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District-wise Rates of Growth of Agricultural Output in East and West Punjab during the Pre-partition and Post-partition Periods

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The Punjab is one of the most progressive states of India and has been enjoying a significant rate of economic growth—invariably above the rate for the country as a whole—since the beginning of the process of planned economic development in the country. Though the region has been making rapid industrial advance since independence and is famous for its economically viable small-scale industrial sector, it is a predominantly agricultural region with a proportion of the agricultural population to total population above that for the country as a whole. The performance of the agricultural sector in the Punjab, over the first decade of planned development has been commendable when compared to that in the other states of India.¹ But even within Punjab, there might have been areas of relatively higher and lower growth. We, therefore, make a district-wise study of the growth in agricultural output in the Punjab so that the intra-regional variations come out sharply, providing useful insights into the spatial pattern of agricultural growth.

The period that we had chosen for intensive study was 1952-53 to 1963-64. But in view of the importance of initial conditions in the characterisation of the process of economic growth, an analysis is given of the economic scene relating mainly to agriculture in Punjab from about the turn of this century to the period immediately prior

1. "Growth of Crop-output in India, 1951-54 to 1958-61", Minhas, B.S. and Vaidyanathan, A., *Journal of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics*, December 1965, pp. 230-252

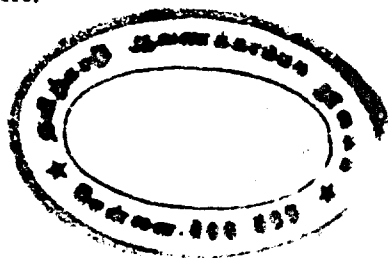
to independence. This enables us to see the recent growth of Punjab's agriculture in a better perspective and examine the pattern of growth over time and space.

Of the economically significant events in Punjab, perhaps the most important was the undertaking of major public investment in irrigation and large-scale colonisation of certain previously barren and uninhabited tracts during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. After the annexation of Punjab to the British territory in 1849, the agriculture of Punjab was a major focus of attention for the government. The motives of the British government in pursuing such a developmental policy must have been diverse. There might, for example, have been a desire to strengthen the economic base of this strategic frontier province. Alternatively, the intention might have been to win the loyalty of the Punjabis—famous for their bravery and skill in fighting—in view of the fact that the British had to indulge frequently in military struggles against the native states and neighbouring countries during that period. It is also possible that being aware of the progressive and enterprising spirit of the Punjabis, the government felt assured of the public investment being matched by enthusiastic response from the people and hence of a profitable rate of return. These are, however, mere speculations about the possible objectives of the British government and no historical analysis of these objectives has been made here.

Whatever the motivation, huge investments were made in economic overheads (e.g. irrigation, power, roads and railways) over the period 1898-1938². Of the gross public investment in overheads which was of the order of Rs. 1120 crores over 1898-1938 over British India as a whole, Rs. 212 crores, i.e. about 18.5%, was invested in the Punjab which had only 8.9% of the total population of British India during the same period.³ This implies that the *per capita* gross public investment in overheads was more than twice as large in the Punjab as in British India as a whole. The *per capita* gross investment in irrigation alone was still greater in

2. Thavaraj, M.J.K., *Trends in Public Investment in India, 1898-1938*, Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the University of Delhi, 1957.

3. *Ibid*, p. 110.



relative terms—almost thrice of that in British India as a whole.⁴ As we are particularly interested in irrigation which is, of all the economic overheads, most closely associated with agricultural progress, we may examine in detail the government's activity in this sphere.

At the time of annexation, wells under private and (more often) joint ownership were the chief source of artificial irrigation in the province.⁵ The government initially appear to have tried to encourage the sinking of wells by granting *tacaavi* loans on easy terms to the agriculturists and by liberal assessment of land-revenue on well-irrigated lands.⁶ These facilities, however, were not made use of, partly due to administrative encumbrances.⁷ Keeping in view the excellent river-water resources of the state, the government then concentrated mainly on canal irrigation.

Intersected by six perennial rivers, the province was bounded, on two sides, by hills whence poured down numerous rivulets and the land sloped south-ward with a considerable gradient. Nearly all the dynasties which had ruled over this region had done something for irrigation. Even so, the only canals at the time of annexation were: (1) the Western Jumna Canal, taking from the Jumna and irrigating Delhi, Ambala and some native states; (2) the Hasli Canal taking from the Ravi and irrigating Lahore and Amritsar districts and (3) a good many inundation⁸ canals in the south-western districts.

4. Of the gross public investment in irrigation of the order of Rs. 194 crores in British India, Punjab had a share of about Rs. 45 crores, i.e., about 23% of the total (*Ibid.*, p. 78).

5. Chhabra, G.S., *Social and Economic History of the Punjab, 1849-1901*, Jullundur, 1962 (pp. 173-74). The information quoted by him is taken from the *Revenue Administration Report, 1900-1901*. The information regarding area irrigated by wells can also be had from *Indian Irrigation Commission, 1902 (Punjab) Evidence*, pp. 299-300.

6. Chhabra, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-177.

7. Indebtedness to village money-lenders, lack of security to be offered, tenants' fear of increase in rents, short-period nature of the loans, need for unproductive credit which only the *Mahajan* could supply are cited by Chhabra as other reasons for the non-utilisation of credit facilities.

8. These are canals which run only during the rainy season when the rivers are flooded and which irrigate the low-lands along the rivers.

The canals constructed during the British rule fell into two classes: the perennial canals (with permanent head-works providing irrigation throughout the year) and the inundation canals. Immediately after the annexation, work was undertaken on the Upper Bari Doab Canal which actually began as a re-modelling of the Hasli Canal, but turned out to be much more than that. The Upper Bari Doab Canal started irrigation in 1860-61, but was completed in 1878-79 and irrigated the Central Punjab districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Lahore. Moreover, the Western Jumna Canal was extended to irrigate the South-eastern districts of Karnal, Hissar and Rohtak. The Sirhind Canal was constructed during 1867-87 in collaboration with some native states because it commanded some of their territory. It took from the Sutlej at Rupar in district Ambala and irrigated Ludhiana, Ferozepur and the state of Patiala.⁹

The government then turned its attention westwards and all the main rivers there were harnessed and controlled in 1884 by constructing an inundation canal which was made perennial in 1890 and finally completed in 1900. This canal, called the Lower Chenab Canal, irrigated Gujranwala, Sheikhupura,¹⁰ Lyallpur and parts of Jhang—all of which were to be prosperous colony districts afterwards. The Lower Jhelum Canal, taking from the Jhelum, was constructed during 1897-1917, irrigating parts of Gujrat and Shahpur which were colonised later on. Then came the ingenious Triple Canal Project which carried the waters of the Jhelum, crossing the Chenab and Ravi on the way, to the vast deserts of Montgomery and Multan¹¹—irrigating about 10 lakh acres in all. A number of inundation canals were also built.¹²

As a result of these irrigation works, the area under irrigation almost trebled from 45 lakh acres in 1899-1900 to 125 lakh acres in 1937-38 while in British India, the irrigated area only doubled from 135 to 275 lakh acres over the same period. In other words, 80

9. All these projects were in the Hindu-dominated tracts of the Province and the Government had laid itself open to the charges of communal discrimination. See Chhabra, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

10. Sheikhupura did not exist as an administrative entity at that time.

11. These two emerged as the most prosperous of canal colonies later on.

12. This paragraph has drawn heavily on Darling, M., *Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, Oxford, 1925 (4th Edition, 1947), Ch. VII.

out of the 140 lakh acres of newly irrigated area (*i.e.* about 57%) were in Punjab.¹³ To cite another index of progress in irrigation, while in 1900-1901, only 22% of the total cultivated area in the Punjab was irrigated by canals, as much as 44% was so irrigated in 1937-38.

In the meanwhile, the first experiments in colonisation were being made in 1886 when 177,000 acres of waste-lands in Multan district came under irrigation from the Sutlej.¹⁴ However, it proved to be only a qualified success since a perennial supply of water could not be guaranteed and the nature of agriculture remained basically the same.

The next experiment, however, was planned on a much bigger scale and proved to be a brilliant success. One million acres, newly irrigated by the Lower Chenab Canal in Lyallpur, Sheikhupura and parts of Jhang were colonised in the early nineties of the last century.¹⁵ A second canal colony (called the Lower Jhelum Canal Colony) started emerging in Shahpur and parts of Gujrat in 1902, five years after the work was started on the Lower Jhelum Canal. The third canal colony, called the Lower Bari Doab Colony, appeared as a result of the Triple project (completed in 1917) in the vast desert of Montgomery and Multan. The three colonies¹⁶ together covered an area of *five million acres*. In addition, there were six smaller colonies covering half a million acres in all. The total area colonised through the above projects constituted more than one sixth of the total cultivated area in the province.¹⁷

Most of the land colonised was barren and desolate to start with—peopled sparsely by pastoral nomads. A large part of this land was appropriated as state property. This land was then divid-

13. Thavaraj, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

14. Most of the information relating to the location of colonies, early difficulties, choice of the colonists and the prosperity of the colonies has been taken from Darling *op. cit.*, Chapters VII and VIII.

15. The canal was opened in 1892 and is described by Darling as "the turning point in the economic history of the Punjab" (p. 113).

16. These are also referred to as Lyallpur, Shahpur and Montgomery colonies respectively, named after the principal towns.

17. More than four million acres were irrigated, later on, by Sutlej Valley canals and Haveli Canal and colonised.

ed into squares of 25 or sometimes 27.8 acres and granted to the selected colonists.

The choice of the colonists was made very judiciously and carefully. "Thus the original crowd of applicants would be reduced to a band of men all connected by common descent, all physically fit to take up life in a new country under considerable difficulties, all hard up for land, but with sufficient resources to start them."¹⁸ The criterion of selection in the case of early colonists was primarily based on the objective of relieving the pressure of population in the highly congested districts of the Central Punjab. So, during the first decade of colonisation the densely-populated districts of Sialkot, Amritsar, Jullundur, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Lahore, Ferozepur and Ludhiana were the chief contributors. Fulfilment of the needs of the army was the dominant objective in the Shahpur and Montgomery colonies where large amounts of land were granted on the condition that horses and camels would be bred and supplied to the army.¹⁹

Broadly speaking, the colonists fell into three classes.²⁰ The small peasant proprietor was generally given one or two squares (a square was of about 25 acres) of land and was a tenant of the government for a given term of years after which the grant could be renewed or discontinued. The yeoman farmer received four or five squares of land with rights of continued occupancy as long as he paid the assessment regularly. Finally, the landlord, the representative of the landed gentry, received anything from six to twenty squares and in addition to the occupancy rights, had the right to purchase proprietary rights after a certain interval of time.²¹ The

18. Memorandum by Mr. J.A. Grant, Settlement Officer, Amritsar (1893) quoted in Darling, *op. cit.*, p. 116. Also see *Punjab Colony Manual*, 1926, Vol. 1, p. 38.

19. Other conditional grants were developed later on, for example for the growth of selected seed, breeding of special strains of cattle, supply of butter and milk to the cantonments, introduction of steam ploughs and for plantations and fruit-farming.

20. The potential colonists were classified into three categories for the purpose of giving grants, perhaps on the basis of the amount of land initially owned by them or the resources commanded by them.

21. In fact, to start with, the government retained the proprietary rights in land and all the three categories of colonists (peasants, yeomen and landlords) were its tenants on increasingly favourable conditions.

peasants belonging to the first of these categories were, by far, the most satisfactory tenants and colonists. The other two types of colonists, expected to be men of greater resources and enterprise, and thus capable of providing intelligent and progressive leadership to the new communities, did not fulfil the hopes pinned on them. Most of them turned out to be absentees and even when residential, they were unconcerned about the condition of their tenants or even timely cultivation of the land granted, not to speak of agricultural improvements.²² The peasants were also quantitatively the most important group as they held 80% of the land in the Lyallpur and Shahpur colonies. In the Montgomery colony, owing to a large number of miscellaneous grants, only 59% of the total reclaimed land was held by the peasant proprietors.²³ Thus the principal form of land-tenure in the colonies turned out to be peasant proprietorship.

In relation to the emergence of these canal-colonies, the following economic implications may be particularly noted:

- (i) There was clearly a net increase in the economic resources of the province as the whole of the area colonised was a net addition to the existing cultivated and irrigated area. The government invested huge amounts of financial resources,²⁴ as we have previously noted, in bringing about this sizeable expansion of cultivation and irrigation.²⁵
- (ii) There was a shift of resources, in terms of labour and possibly capital in some degree, from the densely-populated parts of

22. Chhabra, *op. cit.*, p. 185. Also see Darling, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-19.

23. *Punjab Colony Manual*, 1922, p. 21.

24. The investment justified itself by yielding 10-20% p.a. on the total capital at charge by way of increased land-revenue, while the rate of return was only 6-10% p.a. for British India as a whole (see Thavaraj, *op. cit.*, p. 112). It is possible, as we have already stated, that the government anticipated this high profitability.

25. The area irrigated by canals was about 2.3 million acres in 1887-88 increasing to 6.0 million acres in 1900-01 with the opening of the Lower Chenab Canal. (See *Census of India*, Vol. XVII (Punjab), Part I-Report, p. 38). The area irrigated further rose to 10 million acres with the Sutlej Valley Project. The total cultivated area in the Punjab was 32.4 million acres when averaged over the five years ending 1944-45. (See Darling, *op. cit.*, p. 20). This gives an indication of the relative importance of the increase in irrigated area.

province to the canal colonies²⁶ where they could be combined with the newly-irrigated land, to greater profit than in their original location. This probably led to an increase in the productivity of the resources (through better utilisation) in the state as a whole.

The agriculture in the colonies started with some distinct advantages in comparison with the agriculture in other parts of the state. The more important of them can be listed as follows:

- (a) assured supply of water throughout the year in most parts;
- (b) good peasantry, carefully selected by the settlement officers, possessing some initial capital to start with;
- (c) a higher than average proportion of the population in the working age-group of 15-40 years.²⁷ [The initial difficulties of the colonisation made this predominantly active population even more hardy. The bushes and jungles had to be cleared, the land prepared for cultivation and small irrigation channels dug. Also there were no means of transport to begin with and the original population was hostile to the settlers]²⁸;
- (d) compact holdings of at least 12-14 acres, generally going up to 20-25 acres, in contrast to the average size of 6-7 acres split up in small, scattered fragments in other parts of the province.²⁹

The favourable factors put the colony cultivator in a position of initial advantage and especially saved him from excessive indebtedness which prevailed in many parts of the province. Though the percentage of those entirely free of debt in the Lyallpur and Shahpur colonies was not above that for the Central Punjab and the

26. The density of population per square mile increased tremendously in the canal colonies, the range of the increase being 94 to 226% against a rise of only 39% for the state as a whole over the period 1901-41. See *Census of India*, 1941 (Punjab).

27. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. XVII (Punjab), Part I—Report, p. 135.

28. Darling, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

29. Darling considers the smallness of holdings and fragmentation as the biggest curse affecting agriculture in the Central Punjab at that time (p. 127).

average debt *per capita* was also higher in the former (both probably due to the greater capital-requirements in the colonies), the debt was only four times the land-revenue in the above mentioned colonies while the multiple was 24 in the Central Punjab and over 10 in almost all the other districts.³⁰

As a result of these favourable factors in relation to the large scale colonisation,³¹ there were signs of agricultural prosperity in the colonies and also in other parts of the province, perhaps through spread-effects.³² The trend in output of both food and commercial crops was better for the Punjab than that for All-India over 1898-1938.³³ Per acre yields of principal crops namely wheat and cotton also grew significantly, as shown by Thavaraj. The government obtained a fair share of this prosperity in terms of revenue ensuing in the form of irrigation charges. After 1920-21, when irrigation became a provincial subject, the state government derived 40% of its current revenue from this source, as has been cited by Thavaraj. Also, in 1929-30, the government earned a net profit of 32% on the canals serving the three major colonies.³⁴

The cultivators, by and large, benefited from an increase in physical output as well as favourable prices of agricultural commodities.³⁵ Prosperity tended to spread itself through remittances from the colonies to the home-districts of the settlers and the standard of living rose considerably as a result of this wide-spread prosperity. For example, in 1911, the colonists of Lyallpur spent Rs. 20 lakhs on land-purchases and remitted another 22 lakhs

30. Darling, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

31. By the end of the second decade of this century (the Triple Project, leading to the formation of the last of three major colonies, was completed in 1917), the total area colonised was about 5 million acres, more than one sixth of the total cultivated area in the province. Later, with the completion of the Sutlej Valley Canals and the Haveli Canal, the colonised area approach 10 million acres, about one third of the total cultivated area in the state. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14.

32. *Ibid.*, Chapter VIII (pp. 132-44). This statement is based on general impressions of the writer regarding improvement in the peasants' food, clothing and housing in the colonies as well as other parts of the state. See Darling's description of Chak No. 208, pp. 133-36.

33. Thavaraj, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-13.

34. See Darling, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

35. In the ten years ending 1920, prices in the colonies rose by 55% (*Ibid.*, p. 129).

(through money-orders alone) to the other districts.³⁶ Certain other factors also contributed to this prosperity, e.g. service in the army, better means of transport and communications, emigration to Australia, U.K., Africa etc. (leading to large remittances home) and expansion of foreign trade.³⁷

The above account of governmental activity with respect to irrigation and colonisation highlights the important role played by the state in creating new economic resources for the agricultural sector of the economy. Moreover, the government also took care of other modern agricultural inputs through the Department of Agriculture established in 1906. The Department and its various sections did much useful work in the sphere of agricultural research (relating to new varieties of seeds, fertilisers, soil-conservation, water-logging, rotation of crops, etc.), education and extension.³⁸ We have already presented an impressionistic account of the resulting agricultural prosperity of the region as given by Darling. It will be useful now to examine the quantitative magnitudes of the growth of agricultural output in the various districts of the Punjab, as shown in Table 1.

Agricultural output (of eleven major crops only) in the state of Punjab as a whole was growing at slightly less than 1.0% p.a. during 1906-46 which is not a very impressive performance. Only Montgomery and Multan, both of which were the last to be colonised, registered rapid rates of growth of about 5.5% and 4.1% p.a. respectively. Column (3) shows 10 districts which were growing at rates above the state average of 1.0% p.a. Seven out of these ten districts were wholly or partly developed as canal-colonies. Column (6) gives districts with rates of growth below the state average. The first five of these districts grew at 0.62-0.92% p.a. These districts were significant contributors to the army and could be expected to invest in agriculture on account of greater wealth and a more progressive attitude generally associated with serving in the army.

36. *Census of India*, 1911 (Punjab), p. 56.

37. Darling, *op. cit.*, Chapter VII, pp. 132-44.

38. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. XVII (Punjab) and the *Royal Commission Agriculture*, (Evidence cited for Punjab).

TABLE 1
SEMI-LOG RATES OF GROWTH OF AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT
IN PUNJAB (DISTRICT-WISE), 1906-46

Serial No:	District*	Rate of growth p.a.†	Serial No:	District	Rate of growth p.a.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1.	Montgomery	5.5	11.	Attock	0.92
2.	Multan	4.1	12.	Hoshiarpur	0.90
3.	Jhang	2.0	13.	D. G. Khan	0.77
4.	Muzaffargarh	1.7	14.	Mianwali	0.74
5.	Gujrat	1.6	15.	Jhelum	0.62
6.	Gurdaspur	1.6	16.	Jullundur	0.35
7.	Sheikhupura	1.3	17.	Kangra	0.32
8.	Lyalpur	1.2	18.	Gujranwala	0.27
9.	Ludhiana	1.2	19.	Ferozepur	0.27
10.	Shahpur	1.1	20.	Karnal	0.27
	State	0.92	21.	Amritsar	0.20
			22.	Sialkot	0.14
			23.	Rohtak	0.13
			24.	Rawalpindi	0.10
			25.	Gurgaon	-0.44
			26.	Ambala	-0.64
			27.	Lahore	-0.70
			28.	Hissar	-1.10

*There were, in all, 29 districts in the undivided Punjab. We have had to leave out the hilly district of Simla which, in any case, is not important agriculturally.

†The agricultural output data were taken from the Season and Crop Reports of Punjab for the period 1906-07 to 1945-46 for 11 major crops only (namely rice, wheat, barley, jowar, bajra, maize, grams, rape and mustard, sugarcane, *desi* cotton and American cotton). Three-year moving averages of the crop-output were calculated in order to separate the seasonal factor from the long-term trend. These averages were then evaluated at 1924-27 average Punjab harvest prices which were again taken from the Season and Crop Reports. Then the equation $Y = ae^{Bx}$ (where 'Y' denotes the value of agricultural output at constant prices, 'a' is a constant to be estimated, 'x' is the number of years and 'B' the rate of growth per annum) was fitted to this series through the method of least squares. Columns (3) and (6) show values of 'B' for different districts.

The rest of the nine districts in column (6) with quite low (0.10 to 0.35% p.a.) but positive rates of growth were mostly the densely-populated districts of the Central Punjab from where there was a drain of enterprising cultivators and in some degree capital, to the canal colonies. The bottom four districts in column (6) had negative rates of growth. Three of these districts were the arid south-eastern districts with the most erratic pattern of rainfall and were often the victims of famines.

As we have already noted, most of the above average districts were in the canal colonies which received new irrigation on a large scale during the period under study. This leads one to make a strong conjecture that public irrigation was a dominant factor in the process of agricultural growth during this period. This hypothesis is further corroborated by the findings of Raj Krishna for the state of Punjab as a whole over the somewhat shorter period of 1913-14 to 1945-46.³⁹

Raj Krishna computes rates of growth of agricultural output (taking eleven major crops only) for the Punjab as a whole over two partly overlapping periods, namely 1913-46 and 1939-57. He uses different sets of prices for these two periods. Fitting a Cobb-Douglas type of production function with (i) irrigated and (ii) unirrigated acreage, (iii) rural population (as a proxy for input of labour in agriculture), (iv) productivity change and (v) rainfall as the explanatory variables, the author finds high inter-collinearity between certain variables and in order to avoid the same, drops (iii) and (iv) i.e. rural population and technology from the production function. It turns out that growth of output in Punjab during 1913-46 which was about 1.1% p.a.,⁴⁰ was mainly a function of the irrigated acreage which accounted for about 93% of the actual growth-rate while unirrigated acreage contributed only a minor proportion of the total growth in output. Productivity per acre, according to this study, did not grow in this period and growth was largely explained by area-extension.

39. Raj Krishna, "The Growth of Aggregate Agricultural Output in the Punjab", *Indian Economic Journal*, July-September, 1964.

40. This rate is quite close to the rate of growth of 0.92% p.a. computed by us for the period 1906-46.

Along with this agricultural growth which can be chiefly attributed to extensive public irrigation works, there were signs of growth in other sectors of the economy too. Though the precise interactions between agriculture and other sectors have not been studied systematically, some general remarks can be made about the increase in activity in other sectors, specifically trade and industry.

Consequent upon the increase in agricultural output and better means of transportation, there was an impressive rise in the export of raw cotton, grains, pulses and oil-seeds from the Punjab to other parts of India over the period 1898-1938.⁴¹ The Punjab made increasing imports of 'luxury' consumer goods such as cotton textiles, sugar, precious stones and metals. Exports of wheat more than doubled from 250,000 tons to 561,000 tons per annum over 1892-1922. Trade with foreign countries, though an insignificant part of the total trade, increased in quantity.

While all this expansion was taking place in the primary and tertiary sectors, the industrial sector too did not remain stagnant. The number of factories as well as persons employed therein roughly trebled between 1908 and 1938. Most of the industries were, however, small scale and cottage industries and the factory industries were yet in an elementary stage.⁴² Most of the industries belonged either to the category of agriculture-based (e.g. cotton, vegetable fibres, essential oils, sugar, etc.) or live-stock and forest-based industries (e.g. wool, silk, tanning and leather-work, miscellaneous animal products, wood and wood products, etc.). There were a few chemical and metal industries, but they were not quantitatively significant. Moreover, these industries generally suffered from shortage of fuel, raw materials and technical know-how. Even in the absence of precise statistical information, it may be safely assumed that the advancing industrial sector of the region was more or less agriculture-based. This provides still another motive for the study of agriculture which seems to have been a leading sector in the Punjab since the beginning of the present century.

41. This paragraph and the first sentence of the next paragraph are based on Thavaraj's discussion of the impact of public investment.

42. The information in the paragraph has been taken from Latifi, A., *The Industrial Punjab*, 1911, Introduction.

So far, we have attempted to present a descriptive account of the development of public irrigation and the formation of the canal colonies in the Punjab around the turn of this century. We also hinted at the resulting agricultural growth for which we provided a set of district-wise estimates relating to the period 1906-46. With this background in view, we may now present a couple of comparisons which may yield certain useful hints regarding the factors associated with the growth of agriculture in the Punjab.

First of all, we may compare the performance of the Punjab (India) agriculture over two stretches of time—before and after the partition respectively—and note the pattern of inter-temporal variations in the districts' rates of growth. Secondly, we may contrast the district-wise rates of growth in West Punjab (belonging now to Pakistan) to those in East Punjab (India) in the recent past, against the background of their corresponding performances in the previous period when they both formed parts of the same administrative region. This may be of interest as both these regions, though politically distinct at present, form geographically contiguous areas with roughly the same type of agriculture and similar irrigation facilities.

Table 2 presents estimates of the rates of growth of agricultural output for East and West Punjab districts over two periods of time—before and after the partition respectively. Confining ourselves to the first four columns (i.e. 11 districts only), we note that for all the districts, annual rates of growth over 1952-64 are uniformly higher than those over 1906-46. None of the eleven districts grew at less than 1.0% p.a. during 1952-54 while only two districts, (Ludhiana and Gurdaspur) registered a rate of growth slightly greater than 1.0% p.a. over the period 1906-46. Six of these eleven districts had positive rates below 1.0% p.a. and the remaining three had negative rates of growth during the latter period. Of the four districts which grew at rates lying between 4% and 6% p.a. during 1952-64, two (namely Ambala and Hissar) had negative rates of growth in the earlier period 1906-46, one (Karnal) had a negligible, positive rate of growth of 0.3% p.a. and only one district (Ludhiana) grew at a rate slightly greater than 1.0% p.a. Apart from these four high-growth districts, six districts grew at 2-3% p.a. and only one

TABLE 2
PRE-PARTITION AND POST-PARTITION RATES OF GROWTH IN EAST PUNJAB AND WEST PUNJAB DISTRICTS

Serial No.	District (East Punjab)	Rate of Growth 1906-46 p.a.	Rate of Growth 1952-64 p.a.	Serial No.	District (West Punjab)	Rate of Growth 1906-46 p.a.	Rate of Growth 1949-59* p.a.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1.	Karnal	0.27	5.7	1.	Lahore	-0.70	6.09
2.	Hissar	-1.10	5.33	2.	Jhelum	0.62	5.36
3.	Ambala	-0.64	4.83	3.	Mianwali	0.74	5.13
4.	Ludhiana	1.20	4.15	4.	Multan	4.10	3.14
5.	Jullundur	0.35	3.16	5.	Gujranwala	0.27	2.55
6.	Ferozepur	0.27	2.88	6.	Attock	0.52	2.40
7.	Hoshiarpur	0.90	2.74	7.	Lyallpur	1.20	1.92
8.	Rohtak	0.13	2.50	8.	Shahpur	1.16	1.86
9.	Gurdaspur	1.60	2.14	9.	Gujiat	1.10	1.60
10.	Gurgaon	-0.44	2.95	10.	Montgomery	5.50	1.20
11.	Amritsar	0.20	1.03	11.	Muzaffargarh	1.70	1.09
12.	Patiala	—	9.10	12.	Sialkot	0.14	1.06
13.	Bhatinda	—	6.80	13.	Jhang	2.00	1.01
14.	Mahendragarh	—	5.90	14.	Rawalpindi	0.10	0.85
15.	Sangrur	—	4.30	15.	Sheikhupura	1.30	-0.22
16.	Kapurthala	—	2.00	16.	D. G. Khan	0.77	-3.12
	State	—	4.10		State	—	2.00

*The post-partition period considered in the case of West Punjab is 1949-59 due to data difficulties.

