolt. In fact, of the rebellion as a whole, it is not quite easy to present a uniform pattern as it differed considerably from region to region, and political and social motives got mixed up in the process. The total subversion of the British military control in India was undoubtedly the objective of the military classes. The subversion of the British system of administration in all its aspects by the abasement of the British rule to its utmost extent its extinction if it could be managed, was the ruling motive in general of the non military classes. The inter action of the two ideas, increasingly as the mutiny was turned into a rebellion generated such a wave of popular feeling as can fairly be distinguished with the name of a national movement in its incipient form.

The conversion of the mutiny into a popular rebellion has been doubted by many scholars both Indian and British of contemporary and later periods. The greatest protagonist of the theory that the revolt of 1857 was only a mutiny of troops was William Muir secretary to the government of North West provinces. His thesis was that it was essentially a military mutiny, a struggle between the government and its soldiers. From the lack of excitement in some places and welcome given to British soldiers in other places and sundry other signs of returning loyalty of the people as reflected in improved collections, from the desertions from the rebel forces, the loyalty of the Panjabis the splendid crop of a few isolated stretches and above all, from the occasional manifestations of communal distemper he argues that there was no controversy between the people and the government.<sup>1</sup> This amounts to a negation of the fundamental proposition of the present work. If there was no controversy between the people and the government then the latter would not have committed inhuman atrocities upon the unarmed populace as is evident from the details recorded above. In a vast upsurge like the revolt of 1857 engulfing a major portion of a sub-continent like India

<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Intelligence Department* : 31 35 202-03 248 289 334 5 337 343 360 405 491 505 n 112 145 153 155 202 237 266 335-6 363 372

variations and fluctuations of conditions cannot be regarded as anything unusual and should not have any undue bearing on the overall historical estimate. The faulty nature of the observation of Muir is also made clear in his remark on the revolt of Mathura. He says: 'The most remarkable proof of the people being not opposed to us is found in Muttra'.<sup>1</sup> The report of Mark Thornhill, the British officer of the station who certainly had more opportunities to watch the situation than Muir who depended only on reports, however gives a different version.<sup>2</sup> The picture Muir gives of Saharanpur<sup>3</sup> again appears to be a twisted one when seen in the light of Robertson's *District Duties*.

A very trite argument which is used to question the popular character of the revolt is that the proportion of the civil populace who joined the rebellion was insignificant when compared with those whose sympathies were with the government. F. Williams, the commissioner of the Meerut division, for instance, furnishes a table of the population of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Meerut and of the troops stationed in each of these districts, the former overwhelmingly in excess of the latter, and concludes that had the mass of population joined, those small bands could not have held out.<sup>4</sup> This view, namely that a considerable section of the people even of the affected regions remained sympathetic to the English, has been echoed and re-echoed in many contemporary and later works.<sup>5</sup> It is of course evident and is not disputed that in many districts quite a few of the chiefs and landholders, large sections of the common people, and specially the English-educated classes, actively supported the government in their trial.<sup>6</sup> The peculiar feature of the mutiny, as Kaye says, was that though the English were fighting against the Indians, they were in

<sup>1</sup> Muir, *op. cit.*, i, 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>3</sup> i, 191.

<sup>4</sup> NE. i, 288.

<sup>5</sup> *Native Fidelity during the Mutiny: The Mutinies and the People* (1859) by a Hindu which attempts to vindicate the Indians from the charge of universal disloyalty. The author is Sarabhu Charan Mukhopadhyaya. This is not to be confused with another work entitled *The Mutinies, the Government and the People* by a Hindu which is usually ascribed to Kishori Chandra Mitra.

<sup>6</sup> R. C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, 223, 225-6.



reality sustained and supported by them<sup>1</sup> But these circumstances are of a nature which do not touch the fringe of the problem<sup>2</sup> and are of value only in that they enable us to understand better how the English came out successful in their contest In most of the convulsions of history, the brunt of the struggle is borne by a small portion of the population,<sup>3</sup> and the fact that rebellions against foreign rule, parallel in causation, character and extent to the revolt in India, have occurred in the past and are occurring even now, should counsel caution in all calculations about the nature and extent of the revolt As for the princely order and the various ruling chiefs who materially helped the British cause, it is well to consider that the loyalty of this class with the difficulties and dangers attending them only brings out in bold relief and renders more prominent the universal rebellion round them<sup>4</sup>

The very facile argument that the rebellion that emerged was the rebellion of the riff-raff and other disturbing elements of society who enriched themselves by all unscrupulous means was one which was used mostly by the contemporary British press and writers to play down the popular content of the sepoy mutiny Even Indians like Syed Ahmed Khan freely spoke of robbers and dacoits in the context of the rebel leaders<sup>5</sup> This view however did not find favour with Kaye, Malletson and Forrest who were the first series of mutiny scholars to discover the enormity of the issues of the great revolt and could not necessarily advocate such lame theories But the notion still persisted and Holmes, the author of the 'best history of Sepoy Mutiny' according to V A Smith, allowed his imperialist sentiments to outweigh other considerations of historical studies in at least one page in his great work But even a great work cannot possibly redeem such an unbalanced observation

just as a general mutiny of the London police would be followed by a violent outburst of crime on the part of the London thieves and roughs, so would the talukdars, the dispossessed land

<sup>1</sup> Kaye, II 603f

<sup>2</sup> Cf the remarks of Dr S N Sen that no community, class or caste as such was entirely for or against the government (*op cit*, 406)

<sup>3</sup> This point has been developed by Dr S N Sen (*op cit*, 411)

<sup>4</sup> Robertson *District Dehies* etc 188

<sup>5</sup> *Op cit*, 180

holders, the gujars and the budmashes of India have welcomed the first symptom of governmental weakness as a signal for gratifying their selfish instincts.<sup>1</sup>

It has been shown that the support extended by Holmes to the theory of Innes in respect of the non-belligerency of the Oudh talukdars has not been substantiated by adequate evidence.<sup>2</sup> This when read along with the above remarks points to a trend of thought which characterised the early school of mutiny scholars. Robber bands, the riff-raff and others of this tribe certainly joined in the Indian revolt as they do join in every country whenever law and order is threatened. We may search all history in vain for a movement of emancipation which was not joined by people harbouring impure motives. But the foregoing pages must have shown that there were many others, possibly the bulk of rebels, who were not robbers by profession but people of decent social status to whom the revolt appeared to be the only legitimate means of redressing their grievances. Many scholars following Holmes and Raikes have preferred to express similar views.<sup>3</sup> But British official papers themselves, as shown in this work, point to a different estimate. A very simple but a substantially correct appraisal of the situation may be found in the following lines:

The question whether the mutiny was a mere military revolt or a popular rising when calmly considered leads to the conclusion that the army revolted, the population left to itself committed overt acts of hostility against the government. This is rebellion.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holmes, *op. cit.*, 560.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix D: The behaviour of the Talukdars of Oudh during the Mutiny.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. R. C. Majumdar in his recent work seems to have given an overemphasis to the depredations of the anti-social elements (*op. cit.*, 51, 220-02, 224, 268). Dr. Sen (*op. cit.*, 406-7) also makes a derisive reference to the gujar King Fatua of Saharanpur. But if three thousand people of this and other allied communities could assemble together for hostile purposes the movement cannot be dismissed as a mere instance of predatory activity (*supra*, 77). Poor Devi Singh of Mathura has been too much ridiculed by Thornhill who was otherwise very sober in his observation. The fact is that when the striking power of the government was reduced it gave inducement to royal pretensions. Devi Singh, as Thornhill himself states, took his new position very seriously and organised a government of his own. Then what about the gujar leader of Dholpur who mustered an army of nearly three thousand men (*supra*, 83)? Further, Shahamal, the Jat leader, was not one whit less in energy and resolution than the leaders of the other classes (*supra*, 64-5). It does not appear quite reasonable that 1857 should be dismissed as a string of depredations of the gujars and ranghars.

<sup>4</sup> Thornhill, *The Personal Adventures*, 330f.

very borders of Bengal<sup>1</sup> In Bundelkhand, and in Sagar and Narbada territories, and also in portions of the southern Maratha country the great bulk of the people rose against British rule and so also in the North-West provinces where the risings of the people and the sepoys were almost simultaneous in point of time, and the alliance between the military and agricultural classes was the closest of its kind<sup>2</sup> In Rohilkhand, the country of the hardy rohillas, who had not forgotten their hereditary rancour, the movement took the form of a mahomedan rising and was marked by communal distemper, yet 'the national heart', as Kaye says, 'was turned against the English'<sup>3</sup> Throughout Rohilkhand disorganisation in the civil government preceded the mutiny in the cantonments, and infection of sedition and disaffection spread in the Gangetic tracts which had been in open rebellion<sup>4</sup>

The affairs in Oudh had assumed special significance during this period of struggle. The governor-general had always this question uppermost in his mind and urged with his commander that the country should be taken in hand with the least possible delay and British authority re-established in the centre and capital of Oudh, at Lucknow, which had scarcely been in their possession for two years. He could not, from a historical point of view, forget that British relations with Oudh were not above board, and were in every Indian's mind for the last two years. There were also other reasons for giving immediate attention to the affairs of Oudh. The revolt in Oudh, according to all contemporary writers, early assumed the character of a war of independence. As the *Times* of London observed<sup>5</sup>

There it is not fanaticism or religious panic which holds the guiding spring, there it is love of freedom—the dislike of foreign rule that actuates the people

<sup>1</sup> The Bihar movement has been played down in many works on the ground that the rising in Chotanagpur was of a very limited character, that the Shahabad revolt was a personal matter of Kunwar and also because the province as a whole remained loyal (cf. Sen, *op cit*, 408-9)

<sup>2</sup> Kaye, III, 194

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 251. The '1857' is of the view that the masses of Rohilkhand in general were not behind the revolt (Sen *op cit*, 409)

<sup>4</sup> Edwards, *Personal Adventures* etc. p. 3

<sup>5</sup> 31 March, 1858

The siege and capture of Lucknow and its defence by the Indians which were attended with indications of a national resistance raised many issues of the rebellion of the sepoy war. Even before the fall of the city, Canning directed the chief-commissioner at Lucknow that his proclamation was to be issued so soon as the British troops have possession or command of the city, and in no case before its fall. The proclamation dated 14 March, 1858, declared that, except in a few specified cases, the talukdari lands would be liable to forfeiture:

The Governor-General further proclaims to the people of Oudh, that, with the above mentioned exceptions, the proprietary right in the soil of the province is confiscated to the British Government which will dispose of that right in such manner as to it may seem fitting.<sup>1</sup>

This confiscation clause in the Oudh proclamation was almost universally condemned as being singularly injudicious, and even Lord Ellenborough, then secretary of state for India, resigned on this account.<sup>2</sup> The secret committee of the Court of Directors of the East India Company urged the mitigation of the severity of the decree of confiscation on the ground that the rebels of Oudh were under very different circumstances than their compatriots in other provinces.<sup>3</sup> More emphatic was the protest of the chief commissioner of Oudh, Sir James Outram, who pointed out that the effect of the proclamation would be to confiscate the entire proprietary right in the soil since there were not a dozen landholders who had not borne arms. They could not do otherwise, even if they had no grievance to complain of, under the shocks to which the British rule was exposed in Oudh. As they are honourable enemies, they deserved a better treatment, or else, the commissioner warned, guerilla war will again commence.<sup>4</sup>

The proclamation was so opposed to the usually conciliatory attitude of Canning that his defence of the measure lends interest to the question. In his letter to Outram dated 31

<sup>1</sup> Forrest, *Selections*, iii, pp. 503-4.

<sup>2</sup> For the general emotion which was excited in London on this measure, see Montalembert, *A debate on India*, 27ff.

