

# THEORIES OF THE INDIAN MUTINY

(1857-59)

*A Study of the Views of  
an Eminent Historian  
on the Subject*

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To all the  
historians of the Mutiny  
in the hope of a new and  
deeper understanding this  
book is dedicated.

Review from the Munglakan ...

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Richard Collier in his *Sound of Fury* has covered a new ground of the old story of the Sepoy Mutiny. By his massive research in which he has completely exhausted a kind of materials hitherto unpublished and unread, and indeed not explored so far by the professional historians, a bunch of 'letters, diaries and memoirs of those on the spot', he has offered 'a new and personal picture of what it was like to experience the Indian Mutiny.' But Richard Collier, the latest to write on the Sepoy War, was however nobly conscious that he was not writing a definitive history of the Indian Mutiny, and yet in the fullness of knowledge of the subject, he has assessed the present state of Mutiny studies in the following words :

Three Indian scholars, Dr. Surendra Nath Sen, Dr. R. C. Majumdar and Dr. S. B. Chaudhuri have in recent years added much needed fundamental research and shrewd interpretation to the earlier synoptic accounts of Forrest, Kaye and Malleson and Thomas Rice Holmes.

While the above characterisation fits in quite well with the contributions of Dr S. N. Sen and Dr R. C. Majumdar, the present author has his reservations in respect of his own work which may not appear to be of particular value except that it attempted to present an authentic and evocative account of popular participation in the revolt of 1857. This reservation referred to tends to be confirmed by the way Dr R. C. Majumdar has chosen to criticise his thesis of *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies*.

Very few students of Indian history had had the privilege of sitting at the feet of Dr R. C. Majumdar for a long time in the pursuit of historical studies as the author of this book. It was his unique privilege to be his life-long student and no words would be adequate enough to express his gratitude and his sense of loyal devotion to him. Such criticisms as the great historian has made of the author's work is yet another gesture of his affection and concern for his student who has received these criticisms in the same spirit as a student would receive instructions from his teacher.

If therefore Dr R. C. Majumdar has criticised and differed from the views of the present author in respect of the historical import of the Mutiny, it is all the more appropriate that the latter should re-examine more thoroughly the inner lines of his work and the nature of the materials utilised in the light of the criticisms to which they have been subjected. In the process, a critical perusal of the views of the historian would also be deemed necessary in the interest of historical studies and no less for the satisfaction of general readers who would, after all, like to know if 1857 was not only a year of military mutinies. The present work is the result of such an introspective examination.

Despite the strictest interpretation of historical materials and their re-appraisal, if the author is unable to accept the views of his teacher he can only regret his unenviable lot. The theory of Dr R. C. Majumdar would also be no less comendable than hitherto, because of the appearance of this book. But the author of this work will have the satisfaction that he has yielded to none in his desire to uphold the truth, a direction which he has received from his illustrious teacher himself.

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## INTRODUCTION

This book is a resultant study of the views on the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 as embodied in the chapters on 'Revolt of the People', 'General Review', and 'Nature of the Outbreak' in the recently published *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*.<sup>1</sup>

The subject is admittedly a controversial one in the whole history of Indo-British relations. If some British writers in the early phases of mutiny studies had characterised the Indian rebels as either Brahmanical demons or Muslim maniacs, somewhat identical views are even now held by Indian historians, who do not seem to suffer from any inhibition or historical qualms in denouncing the Indian rebels as *goondas* and *budmushes*. The opposite view is maintained also with equal strength now, as formerly, both by Europeans and Indians. There is thus a sharp difference of outlook which persists. On the face of it, therefore, there should be no objection to any scholar dealing with the subject in his own way in a book exclusively devoted to India in 1857.

But the treatment of the subject in its most controversial form in the *British Paramountcy* which claims to be the first 'standard work' on the history of modern India in the post-independence era possibly makes a difference. Some writers at least would not have gone to such lengths to utilise the medium of a professedly 'standard work' in pushing the idea of the exclusively military character of the movement and to present the same as the only acceptable truth. Young learners of history who will make a liberal use of this volume are likely to get an oblique impression of the precursors of modern India when they go through these chapters. In the *British Paramountcy*, the rebels are held up to have been no better than the 'Pindaris', the revolt being pressed only to show in lurid light a dark epoch of Indian history.

<sup>1</sup> THE HISTORY and CULTURE of the INDIAN People, Vol. IX : BRITISH PARAMOUNTCY AND INDIAN RENAISSANCE PART I. General Editor : Dr. R. C. Majumdar. Assistant Editors : Dr. A. K. Majumdar and Dr. D. K. Ghose. Prepared under the direction of Dr. K. M. Munshi, President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhaban, 1963.

A proneness to disregard certain obvious factors regarding the popular content of the revolt was manifestly clear in Dr R. C. Majumdar's first book on the subject which appeared early in 1957. This famous work, *History of the Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857*, is indeed a monumental addition to the prodigious stock of mutiny literature, rivalling in popularity Malleson's *Red Pamphlet* of classical fame. But the book deals with the military character of the revolt, and sticks to the single thread of the absence of a general understanding among the rebels as proof positive of the same. The publication of a work on the civilian side of the Indian Mutiny late in the year 1957, with its accent on the popular aspect of the war and some informative elaborations of the socio-economic forces possibly made out a case for a scrutiny of the source-materials used in building the thesis of *Civil Rebellion During the Indian Mutinies*. A sample survey of these materials has indeed been made from a particular point of view in the *British Paramountcy* which obviously has not led to any major historical revisions. The *British Paramountcy* attempts to arrive at the same military foundations of the Indian Revolt, only with new strength and emphasis, by an open challenge to the relatively novel conception of popular participation in the Sepoy War as posed in the *Civil Rebellion*. It posits a total rejection of the popular character of the revolt if only to give a measure of infallibility to the convictions previously held. The materials used in the *British Paramountcy* have been carefully marshalled and thoroughly reoriented to a posture of strength, to prove from the point of view of a military revolt the weakness of the foundation of the opposite school of thought and, no less patently, to a posture of challenge, demanding of the author of the *Civil Rebellion* an empirical confirmation of his views.

This is now offered here in a way, it is hoped, in keeping with the accepted principles of historical research and the methods and standards of critical investigation. In so doing, the directional trend of the present work has been towards an assessment of the theories, opinions and views on the subject as stated in the *British Paramountcy*. A close and searching perusal of the relevant chapters of the above book, line by line and page by page, has been inevitable in the process with a view to checking meticulously, as far as possible, each and

every issue against evidence. This line of treatment, that is of meeting the implications of the challenge made by the historian, point by point, as they occur in his book, will account for the topical, rather than chronological arrangement of the present work. That any other course would have been more successful does not seem likely; the book combines the chronological with the thematic approach, but emphasizes the topical. Source citations serving as a means for presenting the views of the historian have been featured, and frequently enough, descriptive narratives blended with critical and interpretive analysis have been executed for an adequate understanding and appreciation of the problems involved.

But repetitions of some points are very much regretted. The insistence on some themes like the communal question and the selfish motives of the rebels, which are too often repeated in the *British Paramountcy*, it is feared, has left its mark in the present work also. Even so, attention has been given to maintaining balance and giving fair coverage to all aspects of the points at issue. But this book is not intended to be a definitive history of the Indian Mutiny. It does not seek either to offer any new theory. The work has been fashioned to help understand better the nature of the uprising in the light of the re-alignment of source-materials bearing on the subject. This fresh appraisal it is hoped, may provide a larger and an authentic foundation to support an empirical-rational approach to mutiny studies.

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S. B. C.

# I

## HISTORIOGRAPHY

In the summer of 1857, the sepoys and civilians throughout northern India began killing their British military officers and government officials. In doing so, they started a conflagration by a process of concerted action and a measure of understanding which must have resulted from a sense of general disaffection. This alliance between the military and civil elements which was forged by the experience of alien rule was hardened into a purpose and a plan and created the foundation of a genuine popular movement. The compact mass of mutiny and rebellion, which spread like fire, shook the foundation of British rule in India and generated vague and floating ideas of a free and independent rule in the minds of the countrychiefs who missed no chance of setting up governments at their own will, while the racial and religious feelings which roused the masses imparted a kind of malignancy to a war of extermination. By and large, the Mutiny which as Canning wrote 'was little more than a military revolt was fast growing into a widespread and implacable feud between the agricultural classes and their rulers', and indeed into a vast upsurge of the people. The villagers impeded the march of the British avenging army by withholding supplies and information which they freely gave to the rebel forces; wage earners vented their rage on the system of foreign exploitation by a wholesale destruction of the British-owned factories; the social destitutes to whom borrowing was the only means of livelihood turned against the bankers, *mahajans* (capitalists) and usurers, the class protected by the British courts; the priests and prophets preached *jehad* against the *feringhis*; and other elements of society, not always amenable to law and order, broke out into uncontrollable fury, attacked police and revenue establishments, destroyed government records and court-buildings and telegraph poles, in fact everything which could remind them of the English. The British rule came down to a point of utter helplessness; all seemed to be closing on the English in this mortal conflict;

and even the new middle class, the English-knowing educated Bengalis in particular, nestling under British law and protection, who had been the staunchest supporters of the government, could not be a source of any real help to the British at bay.

The popular aspect of the Sepoy War as outlined above is reflected more in the accounts of the contemporary government officers than in later reports or books written by later writers. Distance of time and space more often than not makes for a certain obliteration of historical data. The more one is removed from the time and place of occurrences, the more inclined he is to be content with a mere gist of events neglecting the specific details. And this simplification by a natural process comes to be accepted as an authentic version on which later writers rely. It is precisely at this point that contemporary reports, whatever be their source, possess a merit of their own when contrasted with later summary accounts. No comprehensive statements are available to us from the defeated side in 1857-59 about how the sepoys and civilians confronted the situation brought forth by the outbreak. But this absence in a way enhances the value of the surviving reports of the British officers who were obliged in accordance with official orders to compile a narrative of the events of their respective areas which did acknowledge the genuineness of the popular reactions in the Sepoy War. These reports furnished by the local officers in 1857-59, in obedience to the instructions issued in a General Order, were later on classified and collected; they were published for the first time in 1881 by the Foreign Department Press, Calcutta, under the title *Narrative of Events Attending the outbreak of Disturbances and the Restoration of Authority in all the Districts of North-West Provinces in 1857-58*.

These *Narratives* going out in the name of various magistrates and collectors, other district officers and special officers, and the divisional commissioners contain almost a day to day account of the incidents that happened of which they were witnesses, or of which they got information from men who witnessed them. As such they contain materials of unique importance. The authenticity of events recorded by them rests not only on the official process by which they were recorded but is also borne out by the general resemblance in the incidents of the outbreak given districtwise, as well as by the

natural variations in the pattern and complexion of the uprising from area to area so minutely noted in the reports. There might have been wilful suppression of the details of the rebellious proceedings in some cases to meet official exigencies, or perhaps a little inflation of the figures of the rebel forces to show the enormity of the danger the government faced. But the account of civil rebellion furnished by the British officers themselves who were not in all cases able to keep their balance owing to strains of war or fatigue and racial passions, has at least this saving feature that it automatically rules out the charge of biased evidence. The *Narratives* were composed by some of the very eminent civil servants of the time such as Allan Hume, E. C. Bayley, W. C. Erskine, F. B. Gubbins and others as shown in the Appendix. The earliest one comes from F. O. Mayne, magistrate and collector of Banda, dated 11 September 1857<sup>1</sup>, and the latest one on record is the *Narrative* etc. of Cawnpore from C. B. Thornhill dated 28 April 1859.

These source-materials indicate clearly enough the spontaneous reaction of the masses. They were not, however, utilised to any appreciable extent by even J. W. Kaye and G. B. Malleson not to speak of other early English writers on the subject. The reason for this is not far to seek, as the *Narratives* were not available in a published form before 1881. That this was the position is obvious from what Sir George Trevelyan wrote in his preface to *Cawnpore* : 'The 'Government narratives of the Mutiny, drawn up for the most part by the civil officers in charge of the several districts. The Author returns his most hearty thanks to Sir John Lawrence and the authorities of the Calcutta Home Office, who, at the cost of great trouble to themselves, supplied him with the copies of these invaluable documents reserved for the use of the Indian Government.'<sup>2</sup> It is not unlikely that some of these documents or copies of them may have been among Kaye's Mutiny Papers now preserved in the Commonwealth Relations Office. But the celebrated historian of the Sepoy War based his studies

<sup>1</sup> Dr R. C. Majumdar remarks that the General Order (No. 212) for furnishing the reports was issued on 30 April 1858 (BPIR. 523).

<sup>2</sup> Trevelyan, *Cawnpore* (4th edn. 1894), Preface, pp. v-vi. . . .

almost exclusively on a variety of source-materials other than the *Narratives* in examining the share of the people in the Mutiny.<sup>1</sup> It has been noticed that the idea of a popular rebellion was actually debated and discussed by some contemporary British officials at the time of the events.<sup>2</sup> J. B. Norton and H. Mead who wrote actually during the Mutiny period, were certainly aware of the participation of the people in the upheaval. But no one attempted to treat the subject on a factual basis, and the approach of historians and pre-suppositions of British historical writings on India being what they are, no real attention was paid to the extent of popular intervention in the mutinies of 1857. The *Narratives* must have been available to T. R. E. Holmes whose *History of the Indian Mutiny* first appeared in 1898. Of all the English historians he is the first to use the expression 'Civil Rebellion' in connection with the Mutiny, and furthermore he stated, an admission very significant from the point of view of a historian, that it was more important to investigate into the former than to analyse the phenomena of the military mutiny itself.<sup>3</sup> But while professing to deal with the accompanying civil disturbances of the Sepoy War, Holmes speaks much more of the military movements than of the other exertions of the Indians. Not even one single chapter is devoted by him to civil rebellion during the mutinies.

Nor did the Indian writers who came later in the field utilise these authentic materials as evidence in support of the occurrence of popular outbreaks distinct from the mutinies of the sepoys. The first Indian to write a connected history of the Sepoy War, and the first Indian to treat the subject from the broad perspective of India's long struggle against British domination, was V. D. Savarkar whose *Indian War of Indepen-*

<sup>1</sup> Kaye's statement in his Preface to *A History of the Sepoy War in India 1857-58* runs thus : 'And here I may observe that, as on former occasions the historical materials which I have moulded into this narrative are rather of a private than of a public character. I have made, but little use of recorded official documents.' (Preface, pp. x-xi).

<sup>2</sup> *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies*, by S. B. Chaudhuri (abbreviated as CR.), 284 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Holmes, *A History of the Indian Mutiny* (and of the Disturbances which accompanied it among civil population), (1913), 141.

dence came out for the first time in 1909. The *Narratives* published in the year 1881 could have been utilised by him, and undoubtedly the background of these reports was known to him from other sources. But he deals mainly with the bravery and heroism of the sepoys, their ideals, sacrifices and exertions and not much with the actual facts of popular commotions, the extent to which the common people co-operated with the rebel army, or whether they rose or fought, even without the direct help of the sepoys, under their traditional leaders, the *zamindars* (landholders) and *talukdars* (feudal landholders). Of the hundreds of popular leaders who appeared on the scene not even a few are taken note of by Savarkar who established his thesis of an Indian War of Independence mainly on the ground of the revolt of the sepoys themselves, whose undoubted anti-British feelings, he thought, invested the uprising with the status of a 'War of Independence'. The concurrence of popular commotions with the mutinies' raging simultaneously, and even continuing long after, which in reality adds to the strength of the case for a 'War of Independence', is adequately reflected in the *Narratives* but has not been brought out by Savarkar. Since the time the book of Savarkar was written, no further progress was made in mutiny studies from the standpoint of his line of thinking until the centenary year of the event, 1957. P. C. Joshi's Symposium on the '*Rebellion-1857*' published in that year was very much like Savarkar's book. Like Savarkar, this work made a very liberal use of the more well-known published writings and opinions having a bearing on his views, but Joshi also strengthened the basis of the theory by a reference to the utility of the *Narratives* themselves. He also advanced an interpretation of the 1857 uprising on socialistic lines.<sup>1</sup> Reference to the popular aspect of the revolt may of course be found in a number of other publications but mere consciousness is quite different from a full-fledged factual development of the thesis.

The official history of the Sepoy War, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, published in 1957 by the government of India, takes no notice of the grand sequence of popular movements and so the ques-

<sup>1</sup> P. C. Joshi (ed. by), *Rebellion-1857, a Symposium*, 179, 195, 200.

tion of utilising relevant source-materials, the *Narratives*, did not arise in this case. Nor does Dr R. C. Majumdar, who was mainly occupied in carrying on an investigation into the integrity and conduct of the eminent leaders of the movement, refer to these materials in his book, *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857*, which in its title at least did not exclude the possibility of popular participation. Eminent Indian historians who might have been expected to be conscious of the popular element in the Mutiny ended thus by asserting totally different conclusions without caring to note that contemporary British officers themselves had quite unconsciously vindicated the standpoint that the Mutiny of 1857 was also linked up with a civil rebellion. It needed an intensive study of the materials, as recorded in the *Narratives* but more specifically in the *Further Papers* of Parliamentary Records, to present an authentic account of the ferment in the civil populace attending the mutinies. This was attempted perhaps for the first time in the book *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies* which appeared late in the year 1957. The book was based almost entirely on the *Narratives* and on the *Further Papers* of the Parliament, and to some extent also on the unpublished papers preserved in the British Commonwealth Relations Office.

That the *Narratives* contain the most important acknowledgement of the anti-British popular uprising of 1857 is however questioned by Dr R. C. Majumdar. He comments : In any case, it is not possible to get a more authentic detailed account of the various local outbreaks. It is interesting to note that even those writers, who represent the outbreak of 1857 as a national war of independence, have freely drawn upon these accounts (*Narratives of Events*) at least whenever they suited their purpose.<sup>1</sup>

The remark appears to be somewhat uncalled for. The survey above will make it clear that these *Narratives* have not been used to any considerable extent in any book excepting the *Civil Rebellion*. Therefore the idea that many have drawn upon these materials to argue the national character of the movement is not particularly true of mutiny studies. Secondly, the assumption implicit in the above statement that the

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 523.

*Narrative of Events* also establishes the military character of the outbreak of 1857 cannot be maintained with any degree of strength. Whoever has gone minutely through these voluminous records as detailed in the Appendix will affirm, (as the title itself implies) that 'Events Attending the Outbreak of Disturbances' refer mainly and primarily to the details of the popular commotions of the mutiny period (and not so much to the mutinies) which the district officers, as the custodians of law and order in their respective areas, were asked to narrate. Thirdly, it cannot be denied that the *Narratives* along with the *Parliamentary Papers* do form an authentic source-material on the British side for a proper assessment of the historical significance of the events of 1857, though these have unfortunately not been as thoroughly examined as would have been desirable. In view of this neglect, it should not have appeared surprising that the author of *Civil Rebellion* in an attempt to find out the social and economic causes of the revolt in the countryside, had 'freely drawn' upon these accounts. The point of interest, which is quite curious, is that even some of those writers who represent the outbreak of 1857 as only a military insurrection have also 'freely drawn' upon these accounts which do not deal primarily with the incidents of the mutinies.