NOTE: Columns (3 and 7) are taken from Table 1. Columns (4) and (8) are computed by the same method (least-square fitting applied to a semi-log form of relationship), using average 1952-55 Punjab harvest prices for evaluating the output of the eleven major crops selected for the purpose.

district (Amritsar) grew at about 1.0% p.a.⁴³

Two facts seem to stand out on the basis of the above comparisons:

- (i) All the East Punjab districts (including the Pepsu districts) have been growing faster over the period 1952-64 compared to the pre-partition period 1906-46;
- (ii) The relative position of most of the districts changed considerably from the earlier to the later period.⁴⁴

Keeping in mind these features of the inter-temporal agricultural scene in East Punjab, we proceed to compare the performance of West Punjab to that of East Punjab in the agricultural field over a stretch of ten and twelve years respectively after the partition, the periods considered in two cases not coinciding completely. Comparing columns (3) and (7) of Table 2, it seems evident that the performance of agriculture in West Punjab was much better than that in East Punjab during the forty years immediately before partition. The state (i.e. undivided Punjab) grew at slightly less than 1.0% p.a. during this period, as has already been noted above. Eleven districts, of a total of twenty-seven districts considered, performed better than the state as a whole. Nine of these belonged to what is now West Punjab and only two belonged to the part which is now East Punjab. Also, at the other end, three East Punjab districts experienced a decline in agricultural output while only one West Punjab district showed a negative rate of growth over 1906-46. The remaining districts in East and West Punjab (six in each case) grew at rates which were positive, but below the state-average.

43. Punjab as it existed in 1964, included 5 Pepsu districts four of which experienced high rates of growth (between 4 and 9% p.a.) above the state-average over the period 1952-64. Though these Pepsu districts have always belonged geographically to the Punjab, they were ruled by independent, feudal lords before the partition and systematic agricultural data could not be found for these districts for the period 1906-46.

44. For example, we give the ranks of some districts during the earlier and later periods respectively: Gurdaspur (1,9); Hoshiarpur (3,7); Kangra (5,12); Karnal (7,11); Ambala (11,3) and Hissar (12,2). The rank-correlation co-efficient considering eleven districts works out to be -0.173 approximately, implying negative correlation between the pre-partition and post-partition performance of these districts.

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To sum up, we may say that on the average, West Punjab seems to have experienced a significantly higher growth in agriculture than East Punjab (excluding Pepsu districts of course) over a fairly long spell of time before the partition. This is consistent with the pattern of large-scale public investment in irrigation and colonisation in West Punjab over roughly the same period.⁴⁵

However, the picture changes significantly when the post-partition period is considered. Comparing columns (4) and (8) of Table 2, we find that the agricultural output in West Punjab was growing at a moderate rate of 2.0% p.a. over the decade 1949-59 while the rate of growth registered by East Punjab as a whole (i.e. including Pepsu districts) was slightly more than 4.0% p.a. over 1952-64. Only three of the sixteen West Punjab districts experienced rates of growth above 4.0% p.a. while eight of sixteen districts of extended Punjab grew at more than 4.0% p.a. during the post-partition period. Apart from these high-growth districts in both the Punjabs, East Punjab had seven districts growing at rates between 2% and 3% p.a. and only one at about 1.0% p.a. whereas West Punjab could claim rates of growth between 2% and 3% p.a. for only three districts, 1-2% p.a. for eight districts and negative rates for the remaining two.

The district-wise rates of growth for the pre-partition and post-partition periods respectively seem to be generally inversely related to each other. In other words, the districts which enjoyed significant agricultural growth in the earlier period (1906-46), grew generally at below-average rates of growth in the latter period (1952-64) and *vice-versa*. However, the phenomenon of reversal is meaningful in relative terms only. In absolute terms, most of the districts in the undivided Punjab (26 out of 28 districts, to be precise) grew at less than 2.0% p.a. over the period 1906-46, while sixteen (i.e. more than half) of these districts grew at more than 2.0% in the

45. Public investment in irrigation in West Punjab started during the last decade of the 19th century whereas all the major irrigation projects in East Punjab had been completed by this time. Had we extended the period backwards (which was not, however, possible due to non-availability of data), we might have found evidence of fast growth in East Punjab districts prior to 1906-1907.

post-partition period.⁴⁶

We have already stated that the period over which we have compared the post-partition performance of agriculture in the two Punjab is not strictly comparable. There is reason to believe, however, that if the period considered for West Punjab (i.e. 1949-59) could be extended to 1963-64, the rate of growth of agricultural output would rise significantly. 1958-59 is considered by many experts to be the point of departure for West Punjab agriculture after which, it is reported, extensive tube-well schemes were launched by the government or by private enterprise with government assistance. On the other hand, there is some evidence of the growth of agricultural output levelling off at about the same time (i.e. 1959-60) in East Punjab.⁴⁷

While reviewing the spatial pattern of agricultural growth in the Punjab over two different stretches of time, what strikes one most is the unmistakeable association between increase in cultivated area and irrigation facilities on the one hand and growth of agricultural output on the other. This is clearly noticeable in the case of undivided Punjab in the pre-partition period where canal colonies recorded the most rapid growth in agricultural output. We have also referred to the *reported* spurt in agricultural output in West Punjab and extensive investment in ground-water irrigation in the period following 1958-59. On the basis of these observations, we may venture to hypothesise the expansion of area and irrigation facilities to be amongst the factors most closely associated with the growth in agricultural output in East Punjab during the post-partition period.

46. The absolute improvement in the performance of agriculture in Punjab in the latter compared to the earlier period may be mainly due to the period considered before the partition being too long to show the impact of increase in cultivated area and irrigation facilities on agricultural output in a more spectacular manner. Increase in cultivated area is obviously a once-for-all source of increase in output while the rise in agricultural output on account of an increase in irrigation facilities too may level off over a period, slightly longer or shorter depending upon the improvement in technology and use of other modern inputs accompanying the provision of irrigation facilities.

47. In a continuation of this study, it has been found that the overall rate of growth of agricultural output (of 19 crops which include some of the important commercial crops in addition to the eleven major crops) for East Punjab rises by more than 25% (i.e. from 4.05% to 5.17% p.a.) if the period 1951-61 is taken instead of 1952-64. The rise is, however, 50% if only eleven crops are considered.

Government, Landlord and Tenant in India, 1875-1900

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I. The Relation of Landlord and Tenant: Rent, Custom and Contract

In an agrarian society rights in land are the constitutive elements of political and economic power. The structure of this society reflects the way in which numerous interests are accommodated in a scale which reaches from the tiller of the soil to the highest authorities of the state. Landlord and tenant are designations of such interests, their position may differ according to the specific scale in which they are placed. In India these two terms were burdened with alien connotations because British revenue officers, who had to fix the responsibility for paying the revenue on somebody, stream-lined agrarian relations by following their own native model. In England landlord and tenant had made the transition from feudal status to modern contract. In India the enjoyment (*bhoga*) of a part of the produce of the soil and of the labour of those who were destined to till it was still very much a matter of status. A contractual relationship tends to focus on the two partners to the contract and, as far as its economic aspect is concerned, it will be governed by competition. Rights which are based on status do not refer to two partners but are conceived of in terms of the whole status scale, the share of the produce is accordingly governed by custom. Customary rates may be affected by changes in the structure of political power but they cannot respond to economic competition, as they are normally expressed in terms of propositions which reflect social privileges. Customary rent is, therefore, in every respect different from the kind of rent about which Ricardo said that it does not influence prices but is influenced by them. In fact, Ricardo's dictum may be reversed

in the case of customary rent; it is not influenced by prices, as it is based on fixed proportions of the produce, but it influences prices, because it regulates the production and distribution of the crop.¹

The commutation of rents, which were hitherto paid in kind, into rents payable in cash contributed more than anything else to the great change in the relation of landlord and tenant in India in the nineteenth century. This commutation was not a simple transition from a less convenient to a more convenient form of payment; it was a revolutionary change from customary to contractual rent. By accepting this commutation landlord and tenant abandoned the customary status scale in which their respective shares of the produce were fixed by the sanctions of tradition, and faced each other as partners to a contract for which they were individually responsible. That this was done gradually and with great caution could be observed from the numerous stages of commutation which often existed side by side in the same area. The first step was usually to agree on a cash payment for the customary share of the produce at the current price; the next step was an annual money rent, both parties reserving the right to return to the customary produce share; the fixing of a money rent regardless of the produce might be the third step and it was only then that the rent could become a matter of bargaining between landlord and tenant, as both of them wanted to get a larger share of the value of the produce.²

The change from one role to another and from one type of rent to another was not very smooth. Old and new relationships between landlord and tenant, and between tenant and sub-tenant existed side by side. This complicated pattern of dependence contained elements of privilege and of economic coercion. All relationships tended to become ambivalent. In keeping with this ambivalence "rent" was neither customary nor governed by universal competition and corresponded to an arbitrarily differentiated squeeze, thus confounding

1. For Ricardo's doctrine in the Indian and in the Irish context see Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India*, Oxford 1959, p. 88 ff., and R. D. Collinson Black, *Economic Thought and the Irish Question, 1817-1870*, Cambridge 1960, pp. 15 ff., 54, 245.

2. For a description of this process see the report of Major Erskine in Government of the North West Province and Oudh, *The Condition of the Tenantry in Oudh*, Vol. II, Allahabad 1883.

both those who looked to custom and those who believed in a market rate when dealing with Indian rents.³

The ambivalent rent structure did not behave in the proper Ricardian way but it had also lost its customary stability; it could combine the worst of both worlds by responding to a rise in prices and then cutting so deep into the earnings of the tenant as to leave him without a sufficient margin for the cost of production.⁴ The vicissitudes of rural credit added further complication to this rent structure. The tenant had to sell the crop at a low price so as to pay the rent and repay his loan and frequently he had to buy grain later in the year at a higher price from the same grain-dealer to whom he had sold his crop and to whom he was indebted because the dealer was also a moneylender. In many places the moneylender soon became a landlord and in this case the credit-system and the rent structure merged into a perfect blend. But even where he did not become a landlord the moneylender was able to exploit the existing pattern of agrarian relations to his advantage. His activities were restricted only in those areas where the landlords provided credit to their tenants.⁵

The new rent-and-credit-structure and the remnants of customary relationships enmeshed landlord and tenant in a web of confusion and conflict. The introduction of money rents facilitated the subletting of land, sometimes referred to as "sub-infeudation", which would have been very difficult under the customary system as the levels of those who had a share in the produce were more or less fixed. The contractual relation of landlord and tenant fitted in with

3. For an illustration of this problem see Government of Bengal, Board of Revenue, Minute by Mr. Dampier of 25 June 1883 (regarding the experiments to establish a Table of Rates); see also the author's paper "The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 and its Influence on Legislation in Other Provinces", *Bengal Past and Present*, July-Dec. 1967.

4. For a discussion of this problem see the Minute of Lord Ripon and the Despatch of the Government of India to the Secretary of State, June 1885 in Government of India, Legislative Dept., Oct. 1886, Pro. No. 211-270; also the Minute of Lt. Gov. Rivers Thompson, in Government of India, *Papers re. Bengal Tenancy Bill*, No. II, Calcutta, 1884.

5. See the Note on Land Transfers in Government of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Oct. 1895, Pro. No. 72-73.

this development, but at the same time this concept of the relationship precluded the recognition of the rights of those who were tenants of tenants, because a tenant could not be a landlord and only a landlord could have tenants. This paradox was most striking in the ryotwari provinces where the government was supposed to be the landlord and the ryots were government-tenants. As these ryots could not be landlords their tenants did not exist as far as the government was concerned. In fact, the existence of such tenants had to be ignored even as a matter of principle, since nobody would want to be the tenant of a ryot as long as the government was willing to give him uncultivated land. If ryots had tenants, as indeed they had, it was better not to look too closely into the matter because this might upset the whole theory of the ryotwari settlement.⁶ In other provinces, where the British-Indian government did not pretend to be the landlord, the problems of sub-letting could be faced without such qualms. But even then it was difficult to cope with it and all kinds of terms like "tenureholder" and "under-ryot" had to be coined in order to designate interests which did not fit into the simple pattern of landlord and tenant.⁷

Another notion which did not agree with the British concept of landlord and tenant was the customary division of an estate into *sir*, i.e. land under the immediate control of the landlord, and other land which was let to tenants. Only in those parts of Northern India where *sir* had been differentiated for the purposes of revenue assessment did this concept prevail. Both in the permanently settled areas where pure landlordism had been introduced and in the ryotwari provinces where no landlords existed this concept

6. The contrast between Ryotwari and Zamindari systems became a problem for the Government of Madras when tenancy legislation for the Zamindari areas of this province which was predominantly Ryotwari had to be taken into consideration, see Government of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Sept. 1904, Pro. 37-38.

7. A tenureholder is, according to Section 5 of the Bengal Tenancy Act VIII of 1885, a tenant who holds more than 100 bighas, a ryot could acquire an occupancy right in land held by a tenureholder; an under-ryot is the tenant of a ryot.

was obliterated.⁸ Accordingly the customary right of the tenant to an undisturbed occupancy of his holding in the land allotted to tenants outside the *sir* of the landlord had also lost its meaning and all tenants could be treated as tenants-at-will if they could not prove that their occupancy was based on a contract with the landlord. As long as there was enough land and the prices were stable or falling, the problem of sub-letting and of the tenant's occupancy right did not disturb agrarian relations. But the combination of money rents and population pressure induced the tenant to sub-let his land as soon as he could afford it and made the landlord jealous of the tenant's occupancy right. A landlord who felt that the money-rent which he received did not keep up with the rise in prices would be eager to reduce all his tenants to the status of rack-rented tenants-at-will so as to enjoy the full increase in the value of his property. Once customary rent had been abandoned the other customary constraints would seem to be irrelevant.

Rising prices were the most important cause of a rapid change in agrarian relations as they provided a strong incentive for the commutation of customary rents into money rents. If the money rent left the tenant with more than he would have retained under the customary system he could sub-let land or raise a larger family, in both cases this would contribute to an increase of the rural population.⁹ With an increasing population prices would continue to rise and landlords would be tempted to raise the rent. The combined rent-and-credit-squeeze would always have some effect and it would also contribute to a further rise in prices. This system could work only if there was a steadily growing supply of money, because demonetization and deflation would have put it into reverse gear. It so happened that in the years after 1876 the development of the Indian currency showed an inflationary tendency and monetization

8. For a discussion of the distinction between land under the management of the landlord and land let to tenants see Government of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, May 1898, Pro. No. 11-16; also the Memorial of the Madras Landholders Association of 4 July 1898 in Government of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Sept. 1904, Pro. No. 37-38; for Bengal see Peary Mohan Mookerjee, *Opinions of Mofussil Landholders on the Bengal Tenancy Bill*, Calcutta 1883.

9. See the minutes of Lord Ripon and Rivers Thompson referred to in footnote 4.

was no problem. A stream of silver tore landlords and tenants away from their customary moorings and swept them into a new world where their relationship had to be defined in different terms.

II. Monetization and the Depreciating Silver Currency

Silver depreciated rapidly after 1876 due to an increase in world production of this metal. While other nations demonetized silver India absorbed the world's surplus to an amazing extent. The increase in the active circulation of silver rupees in India outpaced the growth of population considerably. Whereas the population increased at about 1% per annum the currency expanded on an average by about 2.3% per annum in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ This amounted to an induced inflation. Internal rupee prices were rising. India exported foodgrains in spite of a drastic fall of the gold price for this commodity at the time of the world agrarian crisis.¹¹ The silver screen protected the Indian agricultural market from the impact of world competition. Even when there was a glut in the world market people could starve in India while foodgrains were exported. By absorbing silver and exporting wheat at the lowest price India provided the balance at the base of the world economy of the late nineteenth century.¹² The expansion of the currency maintained a curious balance: the total value in terms of gold of the expanded silver currency of 1893 was about the same as that of 1876.¹³ For this reason one may

10. The figures for the total active circulation are based on the calculations of Fred Atkinson, "Rupee Prices in India", *Journal of the Statistical Society*, Vol. LXVI, 1903, pp. 112-112; the census data are taken from Govt. of India, Census Reports 1881 and 1891.

11. For the fall in gold prices see the index numbers of Augustus Sauerbeck published in his article on "Prices of Commodities and the Precious Metals", *Journal of the Statistical Society*, Vol. XLIX, 1886, reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson, ed., *Essays in Economic History*, Vol. III, London 1962, pp. 68-127.

12. See Fred Atkinson, "Silver Prices in India", *Journal of the Statistical Society*, Vol. LX, 1897, p. 117.

13. The total active circulation, as calculated by Atkinson (see footnote 10) was 1890 million rupees in 1893. If reduced by 36% (depreciation) this would amount to about Rs. 1186 million; the total circulation in 1876 was Rs. 1250 million.

speak of a "static expansion" of India's currency. This phenomenon was in tune with the general development of agrarian relations in the country. The rent-credit squeeze and the practices of grain-dealers helped to maintain a steady rise in prices. Prices would rise due to famine or scarcity but never drop so much as to touch their level for any length of time. The grain-dealers were able to hold the price line even during years of a good harvest.¹⁴ They may have bought more cheaply in a good year, but this did not mean that they would sell cheaply. Being well integrated in the rent-credit-squeeze system they were anyhow used to buying at a low price and selling at a higher price later on.¹⁵ Due to the sufficient flow of money the system was not subjected to deflationary pressure which might have broken the catch and started an avalanche of falling prices. The flow of money was guaranteed to a great extent by the peculiar way in which the Government of India paid their home charges. These charges had to be paid in gold in London but in order to facilitate the transfer the Secretary of State would sell Council Drafts to be redeemed in silver in India.¹⁶ As long as the Government of India could raise the money in silver the system could continue to operate. The Indian mints were open to the free coinage of silver but the government was bound to its revenue resources and these could not be augmented so as to keep up with the depreciation of the currency. This finally forced the government to close the mints in 1893, and to introduce a gold-exchange standard by which the rupee was maintained as a token coin. The currency remained a silver currency but was rated at its gold exchange value.¹⁷

The deflationary effect of this measure was very severe. The Government of India had put monetary development into reverse gear for purely fiscal reasons. But there was no immediate drop in

14. See F. Atkinson, "Rupee Prices in India", *Journal of the Statistical Society*, Vol. LXXII, 1909, p. 566.

15. A good indication of the changes in the price level in the course of the year is given by the tables of monthly prices compiled by F. Atkinson, *loc. cit.*, 1903, p. 106.

16. See J.M. Keynes, *Indian Currency and Finance*, London 1913, p. 102 ff.

17. On the gold-exchange standard which does not imply a gold currency, see Keynes, *op. cit.*, p. 15 ff., cf. also Barbour, *op. cit.*, Ch. XVII: "The Establishment of a Gold Standard in India and the Results of that Measure".

prices because a great calamity befell India at the end of the century. Severe famines set in and agricultural prices remained at their previous level while the currency slowly approximated the exchange rate at which the Government wanted to maintain it.¹⁸

III. The Land Revenue Problem : How to make both ends meet?

The land revenue was the largest single item in the budget of the Government of India.¹⁹ The problem whether this revenue was a tax or a rent was never satisfactorily settled,²⁰ but for all practical purposes it was a rent because it could not be adjusted to the requirements of the budget; once assessed it remained a fixed income which more or less determined the limits of the budget. The main item of the budget being so inelastic, the government was caught on the horns of a dilemma when the home charges had to be paid in gold but the revenue was received in depreciating silver. With indirect taxation or customs duties the government would have been riding the tide of inflation but the solid weight of land revenue attached it to the soil. Earlier plans of a permanent limitation of the land revenue demand were soon shelved²¹ and the new Department of Revenue and Agriculture was supposed to find ways and means of increasing the revenue.²² In this way the government was bound to antagonize the landlords who were eager to get more rent but did not want to pay more revenue. Long periods of settlement, usually 30 years, debarred the government from taking imme-

18. For the prices in the famine years 1896-97 see F. Atkinson *loc. cit.*, 1903, p. 106; for a discussion of the effects of the famines see B. M. Bhatia, *Famines in India, 1860-1945*, London 1963.

19. Govt. of India, *Reports of Currency Committees*, p. 1. The remittances of the Govt. of India amounted to 140 million rupees in 1873-74 and to about 265 million rupees in 1892-93, in 1873-74 the gross revenue of the Govt. of India was about 550 million rupees of which about 230 million were land revenue, cf. R.C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, London (Sixth Edition) 1950, p. 373.

20. For a discussion of the question "Is land reform a tax or rent?" see Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, June 1920, Pro. No. 41(B).

21. R.C. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 273 ff.

22. See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, April 1909, Pro. No. 11 (Memorandum by J.O. Miller, summarizing the evolution of revenue policy).

diate advantage of an increase in the rental assets of the landlord. But even at the time of the revision of the settlement it was deemed to be impossible to raise the assessment at once so radically as to catch up with the landlord's capacity to pay and the government's desire to receive revenue.²³ The only solution seemed to be either a shorter term of settlement or a prospective assessment which would take into account a future increase in the rental assets.²⁴ Other suggestions such as taking Ricardo's theory as an operational rule by tying rent and revenue to a price index were soon disregarded because they were not within the scope of administrative practice.²⁵ Short term settlements and prospective assessment were practicable but they could be objected to for reasons of sound revenue policy. Prospective assessments would have to be based on a projection of past trends in the development of prices and rents, and there was no reason why these past trends should continue in the future.²⁶ Short term settlements would be very unpopular, particularly after everybody had become used to long term settlements and the government had at one time even proposed to make all settlements permanent. The Secretary of State rejected all these plans of the Government of India and was at the most prepared to accept higher assessments which would not be introduced at once but only in stages, the additional revenue being remitted in the early years of a new term of settlement.²⁷ In this way the focus was shifted from the elasticity of revenue assessment to the elasticity of revenue collection.

In comparing their own rigid methods of revenue collection with those of previous regimes British administrators had often praised

23. See, for instance, Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, August 1892, Pro. No. 17-19.

24. See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, June 1895 Pro. No. 25-29.

25. See the suggestion of Justice Field as member of the Bengal Rent Law Commission, C.D. Field, *Land holding and the relation of Landlord and Tenant in Various Countries*, Calcutta 1885, p. 792 ff.

26. See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, May 1895, Pro. No. 31-32.

27. Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Dec. 1895, Pro. No. 44-46.

the elasticity of the revenue system of indigenous rulers who had taken more when the harvest was good and less when it was bad.²⁸ But this nostalgia for customary revenue collection, just as the quest for customary rent, was incompatible with the conditions created by British rule. Elasticity of revenue collection in terms of British administrative practice would only mean a more refined system of rules and regulations so as to take account of the rainfall, the condition of the people, etc. and thus it could only lead to another type of rigidity.²⁹

With the closing of the mints the whole problem of revenue assessment and collection receded into the background. In managing the currency the government could now use it as an instrument of indirect taxation and abstain from a direct assault on the revenue payers.³⁰ The methods of a pickpocket are usually less frightening and often more effective than those of a highwayman, and the highwayman may turn into a pickpocket when he finds himself without suitable weapons. If the Government of India would have been able to step up the land revenue demand so as to recover the loss incurred in paying the home charges, the mints would not have been closed and India could have absorbed the silver which America wanted to disgorge at that time. But as the mints had to be closed Britain turned a deaf ear to American pleas to re-open them and valiantly defended the integrity of the Indian currency for which it had not cared too much as long as the going was good.³¹

28. Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Feb. 1906, Pro. No. 7-9, and the earlier file on "Elasticity of Assessment and Collection of Land Revenue" in Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Jan. 1899, Pro. No. 15-20.

29. *Ibid.* ("Elasticity of Assessment . . .") cf. the suggestions of Denzil Ibbetson who wanted to base the revenue collection on the eleven-years cycle of the sun spots which are supposed to influence the average rainfall.

30. See the remarks of Mr. Moses in the Bombay Legislative Council, quoted in Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Dec. 1901, Pro. 26-27.

31. See Lord Farrer, *Studies in Currency*, London 1898, especially Chapter XI, "Bimetallism and the Indian Mints".

IV. Tenancy Protection : Who Gets What ?

As the government could not get at the landlord it thought of protecting the tenant. If it was impossible to recover a larger part of the rental assets of the landlord he should at least not squeeze any more out of his tenants. In order to protect the tenant sufficiently it was necessary to fortify his customary occupancy right as well as to restrict the right of the landlord to raise the rent.³² Prescriptive rights could be substituted for customary occupancy rights,³³ but rent restrictions were not easily accommodated in British legal concepts.³⁴ Customary rent was often referred to but it proved to be intractable both in legal and in practical terms. Legally it could not be defined and practically it could not be found, because wherever rents were paid in cash, custom had been obliterated, and where they were paid in kind the problem of rent restriction did not arise. Any inspection of the rents actually paid revealed a confusing pattern for which no common denominator could be found.³⁵ Therefore, arbitrary restrictions were adopted which placed a ceiling on rent enhancement regardless of the rent originally paid. The permissible rent enhancement which emerged in this way was a little less than 1% per annum, roughly corresponding to the average rise in prices as well as to the average rate of growth of the population, though no attempt was made to define the restrictions in these terms.³⁶

In restricting the rights of the landlord and augmenting those of the tenant the British administrators debated at length the concepts of custom and competition. Even if custom proved to be elusive and arbitrary restrictions had to be adopted this was thought of as

32. See the author's paper on the Bengal Tenancy Act (cf. footnote 3); for the Irish precedent see Lord Eversley, *Gladstone and Ireland*, London 1912.

33. See Radharomon Mookerjee, *Occupancy Right*, Calcutta 1919.

34. On the incompatibility of rent restrictions with British economic thought see Black, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 66, 69.

35. The experiments conducted by the Government of Bengal in order to establish a table of rates are an instance of this problem (cf. footnote 3).