<sup>3</sup> House of Lords, Sessional papers, vol. xi (Returns etc.), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> House of Lords, Sessional papers, *op. cit.*, (Fresh Returns), p. 1.

March, he admits that the talukdars of Oudh, who had suffered a loss of property by the introduction of British rule recently established, should be treated differently than the rebels of the old provinces. It was no marvel that this class of people *should hasten to shake off their new allegiance* when the British rule was found to be dissolving. But he expressed his doubts if the case of the suffering landlords was not over dramatised. The attempt to introduce into Oudh a system of village settlement in place of the old settlement under talukdars might not have been expedient, but it was certainly the right one, as he thought it, on a question of justice, for the lands and villages from which the talukdars were disinherited were mostly those usurped by them through fraud and violence. In support of his contention that a sense of justice and loss was not always the factor which provoked the hostile activities of some of the most active rebels, the governor general proceeded to show that the raja of Churda did not lose a single village by the summary settlement, not to speak of the fact that his assessment was materially reduced, and so also was the case with the raja of Bhunga. The raja of Gonda lost thirty villages out of four hundred and his assessment was also lowered by some ten thousand rupees. The young raja of Nanpara was saved from the dissolution of his estate by the British government, he was recognised as sole proprietor of the estate losing only six villages out of more than a thousand, yet he was one of the earliest to join the rebel forces. The case of the raja of 'Dhowrera' was similar and so also was the position of Ushraf Box Khan.<sup>1</sup>

The observation of the governor general that injustice at the hands of the new administration has not been the cause of hostility, at least in these recorded instances, can be interpreted to mean that the Oudh chiefs in general appear to have been actuated either by patriotic or selfish motives. Neither of this is again wholly untenable. The talukdars cannot certainly be dissociated from patriotic motives. Gubbins gives many instances of the attempts made by the government to secure the fidelity of the landed chiefs, whose friendship or

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* See also *Innes op cit*, 291f

rivalry were matters of consequence, by promise of high reward and grant of perpetual jagirs, as in the case of raja Nawabali of Mahumdabad, raja Guru Baksh Singh of Ramnagar and raja Man Singh and others but failed to work upon their cupidity.<sup>1</sup>

The war of the mutiny in Oudh took the character of a social war, a legitimate war of independence. Yet it cannot be denied, as Canning analysed:

the moving spirit of these chiefs of Oudh must be looked for elsewhere mainly in the repugnance which they feel to suffer any restraint of their hitherto arbitrary power. . . . to a diminution of their importance and to the obligations of disbanding their armed followers.<sup>2</sup>

The assumption is that the rebel chiefs appear to have been actuated far less by a feeling of loyalty for their late king and patriotic interests than by motives more selfish. It is known that the whole population of Oudh was inspired by martial instincts and that for centuries the nobles of that country constituted a power superior to that of the King. Before the British conquest, the country had not been held by a strong central power which favoured the growth of fortified places held by feudal chieftains,<sup>3</sup> and indeed, on this, and on many other aspects, nothing could be so opposed to each other as the condition of Oudh and of the Panjab immediately after they were respectively brought under British rule, which accounted for the revolutionary excesses of the former country and the restrained course of the rebellion in the latter during the sepoy war. While therefore the territorial instincts of the zamindars of Oudh played their part in the causation of the rebellion in Oudh, no less potent was the higher motives of independence and freedom from foreign rule which must have been produced by the shock and tension of the situation. The noble part played, and the sacrifices made, by the chiefs of Oudh

<sup>1</sup> Gubbins, *op. cit.*, 193.

<sup>2</sup> House of Lords, Sessional papers, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Lord Stanley in his Despatch to the governor-general stated that in September 1856, the number of fortified places held by the great landholders and other influential persons in Oudh amounted to 623, of which 351 were in good repair. (Quoted in Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, App. x, para 23, p. 324). See also Montalembert, *op. cit.*, 39. Stanley further says that they had large bodies of armed retainers and retained in concealment their serviceable guns despite the proclamation for the surrender of military stores on pain of legal consequence.

for their king, their country and their religion put out of court any consideration postulating mere personal and selfish motives in the Oudh leaders<sup>1</sup>

But what constitutes the chief objection to Canning's theory is that numerous talukdars of Oudh who joined the rebellion had actually suffered most and lost their all by the village system so recklessly introduced. It is idle to contend that the reversion of the former talukdari system in favour of a village system had nothing to do with the rebellion in Oudh as Gubbins would have us believe. He failed to realise that in India the village system was not complete without the zamindars and that it was not destroyed by allowing a class of large proprietors to exist, it simply lay behind them. The fact that the superiority and influence of the landed classes had formed a necessary element in the social constitution of India was ignored.<sup>2</sup> This was the tragedy of the civilian settlement as demonstrated in the revolt in Oudh.<sup>3</sup>

In looking at this great history of the sepoy war as a whole, we shall not take a just account of it unless we consider that it was far more than a military and mainly feudal insurrection which it looks like in a first view. The sepoys were no doubt the spearhead of this violent upheaval, but ultimately they fell into the rank of camp followers and swelled the number of feudal levies. The landed chiefs remained in the field almost from the beginning to the end and shaped their activities according to political and economic conditions of their respective localities, but they did not necessarily play a reactionary or conservative part or show any spirit of feudal obscurantism. On the contrary, they became the unconscious tool of a vague feeling of patriotism while combating the anti-feudal tendencies of the British settlement operations.

This is disputed by Dr R. C. Majumdar. He observes: 'The miseries and bloodshed of 1857-58 were not the birth pang of a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the case of Beni Madho and Mohammed Hasan.

<sup>2</sup> Townsend *The Annals* etc. (1860) vol. iv p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Referring to the battle of Chanda (30 October 1857) which was stoutly contested H. C. Tucker quoted the remark of a thakur and commented: 'I mention it in the present connection to show that if the supreme government does not take steps to preserve the two co-existing rights of talukdar as well as of petty zamindar, we may fully expect to have to fight every foot of our way in Oude' (FP ix 709).

freedom movement in India, but the dying groans of an obsolete autocracy....<sup>1</sup>

He argues his case by stating that if the talukdars of Oudh are to be looked upon as fighters for independence of India, can we withhold such claim or recognition from Wazir Ali of Avadh, Pyche Raja of Malabar, Dhundia Wagh of Mysore... Vizieram Rauze of Vizianagram... Vellu Thampi of Travancore, Jagabandhu of Khurda....?<sup>2</sup>

The whole subject was for the first time discussed in all its bearings in my book, *Civil Disturbances During the British Rule in India (1765-1857)* to which the attention of the readers may now be drawn. Details recorded in that book of the activities of the above leaders will certainly show that they were fighting for their territorial interests in defiance of British authority. Wherever such activities called forth the support of large bodies of common people, as distinct from personal retainers or mercenaries, wherever some initiative in the struggle passed to the inhabitants of the affected area, the historian cannot in fairness deny the existence of a resistance movement, not very far removed from a national movement of some kind. But the whole question is not free from difficulties. A critical perusal of the above book will show that in the pre-mutiny period outbursts of violent types broke out mainly in Bengal, Orissa, Madras, Travancore, Mysore and Malabar—roughly speaking the region where the mutiny call of 1857 hardly had any response. The leaders referred to in the above list excepting Wazirali came from this belt of country which was the oldest possessions of the English in India. But in the countries which were later on acquired at different stages, that is to say, the whole extent of the sub-continent extending from the Panjab to Bihar and from Dehra Dun to Kolhapur, no formidable anti-British movement originated (excepting those at Barcilly and Benares) in the early period though it was particularly the area where the drama of the revolt of 1857 was enacted. This aspect of the question very forcibly illustrates a line of demarcation which cannot be easily rationalised. Nevertheless, a tentative proposition may be offered in

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, 241.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, 237.



that in 1857 there was the greatest dislike of British authority where it had not yet been long established; and conversely, there was the least effort towards change in those parts of India which had longest been subject to British rule.<sup>1</sup> This explanation does not really cover all the factors which made for the presence, in the new countries and the absence in the old, of the revolt and unrest of 1857. Yet in a way it points to a state of acclimatization and adjustment coupled with the experience of frequent previous suppression that had broken the spirit of many men which prevented the people of the old areas from renewing their offensive in the year 1857.<sup>2</sup> The many sources of discontent and affliction, which were breaking forth in an almost uninterrupted chain of violent current in this area in the pre-mutiny period, did not widen and merge with similar trends of the new areas in 1857. This provided the occasion for the emergence of the northern and the central regions of India into a position of relative importance. Besides the talukdars of this period were fighting in the background of the imperial traditions of the Moghuls and Marathas which raised the civil movements of 1857 much above the level of previous more isolated risings. The outbreak may not be regarded as an all-India war of independence, but even if it was not so, Beni Madho, Narpal Singh, Kunwar Singh, and Daulat Singh were not far removed in character and outlook from the period of the movement of independence which began later. Tutu Mia, Jagabandhu and Velu Tampi were lone figures of an earlier age. In the pre-mutiny period there had not been much combination between the different disaffected elements of the country, the military, aristocracy, priesthood, and commonalty. The sepoy mutinies and the civil commotions had run on two parallel lines. It was the revolt of 1857 which brought about a link-up of all these elements,<sup>3</sup> on a massive scale with a formidable challenge to

<sup>1</sup> *Civil Disturbances*, 199. The case of the Panjab, and Bihar forms an exception. The newly acquired province of the Panjab was secured by good administration and the old province of Bihar was lost for some time owing to the influence of a galaxy of popular leaders like Kunwar, Nilambar, Arjun and Surendra.

<sup>2</sup> The case of Dayram of Aligarh as foreshadowing the revolt of the talukdars is an exception. But his son was the most active loyalist in the mutiny period (*supra*, p. 80).

<sup>3</sup> *Civil Disturbances*, 219.

the alien rule. As such, the 1857 upsurge was undoubtedly national unless we restrict the term unduly.

There is no doubt that the strong under-current of popular disaffection which was frequently manifesting itself in open resistance against the British in the early period culminated in the sepoy war of 1857.<sup>1</sup> A few instances of the civil commotion of the mutiny period were really the continuation of earlier outbreaks<sup>2</sup> and some of the leaders of the pre-mutiny period such as Delan Sha, the gond chief of Narsinghpur,<sup>3</sup> Apa Sahib of Nagpur<sup>4</sup> and Chakra Bisayi, the leader of the khonds<sup>5</sup> are also referred to in the official communications of the mutiny period as entertaining hostile designs. The disturbances of the earlier period pointed to a settled disaffection of the people and clearly anticipated their participation in the rebellion of the mutinies. Yet it cannot be denied that the background and the unique situation created by the 1857 mutinies released forces which immensely strengthened the popular uprisings of the sepoy war. The combination and scale of operations stretched out to wide fields and all the elements of discontent and disaffection being focussed in a limited period of two years and not diffused over a century as in the early period gave a new force and direction to the spirit of opposition to British rule in 1857. Viewed in this light the revolt of that year appears to have been the first combined attempt of many classes of people to challenge a foreign power. This is a real, if remote, approach to the freedom movement of India of a later age.

The aristocracy of India was neither dying nor had it yet become obsolete. Though fighting for their lands and rights, the local landed chiefs still could function on a national plane since they brought together an alliance of the diverse people of all classes who made common cause with them in complete disregard of the forces of estrangement which might otherwise exist in the social and economic life. This combination of the

<sup>1</sup> *Civil Disturbances*, 198.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Surendra Sai (*supra*, p. 196 f. *Civil*, etc. 152n), the outbreak at Savantvad (*Civil Disturbances*, 170); the Gadkari rising and the Kolhapur revolt (*Ibid.* 166-7 and *supra*, 230) Santal insurrection.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 178, and *supra*, p. 227.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 117-8, and *supra*, pp. 57, 89.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 111, and *supra*, p. 202.

local landed chiefs all over the country who were bound by a community of interests, added with the grouping of their followers at cross sections, created possibilities for the foundation of a national front and in consequence united a big portion of India against foreign domination as never before. Thus old feudal instincts and the anti-alien patriotism became mixed up in 1857 in a curious process. The latter was not yet of the pure advanced political type, as the leaven of feudal discontent was still strong. Yet the yearning for freedom which was latent in these instincts stood out as the outward emblem of a national outburst against foreign rule which was rendered intensive by reason of a socio-religious and economic discontent. Here, surely, we have objectively an anticipation of the future and not a mere recoil to the past.