But if all these accounts of civil rebellions as contained in the records in question are made to represent a movement not differing from say the Pindari commotion of an earlier age,<sup>1</sup> then the popular revolt of 1857 may indeed be divested of the character of a war of independence. And undoubtedly facts could be marshalled in support of this line of thinking. Hence this statement :

For, in any discussion of the question whether the revolt of 1857 was the first national war of independence or not, the real character of the outbreaks of the civil population must be the decisive factor. A detailed statement of actual facts based on authentic sources, is calculated to give a more accurate and definite idea on the subject. . . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. G. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. i, 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Preface, p. xvii.

The approach is quite correct, but this particular line of study seems to be a new one as in his earlier work the distinguished historian did apply quite other methods in judging the character of the movement. So in examining the above statement one will have to find out what actually was the intention of the historian in now subjecting the civil rebellion in the mutinies to a severe historical test. Secondly, it will have to be seen to what extent the historian has been successful in maintaining the vaunted objective attitude in analysing the factors of popular commotions. The second point may not however be of any particular importance if it can be shown that the historian had a pre-ordained purpose to serve in taking up at last the study of the civil rebellions in the Indian Mutinies.

As already indicated, the theory that the revolt of 1857 was not the result of a general conspiracy, and that it had no national character either, was stressed in the *Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857*. But the *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies* published sometime after made out a case that the personal interests of the more famous leaders possibly had nothing to do with the causation of the civil rebellion which broke out spontaneously on the rising of the sepoys or even earlier.<sup>1</sup> This argument, as well as the theory that the anti-British war of resistance of 1857 expressed profound desires of freedom, as propounded in that book obliged Dr Majumdar to examine the thesis of the *Civil Rebellion* which possibly had presented the history of the popular commotions of 1857 in a connected and indisputably authentic form so long neglected.<sup>2</sup> To some extent this has been admitted in the Preface to the *British Paramountcy* :

Except a single book of small size, there is no monograph or special history of the Mutiny of 1857, which gives even a brief but systematic account of the outbreak of civil population in various localities in 1857-58. Yet this is a very important factor in making a proper estimate of the character of the movement.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CR. Preface, p. xxii.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Michael Maclagan, *Clemency Canning*, 374.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. Preface, p. xxviii.

The reference is apparently to the *Civil Rebellion*, as statements from that book have been copiously quoted and severely criticised, though the book as such has not been mentioned even once in the whole compass of a bulky volume. The book also is not that small; at any rate, it had not omitted to incorporate any details of material importance to the subject which have now been embodied in chapters eighteen and twenty of the *British Paramountcy*, though the editor assures us that a detailed account of the local outbreaks apart from the mutiny of the sepoys, has been added.<sup>1</sup> It is of course true that the *Narrative of Events* has been made the basis of his enquiry, but not all the relevant records, shown in the Appendix, have been yet considered by him, specially the *Further Papers*, a study of which must be deemed to be very rewarding, if not essential, for an investigation into the 'real character of the outbreaks of the civil population'.

As for objectivity of attitude, our historian proclaims pontifically :

It would be the endeavour of the present editor to follow the three fundamental principles . . . : firstly, that history is no respecter of persons or communities; secondly, that its sole aim is to find out the truth by following the canons commonly accepted as sound by all historians; and thirdly, to express the truth, without fear, envy, malice, passion or prejudice, and irrespective of all extraneous considerations, both political and humane.<sup>2</sup>

The principles so emphatically put forward are intended to have a deterrent effect on critics who might venture to controvert the author's theories on the very same principles as enunciated above. It is assumed that there cannot be any question of doubting the authenticity of the author's conclusions—to do so would appear to be so presumptuous. But as hinted above, the historian seems to have started with the idea of securing the primacy or priority of his theory as against the one propounded in the *Civil Rebellion*. It is not even unlikely that he started with a selection of facts in that very light. As against the few significant facts which he has admitted as facts of history, he

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Preface, p. xxxiii.

has discarded many more as insignificant which to others might not appear at all unhistorical. Unconsciously he has been selective in the arrangement of the appropriate facts, their order or context. It is particularly noticeable that in the treatment of this subject, the historian has taken the kind of facts he wants.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the case for a negation of the theory of popular rebellion imbued with a social purpose has been based primarily on the alleged anti-social activities of the lower orders of society. The repetition of arguments that personal gain or satisfaction of personal ambition impelled the people to revolt, that the prominent chiefs took advantage of the general turmoil to regain what they had lost or to gain new territories, that freebooters plundered with impunity in this godsent opportunity to loot, kill and burn which no gujar or banjar are known to have missed, shows a kind of decision already taken as to the facts to which emphasis is to be given. In other words, our historian has evaluated the facts before recording them, that is to say, what he has taken to be facts are not indisputable facts at all but only a series of 'accepted judgements'. The sort of value judgement he has passed in the very first page of the chapter dealing with the 'Revolt of the people', before facts have been stated as such, will illustrate this point :

Hopes of personal gain also undoubtedly operated to a large extent among all classes, and were the sole motive of many, notably the *goonda* elements and those professional classes who were accustomed to live by plunder, such as the Gujars, Ranghars, Jats etc.<sup>2</sup>

The average mentality of western historiography which luxuriates on the theme of the *goondas* and *budmushes* is reflected in the above judgement which bears a striking resemblance to the comment of a historian of the imperialist school : 'just as a general mutiny of the London Police would be followed by a violent outburst of crime on the part of the London thieves and rogues, so would the talukdars, the dispossessed landholders, the gujars and the budmushes of India

<sup>1</sup> Modern historians differ on the feasibility of writing an objective history.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 497.

have welcomed the first symptom of Governmental weakness as a signal for gratifying their self-instincts.<sup>1</sup> It would be difficult not to note that there has been a striking coincidence in the areas of emphasis selected by the two historians as well as in the liberty they have taken in hunting after the kind of materials they want in making an 'objective' assessment of the importance of a major historical event.

Areas other than the world of the *goondas* and *budmushes* might as well have existed, but the discussion enters inevitably into the main stream of the controversy over the Mutiny and the complex reactions it has produced in both British and Indian historical writings. The century-old problem has now taken an acute turn since after the centenary year, as will be evident from the following observation of a recent writer on the subject : 'Of all interpretations of the uprising, the one that has had the most influence is that which sees 1857 as the year when nationalist feelings, long suppressed by British occupation, flared into violence. For these writers, 1857 is the First War of Independence, the moment when the groundswell of smouldering discontent and hatred found expression in a passionate movement led by patriotic men and women to restore national governments in India. Back of this interpretation is the desire to show that the nationalist movement that won freedom for India is not a product of the late nineteenth century, and above all, that nationalism is not an ideology learned from the West, but that there was a living sense of India as a nation that existed long before the advent of later political movements. This view is categorically denied by almost all Western and many Indian historians, who assert that nationalism in any meaningful sense cannot be found in the struggles of 1857'.<sup>2</sup> While one cannot disagree with the classification of views recorded above, it may be pointed out that not very many Indian historians have asserted that 'Nationalism in any meaningful sense cannot be found in the struggles of 1857'. It is quite a valid contention that Indian writers in the nineteenth century were unwilling to

<sup>1</sup> Holmes, *A History of the Indian Mutiny* etc. 560.

<sup>2</sup> A. T. Embree, 1857 in *India—Mutiny or War of Independence ?* Introduction, p. x.

commit themselves on such a controversial subject, unless they were openly pro-British in their attitudes. This explains why the few books written then on the subject by Indians were on the lines of the British historical writing. But our historian, writing in the post-independence era and being presumably free from the inhibitions of British rule, has nevertheless upheld the western point of view of the Mutiny.

He has thus inherited the traditions of British historiography and the aptitudes of those Indians who either wrote under duress or for favour during the British rule in India. In other ways also his position in the historiography of the Mutiny has been distinctly striking. He is not only the latest Indian to accept the English interpretation of the uprising and he may be one of the last as well. He has also the complacency to find that the 'tendency to look upon the Mutiny as a national war of independence shows visible signs of decline'. He is, again, the latest and unquestionably the most powerful exponent, among all writers both Indian and English, of the theory which categorically denies that the mutinies could ever be interpreted as a war of independence. He has not only not denounced the theory, but has gone a step further in adorning the case with a new look by accusing the Indians of making a false charge against the British writers that they had wilfully misrepresented a popular rebellion as a military mutiny. Quite forcefully he has asserted :

In contrast with the contemporary Indians, their descendants of the present day look upon the outbreak of 1857 as a general revolt of the people, and what is more curious, accuse the Englishmen of deliberately misrepresenting the great popular rebellion as a mutiny. It will be quite clear from what has been said above, that there is not the least truth in this accusation.<sup>1</sup>

The charge levelled against the Indians calls for a challenge as it is basic to the whole issue, the character of the mutiny, and to the historiography of the revolt of 1857 as well. The first point will be taken up in due course. Here an attempt only will be made to analyse the political and historical background of British historical writings on the Mutiny and the attitude of the British historians towards it. It will be seen

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 604; *History of the Freedom Movement etc.* vol. i, p. 243.

that there is in fact 'not the least truth' in the assumption of Dr R. C. Majumdar that the British writers were completely free from prejudice on this most 'written about event in Indian history'. Even his own admission made in a different context that 'without any preconcerted plan and organisation, the mutiny merged itself into a general rising of the civil population of all types and classes',<sup>1</sup> considerably weakens the force of his unmerited confidence in the objective mood of the British historians. That there was a 'general rising of the Civil population' if not a 'great popular rebellion' even as a backwash of the mutinies is undeniable. If, therefore, the European writers have paid scant attention to the civil rebellion in the Indian Mutinies, the charge of deliberately misrepresenting the rebellion as a mutiny cannot be as baseless as alleged. It is also to be remembered that the descendants of the 'contemporary Indians' did not regard the events of 1857 only or primarily as a revolt of the people. What they thought was that the so called Sepoy Mutiny had two aspects, namely military revolt and civil rebellion unmistakably united—possibly more of the revolt of the people at some places over and above the undoubted military mutiny. Historiography of this period will tend to show that for obvious reasons the British historians in general could not accept this view.

The old controversy about the nature and character of the Sepoy Mutiny provides a fascinating study of the writings on the subject. The revolt of 1857 was in a sense the most formidable which had ever broken out against a foreign domination. It is impossible not to admit that the English fought in the mutinies with a passion and determination as though they were fighting in defence of their own country and struggling for their cherished rights. The first reaction was one of anger and revenge and the early English writers could not possibly make a critical assessment of the situation in the atmosphere then prevailing. The large mass of pamphlets, narratives, diaries and letters revealing sensational accounts of personal experiences and applauding British military achievements, written under excitement mainly to satisfy the thirst for news of the English public, could not help restore a

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Freedom Movement etc.* vol. i, p. 172.

proper perspective in mutiny studies. By and large, as the mutinies were turned into a war of revenge and extermination, the violence of the British Press rose to great heights. The *Englishman* of Calcutta wrote that sufficient vengeance had been taken at Delhi, but a long account of blood yet remained to be settled. For this inadequate requital, the *Times* of London cried out that upon the standard of England 'Vengeance' and not 'Justice' should be inscribed.<sup>1</sup> In the same strain *The Morning Post* thundered that the 'British Empire in India shall endure if for no other reason than for the purpose of exterminating and rooting out from the face of the earth Mahomedan and Brahmanical demons'.<sup>2</sup> In this atmosphere of passion and fury very few people, politicians, priests, and historians could keep their balance. Lord Shaftesbury cried out for savage retaliation and Majendies and Roberts' echoed the mutiny spirit: 'Cawnpore, my lads, remember Cawnpore'. Even Sir George Trevelyan writing as late as 1899 could not be free from that national complex: the skin was black and that was all.<sup>3</sup>

The evangelists were even more bitter ascribing the mutiny to the failure of the British government to evangelise. The clergyman, J. E. W. Rotton, who was present with the Delhi Field Force, sincerely believed that 'it was a battle of principles, a conflict between truth and error' and the perfect unconcern with which he records how wounded prisoners were put to death and even native camp-followers were killed not only showed the racial character of this war of extermination but also highlighted the bitter attitude of the general class of British writers on the Sepoy Mutiny.<sup>4</sup> Moreland rightly suggested that the lurid picture of Indian life as stressed by the missionaries and philanthropists in their eagerness for reform had very adversely affected the thoughts and moods of the British officers serving in India and tended to strengthen

<sup>1</sup> CR. 265.

<sup>2</sup> September 5, 1857.

<sup>3</sup> of. The views of Forbes-Mitchell of the Ninety-Third, Mackenzie of the 3rd Light cavalry, and Lieutenant Majendie as referred to in CR. 47, fn. 2.

<sup>4</sup> J. E. W. ROTTON, *Chaplain's Narrative of the Siege of Delhi from the outbreak at Meerut to the capture of Delhi*, 1858.

their conviction of Hindu or Muslim wickedness and error.<sup>1</sup> The evangelists of course had their adherents among the civil and military servants of the Company. Many like Sir John Lawrence found in the Mutiny the clear evidence that the wrath of God had fallen upon the sepoys. Henry Beveridge writing just after 1857 still advocated the conversion of India to Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Similarly J. C. Marshman was strongly allergic to the Mutiny and argued with pride and prejudice that it was essentially a military affair and not a 'National revolt against our authority',<sup>3</sup> though he admitted that he found it difficult to consider it calmly.<sup>4</sup> With these presuppositions clearly visible in British historiography, the writings on the Mutiny could not be either restrained or objective, and far less comprehensive covering all sides of this vast upsurge.

And when the movement collapsed the Englishmen could not help nursing a sense of triumph and exultation together with a feeling of contempt for Indians. The Mutiny was 'not a mere narrative of a military revolt, but a revelation of Asiatic nature'.<sup>5</sup> The theme of imperialism, proud and arrogant, stemming from the utilitarian associations of many of these writers derived additional strength from the overwhelming success of British arms during the Indian revolt of 1857, a circumstance which accounted for 'the flowering of imperialist literature in the last quarter of the nineteenth century'.<sup>6</sup> The Sepoy War and British triumph held the centre of the stage, the popular passion for national heroes was allowed to outweigh considerations of historical proportions and balance. A whole generation of British youth was brought up on Mutiny tales<sup>7</sup> whose authors took particular care not to spoil the effects of the 'Indian Essays' by an adequate regard for fact and truth. The effect to be produced was stimulation

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Harrison, *The Indian Mutiny* (Aids for Teachers series No. 5). Published for the Historical Association by Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1958, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Beveridge, *A Comprehensive History of India*, iii, 709.

<sup>3</sup> J. C. Marshman, *The History of India, from the Earliest Period to the close of Lord Dalhousie's Administration* (3 Vols.), ii, 452.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* iii, p. 451.

<sup>5</sup> E. T. Stokes in C. H. Philips' *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, 396.

<sup>6</sup> Holden Furber in C. H. Philips' *Historians etc.* 340.

<sup>7</sup> Philips, *Historians etc.* 341.

of thought embodying the true traditions of the imperialist sway of England, so forcefully enunciated by Sir William Wilson Hunter, the administrator-historian, that the history of British rule in India is 'an epic of the British nation—the fibre of its fibre, the express image of its inmost character'.<sup>1</sup> Being led to believe in the evangelical fashion that truth and God was on their side, the British historians freely assumed that the uprising of 1857 was a mere mutiny and not a popular rebellion and portrayed the sweep of events as an essentially British epic in which more emphasis was given to British pluck and resourcefulness than to the technical advantages they happened to possess. This blatant nationalistic attitude was frankly obstinate and did not even take adequate notice of the vital part played by Indian troops on the British side, not to speak of the part played by the masses in this conflict.

The emphasis on British actions in mutiny literature became increasingly evident. The English view, that the Indian Empire was 'a standing miracle in English politics, only to be explained by the heroic qualities of the English race',<sup>2</sup> drew its inspiration from the conscious attempt made by British writers to make an apotheosis of mutiny heroes—'adventurous, masterful, patient in defeat and persistent in executing its designs'—a galaxy of men who, as Sir H. S. Cunningham felt, should be spoken of 'with reverence, with gratitude, and with just and patriotic pride', only in 'hushed accents'.<sup>3</sup> The Mutiny in the hands of British historians thus became an episode to adorn a tale, a didactic theme to hold up and elevate the position of Great Britain, and what was more purposeful, a great stage to demonstrate the triumph of English character.

The idea that India was a theatre 'where the English character could assume its most heroic form' seems to have emanated from Macaulay, who in order to make Indian history sufficiently attractive to British readers had deliberately

<sup>1</sup> F. S. Skrine quoted by Stokes in Philips' *Historians* etc. 403.

<sup>2</sup> Philips, *Historians* etc. 399.

<sup>3</sup> H. S. Cunningham quoted by Stokes in Philips, *Historians* etc. 387.

held up in his animated writings Clive and Hastings as two solitary leaders of genius fighting desperate and lonely battles against an Indian 'blackcloth' for the 'ascendancy of the small islandpeople of Britain throughout the world.' Since then India had come to be used as a shadowy, and yet a 'magnificent' background to give the qualities of an imperial race certain proportions surpassing anything that was quite credible. The Mutiny taking place in the hey-day of British dominance in the East afforded thus the best opportunity of portraying the noble English figure engaged in a mortal conflict; Havelock making desperate attempts to reach Lucknow, Outram at bay and fighting with his back on the wall at the beleaguered city, Wheeler waging a battle of defence and death at Cawnpore, Wake defending himself at Arrah against fearful odds. Some of the finest compositions in the writings of the Mutiny related to this particular topic of how dark and tragic scenes were overcome by 'splendid daring' and 'by courage glowing into heroism', as an imperialist thinker wrote about Earl Canning.<sup>1</sup> Maude and Sherer, Mowbray Thomson, the *Red Pamphlet*, Forbes-Mitchell, Malleeson and even Kaye—the classics of mutiny literature—abundantly reflect this spirit, that being Englishmen, they were bound to suppress the mutinies and reconquer India.<sup>2</sup>

But none thought of the Indians—that the revolt of a subdued race might have been produced by causes not exterior to their immediate interests, might indeed have been provoked by the rule of a foreign power. It was ignored that the Indians might as well have had a case to represent and a cause to fight for. In all the works cited above there are not even fifty names of the Indian rebels who confronted the English. Forrest on the other hand considered it worthy of historical attention to collect the names of even the lowest subalterns who took part in the Mutinies, a 'noble epic' which spoke to every Englishman. Objectively, the same might have been said of the Indians; but no notice was taken of them, of their

<sup>1</sup> H. S. Cunningham, *Earl Canning* (Ruler's of India Series), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Many other writers on the Mutiny manifested this spirit. cf. John Holloway of the Civil Services (*Essays of the Indian Mutiny*, 73), and Cooper of Amritsar (*The crisis in the Punjab*, 244-5).

hopes and aspirations, of the open manifestations of their rebellious feelings, if only to complete the history of this epoch. The fact was that the whole movement was seen by the British writers as a 'footnote' to British imperial history. Military historians who saw the mutiny as a purely military event, and they were the largest in number, confirmed the imperialist standpoint. Being accustomed to think in military terms, most of them failed to see any other development of intrinsic interest, the emergence of any issue of a different complexion other than military, which deserved to be recorded in the story of the revolt. This preoccupation with British military action which was agreeably reflected by the English historians of the imperialist school accounted for the great bulk of writings on the upsurge of 1857.