36. The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 provided for a restriction of rent enhancements to two annas in the Rupee (12-1/2%) in fifteen years and the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 mentioned one anna in a Rupee (6-1/4%) for the statutory period of seven years.

somehow restoring a customary balance and reducing the harsh effects of competition. Some administrators who were very anxious to promote the good work of tenancy protection proudly stated that they had eliminated competition altogether.³⁷ Others warned them and demanded that at least the tenants-at-will should remain exposed to the undisturbed operation of competition because if they were also sheltered there would be no way of judging the market rate of rent.³⁸ In fact, those who were for and those who were against "competition" could only tilt the balance of the rent-credit-squeeze either in favour of the landlord or of the tenant by conferring privileges on the one or on the other. Under the prevailing circumstances agrarian relations in India could not enter the sphere of pure contract and, therefore, there could be no real competition. As customary relations were eroded by the impact of monetization the administrators had to establish a new status scale, and this is exactly what they did even though in reasoning about it they could not escape the universe of discourse which was familiar to them. In designing the new status scale the administrators were, therefore, constantly handicapped by their own concepts. In addition to these conceptual difficulties they had to cope with another problem inherent in the determination of a status scale. Such a scale was incomplete if it did not take into account all interests in the land, but they could not go beyond a certain point without upsetting their revenue system. This is what they meant by leaving certain interests to the operation of "competition". As a result of this a very uneven scale emerged of which only the upper echelons were marked in an arbitrary fashion by government interference.³⁹

The Indian economist, M. G. Ranade, suggested at that time that the government should cut the Gordian knot of agrarian relations by giving the tenants full proprietary rights and compensate the landlords by giving them equally unrestricted rights in the land under their own management to which they might add as much

37. See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, May 1898, Pro. 11-16, and Sept. 1904, Pro. No. 37-38.

38. *Ibid.*, Sept. 1904, Pro. No. 37-38, remarks by Ibbetson on rent and competition.

39. For a debate on administrative interference and rights in land see Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 53, 1907, Punjab Tenancy.

land as they would be permitted to resume from their tenants.⁴⁰ This suggestion foreshadowed the method of land reform adopted by independent India some seventy years later. But at the time when this suggestion was made it was definitely not in tune with the prevailing policy of tenancy protection, prevention of land alienation and relief of encumbered estates which added up to a kind of standstill arrangement imposed upon conflicting interests by a bewildered government. If the British administrators had followed Ranade's advice they would have been forced to make up their mind about the level at which full proprietary rights should be granted. But this was the very issue which they shirked for good reasons, because they were hardly able to find an answer to the question "Who is who?" in agrarian relations and, therefore, they were of course reluctant to decide once and for all who ought to get what. Their experience with the landed interests which they had created at an earlier stage taught them not to trust their own judgement too much in these matters. They were eager to keep the channels of executive and judicial control open and not to commit the government to any final legislative verdict.⁴¹ Shifting the pegs on the status scale by some legislative protection here or there was not as dangerous and irrevocable as going in for the new dispensation which Ranade recommended. The British had learnt by their experience in India that all legislative interference was like a shot in the dark which might hit anything but the point it was aimed at. They, therefore, preferred a tentative and remedial interference to a bold and new measure. However, even limited interference was bound to make an impact on agrarian relations. The British did not draw a bold line between different interests but as they singled out the substantial tenants for special protection and

40. M. G. Ranade, *Essays on Indian Economics*, Madras 1920 ("Prussian Land-legislation and Tenancy Bill", 1883).

41. Both the judges who preferred precedent to new legislation and the administrators who thought that executive action was the best remedy for the settlement of disputes between landlord and tenant were against legislative experiments. It was the existence of these vested interests as much as political prudence that curbed the activities of legislators in India and made them pay due respect to judicial or executive decisions as a means of adjusting agrarian relations.

devoted less attention to those lower down in the scale—they practically marked the strata of agrarian society which would benefit most from a land reform of the kind suggested by Ranade, and thus they predetermined in the nineteenth century the shape of things to come in the twentieth century.⁴²

V. Record of Rights : Who is Who ?

The only sure guide for anyone who wishes to penetrate the web of agrarian relations is a reliable record of rights. In many parts of India this guide was and still is conspicuous by its absence.⁴³ Those who tried to draw a line between different interests could never be sure of what they did because the rights which they wanted to distinguish were nowhere fully recorded and existed only in the minds of men. He who had the longer purse or the stronger influence could always see to it that others would accept what he had in mind.

A record of rights could only exist if it was imposed from above by the government or if it was kept as a record of division of shares among men of equal status. The ideal conditions for its maintenance would be if it existed for both these reasons as in the case of the estates and villages of Northern India where the record of rights was the basis of the accounts of the proprietary body and of the revenue assessment.⁴⁴ In all other parts of India where these conditions did not prevail there was no adequate record of rights. The government would normally be interested only in a record for

42. The profile of agrarian relations as it has emerged after several decades of tenancy protection is revealed in the interesting report by Wolf Ladejinsky who visited a few Indian districts which participated in an intensive agricultural programme, see W. Ladejinsky, *A Study of Tenurial Conditions in Package Districts*, Govt. of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi 1965.

43. For the discussion of the establishment of a record of rights in different Indian provinces see Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, July 1897, Pro. No. 1-12; see also Govt. of India, Papers re. Land Records Maintenance Act III of 1895, Calcutta, 1896, for the lack of an adequate record of rights see also Ladejinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 12, 24, 32.

44. See B. H. Baden Powell, *Land Systems of British India*, London 1892, Vol. II, p. 88 ff., 275 ff.

the purposes of revenue settlement. This record was sufficient if it provided information about those who were responsible for the payment of the revenue, and the government would hesitate to burden this record with any information which did not contribute to this aim. Settlements being of a long duration, the revenue authorities did not want to cope with the innumerable changes in property due to inheritance or alienation.⁴⁵ Strange as it may sound the revenue record in the course of time bore no relation to actual holdings and if it did then it was purely accidental. It even happened that the man whose name appeared in the revenue record did not own the land any longer but thought that this last connection with his land would help him to recover it if he could pay off the debt which had forced him to alienate the land.⁴⁶

It was only when the government wanted to check land alienation and to protect the tenant against the landlord that a record of rights for other than revenue purposes was asked for. But as the maintenance of such a record did not correspond to any strong interests and was resented by all those who thought that obscurity in agrarian relations was to their advantage it did not make much headway.⁴⁷ In the rent-credit-squeeze system neither the landlord nor the tenant was eager to put all the facts on record, because everybody hoped to get more by cheating the other rather than fighting for some right. This was only natural in a world where customary rights dwindled under the impact of monetization and new rights of the kind which should be recorded could only be regarded with suspicion. After all who wants to put his cards on the table if he does not know what game is to be played—and in a time of change nobody can tell the rules of the game. This tendency of suspended gamesmanship was best expressed in the preference for *benami* transactions, i.e. concluding deals under a false name. In some parts of India this was done as a matter of course,

45. See the remarks in the "Joint Report of 1847", *Selections from the Records of the Government of Bombay*, New Series no. 352, p. 3.

46. See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, Dec. 1897, Pro. No. 57-59.

47. For a discussion of these problems see Govt. of India Papers re. Land Records Maintenance Act III of 1895

even if no harm was meant by doing it, as one may not want to cheat anybody at present but should be prepared if one is forced to do so in the future.⁴⁸

VI. Limited Development: The Problem of a Hidebound System

The problem of answering the questions "Who is who?" and "Who gets what?" is indicative of the general ambiguity which pervaded Indian agrarian relations. The changes in the nature of rent and the strange phenomenon of the "static expansion" of the silver currency are inherent features of this ambiguity. Large scale monetization did not come to India as an invigorating influence; it only helped to convert the existing patterns of dominance and dependance into a rent-credit-squeeze system. In this way more people could be accommodated less comfortably in the narrow confines of an agrarian structure which did not change. Thus monetization was not used as a means of syphoning off capital in order to invest it in industries. The only agency which could have done this, the government as collector of the land revenue, looked at this revenue only from the narrow budgetary point of view of meeting the rising expenditure for the home charges. Being alien rulers and thinking only in terms of the dichotomy of custom and competition the British were unable to take any bold, constructive action. Lord Mayo thought of the improvement of Indian agriculture and held that "the only Indian landlord who can command the requisite knowledge and capital is the State".⁴⁹ This view was shared by Indian nationalists like Ranade.⁵⁰ but it did not represent the main stream of British opinion. The Department of Agriculture which Mayo started for constructive purposes was soon abolished and when it was re-established some years later it had to concentrate on such matters as the enhancement of the revenue assessment, tenancy legislation, and the prevention of land alienation.⁵¹ The

48. See Sir George Campbell, "Tenure of Land in India", in *Systems of Land Tenure in Various Countries*, London 1870.

49. Quoted by Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, "Laissez Faire in India" *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. II, 1965, p. 13.

50. For Ranade's view of the responsibility of the State in India see his essay "Indian Political Economy", 1892, in *Essays on Indian Economics*.

terrible famines which periodically overwhelmed India at that time bewildered the government and several famine commissions produced numerous recommendations which pointed to remedial legislation, but they never tackled the main issue why people in India should starve when a glut in the world market caused a fall in the prices of food grain.⁵² Theories about the automatic adjustment of international trade which would prevail over all temporary dislocations caused by the means of exchange deluded the British administrators⁵³ and they did not recognize the structural deformation which the stream of silver caused in India by holding it down at the lowest level of the world economy and creating an internal inflation which was not related to any productive investment. The limited development which took place in India did not create the basis for future economic growth but twisted and then reinforced the existing system of agrarian relations making it totally hidebound so that it became a liability rather than an asset.

51. See Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Central, Jan. 1882, Pro. No. 1-6 (Constitution of the Department of Revenue and Agriculture). The department was first established in 1871, then merged with the Home Dept. and was re-established as a full department in 1882; for the further history of the department see Govt. of India, Dept. of Revenue and Agriculture, Revenue, May 1890, Pro. No. 13 15.

52. For a summary of the findings of the Famine Commissions see B. M. Bhatia, *op. cit.*

53. The theory of automatic adjustment found a very influential proponent in Walter Bagehot, whose collected essays on currency in the *Economist* were published under the title *Some Articles on the Depreciation of Silver*, London 1877. Similar views were expressed by economists like Giffen and Goschen; their views prevailed for a long time over those held by the defenders of a universal gold standard like Farrer and Welby; for a further analysis of the currency problem see the author's forthcoming paper on "The Indian Silver Currency, 1876-1900".

The Nature and Scope of the Records From Peshwa Daftar with Reference to Zakat System

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It was an established practice in the Maratha Confederacy to charge Zakat (toll tax) on cattles, goods, animals, etc. Some information is available about these matters for the period 1730 to 1818. A class of traders known as Hundekaries, i.e. caravan traders, engaged in large-scale transport of goods were liable to pay Zakat. It may be noted that these merchants were not only engaged in transport but traded on a large scale. Ordinarily, Zakat included a transit charge as well as a tax on sale. These two types of taxes were collected in various marketing centres and on the trade routes. Even miscellaneous goods of relatively small value were also taxed.

The account references and notes relating to Zakat available in original historical *modi* papers make it possible to give a general account of the Zakat system of the times. This paper is based on the material from unpublished papers in Peshwa Daftar from the Alienation Office, Poona.

Feristas (Indexes) to the materials in Peshwa Daftar are available. The list below shows the relevant *rumals* (bundle of papers).

FERISTAS Nos.	RUMALS Nos.					
No. 5	345, 624,	618, 625,	619, 627,	620, 628,	621, 633.	623,
No. 20	4, 488,	84, 525,	409, 529.	484,	485,	487,
No. 24	1379, 1385,	1380, 1386,	1381, 1388.	1382,	1383,	

No. 22	127,	206.					
No. 31	127,	166.					
No. 82	137,	147,	140,	50,	126,	157,	
	53,	115,	144,	136,	156,	146,	143.
<i>Ghadani</i>	621,	622,	623,	624,	609,	626,	627,
	647,	628,	630,	631,	633,	634,	636,
	637.						
<i>Wad Rumal</i>	5.						

From the above-mentioned *rumals* about six thousand papers were examined and about two thousand were selected for copying. The selection included all varieties in the papers which had a direct bearing on this subject. The selected papers may be broadly classified into the following main types.

TYPE	CONTENTS
(1) <i>Yadi</i> (List)	: These papers give details of expenditures incurred by Zakat collectors.
(2) <i>Anjamas</i> (Estimates)	: Agreement papers relating to the grant of monopoly for the collection of Zakat
(3) <i>Taleband</i> (Accounts)	: These are accounts of Zakat receipts and expenditures of Zakat collectors.
(4) <i>Patre</i> (Letters)	: Public and private correspondence relating to Zakat.
(5) <i>Zakat Shirasta</i> (Usage)	: These are notes on the traditional charges of Zakat as then recorded.
(6) <i>Zakat Vahivat</i>	: These are notes about the traditional claimants to Zakat.
(7) <i>Hiseb</i> (Accounts)	: These are accounts of both of the caravan merchants and the traditional claimants.

For understanding the nature and scope of the papers these

papers can be approximately counted on the basis of (1) Period, (2) Region and (3) Type :

PERIOD	
<i>Years</i>	<i>No. of Papers</i>
1730-1760	200
1760-1818	1800

REGION	
<i>Region</i>	<i>No. of Papers</i>
1. <i>Poona Junner Karde Ranjangaon</i>	1000
2. <i>Kalyan Bhivandi</i>	550
3. <i>Sarkar Sangamner</i>	150
4. <i>Tapee Dakshinteer</i>	200
5. <i>Jakat Bandar Rohe Ashti</i>	25
6. <i>Jakat Revadanda</i>	25
7. <i>Pargane Nasik</i>	50

TYPES	
	<i>No. of Papers</i>
1. <i>Yadi</i>	25
2. <i>Anjamas</i>	1000
3. <i>Taleband</i>	600
4. <i>Patre</i>	50
5. <i>Zakat Shirasta</i>	100
6. <i>Zakat Vahivat</i>	25
7. <i>Hiseb</i>	200

The largest number of the type of papers are those relating to *Anjamas*, *Taleband* and *Hiseb*. It is possible to broadly describe the Zakat arrangements prevalent in the following regions on the basis of the papers mentioned :

1. *Poona Junner Karde Ranjangaon*
2. *Kalyan Bhivandi*

3. *Sarkar Sangamner*
4. *Tapee Dakshinteer*
5. *Jakat Bandar Rohe Ashti*
6. *Jakat Revadanda*
7. *Pargane Nasik*

There are, however, many difficulties in identifying the exact territorial limits of the units referred to above. The list we have given refers to the units of Zakat administration; however, we do not learn anything about the trade routes that pass through these units or the towns and villages included in them.

In order to overcome this difficulty we select one unit of Zakat Administration and try to reconstruct as complete a picture as possible from all available papers. The unit selected is *Poona Junner Karde Ranjangaon*. On the basis of the papers certain aspects of the subject appear to be relevant for reconstructing a picture of this unit. The points on which it appears reasonable to focus attention are the following.

- I Varieties of Zakat.
- II Rates of Zakat.
- III List of Zakat *Nakas*, the subdivisions of the Zakat units.
- IV Zakat receipts over a given period in given areas.
- V Examining the benefits, if any, accruing to those accepting or bearing responsibility of Zakat collection.
- VI Trade routes.
- VII Export and import from places of loading and centres of delivery respectively.
- VIII List of market centres.
- IX Benefits to government from Zakat income.

I. Varieties of Zakat

Understanding of the varieties of Zakat is basic to further discussion. Unfortunately, contemporary materials throw little light on this point. However, a few papers show that separate charges were made for transit (*Rahodari*) of goods and animals etc. and for the sale (*Hasil*) of goods and animals. We also get separate refe-

rences showing that Zakat was charged at the places of the loading (*Sthalabharit*) and unloading (*Sthalamod*) of goods respectively. However, the bulk of the papers make no distinction between different types of Zakat and only refer to Zakat in general. We, therefore, merely suggest that at least the four broad varieties of which we have found mention did exist.

The English administrators made enquiry about the Zakat System and as a result papers relating to a period 1818 to 1825 are available. These enable us to acquaint ourselves with the description of the varieties of Zakat.

The question paper prepared at the time of enquiry and the replies from the people are found in *rumals* from *Ferista* 31 of Deccan Commissioner from Peshwa Daftar.

II. Rates of Zakat

A very few papers giving the details about the rates of Zakat charges were found. Those found related to Zakat paid by Hunderkaries on particular routes and places. But as such papers relate to annual accounts of payments of Hunderkaries to Zakat collectors we are not in a position to describe the rates charged on different places on different routes.

In this matter again the enquiry conducted by the English administrators has made available useful papers.

Grant Duff's summarisation of this material may be taken as a basis of our account.¹

1. "Every Kusba has some usage in levying customs peculiar to itself, import and export which in England refer to the Kingdom, apply in India, where these duties exist, to import and export to and from Kusba, or villages within its range. Thus there are peculiar rates for the inhabitants of the Kusba, for the inhabitants of Mouzas dependent on Kusba and from persons coming from a distance, or from within the range of an adjoining Kusba. In cities or large towns where there are several markets, each separate division where such market is held is called *Pete* and is regulated in a manner nearly similar. Transit duties are of two sorts, one collected within the range of the Kusba and the other a general transit through the country. The general transit is a ready money payment and was commonly at least by the Mahomedans reserved by Government but the right of collecting within the range of Kusba is portioned in an intricate manner and most of the permanent agents of Government have some right to share in the customs which by them are collected in kind. Many persons have pensions upon the customs, a right of levying a small share from certain articles or exacting something from every one exposing their merchandise on a particular spot. This descend as hereditary and with the divisibility common to all Hindoo property" (J. G. Duff, *History of the Marathas*, Vol. I, p. 37, 1826 edn).

III. The List of Zakat Nakas—the Subdivisions of Zakat Units

The Zakat administration is already indicated above. The said territorial divisions can be described in their subdivisions, but the data regarding the number of Zakat *Nakas* are scarce and, therefore, nothing very specific about Zakat *Nakas* is learnt.

Many of the papers collected refer to the following divisions :

- (a) *Poona Karde Ranjangaon* ;
- (b) *Kalyan Bhivandi* ;
- (c) *Tapee Dakshinteer*.

As we limit ourselves to one unit, namely *Poona Karde Ranjangaon*, our papers help us to prepare a detailed list of the subdivisions. The list of subdivisions given below is based on papers from *Ferista* No. 5 and *Rumal* Nos. 621 and 623 from Peshwa Daftar :

I. SUBDIVISIONS AROUND POONA CITY

1. *Choutra Kasbe Poona*
2. *Nakasa Kasbe Poona*
3. *Chowki Ganesh Khed*
4. *Chowki Wadgaon Havelee*
5. *Mahal Patas*
6. *Yatra Morgaon*
7. *Chowki Vadki*
8. *Chowki Yavat Sandas*
9. *Mahal Lohogaon*
10. *Mahal Nirthadee*
11. *Rajur*
12. *Chowki Wadgaon Bade*

II. SUBDIVISIONS AROUND JUNNER

1. *Indoori Talegaon*
2. *Chowki Chandkhedi*
3. *Mahal Chakan*
4. *Mahal Khed*

5. *Mahal Pabal*
6. *Mahal Nikhoj Bhoyare*
7. *Mahal Aysari*
8. *Kasbe Talegaon Dhamdhere*
9. *Chowki Bahul Koregaon*
10. *Ghat Chondha*
11. *Chokee Kird Pimple*
12. *Mahal Bori*
13. *Mahal Wootur*
14. *Ghat Nana*
15. *Ghat Ahupa*

III. SUB-DIVISIONS AROUND ALANDI

1. *Alandi*

IV. SUB-DIVISIONS AROUND KARDE-RANJANGAON

1. *Pait*
2. *Sandas*
3. *Bhor*

As to the number of Zakat *Nakas* prevalent in these sub-divisions no information is available. But some papers refer to *Nakas* in Poona City alone. The information gathered is as follows. A paper dated 1782-83 directly refer to the number of *Nakas* in the City. A list of *Nakas* can be prepared. This list is as below based on papers from *Farista* Nos. 5 and *rumal* Nos. 621 and 623 from Peshwa Daftar.

1. *Naka Garpeer*
2. *Naka Panadesar*
3. *Naka Kumbarvesa*
4. *Naka Tophakhana*
5. *Naka Bhadki*
6. *Naka Kamathpur*
7. *Naka Musfarjanga*
8. *Naka Sangam*
9. *Naka Khadki*

10. *Naka Anagadathiya*
11. *Naka Ganeshkhed*
12. *Naka Wedge-modi*
13. *Naka Ganeshpeth*
14. *Naka Choutra*
15. *Naka Hadapsar*

Another paper dated 1738-39 mentions the name of one single *Naka* in Poona City, namely Havelee Kasbe. A third one dated 1763-64 mentions the names of three *Nakas* in the City, Shukrawar, Budhwar and Raviwar. One more reference is during 1788-89 which mentions four additional *Nakas*, *Naka Sirpuree*, *Naka Khadkee*, *Lohagaon*, *Naka Bangla*, *Naka Panad* Maval referred to in the paper dated 1782-83.

Similar information may be made available if still some of the remaining *rumals* were examined.

IV. Zakat Receipts over Given Period in Given Areas

Actual accounts during 1777 to 1783 are found from which a table can be prepared of sum total of receipts and expenditure of each year. The nature of such a table is as below based on papers from *Ferista* No. 82 Peshwa Daftar.

YEAR	RECEIPTS Rs.	EXPENDITURE Rs.
1777-78	1,10,679	1,25,525
1778-79	92,730	1,23,000
1779-80	1,20,991	1,50,308
1780-81	1,11,425	1,15,729
1781-82	1,04,001	1,39,993
1782-83	98,239	1,24,429

Similar information can be constructed regarding the receipts and expenditures of the rest of the divisions if the search of the papers is extended to some more *rumals*.

V. Examining the Benefits if any Accruing to those Accepting or Bearing the Responsibility of Zakat Collection

We have already mentioned that the collectors were responsible for collection. This makes the question of the profitability or otherwise of these collections a significant one.

The main relevant papers refer to accounts of collectors. These accounts show losses but for all the years they were actually financing the Government. The Government went on asking for the payments according to the terms under agreement though ultimate actual collections were often smaller, it follows therefore that to this extent the Government could overdraw.

There are, however, no instances of collectors having absconded or becoming insolvent. They would not have continued the business unless the direct or indirect gains over a long period exceeded what they had to pay.

The various aspects of this problem of the apparent or accounting losses need examination. There must have been sources of gain to the collectors that do not appear in the records. It is necessary to know the extent to which the Government supervised the collectors. It is also necessary to know whether the excess over receipts paid by collectors during particular years was borrowed or supplied from personal funds. While an examination of all these aspects would complete the description, it is necessary to content ourselves by noting that the account losses were actually as follows:

YEAR	LOSSES Rs.
1777-78	14,846
1778-79	30,269
1779-80	29,316
1780-81	40,324
1781-82	35,992
1782-83	29,190
(Ferista No. 82 Peshwa Daftar)	

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VI. Trade Routes

What the trade routes were in the area mentioned above is not known from the original papers; here also we have to depend upon the papers made available from the enquiry conducted by the British administrators during 1818 to 1825. The papers are available in *rumal* No. 127 from *Ferista* 31.

The non-availability of original papers may be true with reference to other areas also and perhaps the papers of 1818 to 1825 would have to be utilised.

VII. Export and Import from Places of Assembling and of Sale Respectively

The information about the import and export of goods traded in the whole area cannot be constructed because of the lack of source material.

VIII. List of Market Centres

References to market places are found in some papers from which a list of Market Centres can be prepared. But whether such a list is exhaustive or not cannot be decided because papers may be found mentioning some more places also. From the available data a list can be prepared:

1. *Poona*
2. *Kasabe Shiwapur*
3. *Khanapur*
4. *Nasarapur*
5. *Alakuli*
6. *Manchar*
7. *Gangapur*
8. *Sinnar*
9. *Supe*
10. *Hivare*
11. *Kondhit Khurda*
12. *Vamori*
13. *Sonagaon*

IX. Benefits to Government from Zakat Income

The Government used to ask its collectors to purchase clothes, dresses and ghee, for the Government and forward them to Government godowns. This requirement is specified in the terms of the agreement entered into the Zakat collectors. From these references the nature and the range of supplies can be ascertained.

Requirements mentioned in the accounts of the years from 1777 to 1883 of the collectors (based on Ferista No. 82 Peshwa Daftar) are given as an illustration

YEARS	REQUIREMENT IN MONEY VALUE Rs.	
1777-78	1 Clothes & dresses	7000
1778-79	2 Ghee	2000
1779-80	1 Clothes & dresses	7000
1780-81	"	"
1781-82	"	"
1782-83	"	"

The upshot is as far as the Zakat administrative unit *Poona Karde Ranjangaon* is concerned one finds rather full quantitative information but not enough qualitative information to enable us to fully interpret these quantities. We, therefore, get a broad picture of certain arrangements and the benefits to Government from the same. The position as regards the availability of records seems similar for other units of Zakat administration. We, therefore, have to content ourselves with the outlined picture that has emerged under each of the heads of discussion.

*The Social Background and Politics of the Muslims of Tamil Nad, 1901-1937**

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In recent years there has been an increasing tendency amongst historians interested in modern India to attempt a new analysis of the nationalist movement by a more detailed examination of regional societies and cultures. This has led to a variety of studies concerning the dominant social and religious groups in India—the Hindus, in such different regions as the Punjab and Tamil Nad, but as yet little research has been devoted to the Muslim communities of modern India. Certainly we possess several excellent general surveys of Muslim society, politics and culture in India before Independence but the image of the Muslims of India as a monolithic minority group has only recently been challenged¹.

The purpose of this article is to survey briefly the political history of the Muslims of Tamil Nad during the first thirty seven years of this century. In particular the article examines the sources and nature of social tension between sub-groups within the community; their differing responses to the burgeoning nationalist movement and the eventual development of political unity within the community in the 1930s.

The Muslim community of Tamil Nad is the oldest extant Muslim community in the Indian sub-continent. Islam was introduced into southern India by Arab traders who for generations prior to, and after, the advent of Muhammad, carried on a flourishing trade with the Malayalam- and Tamil-speaking areas of India. Islam was

*The research for this article was made possible by a scholarship and travel grants from the University of Western Australia between 1967 and 1968.