Apparently enough the upsurge appears to have been erratic, isolated from large regions and even sporadic. It was also characterised by lack of efficient organisation on a big scale. But it is no less obvious that the revolt also presents evidence of consistency in so far as the spontaneity of the far-flung movement is concerned. The sepoys starting the conflagration, the British authority superseded, the local leaders setting up independent governments, the landed chiefs re-occupying their estates, and the common people rising in the interior—and all these taking place in utmost regularity, as though in response to a mysterious clarion call, bespeak, at least in a vague and inchoate form, the elements of a national resistance movement against an alien imperial domination.

The want of a concerted plan which was discernible in the rebellious proceedings was inevitable as the rebels though conscious of their object had no precise idea as to the ways and means to be adopted for the destruction of the British power. They took a leap in the dark, people who could not be dreamt of joining the revolt even at the instigation of Mephistopheles were on their feet without thinking of consequences. The movement failed for various reasons, political immaturity, defective military command<sup>1</sup> and indifferent

<sup>1</sup> *Muir, Records*, etc 1, 41, 61, 106, *Holmes, op cit* 272, *Majumdar, op cit* 69, 73, 132 3

leadership.<sup>1</sup> The excesses committed by the sepoys had also to a great extent alienated the sympathies of the people in many places.<sup>2</sup> Yet it cannot be denied that it was not a movement of the disgruntled elements alone but a rising of the people, at any rate a considerable section of them, who felt, however dimly, the stirring of a common impulse. The character and content of the upsurge that put its stamp on the year 1857 point to a conflict that was larger in significance than that of a mutiny in the barracks. The legacy of a revolution is often laid up in the subconscious mind of the race. It is difficult to trace the causes that work noiselessly to a certain end that is hardly in sight. Who knows that the inception of the nationalist movement was not contained in the rising of 1857 after the fashion of the oak in the acorn? Because the revolt of 1857 was not merely anti-British but a movement expressing profound desires for freedom.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. R. C. Majumdar's chapter on the Sepoys though based only on the accounts of the Delhi Chronicles and a victimised Bengali is a welcome addition to mutiny studies (pp. 172f).

<sup>2</sup> For the causes of the failure of the movement see Majumdar, *op. cit.*, 270-09.

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It is to be feared that many excellent actions, much private heroism, and moral as well as physical chivalry of the Indian rebels have escaped merited notice: but if any omission has been made, the author offers his apologies to the descendants of those unnoticed warriors of 1857.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### MEMORANDUM OF REBEL FORCES IN FYZABAD DISTRICT

From the Secretary to the Government of India with the  
Governor-General

To the Chief of the Staff, District Camp, Allahabad, 24th  
February 1858

FOREIGN DEPT.

(*Secret*)

Sir,

I am directed by the Governor-General to forward for the information of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, copies of papers noted in the margin received by His Lordship in a private letter from General Macgregor.

Allahabad,

*The 24th February, 1858.*

I have etc.

G. P. EDMONSTONE.

### MEMORANDUM OF REBEL FORCES IN FYZABAD DISTRICT

RAJA MAN SINGH has with him about 4,000 men and considerable number of guns—they are not in the field, but. . . . . for defence of his fort at Shahgunge. He is entirely neutral and may be excluded from the list of our opponents.

BABU MADHU PERSAD Zamindar of Pargana Birhur in the district of Fyzabad bordering on Azimgarh is a powerful chief of the Birhur Rajputs inhabiting that pargana. He could, had success attended him, have raised from 4,000 to 5,000 men, but at this present moment he has not more than 1,000 men with him and two guns.

BABU UDDIT NARAYAN also a Zamindar of Birhur and Pulwar chief now opposed to us with some thing under 1,000 men and two guns.

ADRES SINGH, CHUNDRES SINGH, UMRESH SINGH Zamindars

of Dhoorooa Pargana, Aldemhow, District Faizabad—powerful Rajcoomar chiefs fought against us in Azimgarh and Jaunpoor and also lately under Brig Franks at Secundra supposed to have 5 guns and 4 or 5,000 men They are with Mehndee Hassan formerly Chuckladar under the Nazim of Sultanpore They are said to be still on the other side of the Gomtee and in front of Brig Franks

BAGMIR HOSEIN AND GHAZNEFFER HOSEIN Khangadas and large Talukdars of Rissoor Perg Akbarpoor, District Fyzabad said to be with Gholam Husan and Mohammad Husan Pescendo(?) Nazim of Gorackpore with 5,000 men and 5 guns at Recazpore, 8 miles south of Tanda This force includes also Rajputs brought to Gholam Husan's, standard by small zemindars of the District Bagmir Hosein is also a landholder of Azimgarh—and remained faithful for a long time assisting us even to hold Thanas and Tahseels in that district against Madhu Persad and others and protecting the native officials of Fyzabad who all escaped through his means

RAJA ABBAS ALI OF TANDA he is at present in the vicinity of Tanda with only 4 or 500 men and 2 guns, he has however furnished Mohammad Husan with about 2,000 men and these will be included in the tabular statement under his name

MD HUSAN Pescendo Nazim of Gorackpore formerly Nazim of Gonda under the old Regime has with him about 5,000 men and 4 guns These men have been furnished to him by the Raja Abbas Ali and a number of the smaller Zamindars of the District such as Abaidut Singh, Jyont Singh, Nadir Shah, and other Rajput Chieftains

KOOR SINGH of the Arrah District has brought with him from Lucknow six Regiments chiefly Bhojpoorees numbering in all about 6000 mutineers, including 1,500 who had previously been with Hur Kishun Singh nephew of Koer Singh in Gorackpore They have 9 guns with them

There are, also a small body of mutineers at Fyzabad District from the above, about 500 men with 12 guns whom I will include with the above in the tabular statement for Koer Singh—and the principal leader of the mutineers, as distinguished from the rebel Zamindars

RAJAH JEYLAAL SINGH and Bence Madhu Singh sons of



Ghalab Singh, a Koormu Zamindar of the Fyzabad and Azimgarh District 2,000 men and 3 guns.

DEVI BUX SINGH Raja of Gonda, now encamped at Nawabganj opposite Fyzabad—not likely however to oppose us on this side of the Gogra—since the small action at Shahgunj near Bilwa, his following has never exceeded 4,000 men and 7 guns with about 500 Cavalry, equal to the annual run of the District sowars.

RAJA OF BHINGA in the Gonda District not likely to meet this force: said to have 2,000 men—number of guns not known—perhaps 4 or 5.

RAJA OF MANKURPOOR of Gonda District—1,500 men and 4 Guns.

*February 20, 1858*

Sd./- W. FORBES, C.S.

# APPENDIX B

## LIST OF REBELS

(Received from the Zamindar of Charda)

19th November, 1857.

Name of Zamindar	Number of men	Number of guns
Mehndei Hussun Nazim in person ..	900	1
Nujeeb regts. .	2,000	6
Raja Hossan Ali . ..	700	
Kalka Buksh of Runpoor	200	
Sugra Bibee of Munyarpur	400	2
Raja Allie Buksh Khan of Mohndes- gaon .. ..	400	2
Buchgottee tribe	400	
Oodres Singh 'oopoor ..	400	
Umres Singh of Do .	300	
Issuj Singh of Do. ..	300	
Dulput Sah of Bhadayan .	200	
Bajinath Singh of Shugweb .	100	
Bukhtoor Khan and others of Dunhut	200	
Seetula Buksh Singh of Nunder .	100	
Sowars Nonkur Surikon	100	
Arjoon Singh and Juggeswar Buksh of Budlapoor-Junpoor. ..	50	
Burruar Singh brother of Roostum Sah of Dehra. .. ..	300	
	<hr/> 7,050	<hr/> 11

## APPENDIX C

### THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE TALUKDARS OF OUDH DURING THE MUTINY

Rice Holmes finds no positive evidence that the talukdars took the field in person on the side of the mutineers and agrees with general Innes in considering that the participation of the talukdars in the war had been more nominal than real until after the proclamation issued by Canning.<sup>1</sup> He comes to the conclusion by relying on the statement of lieutenant Crump and invalidating by a twist the open statement of Gubbins and others.

That the talukdars, with a few exceptions actively aided and abetted the mutineers during nearly the whole of the struggle stands confirmed by authentic evidence. Even Innes says that at the battle of Chinhat three of the talukdars joined the mutineers.<sup>2</sup> This strengthens the authenticity of the statement of Gubbins that by the first week of July some of the talukdars had joined the besieging army. But Innes asserts that the talukdars of Oudh did not join in the attack of the residency till Havelock's withdrawal in the early part of August, and that even on the 10th of the month, the mass of the talukdars was holding aloof. Later on, the presence of their retainers was noticed in the attack on the residency on September 5, but as a body, they had not, he maintains, taken any active part in the war or shown hostility to the British. This view, he repeatedly introduces in his book and also observes that the talukdari troops did not fight well; in fact they hardly fought at all.<sup>3</sup>

As early as 12 June, Henry Lawrence reported against the militant attitude of the talukdars who had been arming themselves.<sup>4</sup> Even before the second action at Bashiratganj on 5 August the English army, according to Crump, whom Holmes quotes, had to contend against a few talukdars who were on the

<sup>1</sup> Holmes, *op. cit.*, 624f; Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, 42, 47.

<sup>2</sup> Innes, *op. cit.*, 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 32-33, 201, 204, 260, 267, 276, 307, 523.

<sup>4</sup> Mallison, i, 410.

side of the mutineers and he further says that in that battle they had to fight against the whole population. According to another officer, lieutenant colonel Tyler, the zamindars were all around the invading army in bodies of five or six hundred.<sup>1</sup> It has been seen that the retrograde movement of Havelock injured the British cause but Innes gives the impression that the attitude of the talukdars remained unchanged and that even if they had participated the participation had been more nominal than real.

The argument that the talukdars were rebels only in a technical sense because they only sent their retainers looks like arguing a case and ignoring the substance of it. But the fact is that they did not merely send retainers but joined the mutineers in person.<sup>2</sup> As noted before when Havelock recrossed the Ganges, the zamundars of Oudh were seizing the villages and joined the masses.<sup>3</sup> The talukdars of Unao openly fought against Havelock's forces,<sup>4</sup> and Man Singh according to Innes opposed Havelock's advance through the streets of Lucknow on 25 September. Official intelligence obtained from Lucknow in the month of October quite emphatically stated that Man Singh, Hanumant Singh, Beni Madho Baksh, Biswanath Baksh and Sugram Singh were fighting against the English at Lucknow<sup>5</sup> and many others had entered into an obligation to attack Alambagh. All these completely refute the observation of Sir George Campbell (Judicial and Financial Commissioner in Oudh in 1858) whom Holmes quotes, that only after November 1857, when Sir Colin abandoned the city, did the talukdars go into full rebellion. The number of the rebel forces concentrated at Lucknow towards the end of the year,<sup>6</sup> and Gubbins' list of Oudh leaders who actively participated in the conflict<sup>7</sup> and the governor general's reference to the rebellious activities of the rajas of Churda, Bhunga and Gonda<sup>8</sup> would

<sup>1</sup> *Supra* p. 30

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp 31, 33 130-01

<sup>3</sup> *Supra* pp 33-34 37-38 93-94 290 f

<sup>4</sup> *Supra* p 127

<sup>5</sup> *CRO Secret Letters from India* vol. 163 pp 403-5

<sup>6</sup> *Supra* p 304

<sup>7</sup> *Supra*, p 131

<sup>8</sup> *Supra*, p 132.

point to a situation not comprehended by Innes. The hostile preparations made by the Oudh Chiefs and their presence in Fyzabad in the month of February along with their levies as reported by Macgregor also go against the theory of Innes.<sup>1</sup> Reports from British Intelligence Officers in respect of the government of the royal Begam and the countrywide preparations she made with the support of loyal chiefs completely contradict the general's presentation of facts.