Historical writing on the Indian Mutiny is no doubt a very interesting feature of Indo-British relations and assuredly a very rewarding subject of research. It has not been possible to make a detailed study of the background of the more famous authors on the subject within the limits of this book, but from what has been sketched above it will be evident that the British writers in general in writing about the Mutiny were influenced by their political and historical traditions. They had neither the inclination, nor perhaps in many cases the necessary materials to explore the popular side of the anti-British war of resistance. Hence it would not appear to be very reasonable to comment that the Indians were guilty of making a false charge against the British writers that they had deliberately misrepresented a rebellion as a mutiny. Even if it is argued that the civil rebellion in the mutinies did not assume the proportions of a war of independence, it would be difficult to maintain that the British writers were uninhibited, having regard to what has been said above of their political and historical affiliations.

There is yet another point of far-reaching importance. The old idea that the Indians were happy and contented under British rule 'so patently superior to their predecessors in respect of justice and the establishment of internal security' was rudely called in question when the sepoys and civilians all throughout northern India rose up against the ruling

authority in the summer of 1857. Never since the battle of Plassey had such a formidable revolt occurred which obliged the British government for the first time to bring under searching scrutiny all the assumptions about the nature of British rule in India. The official and imperialist interpretation of the revolt as being basically army mutinies found favour for two reasons. Firstly, such a view could be urged in defence of government policies and secondly, 'it permitted the continuance of the belief that British rule in India had not awakened any deep antagonism'.<sup>1</sup> But the outburst of the civilian population simultaneously with the mutinies must tend to contradict the complacent attitude of the contemporary writers and observers and challenge all that was boastful and smug in British imperialist writing which drew most of its sustenance from the concept of a 'virtuous, secure and happy India'.<sup>2</sup> 1857 should have been a turning point in the attitude of the British historians towards India, but they failed to turn. From the *Red Pamphlet* to Richard Hamilton, the latest Anglo-Saxon to write in the centenary year, the same sequence of attitude was in general continued to be maintained that it was a mere mutiny and not a popular rebellion.

Fed by this imperialist literature, eminent Indians also came to share the views of their British masters, and in the absence of any detailed investigation on the unrest among the civilian population during the mutinies, the theory of army revolt gained the field. It is not surprising therefore that Dadabhai Naoroji, who is quoted by the *British Paramountcy*, should share the same view. The relevant passage runs as follows :

That this was the general view of even eminent Indian statesmen down to the end of the nineteenth century is proved by the statement recorded by Dadabhai Naoroji that "the people in India not only had no share in it, but were actually ready at the call of the authorities to rise and support them."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. T. Embree, op. cit. Intro., p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Holden Furber in Philips' *Historians etc.* 343.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 604; *Freedom Movement*, op. cit. p. i, 243-44.

It is presumed that the historian of the *British Paramountcy* does not quote Dadabhai Naoroji to prove that the revolt of 1857 was essentially a military affair, for the eminent Indian statesman was neither a contemporary observer nor a historian of repute. He is quoted, one may infer, just to show what the people of India in the nineteenth century thought about the Mutiny. There is however a danger in making use of such statements if they are not historically processed, for the opposite view coming from a contemporary Indian of equal eminence would demand the same consideration for evaluation unless the historian was thinking of selecting such evidence only as would suit his purpose at the sacrifice of objective principles. Can it be accepted if the theory that the revolt of 1857 was much more than a 'Sepoy Mutiny' is put in the following way in imitation of the *British Paramountcy*? 'So far as available evidence goes, it was the Indians, and not the Englishmen, who unanimously represented the outbreak as essentially a rebellion. That this was the general view of eminent Indian statesman down to the end of the nineteenth century is proved by the statement,' of R. C. Dutt who said: 'It is beyond doubt that political reasons helped a mere mutiny of soldiers to spread among large classes of the people in Northern and Central India, and converted it into a political insurrection'.<sup>1</sup> Yet if one goes by the statement of R. C. Dutt one may as well reply to the historian of the *British Paramountcy* that not only the Indians of to-day, but their predecessors in the nineteenth century also had a shrewd suspicion that the oft-voiced assertion of British historians that the rebellion of 1857 was essentially a mutiny was not quite the truth. That this was the firm belief of many contemporary Indians is proved by yet another statement of a famous publicist, the eminent editor of the *Hindoo patriot*. Harish Chandra Mukherjee wrote on 21 May 1857: 'How slight is the hold the British government has acquired upon the affection of its Indian subjects has been made painfully evident by the events of the past few weeks . . . It is *no longer a mutiny but, a rebellion*'. Harish Chandra lived in the mutiny period and was almost an eye-witness to the events unlike Naoroji.

<sup>1</sup> R. C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India*, vol. ii, (7th edn. 1950), 223.

The volume of opinion overwhelmingly in favour of the popular characterisation of the Mutiny emanating from British official sources in India need not be quoted here as the issue is confined to Indians in the present context. Nor need it be pointed out that Dr Majumdar himself has shown disrespect to the authority he has cited by quoting from official sources to prove that in consequence of the *general nature of the rebellion* . . . the magistrate recommended the wholesale burning and destruction of all villages.<sup>1</sup> The movement of 1857 was composed of so many ingredients and was so full of 'explosive emotional and political complications' that a rigid approach to the subject turns out to be the easiest way of arriving at untenable conclusions. If what Dadabhai Naoroji stated about the fidelity of the Indians in 1857 was true, his statement does not accord with his recorded view in 1882 : 'Hindus, Mohammedans and Parsees alike are asking whether the British rule is to be a blessing or a curse.'<sup>2</sup> This points to a different picture. But nothing tangible possibly could have happened during the short period 1857-1882 which will account for this sudden fluctuation in Indian attitude, unless we regard the statement regarding 1857 as somewhat unrealistic if not faulty.

It is of course not a fact that all Englishmen themselves unanimously represented the outbreak as a mutiny. It was Disraeli who sounded a warning which raised in its most insistent form the question of the popular character of the so-called Sepoy War. 'The decline and fall of empires', he said, 'are not affairs of greased cartridges. Such results are occasioned by adequate causes, and by the accumulation of adequate causes'.<sup>3</sup> A few years later J. W. Kaye, the celebrated historian of the Sepoy War in India, similarly repeated that there were fears and discontents which had no connection with the greased cartridges and uprisings not motivated by the spoils of the treasury. The first symptoms of the revolt of 1857 were undoubtedly of a military character, but in many places

<sup>1</sup> *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857*, 217.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by P. C. Joshi in *Rebellion—1857*, a Symposium, 210.

<sup>3</sup> CR. Intro. p. xviii.

the first attack came from the disaffected communities.<sup>1</sup> A vast amount of descriptive literature on the fears and discontents of the Indians leading to the main stream of the revolt had already appeared in the first two years of the revolt. Henry Mead, possibly the first to attempt a history of the 'Sepoy Revolt', who had many opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of political and social affairs of India in ten years of work in the field of journalism, showed a kind of vehemence in condemning the Company's rule which was very unlike the prevailing mood in England of that time. After referring 'to the cruelty, the oppression, and the measureless folly of our rule,' he sums up: 'If we are wise henceforth in dealing with India, the well of Cawnpore will so fertilise the land, that every corner of it will yield a crop of blessing'.<sup>2</sup> John Bruce Norton writing in 1857 expressed the same repugnance to the Company's rule by referring to the sale of jeweleries of the fallen royal families and other such revolting acts which made the British rule odious to the people and he suggested the transference to the crown of the rule of India. Reverend Alexander Duff made an assessment of both the depth and the diffusion of the revolt, and the *Red Pamphlet* published in the year 1858 categorically stated that 'All Oudh was in arms against the British'.<sup>3</sup> Another British historian, Charles Ball observed without hesitation that the movement eventually became the rebellion of the whole people,<sup>4</sup> while Russell, the famous correspondent of the *London Times*, characterised it as a 'war of race . . . and of national determination to shake off the yoke of a stranger'.<sup>5</sup> Col. G. B. Malleeson who completed the work of Kaye similarly noted in 1880 that the movement had increasingly become national.<sup>6</sup> He further observed significantly that in four northern provinces—Oudh, Rohilkhand, Bundelkhand and Saugar and Narbada—the great bulk of the people rose against the British rule.<sup>7</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Mead, *History of the Sepoy Revolt*, Preface, p. iv.

<sup>3</sup> *Red Pamphlet*, 194.

<sup>4</sup> Ball, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, i, 642.

<sup>5</sup> *My Diary in India in the year 1858-59*, 164.

<sup>6</sup> Malleeson, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, vol. i, 165.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. iii, p. 487.

Central India, according to Thomas Lowe, the Rajputs and Marathas, the Hindus and Mahomadans revolted conjointly.<sup>1</sup> All these competent opinions to which many others may easily be added indicate that at least some British writers were not wholly absorbed in the theme of military insurrection but showed a degree of awareness of the popular overtones of the movement together with a strength of personal conviction in not misrepresenting the revolt of 1857 as essentially a 'Sepoy War'.

While some of the British writers had already admitted the dominance of popular factors behind the sepoy movement, the adequacy of that thesis was not however worked out in any concrete form on a factual basis by any of these eminent historians. As already shown, all the materials necessary to illustrate the popular commotions of the epoch of the Sepoy War in the true historical perspective were not probably marshalled and properly organised at the time when these books appeared. Despite the emphasis they gave to the theory of the popular character of the revolt, Kaye and Malleon actually wrote the history of the Sepoy War. Nor did Holmes as already stated, his reference to the civil rebellion notwithstanding, devote any chapter to the subject. But he quoted Cave-Browne to show that the downfall of the English was taken for granted and civil rebellion followed as a result.<sup>2</sup>

British historiography on the Mutiny with its slant on the military side was for the first time put on the defensive by Savarkar's *Indian War of Independence* which was a major breakthrough in the mutiny studies. The book was written of course with a view to inspire the people to rise and wage a war to liberate their motherland. But though he approached the subject with a purpose, his writings made the historians more alert, careful and critical about the assumptions of the military character of the Mutiny. His forceful presentation of the subject gave a new strength and accent to the old controversy and showed that the revolt of 1857 might easily have contained in its complex and intricate folds the elements of a national war of liberation. Savarkar reproduced the atmosphere of

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Lowe, *Central India During the Rebellion of 1857-1858* (1860), 24.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 28, fn. 1.

a popular war charged with patriotic fervour in the events of 1857. What he said was redolent of comprehensive history, even if he took some untenable stands. The first War of Independence indeed could be felt in the passion with which he invoked the spears of the Marathas, the swords of the Rajputs, the Kirpans of the Sikhs, the crescent of the 'Islamites' as elements in the common endeavour.<sup>1</sup> But though Savarkar's studies stirred up the national memory to a recognition of the importance of the uprising in India's struggle for independence, his treatment of the subject as already pointed out was not adequately factual and convincingly concrete. Many also doubted the historical worthiness of his proposition because of his undoubted emotional involvement in the subject. In any case, Savarkar was the first Indian among the 'contemporary Indians' to hold very firm views on the popular character of the movement and his range of study would certainly entitle him to be regarded as a more competent authority in respect of the 1857 struggle than Dadabhai Naoroji who had taken only a pedestrian interest in the subject.

<sup>1</sup> Savarkar, *The Indian war of Independence*, 98, 493-4.

## II

### MOTIVES AND ATTITUDES

The *British Paramountcy* has repeatedly stressed that there was no political aspiration for freedom as the impelling motive behind the revolt of 1857. It has been admitted that the general discontent and disaffection against the British might have made some people anxious to put an end to their rule, and that the ground for a popular revolt might have been prepared by a number of muslim maulavis, Maulavi Ahmadullah in particular. Nevertheless, it was proclaimed that selfish motives and personal ambition mainly impelled the people to revolt.<sup>1</sup> The strength of this theory that the revolt was really inspired by a natural instinct of the people for 'personal gain', from which 'they were hitherto restrained by the rule of law established by the British' would have been however much weakened, had more attention been given to the activities of the disaffected maulavis, some of whom at least must have been inspired by the 'noble instinct of achieving freedom from foreign yoke.' To illustrate this point, the *Civil Rebellion* spoke about Sarfarazali, the Gorakhpur Maulavi, who it is alleged delivered a speech at Shahjahanpur. But the *British Paramountcy* finds fault with it. It comments :

Dr. S. B. Chaudhuri, who regards the outbreak as a war of national independence, has given a long and detailed account of a patriots' meeting held on May 1, 1857, at Shahjahanpur, at the house of Mazhar Karim. He gives the names of the persons, both Hindus and Muslims, who attended the meeting, and long extracts from the speech of Sarfarazali, the Gorakhpur Maulavi. The speech would do credit to the most seditious extremist in the first two decades of the twentieth century, if we only substitute religious frenzy in place of political aspirations for freedom as the impelling motive.

The Maulavi concluded his speech by reminding his audience that the centenary of the battle of Plassey 'approaches,' and asking them, 'have I your unanimous vote to declare that the Kafir brood shall be stamped out on that date'? The whole assembly with

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 498-99.

one voice cried out : 'No, sooner than that'. . . . "Nothing," says Dr. Chaudhuri, "illustrates more strikingly the spirit of contumacy and revolt which seized the people" than this speech. He admits that the "authenticity of this seditious speech cannot indeed be vouched for". But what he omits to say is that the whole scene, including the speech, is taken from a novel written in 1896 on the basis of the tale of Mariam, a victim of the outbreak of 1857.<sup>1</sup>

The significant point of omission is not the novel itself, as such, as it hardly mattered in the context, but the full statement in the *Civil Rebellion* which the *British Paramountcy* has not quoted that, though the authenticity of this seditious speech cannot indeed be vouched for, *it agreed quite well with the rumour of rebellion that was in the air of India in 1857.*<sup>2</sup> Nor does it appear to be a correct historical attitude to omit to mention that Qadarali Khan, Nizamali, Qudratali, Abdulrauf Khan, Sital Singh, Daulatrai, Kalkaprasad, Ghanshyam Singh, and Mangalkhan along with many others, who are alleged to have attended the meeting in the house of Mazhar Karim at Shahjahanpur on 1 May 1857, are all referred to as rebels in the official reports on the disturbances of the district.<sup>3</sup> Maulavi Sarfarazali of Gorakhpur was not a fictitious figure either. The seditious maulavi did excite sepoys who participated in the mutiny at Shahjahanpur.<sup>4</sup> He then went to Moradabad where he sat on the tribunal over the suspected loyalists,<sup>5</sup> and finally went to Delhi where he was appointed chief of the ghazis.<sup>6</sup> Any one acquainted with the source-materials of the Mutiny will have to affirm that the ghazis and maulavis were the most uncompromising 'Jacobins' of the Indian revolt whose main object was the total destruction of the European element. Sarfarazali in particular, who was mainly responsible for the massacre of the Europeans at Shahjahanpur while they assembled for prayer in the church on 31 May (one of the worst tragedies of the Sepoy Mutiny), was certainly a man of the most menacing and con-

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 500.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 25.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 25, fn. 1.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 116.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 110.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 116, fn. 2.

tumacious disposition, possibly not differing remotely from the 'seditious extremists of the first two decades of the twentieth century'. If this historical and political background of the person concerned is reflected in the tone and temper of the speech alleged to have been delivered by him, it certainly makes out a case for a critical study of the speech in detail. To brush it aside merely on the ground that it is taken from a historical novel does not appear to be quite reasonable.

Yet the case is argued as violently as possible :

The speech of Maulavi Sarfarazali has, therefore, no more historical value than the speeches put by poet Nabinchandra Sen in the mouths of Rani Bhabani, Raja Rajballabh, and other alleged conspirators against Siraj-ud-daulla, at . . . *Palasir Juddha*. It would be against all canons of historical criticism to accept, as Dr. Chaudhuri has done, the alleged speech of Sarfarazali, as "typical of the attitude of the general body of the rebels". If no better evidence can be furnished, the least that one can do is to profess ignorance of what that attitude was, and merely take note of the different motives, noted above, that impelled different classes and types of persons. For, this rests upon the unimpeachable testimony of actual facts.<sup>1</sup>

The analogy possibly does not fit in quite well as there was nothing unauthentic about Sarfarazali, who was not a 'Conspirator' working behind the scene but an open revolutionary whose plans and activities have been witnessed and recorded as such by contemporary British officers. Without the least intention to 'profess ignorance' which, as will be shown later, was also not one of the virtues of the *British Paramountcy* either, it can be maintained that the over-excited political sentiment as reflected in the speech was typical of the attitude of the general body of the rebels who actually demanded the expulsion of the faithless *feringhis*.<sup>2</sup> To challenge this assumption as being 'against all canons of historical criticism' amounts to an admission of the view that, alike from the violent tone and the standpoint of arguments put forward, the speech of Sarfarazali was unlike any of the famous incendiary addresses, manifestos, proclamations and statements

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 500.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 26.

that were issued by the leaders from time to time during this period. It cannot however be denied that such addresses, proclamations, manifestos and even anonymous placards constitute a major source of evidence for a proper understanding of the attitudes and motives of the leaders and their rebel followers from the Indian point of view.

It will also appear comprehensible that so far as the attitudes of the leaders and their followers were concerned there could not be any dichotomous developments, for the former would naturally harp on those festering causes of discontent and national humiliation on which people would react instantaneously and indicate those arguments which would carry conviction. The leaders did not exist apart from the rebels. The facile argument that the proclamations and addresses issued by the leaders did not represent the views of the rebels as a body, nor indeed of anyone excepting themselves, is only a distorted way of thinking and is completely discredited by the unimpeachable testimony of actual facts. The contemporary British officers, who watched day after day the throbbings of the vast sub-continent in its convulsion in the hectic days of 1857-58, and saw the British empire melt away in the course of a month, had not confirmed that when the leaders thought of delivering the country from the yoke of foreign rule this was not the objective of the rebel masses also. It will be seen that what Sarfarazali said was common to all the published statements of those who took part in the war against the British and that there was hardly any difference in tone, temper and motivations which inspired the speech of Sarfarazali and similar other statements of the mutiny period.

Sarfarazali harangued<sup>1</sup>: 'Shall they continue to be our masters any longer? ... By the last prophet, they shall not defile our native soil any longer. I am here to devise ways and means to accomplish that object.' The preamble to the famous Azamgarh proclamation (the authenticity of which cannot be doubted) issued in the summer of 1857, which was later on published in the Delhi Gazette of September 29 1857, as a manifesto issued by the King runs thus: 'It is

<sup>1</sup> CR. 25.

well known to all, that in this age the people of Hindoostan, both Hindoos and Mohammedans, are being ruined under the tyranny and oppression of the infidel and treacherous English . . . I having in the course of circuit come here to extirpate the infidels residing in the eastern part of the country, and to liberate and protect the poor helpless people now groaning under their iron rule etc.<sup>1</sup> The similarity in approach as evidenced above is also strikingly illustrated in what follows. Sarfarazali reminded the audience : 'Just a hundred years ago the rule of the infidel began, and I declare to you that it must now end . . . The *centenary approaches*, my friends, and have I your unanimous vote to declare that the Kafir brood shall be stamped out on that date?'<sup>2</sup> The Azamgarh Proclamation similarly runs : 'Be it known to all, that the ancient works, both of the Hindus and the Mohammedans . . . and the calculations of the astrologers, pundits, all agree in asserting that the *English will no longer have any footing in India* or elsewhere. Therefore, it is incumbent on all to give up the hope of the continuation of the British sway . . . etc'.<sup>3</sup>

Even the British writers admitted that the English officers both civil and the military were guilty of using bad language to their subordinates, to the sepoy, and to the people of the country in general.<sup>4</sup> The Azamgarh Proclamation, as noted above, also refers to the 'natives employed in the civil and military services' who have little 'respect'. Upon this subject, of the *hauteur* and insolence of tone and manner assumed by the civil and military servants of the Company, Sarfarazali could naturally enough cry out in agony : 'But you will perhaps ask, "what have they done to receive this treatment?" I answer : 'If *Suar Gadha* in the public streets and "damn your eyes" in the public courts is a form of compliment acceptable to you, then they have deserved well at your hands. Have you never seen a fellow countrymen of yours being kicked and cane laid across his back . . . ?'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles Ball, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, ii, 631-2.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Ball, *op. cit.* ii, p. 631.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 636.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 25.