1. Mujeeb, M., *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967), p. 23.

originally confined to small Arab trading settlements along the coasts of Malabar and the Gulf of Manaar but as Arab trading influence increased under the benevolent aegis of various mercantile-based Tamil dynasties the nature of the Islamic community in the south changed.² Various indigenous trading and fishing groups were converted to Islam with the approval of local rulers, who were eager to encourage Arab mercantile activities by establishing a permanent nexus between the Islamic Arab world and southern India in the form of an amenable supply of local craftsmen and labourers.³ Considerable intermarriage ensured that by the thirteenth century the indigenous language and culture had largely obscured the Arabian purity of Islam in Tamil Nad. In everything but religion the Muslims of south-east India formed an integral part of local society by this period.⁴ Tamil society was extremely caste-conscious and was split into a multitude of socially exclusive but economically inter-dependent groups. It was a fractional society where group distinctions were accepted as an integral part of society. Thus the Tamil Nad Muslims, who spoke Tamil and who could by and large claim an ethnic identification with the region were able to maintain their identity as a religiously distinct group. In addition, they possessed an economic niche within local society which was maintained in succeeding centuries.

It would be incorrect, however, to view the Muslims of Tamil Nad as a homogeneous group. They were a conglomerate community which grew slowly as a result of intermarriage and conversions. This led to the formation of various exclusive sub-groups within the community defined in terms of geographical and racial or caste origin.⁵ Groups of indigenous origin retained a degree of caste-consciousness to the extent of maintaining endogamy and rules of commensality while certain other groups claimed direct

2. Aiyangar, S. K., *South India and Her Muhammedan Invaders* (Madras 1921), pp. 70-73.

3. Gopal, R., *Indian Muslims: A Political History (1858-1947)* (Lucknow, 1959), p. 1; Qureshi, I.H., *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent (610-1947)* (S-Gravenhage, 1962), pp. 12-18. See also various Madras District Gazetteers.

4. Hemingway, F. R., *Tanjore District Gazetteer*, vol. 1., p. 60 and other Madras District Gazetteers.

5. Qureshi, I.H., *op. cit.*, p. 16; see also Madras District Gazetteers.

Arab descent and adopted endogamy to preserve their racial purity.⁶

From the thirteenth century onwards a further element was added to Islamic society in Tamil Nad. As a result of repeated incursions by Muslim rulers from north and central India and rule of the Nizams of Hyderabad and the Nawabs of Carnatic there was a steady stream of Muslim migration from northern India.⁷ These Muslims were mostly Urdu-speakers whose descendants form the present-day Muslim populations of Mysore and Andhra states but numbers of them settled in Tamil Nad as soldiers and administrators. They shared neither the language nor culture of the Tamil-speaking Muslims and had no desire to identify with any aspect of local society. They formed an exotic ruling class which maintained its minority consciousness and sense of community identity apart from local society.

The advent of British rule had a mixed effect upon the Muslims of Tamil Nad. The Urdu-speakers were dispossessed as a military and administrative group and, lacking any land-holding or mercantile background, they rapidly sank into poverty and sullen apathy. They rejected the educational and administrative innovations introduced by the British with the result that they were replaced by local non-Muslim groups,⁸ particularly the Brahmins, who quickly acquired the administrative skills required by the British.⁹ The Tamil-speaking¹⁰ Muslims were better equipped to adapt to British rule. They found new avenues of economic exploitation,

6. "Indigenous groups": Labbais, Ravuttam, Jonagans, Panjuvettis; "Arab groups": Navayats, Marakayyars. At the best the claims of the latter groups are tenuous.

7. See Madras District Gazetteers for North Arcot, Bellary, Nellore, South Arcot, Cuddapah, Kurnool; Aiyar, R. S., *History of the Nayaks of Madura* (Madras, 1924), pp. 1-4; Mahalingam, T. V., *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar* (Madras, 1940), pp. 319-20.

8. *Selection from the Record of the Government of India*, Home Dept, No. 205 (Calcutta, 1886), pp. 153-55.

9. Madras Govt. *Administration Reports* (annual) contain a selection on communal representation in the Public Service.

10. Hereinafter "Urdu-speaking Muslims" and "Tamil-speaking Muslims" are abbreviated to "Urdu Muslims" and "Tamil Muslims".

and their traditional entrepreneurial skills stood them in good stead. By the end of the nineteenth century they held a virtual monopoly of the prosperous and modern tanning industry in southern India, as well as controlling the trade in skins and hides from northern India.¹¹ They had a traditional interest in the village-based tanning industry and the skin and hide trade and were apparently the only entrepreneurs interested in establishing the business on a modern basis when Western techniques were introduced in the 1850s.¹² Tamil Muslims also held a disproportionate share in the import-export trade of Tamil Nad and in the coastal and Ceylon sea-trade.¹³

Demographically the Muslims formed approximately 3 per cent of the populations of the Tamil districts by 1900 with a ratio of one Urdu Muslim to three Tamil Muslims.¹⁴ But the figure of 3 per cent gives no real indication of their position in the region. In some Tamil districts the Muslim percentage was 3 per cent or less but in others it rose as high as 5-7 per cent.¹⁵ In addition the Muslims were more highly urbanised than any other indigenous group excepting the Indian Christians, and in the case of the largest city in the Presidency,¹⁶ Madras City, they formed 11.26 per cent of the population in 1901.¹⁷ In many other urban centres, especially along the Gulf of Manaar, they formed a disproportionately-large section of the population and were in some instances in a majority.¹⁸ Despite their overall numerical insignificance, their demographic distribution was such that they were located in or near the centres of power and wealth in southern India in numbers which were sufficient to remind both their rulers and their fellow Indians constantly of their presence.

11. Dupuis, J., *Madras et le Nord du Coromandel* (Paris, 1960), p. 220.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

13. See *Madras District Gazetteers* for Tinnevely, Tanjore and South Arcot.

14. *Census of India*, 1901, vol. XV, part I, pp. 133, 165.

15. *Ibid.*, Ramnad (6.9 per cent), Tinnevely (5.77 per cent), Tanjore (5.48 per cent), Nilgiris (5.21 per cent), Salem (2.36 per cent), Chingleput (2.29 per cent).

16. Tamil Nad was formerly part of the Madras Presidency which comprised Malayalam, Tamil, Kanarese and Telugu speakers.

17. *Census of India*, 1901, vol. XV, part I, pp. 23-26.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 13; *Ibid.*, 1911, vol. XII, part II, pp. 16-21.

Until the early years of the twentieth century the Madras Presidency was a political backwater when compared with other important regions in British India notably the Bengal and Bombay Presidencies. However, there was not a total absence of political activity and the foundation of the Indian National Congress did not go unmarked in the region. There is not much evidence of widespread political activity in the Tamil *mofussil* until well into the twentieth century, but in Madras City there was growing interest in the nationalist movement by 1900. It was the largest urban centre south of Bombay and was both the political and intellectual capital of southern India. Situated in the border area between the Telugu- and Tamil-speaking regions of the Presidency, the city contained the wealthiest and most articulate section of the Hindu community in the south and was also the largest urban centre of Muslim population in the Presidency. The Mahajana Sabha was the premier nationalist organisation in the city and drew its support from the westernised Hindu elite and to a limited extent from their counterparts within the Muslim population of the city.¹⁹ However, the bias of the Aligarh school and the Nizam of Hyderabad against Congress limited Muslim support for its activities in Madras City,²⁰ as did the fact that the Muslim community in the city was split into two socially-exclusive groups. The major group comprised Urdu Muslims who had flocked to the city from the Telugu and Tamil *mofussil* and had their own quarter in Triplicane. The other smaller group comprised Tamil Muslims centred upon Georgetown (Blacktown). The preponderance of Urdu-speakers within the largest urban Muslim centre in the Tamil districts is not really surprising. It was due to their dispossession by the British and their need to find new avenues of employment, hence their settlement in the centre of commercial and government activity in the south. In addition the city also had the historical attraction of having been the last capital of the Nawabs of the Carnatic whose descendant, the Prince of Arcot, lived there. The Tamil Muslims, on the other hand, were

19. *Annual Congress Session Reports*, 1887, 1888, 1889.

20. Bombay Govt., *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Bombay, 1958), pp. 31, 73, 81, 86.

not subject to the same economic dislocation, and fewer of them migrated from the *mofussil*.

Although the Madras City Muslims were not an affluent community, a small core of wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs had emerged during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Their commercial contacts with northern India, the medium of the press and improved communications, slowly drew these more prominent Muslims in Madras City into the mainstream of modern Muslim social, cultural and political activity centred upon northern India. Certainly the Urdu Muslims of Madras City were courted by north Indian Muslim organisations such as the All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference and the Nadvath-ul-Ulema, both of which were attempting to weld the Indian Muslim community into a whole as a result of increasing social and political activity amongst non-Muslims and growing Muslim self-consciousness.

The Urdu Muslims of Madras City responded readily to such stimulus and in 1901 established the first major Muslim communal organisation in southern India, the Southern Indian Muhammadan Educational Association, following the Madras City session of the annual All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference.²¹ Likewise in 1901 a branch of the Nadvath-ul-Ulema was established after that organisation held its annual session in the city.²² The Urdu Muslims possessed social and economic grievances which were not shared by the more secure Tamil Muslims, who readily identified with the region they inhabited. Having lost their former status which depended upon political and administrative control, as did their economic position, the Urdu Muslims, in Madras City at least, were awakening to the need to secure educational and employment concessions from the Government if they were to regain some of their former social status *vis-a-vis* the dominant sections within the Hindu community.²³

Both organisations were primarily concerned with articulating

21. Southern Indian Muhammadan Educational Association, *Golden Jubilee Souvenir 1902-52* (Madras, 1954), pp. 25-28, also *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir 1902-62* (Madras, 1964), pp. 101-103.

22. *New India*, 1917, 24 Feb., p. 5.

23. Madras Govt., Public Dept., G.O. 1172 (Press), 19 Sept. 1912.

the grievances and aspirations of the Urdu Muslims, particularly in relation to Muslim employment in the public service where they were grossly unrepresented except at the lowest levels,²⁴ and the preservation of the Urdu language which was "regarded by many Muhammedans as an indication of social and even of religious status".²⁵ There was no overt concern for Tamil Muslim problems, indeed, there was no interaction between Tamil and Urdu Muslims in this awakening of communal consciousness which was a purely Urdu Muslim phenomenon. The existing divisions within the Muslim community were exacerbated by the growth of such Urdu Muslim social and educational organisations which were conceived in an all-India rather than a regional setting.

Between 1901 and 1914 Urdu Muslim self-consciousness in Tamil Nad was heightened by the foundation of the All-India Muslim League in 1906 and its provincial branch, the Madras Presidency Muslim League, in 1908, and also by growing Pan-Islamic sentiment.²⁶ Local Urdu Muslim political activity, especially after the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909 and the "Cawnpore affair [which] aroused the Mahommedans of the Presidency to a more active political interest than is usual in this part of India",²⁷ faithfully mirrored Urdu Muslim political activity elsewhere in India. Urdu Muslim organisational leadership was provided by Madras City merchant families such as the Badshas, and by members of the princely Arcot family. Merchant leadership was reinforced by the role they played in the successful Educational Association²⁸ and by the absence of any Muslim landholding class such as the *zamindars* of northern India who exerted both a historical and financial leadership. The Muslim merchants of Madras City approximated in wealth if not in historical prestige to the *zamindars* of the north, while the Arcot family had some claim to historical prestige.

The First World War was the turning point in Muslim political

24. *Ibid.*, G.O. 263 (Ms), 3 Apr. 1907.

25. *Ibid.*, G.O. 1172 (Press), 19 Sept. 1912, enclosed letter from the Educational Association dated 20 Oct. 1909.

26. Madras C.I.D. Reports on Native Owned Newspapers, 1908-14, *passim*.

27. Govt. of India, Home Dept. Political, A, Nov. 1914, nos. 33-38.

28. Southern Indian Muhammadan Educational Association, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

activity in Tamil Nad. Tamil Muslims were, for the first time, drawn into the maelstrom of nationalist and communal politics. The bulk of the Tamil Muslims had proved impervious to the growth of Pan-Islamism in India prior to the War as they had no emotional attachment to the temporal power of Islam. However, economic and political grievances during the War finally stirred many of them into overt political activity.

This did not become evident until after the Lucknow Pact in 1916. Until then Muslim politics in Tamil Nad had been dominated by two Urdu Muslim groups. The best organised of these was the Presidency Muslim League which consisted of two factions; one comprised aristocrats and political conservatives under the leadership of the Prince of Arcot and his kinsman, Muhammad Usman, and the other comprised young western-educated nationalist sympathisers and merchants led by Yakub Hasan. Arcot and Usman, a traditionally-educated medical practitioner, were social and political conservatives, intensely loyal to the British and convinced that neither the Muslims nor Hindus were capable of any degree of self-government. As such they were against any Muslim involvement in the nationalist movement and were more interested in securing education and employment concessions from the British, rather than political concessions, to improve the lot of their community. Yakub Hasan on the other hand had received a western-education at Aligarh and since settling in Madras City as a merchant in 1901²⁹ had become increasingly sympathetic towards the nationalist struggle and believed that although his community still needed certain safeguards because of the educational and economic backwardness they were "an important part of the Indian nation and must have equal opportunities with the other component part to serve the motherland".³⁰ The second major group comprised fervent Pan-Islamists whose spokesman was Abdul Majid Sharar, editor of a popular Madras City Urdu language daily, the *Qaumi Report*. Sharar's family was strictly orthodox and he received a classical education in Urdu, Arabic, Persian and theological subjects. A brilliant student he received the honorific "maulvi" while still a

29. His family was originally in the service of Bikaner.

30. Hasan, Y., *Hindu-Muslim Problem* (Madras, 1917), p. 5.

youth and was the foremost exponent of Pan-Islamism in the Presidency. He viewed both sections of the Muslim League with equal scorn: Arcot for his pro-British sympathies and Hasan for his western-education and support of the Lucknow Pact which Sharar rejected on the grounds that "our mode of living is entirely different [from that of the Hindus] and nowhere has there been any contact between the two communities".³¹

The Lucknow Pact further split the Urdu Muslims. Arcot and his followers rejected the concept of close co-operation with Congress and denied the necessity or advisability of wringing further concessions from the British.³² Under the leadership of the energetic Usman this dissident faction formed the ultra-loyalist Islamic League³³ and established contact with various politically-conservative and loyalist Muslim leaders in northern India.³⁴ The remaining Leaguers, led by Hasan, closely followed the pattern established by Jinnah in the north and drew closer to local Congress organisations.³⁵

This three-fold split in the most articulate section of the Tamil Nad Muslim community was further complicated in 1918 and following years by the development of the Khilafat movement. In the period immediately following the Lucknow Pact most Tamil Muslims had been apathetic regarding the Congress-League *rapprochement*. Annie Besant raised scant Tamil or Urdu Muslim support for her Home Rule League despite occasional success at various peaks of unrest over the Ali brothers.³⁶ With the deve-

31. *Qaumi Report*, 5 Mar. 1917, Madras C.I.D. Reports on Native Owned Newspapers, 1917.

32. Madras Presidency Muslim League, Minutes, 30 Nov. 1917; *House of Commons Papers*, 1918, vol. XVIII, Cd. 9178, pp. 61, 62-63; Madras Govt. Public Dept., G.O. 885-86 (Ms), 27 Sept. 1918.

33. Govt. of India, Home Dept. Political, Deposit, Jan. 1918, no. 2; *Hindu*, 1917, 24 Nov., p. 3, 5 Dec., p. 5.

34. *New India*, 1918, 2 Jan., p. 8; Govt. of India, Home Dept. Political, Deposit, Mar., 1918, no. 38.

35. *Ibid.*, Aug. 1917, no. 3; *Ibid.*, Nov. 1917, no. 6; *Ibid.*, Nov. 1917, no. 29 et al.

36. E.g. Govt. of India, Home Dept. Political, Deposit, Aug. 1917, no. 3; *ibid.*, May 1918, no. 22.

lopment of the Khilafat movement and the emergence of Gandhi as champion of Muslim sentiment, the pace of Muslim political activity in Tamil Nad rapidly increased. Between the Lucknow Pact and the emergence of the Khilafat agitation as a definite political movement, however, several important developments had occurred in the sphere of Muslim political activity in the south. In particular as a result of wartime taxation and trade restrictions³⁷ which had affected adversely the Tamil Muslim-dominated tanning industry there had been an upsurge in Tamil Muslim support for the Madras Presidency Muslim League which, albeit unsuccessfully, championed Tamil Muslim economic grievances by establishing the Southern Indian Skin and Hide Merchants' Association.³⁸ In addition religious agitation from 1917 on by north Indian and local *ulema* roused the religious susceptibilities of the Tamil Muslims by relating the fate of Islam with the fate of the Khalif.³⁹ The result of these developments was increasing Tamil Muslim support for the Presidency League and the eclipse of the Islamia League. For the first time Tamil Muslims were initiated into communal and later nationalist politics.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Proposals were warmly welcomed by the Muslims of Tamil Nad.⁴⁰ They had the effect of temporarily weakening their links with Congress and overshadowed their concern for the Khilafat. The majority of local Muslim leaders were prepared to accept the Proposals and were disappointed by the negative attitude of the Special Session of Congress at Bombay in 1918.⁴¹ However, this breach was healed by the publication of the Treaty of Sevres in 1920. The severity of the treatment meted out to Turkey pushed the constitutional reforms into the

37. *Hindu*, 1917, 20 Oct., p. 5; *Pioneer*, 1917, 12 Jan., p. 6; Imperial Institute, *Indian Trade Enquiry Report on Hides and Skins* (London, 1920), p. 87; Madras Govt., *Administration Report*, 1915-16 to 1917-18.

38. Perumal, N., *Jamal Mahomed* (Madras, Pushpam, 1936), p. 39; *Hindu*, 1917, 25 Oct., p. 7.

39. Govt. of India, Home Dept. Political, Deposit, March 1917, no. 26 and K.W.

40. Madras Govt. Public Dept., G.O. 327 (Ms), 7 June 1919.

41. *First Annual Report of the Madras Liberal League* (Madras, 1919), pp. 1, 4, 32.

background and there was an upsurge in support for the Khilafat movement amongst the Muslims of Tamil Nad.⁴²

Between 1920 and 1923 Hasan, Sharar and C. Rajagopalachariar led the Congress-Khilafat agitation in Tamil Nad. Pan-Islamist and pro-nationalist Muslims sank their differences and worked with Congress in defence of the Khilafat. Rajagopalachariar was an avid admirer of Gandhi with the result that he introduced Non-Co-operation into southern India where it became the practical expression of the Congress-Khilafat alliance.⁴³

The introduction of Non-Co-operation revealed the weaknesses in the post-Sevres alliance. The Presidency Muslim League dissolved in a spate of internal quarrels concerning the programme and the politically-conservative Muslim faction emerged once more: in alliance with the Justice Party in the first Reformed Council of 1921-23. Non-Co-operation was too extreme for many of the older Muslim leaders; they were essentially cautious merchants possessing a long-term view of the progress to be made by their community and they withdrew their support from the Presidency League.⁴⁴

Most of them were conscious of the justice of Muslim grievances but as one of them, Mir Asad Ali, wrote in his letter of resignation,

while fully aware of the incompetence of the present bureaucratic administration to cope with the growing political situation in the country, I should certainly hesitate to advise the adoption of any unconstitutional or impracticable programme of public action to make the deep resentment felt . . . However excellent the principle of non-co-operation may be it cannot be adopted as a practical measure unless the country [is] prepared to carry it out in spite of all anticipated obstruction. I believe such a programme both inadvisable and inexpedient besides being calculated to do more

42. Govt. of India, Home Dept. Political, Deposit, nos. 19-31; *Ibid.*, July 1920, no. 97.

43. *Ibid.*, Nov. 1920, nos. 19-31; *Indian Annual Register*, 1921, p. 289.

44. Madras Presidency Muslim League, Minutes of meetings, 29 Sept. 1920, 15 Dec. 1920; Sastri to Venkatarama Aiyar, 13 Aug. 1920, Servants of India Society Papers, Madras City.

harm than good to the people in the present condition of Indian society.⁴⁵

The majority of such men remained on the sidelines of the political agitation committing themselves to neither side. A few, however, decided to make use of the reforms and in 1921 they entered the Legislative Council, where under the leadership of Usman they allied themselves with the politically moderate, non-Brahmin Justice Party. This party appeared to be dedicated to a moderate process of constitutional evolution towards self-government and offered the Muslims tangible education and employment concession as well as a means of undermining the Brahmin stranglehold on these areas.⁴⁶

The collapse of Muslim political unity in Tamil Nad heralded a re-emergence of the Urdu-Tamil Muslim cleavage. Members of both groups were scattered throughout the political spectrum but, in general leading Tamil Muslims were opposed to the non-co-operation programmes as were the more prominent Urdu Muslim merchants, although conversely few of them supported the Justice Party.

By 1923 the inter-communal Khilafat Committee, which had superseded the Presidency Muslim League, had foundered. Gandhi's "calling off" of Non-Co-operation, the abolition of the dual role of the Khalif as spiritual and temporal ruler by Attaturk, the secession of Sharar and the Pan-Islamists from the Committee and improving economic conditions⁴⁷ tempered the urgency of Muslim political interest. Sharar had never been comfortable in the Hindu-Muslim alliance, and by late 1920 was in conflict with Hasan and Rajagopalachariar who attempted to curb his religious fanaticism and stressed the secular nature of the movement as the only means of maintaining the inter-communal alliance.⁴⁸ The Muslim-Justice Party alliance collapsed with the failure of the Justice Party to fulfil the demands of its Muslim supporters and to include any

45. Madras Presidency Muslim League, enclosed letter dated 29 Sept., 1920.

46. *Madras Legislative Council Debates*, vol. XV, 27 Nov. 1923, p. 50.

47. Madras Govt., *Administration Reports*, 1919-20 to 1924-25; Southern Indian Chamber of Commerce, *Golden Jubilee Souvenir 1910-60* (Madras, 1960), pp. 14-16.

48. Govt. of India, Home Dept. Political, Deposit, July, 1920, no. 94.

Muslims, apart from the ubiquitous Usman, in the inner councils of the Party. One of the former supporters of the alliance summed up the spirit of Muslim disillusionment when he stated:

we entrusted our destiny into their hands What have they done to that trust? Their record is summed up in one word 'cipher', so far as the Muhammedan interests are concerned [and] for three years we have been ignored and neglected.⁴⁹

There was in any case a basic lack of popular Muslim support for the conservative alliance: few Muslims identified with the non-Brahmins at a social level, and the most capable Muslim leaders were actively opposed to the Justice Party.

Between 1923 and 1934 the Muslims of Tamil Nad drifted in a political vacuum. They had been alienated from the Justice Party, which in any case was rent by factional rivalry.⁵⁰ The attempt at intercommunal co-operation failed with the collapse of the Khilafat agitation and the Non-Co-operation movement. Despite this there was no great rise in Hindu-Muslim antipathy but rather an alienation occasioned by a lack of effective Muslim leadership and a re-orientation of Muslim objectives which led to apathy towards overt political activity.

The Muslim community of Tamil Nad became more introspective during these years. In the absence of divisive political movements there was a slow merging of Urdu and Tamil Muslim interests. The Presidency Muslim League was defunct, and leading Tamil and Urdu Muslims turned their energies towards the social and economic amelioration of the community. The Southern Indian Muhammedan Educational Association lost its purely Urdu Muslim bias and there was an increase in its *mofussil* activities where it provided a means of communication between Madras City and the scattered Tamil

49. *Madras Legislative Council Debates*, vol. XV, Nov. 1923, pp. 50-51.

50. See Irschick, E.F., "Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separation, 1916 to 1929" (Ph. D. thesis, Chicago University, 1964), *passim*.

Muslim communities.⁵¹

There was not of course a complete absence of Muslim political activity in Tamil Nad. The 1920 reforms had increased the elected Muslim representation in the Madras Legislative Council from two to 12, of whom seven were from Madras City and the Tamil-speaking districts.⁵² Consequently there was a constant representation of Muslim interests in the government; however, this representation was diverse in character. There was no specific Muslim political party or bloc in the Council apart from a very nebulous party formed in 1926;⁵³ some Muslim MLCs supported the Swaraj Party, some were independents, and a few were "Muslim Justicites". Most Muslim MLCs were vaguely pro-nationalist although wary of Congress leadership, with the result that they tended to follow in the wake of the nationalist opposition in the Council although they refused to join in the walk-out and election boycott of the Swaraj Party during the period.⁵⁴

There were various attempts by some Urdu Muslims to introduce north Indian-inspired aggressively communalist organisations into Tamil Nad but these met with little success.⁵⁵ There was no popular Urdu Muslim leadership, Sharar had died in 1923 and Hasan retired from political activities between 1923 and 1930, and virtually no communal conflict in the south. In addition Tamil Muslims held aloof from such organisations. The economic position improved considerably between 1923-30 with the revival of trade and industry,⁵⁶ and their parochial interests were still strong despite the close

51. Southern Indian Muhammedan Educational Association. *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir, 1902-62* (Madras 1964), pp. 104-107; *ibid.*, *Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1902-52* (Madras, 1954), pp. 51-59.

52. *House of Commons Papers*, 1921, vol. XXVI, Cmd. 1261.

53. Hasan, U., *Party Politics* (Madras, 1930), p. 8; *Hindu*, 1926, 28 Jan., p. 5, 23 Sept., p. 4.

54. *Memo. of the Madras Govt. on the Working of the Reformed Govt. Submitted to the Indian Statutory Commission* (Madras 1930), p. 348; *Indian Statutory Commission* (London, 1930), vol. VI, p. 195.

55. *Hindu*, 1926, 15 Mar., p. 5, 5 Apr., p. 8; Govt. of India, Home Dept. B, Dec. 1925, no. 112; *ibid.*, May 1926, no. 112.

56. Madras Govt., *Administration Reports, 1923-24 to 1928-29*; *Indian Quarterly Register*, 1930, vol. I, pp. 420-23.

alliance with the Urdu Muslims during the Khilafat agitation.

By the early 1930s, however, certain events precipitated the Muslims of Tamil Nad into a search for political unity and a definite political identity. The failure of Jinnah's overtures to Congress in the late 1920s, renewed communal strife in northern India, the visit of the Simon Commission, and the failure of the Round Table Conferences all contributed to Muslim nervousness regarding their political future in India. With the prospect of constitutional reforms in the immediate future and with the world trade depression undermining Tamil Muslim economic interests⁵⁷ a feeling of insecurity began to permeate the Muslim community in Tamil Nad. Muslims in the region, both pro- and anti-nationalist,⁵⁸ had little faith in Congress leaders and began to cast around in an attempt to strengthen their community on a political basis. Evidence of this can be found in the statement issued by ten of the twelve Muslim MLCs in 1927 condemning Congress proposals for joint electorates. Several of the signatories had formerly been strongly pro-Congress but they subscribed to the statement that:

under the present circumstances, joint-electorates for Muslims in this Presidency . . . will not only prove detrimental to the political advancement of the Muslim community but will also jeopardise the interests of Muslims and to a very great extent hamper the friendly relationship that exists between Hindus and Muslims.⁵⁹

The growing political unity amongst rival Muslim factions in northern India⁶⁰ stimulated the search for unity in the south by offering Muslims throughout India a concrete focus for their diffuse and sublimated political energies which had first been roused on a national basis during the Khilafat agitation.