The way in which Innes invalidates the statement of Outram shows a kind of obduracy which even Holmes, his supporter, was at pains to explain. He admits that Outram's statement of 30 March, 1858, referring to the few talukdars who did not take an active part in the rebellion virtually points to the general revolt of the talukdars. But this he says originated from a confusion: Outram mistook the retainers of the talukdars for the talukdars themselves and he applied the same argument to controvert the equally emphatic statement of Sir Robert Montgomery who succeeded Outram in April 1858. Sir Robert who naturally had the whole of the evidence before him remarked on a review of the situation that between June and November the whole country (Oudh) was in arms against the British government. Besides, the interpretation that is given of Outram's statement is extremely misleading and is not supported by an earlier communication of the same officer. Edmonstone wrote to G. Couper, secretary to the commissioner, on 3 March, 1858 enclosing a copy of the proclamation and directing the chief commissioner to issue it as soon as the British troops took possession of Lucknow. Outram in arguing against the proclamation directed his secretary to write back on 8 March 1858, in the following terms:—

*The chief commissioner desires me to observe that in his belief there are not a dozen landholders in the province who have not themselves borne arms.*<sup>2</sup>

This is sufficient to clear up the misconception regarding the behaviour of the talukdars of Oudh during the mutiny. Innes certainly exaggerated the friendliness and hostility of the

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 121; Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> *Sessional Papers, House of Lords (East India Mutinies)*; vol. XI (Return, etc. Fresh Return) p. 3 and p. 1, Italics of the author.

talukdars in the pre and post proclamation phases respectively of the rebellion and yet Holmes would not 'refuse to accept his theory' and very frequently introduces it in his work. If as he says, 1572 forts had been destroyed and 714 cannons captured<sup>1</sup> exclusive of those taken in course of the suppression of the revolt of the talukdars, it could not possibly have been effected all in the period from March to November 1858. There is no gainsaying the fact that the mutinies of 1857 roused the talukdars of Oudh into desperate hostility.<sup>2</sup> Official despatches refer to many such people who crowded Lucknow at one time or other during the war. In addition to those already mentioned we have the following list of rebel leaders in other accounts: Hiravant Sing, nazim of Saloni, Basant Singh of Simarpatra, Raghunath Singh of Rai Bareilly, Jagannath Baxi, talukdar of Nain,<sup>3</sup> Rajpal Singh of Busna Buretha, Bhumdeo Singh of Junghi, Bulbhudar Singh,<sup>4</sup> Bhao Singh of Bilaspur,<sup>5</sup> Maharaj Singh of Dundi,<sup>6</sup> Ajmir Singh of Tardi, Chatrapati Singh of Shampur,<sup>7</sup> Sarabdin Singh of Siadi,<sup>8</sup> Fakir Baksh of Jhori, Mohan Singh, Bisweswar Baksh son of Sugram Singh of Singraur, Kunwant Singh of Kalakankar, Bulber Singh of Dhoba, Sindas of Meh, Fazal Hussam of Utram,<sup>9</sup> Sheoraj Ghulam Singh,<sup>10</sup> of Binapur, Hatbaran Singh,<sup>11</sup> and Hyder Hussain<sup>12</sup> of Lucknow. Rajabali Baksh and Kalka Baksh were two other rebels in the ranks of the talukdars, the former held Phaphamow and made an inroad to Azamgarh.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holmes 506 fn., *supra* 293n3

<sup>2</sup> See also Holloway *Essays* etc. 165 Hutchinson *Narrative of the Mutinies* etc 35 70-01

<sup>3</sup> FP ix 616

<sup>4</sup> FP ix 224f 229 237

<sup>5</sup> FP ix 228

<sup>6</sup> FP ix 234 239

<sup>7</sup> FP vii 145

<sup>8</sup> FP vii 47

<sup>9</sup> FP vii 262

<sup>10</sup> FP ix 717

<sup>11</sup> FP ix 10

<sup>12</sup> FP ix 260

<sup>13</sup> FP ix 593 595 608 Maulavi Laskatali of Allahabad also participated in the struggle at Lucknow (FP vii 162 3) and it appears he did not surrender and avoided detention for a long time. According to one source he was apprehended on 5 July, 1871 and was condemned to transportation for life on 27 July 1872 (Vincent *Dictionary* 567)

## APPENDIX D

### PROCLAMATION REGARDING KUNWAR SINGH

454 Page No. 1  
463 Copy No. 581  
PROCLAMATION

Allahabad  
Foreign Department  
*The 12th April, 1858*

It is hereby notified that a reward of Rupees Twenty-five thousand will be paid to any person who shall deliver alive at any British Military post or Camp, the rebel Baboo Kooer Singh of Jugdespoor.

It is further notified that in addition to this reward a free pardon will be given any Mutineer or deserter, or to any rebel other than those mentioned in the Government Proclamation No. 470 of the 1st instant who may so deliver up the said Kooer Singh.

By order of the Right Hon'ble the Governor General.

Allahabad  
Foreign Department  
*Secret No. 16 D/30th April.*

Sd/- G. F. EDMONSTONE  
*Secretary to the Government of  
India with the Governor General*

No. 581,  
No. 36.

## APPENDIX E

### THE HISTORIC MARCH OF KUNWAR SINGH

#### JAGDISPUR TO LUCKNOW

The commissioner of Patna informed the secretary to the government of Bengal on 13 August that a reward of rupees ten thousand had been declared for the apprehension of Kunwar Singh. Several days after he again wrote to the officer that orders had been passed confiscating his estates under act xxv of 1857<sup>1</sup>. Thus Kunwar Singh was dislodged from his country but only to play a more significant part in other sectors of this vast field of struggle. Originally he had no plan of going either to Cawnpore or to Delhi. His object was to attack Benares, but the concentration of British troops at that station on their way to upper India where Havelock was at bay obliged him to detour to Mirzapur. Lakshman Singh of Mirzapur and his chandel malcontents were in open communication with the Shahabad rebels. The party of the Dinapur mutineers who had abandoned Kunwar after his defeat at Arrah had already reached Mirzapur passing through Jehanabad and the unfrequented road through the Chainpur jungles<sup>2</sup>. There they excited a disturbance of a serious character but were repulsed at Amoi, seventeen miles from Mirzapur on 15 August<sup>3</sup>. Kunwar had not yet crossed the borders of Shahabad, but the defeat of the rebel forces might have induced him to turn his steps towards Mirzapur where he arrived with his force by way of Pannaganj on 24 August, 1857. When he encamped himself at Ramgarh, the chandels and other malcontents followed him and a spontaneous movement of the people was stirred up<sup>4</sup>.

The official despatch forwarded by the governor general in council dated 3 October, 1857 to the Court of Directors admitted that the conflicting reports about the movements of Kunwar had baffled attempts to pursue him. It was, however, ascertained that the 40th regiment which had mutinied remained with him and that he and his party who had been

<sup>1</sup> Patna Collectorate Records Nos 810 827, 919 of 1857 FP v 51

<sup>2</sup> FP v 45 App B 407

<sup>3</sup> NE i 47

<sup>4</sup> *S. pra* p 153



threatening Mirzapur, entered Rewah but were obliged to leave it immediately. Then they crossed the Tons and were on the march through the pargana Bara towards Banda. The governor-general further informed the home authorities that there was a report worthy of credit that Kunwar intended to offer his services to Nana Sahib, and if they were not accepted by him, to proceed to Delhi.<sup>1</sup> This above report reflects to some extent the importance of the historic march of Kunwar; that his great intention was to unite his veterans with the Central Indian Revolutionary Forces, the Gwalior regiments in particular, who never tasted defeat in any battle. The fall of Delhi in the middle of September and of Cawnpore even earlier, left the movement without a steady and effective command. Nothing could be expected from Lucknow where the Fyzabad maulavi was only crying for a jihad and intriguing against the royal begam to depose her and to make himself king.<sup>2</sup> Nana Sahib was reported to be crossing the Ganges every day but it proved to be no more true than the proverbial wolf attacking the flock of sheep. That being the situation, only a combination of Tantia and Kunwar—the boldness of the former and the strategic skill of the latter—in a planned attack either on Delhi or on Cawnpore could have relaxed the grip of the British offensive parties over the plains of northern India. As, however, he marched, Kunwar Singh gradually matured his plan and increasingly realised the great possibilities of his intended attack on Cawnpore.

The reports of the local officers of Bihar in respect of the movements of Kunwar Singh and his followers after their flight from Jagdispur present a tangled mass of marches and counter-marches, occupying posts at will and moving to and fro in contrary directions. A report of 13 August indicates that the Dinapur mutineers reached Nowbatpur on the the trunk road. On the 14th, major Eyre wrote to the assistant adjutant-general that Kunwar had gone towards Rohtas. On the way he seems to have halted at Sasaram<sup>3</sup> which is confirmed by Shah Kabiruddin's letters to the secretary to the government

<sup>1</sup> FP. iv, 171, 191; v, 84.

<sup>2</sup> GRO. *Secret Letters from India*, vol. 163, p. 449.

<sup>3</sup> FP. iv, 38, 95, 97, 160.

(15 August) He reported that Kunwar had reached Sasaram with two thousand mutinous sepoys and then moving down the hills, burnt captain Dicken's bungalow and plundered Dhomdar, a very large village with a large quantity of grain belonging to him<sup>1</sup> On 19 August Kunwar Singh moved to a village six miles south of Sasaram,<sup>2</sup> but on the same day, according to another official message, he issued further south of Akbarpur close to Rohtas At this time his brother Amar Singh was hanging on the hills flanking the grand trunk road to Sasaram and continued a system of devastation between the former place and Dehri His emissaries went out in different directions, threatening and cajoling all who were in the government service or were pro-British<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant Stanton's electric telegraph and A. R. Young's narrative make out that Kunwar was at Rohtas or Akbarpur till 21 August with upwards of one thousand men, four elephants, fourteen camels, a lot of horses, but no ammunition His adherents consisted of Bhojpur pensioners and other chief leaders like Nishan Singh, Juhan Singh and Thakurdayal Singh As noticed before he entered Mirzapur on 24 August and by the 26th at the latest Kunwar with his one thousand men was at Bijaygarh<sup>4</sup> The telegraphic message that by about 23 August, Kunwar was passing through the country to the south of Mirzapur,<sup>5</sup> is an instance of official confusion But another such message refers to Kunwar's presence in Allahabad districts three days later on the 26th

Mirzapur is the key-stone to the Deccan, leaving aside the fact, of its being the depot of the heavy supplies of grain which came through and from Rewah So all the available British forces from the neighbouring regions were diverted to Mirzapur to counteract the influence of Kunwar Singh<sup>6</sup> Kunwar passed through the southern parganas of the district<sup>7</sup> plundering as his

<sup>1</sup> FP v, App B 425 6

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 547

<sup>3</sup> FP iv 106-7 111 From deputy superintendent, Electric Telegraph, dated 20 August.