The truth of what Charles Ball said to the effect that the mutinies and the rebellion were all the work of the moulvis<sup>1</sup> is possibly nowhere better illustrated than in the career of this Gorakhpur Maulavi. Like a typical demagogue, Sarfarazali thundered : 'Consider what instruments they used to acquire this country ? . . . It is the *Sipahi* army which conquered India for them, and by the sword of Ali ! that very *instrument shall be employed to destroy them* . . . Do you forget how over and over again our countrymen have beaten these so-called invincible British in Malabar, in central India, in Kabul, in the Punjab, . . . And *insha allah* ! it will be so again.'<sup>2</sup> Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly showed the same spirit of determination in destroying the English, employing more forceful arguments to excite the people to proceed to the work of extermination. 'They are', the old nawab stated, 'adepts in the art of trickery and deceitful imposture. Have they not swallowed up the countries and kingdoms of our kings ! Who took away the kingdom of Nagpur ? Who took away the kingdom of Lucknow ? Who has trampled under foot both Hindoos and Mohammedans ? *Wash away the name of the English* from India in the stream of your blood'<sup>3</sup> A proclamation of Nana Sahib recently discovered from Bombay Government Records, which has been rightly considered to be 'unique' in that it purports to be not merely a narrative of events as his other proclamations were, echoes the same firm conviction about the 'wickedness' of the English in the following words : 'The English who are 'Kaffurs' came to this country under pretence of carrying on trade. Afterwards instigating sedition among our *Surinjamadars* and practising treachery they seized all the Hindoo and Mahomedan kingdoms, imprisoning some of the descendants of the former kings and driving others to beggary they themselves enjoy the country'.<sup>4</sup> The speech of a Satara rebel while being led to the gallows reflects the same attitude : 'Listen all ! As the English people hurled the Rajah from his throne, in like

<sup>1</sup> Ball, op. cit. ii, p. 634.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 25-26.

<sup>3</sup> Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, iii, 290 (quoted in Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence*, 177-178.

<sup>4</sup> *Source Material for A History of the Freedom Movement in India*, 253.

manner do you drive them out of the country'.<sup>1</sup> But the destruction of the English which was the main theme of Sarfarazali's speech perhaps found its most powerful exponent in the person of a yet more ardent revolutionary, another maulavi, the famous Ahmadulla of Fyzabad. The incendiary address written in Hindusthani which was placarded right in Madras early in January 1857 and believed to be the 'handiwork' of the Fyzabad Maulvi<sup>2</sup> breathes the same spirit of war and extermination as seen in the Gorakhpur Maulavi's speech. It runs : Countrymen, and faithful adherents of your religion, rise, rise ye one and all, to drive out the *Feringhi Kaffirs* ! They have trampled under foot the very elements of justice, they have robbed us of *swaraj* . . . There is only one remedy, now, to free India from the insufferable tyranny of the Kaffir Feringhis, and that remedy is to urge a bloody war. This is a *Jehad* for independence ! This is a religious war for justice.<sup>3</sup>

The Madras Proclamation thus makes out a case that Ahmadulla and his party was inspired by the distinct and conscious object of gaining freedom of the country by destroying the English, an attitude clearly reflected in the speech of Sarfarazali in his repeated declarations that the '*Kafir brood shall be stamped out*'<sup>4</sup>. The religious issue as the other ground for effecting the overthrow of the English was stressed with equal vehemence. The Gorakhpur Maulavi argued : '*But ai bhao*' ! our religion is now in danger. Having lost the sovereignty of the land, having bowed in subjection to the impure Kafir, shall we surrender the inalienable privileges which we have received from the prophet, upon whom be peace' ?<sup>5</sup> This again would not appear to be even slightly different from the attitude of the general body of the rebels as will be evident from the many references to the cry of religion in danger which was echoed and re-echoed in the seditious

<sup>1</sup> CR. 13, fn. 3.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 499.

<sup>3</sup> Ball, op. cit. i, pp. 39-40; Savarkar, op. cit. pp. 88-89.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 26.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 25.

proclamations of the period.<sup>1</sup> The captured sepoy before being hanged would answer sternly to interrogations : 'the slaughter of the English is required by our religion; the end will be, the destruction of all the English and all the sepoy; and then—God knows'.<sup>2</sup> Captain Anderson, who was assistant commissioner at Lucknow when the outbreak took place, wrote that seditious placards were found stuck up in all the principal streets calling upon Hindoos and Mahomedans to kill the Christians.<sup>3</sup>

On a survey of the whole speech of Sarfarazali, and comparing it with the contemporary proclamations and addresses of the like nature, it appears that the desire to kill the *feringhis* with a view to deliver the country from the yoke of English rule was even more vehemently expressed by other rebel leaders than it was done by the Gorakhpur Maulavi. If, therefore, the authenticity of the speech alleged to have been delivered by Sarfarazali is questioned on the ground that it resembled the views of the seditious extremists of the twentieth century, there is no reason why the more authentic statements of Khan Bahadur Khan, Ahmadulla and Nana Sahib as quoted should not equally be considered to have been concocted in the twentieth century. The *Civil Rebellion* made it abundantly clear that the authenticity of the speech cannot indeed be vouched for, but that the value of the speech lies in the fact that its contents agreed quite well with the rumour of rebellion that was in the air of India and that it reflected in the most vivid way the attitude of the general body of rebels who took part in the war against the faithless *feringhis*. The undoubted evidence of all the published statements as shown above will prove, only those who have not studied the seditious proclamations issued during the 1857 uprising will dispute it—that the speech of Sarfarazali was typical of the attitude of the general body of the rebels. The canons of historical criticism will not impose injunction on the use of statements historically conditioned and processed, but

<sup>1</sup> CR. 260. See also, the Azamgarh Proclamation (Ball, op. cit. ii, p. 632), and Nana's Proclamation in *Source Material for a History* etc. (op. cit. p. 254).

<sup>2</sup> Ball, op. cit. ii, p, 242. See also the Lucknow Placard as quoted in Savarkar, op. cit. p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 128.

canons of historical criticism will not be properly observed if one professes ignorance of what that attitude was, despite the open manifestation of that attitude as recorded in a large number of source-materials.

Raja Shankar Shah, a proud descendant of Rani Durgavati, along with his son was tied to the mouth of a cannon and blown away on 18 September. The offence was that in his possession was found a piece of paper on which the raja had written a prayer invoking a multi-armed goddess to aid him to upset the British government. The prayer is very similar in content to the famous hymn composed by the celebrated Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in honour of the goddess Durga.<sup>1</sup> Here in this case one cannot obviously profess ignorance about the motive of the raja because the prayer composed by him would 'do credit' to the political thinkers of a later age. In other words, there is no historical reason to presume why seditious extremism of the first two decades of the twentieth century could not have been anticipated by the Sepoy Mutiny, unless there is an allergy to admit the anti-British revolt of 1857 as a war of independence.

There cannot be any better evidence for understanding what exactly was the attitude of the general body of the rebels than what has been stated above. Khan Bahadur Khan, Maulavi Ahmadulla, Nana Sahib were among the most prominent leaders of the upsurge, and the fact that in between them they commanded a cross-section of large numbers of rebel groups cannot also be questioned. The common point they made out was that the English should be either destroyed or driven out of the country, an attitude which was the burden of the speech of Sarfarazali and urged with equal vehemence in the Azamgarh Proclamation.<sup>2</sup> There is, therefore, no dearth of evidence to justify an ignorance of the rebels' motive. Furthermore, this motive was not left ill-defined and vague in the proclamations. The mere motive of driving out the English might not invest the movement with the character of a war of independence, unless the motive was found to have been inspired by the distinct and conscious object of gaining

<sup>1</sup> CR. 324. Also *Infra*, pp. 188-89,

<sup>2</sup> Ball, op. cit. p. 632.

political freedom of India. This came out in a clear shape in the proclamation ascribed to the Fyzabad maulavi, and was rendered still more articulate by Nana Sahib. The former distinctly envisages that the driving away of the English was only a means to an end, the end being the freedom of India and he actually regarded the movement as a *jihad* for independence, a religious war for justice at that. Nana Sahib went a step further in the clarification of the goal of this national struggle in that famous proclamation already referred to as the most 'unique' of its kind. He elaborates : 'Tyranny, wickedness and injustice having been much practiced by the 'Kaffur' English on the faithful and sinfearing I have been commissioned by God to punish the 'Kaffurs' by annihilating them and to re-establish the *Hindoo and Mahomedan kingdoms as formerly* and to protect our country and I have conquered the country north of the Nurbada river.'<sup>1</sup> Here is a clear enough enunciation of the political ideals of the movement. The annihilation of the English was to be carried out to serve the ulterior purpose of establishing Hindu and Mahomedan governments in consonance with the traditional pattern of the national life of India.

If any proof was required to show in a concrete way the real objective of the Indian revolt of 1857, it was this statement of Nana Sahib which laid bare the motive of the rebels, namely restoring the former condition of India. We have to admit in an objective approach to the Sepoy War of 1857, that the broadest possible national unity against British domination could be forged in the circumstances of the day only by restoring Budshahs, Peshwas and Nawabs, the traditional rulers of the country, each ruling respectively in their own spheres free of any foreign domination. In any true canon of historical investigation, such a proclaimed objective of expelling the foreign intruder cannot but be held to be equivalent to national emancipation.

<sup>1</sup> *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, op. cit. p. 254.

### III

#### REVOLT OF THE PEOPLE\*

As already noticed, the preference for an 'objective attitude' runs counter to what is stated in the very first page of the Chapter on the 'Revolt of the People' before a 'detailed study' has proceeded to any length. In a very convincing tone the historian affirms that hopes of personal gain were the sole motives of many and indeed of all classes of people, 'notably the goonda elements' such as the gujars, ranghars, jâts etc. The class connected with the land was also no less strongly influenced by motives of self-interest.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the question of propriety in applying value judgement on the events not yet narrated, the truth of this sweeping remark is not borne out by the statement of H. D. Robertson who reported in the *Narratives* that the ranghars were generally wealthy so that plunder could hardly be their inducement to disaffection.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of the jâts who followed the banner of Shahmal and who fought to the last ditch at the battle of Baraut on 18 July, were not regarded as anti-socials by F. Williams, the commissioner of Meerut,<sup>3</sup> who collected evidence of those who witnessed the scene. The unimpeachable testimony of all these facts was stressed in reply to what the historian stated in his *Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt* that the civil rebellion of the mutinies was a string of the depredations of the gujars and ranghars.<sup>4</sup> The whole question and the connected issue, the selfish motives of the landed classes, so frequently adverted to, will be taken up for discussion in the relevant context.

The reference to the motives of self-interest is followed by a long extract from the report of F. Thompson, the magistrate of Allahabad, which presents an 'analysis of the causes

\* BPIR. 497-531.

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 497.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 77.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 64-65.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 287, fn. 3.

of the popular outbreak'. His reading of the situation was fairly accurate. He admitted without reservation that the zamindars of the Doab pergunnah without any exception joined the revolt with the object of exterminating the English and upsetting the government, that the pragwal brahmans also involved themselves in the conflagration, that the old zamindars were still the most 'influential residents of the village' and were looked upon with greater regard by the cultivators and poorer classes in preference to the auction-purchasers who were generally residents of the city and never visited his village except for the hateful purpose of collecting rents. Hence, 'The people,' as Thompson correctly estimated 'naturally sided with the zamindars', who took advantage of the opportunity of recovering their position. The more significant part of his remark runs as follows: '*Of course, the auction-purchasers were our friends, and rendered every assistance in their power for the restoration of order*'. The above appears to be an objective assessment of the forces working for and against the British government in the popular outbreaks of the mutinies but the whole piece has been related to an analytical exposition of the different forms of 'personal gain and ambition' which impelled the people to rebel<sup>1</sup>. In other words, the factor of personal gain or ambition which is frequently repeated<sup>2</sup> was according to the historian the sole cause of the popular outbreak. While this matter of 'Personal conviction' may await fuller examination in due course,<sup>3</sup> the Allahabad magistrate's report, as cited, was not utilised in the light of *Further Papers* and Chick's *Annals* to depict the immediate popular results of the Allahabad mutiny.<sup>4</sup> The great city rose in an instant, as Kaye said, and the *Narratives* show that it was a tremendous upsurge, but only those portions which refer to the excesses committed by the rebels in Allahabad have been quoted.<sup>5</sup> It has not been shown that the recovery of Allahabad by the British did not lead to the suppression of the rebellion, that Mehndi Hasan, Fazl Azim and a host of other rebels were

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 498.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 497, 498, 503-4, 532, 533, 534-5, 547, 613, 621, 624.

<sup>3</sup> *Infra*, pp. 37, 80-81, 106-7, 110-11.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 89-95.

<sup>5</sup> BPIR. 561-62.

fighting against the English till up to July 1858, that the rebellious proceedings of the village leader Dhakan Singh, zamindar of Dharwal, so frequently mentioned in the official despatches continued unabated. The long report of F. O. Mayne, the joint-magistrate of Gopiganj showing the deployment of rebel forces consisting of the contingents of ex-zamindars<sup>1</sup> alone could convey a factual impression of the extent and depth of the rebellion at Allahabad as hinted by Thompson, the omission of which in a 'detailed study' of the 'Revolt of the People' cannot but appear to be striking.

The theory that 'personal gain or satisfaction of personal ambition' compelled the people to rebel has been attempted to be illustrated in various ways. The leaders have been denigrated, their speeches and proclamations have been degaussed and the district movements have been defeatured. Yet a more slashing argument was perhaps necessary to strengthen the idea, and that was done by offering a novel explanation of the spontaneity of the rising, attributing it to the diabolical motives of the rebels and not to the patriotic urges and motivations of the people in general. After a criticism of the speech of Sarfarazali, as already noted, the historian observes :

There can be no reasonable doubt, therefore, that the various factors mentioned above were mainly responsible for the general 'upsurge of the people', and it was thus that without any pre-concerted plan and organization, the mutiny merged itself into a general rising of the civil population of all types and classes. The civil population was undoubtedly spurred on to revolt because of the grave discontent and resentment . . . but if the mutiny had not extinguished the local authority, the civil population would not have dared to revolt. *The people's revolt was the effect, and not the cause of the mutiny.*<sup>2</sup>

The above makes out a case that the spontaneity of the civil rising was caused by the godsent opportunity for plunder or loot<sup>3</sup> which the mutiny afforded. It cannot be denied that the anti-social elements took advantage of the 'political vacuum'

<sup>1</sup> CR. 94-95.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 501 : Italics of the author.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 534.

and the collapse of the government to commit depredations, but the emphasis given to this aspect of the question reflects a tendency to overshadow truth and evidence. It may not appear incongruous to refer to what is generally recognised that such a situation as the condition of India in 1857 affords the best opportunity for popular outbreaks, varying in nature according to the circumstances and temperament of the different types of people,<sup>1</sup> but such outbreaks may also be caused by the natural desire of the people to assume a posture of strength against their oppressive rulers and the spontaneous character of the popular participation in the sepoy movement of 1857 certainly tends to confirm the view. But to disprove this contention and to reinforce the theory that the movement of 1857 was not imbued with any social and political purposes, the *British Paramountcy* asserts that had not the mutiny extinguished local authority the civil population would not have dared to rebel.<sup>2</sup> This attitude ignores the tension prevailing at that time and involves the acceptance of an untenable position that the British rule in India had not awakened any such deep antagonism that the people would not rise up even under gravest provocation at proper time. The civil disturbances of the earlier period demonstrated that the people had actually revolted even without the help of the sepoys.<sup>3</sup> The same thing happened during the anti-British struggle of 1857 as the history of the civil rebellion in the Indian mutinies would tend to show. In Muzaffarnagar, for instance, civil rebellion preceded the mutiny of the 4th irregular on 21 June. An explosion occurred on 14 May, the people plundered the tahsils, bungalows, destroyed the jail and *baniyas* and *mahajans* were despoiled. As in Muzaffarnagar, so also in Saharanpur civil rebellion preceded the mutiny.<sup>4</sup> In Lucknow the long smouldering discontent of the people burst into a flame several days before the 71st infantry regiment broke out on 30 May.<sup>5</sup> In Banda, the mutiny of troops was preceded

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 499.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 501.

<sup>3</sup> S. B. Chaudhuri, in *Civil Disturbances during the British Rule in India*, (1757-1857).

<sup>4</sup> CR. 75-76.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 127-28.

by a vast upsurge of the people.<sup>1</sup> In Jhansi fermentation appeared on the surface before the military insurrection of 5 June.<sup>2</sup> The history of Karnal in Punjab during this period offers the singular instance of a civil revolt breaking out spontaneously and independently of the military rising, and possibly even in opposition to it.<sup>3</sup> In other stations as in Farrukhabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Etawah, Shahabad and Hamirpur<sup>4</sup> disaffection was so patently in evidence and so strong in volume that it would have flared up even without an *emeute*. The fact that the first attack against the British in the revolt of 1857 had also come from the disaffected communities is further proved by the history of the tensions of the non-military stations of this period. Fatehpur was not a military station but Corrigan's report shows that the townspeople were arming themselves in the early part of June.<sup>5</sup> Similarly the people of Bijnor rose up quite spontaneously as early as 19 May.<sup>6</sup> The same thing happened in Sagar, Jabalpur and Narbada territories<sup>7</sup> where the chiefs and the people flared up without any local mutiny to provoke them into action. In Budaun, popular agitation was progressing long before the mutineers reached that station on 2 June.<sup>8</sup> All these instances to which others may be added will afford a reasonable ground to assume that the civil population had acted independently even before the sepoys rose up, and had not taken advantage of the 'complete political vacuum' resulting from the military insurrections. It is not very easy to determine the sequence in which one act of revolt followed another and, therefore, the cause and effect relation between mutiny and rebellion of 1857 as stressed in the *British Paramountcy* does not appear to be quite clear. In fact, the outgrowth of fear and distrust generated by the British system in the

<sup>1</sup> CR. 207.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 215.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 237-38.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 84, 86-7, 109-19, 165, 211.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 107.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 108.

<sup>7</sup> CR. 223-226.

<sup>8</sup> CR. 114-15.

minds of both military and non-military classes had gone to such an extent that these fears and distempers were all converted into elements of a vast conflagration of which the sepoj mutinies and civil rebellion formed both the cause and effect. If it is true that there would have been no popular outbreak without the mutiny, it is equally true that the spirit of the revolt as manifested in the mutiny was not terminated by its suppression but was facilitated by the circumstances of the civil rebellion which either succeeded or preceded the mutinies. The tension of the situation was such that what was wanted was perhaps a pretext. Keith Young writing on 2 May 1857 recorded his impression that disaffection appeared to be so universal that he was prepared to see it flaring forth at any time. Disraeli perhaps gave the correct answer to this ticklish question of chicken and egg nature in what he said in the House of Commons which runs as follows : 'for a considerable period of time the state of India was one of menacing combustion, and all that was wanted was the occasion and the pretext'<sup>1</sup>. Was not the Sepoy movement only an occasion for the rebellion of the people ? Judged in that light, the Sepoys as the organised force of the Indian public, seem to have acted merely as spearheads and instruments, and became the means only of an upsurge of the people by the natural process of history. So our historian's contention that the 'successful mutiny of sepoys may be looked upon as the direct and proximate cause of the revolt of the people'<sup>2</sup> may not appear to be quite comprehensible.