Between 1932 and 1934 both the All-India Muslim League and

57. Madras Govt., *Administration Report, 1929-30*, pp. 118, 138, 144; *ibid.*, 1930-31, pp. 103, 117.

58. Hasan, U., *op. cit.*, p. 5; Govt. of India, Reforms Dept., 35/31-R, 1931.

59. *Indian Annual Register*, 1927, vol. I, p. 37.

60. Waheed-uz-Zaman, *Towards Pakistan* (Lahore, 1964), pp. 62, 75.

the Madras Presidency Muslim League were re-established.⁶¹ In Tamil Nad the League received the support of most Muslim MLCs and prominent Urdu and Tamil Muslim merchant leaders in Madras City and the *mofussil*.⁶² However, the leadership of the revived League was radically different from that of its predecessor: Tamil Muslims, led by Jamal Mahomed, were its main organisers and its strongest support came from the Tamil *mofussil* areas.⁶³ This was due to several factors, namely Tamil Muslim disillusionment with Urdu Muslim politics and leadership, and also to changes within the Tamil Muslim group. The Khilafat agitation had sharpened the group's sense of Muslim identity and blunted its parochial outlook, while during the 1920s the increasing activities of Tamil Muslims in the Educational Association, Tamil Muslim settlement in Madras City, and the experiences of Tamil Muslim MLCs had all combined to break down the barriers between sub-groups in the Tamil Muslim community. Amongst Tamil Muslims the concept of themselves as a regional minority group had subsumed their previous tendency to think of themselves as members of a village or district quasi-caste. To a limited extent they were attaining the larger sense of community identity that the Urdu Muslims had always possessed, and yet there were differences. The Urdu Muslims were confined by a romantic political outlook that sought no regional outlet and had singularly failed to satisfy the group, with the result that it was split into rival antagonistic factions, none of which had clear political objectives.

The Muslim political outlook was largely negative; it was based on a sense of political and economic grievance, and a lack of social integration with non-Muslims and was coloured by their romantic concept of themselves as part of the predominantly Urdu-speaking north Indian Muslim cultural community. The Tamil Muslim political outlook, too, was compounded by political and economic grievances, but it was modified by a strong regional identification

61. Madras Govt., Public Dept. G.O. 254 (Ms), 15 Feb. 1932; *Indian Annual Register*, 1932, vol. I, p. 301; *ibid.*, 1932, vol. II, pp. 286-7, 298; *ibid.*, 1934, vol. I, pp. 316-19.

62. *Hindu*, 1936, 3 Aug., p. 10.

63. *The Deccan Times Muslim League Special* (1940), p. 83.

and a leadership which for all practical purposes wished the group to continue as a functional part of Tamil society. In this respect their political outlook was positive—it was essentially sympathetic towards nationalist goals and concerned that the Muslims of Tamil Nad should participate in the government of an independent and multi-communal India.

The problem was, how to maintain this Tamil Muslim outlook, the unity of Tamil and Urdu Muslims and how to organise a provincial Muslim political party affiliated to the Urdu Muslim-dominated All-India Muslim League? Essentially the problem was one of identity: how was this peculiar Tamil Muslim view of themselves to be reconciled to the dominant Urdu Muslim concept of Indian Muslims?

The credit for reconciling these diffuse objectives must go to the Tamil Muslim leadership and in particular to Jamal Mahomed. He was one of the wealthiest Muslim merchants in the Presidency and although he lived in Madras City he maintained extensive personal and business contacts with the Tamil *mofussil*. Between 1917 and 1920 he had supported Yakub Hasan and the Madras Presidency Muslim League but retired from politics when the Non-Co-operation programme was adopted. His family had founded and supported many of the more active and flourishing Muslim educational, charitable and religious institutions in Tamil Nad, and socially represented a balanced meeting of Urdu and Tamil Muslim cultures. Jamal Mahomed was respected by both groups while his wealth and activities in mercantile circles⁶⁴ throughout India assured him of considerable personal following and he was able to establish the Presidency League with a wider base of support than it ever had before. The former Presidency League had failed to extend its activities into the *mofussil*, whereas Jamal Mahomed established branches in all the Presidency's districts and particularly in Tamil Nad.⁶⁵ Instead of attempting to force unanimity of political opinion upon the Muslims

64. Pernal, N., *Jamal Mahomed* (Madras, 1936), *passim*; Dupis J., *Madras et le Nord Coromandel* (Paris, 1960), p. 219; 1931 he was Pres. of the All-India Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry; 1929-34, Pres. of the Southern Indian Chamber of Commerce.

65. *The Deccan Times Muslim League Special* 1940, p. 83.

of Tamil Nad Jamal Mahomed organised a compromise political front, The Muslim Parliamentary Board, specifically designed to contest the 1937 elections which were due as a result of the constitutional reforms embodied in the Government of India Act in 1935. The Board comprised representatives of the Presidency League, stalwart pro-nationalists who had held aloof from the League, independent Muslims and politically-conservative Muslims.⁶⁶ It was an amazing conglomeration of antagonistic factions with little in common apart from a desire to see the Muslims fight the election as a united community. Support for the Board was induced by the vague and widespread sense of political insecurity amongst the Muslims of Tamil Nad and by the communal but conciliatory political outlook of Jamal Mahomed: that was characteristically Tamil Muslim.

Jamal Mohamed's first accomplishment once the Board had been established was to reach an electoral agreement with the local Congress leader, C. Rajagopalachariar.⁶⁷ The essence of the agreement was an understanding that neither organisation would nominate rival candidates to Muslim electorates, and Congress was apparently allocated Muslim electorates where the local leadership was firmly pro-Congress. The Board was in fact an adjunct of the Presidency Muslim League as Jamal Mahomed was President of both and the majority of candidates were *mofussil* members of the League;⁶⁸ nevertheless some Board candidates were nationalists in all but membership of Congress and had not joined the League. These men were elected with the support of Congress and the Board.⁶⁹

The Board was soon faced with some local Muslim opposition, particularly from Urdu Muslims. There were three main opposition groups: extreme communalists; "Muslim Justicites"; and

66. *Hindu*, 1936, 3 Aug., p. 10.

67. This was confirmed in an interview with Jamal Mahomed's nephew, Mahomed Ismail Sahib M.P. Pres. of the Indian Union Muslim League, 1 Dec. 1967 but denied by C. Rajagopalachariar in an interview, 19 Jan. 1968. The available evidence supports the statement of Mahomed Ismail.

68. *Directory of the Madras Legislature* (Madras, 1938), *passim*.

69. *Ibid.*; *Hindu*, 1937, 25 Jan., p. 15.

active members of Congress led by Yakub Hasan who had re-emerged in the early 1930s as an exponent of communal *rapprochement*. The extreme communalists were led by two former Khilafatists and Congressmen: Abdul Hamid Khan, a wealthy North Arcot merchant and an ex-employer of Hasan, and Abdul Latef Farookhi, a former protege of Abdul Majid Sharar and editor of the proscribed Madras City Urdu language daily, the *Azad Hind*. Neither of these men were effective leaders. Both were respected for their religious orthodoxy but Hamid Khan was old and ill while Farookhi was too erratic in his actions and too inconsistent in his statements to inspire a large personal following—during this period his statements veered without apparent consistency from violent diatribes against Hindus to effusive praise for Congress! Originally these men supported the Board⁷⁰ but later they resigned in protest against the understanding with Congress and formed the Muslim Progressive Party.⁷¹ They denounced the supposed Congress bias of the Board, appealed for communal harmony, attacked all inter-communal political organisations and claimed that they alone represented the political policy of Jinnah.⁷² This was a vain attempt to re-establish the former dominance of the communalist element within the community as opposed to the Tamil Muslim spirit of compromise. In sentiment the Muslim Progressive Party was compounded of a variety of political outlooks previously articulated by Pan-Islamists, the Islamia League and the Muslim communal movements of the mid-1920s which Farookhi had attempted to implant in the south.

The Muslim Congressmen acquiesced in the Congress-Board pact, but the majority of prominent "Muslim Justicites" under the leadership of Usman were never reconciled to the Board. Some defected from the effete and disorganised Justice Party to form the inter-communal Peoples' Party⁷³ but most remained faithful to their old party. Both the Muslim Progressive Party and the Peoples' Party contested Muslim seats but only the former gained a seat—in the

70. *Ibid.*, 1936, 3 Aug., p. 10.

71. *Ibid.*, 1936, 8 Aug., p. 9, 4 Sept., p. 15, 24 Sept., p. 16.

72. *Ibid.*, 1936, 16 Oct., p. 24.

73. *Directory of the Madras Legislature* (Madras, 1938), *passim*; *Indian Annual Register*, 1936, vol. I, p. 298.

orthodox Urdu Muslim center of North Arcot. Out of 29 Muslim seats in the new Madras Legislative Assembly the Board contested 14 and gained 13, Congress contested 12 and gained five, and the rest went to "Justicites" and independents.⁷⁴ The Board contested and gained six of the nine Muslim seats in Tamil Nad; Congress contested and gained two and one went to an independent.⁷⁵

After the elections relations between the Board—or rather the League which soon discarded the facade—and the triumphant Congress grew increasingly strained. Congress refused the League any of the fruits of victory and the members of the League in the Assembly sat in the opposition benches while the more pronationalist members of the defunct Board sat as a neutral bloc committed to neither side.⁷⁶ The resignation of the Congress ministry in November 1939 finally wrecked Congress-League relations in Tamil Nad and gave rise to increasing support within the Muslim community for the communalist politics of the All-India Muslim League. The resignation of the Congress ministry was regarded by Muslims as irresponsible and obstructive of the course of constitutional evolution towards self-government. The Muslims had no desire to precipitate a rapid devolution of power by the British as they wished to secure a constitutional settlement including measures for the protection of Muslim political interests. Congress tactics throughout the Second World War, especially the "Quit India" movement, only served to confirm Muslim suspicions throughout India and undermined the basis for *rapprochement*. Rajagopalachariar was undoubtedly sympathetic towards Muslim grievances, particularly in Tamil Nad where he was on friendly terms with Jamal Mahomed,⁷⁷ but the death of the latter in 1943 and the intransigence of the national leadership of Congress weakened his position *vis-a-vis* the Muslims of Tamil Nad.

Within the Presidency Muslim League Jamal Mahomed's influence

74. *Directory of the Madras Legislature* (Madras, 1938), *passim*.

75. *Ibid.*

76. Those elected on the Congress ticket joined that party in the Assembly. Yakub Hasan became Minister for Health in the ministry.

77. Interviews with Mahomed Ismail Sahib M.P. and C. Rajagopalachariar, *op. cit.*

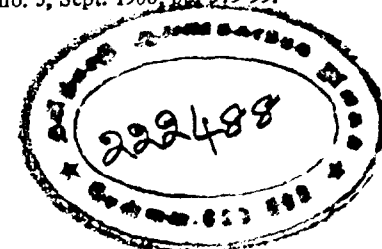
waned in direct proportion to the activities of Congress and the increasing organisational strength of the All-India Muslim League which tightened its control over the provincial branches in the years immediately following the 1937 elections. The more intransigent and all-India oriented Urdu Muslim political outlook eclipsed the regionally oriented and conciliatory Tamil Muslim political outlook. Both Tamil and Urdu Muslims were carried along by the irrational political outlook, for Tamil Nad at least, of the All-India Muslim League which eventually led to Partition and Pakistan.

Partition provoked a re-evaluation in 1948 of the policies of Jamal Mahomed. Bereft of an all-India political organisation and of national leadership, the Muslims of India were thrown upon their own resources. Some solved the dilemma by leaving for Pakistan but this alternative held small attraction for the Muslims of Tamil Nad, especially the Tamil Muslims, whose culture and language had no place in the new Urdu-dominated nation.

The Muslims of Tamil Nad had two political alternatives: either complete integration with intercommunal political organisations, or the revival of a distinct communal political organisation. This latter alternative was made more difficult by the abolition of separate electorates and the unfortunate reputation surrounding the defunct Muslim League. However, there was little overt communal tension in the south where leaders of the non-Muslim communities were favourably disposed towards Muslims, and this helped remove Muslim fears of a Hindu reaction if they supported a revived Muslim League. The League was revived in Tamil Nad and has successfully put up candidates for State and Central legislative bodies by means of electoral alliances with various non-Muslim political factions⁷⁸—a policy first implemented by Jamal Mahomed.

The history of Muslim politics in Tamil Nad has been the history of the conflict between a national and a regional political outlook on the part of a communal minority group. Specifically it has been the conflict between the Tamil and Urdu Muslim political outlooks occasioned by differing concepts of their position and role

78. For a detailed account see: Wright, T.P., "The Muslim League in South India since Independence: A Study in Minority Group Political Strategies", *The American Political Science Review* vol. LX, no. 3, Sept. 1966, pp. 579-99.



within the communal society of India. Politically the Muslims have been most successful when the regional outlook has prevailed, for at the regional level the spirit of accommodation has been strongest and hence it has been easier to conciliate diverse elements within the community and to seek electoral alliance with non-Muslim groups. At the regional level Muslims have been able to recognise the diversity of non-Muslim grievances and aspirations and the fact that the majority Hindu community was neither monolithic nor united in political or economic interests in relation to the Muslims. In what was essentially a pluralistic-communal society the minority Muslim group was strongest when it identified with regional rather than national interests and weakest when it attempted to see itself as part of a monolithic national minority group: a view which denied the very real social, linguistic and historical differences amongst the Muslims of India.

*Scarf and Sword: Thugs, Marauders, and State-formation in 18th Century Malwa**

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1. Introduction

Thugi¹ captured the English popular imagination in the nineteenth century as did few features of India. Bracketed with suti (widow self-immolation) and infanticide, it proved the "backward" state of India to the Utilitarians, and its need for Christianity to the Evangelicals. Priests thundered of the need for missionaries and Benthamites argued for better courts and jails. For many Englishmen, Thugi was only the most hideous and bizarre of those strange religious perversions which were the essence of India—making it alien, evil, incomprehensible, and quite frightening enough to be titillating.

European official accounts of Thugi and later histories reveal almost as much colour as the novelists; yet among them there are also striking inconsistencies. Let us compare descriptions of Thugi by authors whom we might justly expect to be authoritative. First,

* The ideas of this paper were first presented at the Michigan Rotating South Asia Seminar in March, 1969. With the comments and criticism of that group and the generous assistance of J. H. Broomfield it has been substantially revised to its present form.

1. The problem of transliteration is a plague whenever foreign terms are used. Words known in the West in one form—such as Thug, Thuggi, Bhil, Rajput—I have retained in that form, though the terms appearing in quotations will vary, i.e.: Thag, Thagi, Thaggi. Place names especially in the section on the geography of Malwa I have taken from James Tod *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* and John Malcolm *A Memoir of Central India*.

Percival Spear, a twentieth-century historian :

The dislocation of society drove adventurous, hopeless or embittered spirits to a lawless life. They formed the material for princely armies or robber bands, each of whom recruited from the other as fortunes rose and fell. The landless or uprooted man looked for a leader and reckless from despair was the typical figure of the time. A specialized form of these men were Thugs, robbers and ritual murderers, who rose to prominence in these times and spread across central India to the terror of travellers and peaceful men.²

Second, James Sleeman, military officer in India, and author of *Thug, or a Million Murders* (1933) :

[The Thug] regarded the stalking of men as a higher form of sport . . . : that fiend in human form, luring his victims to their doom with soft speech and cunning artifice, committing the coldblooded murder of every man he met, saint or sinner, rich or poor, blind or lame The taking of human life for the sheer lust of killing was the Thugs' main object : the plunder, however pleasant, being a secondary consideration.³

Third, the characterization of Thugi in R. V. Russell's comprehensive *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces* (1916): Thug is listed between Teli (oilmen) and Turi (a cultivating caste) and the Thugs are considered a caste or "community of murderers" just as the Teli are a community of oilmen.⁴

These accounts are quite incompatible. First, on the fundamental motivation of Thugs. To Spear, they are essentially rational men, though "hopeless" and "embittered", who are driven by conditions in society and for lack of other income to murder and

2. V. A. Smith, rewritten by Percival Spear, *Oxford History of India* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 575-576.

3. James Sleeman, *Thug, or A Million Murders* (London, 1933), pp. 3-5.

4. Robert Russell and Hira Lal, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), p. 558.

rob. For Sleeman, in contrast, the basic motivation is psychological blood-lust. A Thug was a "fiend in human form" who regarded the "stalking of men as a higher form of sport". It follows that according to Spear plunder was the central objective, while Sleeman states that the plunder was a "secondary consideration".

Second, Spear's image of men of diverse occupations and origins driven to Thugi by social dislocation is incompatible with the Russell description of Thugs as a "community of murderers" or caste. Either Thugs were or were not a "caste" with all that implies : a high degree of hereditary entrance, commonality of pool of marriage partners, and some consensus on place in the ritual hierarchy.

Third, Russell and Sleeman are at loggerheads on who the Thugs would kill. For Russell, the elaborate set of omens and prohibitions (against murdering women, Brahmins, etc.) constituted the essence of the Thug caste. Sleeman baldly says a Thug committed "coldblooded murder on every man he met . . ."

Finally, to Spear, Thugs are a product of a particular political and geographic setting. He refers to dislocation in "these times" (the eighteenth century) and "central India". For Sleeman and Russell, Thugs were assumed to be an ubiquitous, permanent, and immutable feature of Indian life.

Beyond these inconsistencies, more perplexing still is the fact that if we turn to verbatim testimony of men arrested as Thugs, rather than European interpretation, we find that none of these three contradictory assertions is adequate to explain the social organization or motivation as revealed in the testimony. Consider first the definition given by Percival Spear: Thugs were a special type of "landless or uprooted men looking for a leader and reckless from despair." From a reading of Thug pre-trial testimony, it is clear that these men were not "landless or uprooted"; in fact they were only part-time murderers—having regular, permanent villages and occupations which included cultivating, trading, or even serving as local officials in revenue collection. Many cases were reported of whole villages coming out to defend an accused Thug against British capture.⁵

5. Charles Hervey, *Some Records of Crime* (London, 1892), I, 439.

We might expect Thugs, as "uprooted" men, to be roaming the countryside, pariahs of society; nothing of the sort is true. This very same European-collected testimony reveals a pattern of continuing relationships between accused Thugs and local zamindars (we shall return to a precise definition of these zamindars). Numerous men who turned state's evidence describe such arrangements. In return for the promise not to commit robbery or murder in his area, and a percentage of the booty from all expeditions elsewhere, the local zamindar not only left the bandits alone, but protected their homes and families while they were on the roads. Regular rent rolls detailing this relationship were known in the early nineteenth century.⁶

Were Thugs as Spear suggests, "looking for a leader"? Probably not. Some men arrested were of criminal families going back several generations. However, in addition to these bandit chiefs, other types of leaders emerge from the evidence: "(1) The man who always has at command the means of advancing a month or two's subsistence to a gang; (2) A very wise man whose advice in difficult cases has weight with the gang; (3) One who has influence over local authorities or the native officers of the courts of justice; and (4) A man of handsome appearance and high bearing who can feign the man of rank well" might all be leaders.⁷ If anything, there were *too many leaders*; bands were constantly fragmenting as new men proved their prowess and gained followers.

We fare no better if we turn from this twentieth-century historian's characterization to the formulation of a "community of murderers" in *Tribes and Castes of Central India*. The same European-collected evidence belies this thesis. Minimally, caste implies some commonality of potential marriage partners, some consensus on a place in a ritual hierarchy, and a great degree of hereditary entrance. None of these hold for the men arrested—they came from dozens of different castes. Hindus and Moslems ate, slept, and worked together in some bands.⁸ Many of the men

6. Edward Thornton, *Illustrations of the History and Practice of the Thugs* (London, 1837), pp. 473-475.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

8. Caleb Wright, *Lectures on India* (Boston, 1849), p. 177. This "problem" is discussed in Russell, *Tribes*, Vol. IV, pp. 562-567 and in Hervey, *Records*, I, 274-275 f.

arrested were not members of long-standing criminal families, but were recruited later in life.⁹ Also, murder and robbery was not necessarily a hereditary occupation; sons of some accused Thugs chose to support themselves in agriculture or as religious ascetics.

Let us apply this European-collected data to the theory advanced by our remaining "authority", James Sleeman, who as we have seen described Thugs as "brought up in a faith which regarded the killing of men as legitimate sport." The testimony provides numerous examples of men who were not "brought up" as Thugs at all, but first joined a band as men in their twenties or thirties.¹⁰ It also shows that plunder was the main motivation, in contradiction to Sleeman's statement that "it was secondary". The accused men took to the roads, not in search of just any traveller, but specifically looking for banker's agents, treasure-carriers, rich traders, and wealthy mercenary soldiers or pilgrims. Routes were chosen where booty was expected, and bodies of victims were especially severely mutilated when anticipated booty was not found. Elaborate scales of division of booty are recounted in pre-trial testimony, a greater percentage for those actually doing the murders, and the head of the band, somewhat less for guards, gravediggers, and information-gatherers.¹¹

2. Stereotypes and an Ambitious Officer

These inconsistencies among various theories about Thugs arise in part from the common Anglo-Indian process of appropriating an Indian term and using it to make sense of unfamiliar and inadequately understood social institutions or groups of people. These appropriations and consequent distortions were of several kinds. For example, a specific office or title was made to stand for all titles with superficially similar functions. In a recent volume, Walter Neale has discussed the distortions to the term zamindar arising from differing Indian and British conceptions of the function of land.¹²

9. James Sleeman, *Thug*, p. 73.

10. Thornton, *Illustrations*, pp. 346, 367-368.

11. James Sleeman, *Thug*, p. 79.

12. Walter C. Neale, "Land is to Rule", *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, ed. Robert E. Frykenberg (Madison, Wisconsin, 1959).

A second important type of distortion occurred when a regional or tribal name became a stereotype. In this dual process the terms ceased to mean all people from a specific area or tribe, and came to refer to any person possessing a set of characteristics *attributed* to people of that place or tribe. For example, consider the word "bhil": originally referring to a specific group of tribals, it came to mean any group of turbulent woods dwellers:

The term Bheel [is] applied as a general name to all the plunderers who dwell in the mountains and woody banks of rivers in the Western parts of India; not only Bheelalabs and Coolies, who have an affinity to them but many others have been comprehended in this class. But these are in no manner (beyond the common occupation of plunder) connected with the real Bheels, who have from the most remote ages been recognized as a distinct race, insulated in their abodes, and separated by their habits, usages, and forms of worship from the other tribes of India.¹³

The term "Mehwatee" had a similar history. Originally a place name, it came to mean anyone operating—in this case plundering—in the style attributed to the people of the Mahi River region in Eastern Gujarat regardless of whether they in fact came from there.¹⁴

Looking at the name "Thug" in this light, we find that it was not a place or a tribal name, but a common eighteenth-century Hindi word meaning a cheat or trickster—anyone from the perennial practical joker, to a sleight-of-hand artist or a coinage swindler. As a verb, it can even be translated: "to amaze". Oral tradition supports the position that the principal meaning of the word Thug was not even robbery, much less a particular style of robbery. Among some 2000 fragments of oral tradition—both in vernacular

13. John Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India* (London, 1832), pp. 517-528.

14. Ranvir P. Saxena, *Tribal Economy in Central India* (Calcutta, 1964), p. 5. Note the beginnings of the stereotyping process in Malcolm, *Memoir*, pp. 174-176 and its continuation in Hervey, *Records*, II, p. 511.

and in translation—from Central India, I find many stories about robbers, but none specifically about Thugs.¹⁵

Through the first half of the nineteenth century, we can follow this process of stereotyping in the British official writing. Increasingly and steadily, differences between bands called Thugs were ignored, and similarities between them became exaggerated. Their fragmented organization came to be represented as a dangerous, widespread conspiracy.

First described by a Madras medical officer, Dr. Sherwood, in 1816 (in an article in the *Madras Literary Gazette*¹⁶) the Thugs virtually dropped from official British notice until the mid-1830's, except for a few careful British observers who saw great diversity in Sherwood's so-called Thug bands. These observers noted that, some bands were Hindu, some Moslem, while some were mixed caste and community. Some attacked openly in large groups, and did not bury their victims; others attacked only at night and took great care with burials.¹⁷

In the early 1830's a few military officers observed that numbers of sepoys who had been discharged with pay failed to return the following season. Further checks showed that they had not arrived in their home villages. At that point an ambitious military officer, William Sleeman, decided on reading the Sherwood article that these sepoy disappearances were caused by an India-wide Thug brotherhood of murders. He set out to prove this thesis to the Government of India, but more than five years of official scepticism greeted his efforts. As George Bruce, twentieth century historian of Thugs, explains:

Sleeman found himself up against a British wall of avowed disinterest, even hostility towards any organized investigation. Government House, and most of his fellow magistrates argued that if Thugs existed, and there was no proof, they were members of a religious

15. Principally in Stith Thompson, *The Oral Tales of India*, Indian University Folklore Series, No. 10 (Bloomington, 1958).

16. Quoted in full in George Bruce, *The Stranglers* (New York, 1968).

17. Extract of a letter from the Magistrate of Etawah, 1816, in Thornton, *Illustrations*, pp. 322-324.

fraternity; and Company policy was not to interfere. Thus, apart from a few notable exceptions among fellow magistrates, Sleeman was almost alone in his determination to stem the flow of murders.¹⁸

More than any other person, William Sleeman is responsible for the stereotyping of the word Thug. Many of our "primary" documents on Thugs were produced by Sleeman in this period, and they are anything but unbiased. By omission of differences and emphasis on similarities, he repeatedly made the case for a widespread Thug conspiracy. Sleeman's eventual success in persuading the Government of India is a gauge of the triumph of the Evangelical, crusading philosophy of British Indian administration over the "preservation-of-Indian-customs" philosophy of the Orientalists. Official support for Sleeman's campaign came less than two years after Macauley's Minute on Education.

Even after Sleeman made a name and office—The Thagi and Dacoity Department—for himself, it was necessary for him to keep the Government of India reminded of the widespread Thug conspiracy; only this conspiracy justified the special judicial practices, blanket military aid, pay for spies, and special treaties with the native states allowing for free pursuit by the Department. Charles Hervey, Sleeman's successor in the Thagi and Dacoity Department, is quite explicit on this point:

What is association or combination for criminal purposes? It is a secret society centred in certain well-understood oaths and rules, that bind and guide all those admitted into it, as agents for carrying out unlawful deeds in combination one with another—members with members, tribal congeries with their congeners, leaders of gangs with leaders—all the threads of whose action are drawn to those set rules and customs (each tribe having its own distinctive modes of guidance and procedure,) as the *guiding centre* of each organization, all mutually depending

18. Bruce, *Stranglers*, p. 36.

upon each other, and, as well, upon that "governing focus" (so to term those rules and principles which guide all,) as between all the atoms of the several confederacies. If, then, there were no such organizations, the secret associations concerned, would crumble away; and it is to reduce them to that extremity, to the *effacement* that the agents of the Government, that is the *special Thuggee Police*, are called into existence, *themselves acting in like manner upon their own set rules, by which to enable them to do so.*¹⁹

He further argues that it is the organization and its "crimes, secret, darkly planned, esoteric," that demand the special legislation allowing for the death penalty or transportation for association alone. The "Thugi" laws—resisted by many judges—provided "special punishments on proof, not of any specific act taken by itself, but of association . . . on proof of a *general charge*, that the arraigned party 'belonged to a gang of habitual dacoits (or Thugs, etc.); while engaged in dacoities, etc.' irrespective of whether the convicted party was or was not present in any one of the specific instances which supported the general charge upon which he was convicted." " . . . it was for *association per se* that he [a Thug] had been sent up for trial!"²⁰ All the reports of the Thagi and Dacoity Department—whether by Sleeman, Hervey or others—supported this conspiracy position.