<sup>4</sup> FP iv, 172, v, 51

<sup>5</sup> FP iv, 113

<sup>6</sup> FP iv, 172, v 85

<sup>7</sup> Kunwar is said to have passed by Chakia, Ahraura and Sukrit, and details of these movements are preserved in a number of unpublished records The reference to his movements through Ahraura road Chakia in the northern part of the district as preserved in those records do not agree with the route of his march through the southern portion of the district which he seems to have taken

party went to Shahaganj, Robertsganj and Ghorawal which were burnt and sacked, but ultimately he left the country and was found marching through the parganas to the south of the Jumna. The commissioner of Allahabad received the intelligence that the rebel party was at Saharka in the pargana of Khairagarh on 26 August, but as yet they could not cross the river Tons on account of high flood.<sup>1</sup> The report of 28 August, however, indicated that they had crossed the river and plundered a town called Sankrajpur about thirty miles southwest of Allahabad.<sup>2</sup> The disorganised band of sepoys who followed him were more keen on plundering and destroying public property which marked his passage across the country.<sup>3</sup> By 9 September Kunwar, with the Ramgarh and six hundred of the Dinapur mutineers, had reached the Kuttra Pass,<sup>4</sup> his force consisting of five thousand men.

The Rewah episode of Kunwar has been the subject of numerous official dispatches and reports, all of which purport to the same end that the Shahabad leader met with a rebuff from the raja of that country.<sup>5</sup> The narrative of events for the week ending on 3 October by lieutenant-colonel R. Strachey, secretary to the government of Central provinces, runs that Kunwar Singh at the head of a party of rebels actually entered the Rewah territory with the connivance of a party in that state hostile to British interest. But as the people of Rewah did not respond to the call of rebellion the invaders retired almost as soon as they had crossed the frontier and the whole force of Kunwar marched to Banda.<sup>6</sup> Many official despatches con-

<sup>1</sup> FP. iv, 167.

<sup>2</sup> FP. iv, 116, 171.

<sup>3</sup> FP. iv, 185. The report of the collector of Mirzapur that Kunwar marched westward from Ghorawal on 20 August is obviously wrong (FP. iv, 190). The other report of the Mirzapur officer that Kunwar was at Baraundha or in Munda in the west of the district on 7 and 8 September is equally misleading (FP. iv, 197, 225) for by that time he was on the Allahabad side of the Tons and was preparing to enter Rewa from the northwest. See also the letter of the 8th N. I. to the king of Delhi referring to Kunwar's presence at Banda on 28 August (Sen, *op. cit.*, 261n).

<sup>4</sup> FP. iv, 259, 275.

<sup>5</sup> FP. iv, 201, 225, 241, 260, 263, 269; v, 69.

<sup>6</sup> FP. vii, 250. The *Tarikh-i-Baghalkhand* by Rahamanali (an official of the Rewah State) which describes the exploits of Kunwar Singh at Rewah does not appear to have been compiled with much care. On 18 August, the Shahabad leader was still hovering in his own country and so the reference to his encounter with

firmed the news that Kunwar Singh had got into Rewah by the Kuttra Pass through the help of Hashmatah and Harchand Raja.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of official accounts regarding this phase of his activities it would be necessary to see if other contemporary accounts throw any light on the Rewah episode of Kunwar. The Rewah correspondent of the *Calcutta Englishman* reported that when Kunwar Singh ascended the ghats at Kuttra with about 4,500 mutineers (the number is variously given in official messages), colonel Hinde had to fall back on Mangawan to cover Rewah. This shows that the invaders had actually dominated the northern portion of the country. It was further discovered that the extent of disaffection among the officers of the raja's troops was so great that 'there was no chance of getting a force to oppose Koor Singh with the slightest hope of success'. A panic ensued, raja Raghuraj Singh begged the political agent, lieutenant Osborne, to leave the territory, as he himself intended to bolt. But Osborne knew well the danger of surrendering this place. He exerted himself greatly to secure Rewah. By 'sowing dissensions' among the rebel ranks, and by sending agents to their camps who represented to them the strength of the British position, he was able to neutralise the offensive of the Shahabad leader. Kunwar was allowed to march through Bundelkhand unmolested. When he passed through Kalinjar on the road to Banda, the troops under lieutenant Remington refused to attack the invaders, but provided them with *rassad*.<sup>2</sup>

The triumphal march of Kunwar Singh from place to place caused consternation in the British circles. Numerous telegrams and despatches exchanged during the last two weeks of September by the authorities serve to give an idea of the nature of the danger which the British sensed in Kunwar's unopposed

Iswaran Singh of Harol on that date was not correct (P. C. Roy Chaudhury in the *A.S. Patria*, Calcutta War of Independence Supplement, 9 May, 1957).

<sup>1</sup> FP iv 228-9.

<sup>2</sup> *The Englishman* 19-25 September, 14 October 1857, FP iv 259. The name Kuttra Pass cannot, however, be traced in the Rewah State gazetteer. It might be one of the numerous passes which traverse the Hamur ranges in Rewah (P. 2). But there is a place called Khatra in the great Deccan Road between Mangawan and Allahabad below Teonthar which seems to agree with the conditions of Kunwar's attack from the trans-Jumna parganas through which he was traversing. There is another place called Kutra on the above road, between Mahar and Rewah in the south of the district which is not the place meant here (See Map in the above gazetteer).

march. Nagode, Jabalpur, Damoh and Sagar were threatened<sup>1</sup> and even the officer commanding at Fatehpur was alerted.<sup>2</sup> When he was marching within twenty miles of Nagode and his approach was known, the ammunition in the magazine was thrown into a well, and when he was within six miles of the place, the 50th stationed there mutinied and on the 16th they commenced their march to join Kunwar. Two days later, on the 18th, the '52' at Jabalpur rose and left their cantonment. It was impossible not to realise that Kunwar's influence prompted these simultaneous risings. His bright sword attracted thousands to flock under his banner with whose help he intended to attack various stations in that part of India.<sup>3</sup> His great personality and his indefatigable energy were factors which rendered him almost unconquerable in military contests. An army engineer, major Gordon of Jabalpur forwarded an intelligence to the official quarter on 9 September, to the effect that:

A few days ago Koer Singh, with guns, in one day crossed two rivers, and marched thirty miles, and that over a country, where there was no road.<sup>4</sup>

It is not clear from official correspondence whether Kunwar Singh actually occupied Nagode but the deputy-commissioner of Jabalpur informed the authorities that the Dinapur mutineers were expected to reach Nagode on 18 September.<sup>5</sup> He also reported that the Banda rebels estimated at four thousand had taken possession of Nagode being invited to do so by the 50th of that place.<sup>6</sup> The movements of Kunwar during this period appear to have been a little hazy and the question was raised in the official circles as to his whereabouts. Not being able to effect a passage through Rewah he possibly rounded the territory of that state and in the process approached Nagode.<sup>7</sup> The reports of lieutenant Osborne and lieutenant Clerk (deputy

<sup>1</sup> FP. iv, 227-8, 259-60, 262, 265, 267-8, vii, 293.

<sup>2</sup> FP. iv, 295.

<sup>3</sup> FP. iv, 250; *The Englishman*, 18 September (Sagar letter of 3 September, 3, 13, October, 1857), *Hindu Patriot*, 15 October, 1857.

<sup>4</sup> FP. iv, 260.

<sup>5</sup> FP. iv, 266.

<sup>6</sup> FP. iv, 267-8, 271.

<sup>7</sup> FP. iv, 272-3.

commissioner at Jabalpur) make out that the Shahabad party left Rewah on 10 11, September<sup>1</sup> Did Kunwar go straight to Banda from Rewah at about that time? Clerk says that on 14 September the Dinapur and Ramgarh *mutineers* arrived at Kalinjar from Banda *en route* to Nagode. The combined testimony of all these reports seems to hint that Kunwar retraced his steps to Kalinjar from Banda for an attack on Nagode,<sup>2</sup> possibly at the request of the 50th of that station, but this is a position which cannot be definitely ascertained. The political agent for Bundelkhand telegraphed that Kunwar left Kalinjar for Banda on 27 September. This agrees with another official communication in which it is announced that on 29 September Kunwar with two thousand men reached Banda where he was received with great honour. It is further stated that he stayed there till the 18th October when he went away towards Kalpi.<sup>3</sup>

The spirit of revolt smouldering in Banda afforded a welcome home to the struggling spirits to flock there,<sup>4</sup> the disaffected Bundelas joined them in large numbers. The fall of Delhi increased the importance of Banda as a rallying point and Kunwar and others took advantage of the situation to renew their offensive. The followers of Kunwar Singh increased in number to nearly 18,000 men, according to an official narrative, though it may not be taken to be absolutely correct.<sup>5</sup> Nana Sahib and the Gwalior forces also had an eye on this strategic point and a move seems to have been afoot for a combination of all these elements at Kalpi for the projected assault on Cawnpore. It cannot be definitely ascertained who actually formed this bold plan, but it cannot be denied that Kunwar Singh kept some such plan of attacking either Delhi or Cawnpore steadily in view and the degree of success he achieved in marching from Bihar to Banda might have encouraged Tantia Topi and Nana Sahib at two other ends, to bring to a head this combination of the Central Indian Revolutionary Forces with the smouldering remnants of Dinapur,

<sup>1</sup> FP iv, 228

<sup>2</sup> FP iv, 275

<sup>3</sup> FP vi 68

<sup>4</sup> NE i 531 2

<sup>5</sup> FP vii, 257

Ramgarh, Nagode and Banda. That the British were quite aware of the possibility of an attack is made abundantly clear in colonel Durand's communication to the governor-general dated 15 October. He wrote that Nana's agent, Tantia Topi, would march with the Gwalior forces to effect a juncture with the Banda rebels. It was probable, he believed, that Nana Sahib would also make a simultaneous move from the north in which case thousands of Bundels would be up in arms.<sup>1</sup> Sherer of Cawnpore also contended that Nana would attempt to cross the Ganges *en route* to Gwalior but Muir's (of Agra) reading of the situation was that his object was not to go to Gwalior but to attack Cawnpore at the head of the Gwalior contingents. They were said to have been located one hundred-fifty miles of Cawnpore by the middle of October and thirty-six miles on the Jalaun-Kalpi road on 23 October.<sup>2</sup> Reports from various sources confirmed the fact that the Gwalior mutineers led by Tantia marched on the 15th in the direction of Kalpi. The fall of Delhi and the defeat of the Indore and Mhow rebels by colonel Greathed at Agra on 10 October, strengthened the position of the Sindhia which obliged the mutineers to leave the country.<sup>3</sup> All these were the circumstances which developed into a combination on a grand scale. Nana Sahib was waiting for them near Cawnpore and another leader Jawahir Singh, nephew of Golab Singh of Lahore was encamped at Chaubepur twelve miles west of Cawnpore with a large force.<sup>4</sup>

It has been noticed that Kunwar left Banda for Kalpi on 18 October. He seems to have reached the latter place on the day following, that is on the 19th. Both J. W. Pinkney, commissioner of Jhansi and other officers state that the party reached Kalpi on that date. Subsequently on 7 November, the Gwalior mutineers came and joined Kunwar and the united forces then marched to the attack on Cawnpore some time after.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FP. vi, 29.

<sup>2</sup> FP. vii, 122, 127.

<sup>3</sup> NE. ii, 325.

<sup>4</sup> FP. vi, 31; *The Englishman*, 7, 11 November, 1857.

<sup>5</sup> NE. i, 553, 579. The message sent by the political assistant of Bundelkhand that the Shahabad leader left Banda on 20 October (FP. vi, 1, 31) shows that the hectic movements of Kunwar produced confusion in the British circles.

According to Birch, the secretary to the government, the invading party was at Kalpi on 11 November<sup>1</sup> But rumours of the movements of the rebel forces threw the whole country along the Jumna into a confusion. The *Calcutta Englishman* of 12 November reflected this spirit of excitement. The daily gave it as a news that Kunwar was hovering about the neighbourhood of Allahabad.