There is yet another aspect of the question. In a sense all mutinies turn into a mass movement when they attain a certain measure of success, and it was more so in India, because the mutinies of 1857 had a peculiar feature in that the rebel Bengal Army had from the beginning drawn the sympathies of the country people. The justification of their revolt rested on a widely based belief that their religion was in danger, a cause held holy and national by the people. There is possibly no valid argument to think that the Sepoys are to be considered as a separate entity altogether. It is

<sup>1</sup> CR. 8, fn. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Freedom Movement of India*, op. cit. i, p. 172.

forgotten that like the agrarian classes in general, the Sepoys shared the common sufferings of the peasant householders in the Indian country-side. Though soldiers they remained civilians at heart. They had their roots in the 'soil' and they used their income from service to supplement their income from ancestral land. Thus the Bengal Army was not exclusively a professional body cut off from the rest of the society, they were indeed as one writer remarked 'related to the Indian people as the foetus is related to the mother's womb'.<sup>1</sup> The closest approximation of the anti-British objectives of the army, and of the people in 1857, seemed to convey the impression that the Indian Army was even regarded as the most organised force of the Indian people,<sup>2</sup> and that the sepoy mutinies and the civil risings were but parts of the same movement. The historical inevitability of the situation, namely, the mutinies turning into a rebellion was rendered still more inevitable in the case of India, by the trend of the civil disturbances of the earlier period. The recognition of this fact that the disturbances of the pre-mutiny period formed a background to, and culminated in the outbreak of 1857, has been a pioneering example of accommodation of extended historical knowledge,<sup>3</sup> and in fact it has been shown that some of the episodes of the civil rebellion in the Indian mutinies were but a continuation of the earlier movements of the locality,<sup>4</sup> which more than anything else brings out in clear relief the total and integrated nature of the settled disaffection of the people tending to break out with, or even without mutinies.

The accounts of the district movements may now be taken up for review. In the case of Muzaffarnagar the author begins by offering an explanation for the exceptional nature of the civil revolt of that place which, as already stated, preceded the mutiny of local troops. His analysis of the situation

<sup>1</sup> Amiya Barat, *The Bengal Native Infantry*.

<sup>2</sup> P. C. Joshi, *Rebellion-1857—a Symposium*, 186.

<sup>3</sup> Dr R. C. Majumdar who edited the first comprehensive history of India in the post-independence era had no doubts in his mind about the great significance of the pre-mutiny outbreaks. He has, therefore, indicated the scope of the subject in this standard work by devoting a separate chapter, chapter XIV, on the disturbances before 1857 (BPIR. Preface, p. xxviii).

<sup>4</sup> CR. 297.

follows the account given by Berford, the magistrate and collector, how it was precipitated by his nervous attitude on hearing the news of Meerut and the rumours currently going on, how he fled to the jungles and then came back and released the prisoners which emboldened the people to commit excesses in which the *baniyas* and *mahajans* were the victims. The magistrate however added, what was significant, that these classes were made to suffer 'for their previous rapacity and avarice.'<sup>1</sup> But this is not the history of the rebellion at Muzaffarnagar, these thirty-five lines devoted to an explanation of the attitude of Berford has been a sheer waste. The more important features showing peoples' determination and grit as known from the reports of F. Williams the commissioner and R. M. Edwards, the magistrate were either not known or ignored. The part played by Khairati Khan and the disaffected shiekhzadas, and the fierce action in particular at Samli where Mohir Singh, the Jat leader, fought gallantly for its defence are not mentioned. It was convincingly pointed out that disaffection prevailed widely from the line of the Hindan going westward as far as the Jumna Canal and the British punitive forces were continuously kept on the move by the rapid movement of the masses of rebels.<sup>2</sup>

As in Muzaffarnagar so also in Saharanpur, civil rebellion preceded the mutiny, but here no explanation has been offered why the 'notorious landless elements' rose up before the sepoys, as has been done in the case of Muzaffarnagar. A portion of a *Narrative* without the name of the reporter has been made the basis of an account depicting the scene of general anarchy that followed when bankers, money-lenders and traders were victimised, and old feuds were renewed. The reports of F. Williams and H. D. Robertson, the magistrates have not been utilised but the account given in the *Civil Rebellion* as based on these reports is quoted to disabuse the minds of the readers regarding the nature of popular upsurge according to his line of thinking.<sup>3</sup> After a reference to the usual excesses committed by the rebels against the

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 502.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 75-76.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 502-3.

bankers and money-lenders and the destruction of the tahsils and thanas the comment is made :

This being the usual pattern of the 'popular upsurge' and 'war of independence', obviously these expressions have to be understood in a special sense.<sup>1</sup>

It may not be of any interest to know the 'special sense' the historian has in view of a 'popular upsurge' but as will be shown, these facts of disaffection and contumacy were regarded by the authorities as constituting a rebellion. It is a common knowledge of history that in all convulsions popular fury is naturally directed against the institutions of their oppressors and in consequence throughout the rebellion, the first thing that the rebels whether goondas or others did, on getting a footing in a station was to burn the government offices and properties. Under this category came police stations, tahsils, telegraph wires and railway lines and other such establishments. The idea of destroying these things as Kaye was able to rationalise, was to wipe out all traces of British Rule. Next, records of every description were destroyed which according to M. Thornhill were the machinery by which the British enforced the system of taxation and revenue and obviously the destruction of these materials would be a normal feature of rebellious proceedings.

In Banda, the records of the court were destroyed and distributed to the winds.<sup>2</sup> In Rohtak the rebels had torn up all the public records, papers and documents and after making vast rolls and piles of them made huge bonfires of the whole.<sup>3</sup> As for the persons who were the targets of attack the Europeans came first, and in some cases their Indian supporters. But on the Indian side, the whole class of bankers, traders, money-lenders, auction-purchasers, and the *baniyas* and *mahajans* in particular, were the victims of attack and the reason for this is not far to seek. The auction-purchasers who had ousted the original owners of land under the ensnaring system of British law were naturally

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 503.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 208.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 239.

regarded as stooges of the British imperialists, a fact which is admitted by the Allahabad magistrate in the following way : 'The auction-purchasers were our friends and rendered every assistance in their power for the restoration of order'.<sup>1</sup> No wonder, therefore, that they were chased by an infuriated people. For exactly the same reason the *baniyas* and *mahajans* became the victims of popular fury as the Muzaffarnagar magistrate made it so clear: 'fearfully have many of them been made to suffer for their *previous rapacity and avarice*'.<sup>2</sup> Even the historian of the *British Paramountcy* admits while analysing the different forms of personal gain that the people destroyed the bonds for loans or title-deeds of land deposited with the *baniyas* at the time of borrowing money at high rate of interest which threatened to ruin them.<sup>3</sup> This sufficiently explains why the people in general vented their wrath against this class of exploiters. In Saharanpur the rebels had not merely burnt or destroyed the *baniya* houses and thrown the accounts into flames but in some cases had carried the account books out of the town and torn them up in the highways. The same thing of destroying the books of business and bond-debts happened at Mathura.<sup>4</sup> In a sense the universal burning and destroying of books of accounts, and vouchers for debts, was the great feature of the popular upsurge in 1857 for these were the documents of rural indebtedness which told so oppressively on the lower orders of society. Thus it stands that the commercial and industrial classes, the bankers and *mahajans* who were on the side of order and government were the targets of attack in almost every place. So universal was this feature that G. H. Freeling of Banda could not help reporting that in no instance the bankers and traders, the class favoured by them, had been able to keep their own in the struggle.<sup>5</sup> This is rebellion in the fullest and broadest historical sense as it is understood.

That the upsurge of 1857 was not a rebellion in a 'special sense' rests on the evidence of other unimpeachable facts also.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in BPIR. 498. cf. also BPIR. 533.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in BPIR. 502 : Italics of the author.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 498.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 278.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 279.

European factories had been destroyed without any exception and examples had been made of all such properties as fell into the hands of the rebels and full retaliation exacted for all the acquisitive tendencies of the factory owners. The dismantling of the factories at Shahjahanpur, Saran, Shahabad, Gaya, Palamau and in many other places the details of which are given in the *Civil Rebellion* seem to indicate that the rebel masses were determined to stop all sources of European exploitation.<sup>1</sup> So universal was this destruction of factories of colonial powers during the revolt that it may be regarded as the first challenge of India to the system of exploitation and the instruments of production, the primitive demand of the nascent proletariat. An analysis on the above lines will, it is presumed, present the 'sense' of popular upsurge better than offering a catalogue of the notorious lawless elements, the goondas, marauding tribes, jail convicts and other professional classes, who, as contended, constituted the 'prominent elements' of the rising at Saharanpur, Bulandshahar and other places.<sup>2</sup> It may now be realised that in all calculations about the popular content of the rebellion of 1857 it is absolutely immaterial to harp on the activities of the so-called goondas and the 'notorious lawless elements' for these anti-British activities may also be taken as so many tangible evidences of a volcano of discontent and resentment that had erupted. The failure to realise this common lesson of history has resulted in a failure of perspective. To illustrate this point it would be necessary to quote the passage from the *Civil Rebellion* cited in the *British Paramountcy* regarding the incident at Saharanpur :

The magistrate Robertson, proceeded to punish the refractory villages on 20 June, but the country around rose up to effect the release of the prisoners. It was a war of the villagers-parties with the beat of *dhols* assembled, on 22 June, and showed a grit and determination in the fight.' . . . The same story was repeated in other places.<sup>3</sup>

The above account leaves out the main point in the report of Robertson who further said : On 26 June the British

<sup>1</sup> CR. 173, 174, 182, 184, 190-92, 279, 250.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 503.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 503.

offensive was resisted by a huge ranghar gathering spreading over half a mile area. The whole of this area was covered with rebels, in some places ten and twenty deep, which would number not less than three thousand.<sup>1</sup> If it was so, it would be difficult to imagine a more realistic scene of a war of villagers but obviously our historian was smelling motives of plunder even in this battle array. He observes :

A scrutiny of these accounts reveals several prominent elements in these early risings. The first was the notorious goonda elements of the locality who never miss any opportunity . . . to carry on their nefarious activities . . . Next to the local *goonda* elements, we notice the activities of various marauding tribes, notorious for rapine, plunder and massacre . . . The above account of the Gujars and Ranghars at Saharanpur gives us a fair idea of the quick reaction of the mutiny upon these classes of peoples.<sup>2</sup>

That the *British Paramountcy* has looked upon the civil rebellion of 1857 only as a string of the depredation of the gujars and ranghars without making a proper appraisal of the forces which can account for this depredation as indicated, need no longer be doubted. This line of thinking finds expression in many other ways, that the prominent chiefs of various localities did not sit idle, that they took advantage of the general turmoil to regain what they had lost, and to settle old scores with enemies.<sup>3</sup> To buttress what has been said the anonymous author of the *History of the Siege of Delhi* has been quoted to show the condition of anarchy that prevailed.

Villagers fought with one another about boundary questions decided half a century ago. Hundreds of heads of cattle changed hands; murder and robberies were committed unpunished in the open day.<sup>4</sup>

This account of the condition of the country however, does not agree with the report of Sir William Muir, secretary to the government of North-West Provinces, who found only stretches of smiling corn fields and well-cultivated areas abounding in the country side. Sir William was however

<sup>1</sup> CR. 77.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 503.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 504.

<sup>4</sup> BPIR. 504.

convinced that the revolt of 1857 was only a mutiny of troops<sup>1</sup> which shows that the protagonists of this theory whether of the early times or of the modern times had based their arguments on evidence which was mutually contradictory because warring villagers in a disorganised country cannot possibly attend to cultivation.

### DELHI

The absence of a strong objective attitude in the treatment of materials can also be detected in the section on Delhi, which otherwise was a masterly specimen of historical composition. With a vast mass of materials it has been shown that the turbulence of the sepoy's knew no bounds, who oppressed and plundered the people with the result that the citizens of Delhi prayed to God for the return of the English. It has been shown on the strength of evidence that Bahadur Shah had no faith in the case, that his loyalty to the British remained unimpaired and that he carried on treasonable negotiations through an agent Ahsanulla Khan with the British general<sup>2</sup>. But Bahadur Shah should have been judged by the evidence of his own life, his piety, conscientiousness and sincerity. It has not been stressed that he was the torch-bearer of Hindu-Muslim unity and proved a great personal force in cementing inter-communal relations during the critical days of the Mutiny. The communal situation has been patently overdrawn. Instead of stating that there was a clear manifestation of communal distemper,<sup>3</sup> it could have been maintained on very strong grounds that from the very beginning Bahadur Shah set his mind definitely against communal tendencies which threatened to disrupt the offensive against the English. The long quotation from Jiwanlal's diary has been given to show that there was communal bitterness, but Bahadur Shah resolutely said: 'The Holy war was against the English', Never was the national idea spoken with such a strength by any of the mutiny leaders but there was hardly a word about the significance of this statement. In confirmation of Jiwan-

<sup>1</sup> CR. 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Freedom Movement*, op. cit. p. 154; BPIR., 504, ff.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 514.

lal's account, Reed is quoted to state that Green flag was displayed in the city and that the Hindus<sup>1</sup> were bullied. Mention has also been made of the statement of Jiwanlal that the king came flat down against the proposal for a *jehad* and that he strongly warned the Mahomedans against the killing of cows but its importance has likewise been ignored. What Keith Young recorded with dismay that instead of fighting among themselves the Hindus and Mahomedans have all joined together to make a vigorous attack<sup>2</sup> would have been a very inconvenient statement to record. Yet the historian comments :

To judge, therefore, from the data so far available, one must admit that there was hardly any combined effort or even unity of purpose between the sepoys and the Hindu and Muslims citizens of Delhi.<sup>3</sup>

The assumption of a particular role does not accord with the way in which the subject has been treated. As shown above the data selected was only Jiwanlal's account and the fragmentary letter of Reed. It has also been noticed that the treatment of the account of the former has been very much selective. What is perhaps more deliberate is that the tone and temper of that famous proclamation issued on behalf of the officers of the sepoys has not been taken note of, though it has been quoted possibly to reiterate the view that there was no abstract ideal of freedom or the struggle for achieving independence. Whether or not the ideals of freedom are referred to in the proclamations of the period will be best appreciated from what has been said about the Madras placard, Bareilly and Azamgarh Proclamations,<sup>4</sup> but in the context of the communal question, the Delhi proclamation constitutes the most trustworthy testament of perfect understanding that prevailed at that time between the Hindus and Mahomedans. It runs :

To all Hindoos and Mussulmans, Citizens and Servants of Hindostan, the Officers of the Army now at Delhi and Meerut send greetings :—It is well known that in these days all the English have

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 515.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 70.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 515.

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, pp. 29-34.

entertained these evil designs—first, to destroy the religion of the whole Hindosthani army, and then to make the people by compulsion Christians. Therefore we, *solely on account of our religion, have combined* with the people . . . and have re-established the Delhi dynasty on these terms . . . It is further necessary that all Hindoos and Mussalmans unite in this struggle, and, following the instructions . . . keep themselves secure, . . .<sup>1</sup>

This is undoubtedly a specimen of a magnificent appeal covering the requirements of a national front<sup>2</sup> that all Indians whether Hindoos and Muslims should look at things from the same point of view and judge events by the same standard. But according to our historian the proclamation only shows that a section of the military had a wider vision and rose above mere considerations of personal gains. That the tone of this proclamation along with the evidence that has been suppressed would give a picture of the communal situation completely different from what has been stated needs no avowal.

There is one more point of basic importance which has not been touched at all. While massive facts have been marshalled and arranged to debunk Bahadur Shah and discredit the sepoy movement, the real spirit of the struggle centering round Delhi has not come for a comment even once. The sepoys at Meerut rose up and then 'marched to Delhi'. This was a huge event in the annals of the Indian Rebellion. In the early phase of mutiny studies it was Charles Ball who realised that this move invested the cause of the insurgents with a political purpose and the character of a national movement. The Meerut Sepoys in a moment found a leader and a flag. The mutiny was transferred into a revolutionary war.<sup>3</sup> This step of turning to Delhi and proclaiming allegiance to the Mughal emperor was, it appears, a spontaneous reaction of the common soldier because it happened in the case of many other regiments similarly situated during

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 513; Ball, op. cit. i, p. 459.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Ball regarded this appeal as an 'extraordinary document' being literally the joint production of two religious bodies that had hitherto mortally hated each other. (Ibid. i, p. 644).

<sup>3</sup> Ball, op. cit. vol. i, p. 64. cf. 'the movement now assumed a more important aspect; it became the rebellion of a whole people' (Ibid. i, p. 644).

the revolt of 1857. For nearly four months Delhi remained the centre of revolt, a beacon to the struggling spirits to flock there for the great holy war lying ahead. At Delhi, resided Bahadur Shah, the emperor according to Indian legitimists which gave the movement a traditional countrywide basis. The political theory of the Indian Mutiny as reflected in this particular attitude of the sepoys was highlighted by the fact that Bahadur Shah was still regarded as the effective source of political authority.<sup>1</sup> The appearance of the sovereignty of the Emperor was kept up, by a double link of acknowledgement namely, the offering of *nazar* and the acceptance of the *khilat* in return, both institutions being symbolical of the allegiance offered. Steadily, however, pressure was brought to bear upon Bahadur Shah, in the form of the increased pension to surrender his imperial title in favour of an innocuous one, "King of Delhi" but to no effect. Next the Company planned to end Mughal rule in Delhi and actually in 1849 Dalhousie proposed the removal of the House of Taimur from the city, for it was believed that the strength of the dynasty lay in the associations of the city.<sup>2</sup> Eight years later the mutinies flared up. Viewed in this light the revolt of the Indian Army was not a challenge to the legitimate government of the country, for the army destroyed the power of the Company to help the Emperor, the suzerain *de jure*, to resume his sway. Dr S. N. Sen, had perhaps the same idea in view when he wrote : 'What began as a fight for religion ended as a war of independence for there is not the slightest doubt that the rebels wanted to get rid of the alien government and restore the old order of which the king of Delhi was the rightful representative.'<sup>3</sup> Commenting on this statement of Dr S. N. Sen the *British Paramountcy* writes :

It is not quite clear whether this remark applies to the Mutiny or the revolt of the Civil population, or both. In any case, it is difficult to accept the view unless we believe that any fight against the English is to be constructed as a war of independence . . . Besides,

<sup>1</sup> cf. Charles Ball quoting *Edinburgh Review*: 'Virtually, indeed, the Mugal was extinct. But not so in the minds of the people of India'. Ibid. p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> F. W. Buckler, *The Political theory of the Indian Mutiny* in Embree, 1857 in *India*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>3</sup> S. N. Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, 411.

it is to be remembered that when the civil population began to fight against the English, Bahadur Shah had long been a prisoner in the hands of the British and have even ceased to be a symbol.<sup>1</sup>

It will appear equally difficult why it was not clear to the historian whether the remark of Dr S. N. Sen applied to the Mutiny or Rebellion for the sentence immediately preceding the citation runs as follows : 'The Mutiny became a revolt and assumed political character when the mutineers of Meerut placed themselves under the king of Delhi and a section of the landed aristocracy and civil population declared in his favour'.<sup>2</sup> The idea behind the second sentence of the *British Paramountcy* (as quoted), is patently explosive in nature will be discussed in due course,<sup>3</sup> but if the historian was commenting on the war at Delhi which originated, from the historic decision of the Meerut mutineers to uphold the throne of Bahadur Shah the remark will have the only quality of being abusive in nature. The third sentence contains a factual error, for a casual glance at the *Civil Rebellion* would have shown that the civil population rose up simultaneously with the sepoys or even earlier long before Bahadur Shah was taken captive.