In spite of thirty years of Thagi and Dacoity Department reports and popular books such as Caleb Wright's *A Description of the Habits and Superstitions of Thugs* (1846) and Edward Thornton's *Illustrations of the History and Practice of the Thugs* (1837) which took uncritically—often verbatim—from Sleeman's writings, the term was still not fully stereotyped until at least the late 1860's; that is, even within the government hierarchy there was no consensus on the answers to the question "Who or what is a Thug" and "What are the characteristics by which one knows them?" In 1867, Charles Hervey, then head of the Thagi and Dacoity Department,

19. Hervey, *Records*, II, 445-447. One such "Thugi" law is quoted in James Sleeman *Thug*, p. 134.

20. *Ibid.*

berated fellow government officials who could not seem to recognize a case of Thug murder when they saw one,

some correctly recognizing Thuggee in instances which were palpably the deed of experts, although death should not have taken place; others only doing so where death had resulted; some classing certain murders as cases of "Thuggee" without reference to the means resorted to in the perpetration thereof; others who wholly pass by cases of poisoning whether followed by death or not, although they bore evidence of being the acts of class criminals; some who restrict their notice to selected cases only of its occurrence, passing by other similar instances; some who endeavour to distinguish between different degrees of poisoning, some calling "murder by poison" *Thugge*, others not doing so others who lump all such kindered offenses under round numbers without any narration of the attendant circumstances, contented only with quoting against them the sections of the Penal Code under which they were triable or were tried.²¹

Now perhaps we can understand the confusion in the various theories of Thugi we have examined; the late nineteenth-century official, the military officer, and the twentieth century historian are surely to be forgiven if British officials at mid-nineteenth century—contemporary to the Thug phenomenon—could not figure out what a Thug was! The only people who seemed positive that they could tell a Thug when they saw one were from the Thagi and Dacoity Department.

This self-assurance is deceptive. If, for example, we take the "conspiracy" position as constantly articulated by the Thagi and Dacoity Department and analyze it with verbatim Thug testimony collected by the Department, we find no evidence of widespread organization. For example Malwa Thugs were unaware of practices of stranglers in Bengal or the Deccan. Spoils were never shared

21. Hervey, *Records*, I, 50-51.

with any far-flung Thug hierarchy. There was no consultation even within a single region on departure times or division of prime highways among bands. All these decisions were reached locally between band and leader. Discipline was never dispensed by a broad hierarchy; dissatisfaction with performance by a member merely meant expulsion from the band; dissatisfaction with an inept leader merely meant that his followers drifted off into other bands. Numerous examples exist of men—satisfied with their booty—returning home in the middle of an expedition.²² Indeed, the British method of capture, using confessions of men who turned state's evidence against other gangs and individuals, suggests most strongly that there was not a central organization. Reprisals were not taken against the witness or his family once the immediate gang was captured. One need only recall what the Mafia traditionally does to "squealers" to see the low level of Thug organization by comparison.

Thus, the confusion of later historians regarding Thugs ultimately comes from the unsupported theories generated by the Thagi and Dacoity Department itself. Attempts to resolve contradictory attributes of a Department-invented class of murderers alled "Thugs" have led into a welter of vague, contradictory, and inadequate characterizations. For lack of an adequate definition, the term "Thug" will hereafter appear within quotation marks. Clarity will not come to this term from more re-reading of the Department reports, unless the biases and assumptions are known and challenged. A theory that is the product of a study of eighteenth-century Indian institutions and social and political conditions, rather than Victorian morality, is called for. The remainder of this paper is an attempt in that direction.

3. From the Culture of the Yellow Scarf to the Bandits of Malwa

Even if "Thugs" were not tied to an India-wide organization but operated in a local and fragmented manner, did they perhaps form a culturally distinct group? Do contemporary depositions reveal,

22. The evidence is most extensive in William Sleeman's *Ramaseena* (Calcutta, 1836) and *Rambles and Recollections of An Indian Official* (London, 1915).

for example, that all "Thugs" recognized a unique set of customs and spoke a distinctive argot? The answer, rather surprisingly, is negative. There was apparently no clear Thug subculture and many characteristics attributed to them alone—such as invoking the diety before starting on an expedition, making objects involved in the occupation sacred, falling in with travellers by deception, omens and signs, the specialization of tasks within gangs—prove to be common to many criminal groups. For example, invoking the diety:

Robbers and murderers of all descriptions have always been in the habit of taking the field in India immediately after the festival of the Dasahra, at the end of October, from the sovereign of a state at the head of his armies, down to the leader of a little band of pick-pockets from the corner of some obscure village. All invoke the Diety, and take the auspices to ascertain his will, nearly in the same way; and all expect that he will guide them successfully through their enterprises, as long as they find the omens favourable. No one among them ever dreams that his undertaking can be less acceptable to the Diety than that of another, provided he gives him the same due share of what he acquires in his thefts, his robberies, or his conquests, in sacrifices and offerings upon his shrines, and in donations to his priests.²³

This paper reports preliminary rather than completed research, and much remains to be done on the comparative symbolism and organization of criminal bands (and all habitually-travelling groups). At this stage, I do not want to reject the possibility that all leaders or bands called "Thug" by the British shared some common symbols from a larger Indian tradition, such as left-handed Tantrism, but the only distinctive and *unique* features that I find in all Thug groups so far studied are the use of a scarf to strangle victims and occasional eating of *gur*, a coarse sugar. The form

23. William Sleeman, *Rambles*, pp. 296-297.

is not a sure feature, since groups sometimes also used poison. A sticky bowl of sugar and a limp yellow scarf are slim evidence indeed for calling "Thugs" a "trade union" or a "fraternity of murderers."

If we are stymied in a cultural definition of "Thugi", a geographical approach proves more fruitful. If we plot the places of residence of the Thugs the British captured, these appear to be predominantly in Malwa, which the British called Central India. This area, in the eighteenth century, was the haunt of many sorts of marauding groups, big and small, which attacked not only within Central India, but also in Oudh, Bengal, Rajputana, Hyderabad and Mysore. All these groups, whether they struck whole towns, villages, or bands of travellers, depended on the weakness of the authority of any government above the local level. The local watch had no jurisdiction outside his immediate few square miles, so the marauding groups could escape after looting the village or murdering the travellers. Capturing the marauders was also beyond the means of those immediately affected—the victims' relatives or business associates. Only an overarching, non-local government could possibly mount the large-scale military or police expedition needed to suppress roving bands.²⁴ The freedom of operation of such bands in eighteenth-century Malwa is striking; this freedom strongly suggests the relative strength of local as opposed to overarching governments in the Malwa region which, viewed from a dynamic perspective, as we shall see, suggests a hypothesis of state formation. This theory, it is hoped, will provide an adequate conceptual framework for understanding the phenomenon that has been called "Thugi". First, however, let us place these "Thugs" and other marauders in a political and geographical setting.

24. Such pursuit, and the consequent general safe movement on the roads, was clearly in the interests of such an overarching government, for a number of elementary reasons: (1) Safe movement of land revenue, predominantly in cash, but also in kind from the hinterland to the capital; (2) Easy communication from the capital to the monarch's agents in outlying areas; (3) Rapid movement of armies to rebellious areas without expending men and equipment fighting thieves and plunderers en route; (4) Sure import into the capital of certain necessary articles—such as horses or guns—and certain desirable articles—such as fine cloths, jewels, spices, etc.; (5) Increase in revenue from tolls paid by traders, and (6) Religious merit and an increase in symbolic authority from building tanks and caravanassaries.

4. Malwa and the Powers Therein

Malwa—it calls to mind a vague area south of the Jumna river and east of Gujarat. Some lack of clarity is quite understandable, since the boundaries shifted with successive empires, Malwa being predominantly a rich province and seldom the seat of empire. In Mughal times the province of Malwa extended well into Rajputana, including Harrowtee (later split into Bundi and Kotah) and part of Mewar (Oudipur)—and encompassed the hilly tracts of Roth Bagur and Kantul, running south from Oudipur to the Vindhya and separating the Malwa plateau from Gujarat. At times “Malwa” also included parts of Bundelkhand to the east.

The *Malwa plateau*, as opposed to the political division “Malwa”, is quite easily defined. It is a table land approximately 2000 feet high bounded on the northwest by the hills on the west bank of the Chumbul, on the north by the Jumna, and on the south by the Nerbudda. The eastern boundary is a hilly tract running north-northeast from the eastern edge of Bhopal separating it from Gondwara and Bundelkhand. The western boundary is likewise a hilly tract—some fifty miles wide—running north from the Vindhya range between 74 and 75° east latitude. These hilly tracts on the east and west of Malwa (as well as the Vindhya range) are occupied by tribals distinct from the people of the plateau proper in colour, language, customs, religion, and style of farming—the tribals using shifting agriculture.

On the plateau, the rainy season comes in June or July and through August and September it remains mild (72°-77°F); from October through December to February, it gets progressively colder and often goes below freezing at night. March through May finds hot weather, days in the 90's and above, nights in the 70's and 80's. In this climate the “loose rich black loam” produced, in the eighteenth century, cash crops such as cotton, sugar-cane, opium, indigo, and tobacco and large crops of grain; particularly wheat, but also gram, peas, jowry and bajrie. Many areas had both a Kharif and a Rabi crop.

The basic feature of the eighteenth century historical process taking place within this geographical framework was the multiplicity of states, a hundred by one count, as many as six hundred by

another. Any attempt to summarize the political history is clearly impossible in a paper of this scope. (See Raghubir Singh, *Malwa in Transition or a Century of Anarchy: the First Phase 1698-1765*, Bombay, 1936, for the histories of some larger states). Perhaps a few dates and events will be of some use in understanding the model which follows.

Malwa was conquered in 1837 by Muslim invaders from the north and became a province of the Delhi sultanate. The next hundred and seventy-five years saw a three-way battle between Delhi, some Rajput houses, and independent Moslem kingdoms. The Plateau was attacked by Sher Shah and decisively conquered by Akbar in 1561; many later-important Rajput houses became established as small states in the next fifty years with the help of Akbar and the Mogul court.

A “second wave” of Rajput invaders came into Malwa starting in the 1760's. They were collaborators with the Moguls and received grants of land in Malwa in reward for service. These Rajputs considered themselves purer than those who had come a century earlier and unlike their predecessors they did not inter-marry with the local populace. These second-wave Rajput kingdoms were, thus, not well established when the Maratha invasions began in the late seventeenth century:

[In states] which had been founded in the last years of Aurangzib's reign—and the number of such States was the greatest in Malwa—the founders as well as their early descendants did not get enough time to organize their States nor to secure their hold over the lands and the people within the State, as they were kept busy in the distant South with the Imperial army. And the States yet unorganized and unstrengthened could least help the Empire in times of disorder, for they had first to grapple with the question of their own existence.²⁵

The series of Maratha forays into Malwa (which included upwards of 12,000 horses) began in 1698, had a temporary hiatus between

25. Raghubir Singh, *Malwa in Transition or a Century of Anarchy: The First Phase 1698-1765* (Bombay, 1936), pp. 15-16.

1703 and 1713, then began again in earnest. Yearly raids became regular, and by 1725 the Peshwa had appointed tribute collectors in Southern Malwa. (Incidentally, other invaders were also taking over areas of Malwa at this time. Dost Muhammad Khan Rohilla laid the foundation of Bhopal State between 1709 and 1717).

After decisively beating the Mogul army in 1728 and settling with Jai Sing of Amber, the Peshwa granted land to his major generals, the Puars and Holkar, in Malwa all through the 1730's. Conquest of the rest of Malwa followed during Nadir Shah's invasion in the North. Finally, legal recognition of Maratha supremacy was given by the Emperor when he granted the peshwa *Naib Subahdari* rights over Malwa, and with the death of Jai Sing in 1743 no power was strong enough to oppose them.

In the 1740's, Rajputana was the scene of Maratha invasions. Often called in by one side in a succession dispute, one general or another quickly established rights to tribute. By the mid 1750's Kotah, Bundi, Mewar, Marwar, and other Rajput states were committed to give tribute to the Marathas even if they strongly resisted paying it. Ajmeer, the stronghold in central Rajputana, was turned over to the Marathas in 1756.

A new opponent appeared in the 1750's, the Afghan Abdali. The initial invasions of 1750 and 1752 were followed by much larger-scale invasions in 1757. Maratha power north of the Chumbul River was virtually eliminated even before the military disaster of Panipat in 1761.

Dozens of Maratha chiefs died on the field at Panipat and a whole new generation figures in events after 1765. These include Mahadji Sindia, Ahalyabai Holkar, Tukoji Holkar, Zalim Singh Jhala (of Kotah) and the Pindari leader, Amir Kahn. Only by the late 1760's was Maratha power restored; and invasions of Rohilkund Jat territory near Delhi, and Oudh began.

The death of the Peshwa in Poona in 1772 and support by the British Bombay government of one of the claimants (Raghoba Rao) set off a decade of war and negotiation which has been well chronicled elsewhere. (For Sindia's part in it see S. N. Roy, *A History of the Native States of India*, Vol. I, Gwalior, (Calcutta, 1888). The result was a draw; status quo ante prevailed at the Treaty of Salbai in 1781, with the important exception that the

Company opted out of all affairs in Central India, Delhi, and Rajputana.

The period from the Treaty of Salbai to 1795 was the ascendancy of Mahadji Sindia; he was the arbiter of Delhi affairs, and the strongest power in the Maratha confederacy; after his defeat by the Rohillas in 1788 he became one of the foremost military powers in India, via his shift, with the help of the French adventurer De Boigne, to a European-type infantry and artillery.

The mid 1790's clearly mark the end of an era. Ahalyabai Holkar died in 1795 and Tukoji Holkar followed her two years later; thereafter the Holkar kingdom was in chaos. Chote Khan, minister of Bhopal and an important figure of stability died in 1795. Both the Peshwa and, more importantly, Nana Farnavis—the holder of any real power at Poona—died in the middle of this decade. Mahadji Sindia's death preceded Nana's by only a year and De Boigne—Sindia's general—left India in 1796. Finally the active involvement of the British in the affairs of indigenous states began once again with the "protection" of the Nizam in 1795.

5. A Structure and a Process²⁶

Let us look at Malwa a few years before these morbid events. Beginning with a static view, Central India in the late eighteenth century had a five-tiered power structure. The Peshwa of Poona stood at the top. His real power in day-to-day affairs was small, but his authority to grant or withhold sanads on land conquered by

26. The following were used extensively in developing both the static power structure and the dynamic process models:

Broughton, Thomas D. *Letters Written in a Mahratta Camp*, rev. ed. (London, 1892).

Cohn, Bernard S., "Political Systems in Eighteenth Century India: The Benares Region," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, CXXXII (July-September, 1962), 312-320.

Forster, George, *A Journey from Bengal to England through the Northern India . . .* (London, 1808).

Franklin, William, *Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas . . .* (Calcutta, 1803).

Ghosh, B. *British Policy towards the Pathans and Pindaris in Central India 1805-1818* (London, 1963-1964).

Maratha chiefs, was very important. Also, the major chiefs—Sindia, Holkar, and the Puars—were both legally generals in the Peshwa's army and owed their initial rise to the Peshwa's patronage. There are numerous examples of Maratha chiefs returning to Poona at the Peshwa's behest to engage in political and military actions.

The second level was the Maratha conquerors, such as Sindia and Holkar. Current literature identifies an ideal-type of Central Indian Maratha administration, which included both local and state revenue and treasury officials, a political department, registry officials, the prince's household, and pay-and-muster officials for the army. The state also supported a large military establishment, perhaps numbering up to 20,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 5,000 garrison troops. A third or less of this army would be under the direct control of the prince; the rest would be under subordinate Maratha chiefs who as assignees of lands for support of troops constitute the next, or third, level in the power structure. The prince had virtual-

Fn 26 (contd.)

Habib, Irfan, "Banking in Medieval India," *Contributions to Indian Economic History*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1960), 8-14.

Luard, C. Eckford, "Some Views of an Indian Ruler on the Administration of an Indian State," *Asiatic Review*, New Series, XXII (1926), 278-298.

Malcolm, Sir John. *A Memoir of Central India* (London, 1932).

[An Officer of the East India Company]. *Origin of the Pindaris* (London, 1818).

Roy, Surendra Nath. *A History of the Native States of India*, Vol. I, Gwalior, (Calcutta, 1888).

Sardesai, G. S., "The Rise of Mahadji Sindhia," *Modern Review*, CXXV (March, 1944), 209-211.

Sarkar, Jadunath. *Persian Records of Maratha History* Vol. I, *Delhi Affairs* (Bombay, 1953).

Sen, Surendranath. *Administrative System of the Marathas* (Calcutta, 1925).

Sinh, Raghubir. *Malwa in Transition or a Century of Anarchy: The First Phase 1698-1765* (Bombay, 1936).

Sinha, Har N. *Selections from the Nagpur Residency Records*, 3 Vols. (Nagpur, 1950).

Tod, James. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (Calcutta, 1898).

Twining, Thomas. *Travels in India a Hundred Years Ago, with a Visit to the United States* (London, 1893).

Tytler, Alexander. *Considerations on the Present Political State of India* (London, 1816).

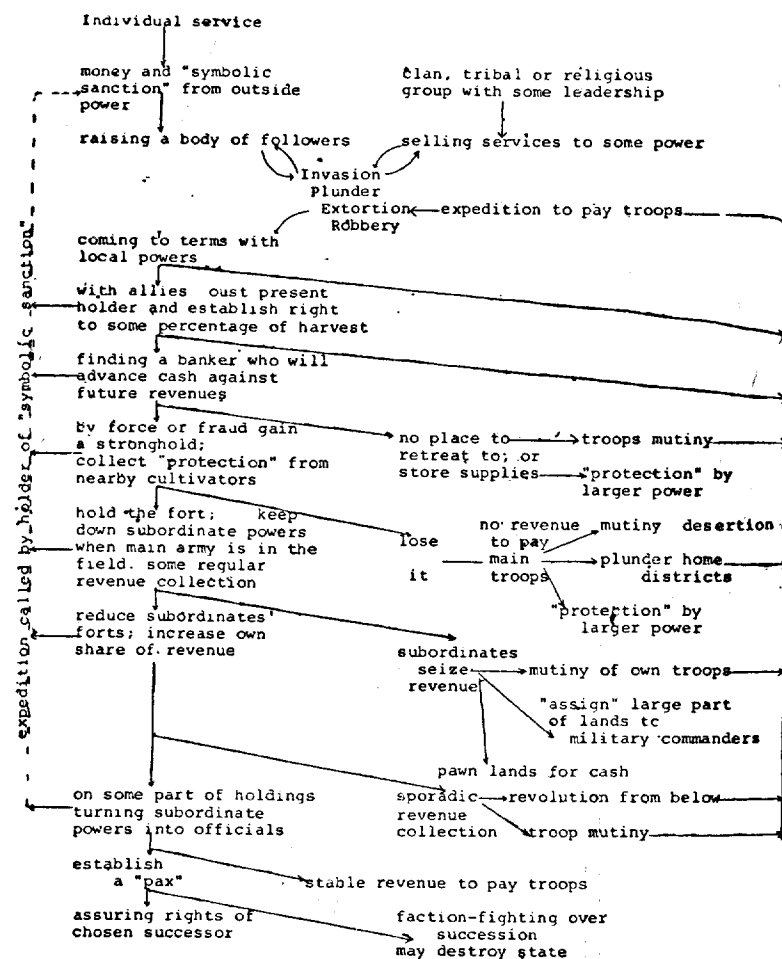
ly no control over internal administration of assigned lands. These subordinate generals were bound to the prince by no ties of family or clan.

East and west of the Chumbul River, below the Marathas stood some fifteen major and many minor Rajput clans some of whom had come as conquerors some centuries before and obtained Mogul sanads over their possessions; others were of recent origin (see above, p. 18). Cousins, brothers, kinsmen held separate estates, over which a senior member with large holdings had some influence. Beyond some common finances and obligations in the field to the head of the clan, estate management was autonomous. The military contingent might range from under 1000 for a small state like Banswara to 15,000 for Kotah, the largest independent Rajput state close to the Maratha dominions. These troops were usually scattered among many estates and concentrated at the fort which was a universal feature of such estates.

Finally, below the Rajputs was one more level before one reached village administration. The men at this level were called zamindars of pergunahs, or wuttundars. They were large local landholders, who contracted the revenue for an area of perhaps twenty square miles and extracted a fee from other cultivators. They maintained a small body of troops (25-150) and often fortified either a village or their own homes. These watandars were definitely drawn from a variety of castes and were—in some sense—a holdover from the Moguls since most held sanads from the Mogul emperor, though a few had sanads from the Peshwa, for special services.

Power-structure analysis, though neat, and often done for various parts of India, is, I think, substantially misleading. Without an understanding—not of the structure—but of the *process* by which these various relations developed, we cannot hope to understand the importance of any specific group, like a small "Thug" band.

The diagram which follows is a flow-chart, representing the general process of state formation in Central India in the eighteenth century. The dynamic is the universal desire for maximum stable land revenue, not land as such, and maximum political control, that is reducing the largest possible number of people to clientship or dependency, relations. The counter-dynamic is the short-run need to pay troops. Groups and individuals enter this on-going



system at various times throughout the century. The Mulhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindia raised their troops and moved to the "invasion" stage by the 1730's, while Amir Kahn entered some forty years later. Note that there are two entrances (at the top), and only one exit—establishing a "pax" at the bottom. The majority who do not reach the "pax" stage are thrown back on plunder as the only means of paying the troops. If we look at Central India at any given moment, we will find individuals and groups at all stages in this process; some will besieging strongholds, some negotiating with bankers, some plundering their neighbours, some finding allies among Rajputs or Bhils, and a few with peaceful and prosperous states.

Let us by way of illustration follow the fortunes of an individual through this system. He is presented at court—perhaps the Peshwa's—through the influence of a patron. Proof of ability leads to increasing numbers of troops under his control. The individual ruler he serves decides that an area, either unconquered or in a state of rebellion should be invaded. Our ambitious parvenu is given just enough money to raise troops, rather little since mercenaries furnished their own horses and equipment, and a "symbolic sanction", for example a sanad to collect chouth in the area, or the "right" to quarter his troops on the conquered lands. Invasion and plunder follow, with extortion of towns or villages which pay not to be plundered.

He then comes to terms with local powers. This is meant quite literally. For example, the invading Marathas offered lower land revenues than the prevailing Muslim administration. The Rajputs switched allegiance quite readily. The invader needed to use them to collect revenue. The aid of these lower-level powers might be active, on the side of the invader, or passive, merely withholding aid from the formerly dominant power.

The next stage—and it is a crucial one—is finding a banker to advance cash against future revenues. Until some banker considers the invader's claims legitimate enough and his prospects for collecting regular revenue bright enough, he is forced to plunder somewhere every few months to pay his troops, especially if his "initial sponsor" makes no payments beyond the first one. The advance by the banker is on a yearly basis (it is a form of risk capital) and

allows the undertaking of a siege, a long-term proposition often requiring heavy equipment. Reliance on a banker became more and more necessary as the eighteenth century progressed because continuing support from the original source of troops and "symbolic sanction" (either the Peshwa or the Emperor at Delhi) became less and less dependable. For example, visits by the Peshwa's Vakils to the North became more sporadic and less likely to be accompanied by any military force.

The steps from the "seizing of a fort" to reducing "subordinates' forts" represent increasing stages of likelihood of regular revenue collection. For every successful movement to a later stage, there is the alternative of failure. Reaching any stage does not imply a stable situation, as there is still not enough land revenue to pay troops. We shall return to the implications of this. "Reducing subordinates' forts", may be viewed as a transition stage; it is possible to pay troops out of land revenue, but equally possible that plundering must be resorted to.

The next three stages represent the exit from this system of necessary plunder. They differ only in the degree of development of government infrastructure. The "turning subordinate powers into officials" stage is, perhaps, best exemplified by the lands held by De Boigne, Sindia's general, in the late 1780's and early 1790's. He had a regular revenue administration and audits; he developed agriculture, cast guns and protected the land from marauders. In contrast, the "pax", the next stage, implies many more government functions—measurement-type revenue system, regularizing dues from travelers, minting money, a state justice and police system, regular diplomatic relations with other states, cash salaries for troops, continuity of members of administration and neutralizing internal marauding groups by grants of land. Examples of a kingdom as stable as this are hard to find: Ahalyabai Holkar's kingdom would probably qualify, Zalim Singh's Kotah might, as would Sindia's dominions for short periods. From initial invasion to stable exit is at least a thirty to forty year process with heirs completing the process started by the father; only Zalim Singh did it in his own lifetime. The line running from the bottom to the top of the chart, on the left-hand side, represents the service which must be given to the power that furnished the initial troops. For example, the

Peshwa might call Sindia to Poona to undertake a joint mission against Tipu or the Nizam. This call might come at any time and involve a war during which the newly conquered area might rebel. Thus, the call to service could entail a loss of several stages (movement upward on the chart).

What is the utility of this rather complicated model? First, I think it organizes and makes sense out of what has always been assumed to be a completely chaotic area in this period. Second, there is evidence that at least some people at the time were operating with this process in mind:

[Mahadji Sindia's] genius saw that to realize his plans, the mere predatory hordes of the Mahrattas could never prove adequate. It was a circle of plunder; and, as one country was exhausted, the army had to march, with numbers increased by those whose condition their success had made desperate, to ravage another. They had, in their first excursions, little or no means of reducing forts; nor did their system of war admit of protracted hostilities in a difficult country, and against a resolute enemy. These wants were early discovered by their enemies. The Bheels from their mountains, and the Rajpoots and others from their strong holds (which were multiplied by fortifying every village), not only resisted, but retorted upon the Mahrattas, by laying waste their lands, the wrongs they had suffered. This evil was only to be remedied by a regular force. We are distinctly informed, that its existence led Madhajeo Sindia to determine upon the measure he now adopted, of raising some corps of infantry.²⁷

Third, it suggests that "states" and "marauders" were not different in kind, but only in relative degree of success in conquest, revenue collection, and infrastructure-building. All were involved in the same process, with the same ends, using the same sources of legitimatization.