Various estimates are given of the strength of Kunwar's force at Kalpi. Many batches of rebels and mutineers must have left Banda 'at different dates to flock at Kalpi'<sup>2</sup> But in all probability he had with him four hundred followers consisting of his own men, the 40th regiment, and one other regiment from Banda.<sup>3</sup> There is perhaps no basis for the statement of Muir that Kunwar Singh reached Kalpi with a 'wretched undisciplined rabble'.<sup>4</sup> There is one point in particular in respect of the movement of Kunwar during this period which cannot be satisfactorily settled. While marching from Banda to Kalpi, the Shahabad leader seems to have halted at Kupsah and then proceeded to Mandaha. Near Kupsah Kunwar and his party were said to have been attacked and defeated by some zamindars of Banda which obliged him to make for Gwalior while another wing of his army crossed the Jumna at Chillatara.<sup>5</sup> The *Hindu Patriot* of Calcutta,<sup>6</sup> also reported in the weekly register of intelligence dated 9 November, that Kunwar had fled to Gwalior, on being defeated by a zamindar. It is very difficult to credit such flying rumours and the place of the occurrence also varies in all these accounts. The tahsildar, possibly of Badausa in the zilla Banda, represented that the Bamnawab had defeated Kunwar and his followers at Kadaura near Kalpi and further that he had been killed.<sup>7</sup> It may be noticed that Nishan Singh also did not say anything about this encounter when he was interrogated about it.<sup>8</sup> Further, if

<sup>1</sup> FP vi 136

<sup>2</sup> FP vi 44

<sup>3</sup> FP vii 121, ix 231 34 35

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in *Sen op cit*, 262

<sup>5</sup> *The Englishman* 7 November 1857 FP vi 46

<sup>6</sup> 12 November, 1857

<sup>7</sup> FP ix 373

<sup>8</sup> K. K. Datta in *Patna University Journal*.



Kunwar left Banda on the 18th and reached Kalpi next day, he could not possibly have been detained on the way, and the simultaneous arrival of the Gwalior mutineers on the Jalaun-Kalpi road at this time precluded the possibility of Kunwar's flight to Gwalior.

The march of Kunwar and the Gwalior contingent caused such a consternation in the British headquarters that a spate of panicky reports on the day-to-day advance of the invading forces had to be furnished. By 21 November they crossed the Jumna and Kunwar Singh's men who formed the advance guard of the army were already within five miles of Akbarpur on that day. According to the intelligence received by general Windham<sup>1</sup> on 25 November, the invading force was at Sachendi six miles from his camp on the canal.<sup>2</sup> The Cawnpore correspondent of the *Englishman* furnished a very critical account of the second siege of the city based on intelligence obtained daily through the leading people, the mahajans and shroffs. The plan of the invading army was found to have been a concerted one, to deliver a simultaneous attack from two, if not from three, sides. Nana Sahib and his brother were to have led the attack from the north via Sheorajpur and Sheouli (fifteen miles from Cawnpore); Kunwar was to advance with a portion of the Gwalior men from Kalpi via Akbarpur, Runia and Raipur from the south, and possibly another column, via Ghatampur and Sarsaul.<sup>3</sup> The military operations at Cawnpore in which Kunwar Singh took a leading part as stated by Nanakchand and Forbes-Mitchell have already been noticed.<sup>4</sup>

Immediately after the defeat of the rebel forces Kunwar Singh seems to have been hovering round Mirzapur and Benares for some time,<sup>5</sup> but it was not long before that he started towards Lucknow. P. Carnegy received intelligence which was corroborated by other officers that Kunwar had gone to Lucknow after the defeat of the rebel forces at Cawnpore. He received honours, and twelve regiments and twelve guns

<sup>1</sup> FP. vii, 136, 147.

<sup>2</sup> FP. vi, 175.

<sup>3</sup> *The Englishman*, 16-17 December, 1857.

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, p. 106.

<sup>5</sup> *The Englishman*, 18, 29 December, 1857.

were made over to him, and his pay was fixed at twelve hundred rupees a month. It was also gathered that his intention was to march on to Benares and reconquer his native place Arrah. Carnegy's communication was dated 7 January, 1858, which shows that within a month after the battle of General-ganj, the Shahabad leader repaired to Lucknow.<sup>1</sup> Brigadier G. H. Macgregor while forwarding copies of intelligence to higher authorities on 10 February, 1858, in respect of the movement of the rebel leaders, referred to the presence of Kunwar with reinforcements somewhere between Lucknow and Dariabad<sup>2</sup> which was on the high road from Fyzabad to Lucknow. G. F. Edmonstone, in his communication on the rebel forces in the Fyzabad district dated 24 February, similarly recorded that Kunwar Singh of Arrah had brought with him six regiments, chiefly Bhojpuris, numbering in all about six thousand mutineers. This number included one thousand and five hundred men who had previously been with Harkishan Singh in Gorakhpur. Kunwar was still at Dariabad towards the end of that month.<sup>3</sup> In the month of March he passed through Fyzabad en route to Azamgarh. A service message forwarded to Edmonstone at Allahabad ran to the effect that Kunwar with one thousand sepoy and two thousand and five hundred followers was at Mandori, ten miles from Azamgarh, on 24 March with the object of getting into Shahabad.<sup>4</sup>

#### KUNWAR SINGH AT AZAMGARH

Official reports in respect of the situation in eastern Oudh in February-March, 1858, repeatedly asserted that Harkishan Singh, erroneously described as the nephew of Kunwar, had massed about two to three thousand men of whom some hundred or more had been sepoys at Tanda in Fyzabad. Their intention was to cross the Gogra. It was stated that Mohammed Hasan was with him. This movement seems to have been a

<sup>1</sup> CRO *Secret Letters from India* vol 163, p 449

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* p 411, No 161

<sup>3</sup> Appendix A CRO *Secret Letters from India*, vol 164 p 231

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* vol 164, p 231 copy No 290

part of the scheme of conquering Gorakhpur which was well in hand. It transpired that Kunwar Singh was also expected to join them.<sup>1</sup> At the time when the war in Lucknow was going on, the eastern districts became drained of troops which encouraged the rebel leaders to renew the offensive against the British outposts at Gorakhpur and Azamgarh in March 1858. This facilitated the plan of Kunwar to pass through Azamgarh with a view to attacking Shahabad and reconquering it. He sent the advance guard of his main army with several guns assisted by Ghulam Hussain to Atrauli, a village twenty miles from Azamgarh on the road to that district. The rebel forces plundered the place on 20 March.<sup>2</sup> Azamgarh was only fifty-six miles from Benares and so Kunwar's offensive menaced the safety of the region lying between the rivers Gomati and Gogra. Meanwhile colonel Milman who was encamped at Koelsa, seventeen miles from Azamgarh, quitted his entrenchment to attack the advance guard of the rebels in possession of Atrauli. On 21 March he surprised them in some mangogroves and drove them away, but the main body of Kunwar's troops coming up in overwhelming numbers beat him to a precipitate retreat. Milman was obliged to leave behind him his guns and baggage.<sup>3</sup> Milman being put to flight, first retreated to Koelsa with the pursuing Indian rebels at his heels and eventually took refuge in the entrenchment at Azamgarh. Kunwar followed up his advantage and gradually advanced towards Azamgarh with one thousand sepoys and two thousand and five hundred followers, and was at a place called Mandori, ten miles from Azamgarh on the 24th.<sup>4</sup> On 26 March, he took

<sup>1</sup> FP. ix, 618, 854, 859.

<sup>2</sup> The official narration of events distinctly states that Atrauli was plundered on 20 March, and that colonel Milman's engagement took place next day (FP. viii, 130; ix, 866), but Holmes places the two events on the 17th and 20th March respectively which cannot be accounted for (*op. cit.*, 452). Malleeson also assigns these encounters to 17 and 18 March (ii, 455).

<sup>3</sup> The following official report dated 20 March, 1858, will make it clear that Milman's action at Atrauli took place on 21 March: 'Colonel Milman with a weak wing of H. M's 37th proposed marching on the 21st to meet them, and, detained a portion of the 4th Madras light cavalry at Koelsa to assist him' (FP. ix, 866). But Malleeson says that Milman started on the 21st March and confronted the enemy on the 22nd (ii, 455). Again, Charles Ball places the event on the 20th, and refers to the loss sustained by Milman (*History of the Indian Mutiny* ii, 285), though the official reports are not very expressive on this point (FP. viii, 130).

<sup>4</sup> GRO. *Secret Letters from India*, vol. 164, p. 231; copy No. 290; FP. ix, 415.

possession of Azamgarh without opposition. He was now at the peak of his power and actually held the town for a few weeks. The government reports indicate that his men had put their guns in position against the entrenchment and were preparing scaling ladders and even attacked the entrenchment. Their number was estimated at four thousand strong with four guns, and three thousand and more were said to be coming up from the rear. There was thus obviously an accession of strength of the rebel forces far in excess of the fighting force which the Shahabad leader commanded when marching against the town.<sup>1</sup>

Kunwar in the meantime registered another victory over colonel Dames. With a force of two hundred men of the queen's 37th regiment, Dames had hurried from Ghazipur but was repulsed with heavy loss when he attacked the city on the 27th. He then retreated to the entrenchment along with the remnant of the 37th where they were shut up without supplies and ammunition. Dames was instructed to act strictly on the defensive and on no account to renew his attacks on the town.<sup>2</sup>

The news of the capture of Azamgarh caused grave anxiety in the official circles. Sir Colin considered that nothing could be more important than the protection of that rich district and requested Lord Canning to consent to the movement of a strong brigade of infantry, cavalry and artillery from Lucknow by Sultanpur and Singramau to Azamgarh. The message was sent on 28 March, and all reports originating from official sources state that Sir Edward Lugard was despatched from Lucknow on the 29th for the relief of Azamgarh.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, in response to an appeal from colonel Dames, brigadier Gordon from Benares sent him reinforcements via Ghazipur and Samuells from Patna sent up the *Jumna* steamer to cruise off Bhojpur.<sup>4</sup> But the gravity of the danger lay in the possibility of Kunwar Singh making a raid upon Benares and disrupting

<sup>1</sup> Malleson II 470

<sup>2</sup> FP V I 130 133 ix 416 7 413 Martin says that Dames' action took place on the 26th (II 491) but Malleson assigns it to the 27th (II 458)

<sup>3</sup> FP VIII 133 ix 416 7 Both Ball (I 284) and Martin (II 491) state that Lugard started from Lucknow on 20 March but Malleson says that he started on the 29th (I 468 9)

<sup>4</sup> FP ix 413 416 7

the line of communication between Calcutta and Lucknow. So Lord Mark Kerr was immediately sent from Allahabad to relieve Azamgarh. He reached Benares on 31 March, and picking up troops from all stations started again on 2 April, and pushed forward with such rapidity that Sarsena, a place eight miles from Azamgarh, was reached on 5 April. When Kerr moved out next morning he discovered that crowds of armed men were lying in ambush in a number of banked ditches on either side of the road, waiting to intercept him. The rebels were estimated at three or four thousand and were commanded with superior skill. They spread out all round and though they could be cleared by a smart action, the convoy in the rear could not be protected, against the attack of the Indians. The position of the British army at one period of the struggle was extremely critical but Kerr reached Azamgarh on 6 April.<sup>1</sup> The officer commanding at Benares wrote:

The party under Lord Mark Kerr after a severe encounter with the enemy forced his strong position on the Benares road and reached Azamgarh bridge yesterday (6th). The loss of the 13th appears to be heavy.<sup>2</sup>

In Azamgarh, Kunwar remained supreme for the time being and the country became free again for a short period. Many documents in the national archives refer to this memorable *coup* at Azamgarh and a number of preserved despatches vividly describe this phase of his activities. But, however, successful he was in playing with strategy and guerilla warfare, he could not take the fullest advantage of the situation opened up by his victorious arms. That was the time when the old rajput leader should have formed a strong confederacy of all the disaffected elements of the country, the palwar rajputs, the baiswara chiefs, the rajcoomars, as a sort of makeweight against the dead pressure of British army in western Oudh, and revived the dying cause of the rebellion. But nothing like this happened. Kunwar Singh was only a traveller in the field of war and nowhere did he consolidate his position. His Bhojpuri men only wanted to return to Shahabad to avenge their previous defeat and he

<sup>1</sup> Dodd, *op. cit.*, 469; Holmes, 453.