But the rigid historical scheme followed in the chapter under review and its traditional European orientation has done scant justice to the critical temper of contemporary historiography. Main-ud-din Hasan Khan, an eye-witness of the events has been quoted to show that the rebels were becoming clamorous for pay<sup>4</sup> but what he said about another aspect of the question has been lost sight of. He observed :

It is quite true that the rebellion actually broke out on the excitement caused by the use of the new cartridge, but the real cause of the rebellion was an old enemy who, long vanquished, still existed.<sup>5</sup>

The skeleton had lingered on and it stalked out for liberty. Unfortunately, however, Bahadur Shah was not fit to serve even as a 'symbol'. The old feeble emperor was in two

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 622.

<sup>2</sup> Sen, op. cit. 411.

<sup>3</sup> *Infra*, pp. 146-8, 149-50, 167-8.

<sup>4</sup> BPIR. 510.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 70.

minds and there was none to guide his faltering hands. The movement in Delhi collapsed but the failure did not invalidate the political theory of the Indian Mutiny, nor did it weaken the ideological conviction on the need of an offensive to terminate British rule. Whatever Bahadur Shah might or might not have done, the failure of the more famous leaders, it appears, had nothing much to do with the causation of the civil rebellion which broke up spontaneously on the rising of the sepoys or even earlier.

#### OTHER AREAS

The sketch of the rising at Bareilly has been attempted without utilising the report of R. Alexander, the commissioner, who referred to the activities of the seditious maulavis like Mohammed Ashan, Rahimullah Khan and Kulab Shah which preceded the mutiny of 31 May.<sup>1</sup> Though the *Narrative* of J. F. D. Inglis has been utilised, the most important portion of it referring to the comprehensive nature of the new government that was established which was served by no less than 125 officers of the former government has not been featured. Many instances of communal distempers have been recorded but to the credit of Khan Bahadur it could have been said that he organised a Hindu rally, as Inglis reported. The rebel cause was also taken up by many rajput thakurs as is known from the same source.<sup>2</sup>

The account of Farrukhabad has been extremely sketchy. The original materials like the reports of Lindsay, Cosens and Wallace, Chick's *Annals*, and *Further Papers* have not been gone through. The short account that is furnished is taken up by the fight that followed between the remnants of two groups of the 10th N.I. and 41st N.I. for a share of the spoils.<sup>3</sup> Tension was very high at Farrukhabad and it had already manifested itself in the contumacious attitude of many chiefs. The formation of the rebel government possibly marked the most significant advance of the revolutionary urges of the period. W. G. Probyn reported : 'The procedure for criminal courts was also

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 518-20.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 110-13.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 520.

detailed and very great care, it appears was bestowed on the suppression of crime. The other features were a monthly report and a register of the daily occurrences which were insisted.<sup>1</sup> All the kanangoes, collectory sircars, record keepers, muhuris, nazirs and also many tahsildars, thanadars and peshkars of the former administration joined the rebel government but all these facts of constructive policies have not been incorporated in the detailed study of the 'Revolt of the people'.

The short account given of the rising at Fatehpur does not give a faithful picture of the situation.<sup>2</sup> Corrigan and Sherers' report as embodied in the *Narratives* showing that civil population rose up without the local mutiny to excite them has not been exhibited. But the most important feature of the revolt namely the action at Kundunpati where country leaders like Bhunnar Singh, Sita Baksh wanted to sever the communications between Outram and his people at Allahabad, and the more famous battle of Khajwa on 1 November 1857 where the rebels numbered four thousand as given in *Further Papers* and in Forrest's *Selections*<sup>3</sup> are likewise missing. The account of the rising at Bijnor<sup>4</sup> has been taken from Malleson but the report of A. Shakespear, the magistrate and collector, shows that despite the communal complexion of the movement the rebels kept steadily in view their main objective. Rent-free holdings resumed under British rule were ordered to be released and other changes made<sup>5</sup> to strengthen the rebel cause.

In the account of Moradabad attention has been focussed on the rivalries of the local nawabs only, the report of J. C. Wilson the commissioner, and that of Dunlop, however, highlights the activities of some prominent rebels like Niamutul Khan, Zainul Abedeen, Maulavi Mannu, Wazirali Khan, Zaminali, who either died as ghazis or collected jehadis.<sup>6</sup> The account

<sup>1</sup> CR. 273.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 520.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 107-8.

<sup>4</sup> BPIR. 520-21.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 108-9.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 110-11.

of Shahjahanpur<sup>1</sup> is based on *Civil Rebellion*<sup>2</sup> but the undoubted fact of seething disaffection as indicated in the option exercised by one hundred and seventy five officers of the British regime for the rebel government has been left unnoticed<sup>3</sup>. Having regard to the extensive area covered by the outbreaks of civil population and the impossibility of referring even briefly to all the affected localities, a few places have been selected for a study of the popular upsurge and its nature. This is of course somewhat against the assurance of a detailed account of the local outbreaks as held out in the preface. The historian then introduces the *Narratives of Events* etc. for the first time<sup>4</sup>, with his own ideas about these source-materials as already commented.<sup>5</sup>

In the account of Budaun certain stray incidents have been prominently featured to show that different classes used the movement to their own advantage and a passage from the *Civil Rebellion* has been quoted<sup>6</sup> to characterise as gruesome the popular agitation of that place. The passage runs to the effect that though internal dissensions between the different communities weakened the basis of the movement, the popular fury was there to feed sedition. Blackmail was freely levied from all the *baniyas* and *mahajans* and valuable indigo factories were gutted and even the iron boilers were melted down for shot and records were burnt extensively.<sup>7</sup> It has already been explained that all these were the usual forms of the manifestation of popular fury<sup>8</sup> and those who consider that the melting of iron boilers for shot was gruesome might have been thinking of shadow-boxing and not a real fight.

But the account of Aligarh has been made as gruesome as possible. Only feuds, murders and plunders which usually take place as a backwash of the mutinies had come to the

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 522.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 116-17.

<sup>3</sup> For similar option exercised, see CR. 83, 88.

<sup>4</sup> BPIR. 523.

<sup>5</sup> See *Supra*, pp. 2, ff.

<sup>6</sup> BPIR. 523.

<sup>7</sup> CR. 115.

<sup>8</sup> *Supra*, pp. 43-45.

notice of the historian.<sup>1</sup> The description given in the *Civil Rebellion* mainly based on the same source but supplemented by *Further Papers* however show that the rebels at Koil excited a formidable rising and fought desperately at the battle of Aligarh on 24 August. A new government was established and rebellion raged all throughout the district down to 25 September when the Mahomedans of Atrauli rose up.<sup>2</sup> In describing the scene at Mathura a long passage from M. Thornhill's report has only been quoted<sup>3</sup> without evaluating the relative merit of the details recorded. The account of Agra very tellingly shows that only those details have been selected which would tend to give the impression that butchers, mewatis and other mixed rabbles dominated the scene.<sup>4</sup> The same source, namely the report of A. L. M. Phillips, the magistrate, describes the effect of the defeat of the British forces at Shahganja in the total collapse of British rule; how tahsil after tahsil fell off one after another, Ferozabad, Khairagarh, Fatehabad and the pargana of Pinahat. The tahsils of the trans-Jumna tract fared no better. Villagers of Dhan-aula and Khandar were seen busy in collecting ammunitions and the tension of the situation did not die out before Rose captured Gwalior.<sup>5</sup>

In regard to Banda, the report of F. O. Mayne, the magistrate and collector, has been extensively quoted. Only a portion of the same passage has been utilised in the *Civil Rebellion* at the exclusion of the rest. The long statement so cited in the *British Paramountcy* refers to anti-British activities in general as well as to private feuds, and also to 'licence and madness of unchecked anarchy and rebellion' such as only 'Asiatics can reveal in these pleasures.'<sup>6</sup> Undoubtedly there is a racial slant and a bantering tone in this comment, but it was an official report and Mayne had to record that in 'the pergunnahs the news spread like wild-fire, and the villagers rose in every direction,' that auction-purchasers

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 524-5.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 79-80.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 525-6.

<sup>4</sup> BPIR. 526-7.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 83-84.

<sup>6</sup> BPIR. 529.

and decree-holders were ousted and that in all instances government buildings and private property of every description were destroyed. Mayne thus sums up the situation : 'Never was revolution more rapid—never more complete'.<sup>1</sup> There was therefore no ground to think that Mayne did not make this remark seriously for his report covering full size sixteen pages refers to various other acts of sedition and rebellion of that period. The data presented would appear to be quite sufficient to form an impression about the popular results of the movement of Banda. But the *British Paramountcy* comments :

Thus, in the words of a modern historian, who fully relied on the account given above, in Banda, "the revolutionary flame was in full blaze", and "the popular character of the rebellion" was manifested in the destruction of the church and the desecration of the Christian burial ground.<sup>2</sup>

The reference is to the author of the *Civil Rebellion* but in offering this comment it has been forgotten that Mayne's report was not the only source utilised in that book. The whole thing has been worked out from other supplementary information as available in the *Further Papers* in addition to the *Narratives*. The justification for this observation that the revolutionary flame was in full swing rests upon other authentic materials not worked out in the *British Paramountcy*. Nawabali Bahadur proclaimed his own rule, pacified the feelings of the Hindus. As a measure of government he formed a council. Thus it was observed that the revolutionary government started on the fullest impulse, and when Kunwar Singh reached Banda on 29 September, he was received with great honour.

As for the second part of the statement that the popular character of the rebellion was manifested in the destruction of the church, it may be stated that it is a misquotation. What was represented was this : The fury of the people was manifested in a spate of anti-British activities like the destruction of the church and the desecration of the Christian

<sup>1</sup> CR. 208-10.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 529.

burial ground.<sup>1</sup> The passage immediately following (regarding the character of the revolt), will explain the position better. It runs : The popular character of the rebellion at Banda was reflected in the determination of the masses to exterminate the smallest vestige of their former masters and the policy of the authorities to make 'severe impressions' which would strike terror into the hearts of the people—hanging, flogging and transporting the ring leaders, burning villages and destroying houses. The official report disclosed that there was not a single village marked on the map that had not more or less committed itself, and the details given of the hostile feelings of the people show how the rebellion spread from village to village.<sup>2</sup> If it was so, could any one maintain that rebellion at Banda was neither rapid nor complete ?

Similarly, in Hamirpur 'anarchy was the order of the day' and the *Narratives* are quoted to show that the sepoys plundered every one and that the zamindars committed all kinds of violence.<sup>3</sup> But even the very passage of G. H. Freeling which has been quoted gives the answer to the question : 'I need scarcely say' Freeling reported, 'that the great feature in the rebellion here has been the universal ousting of all bankers, *baniayas*, *marwarees* etc. from landed property in the district by whatever means they acquired it.'<sup>4</sup> Naturally the overthrow of this order of society could not have been effected by peaceful means. In continuation Freeling adds, which all the more confirms the character and content of the civil rebellion : 'it is strange that in no instance do the classes so favoured by our rule, the bankers and other traders, appear to have been able to keep their own in the struggle.'<sup>5</sup> The attack on pro-foreign element is a common feature of every popular upsurge and though it might appear strange to an Englishman why the classes favoured by their rule had been liquidated it should not have been unintelligible enough to any one who had studied the causes of the civil disturbances originating

<sup>1</sup> CR. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 529-30.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 211.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. fn. 3.

from British land revenue system why the fury of the people was directed against this unscrupulous class of auction-purchasers, *baniyas* and *mahajans* as Berford of Muzaffarnagar also noted.<sup>1</sup> The main cause of the intensity of rebellion in Hamirpur, as pointed out in the *Civil Rebellion*, was the fact that in Hamirpur the auction-purchasers had gained possession of half the estate in the district.<sup>2</sup>

Jhansi also presented a scene of anarchy and confusion. This is made out on the strength of the letter addressed to the commissioner of the Saugor division by the rani of Jhansi,<sup>3</sup> who is supposed to have led the war of independence. It is not disputed that eventually the rani choose to fight and that she did put forward such a resolute and spirited defence as excited the wonder and admiration of her British rivals. As an administrator also she proved herself a most capable ruler.<sup>4</sup> As for her people, the thakurs followed by their followers rose up in all directions and the official papers of this time fully corroborate the situation. Sylvester who had taken part in the siege of Jhansi observed that the rebellion in the city was so general that even the *fakirs* and *goshains* had left their holy places and armed against them. The skill, vigour and energy with which the Indians fought at Jhansi made it one of the most memorable of the wars of the Mutiny. Even women were seen working in the batteris and carrying ammunition. The mode by which Jhansi was captured does not merely attest to the strength of the British force, as Malleeson says, but it also reflects the spirit of the Indian Rebellion of 1857-58.<sup>5</sup> Yet the disposition the people showed to commit excesses in the initial stages of the revolt was considered quite a strong ground by itself for branding the movement as anarchical.

In regard to other areas the short accounts<sup>6</sup> given are based on *Civil Rebellion*. But, Jalaun is omitted. The tension

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 41, 43-44.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 211.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 530.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 216.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 219-20.

<sup>6</sup> BPIR. 531.

at Kalpi where the revolutionary leaders united their forces and sent expeditions across the Jumna and down below, and the temporary occupation of Jalaun by Barjor Singh and Daulat Singh of Indorkee, which gave incentives to revolutionary impulses as indicated in the *Narrative* of G. Passanah and A. H. Ternan have not been featured. Furthermore, it has been overlooked that the regent rani of Tehri and the raja of Datia were also living in a state of contumacy besides the rani of Jaitpur and the rani of Ramgarh.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Further Papers* quoted in CR. 212-14.

## IV

### GENERAL REVIEW\*

The material facts of rebellion in Sagar and Narbada territories have been completely suppressed, as seems very likely, out of a desire to refute the statement made in the *Civil Rebellion* on the subject. The very first sentence in the section on the 'General Review' calls for comment. It runs :

Although many chiefs in Bundelkhand, Sagar and Narmada territories sooner or later threw in their lot with the rebels, one can hardly accept the statement of Dr. S. B. Chaudhuri that 'by the end of August, all places to the north of the Narmada with the exception of the Sadar stations were in flames.'<sup>1</sup>

No new evidence has been presented for the rejection of the above view, on the contrary, the array of facts carefully selected from the voluminous original records which constitute an authentic evidence for the presence of rebellion in those parts has been sought to be disintegrated by a sweeping generalisation unwarranted by any consideration.

The *Further Papers* and the *Narratives* by W. C. Erskine, commissioner of the Jabalpur division make out that the fort of Rahatgarh, twenty miles from Sagar fell to Fazil Mohammed, nawab of Ambapanni in Bhopal. The strong fort of Garhakota about thirty miles from Sagar was occupied by the Shahgarh troops. At the same time the raja of Banpur with more than a thousand men moved down from the north and took up position at Niraoli about nine miles from Sagar. The whole of Damoh was swarming with rebels led by Kishori Singh. On 15 September, the Banpur raja even repulsed the expedition of lieutenant-colonel Dalyell. Official records refer to a large number of hindu and mahomedan leaders, the most prominent of which was Daulat Singh who with his festering

\* BPIR. 531-35.

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 531.

masses swept through Jalaun, Jhansi, Hosangabad and Rajputana. During this time Jabalpur was also in ferment. Raja Shankar Shah of Garhamandla was arrested on 14 September for plotting against the Company-raj and was blown up. In Sihora and Sleemanabad, the thakurs maintained their winning sequence and even carried their forays in Burgi pargana to the south of the Narbada. Extensive preparations were made by a confederacy of rebel powers headed by Indra Singh the Shahgarh raja to attack Damoh. Surjurprasad Singh the young raja of Bijeraghogarh was in open rebellion and closed the Deccan road. The tension of the country to the north of the Narbada continued for a long time. On 30 November 1857 the Jabalpur thana of Shahpur on the road to Narsingpur was burned and on 9 January 1858 about four thousand rebels coming from the whole extent of country from Bhopal to Narsinghpur attacked Tendukhera to the north of Narbada. Even in 26 April 1858 a massive attack was made against the Mujholi thana in Jabalpur. Similarly the swell of the great rebellion was felt in the Narbada territories. Bikramjit, the rajah of Ramgarh, Bijaya Singh of Shahpur and Kumar Singh of Mhoka were formidable in their activities but were suppressed by Waddington in April 1858. The rani of Ramgarh followed the footsteps of Rani Durgabati in defence of her honour and the independence of her country. The *Further Papers* refer to a host of leaders who led the Bundelas and the burgi gonds who destroyed the thana and intercepted communications in the Narbada territories. Delan Shah of Narsinghpur who led the revolt of 1842, launched another attack on 16 May 1858 and became as elusive a fighter as ever though eventually he along with Mirbhan Singh were overpowered and hanged. Hoshangabad passed through a series of convulsions and in Nemawar pargana one Ramkissen hoisted the Maratha flag.<sup>1</sup>

The above review will make it clear that the whole country to the north of the Narbada from Hosangabad and Narsinghpur on the south to Jalaun and Kalpi on the north, and from Mandasor on the west to Baghelkhand on the east, was in the throes of a severe convulsion. Jalaun in the north reaches up

<sup>1</sup> CR. 223-28.

to Etawah on the other side of the Jumna in the Agra division where a severe struggle was raging. The *Narrative* of Allan Hume, the magistrate of the district, makes no attempt to conceal the fact that in Etawah the rebellion assumed an alarming proportion. Rup Singh of Bharih (near the junction of the Chambal with the Jumna) built up his power at Auraiya and here he could not be ousted even after a fierce encounter on 7 February 1858. His troops guarded the *ghats* and maintained communications with the troops at Kalpi. While he was assuming a posture of strength, the Chambal-Jumna tract passed under the control of Chakarnagar raja Kushal Singh and his son, Niranjan. In March 1858, a fierce struggle ensued for the recovery of Ajitmal which was near Auraiya, and twenty-five miles from Etawah. On 11 April the rebel forces drew round Ajitmal from all directions and encircled it but had to fall back before the British offensive. With the accession of the strength of the rebels, Niranjan Singh in an auxiliary movement crossed the Jumna and plundered Phaphund. The country virtually passed under the control of the rebels who kept a watch on all the *ghats* in the Jumna and surprised various British outposts by numerous furtive expeditions. It was only in September-October, 1858, that the Jumna-Chambal Doab was reoccupied by lieutenant Graham and Allan. Even so, on 8 December 1858 Firoz Shah stirred up a tremendous movement against the British outpost at Harachandrapura and held his own against the magnificent charges made by Doyle.<sup>1</sup>

Like the Jumna-Chambal Doab, the Jumna-Betwa Doab, the country of Bundelkhand was seething with revolt. Almost all the local chiefs were affected by the convulsion, the most important of which was the raja of Shahgarh, and Mardan Singh the raja of Banpur who established his rule at Chanderi and held possession of the northern part of the Sagar district until the arrival of the Central Indian Field Force. Similarly all the chiefs of Maihar were in open rebellion. In Ajai-garh a rebel mahomedan chief proclaimed Soal Singh as the raja.<sup>2</sup> All these details of the history of the revolt of Jumua-

<sup>1</sup> CR. 86.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 206-7.