27. John Malcolm. *A Memoir of Central India* (London, 1832), pp. 126-127.

The striking feature of the second half of the eighteenth century is not the existence of this process, but the shift from a predominance of relatively stable states to a mix containing great numbers of marauding groups. I would now like to lay out a hypothesis to explain this change, which in the end returns to our beleaguered term "Thug".

The hypothesis is that after the battle of Panipat in 1761, few Marathas accompanied the Maratha chiefs when they once again established their power north of the Nerbudda river. The Maratha chiefs were, therefore, forced to rely on mercenaries, (some of whom received the new name "Pindari"):

The strength of the Maratha Cavalry continued to be its most distinguishing feature till about the year 1750, when contact with the French and British armies discovered [sic] the superior advantages in modern wars of regularly-trained infantry battallions protected by artillery, the third arm in modern warfare. The success of the English and the French induced the Maratha leaders to have recourse to this new agency and for the first time we find mention of the *Gardis* or the trained battallions. The weakness of this new addition to the military force consisted in the fact that, unlike the Mavals or the Shilledars, who each owned his plot of land and served the State, not as mercenaries, but as militia, the Gardis were mercenaries pure and simple, made up of foreign recruits of different nationalities, who had to be paid fixed salaries all the year round, and only owed loyalty to the commanders who paid them their wages.²⁸

Other powers already in the area then augmented clan troops with greater and greater numbers of mercenaries. The demand for cash rose astronomically, since mercenaries had to be paid virtually year-round and could not and would not be paid in small grants of land. The continued success of the British in using trained mercen-

28. M. C. Ranade, "Introduction to the Peshwa's Diaries," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay Branch*, XX (1900), 456-457.

aries only made the situation worse: to compete, indigenous states had to arise European-type infantry, which cost from four to ten times as much as native cavalry. For example, 1000 European-type infantry troops cost 25,000 Rs. per month in 1795.²⁹ Perhaps more importantly, because of the new European-type artillery, the military advantage shifted drastically from the defensive to the offensive power. Hill forts, especially small ones, provided little protection, and long sieges were replaced by intense cannonades and rapid breaching. Thus mobile marauding groups—with efficient artillery—competed militarily at least on equal terms with established states; leaders of states who could formerly retire to hill forts now had to meet the marauders in the field, with baggage trains of supplies and expensive mercenaries and artillery:

Under the later Peshwas, these forts appear chiefly to have served the double purpose of State granaries and State prisons. State prisoners were sent to the forts for custody, and the condemned criminals of both sexes were sent there for penal servitude. In the latter half of the century, the forts are chiefly mentioned in this connection. Against the more improved means of warfare represented by the artillery, these hill-forts ceased to be valuable for the purposes of defence, and in many places were neglected and allowed to go into disrepair. In the war with the English, the forts offered little or no protection, and submitted without firing a shot.³⁰

All this cost money. More and more states were forced into the position of being unstable, in the sense that the regular revenue was insufficient to pay their troops. Every year these states had to use the troops in one or more of three ways, (1) forcing more revenue from their own lands, (2) attacking neighbouring lands, or (3) allying for the purpose of war and plunder with another power. Every decision to go on a campaign was like a chance card in

29. Surendranath Sen. *Administrative System of Marathas*, rev. ed. (Calcutta, 1925), p. 445.

30. Ranade, "Introduction," p. 459.

Monopoly. It could bring gratuitous revenue, but the risks were very high. If it went on too long, the leader might be forced to plunder his ally's lands in order to pay his troops, or mortgage the revenues of his own lands to a banker at a great discount, for ready cash. There was also high probability of revolt from below every time the major part of the army left its home territories. Thus there was operating a "plunder dynamic" of the powers higher on the chart ("marauders") trying to seize the treasury and standing crop of powers lower on the chart ("states") while attempting to establish longer-term rights to revenue. Powers lower on the chart—having more stable revenue—were often forced to plunder when taxes and tribute were insufficient to pay the troops (for example, because the standing crop had been seized by marauders).

Those hurt worst in this process were at the lower levels of the power structure, previously analyzed. The overlord (perhaps a Maratha prince or his assignee) was constantly trying to increase his percentage of the crop (often by military means) while the rest was likely taken by marauding bands. Reliance on income from local produce became more and more chancey.

Therefore, every level in the power structure tended to link up with and give protection to some groups of part-time marauders, to have a *non-local* source of revenue. These ranged in size from Pindari armies of ten thousand horse to a motley handful of thieves. John Malcolm, the first British administrator of Central India writing in the 1820's enumerated eleven types, or more properly styles, of marauders in late-eighteenth century Malwa. To each was attributed certain characteristics of organization and operation, by the stereotyping process discussed above. Most of these styles—including that identified by Malcolm as Thaggi—were those of locally-recruited, locally-based marauders.³¹ Malcolm emphasized the point here.

Almost every large village which retained its inhabitants subsequent to the ravages of Jeswunt Row Holkar and the Pindaries had a band of this description either living in it or in communication with the Potail;

31. Malcolm, *Memoir*, pp. 174-191.

and the latter received, for the countenance and support he gave them, a fixed share of the booty.³²

Research to date, thus suggests that what the British saw as "Thug"—"a national fraternity of murderers"—consisted of a small core of families members of which had been murderers for several generations. These and many other men recruited bands in their local areas during the severe dislocation of the last decade of the eighteenth century and especially after the British defeat of the Marathas in 1803. After 1815, the British were occupied with establishing regular relations with various levels of the prevailing power structure and with destroying the large scale marauders ("Pindaris" and tribal groups); smaller-scale groups (such as "dacoits" and "Thags") flourished, preying on the traders and pilgrims travelling on roads which were somewhat less dangerous because of the elimination of the large-scale marauders. It was the writing of William Sleeman and the Evangelical, crusading tone of the British Indian administration of the 1830's that played up these locally-organized, small-scale marauding groups (given the name "Thugs" by the British) into a hideous, widespread religious conspiracy, somehow typical of India and Indian "national character". We cannot and will not know the nature of the "Thugs" or any other marauding group of the eighteenth century until we return them to a historical and geographic setting, and view them in the context of the on-going structure and processes of power.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

India's Foreign Trade In Coal Before Independence—A Note

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Two covenanted servants of the East India Company had applied to Warren Hastings in 1774 for a license to produce coal in the Raniganj field. Samples submitted by them were rejected by the Commissary of Stores in 1778 on the ground of their inferiority to imported English coal. Even by 1808, when the Court of Directors began to complain of the high expense of the imported coal, the then Governor General's reference of the matter to a high army official did not bring forth a different response.¹ It will be evident from these two incidents that India had started importing coal practically from the days of Plassey. Coal imports by 1869-70 had gone up to 3.37 lakh tons. An all-time maximum of 8.49 lakh tons was reached in 1887-88. Imports went down as domestic production increased. There has been a steady decline since the beginning of this century with the exception of the years 1921-25,² imports for which are given below³ :

<i>Year</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
1921	10.9 lakh tons
1922	12.2 „ „
1923	6.2 „ „
1924	4.6 „ „
1925	4.8 „ „

1. *Progress of Mineral Industry of India 1906-1955*, pp. 147-152. (Golden Jubilee Commemoration Volume of the Mining, Geological and Metallurgical Institute of India).

2. See table at the end.

3. *Report of the Coal Mining Committee*, 1937, p. 236

Most of these imports came to Bombay and Madras and, to a small extent, to Karachi. Temporary factors, e.g., the rise in pithead prices in Bengal coalfields, difficulties of transport, the pronounced reduction in the price of coal in the United Kingdom after the settlement of the coal strike of 1921 and the trade depression that released cargo-space all over the world,⁴ were responsible for the rise. Thereafter the permanent influence of growing domestic production re-established itself, imports steadily decreased and became insignificant by 1947.

Serious efforts to produce coal in India began only after the abolition of trading monopoly of the East India Company⁵ in 1813. The beginnings of this industry may be traced back to 1820 when a mine was opened in the Raniganj district in West Bengal. There seem to have been no new mines for the next twenty years and by 1854 only three more began operation. In that year the starting of the East Indian Railway line⁶ gave an impetus to the industry and by 1877 altogether 56 mines were at work producing 10 lakh tons, imports being a little less than 5 lakh tons. Indeed, imported coal had ceased to be of importance in Bengal by 1879 when Raniganj coal was being used on the E.I.R. in the steamers employed in river and coasting traffic and in cotton, jute and other mills in Calcutta and its neighbourhood. Bombay, however, continued to be an important market for foreign coal even by the end of the 19th century as in the then state of the development of transport, coal from Cardiff was not more costly than from Calcutta and some coal consumed there was of a quality not yet produced in India. It was, however, stated that in the near future imports would gradually fall.⁷ The inevitable happened, with domestic production gathering momentum through the opening of new coal-fields, viz., Central Provinces in 1862, Rewa in 1884, Singareni starting production in 1887 and Jharia in 1893.⁸

Growing domestic production not only cut down imports, lead-

4. *Report of the Indian Coal Committee*, 1925, p. 15.

5. *MGMII Commemoration Volume*, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

6. *Review of the Trade of British India*, 1873-79, para 61.

7. *Review of Trade of India*, 1901-2, p. 12.

8. *Coalfields Committee Report*, 1946, p. 19.

ing in recent years to near extinction but also gave birth to an export trade early in the last quarter of the 19th century. Exports caught up the volume of imports by 1900, exceeding them since with the exception of the years 1921-25 as noted above. By the beginning of the World War I, Ceylon, the Straits Settlements and Aden emerged as principal markets for Indian coal. It was, however, stated in 1907 that "the export trade in coal has never been very enterprising or very active and in 1907-08 the exports of coal represented 0.77 per cent of the exports of raw materials and 0.34 per cent of the exports of Indian merchandise, the average for the three years ending 1906-07 being 0.91 per cent and 0.38 per cent respectively"⁹ As reported by the Indian Coal Committee 1925, "the peak before the War was reached in 1906 with an export of a little over a million tons, and for the decade ending with 1915 the annual average was a little over three quarters of a million tons. The first two War years did not affect exports which began to fall only in 1917, when the shortage of shipping throughout the world began to tell upon them. In 1918 they reached their lowest point with 74,000 tons, but the end of the War brought a rapid expansion and the figure of 1,224,758 tons in 1920 was the highest ever recorded. In that year restrictions were imposed on exports."¹⁰

Circumstances that led to the imposition of the embargo may be briefly indicated here. Shipping difficulties given rise to by World War I intensified as the War progressed and continued till about two years after its termination. This reduced imports to a negligible quantity during the period 1916 to 1920. These years, however, witnessed an intensification of the domestic demand for coal at first for munitions and later for new industries that had established themselves. In 1918 and 1919 the mines were raising coal beyond the carrying capacity of the railways. By 1920 industries were threatened in many places with a shortage of coal which was aggravated by the exports of more than a millions tons in that year.¹¹ Such boom conditions and the preference for good coking coal on the part of railways and merchant marine, the two important con-

9. *Review of the Trade of India*, 1907-08, pp. 44-45.

10. *Report*, p. 6.

11. *Report of the Indian Tariff Board on the Coal Industry*, 1926, p. 7.

sumers of coal in India, had brought about the phenomenon of "slaughter-mining" in the coal industry.¹² The Government of India prohibited in July 1920 the export of coal except under license and withdrew in September 1920 "the preference which had till then been given by the railways to bunker coal for Indian ports. The object of the latter measure was to economise wagons by diverting bunker coal intended for Bombay, Madras or Karachi from the all-rail route to that which had been followed before the war, when coal had been sent by rail to the Kidderpore docks and thence by coasting steamers to its destination. The prohibition of export except under license was introduced partly to prevent India from being depleted of coal and partly to ensure that the supply of Indian coal by sea to Indian ports should not be hindered by the limited capacity of the Kidderpore docks."¹³ The action was not "sufficiently drastic" and complaints of inadequate supply for industries continued. Subsequently at different dates in 1921 the Government prohibited altogether the export of coal to Aden, Ceylon and the Straits Settlements.

By this time, the world shortage of shipping had diminished and high prices of coal in India attracted imports. Also the capture of our foreign markets by South Africa and Japan and fall in internal demand due to depression in the immediate post-war period had created such a serious situation for the coal industry that the embargo was fully lifted on 1st January, 1923. The Indian Coal Committee was appointed in September 1924 to report on the measures to be taken "to stimulate export of suitable coal from Calcutta to Indian and foreign ports." Convinced that the foreign consumer's lack of faith in Indian coal would make it difficult for exporters to re-establish themselves in the lost markets the Committee laid the maximum emphasis on the need for ensuring the export of good quality coal with a view to reviving the reduced faith.

They recommended that, "A Grading Board should be immediately established which would grade collieries which produced coal for export and would arrange the issue of a certificate for each consignment of the coal exported,"¹⁴ indicating clearly that "grading

12. *Coalfields' Committee Report*, 1946, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

13. *Report of the Indian Coal Committee*, 1925, p. 7.

14. *Report*, p. 133.

should be done from the point of view of consumers overseas."¹⁵ When the Act was passed, it contained a provision which enabled it to be extended to coal not intended for export only resulting in all coal¹⁶ produced in Bengal-Bihar coalfields being brought under Grading Board's classification. The other recommendation made and accepted by the Government to encourage exports was the enhancement of the railway freight rebate on coal certified for export from 25 per cent to 37½ per cent and reduction of river dues of the Calcutta Port Commissioners by 4 annas per ton. Improvement is noticeable from 1926 to 1930. However, from 1925 the industry changed from a seller's to a buyer's market and as everything produced from the mines—coal stone or rubbish—could not be disposed of; as was possible in the earlier situation of a seller's market, "the owners decided to bring out only what could be sold, leaving the rest underground in such a state that it was not only irrecoverable at any subsequent date but was soon to provide the tinder for those eternal fires that to this day are the sightseers' attraction in the Bengal-Bihar coalfields and public memorials to the rapacity of coal owners."¹⁷ The Committee had missed the opportunity of making a careful diagnosis of the factors responsible for the low state of health of a sick industry.

Exports declined again from 1931 to 1936 due mainly to the Great Depression. The Government of India came to the assistance of the export trade by a further rebate of 8 annas per ton on certified coal. This had a very favourable effect on exports from 1937 as shown below :

1937	8.7 lakh tons
1938	13.4 „ „
1939	16.9 „ „
1940	21.1 „ „
1941	17.3 „ „

India's policy of encouraging export of coal since 1925 was re-

15. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

16. *Report of the Coal Mining Committee*, 1937, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

17. K. V. Subrahmanyam, "Annals of the Coal Industry," *Political and Economic Weekly*, p. 1517, 5 October, 1968.

placed by that of restricting exports to the minimum during the World War II owing to the exigencies of internal requirements. When in 1946 the Coalfields' Committee was appointed the policy regarding coal exports was being acutely debated. The group in favour of absolute ban on exports stated its case by maintaining that export demand was generally for high grade coking coal of which India had limited reserves, that domestic production was not high enough to meet internal requirements and the superior qualities of non-coking coal demanded in the export market would be required for developing domestic chemical industries. Those in favour of exports feared that ban on exports may lead to retaliatory discrimination from countries that considered India their natural traditional source of supply, e.g. Burma, Ceylon and the then Malaya, that export would stimulate the flow of tramp tonnage into Calcutta¹⁸ "which is a good thing for trade in general and for special imports such as rice from Burma in particular", that ban might create difficulties later similar to those India faced during 1921-25.

Steering between these extremes the Coalfields' Committee¹⁹ stated that India's policy should "be based not on the consideration that India is anxious to develop her export market, but that she is prepared, subject to certain conditions, to undertake the responsibility of catering for the needs of certain neighbouring countries (viz. Burma, Ceylon and the Straits Settlements) for whom she constitutes a natural source of supply. These conditions are that the requirements of India must generally receive precedence and that exports may be permitted provided internal requirements are not endangered; that it may be necessary to ban the export of certain types of coal, of which our resources are extremely limited; and that any responsibility we may be willing to shoulder in this matter would not be unconditional commitment, but would be dependent on reciprocal agreements to be settled by negotiation." The Government initiated action on the recommendations of the Committee on 1st December, 1947, a date falling outside the scope of this note.²⁰

18. *Coalfields' Committee Report*, p. 52.

19. *Ibid.*

20. The interested reader is invited to consult my article on "India's Export Trade in Coal since Independence" in *Foreign Trade Review*, IV(3), (October-December 1969).

TABLE 1
QUINQUENNIAL AVERAGE OF PRODUCTION, EXPORT AND
IMPORT OF COAL UP TO 1947

(In lakh tons)

	Production	Export	Import
1878-80	9.9 (100)	.005 (0.51)	5.6 (56.57)
1881-85	12.3 (100)	N.A.	6.8 (55.28)
1886-90	17.6 (100)	0.2 (1.14)	8.0 (45.45)
1891-95	27.6 (100)	0.4 (1.45)	7.1 (25.72)
1896-1900	47.5 (100)	3.1 (6.53)	3.3 (6.95)
1901-05	76.3 (100)	5.7 (7.47)	2.1 (2.75)
1906-10	115.2 (100)	7.8 (6.77)	3.4 (2.95)
1911-15	154.4 (100)	7.7 (6.67)	4.3 (2.78)
1916-20	200.0 (100)	6.2 (3.10)	0.4 (0.20)
1921-25	200.1 (100)	1.9 (0.95)	7.8 (3.90)
1926-30	225.7 (100)	6.1 (2.70)	2.2 (0.97)
1931-35	213.5 (100)	3.9 (1.83)	0.7 (0.33)
1936-40	266.3 (100)	12.4 (4.65)	0.5 (0.19)
1941-45	278.4 (100)	5.2 (1.86)	0.04 (0.01)
1946	297.7 (100)	5.3 (1.78)	0.08 (0.03)
1947	301.4 (100)	4.5 (1.49)	0.002 (0.007)

NOTE : Figures in brackets are percentages.

SOURCE : *Indian Coal Statistics*.

BOOK REVIEWS

S. N. Mukherjee (ed.), *The Movement for National Freedom in India*. South Asian Affairs, No. 2. St. Antony's Papers, No. 18. (Oxford University Press, 1966).

An academic historian has often an albatross slung around his neck. It is in the form of a seminar. It goes with the job. There is nothing one can do about it. There is no redemption until retirement. It is therefore customary for us to suffer in silence and make no effort at all to immortalize every weekly belch by publishing it. Dr. Mukherjee has yielded to temptation. The result is a mixed bag of six studies on various aspects of the Indian freedom movement. One of these—Zafar Imam's essay on the impact of the Russian Revolution—is excellent. Another—by Argov on Moderates and Extremists—is the sub-standard and could have been easily dispensed with. A third one—J. H. Voigt's 'Nationalist Interpretations of *Arthasāstra* in Indian Historical Writing'—combines erudition and analytic naïveté in a manner more characteristic of the proceedings of the Indian History Congress than of an Oxford seminar. The rest are mediocre chips from distinguished workshops.

Take, for instance, S. Gopal's article, 'Lord Curzon and Indian Nationalism, 1898-1905.' This is easily the best piece of writing in the volume. But on a theme like this one has a right to expect more than a modicum of readable prose. The author describes how the nationalist leaders had been suffering from high hopes for a square deal from Curzon until in the summer of 1903 he caused offence all around by deciding to partition Bengal. This part of the story is, of course, fairly well-known. One would have thought this worth re-telling only if the process of disillusionment was probed at some depth. But we are offered no insight in this respect. Yet, this is unfair comment. For, we know that Gopal can do better: during the interval between the presentation of this paper at Dr. Mukherjee's seminar and its appearance in print he has come out with his authoritative study of British policy in India,

where one could find all the meat one wished for. What purpose then is served by publishing this seven-page snippet which makes us no wiser about the subject and is so thoroughly unrepresentative of the author's command of it?

In 'Nehru and Early Indian Socialism' Dietmar Rothermund sets out by asserting that Nehru's connection with the Indian socialist movement 'cannot be described in institutional or ideological terms, because Nehru's political loyalties and doctrines were always highly personal'. Yet, if there's anything that emerges at all from this somewhat pompously phrased essay, it is (a) that, *institutionally*, Nehru was a thoroughly integrated Congressman, and (b) that, *ideologically*, his socialism was Vedantic. The first of these two propositions is a commonplace, the second plain silly. We all know that Nehru's socialism was, as Rothermund says, just 'verbal radicalism', and that he never did anything to put into jeopardy his total identification with the Congress main-stream. True, he reached out from time to time for the pale rose of social-democracy, vintage 1926, but did so in such a manner as not to upset anyone at all. The Congress elders simply pretended not to notice. He would often lace his speeches with a pink rhetoric; sometimes he would be reported seen in the company of dangerous men in distant European capitals, or would go into huddle with one or two CSP acharyas of mildly leftish sentiment, but young Hal was all right—he was quite all right—and keeping himself fit for the succession. All this is part of a familiar scene, and the author's conclusion that Nehru's attitude to socialism was ambiguous, is not shockingly original. Pity. For the author would have enhanced our understanding of this complex phenomenon at least in two respects. First, he could have offered us a concrete break-down of the components of Nehru's socialist thought which, one suspects, was more bourgeois liberal than Hindu Vedantic. Secondly, he could have undertaken to find out how and precisely under what pressures at critical points of the nationalist movement Nehru backed out from the socialist brink and joined his party Establishment. If Rothermund could shake off some of his superciliousness, he could have found enough in 'orthodox Marxism'—in Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, for instance—to realize that Nehru's 'ambivalence' had considerably less to do with caprice

than with reflexes characteristic of his class.

Dennis Dalton's essay is an exercise in pure intellectual history. Is the word 'freedom' used in quite the same sense in Indian and western political philosophies? He is quite right in pointing out the absurdity of assuming an identity of meaning and of making Indian political thinkers more beholden to western thought than they really were. He is concerned also with the methodological problems of distinguishing the two semantic universes in which the concept of freedom operates as well as of finding out levels of correspondence between them. At a time when it is becoming increasingly fashionable to seek in the history of Indian nationalism a metaphor for the behaviour of ants, it is perhaps healthy to hear a voice asserting, however unselfconsciously, that ideas matter. What I am not so sure about is whether a perch on the roof of the superstructure offers the best possible view of a political scrum. Metaphysics, as neat as Dalton takes it, can hardly be a cure for Namieritis.

By far the best contribution here comes from Zafar Imam. The evidence he has brought together from a wide range of contemporary Indian and Russian sources is very impressive indeed and has only to be supplemented by the rich documentation we have on this subject in the Home-Political series at the National Archives of India. It is quite clear from this account that the October Revolution was first popularized in India by bureaucrats who saw in every nationalist an agent of Bolshevism. Among the patriots there were those who responded to this proletarian revolution with sympathy but without any understanding of its character or perhaps because of it: for them it was simply a triumph of the oppressed over the oppressors, a sort of storming of an 'Asian' bastille—the analogy of 1789 was in fact often invoked. So far as the working class was concerned, the hardships of a war economy and the brutalities of a black-and-tan regime were enough to drive them towards more disciplined forms of association and collective bargaining. Imam makes this point himself, but then goes on to say that the liveliness of the Indian working-class movement in the period immediately following the demise of tsardom was 'significant and not a mere coincidence.' Significant, of course, but coincidental too, and his own evidence would strongly disprove any suggestion of a direct causality. This model that

the established labour leaders like Joseph Baptista and N. M. Joshi had before them in their expanding trade union activities was reformist rather than revolutionary. Even for young Dange, the glint of October already in his eyes, Gandhism was still in 1919 more convincing than Leninism. Altogether this is a most admirable piece of research which would help immensely to dispel the myth of a push-button impact of the Russian Revolution on Indian politics.

The editor's own contribution is in the form of an introductory essay where he undertakes 'to examine very briefly some of the accepted views of Indian nationalism' and to 'suggest a possible strategy for research on the subject' (p. 10).

The general point that he has to make on the first of these two courts, is unexceptionable. He argues that a great deal of what has been written by the British about India has always been and still is based on imperialist assumptions, and that this has led to a good deal of misunderstanding about Indian nationalism, to an excessive, if not exclusive, obsession with Britain's role in India and to an under-estimation of what our own institutions and our own people contributed to the dynamics of political and social change in our country.

Where this perfectly straightforward observation turns askew and, if I may say so, rancorous, is when the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and its director, Professor C. H. Philips, are made out to be the sole agents of this imperialist tradition in post-war Britain. What about Oxford and Cambridge? And, if one must name the key individuals concerned, what about C. C. Davies and Perceval Spear, who for many years presided over graduate studies in Indian history at these older universities? And since imperialism is to be identified not merely by its crude colonial topee but also by the liberal toga it dons so often on the academic scene, what about, say, the London School of Economics and Political Science among the ancients and the University of Sussex among the moderns where the students are inducted into the rationale of that thinly disguised imperialist procedure known, euphemistically, as the economics of foreign aid and overseas development? In British universities imperialist attitudes with regard to India are by no means limited to the study of

the nationalist movement alone nor to the problem of social change up to 1947. Nor are these exclusively epitomized in any single scholar or institution. The academic ramifications of these ideas are far stronger and wider than Dr. Mukherjee suggests, and it takes much more than a few random jabs at arbitrarily selected targets to expose these.

But let us, in all humility, turn the light inwards. Surely Dr. Mukherjee who is himself a product of SOAS and had a longer association with it than most Indians, would require no reminder of the context in which Professor Philips operates. If any false notions about Indian history originates with him and his colleagues, it is still the Indians themselves, clients for Ph.D. degrees, who feed on these without resentment, nurture the lymph carefully in their minds through years of unquestioning application, process the falsehood into dissertational form, and having pocketed the coveted degrees, come back home as carriers. In due course, the dissertations turn into books, learned papers and lecture notes, and their authors, now saddled into academic positions themselves, start spawning false ideas in their own turn. This is a vicious circle, and if we have to break out of it at all, we must combine our criticism of British academic attitudes with a good deal of honest soul-searching ourselves.

And here we come to the heart of the matter. It is not quite so accidental that the message of the 'civilising mission' has found an active and self-perpetuating medium in so many of our compatriots. For, there is a curious complicity between the pedlars of what, for want of a better name, may be called the SOAS line on Indian nationalism and some of those who amongst us are the most vocal in denouncing it. It is a complicity of élites in a shared fabrication. Let us have a close look at Dr. Mukherjee's own ideas on the subject and his 'strategy of research.'

The substance of his argument is as follows :

'... nationalism in India is a product of the disruption of the old economic and social order. The disruption took place ... because of the growth of a market society, the process of which was accelerated by the establishment of British rule (p. 16, para. 1) ...

Through the land settlements and through extensive trade the British helped the growth of a market economy in India (*ibid.*, para. 2). The direct effect of the growth of this market society was a large scale social mobility . . . This created a new social elite . . . Those who could earn enough wealth or achieve some intellectual standing through the new English education could be accepted as members of this elite (pp. 16-17) . . . They were a group who recognized their new status, which they owed to the new economy and the British rule (p. 17, para. 1) . . . The political development of modern India since the beginning of the nineteenth century can be considered as the history of the struggle of this class to find a new identity (*ibid.*, para. 2) . . . Many works on the 'freedom movement' are now being written solely based on the political writings of the leading Indians and the British officers. But this method ignores the social mobility which created the elite . . . This social mobility may be considered the positive response to the growth of the market society, while the peasant revolts, heroic as they were, were a negative response to this development (*ibid.*, para. 3).