<sup>2</sup> FP. viii, 146.

himself made no secret of his plan to return to his home province. No attempt was made to organise the forces of rebellion nor to establish a stable government. Everything was within his grasp had he only stretched out his hand. Malleeson's estimate cannot be disputed that Kunwar was not as great a tactician as he was a strategist.<sup>1</sup> There were also many difficulties attending the position of the invading forces, the famine that was raging round affected procurement of military supplies and the brave palwar rajputs who in the early period of the revolt had fought against the British were now won over by the district authorities to their side.<sup>2</sup>

The British entrenchment could not be stormed. Five thousand rebels under Kunwar Singh held the town of Azamgarh while the British troops held the entrenchments to the south of it waiting anxiously for the arrival of general Lugard.<sup>3</sup> Outside the borders of Azamgarh, the leaders of Oudh and the neighbouring areas seem to have been making a plan to join Kunwar in a body at Azamgarh, but something occurred to frustrate this plan. Some unpublished records give a confused account of some sort of a joint move which seems to have been afoot. It transpired that Pargan Singh, Indrajit Singh, and Rana Beni Madho Baksh (who was connected with Kunwar by inter-marriage) deliberated to take their force over the Gogra. When Buriar Singh, brother of Rustam Shah surrendered to P. Carnegy, early in April, 1858, he informed him that Ghulam Hussain's forces at Jalalpur of 1,500 sepoys had received order from Kunwar to join him at Azamgarh.<sup>4</sup> A rebel band also gathered at Tanda possibly to make a move in his support. This apart, the Bhojpuri people, and also the people of eastern Oudh seem to have been ready to march to the aid of Kunwar.<sup>5</sup>

Sir Edward Lugard was ordered to march straight upon the

<sup>1</sup> II, 465-6.

<sup>2</sup> NE. I, 46 Report by Taylor.

<sup>3</sup> FP IX, 472 Report by commissioner of Benares, dated 4 April.

<sup>4</sup> CRO Secret Letters from India, vol. 164, No. 14, p. 315.

<sup>5</sup> CRO Secret Letters from India, volume 164 p. 339 (No. 81A of 1858), volume 166 p. 535 (Foreign Dept Secret, Allahabad No. 19 of 25th May). Another such letter states that Kunwar was expecting Beni Madho's brother (Jaylal) to come to his support (*Ibid.* vol. 164, p. 489, No. 233).

rear of the rebels at Azamgarh by Atrauli, but Kunwar Singh by destroying a bridge over the Gomati at Sultanpur, impeded the advance of this column. This compelled Lugard to take a circuitous route by Jaunpur on 5 April. At Tigrā some miles to the north-west of Jaunpur, on the direct road from Sultanpur, he encountered Ghulam Hussain the rebel chackladar and dispersed his force which had got into his rear. This happened on 11 April<sup>1</sup> and on the next day he reached Jaunpur and ultimately reached Azamgarh on 15 April.<sup>2</sup> Kunwar collected his forces along the banks of the river Tons to stop the advance of British forces, but realising that he had no hope against the combination of Lugard and Kerr, he evacuated the town quietly with a part of his followers on 13 April.<sup>3</sup> The remainder of his men and guns marched on the next day and so when Lugard entered Azamgarh on the 15th, the rebel forces were quitting the city on the other side of it. Even so, at the bridge of boats which crossed the river Tons at Azamgarh, Lugard encountered a portion of Kunwar's army which had been left to cover his retreat. In this great battle at the bridge over the Tons, the Indians fought with determination and it was not before a severe struggle that they were defeated. Though the fighting was merely with the rearguard, the British met with stiff resistance at every step. The rebels eventually retreated and were pursued for about a dozen miles, but even while retreating, they maintained good order. As the retreat of Kunwar spelt danger to the Lower provinces, Sir Edward sent off brigadier Douglas in pursuit of him, on the 16th who had with him the 37th and 84th regiments, some cavalry and artillery.

The successful retreat of Kunwar Singh from Azamgarh and his intention of marching to Shahabad threw the eastern provinces into a ferment. There was great alarm both at Chapra and Arrah and it was reported that the rebels had collected ninety large boats on the Gogra. The official report was that the northern portion of the Shahabad district might be invaded on any day. Apart from this grave political position

<sup>1</sup> Malletson, ii, 469-70.

<sup>2</sup> FP. viii, 145.

<sup>3</sup> The day was considered to be auspicious for the movement of troops (FP. viii, 143).

which arose from the menacing threats of Kunwar Singh, the situation from a military point of view was equally desperate. The commissioner of Patna sent frantic despatches to the higher authorities pointing to the evils of divided command in a district like Shahabad which was nearly defenceless against the impending attack. There were only eighty Sikh police at Arrah, a detachment of queen's 35th under brigadier Christie in the north, lieutenant Batt's brigade of one hundred strong at Buxar, and colonel Michel's Sikhs at Dehri. But the authorities were paralysed as Christie would not send two companies to Arrah unless the Sikhs were moved down from Dehri to support them to which Michel would not agree.<sup>1</sup> Another official letter of 31 March from Boyle of Arrah fame, gives us a glimpse of the Shahabad district of that time. He refers to the defenceless condition of Shahabad, open everywhere to the irruption of a hostile force, and its military stations defenceless against the incursions of the rebels, the want of a link between Buxar and Arrah only forty four miles apart, the railway staff spreading out like a chain of unsupported sentries, and the immediate need of adopting measures of security in a district which had witnessed the most stirring events. Further, he observed that there was an increasing uneasiness and feeling of insecurity spreading among the people.

It is Koer Singh's intention to return to Shahabad. He has made this intention widely known. The people are expecting him and large numbers are prepared to join him and his force.<sup>2</sup>

#### AZAMGARH TO SHAHABAD

The flight of Kunwar Singh from Azamgarh to Shahabad is a memorable event of the war of the mutinies. The series of brilliant rearguard actions he fought all the way, and the tactical moves by which he outflanked resourceful British generals redounded to the credit of this great Indian leader in the fight against Britain. It was all the more remarkable

<sup>1</sup> FP VII 134-5, ix 471

<sup>2</sup> CRO *Secret Letters from India* volume 164 p 453 (Allahabad Foreign Department: Secret, No 16 of 30th April)



because Kunwar Singh was not a born general. A respectable dignitary, and an aristocrat of the land who had nothing much to do with military affairs, he turned a great soldier and a commander of men towards the end of his life.

The retreat to Shahabad has not been discussed in detail in any work especially in respect of the route he followed. Malleeson's account of this historic march on which many writers have depended does not accord with official despatches on the subject, which also so far as available ones go, do not furnish many details. Malleeson states<sup>1</sup> that brigadier Douglas, in pursuit of Kunwar, reached Nathupur on 16 April. He makes no mention of Kunwar's halt at Ghosi which was at a distance of twenty-four miles from Azamgarh, the pargana of Nathupur lying further up on the right bank of the Gogra on the north-east corner of the district. Malleeson further says that Kunwar halted at Naghai about fourteen miles from Nathupur where he was attacked on the 17th and was forced to fall back slowly on Nagra. Here Kunwar displayed great tactical ability, for while he 'kept Douglas at bay' he secured two lines of retreat for his main column. Naghai seems to have been a place very near to Nagra, as according to Malleeson, the pursuit was taken up again on the following day, the 18th, as far as Nagra, which he says was eighteen miles distant from Nathupur. But Nagra, the wellknown thana, is at a distance of twenty-four miles from the headquarters of the Ballia district and eight miles distant from Rasra (Ballia), the tahsil of which was bounded on the south by Ghazipur. Malleeson continues to narrate that from Nagra, Kunwar Singh marched to Sikandarpur, crossed the Gogra and then pushed on to Mannohar in Ghazipur where Douglas defeated him on the 20th.<sup>2</sup> The description refers to Kunwar's march through the borders of Azamgarh and Ballia districts, the river Gogra forming the northern line of both and separating them from Gorakhpur and Saran respectively. The proximity of Sikandarpur to Gogra, as mentioned above, points to Sikandarpur in the eastern portion of Ballia which was at a distance of three miles south of the Gogra. Did Kunwar actually cross the Gogra? Malleeson's description does not accord with facts of

<sup>1</sup> ii, 473.

<sup>2</sup> ii, 474-5.

lying at a distance of two miles south-west of Bansdih on the road to Ballia Kunwar did not go to Bairia which is twenty miles to the east of Ballia in the direction of Saran<sup>1</sup> as that would take him far away from Sheopur but when Cumberlege was moving from Ballia to Bairia he got into the rear of his army by a flank-movement and made for Sheopur, and Douglas reaching the ghat on 21 April in hot pursuit, found him in the act of crossing. He fired a few rounds which sank one of the rearmost boats and possibly Kunwar himself also was wounded in the arm <sup>2</sup>

To sum up, the Shahabad leader passed through the route Sagri, Azmatgarh, Ghosi. It is doubtful if he had gone to Nathupur, farther up, but he seems to have retreated down to Naghai (?) and fell back to Nagra. He then moved to Sikandarpur and thence took a line along the Gogra and reached Maniar. From Maniar he left the course of the river and entered into the interior of Ballia at Bansdih and then passed by Mairitar to Sheopur.

The whole of the force of Kunwar did not march along with him, some following a different route were to have met him somewhere on the Ganges. Dodd says that after the action at Azamgarh, Kunwar's force was divided into three sections, one of these divisions with several horse-artillery guns marched towards Ghazipur.<sup>3</sup> In the express sent by the magistrate of Azamgarh on 14 April it was reported that a large body of Azamgarh rebels with two horse-artillery guns had marched off, it was supposed, towards Ghazipur, but it did not cause the government any anxiety as the forces stationed there were quite equal to meeting the rebel fugitives.<sup>4</sup>

A very interesting official letter from R. Davies, the officiating-magistrate of Azamgarh to F. B. Gubbins, the commissioner of the Benares Division from Sheopur in April, 1858, furnishes other details of Kunwar's retreat, not known before, which are completely at variance with the circumstances of the hero's

<sup>1</sup> The report of the rebels crossing at Saran ghat was officially discounted (CRO. *op cit*, p. 899).

<sup>2</sup> Martin, *ib.*, 492

<sup>3</sup> Dodd, *op. cit*, 470.

<sup>4</sup> FP. viii, 142.

march described above.<sup>1</sup> Davies says that as Venables was severely wounded in the action at the bridge on the west side of the town on 16 April, he joined the pursuing force at Sir Edward's request, as a civil officer. He says that Nishan Singh was at Azamgarh with two thousand men and two horse-artillery guns, but left the city on the 13th or 14th. This was very probably the force which had gone towards Ghazipur as referred to in the official sources noticed above. Davies, however, describes the retreat of the main body under Kunwar. He says that they were engaged in digging for treasure on the 16th at a place which may be recognised as Barmau Khas nearly seven miles north of Azamgarh and despoiled mahajans of the place to the extent of seventy-two thousand rupees and burnt tahsil and thana records. They reached Naghai pursued by Douglas, but nothing is said about the engagement that took place there on the 17th as also of the other intermediate stations where Kunwar stopped. On the other hand, Douglas is said to have broken the rebel bodies on the 18th and rested for the night at Ghosi. Besides the topographical anomaly involved in this statement, on the 18th, the brigadier was supposed to be at Nagra, but Davies represents the brigadier as marching to Nagra on the 19th and the rebels as visiting Molanpur and Douglas marching to Qazipur on the 20th, some details which do not agree with the conditions of the movement of the two parties. Further, it is said that the rebels went to Numeechur in Ghazipur having burned the thana and indigo factory at Sikandarpur. This place, Nimchar, may be one of the chain of *jhils* near Barachar in the Zahurabad pargana which is bounded on the north by the Rasra tahsil of Ballia. It has been noticed that Rasra was only eight miles distant from Nagra. It is just likely that a party of the rebels had moved away from Nagra towards Ghazipur as Cumberlege might have threatened to cut them off at Ballia, and Sikandarpur, mentioned above, was the western pargana of this name, which with three others constituted the Rasra tahsil of Ballia. But Davies says that at Sikandarpur the rebels made every possible search for boats. The most interesting part of the report is that Kunwar Singh found himself amongst friends at

<sup>1</sup> CRO. *Secret Letters from India*, vol. 164, p. 425.