Chambal tract and Jumna-Betwa or Bundelkhand, and also the history of Sagar, Jabalpur and Narbada territories have not been recorded in the detailed history of the 'Revolt of the People' which explains this inhibition in accepting the statement that the region to the north of the Narbada was in flames. This rigid outlook is further reflected in what follows :

Jalaun and Charkhari were unaffected, and the Raja of Panna continued to be the most faithful ally of the British. The same was the case with the ruler of Orchha and Datia, who attacked the Rani of Jhansi . . . the Raja of Rewa helped the British with troops, and the whole of Baghelkhand remained quiet.<sup>1</sup>

There are many lacunae in the above statement. It has been stated previously that the activities of the Jalaun leaders have not been taken notice of in the *British Paramountcy*.<sup>2</sup> There is yet another point, it is this, that the maintenance of the headquarters of the revolutionary leaders at Kalpi throughout the whole period would not have been possible had not the people of Jalaun been either sympathetic to the rebel cause or thoroughly disaffected. Charkhari was near Hamirpur where as already noticed rebellion was raging furiously and though there was no open manifestation of the spirit of revolt in that station discontent was driven underground : one Dabal Singh was executed for his hostile activities there.<sup>3</sup> The statement that the raja of Panna continued to be the most faithful ally of the British is quite true but it is overlooked that almost all the rulers of Bundelkhand, namely the rulers of Bijeraghgarh, Patera, Guahat, Richol, Shahgarh, Banpur, Jaso, Maihar and Ajaigarh were thoroughly affected by the convulsion.<sup>4</sup> Moreover when the position was such that a single district like Jabalpur produced one hundred and seventy nine rebel leaders.<sup>5</sup> there cannot be any point of balance in pointing to the case of Panna as proving the absence of rebellion in the territories to the north of the Narbada. It has also to be noticed that though Panna remained a faithful

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 531.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 207.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 206-7.

<sup>5</sup> Holmes, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, 496.

ally of the British government in Bundelkhand, disaffected chiefs like Mirza Rahim Beg and Chaulantia who are described as dewans are noted in the official despatches for their warlike proceedings.<sup>1</sup> The statement that the rulers of Orchha and Datia won the support of the English by their faithful conduct is not wholly true. Kurjaprasad of Datia took up the cause of the rebel raja of Jaitpur, and the Bundela rana of Orchha, it may be remembered, who had a brush with the rani of Jhansi in the early part of the revolt<sup>2</sup> remained aloof during the siege of Jhansi, the heroic rani being steadily supported by all other leading chiefs of the country. The statement about the faithful conduct of the raja of Rewah and that the whole of Baghelkhand remained quiet is not borne out by available evidence. The officer commanding at Benares reported that in Rewah the whole of the population was hostile and the country was secured only by the courage and resourcefulness of captain Osborne.<sup>3</sup> It was discovered that the extent of disaffection among the officers of the raja's troops was so great that there was no chance of getting a force to oppose 'Koor Singh' with the slightest hope of success, who was allowed to pass unmolested.<sup>4</sup> There were uneasy stirrings in Rewah and the whole of the population was hostile; portions of the district having already passed under the possession of the rebels.<sup>5</sup> All these do not tend to disprove that all places to the north of the Narbada were not in flames.

Not even the fact that so many queens like the gallant rani of Jaitpur, the regent rani of Tehri, Tarabai of Jalaun, the rani of Ramgarh, and above all, the celebrated rani of Jhansi rose up<sup>6</sup> in the comparatively small area of the country encompassed by the Jumna and the Narbada, and fought in their own way against the English and sacrificed their lives strike a celebrated historian as something unique and significant. On the contrary, he has taken objection to the statement in the *Civil Rebellion* that the rebellion culminated in the

<sup>1</sup> CR. 207.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 207; 214, fn. 1; 217.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 276.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 318.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 40.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 207, 212, 214 fn., 226.

complete subversion of the British power. In the most characteristic way he protests :

It is equally untrue to say that the "rebellion culminated in the complete subversion of the British power". It would be more appropriate to say that the subversion of the British power by the mutiny of the sepoys culminated in the rebellion of the people as they thought that the "British raj was over".<sup>1</sup>

The statement raises a question of serious importance which requires to be clarified. Did the mutiny lead to the subversion of the British power? Or did the rebellion of the people culminate in the subversion of British power? If the former movement led to the subversion of British power, was it a complete or a partial subversion of British power?

In a technical sense all mutinies cause a temporary debacle of political power when the existing governments go underground for a short period only to come back with the return of their striking power.<sup>2</sup> The same thing happened in the case of the mutinies of India in 1857 when the British civil servants who were alive left their stations leaving either a native dignitary or some trusted officer in charge of the civil administration to carry on, if possible, the routine duties of the station. In some cases the British officers even conducted the administration from 'exile' by issuing directives till such time as the civil administration was not paralysed by popular upsurge. This trend of events indicate that the mutiny of troops did not lead to the immediate abdication of the British government or subversion of its authority. But the complexion changed when the surging tide of popular rebellion which in many cases appeared on the surface before the outbreak of the mutinies, increasingly grew in volume and strength and destroyed the vestige of British power that was still left. The establishment of rebel governments in a large number of districts as in Farrukhabad, Cawnpore, Delhi, Bijnor, Moradabad, Bareilly, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Sitapur, Lucknow, Fatehpur, Gorakhpur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Singhbhum Sambalpur, Banda, Shahabad, Hamirpur, Jhansi and in many other places followed by the transfer of allegiance of the

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 531-2.

<sup>2</sup> See David Herbert, *Great Historical Mutinies*, London and Edinburgh, 1876.

former employees to the rebel government which took place on a prodigious scale, as shown,<sup>1</sup> eventually led to the complete subversion of the British power. In some other stations where the magistrate or collector somehow contrived to linger on as in Muzaffarnagar, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Agra, Etawah, Patna etc. the effective authority of the officers in matters of civil administration had been so much reduced by the popular upsurge that it virtually amounted to an abrogation of the power of the British government. In other stations also, the effect of the mutiny was less in evidence than the effect of the popular rebellion in the matter of the subversion of British power.

Thus in Meerut what the soldiers did to sustain the rebellion appeared trifling when seen in the light of the mass upsurge that engulfed the country side.<sup>2</sup> In Budaun, the rebel mass had done everything to efface all traces of British rule.<sup>3</sup> The situation at Allahabad and in the neighbouring countries became serious by the middle of October. The British rule broke down to a point of utter helplessness and in the Gopiganj area various parties of rebels were even collecting revenue in the name of the king of Oudh.<sup>4</sup> In Benares as the *Red Pamphlet* says, it appeared as if the ryots and zamindars were about to attempt the execution of a project in which the sepoys had failed.<sup>5</sup> In Gaya rujwars and zamindars combined to destroy British rule utterly<sup>6</sup> and in eastern India, in Ghazipur, Ballia, Shahabad and Patna, the government remained so much subverted that it failed to resume its normal power down to the middle of June 1858.<sup>7</sup> Palamau region passed entirely under the possession of the rebels toward the end of the year 1858 long after the mutinies.<sup>8</sup> The situation in the country to the north of the Narbada will illustrate better the sweeping

<sup>1</sup> CR. 68, 70, 79, 87, 90, 100-01, 107, 109, 110, 111-12, 115, 116-7, 125, 133, 147, 154, 172-3, 182, 208, 211, 216.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 64.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 115.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 37, 39.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 157. *Red Pamphlet*, 91.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 181.

<sup>7</sup> CR. 252.

<sup>8</sup> CR. 187.

effects of the peoples' war. W. C. Erskine, the commissioner, in a report dated 16 October 1857 represented the view that unless military measures were taken at once, the whole country would be lost, that numerous thakurs were up in arms with their followers and that even Hoshangabad to the south of the Narbada was thoroughly disorganised. In the circumstances, major Erskine, could not but admit with regret that these three Bundelkhand districts, Jalaun, Jhansi and Chanderi were not at the moment in his possession.<sup>1</sup>

It will thus be appreciated that the abasement and total subversion of British power in the whole extent of the country from the Jumna to the Narbada, as is evident from the above report, could scarcely have been effected by the sporadic mutinies of a few places which occurred a few months back had not the masses rushed out to wreak vengeance on their oppressors. This is further reinforced by what Erskine says in continuation of his report, that Sagar and Mandla regions were in a state of anarchy, and that all these were the outward symptoms of a deep-rooted feeling of sedition which had taken possession of the minds of the people who were taking 'little notice', as the commissioner estimated, 'of our success in Delhi and Lucknow', if they believed the reports at all.<sup>2</sup> To match it with a similar situation in the north, we have the report of F. O. Mayne, the joint-magistrate of Gopiganj, of a date in the same month, October. The document shows that the fall of Delhi had hardly any effect on the rebellious multitude. He reported that the civil administration of these parganas was virtually at a *stand still* and that little or *no revenue* came in. The communication of the governor-general to the Court of Directors in the same month also adverted to the same subject of the occupation of the country by the Oudh talukdars who were systematically acquiring village after village, collecting revenue and forming settlement papers.<sup>3</sup> All these official reports will make it abundantly clear that the civil rebellion of 1857, *reached its peak in the middle of October*, when the British rule in India totally collapsed in many regions both in the

<sup>1</sup> CR. 40.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 40-41.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 38-39.

north as well as in the Narbada countries. This could have resulted only from the rebellion of the people and not from the mutiny of sepoys which passed like an epidemic in the summer of 1857. It receives further confirmation from what happened in Lucknow and the neighbouring parts during the same period, long after the mutinies had taken their course. The rebellious talukdars with their levies now carried a social war into the interior and accomplished the project more basic than other factors which marked the passase of the Indian Mutiny. They were purging the country of the British system almost burning it out. Their marches and counter-marches kept alive a spirit of war and the whole country population of the province was in dogged rebellion.<sup>1</sup>

Having regard to what has been said about the condition of India towards the end of 1857 it may not be difficult to realise which of the factors, mutiny or rebellion, culminated in the complete subversion of the British power. Though however the feeling that the British raj was 'over' was something which flowed from the successful mutinies, the Sepoy Mutiny by itself could not have produced results with any degree of continuity. The oft-repeated statement in the *British Paramountcy* that the sepoys had already won independence by overthrowing the yoke of British rule, and so a national war was out of question<sup>2</sup> is a statement which disregards certain obvious factors. The rebellion of the people no doubt came on the surface on the rising of the Bengal Army and, undoubtedly enough, even earlier in many cases, but not certainly on the ruins of the British power which still existed awaiting to be liquidated by the massive effort of a war-mad people. The cumulative evidence of all the official statements as attested, may tend to demonstrate the untenability of the theory that the subversion of the British power by the mutiny of the sepoys culminated in the rebellion of the people. It is correct neither factually, nor technically. The total subversion of the British rule was brought about by the sweeping participation of the people and their chiefs who usurped all powers of the former government.

<sup>1</sup> CR. 138.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 534, 619-20.

The *British Paramountcy* reverts to the topic and continues : Dr. Chaudhuri seems to convey the impression that the region north of the Narmada was in flames kindled by the torch of freedom. But what are the actual facts.<sup>1</sup>

The actual facts are what Erskine reported, that Bundelkhand districts are completely lost to the government and that a deep-rooted feeling of sedition had taken possession of the minds of the people.<sup>2</sup> It would be better in the interest of historical truth if this fact was realised that the revolt of 1857 covered a much wider area than merely Uttar Pradesh. But nothing of this kind follows. The historian highlights his 'fairly good picture of the state of this region' based on authentic testimony, and,

portrays Indian chiefs fighting against one another, some of them befriending the English for securing the help against rival chiefs, others helping the British at first, then changing, . . . the petty local chiefs only busy with establishing their own authority and enriching themselves by all unscrupulous means; plunder and murder going on all sides.<sup>3</sup>

There could not be a more glaring example of the distortion of the historical image resulting from a failure of perspective. Very few regions excepting perhaps Shahabad could present such an unalloyed picture of spontaneous revolutionary urges as the Jumna-Narmada tract. Here there was no railway line to uproot, no telegraph wire to cut or factories to burn. The *Narratives* speak less of the spoils of the treasury, or plunders of property, than of the victimization of the *mahajans*, *baniyas*, *marwaris* and auction-purchasers, the stooges of British Imperialists, the whole class of anti-social elements who lived by exploiting the miseries of the lower orders of society. The dislike for this pro-British class was only matched by a dislike of foreign rule which in the circumstances inspired the people with motives of patriotic and territorial character. The Reports present the picture of a combined attempt of many leaders coming from the whole extent of country stretching from Bhopal to

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 532.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 532.

Baghelkhand to challenge a foreign power. There was perhaps not a single village that had not more or less committed itself, and very few local chiefs who despite their difficulties at the initial stages of the struggle did not organise their rule and eventually take up arms and build up their military power by all machinations and devices for the great struggle lying ahead. Passion to die for the country gripped all, Shankar Shah and his son, raja of Bijeraghoharh and the rani of Ramgarh. Old leaders like Delan Shah renewed their struggle and ladies of royal household, surprisingly enough large numbers of them, did not quiver before coming out. Kings and queens, landlords and ryots, and people of all classes jumped into the fray to drive back the foul invaders, the British avenging army, heedless of the fall either of Delhi or Lucknow.<sup>1</sup>

The comments continue :

In the opinion of a class of historians the rising of civil population invests the outbreak of 1857-58 with the character of a national war of independence. Few of them, however, have made a detailed study of these risings in order to assess their real nature. Dr. S. B. Chaudhuri is perhaps the only exception, and his careful compilation of facts is therefore of special importance. His comments, however, betray a lack of proper understanding of what a popular rising for independence really means.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that the author of the *British Paramountcy* knows of many historians who made a detailed study of the civil risings of 1857-58 but many certainly regarded the outbreak as a war of independence. The rising of the civil population no doubt has a historical significance of its own in the overall estimate of the character of the movement of 1857, and from that point of view the *Civil Rebellion* may demand special attention. The book, however, instead of characterising the outbreak of 1857 as a national war of independence in the most categorical way possible showed a degree of moderation and balance in regarding the revolt as possessing a national character, and even national, unless the term was unduly restricted.<sup>3</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 533.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 296-7.

opinion of the *British Paramountcy* that the author of the *Civil Rebellion* has betrayed a lack of proper understanding of what a popular rising for independence really meant may best be judged from what has been said about the character of the rebellion of 1857 in the foregoing pages.<sup>1</sup> The author pleads ignorance of the special sense the historian has in view of a popular rising but he is quite confident that contemporary British observers who watched the upsurge had no hesitation in regarding the outbreak of 1857 with all the attending activities of the so-called lawless elements, as rebellion. One can only call to notice what F. O. Mayne of Banda reported about the madness of unchecked anarchy and rebellion and yet commenting : 'Never was revolution more rapid never more complete'.<sup>2</sup> The same attitude is reflected in the report of G. H. Freeling of Hamirpur : 'I need scarcely say that the great feature in the rebellion here has been the universal ousting of all bankers, banyas, marwaries'<sup>3</sup> etc. A simple but a substantially correct appraisal of the situation is made in the following lines of Thornhill of Mathura : The question whether the mutiny was a mere military revolt or a popular rising when calmly considered leads to the conclusion that the army revolted, the population left to itself committed overt acts of hostility against the government. *This is rebellion*.<sup>4</sup> If that is rebellion, 'lack of proper understanding of what a popular rising is' will not materially affect the objective with which *Civil Rebellion* was attempted to be written, but the matter of regret is that despite these competent opinions on the meaning of rebellion, the tendency to hold the opposite of truth still persists.

Therefore the Bijnor rising, as described in the *Civil Rebellion* has been taken to be a 'typical example' which exposes the nature of the 'spontaneous rising of the people'. Reference is here made to the excesses committed by the gujars and banjars, and to the lines of cleavage working to antagonise the two communities.<sup>5</sup> The two points raised have already been

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 43 ff.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 208.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 211.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 287 (Italics of the author).

<sup>5</sup> BPIR. 533.

critically studied and will be discussed again. That question apart, the selection of Bijnur in particular out of nearly fifty stations of the N. W. Provinces only brings into relief the attitude of the historian that he is out to select only such evidence as would suit his purpose. The movements of the Rohilkhand division only were not free from communal incubus but in other divisions such as Meerut, Agra, Allahabad, Fyzabad, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Benares and in Central and Western India, the district movements were not tainted by inter-communal tensions. And in a vast country like India there is bound to be some fluctuations here and there; some proliferations and emphasis arising out of local conditions which are perhaps unavoidable. The selection of Meerut and Etawah or Azamgarh or any other station excepting the districts of Rohilkhand division to 'serve as a typical example' would have pointed to a different conclusion.

The views of *Civil Rebellion* regarding Rohilkhand is again quoted :

Dr. Chaudhuri's comment on the general character of the revolt is still more explicit. 'The revolt in Rohilkhand was mostly confined to the muslim community who were inflamed by fanaticism to an intense hatred of the English. They raised the green flag, shouted for the revival of the Islamic state and despoiled the hindu bankers and merchants. But these features did not warp the popular character of the rising.'<sup>1</sup>

Any point may not be good enough to expose the popular character of the rising. In Rohilkhand the country of the hardy rohillas, who had not forgotten their hereditary rancour, the movement took the form of a mahomedan rising and was marked by communal distemper; yet the 'national heart', as Kaye says, was 'turned against the English'.<sup>2</sup> Bad feeling between the Hindus and Mahomedans may not lead to the development of good feeling between the Mahomedans and the English. It is the strength and depth of anti-British feeling that produced a climate of national sentiment which explains why Kaye used the word national even though the movement was not sufficiently broad based. Numbers of dissolute,

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 534.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 290.

desperate and distressed Mahomedans who had a lineage to boast of, and old traditions to excite them, were easily disposed to rebellion in Rohilkhand. In general also, the Mahomedans of that region entertained the old hatred of the Englishmen, the old desire to extirpate them root and branch. The social state of Rohilkhand was rendered still more grave by the operations of the British revenue system which had ruined the land owners of the country. William Edwards, an officer of long standing experience had marked how during the fifteen years preceding the mutiny, discontent was growing to a point making the country ripe for revolt.<sup>1</sup> In view of this situation communal feeling that was generated was evidently a secondary issue and these considerations had to be weighed.