If this is Dr. Mukherjee's understanding of the genesis of Indian nationalism, he is very close indeed to the Philips point of view. There is nothing in the logic of this argument which should not be acceptable to the SOAS historian or even welcomed by him. He would simply point out that it was the British administrative measures which 'through the land settlements and through extensive trade' helped to 'accelerate' the development of a 'market society' which, in its turn, generated 'social mobility' resulting in the emergence of an elite, 'a new class' whose 'struggle to find a new identity' was, according to Dr. Mukherjee, synonymous with 'the political development of modern India'. It would, therefore, follow that Indian 'nationalism was solely the product of British rule'—a conclusion Dr. Mukherjee seems to abhor on p. 15 and then goes on to affirm it himself at great length in the next two pages. The SOAS man would even feign surprise that Dr. Mukherjee having

thus come more than half the way to meet his point of view should object to John Beams's characterization of the Ilbert Bill agitators as 'place-hunting and power-hunting more or less disguised' (p. 11). Was it not by hunting for places and power, he would ask, that *in the last analysis* the 'new social elite' could best indicate their 'positive response to the growth of the market society' and establish 'their new status', their 'new identity'?

Any attempt by Dr. Mukherjee to salvage the rest of his argument at this stage by the suggestion that the search for a new identity was expressed in the urge for social reform, would be dealt with by the simple reminder that *most* of the ideas of social reform were derived from, though they were *not identical* with, the Christian utilitarian and positivist concepts imbibed through 'the new English education' which the elite, particularly the Bengal 'bhadraloks', desperately sought to acquire in order to qualify for places and for power. That they also invoked the shastras from time to time was, as Dr. Mukherjee himself says, simply designed 'to gain sanction for their actions' (p. 16). Social reformism, the SOAS man would say, was primarily an attempt on the part of 'the new social elite to seek a superstructural re-adjustment conforming to 'their new status.'

Why then did 'they tend to belittle the Indians' (p. 14)? Belittle how? Which are 'the textbooks of Indian history' where British authors have 'generally ignored' Rammohan Roy's role in the reform movement? Dr. Mukherjee would be very hard put indeed to name any. And Gandhi? Well, one has simply to look at the British postage stamp issued in the Gandhi centenary year and read about the pomp of the memorial meeting at the Royal Albert Hall to realize how the entire British Establishment, royalty and all, can rise to pay homage to the 'naked fakir'. There was even a special lecture and tea at SOAS to celebrate the occasion. No, there could be no question of belittling the class of Indians Dr. Mukherjee is primarily concerned with. On the contrary, the record of their collaboration in the early phases of the nationalist movement has been fully and enthusiastically acknowledged. For they recognized—and Dr. Mukherjee seems to be saying it himself in spite of one or two sentimental pulls in a contrary direction—that 'if nationalism were purely the product of the British admini-

stration, the best thing for the Indians to do would be to co-operate' (pp. 14-15). They tried their best, didn't they? And Dr. Mukherjee is quite right, too, in dating the birth of Indian nationalism very close to 1885 ('It came to Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century and to India about eighty years later', p. 11)—the year of the birth of the Indian National Congress as a body of avowed co-operators. For it was by co-operating with the administration of which they were the direct beneficiaries that the élite could best hope to assert their 'new identity' and express their 'positive response to the growth of the market society'. If it became increasingly difficult to co-operate after 1905, and particularly after 1920, this was surely due to the 'negative response' of the peasantry. Just leave that 'negative response' out of your history and you get Indian nationalism in its pristine and purest form. No, Professor Philips need not get unduly upset: Dr. Mukherjee has unlearned nothing of what he was taught at SOAS!

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RANAJIT GUHA

Ancient Society, by Lewis H. Morgan, (ed.), and with an Introduction by Leslie A. White, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1964; Originally published in 1877, pp. xiv+471, \$ 7.95.

This book is a reprint of a classic of anthropology and sociology, edited by the distinguished American cultural anthropologist Professor Leslie A. White. No one is perhaps more qualified than Professor White to edit this book. He has been a close student of Morgan's life and writings, including the Morgan archives. He has also wide and deep knowledge of the ethnography of American Indians, who were the main focus of Morgan's studies. His introduction and foot-notes make the reading of *Ancient Society* interesting and rewarding. He provides a sympathetic as well as critical appraisal of Morgan.

So many advances have taken place in Sociology and Social Anthropology since *Ancient Society* was first published in 1877 that

there is hardly anything in it which can enlighten a social scientist in his study of social phenomena at the present time. Morgan's proper place is in the history of social sciences, and here he occupies a very important place indeed.

Like most other social thinkers of his time Morgan was a social evolutionist. Like them he also thought he was writing history—note the title of his book—but they were all pseudo-historians, conjectural historians, or philosophers of history, as the great social anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown persistently stated. Their main data were not documents about the past but contemporary social institutions. Their main aim was to take different varieties of every social institution in different societies in the world, mainly in the contemporary period, and arrange them in stages of evolution or progress from the most primitive to the most advanced or civilised. The sub-title of Morgan's *Ancient Society* is "Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization". These researches are confined in the book to (i) Growth of Intelligence through Inventions and Discoveries; (ii) Growth of the Idea of Government; (iii) Growth of the Idea of the Family; and (iv) Growth of the Idea of Property. The part dealing with the idea of Government occupies 60 per cent of the book, the part dealing with the idea of the family 20 per cent, and the part dealing with the idea of property 7 per cent. The data for the book were drawn mainly from the societies of the American Indians and of ancient Greece and Rome, and occasionally and incidentally from other societies.

The major criterion used by social evolutionists in arranging social institutions in stages of evolution or progress was consciously or unconsciously ethno-centric: the institutions of contemporary Euro-American society were the best and represented the final stage in evolution while the institutions they thought to be contrary to them were the most primitive. The present primitive peoples were supposed to provide the evidence for pre-historic conditions of historic civilizations. Not only that, frequently the social institutions of the earliest period of ancient civilizations, including those of Greece and Rome, were placed at the same stage as that of the institutions of present primitive societies. The idea was that the different peoples in the world started the race for civilization from

the same point of social conditions ; the journey of progress for all of them was marked by determinate stages ; and at the present time different peoples are at different stages in the journey, some still remaining at the starting point, some reaching the final point, and others remaining at various points in between. Frequently, a society judged as belonging on the whole to a later stage was supposed to include traces, or as the evolutionists said "survivals", of earlier stages. The survivals were in turn believed to provide the surest evidence of the society having passed through the earlier stages. *Ancient Society* exhibits the use of all of these standard evolutionist ideas and analytical procedures.

While the evolutionists were generally agreed about the final stage, they differed among themselves about the earliest and the intervening stages, plainly because they were all so arbitrary. Morgan also enunciated his own paradigms of evolution of various institutions in *Ancient Society*.

Although anthropological and sociological researches after Morgan have proved his theories invalid on many counts, his *Ancient Society* has become a scripture among orthodox Marxists. It is one of the paradoxes of intellectual history that Morgan, a bourgeois American, has become a Marxist god. *Ancient Society* is actually a mixture of idealistic and materialistic interpretations of history, but Marx and Engels were much impressed mainly by the latter. Marx wanted to write a book based upon *Ancient Society* and made notes for this purpose, but he could not write this book. Engels took over this project and wrote *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, which is another well-known Marxist scripture. Morgan's *Ancient Society* was thus incorporated into doctrinaire Marxism. A criticism of Morgan is now considered heretical by orthodox Marxists.

While the theory of social evolution ceased to be worthy of serious consideration (except for a few neo-evolutionists in recent years), a great deal of permanent value to Sociology and Social Anthropology emerged out of the researches of social evolutionists because they sifted and analysed a lot of available raw data and formulated a number of useful concepts and ideas to aid analysis. Morgan, in particular, laid the foundation of the study of kinship and marriage. Any modern student of kinship system is sure to be

impressed by what Morgan did in this field about a century ago : his analysis of kinship terminologies and unilineal descent groups, and the interrelations he sought to establish between various elements in a kinship system and between it and other sub-systems in a social system, especially between the kinship and political systems. The chapters on "Growth of the Idea of Government", the main part of *Ancient Society*, are a long essay on the relationship between the organization of gens, phratry and tribe on the one hand and the organization of government on the other. We do not realise how much of what we do today in this field was initiated by Morgan. Morgan was also one of the first few field-workers. Unlike most of his evolutionist contemporaries he collected first-hand data from several American Indian tribes. He also contacted a number of missionaries, administrators and travellers to seek data about many other societies in the world, including lists of kinship terms in several Indian languages.

Ancient Society has played a significant role in the study of Indian society and history. First of all, there are writings by confirmed Marxists who have applied ideas of Marx and Engels which are in fact originally ideas of Morgan. They include writings by communist political leaders, such as S. A. Dange's *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery* (Bombay, 1949, see in particular the statements on p. xi) as well as writings by Marxist scholars, such as D. D. Kosambi's *Introduction to the Study of Indian History* (Bombay, 1956, see pp. 13, 15-16, 21-22, 122-23).

Morgan's influence on non-Marxist study of Indian society is even more important. His description and analysis of kinship terms in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada, their comparison with the kinship terminology of the American Indians, and their use in the formulation of his paradigms of evolution of family and kinship demonstrated for the first time the scientific value of these terms. Since then they have continuously received the serious attention of a galaxy of anthropologists and become a test case in several theoretical battles in the subject. Morgan also briefly commented upon the nature of kinship and marriage of a number of ethnic groups in India and upon their status in his evolutionary scheme (pp. 305, 308-09, 431, 434, 437).

In Morgan's time and for a long time afterwards, pre-historic

archaeologists and ancient historians worked in almost the same evolutionist framework as did anthropologists and sociologists. The whole climate of scholarship in those days was dominated by the idea of evolution. The Indologists, Sanskritists and Orientalists were no exception : they attempted to disentangle the Aryan characteristics from the non-Aryan or pre-Aryan in ancient Indian culture, mainly on the basis of the notions of 'civilized' or 'advanced' and 'primitive' or 'tribal'. There are references in *Ancient Society* indicating how Morgan and W. D. Whitney, a distinguished Sanskritist at Yale University, held common ideas regarding social evolution. Professor White informs us that Whitney was one of the three members of a committee to whom the manuscript of Morgan's earlier work, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, was submitted by the Smithsonian Institution for evaluation with a view to publication in the Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge (p. 28, n. 5). Morgan quoted with approval a long paragraph on the idea of social evolution from Whitney's *Oriental and Linguistic Studies* in *Ancient Society* prominently at the outset (p. 4, on the other side of the Dedication; see also p. 42, n. 24). Morgan frequently referred to ancient Indian culture (sometimes directly under the name of ancient Hindus, Indians or Sanskrit-speaking people and sometimes indirectly under the name of Aryans) but without citing the sources of his information. It seems he derived some of his information from Max Mueller's works (see p. 27, n. 3) but depended mainly upon Whitney who was nearer home (see the acknowledgement on p. 28).

Morgan added an important dimension, viz. that of consanguinity, to the well-known Indological theory of mixture between the Aryan and the Dravidian cultures in India. He concluded on the basis of the similarity between the kinship terminology of the Dravidian languages and the American Indian tribes that the system of consanguinity of the Dravidian Hindus of South India as well as of some Hindus in North India belonged to what he called the Turanian type in the second stage of evolution (p. 307). The system of consanguinity of the other people of north India was "formed by a combination of the Aryan and Turanian Systems. A civilized people, the Brahmins, coalesced with a barbarous stock, and lost their language in the new vernaculars named, which retain the

grammatical structure of the aboriginal speech, to which Sanskrit gave ninety per cent of its vocables. It brought their two systems of consanguinity into collision, one founded upon monogamy or syndyasm, and the other upon plural marriages in the group, resulting in a mixed system. The aborigines, who preponderated in number, impressed upon it a Turanian character, while the Sanskrit element introduced such modifications as saved the monogamian family from reproach" (p. 337). Although Morgan's theory was corrected in details by subsequent scholars, it remained in essence the basic theory of kinship system in India. It is only very recently that its essence was questioned.

Even while Indologists and Indologically oriented sociologists did not use evolutionist theories, they used a number of terms and concepts formulated by evolutionist anthropologist, including Morgan. While anthropologists have refined these terms and concepts, Indologists have continued to use them in the same old way. This is a result of the increasing dissociation between history and social sciences during the later phase of empiricism and anti-historicism in social sciences. A reading of Morgan's *Ancient Society* is essential at the present moment to understand the nature of the old association and the subsequent dissociation between history and social sciences. This may be of some help in establishing a new association between them.

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Mouvements Ouvriers et depression economique de 1929 a 1939, by Denise Fauvel-Rouif (ed.), Assen, Van Gorcum, 1966, pp. viii+404.

The international commission for the history of social movement and social structures organised a colloquium at Strasbourg in 1958 to make a comparative study of the interaction between the world depression of 1929 and the labour movements of different countries, stretching the period of their study right up to the outbreak of the Second World War. The participants were entirely from Europe and North America, distinguished specialists in the fields of labour

economics, labour history, and sociology. A follow-up seminar was organized at the time of the Stockholm world history congress in 1960, and the present volume, appearing after the lapse of six years after that date, contains twentyone papers on different countries, and an excellent introductory comparative analysis by Messrs Demarco and Dhondt and Mme. Fauvel-Rouif. Twelve of these papers had been presented at Strasbourg, the rest are later additions. Whereas the Strasbourg seminar had concentrated entirely on European and American case-studies (including one on Latin America), this volume includes one study on Japan (by Shobei Shiota) and a very disappointing one on India (by R.P.A. Nevett). Eight papers are in English, but the rest, including the introductory comparative study, are in French.

There is some unevenness not only in the quality of the papers but also in the space given to different countries. While five papers are devoted to France, three to Italy, and two each to the U.K. and the U.S.S.R., the other countries all have to be satisfied with one paper each. As a result, the French and the Italian scholars have been able to delve more deeply than the others into the implications of some of the general questions raised. Nevertheless, the single contribution from Professor Conze on Germany is excellent, and so is that of E. Bull on Norway. The paper of Professor Galenson on the U.S.A. is a competent summary of standard works (including those of Galenson himself), but does not attempt to draw comparisons. Professor Campbell-Belfour, while writing specifically about Britain, shows a greater awareness that he is writing for a volume of comparative studies.

How far did the depression affect the membership, organisational structure, and political attitudes of the labour movements? Was there any correlation between different stages of the slump and the recovery process, and the frequency and intensity of strikes? Is working-class militancy stimulated by the onset of a depression or only by recovery and the prospects of an expanding market? Do major changes in trade union organisation and structure create a mutation in political ideologies, or do political developments, acting as an exogenous force, trigger off rapid development of new forms of trade unions? How far can one notice uniform patterns of working-class behaviour in the major capitalist countries of the

west? Can variations be satisfactorily explained with reference to quantifiable data on the occupational distribution of the labour force, or does one need to take into account ethnic, religious, and political influences? These are some of the general questions posed by most of the contributors. Thanks to the greater space available to them, the French and the Italian contributors have been able to examine such specific questions as the effects of foreign workers' immigration, the consequences of the dilution of traditional skilled labour by the growth of mass production methods, and the precise social composition of the membership of the French Socialist and Communist parties, the breakdown of the membership into white-collar and manual workers. But the papers on the U.S.A., Norway, Belgium and Germany have also been able to indicate briefly the state of research on such questions and their relevance for the broader questions asked.

Drawing together as far as possible the threads of the arguments of the different countries, the introductory 'Etude Comparée' makes the following points. In 1929 a comparatively small proportion of industrial workers in any country were organised in trade unions, and this was strikingly smaller also when compared with the peak years of trade union strength immediately after the war in 1919-20. Though it falls outside the scope of the book the reasons for this are briefly touched on. The impact of the world crisis reached different countries at different times, but the authors take 1933 as a turning point after the nadir of the crisis is reached, mainly for economic reasons, but partly also because the advent of the Nazi power in Germany necessitated political rethinking on the part of the leaders of the labour movements. In the first phase of the crisis (which, the authors correctly point out, was more a crisis of growing unemployment than of falling real wages) the economic reaction of workers in most countries was to abandon militancy (as indicated in the losses of members sustained by the trade unions). The biggest strike waves and trade union organisational drives occurred after the trough of the depression was over. The editors try to explain this early quiescence by a tentative hypothesis that the fear of unemployment prevented workers from resorting to strikes until a *floor of misery* was reached, and militancy started when the standard of living fell below the floor. They examine how far, in lieu

of strike action, the workers protested via political action. A review of the general elections held in many countries around 1932 leads to the conclusion that, with the exception of the U.S.A. where Roosevelt's election was a landmark, there was much less political radicalization than one would expect.

The influence of the French School of sociological history—with its attempts to study the historical process in terms of the conjuncture of economic trends with the changes in institutional structure—is noticeable in the approach of the authors of the introductory comparative study. However, because the editors did not invite studies of the pre-1929 situation in the labour world, which might have delineated all the significant institutional features of the labour movement in different countries before the slump, their attempts to draw conclusions from the post-1929 studies sometimes appear rather lame. They explain the contrast between trade union quiescence before 1933 and trade union militancy after 1933 with reference to two hypotheses: (a) signs of economic recovery stimulated trade union growth because of the prospect of economic gain; (b) belated realization of trade union leadership about the nature of the crisis and about the economic measures best suited to deal with it. The first is a rather mechanical correlation well-suited for Labrousse-type studies of the mid-nineteenth century, but not adequate for the more complex industrial world of the twentieth century. The second really begs the question of why the realisation was so belated. Much more needs to be done to unravel thoroughly the factors that account for the uneven tempo of working-class militancy and politicization in the biggest economic crisis of the twentieth century.

Mr Nevett's eleven-page paper on Indian labour is a potted history of a pedestrian character, ranging over events from the early factory acts to some features of present-day industrial relations. It is true that serious research has only just begun on Indian labour history. Still, anyone with some familiarity with the strike statistics published by the Government of India and the provincial governments, the minutes of evidence of the Royal Commission on Labour, and the memoirs of Indian labour leaders would have been able to put forward some interim hypotheses regarding working-class behaviour. It would have been possible to suggest lines of inquiry

which could examine the regional and temporal intensity of popular political movements with the economic crisis, and their relationship to the protest patterns of industrial workers. For the late thirties the elections to the labour constituencies in 1937 would have provided some lines of enquiry. That it is possible to write suggestive papers on the broad theme of the book even for a semi-colonial, under-developed country is indicated by the papers on Latin America and Spain in this volume.

Mr Nevett makes no attempt to do anything of that nature. Besides, his paper has far too many inaccuracies. To mention a few: The A.I.T.U.C. did *not* begin under the "aegis of the Congress Party" (p. 263). It was formed initially for the purpose of nominating the workers' representative to the I.L.O., out of trade unions which had a variety of political leaders (some of whom were members of the National Liberal Federation). It is doubtful if one can say that "the first affiliation of unions was formed under the aegis of the Congress party" (p. 267). The most striking feature of the early years of the A.I.T.U.C. is the domination of either Liberal and non-political trade union leaders like N. M. Joshi and Mohammed Daud, or of moderate politicians in Mrs Besant's following who had been pushed out of any influence in the Congress party structure. Later on Congress Swarajya party politicians like C. R. Das as well as Communist leaders tried to increase their own influence. It is not true that "the Communists returned to the A.I.T.U.C. fold in 1938" (p. 269). They had done so in 1934. What happened in 1938 was that the National Trade Union Federation (led by moderates like N. M. Joshi and V. V. Giri, Shiva Rao and others, who had split from the A.I.T.U.C. in 1929) rejoined the A.I.T.U.C., so that there emerged once again one all-India body. Mr Nevett's bibliography does not mention the works of Karnik, Punekar, or Dwarkadas, nor of the research papers of M. D. Morris. All in all, the paper is quite out of line with the others in this volume, which show a degree of sophistication to which Mr. Nevett's paper comes nowhere near.

The book as a whole should be very useful to any course on comparative labour movements, or twentieth century European history. There are any number of works on the international socialist and communist movements of this period, but this goes

much more deeply into the economic and structural problems of organised labour than the other works, which deal mainly with political issues.

There is no general bibliography, but some of the papers contain useful reading lists at the end. The absence of an index is particularly to be regretted in a comparative study of this nature. There is a misprint on page 28, line 2, where 1958 is wrongly printed as 1938.

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PARTHA SARATHI GUPTA

West Bengal and the Federalizing Process in India by Marcus Franda, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968, pp. 257, bibliography, \$ 7.50.

Indian federalism has been variously characterized as "quasi-federation" and "cooperative federation". Indeed, if one were to assess the nature of Indian federalism from what the Constitution prescribes, the argument in support of quasi-federation gains strength. Without going into the academic controversy revolving round the nature of Indian federalism, it must, however, be emphasized that constitutional arrangements do not operate in a vacuum: environmental pressures work to modify and at times change the constitutionally prescribed nature of centre-state relations. It is therefore necessary to examine centre-state relations not only in terms of what the constitution-makers intended such a relationship to be but also in the context of the factors that interact with the federalizing process and affect its operation.

In his book *West Bengal and the Federalizing Process in India* Marcus Franda undertakes an examination of centre-state relationship as it has developed under the influence of state and regional political, economic and social conditions. Through three case studies Franda succeeds in bringing out the salient features of the politics of centre-state relations in respect of one Indian state, West Bengal. All the three case studies demonstrate that in spite of the vast power prerogative granted by the Constitution to the central government, a state government will not surrender its freedom of

action in respect of any matter that relates to either inter-state or centre-state relations. Franda presents ample evidence to highlight the central leadership's unwillingness or inability to discipline recalcitrant state, or to use fully the constitutional powers granted to central leaders. As a consequence, then, the federalizing process has come to be excessively characterized by bargaining and horse-trading.

Franda suggests that the root of the resistance of state leadership to central directives lies in the political and social environment of West Bengal. The calculation by the state leadership of political consequences emanating from a certain line of action prompts the state government either to modify it or to drop it altogether. This, however, does not explain why the central leadership, when convinced of the benefits of a particular programme, finds itself unable to persuade or coerce the state government to pursue that programme. Also, the nature of the federalizing process raises the important issue of the consequences of such a process for economic development. As the case studies relating to the Damodar Valley Corporation and land reform legislation indicate, short-term political considerations encouraged the West Bengal government to renounce long-term economic benefits and political advantage.

In spite of the fact that the study under review is concerned with centre-state relationship in only one Indian state, it does bring out vividly the problems inherent in the federalizing process in a country beset with sharp parochial and regional identities. The book can be read profitably by the students of the Indian federal system.

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RAMASHRAY ROY

Aspects of Japan : Sasadhar Sinha, Asia Publishing House, 1968, pp. x+138, Rs. 25/-.

Since the purpose of writing the book as stated by the author, "was not to write a thorough history but to state certain elementary facts about Japan, so that anybody so inclined can . . . follow up the subject by his own reading" there is not much room for a reviewer to critically evaluate the book. However, even as far as

the stated objects of the author go, there are two glaring omissions of elementary facts about Japan—namely the spectacular economic development of Japan since the Meiji Restoration, and specific nature of the pattern of industrialization and the inextricable link between economic growth and militarism that had been the crux of Japanese Imperialism. It is easy for an Asian to sympathise with the travail of Japan following the atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and even accept the assumption that, that there was a racial bias in the decision to drop the atom bombs on Japan. But, no student of history can fail to note that the war was brought to Asia by Japan and Japan alone riding on a wave of national euphoria. In fact, long before the outbreak of World War II, Japan had committed a series of acts of aggression against neighbouring countries watched by a powerless League of Nations. No one compelled Japan to join the Axis Powers except its own vaulting ambition to supersede the European powers in Asia and establish its own hegemony over Asia.

Mr. Sinha claims and rightly too that education was the key to the transformation of Japan. But it is also a fact that education served to bolster the ideology of the ruling class in maintaining an authoritarian system of government, unequal society, rigid social discipline and fanaticism. Consequently, there were no brakes when the decision to engage in a full-scale war was taken. It was defeat and the humiliation of the occupation that jolted the Japanese into accepting a saner outlook. Even the democratisation of the government, the break-up of the Zaibatsu and the land-reform were the result of American intervention and not the result of a deliberate choice of the Japanese people.

Mr. Sinha talks of the economic miracle of the recovery of Japan after the war. There is no doubt that both the Germans and the Japanese have shown great resilience in tackling the problem of rehabilitation of their war-devasted economies. Discipline and national pride were important ingredients in this process. Also, Japan has shown considerable skill in anticipating new consumer demands but the critical factor that made Japanese recovery possible was the Korean War. Japan became a great supply base thus revitalizing her industry. There is also no doubt that the long protracted war in South Viet-Nam has benefited Japanese industrial

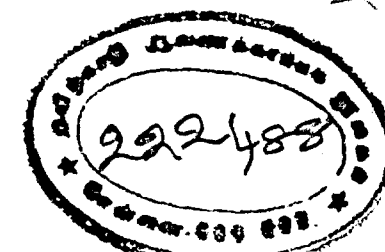
expansion after the World War II. As Professor Shigeto Tsuru suggests "Successful and successive wars may be said to have been an important factor in the rapid industrialization of Japan."

Mr. Sinha then talks of Indo-Japanese relations, a subject worth emphasising since we in India have to our cost, neglected to study and know Asia and our neighbours, while looking longingly towards the west, particularly Europe and America. But to suggest that "had Buddhism continued to dominate the cultural and political life of India, it would undoubtedly have maintained intact the unity of Asia, in particular of India, China and Japan, to the benefit of the whole of Asia" (p. 118) is to not only overemphasise the value of religion as a unifying force but to completely ignore the cultural and historical roots of the civilizations of India, China and Japan, all of which have produced distinct social and cultural groupings.

As Mr. Sinha states in the preface, the influence of Rabindranath Tagore seems to have inspired his own outlook on Japan. Both uncritical Pan-Asianism and perverse hatred of the west were typical of the generation that grew up between the two world wars. It was this psychology which led Subhas Chandra Bose to seek help from the Japanese for the liberation of India. It was ironical that he should have sought help from those who were seeking to enslave the whole of Asia. To have even believed this possible, flowed from a mistaken conception of Asian interests as being identical and homogeneous. I cannot but feel that Mr. Sinha still suffers from an uncritical yearning for Pan-Asia, and this is time and again reflected in his book. I would any day suggest Reischauer's "Japan Past and Present" as a first book for an Indian student wishing to know the basic facts of Japan.

Miranda House,
University of Delhi, Delhi

K. SASTRI



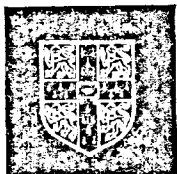
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