Nimchar where the brigadier contacted him in the morning of the 21st and scattered them inflicting a heavy loss. They then reassembled at a place which can be recognised only as Sahatwar at a distance of six miles south-east from Bansdih in Ballia. From that place in several bodies they went off by different routes to Shecopur, burning the Reoti thana. The only explanation of this confused account is that Davies mixed up the movements of the different parties of the rebels retreating through different routes.

Very much confused though the account is in its present form, the magistrate says that the Arrah police, the Mallahs (?) and zamindars were all instrumental in scuttling the boats and in furnishing them to the rebels and that the movements of the punitive force suffered very much in consequence of the difficulty in procuring supplies and information. He also noticed that a great enthusiasm was extending to the lower classes in favour of Kunwar Singh.

The Report of R. Davies is given below.

(Copy)

425 From R. Davies Esq.,  
Offg. Mgt. of Azumgurih.

To  
F. B. GUBBINS, Esq.,  
*Commissioner of the 5 Dvn, Benares,*  
*Dt. Camp Sheepoor the*

*April 1858.*

Sir,

I have the honour to report the progress of events from the arrival of Sir Edward's force at Azumgurih to Koor Singh's flight across the Ganges.

On the 16th instant Sir Edugard attacked the rebels post at the bridge on the west side of the town. A slight resistance was made, but in a very short time the whole rebel force was in full retreat on the Bhunul road. They were overtaken at Bhanghi Daur by the Royal Horse artillery and Cavalry of the force, and their two guns and one by one lub, (?) together with one hundred and twenty carts taken from them. In this affair Mr. Venables was severely wounded and the force having

without a civil officer I joined it at Sir Edward's request. Kooer Sing fell back on Azumgurh where Nishan Singh with two thousand men and two horse-artillery guns had been for two days, having left Azumgurh on the night of the 13th or 14th. During the 16th or 17th they were engaged in digging for treasure in Balum Persah, and mahajuns house and are said to have found seventy-two thousand rupees. They also burned the tehseel and the thannah records. On the night of the 17th they retired from a strong position they had occupied, to the groves about Neghai near the lower Ghosee road—on the same night Brig. Douglas arrived on the morning of the 18th, the rebels were found to have stayed at Neghai. They were attacked by the brigadier and breaking into bodies retreated partly by the lower road and partly across the country to Ghosee where after setting fire to the tehseel they went on to Bhusouth, twelve miles beyond. The brigadier halted for the night at Ghosee having marched about fourteen miles, besides fighting. It was ascertained that Inderjeet Singh of            taking one hundred men with him had gone off towards Oudh. It does not appear that Pargan Singh ever came beyond Azumgurh.

On the 19th the brigadier marched to Nuggur twenty-four miles. The horse-artillery and cavalry were pushed on ahead but nothing took place except some contact between the sowars of the picket on both sides. About the time of the arrival of the infantry the rebels decamped. After burning the tehseel and thannah, and went to Molanpor, on the 20th the brigadier marched to Quazeepore early four miles beyond Seeandespoor, about fifteen miles. In the night the rebels had gone to Numeechur in the Ghazeepoor district having burned the thannah and an indigo factory at Sekunderpoor. It is probable that the cause of their turning off to Sekunderpoor was the movement made by Col. Cumberlege which threatened to cut them off Bulliah—at and about Secunderpoor they made every possible search for boats, but they had either been sunk or burnt or taken down the rivers at Nameechur. Kooer Singh found himself amongst friends and the want of his troops were voluntarily supplied by the villages, who were almost universally in his favour. Through their collusion our spies were seized and

detained and our information surrendered. On the morning of the 21st the brigadier found the rebels still in Numeechur and took them by surprise. They abandoned one of their horse artillery guns with ammunition waggons together with some elephants. They were dispersed in every direction but during the afternoon and night appear to have reassembled to a great extent near Saniturar a place surrounded by very thick wood. Kooer Sing must have been there by the evening and gone off early, and in this way a stream of fugitives in several small bodies all going by different routes advanced during the night to the river at Sheepoor Ghat as had been anticipated. On their way they burned the Reyotee Thannah and the Byrrah Thannah and murdered the Reyotee thanadar. The brigadier had the troops ready to march by two O'clock in the morning, but unfortunately an exaggerated report of the number of men made by the cavalry picket at Saniturar joined to the thick wood and the                      obliged him to postpone the march until day light. By that time all had left, but it is probable that upto two or three O'clock a body of about five hundred men did remain in the wood and subsequently went off in parties leaving Bulliah on their left. Such a body has been reported by Col. Cumberlege to have been on the 21st at Bunagron? or 'cheet'. The 2nd horse artillery gun was abandoned by the rebels at Samiturar and some more elephants. The brigadier pushed on the horse artillery and cavalry to the Sheepoor Ghat but on our arrival we had the mortification of seeing almost the whole of the rebels were across the Ganges, and the boats which were supposed to have been withdrawn or scuttled and sunk lying on the opposite bank. I am enquiring into the circumstances and there seems every probability that the Arrah police, the Mollahs and zemindars friendly to Kooer Singh were all instrumental in deceiving the officers responsible for the withdrawal of the boats and in furnishing them to the rebels. The river is deep at this point, and though some might have got off on elephant and by swimming without boats, the brigadier must have come upon a very large body.

It is consolatory to think, however, that the sustained exertions of the force under brigadier Douglas have not been without effect. To the energy with which he pushed on the

pursuit in spite of the fatigue and exposures suffered particularly by the European infantry the Government owe the capture of the two horse-artillery guns, the repeated defeat and discomfiture of the rebels and the exhibition of Kooer Singh and his troops flying for their lives through a part of the country only too friendly to his rebellion.

(Paragraph 4) I have as yet no information of the rebels across the Ganges. It is highly probable, however, that they will for a short interval disperse to their homes to visit their relatives and dispose of their plunder. But afterwards it is to be expected that at least a portion of them will reappear in arms. The burning of the tehseels and thannahs on the road together with the murder of one or two Government officials and the search made for all, evince that there is a determination to persist in hostility to Government. These are not the acts of men anxious only to save their lives and quietly disperse. A rumour has reached me that Ummar Singh is negotiating with the Santhals who have agreed to rise. I have no means of testing the truth of this story, but that disturbances of some sort will arise is to be expected.

(Paragraph 5) It is, therefore, important that the victorious appearance of our troops such as has been presented in this district, should be maintained. It is evident from the difference between the people living in the Azumgurrh district, from the difficulty in procuring supplies and information, from the aid gladly given to the rebels and a sort of enthusiasm extending to the lower classes in Kooer Singh's favour that had he not been sharply pursued, he would have been joined in large numbers. But beaten, hungry, dispirited, despondent, the appearance of his foreshowed that his cause was a dangerous one.

(Paragraph 6) I most strongly recommend that a British force be at once sent into the Arrah district and that the police be strengthened as far as possible.

Magistrate's Office,  
Zillah Azumgurrh, Camp. Sheopoor,  
*The 23rd April, 1858.*  
Allahabad Foreign Department,  
*Secret, No. 16 D/30th April, No. 25B.*

I have, etc.  
Sd/- R. DAVIES,  
*Offg. Magistrate.*

## APPENDIX F

### REBEL LEADERS OF SHAHABAD

*No 12 of 12 January, 1858*

To

The Commissioner of Circuit of Patna, Camp Jagdispore

Sir,

With reference to your letter No 1726, dated the 28th November, 1857 and its enclosures, I have the honour to submit the following list of persons who took a leading part in the late disturbances in the district —

1st on the list comes Koer Singh of Jagdispur, Beeheeah, son of Sahibzada Singh of the same place. He is a tall thin man, age above 70, large features, aquiline nose and prominent eyes, thin whiskers on the cheek bone showed below, thin moustache, suffers severely from neuralgia.

2 Ummar Singh of Metaha Pergannah, Beeheeah, brother of Koer Singh, age about 45, in appearance nearly resembling his brother.

3 Reetbunjan Singh of Dullipore, Pargannah Beeheeah son of Dial Singh, brother of Koer Singh age about 30, a tall powerful man, stout face wore moustache but no whiskers. I do not know him and this is the nearest description I can get of him.

4 Nishan Singh of Bulder Pargannah, Sasaram, son of Raghobeer Singh, age about 60, fair complexion, middle size, thin, black-teeth, no distinguishing mark, description obtained only by hearsay.

5 Harkishin Singh a Tahseeldar of Koer Singh, took a prominent part in the rebellious proceeding in this district, age about 30, middle sized, very fair, whiskers moustache joined, wore them brushed backwards like an up country sowar.

H C WAKE, *Magistrate*



*No. 13 of 12th January, 1858.*

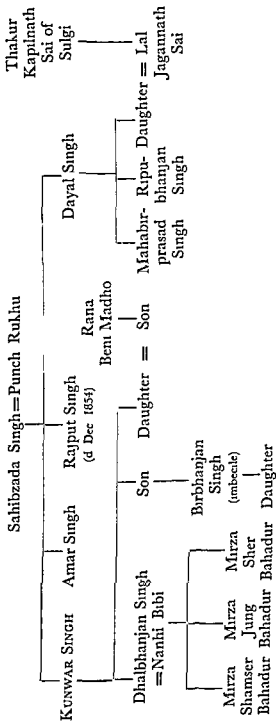
To  
The Commissioner of Patna,

Sir,  
I have the honour to request your sanction to a reward of company's rupees 500/- for the apprehension of Reetbunjan Singh nephew of Baboo Kooer Singh who is proved to have taken part in the present rebellion.

I have, etc.,

H. C. WAKE

## HOUSE OF KUNWAR SINGH



## APPENDIX G

### WORKS REFERRED TO IN THIS BOOK

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| Holmes (T R)                         | .. A History of the Indian Mutiny (1913)                                    |
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| Jacob (Maj -Gen Sir George Le Grand) | The Causes of the Crisis of 1857-58   |
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| Majendie (Lt V. D.)                  | .. Up among the Pandies (1859)  |
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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A COMPANION VOLUME

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BRITISH RULE IN INDIA  
( 1765 - 1857 )

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By Prof. S. C. SARKAR

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His fine achievement lies in the judicious selection of material, in its proper handling and in his cautious impartial attempt to relate these facts. Particular attention of the readers should be drawn to three well written sections in the book, viz. Approach to the Subject, Historical Background, and Concluding Remarks. The author's style and presentation add substantially to the native interest of the book while he seems to be quite free from the circumscription of a specialist. He has attempted valuation and appraisal in the proper perspective.

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HOLDEN FURBER,

*University of Pennsylvania*

INDIA QUARTERLY (Vol. XII, October-December 1956, pp. 504-05)—

....As a study from a new angle of a material not hitherto subject to careful scrutiny the book is of great value, and it is sure to be of much use in correcting the errors of many Anglo-Indian historians who had closed their eyes to the limitations of British rule.

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