The General Review continues on the same line of thinking : It seems to be the view of Dr. Chaudhuri that the hatred of the English is the only factor that counts in a popular national movement, even though the resulting activity was wanton plunder and destruction by the rowdy elements who were hitherto kept in restraint by the English authority and therefore very naturally hated it. The popular character, it seems, is not lost even though the Hindus fight against Muslims, one faction fights against another, and everybody's hand is against his neighbour. Even Dr. Chaudhuri's detailed account does not show that the people, while thus engaged, bestowed a moment's thought upon devising measures to maintain the independence they had so miraculously won without any effort on their part, or that any class or group of persons looked upon this independence in any other light than as a means to gain their personal ends. It is therefore difficult to hold that the revolts in N.W.P. deserve the name of popular rising or popular upsurge, as part of a national movement for independence.<sup>2</sup>

The paragraph is packed with strange suggestions. The first sentence is open to grave objection because of its obvious implication that the British system was detested as it kept the rowdy elements under check by the enforcement of law and order. The whole chain of historic causes which led to the outbreak of 1857 are of no consequence to the historian

<sup>1</sup> CR. 11.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 534.

since the hatred of the English, as manifested in the events of 1857, stemmed from the restraining influence of British authority. One would hesitate to make such an oversimplification of a tremendous issue of political and national importance. It also cannot be overlooked that the historical implications of the 'hatred of the English rule' has not been realised at all. It is an authentic fact that the mounting volume of discontent and disaffection arising out of a variety of causes, social, political and economic, generated by the British system culminated in an intense hatred of the English. In other words this 'hatred' was symbolic of India's case against Britain in 1857, an expression of national feeling of resentment and distrust against an alien and intrusive system. Hence this hatred counted in the popular national movement of 1857 in a way as nothing else did, though the resulting activities of a ruthless nature could easily be confused with works of rowdy elements. The main trend in the annals of the Indian Revolt of 1857 was this that the rebels to whatever classes they belonged were determined to tear the English out of the land, root and branch. Kaye quotes from a writer of the Calcutta Review to show that the genius of the revolt was to destroy everything that could possibly remind one of England. The telegraph posts were dug out and even the milestones, so decidedly English, were defaced. The innumerable manifestos offering rewards for the destruction of the English also support this contention. The massacre of the English in the parade ground at Farrukhabad and also at Delhi, reflects the same attitude.<sup>1</sup> In Meerut, as F. Williams observed, the people were intent upon the destruction of christians, too eager to kill them. And repeated enquiries through different sources confirmed the report that in many cases atrocious indignities were inflicted on the dead bodies of Europeans as a mark of 'diabolical racial hatred'.<sup>2</sup> In Banda the masses were determined to exterminate the smallest vestige of their former masters and this determination was manifested not only in the destruction of the church but also in the desecration of the christian burial ground.<sup>3</sup> In other places the insurgents sacked the

<sup>1</sup> CR. 261.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 64.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 210.

convents and slaughtered the missionaries 'just as if they were Anglicans'. Hatred produced by long suffering outweighed all other feelings. The excesses of the Irish rebellions and the French revolution are pertinent in this connection.<sup>1</sup>

The second question referring to inter-communal relations and factious fights has already been adverted to and will be discussed again but repetitions of such statements may tend to give rise to many complex issues.<sup>2</sup> The third sentence is again a baseless allegation that people won their independence miraculously without any effort on their part. It has been pointed out that the sepoy were hardly ever successful in bringing about the complete subversion of the British power.<sup>3</sup> They had no plan or resources either, of carrying on a protracted struggle under their own management and in many cases they sought the help of the landed dignitaries and even coerced them to lead them to battle if they wavered. The case of Thakur Biswanath Sai, Kunwar Singh and Nana Sahib would illustrate this point.<sup>4</sup> The war at Lucknow was conducted by the landed chiefs alike from the financial and military point of view. After Havelock's entry into Lucknow the sepoy dispersed in different directions but simultaneously the talukdars rose as one man.<sup>5</sup>

The most obscurantist view, and the one that can at best be regarded as a mere conjecture, is the insinuation that the people, while thus engaged, did not bestow a moment's thought upon devising measures to maintain their independence. The history of the *Civil Rebellion during the Indian Mutinies* would have to be unwritten if it were so. The massive facts lying scattered throughout the whole work would have to be re-aligned to meet this point and to weaken the force of this remark. The following survey will show that the people were not only not unaware of the gravity of the situation, but made hectic preparations to build up their military strength both for offensive and defensive purposes with a view to maintaining

<sup>1</sup> C.R. 260.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 47-49, 72 and *Infra*, pp. 157-60, 193.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, pp. 64-68.

<sup>4</sup> C.R. 258.

<sup>5</sup> C.R. p. xix; 137.

their independence. In Rewari, Tularam equipped his fort at Rampur with guns and good many standard arms and other ordnance stores.<sup>1</sup> The measures adopted in Delhi for a defence at depth need not be stressed. The imperial city was above all the proud arsenal of that part of India and preparations were going on in full swing. 250 men were employed in the manufacture of gun powder and the percussion caps were well made. Orders were issued to the rajas personally to attend or to send soldiers and by the middle of June the rebel army at Delhi was daily receiving additions. The arrival of the Bareilly force on the 1st and 2nd of July and the victory of the rebels at Shahganj near Agra gave a great incentive to the army of Delhi who were daily being reinforced by bands of *jehadis* and Wahabis.<sup>2</sup> The Meerut villages reacted quickly by storing up grain and collecting supplies for the purpose of sending them to fighting lines,<sup>3</sup> and so also at Muzaffarnagar, where the rebels were found to be armed to the teeth.<sup>4</sup> Walidad Khan with his fort at Malagarh lying close to the Grand Trunk Road in Sikandarabad cast his net wide. He not only drew levies from the disaffected gujars and enlisted fresh bands of mutinous troops constantly passing up and down the main highway of the Doab, but also intercepted British communications from his strategic post. Malagarh, as it later on appeared, was equipped with guns of native manufacture.<sup>5</sup> While Niranjan Singh entrenched himself in the Chambal-Jumna tract by building a number of *morchas* or posts,<sup>6</sup> Rahulamin, the naib-chackladar of pargana Nawabganj intercepted the river passage between Allahabad and Cawnpore.<sup>7</sup> Zamindars at Fatehpur were procuring ammunition and collecting round them bands of retainers.<sup>8</sup> In Rohilkhand they generally stopped the *daks* and placed guards at all the ferries, but in Bareilly in particular, Khan

<sup>1</sup> CR. 239.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 69.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 65.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 76.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 78.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 86.

<sup>7</sup> CR. 92.

<sup>8</sup> CR. 107.

Bahadur strengthened his army by the inclusion of a number of ghazis three hundred foot and a hundred horse.<sup>1</sup> At Fyzabad workshops were established for the repair of heavy guns; at Dilkhose House, a quantity of lead had been dug up, made into bullets and distributed between Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Sultanpur, and vigorous efforts were made to enlist on the side of the rebels<sup>2</sup> military elements. In the Fyzabad division in Sultanpur, the rebel leaders organised a systematic plan to oppose the passage of British forces marching for the relief of the beleaguered garrison at Lucknow.<sup>3</sup> The talukdars in general relied on the strength of their own levies and the supposed impregnability of their forts. Hanumant Singh, the talukdar of Dharumpur, and the owner of the strong fort of Kalakankar on the Ganges was raising the country against the British besides equipping his fort with 27 guns,<sup>4</sup> while Beni Madhu, the Kurmi raja of Atrauli seems to have defended his fort with men and guns received from raja Man Singh.<sup>5</sup> Similar preparations on a big scale were made by almost all the talukdars. In eastern India in Sahabad, preparations must have been made in advance which enabled the people to carry on a long protracted struggle. Guns and powders were made, spies were kept at every "ghat and intelligence of all the movements of the British troops was obtained. Large stores of ammunition and material of war were collected and grain sufficient to have subsisted 20,000 men for six months were stored.<sup>6</sup> As an example of ingenious device of the Indians for the manufacture of guns it may be mentioned that the two guns which did considerable execution at the battle of Kamp-sagar near Buxar on 16 October 1858 were found to be

<sup>1</sup> CR. 109, 113. The statement is made on the basis of the *Narrative of Events* (i, 444), but Dr S. N. Sen asserts that Khan Bahadur raised an army of Forty thousand troops for which no source is quoted. *The British Paramountcy* merely lifts this statement from *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* but capitalises on what Durgadas Bandyopadhyaya observed that these recruits were only mercenaries and had no enthusiasm for any party or cause (Sen op. cit. p. 409; BPIR. 535).

<sup>2</sup> CR. 37.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 124.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 152.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 156.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 173, 177, 179.

wood lined and bound round with iron and copper, and the whole covered with leather.<sup>1</sup> The same ingenuity was shown by the Palamau leaders who seem to have manufactured cartridges made up with 'native powder,' and otherwise they collected provisions and ammunitions evidently on a large scale on which they drew till up to 1859.<sup>2</sup> The rebels at Porahat received their supplies of match-locks from Jhalda<sup>3</sup> while in Gaya, Judhar Singh, the famous leader, took strong measures to fortify and garrison his entrenchment.<sup>4</sup> The wave of the war even touched the borders of Bengal. Nilmani Singh, raja of Panchet collected military stores and arms of various description.<sup>5</sup> More vigorous preparations were going on in the country bounded by the Jumna and the Narbada. Raja Madan Singh of Banpur in Bundelkhand established a cannon foundry on the European principle, with an excellent boring apparatus,<sup>6</sup> and in Kirwi in Banda, the two leaders, Narayan Rao and Madhu Rao made extensive preparations to resist the avenging army. Pieces of cannon, immense quantity of shot, shell and powder were found in their fort. Their gun-foundries and powder manufactories, as an English general said, must have been working in full swing.<sup>7</sup> In Jhansi preparations ran on a colossal scale, even the women were seen working in the batteries and carrying ammunitions.<sup>8</sup> At other places also, elaborate measures were taken which leave the impression that the leaders and the people were determined to offer defence at depth. Preparations at Cawnpore were proceeding under a well calculated plan as the distribution of portfolios in the rebel government would tend to show. Gayaprasad was made the tent-maker, and Buddhoo the commissariat boat contractor, supplied boatmen. Azim Beg and Karimali served as record-keepers and nineteen newswriters were appointed in nineteen different places. Dewan Rao

<sup>1</sup> CR. 255.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 185, 188.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 195.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 182.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 201.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 206.

<sup>7</sup> CR. 209.

<sup>8</sup> CR. 219.

was the superintendent of magazine, and Kalka, the kanango, collected armed men from Oudh on the other side of the Ganges. The press of Mustafa Khan was utilised, shells were prepared by Imamali, and Shah Ali was appointed the head of the intelligence department.<sup>1</sup> In Lucknow the measures adopted were perhaps the most extraordinary that could be thought of in regard to any country similarly situated showing the pluck and resources of the rebels at their best. A large body of archers was engaged on contract for a sum of six thousand rupees. Percussion caps were being made by artisans who came from Delhi, and large supplies of arms and ammunition were received from the mofussil. Gold and silver ornaments were carried to pay the troops and district appointments were ordered. Voluntary contributions came from many wealthy individuals and disaffected chiefs. The begum herself paid five lakhs to have a wall built round the city. The neighbouring forts were repaired and strongly fortified. A deep ditch was dug round the King's palace so as to admit water from the Gomati in which five thousand coolies worked. The old canal was also repaired. Guns were being mounted and ornaments melted to pay the soldiers who were treated with care and attention. Orders were given that the heirs of the sepoys who might be killed were to have a hundred rupees each and the wounded fifty rupees each.<sup>2</sup> Similarly in Gorakhpur fortifications or rather loop-holed earth works erected here and there forcibly illustrated systematised rebellion. The raja of Satsi carried it still further. According to Rowcroft : 'he had fortified his palace to a considerable extent, the walls within and without being loopholed for musketry, and the building connected by galleries and passages also loopholed, and on one face covered with a very thick thorny-bamboo jungle. The articles found in the palace consisted of 10 or 12 cwt. of powder, five large bags of musket-balls, five valuable double-barrelled guns, of which one was a rifle, large stores of grains.'<sup>3</sup> The preparations at Sambalpur followed the conditions of jungle warfare—breastworks, stone barricades and

<sup>1</sup> CR. 101.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 136-7.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 147-8.

defensive stone blocks. As ensign Warlow found it 'they had thrown up a loopholed stone breastwork about seven feet high and thirty long,... they had also cut down the jungle on either side, so as to concentrate the whole fire on this approach; and about half-way up the hill on the left, they had erected another breast-work. ...A considerable quantity of rice and grain were also found concealed among the rocks'.<sup>1</sup> The huge preparations made for the defence of Kalpi, a strategic centre on the Jumna was clearly seen in the intricate military works which were found to exist inside the fort. There was a subterraneous magazine which contained five hundred barrels of powder and immense quantities of ordnance stores. In the town and fort, four foundries and manufactories for cannon were discovered, and one eighteen pounder brass gun, one brass eight inch mortar, and two brass nine pounder guns. The foundries for casting shot and shell were in perfect order and in the arsenal there were about 60,000 pounds of gun powder.<sup>2</sup>

The above is a brief account of the reactions of the people to the British rule in India in 1857. From Delhi to Bareilly-Lucknow and Gorakhpur, and thence to Sambalpur, and from Sambalpur to Kalpi, from Kalpi to Narbada territories, covering Jhansi and Banpur, and thence to Rewari, a line could be drawn through a country which was firmly set on war path. One wonders if all these extensive preparations for offensive and defensive actions were possible if the people had not bestowed a moment's thought upon devising measures to maintain their independence. Government of a determined character which was established in most of these places to consolidate the results of the revolution also reflect the reactions of the people.

A book if represented without scrutiny tends to retard the growth of historical studies, nor does such remarks as 'classes or groups of persons looked upon this independence as a means to gain their personal ends' offer any standard of historical judgement. Justification for a revolt lies in the removal or redress of grievances and disabilities from which the people were suffering and in righting or

<sup>1</sup> CR. 198-9.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 213.

rectifying the wrongs inflicted on them. Such grievances or disabilities are however not personal or individual features but are shared by each and every individual constituting a particular class, group or society, each of which besides the general causes of discontent had a particular type of disability or restriction to complain of. The resentment against auction-purchasers was commonly shared by all talukdars constituting that class, as was the resentment against *baniyas* and *mahajans* by all people constituting the classes who lived by borrowing. The pattern of activities of the so-called anti-social classes, gujars, ranghars and other inferior orders being nearly the same namely, the spoliation of the *baniyas* and *mahajans* and destruction of all documents and symbols of oppression, there cannot be any question of personal preferences or motives, and the same remark applies in regard to the zamindars who had ejected the auction-purchasers and occupied their former villages. To impute motives of personal interest in all these rebellious proceedings is to deny and challenge the fundamental character of a revolt which is basically an operation of the suffering classes carried out by a violent process to secure an area of freedom in the socio-political conditions of the country. In view of all what has been said above the conviction not to regard the revolt in N. W. Provinces as a popular rising or a popular upsurge related in some way to a national movement for independence does not seem to be competently held.

What follows is the same stuff :

“The spontaneity of the popular risings, on which Dr. Chaudhuri lays stress does not necessarily indicate prolonged and eager expectancy to free the motherland or drive away the English, but may be easily accounted for by the long-standing grievances, mentioned above, of the cultivating class which constituted 90 per cent. of the people, and the godsent opportunity to loot, kill, and burn with impunity, which no Gujar, Banjar, escaped convicts or people of that sort are ever known to have missed.<sup>1</sup>

As an explanation of the risings this argument may appear a bit strained. No doubt the grievances of the cultivating classes had much to do with the spontaneity of the popular

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 534.

upsurge, but it is forgotten that they were not the only people who participated in the conflict. The sepoys fighting for castes, the chiefs for their kingdoms, the landlords for their estates, the masses for fear of conversion and other grievances, and a section of Muslims in particular, for the restoration of their old sway, but all in their own way fighting against the English, the common enemy of all, probably serves to demonstrate in a very factual way a prolonged and eager expectancy to free the motherland by driving away the English. The next sentence that the gujars and banjars and escaped convicts had taken advantage of the godsent opportunity to loot and kill is the same theme which is dragged in by heels at every occasion<sup>1</sup> Nor does the qualifying sentence added in this connection that history does not record any instance where these classes of people hesitated or waited for a moment when such an opportunity presented itself, proves the particular point he has in view. If history shows that anti-social elements do not miss an opportunity of taking advantage of a conflagration then is it the view of the author that revolt against a foreign power should be conducted by the elite of the society only? Movements acquire a self-generating force in course of their progress. The self-interest of different classes and individuals intermingles with the total revolutionary motive force.

The comments continue :

Dr. Chaudhuri claims that even apart from these marauding elements there was 'tension among the landed chiefs as well as the people', and the mutiny of sepoys acted like a spark on an ignited substance. This tension was due to various types of discontent . . . but the ignition did not kindle the torch of patriotism and a burning desire for freedom. The so-called popular upsurge, to start with, was really a scramble for power and plunder, and even the popular cry of 'drive away the English' lost its force and fervour after the first orgy of riots was over.<sup>2</sup>

The main point in the above paragraph is whether the ignition did kindle the torch of patriotism and a burning desire for freedom. From the Indian side the main source in

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 10, 11, 35, 43-46, 54.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 535.

this connection is the series of addresses, manifestos, placards, and proclamations of the leaders with which the history of the Mutiny is full. Any historian making an extensive use of these source-materials cannot dispute that the ignition did kindle the torch of patriotism and a burning desire for freedom. Could it be contended that the patriots of Oudh were not fighting for their king and country ?<sup>1</sup> In Badaun, Saharanpur, Mathura, Ghazipur, and Allahabad and in many other places like Shahabad and Singhbhum the whole country had risen almost instantaneously. In Rewa the whole of the population was hostile, the Sagar and Narbada territories were in a blaze, and seditious conspiracies were fomented in Belgaum, Hyderabad and Poona, and popular risings took place in far distant of Kolhapur, Savantvadi and Nargund.<sup>2</sup>

The sample survey taken of this vast and sombre scene of rebellion may confirm the view that the ignition did kindle the torch of patriotism and a burning desire for freedom. A sense of righteous indignation against the British whose feelings were so different from those of Indians must have flowed from the tension of the time which gave it the character of a just and righteous revolt 'in reality a great and formidable rebellion' as Disraeli said in the House of Commons. The patriotic spirit may also be judged from the selfless spirit which is seen on a large scale in different regions of India during the epoch. Very few rebels cared for life or seemed to care to purchase it. They often courted death defiantly like the Spartans. Wilberforce said that the Punjab mutineers met death with equanimity. In Lucknow the rebels demanded terms and not money from the British when they negotiated the release of European prisoners. No quarter was either sought nor given. What was very remarkable was that the villagers did not betray their rebel leaders and very rarely, if ever, they earned 'blood money' even though habitually poor.<sup>3</sup> Of Palamau Dalton reported : 'It is a singular fact that in not one instance has the offer of the reward had the desired effect. Many of the

<sup>1</sup> *Infra*, pp. 153-54, 162-66.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 275-76. For the Revolts in Western India, see *Source Material for A History of the Freedom Movement in India*. (Collected from Bombay Government Records, Vol. I, 1818-1885); Bombay, 1957.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 262.

delinquents had been captured, it is true, but by military force or by the police, not by the people . . . not a soul will move in the matter even with the additional temptation of a large reward for doing so'.<sup>1</sup> A. Money, the magistrate of Bihar, going in pursuit of Ali Karim found that the heart of the whole country was with the rebel and consequently could not get any assistance or information from the villagers regarding Karim's whereabouts. In fact, from the rarity of the occasions on which the British forces were able to surprise the rebel forces it seems more than likely that the rebels were helped by the villagers all around them.<sup>2</sup> Gubbins gives many instances of the attempts made by the government to secure the fidelity of the landed chiefs whose friendship or rivalry were matters of consequence, by promise of high reward and grant of perpetual jagirs, as in the case of raja Nawabali of Mahmudabad, raja Guru Baksha Singh of Ramnagar, and raja Man Singh and others but failed to work upon their cupidity.<sup>3</sup> All these instances to which others can easily be added illustrating the attitude of the people coming from different classes or groups, will go to show that the ignition did evoke the highest and noblest sentiments of the human mind. The historian who sees only 'scramble for power and plunder,' may also take note of thousands who took the hangman's noose as a garland. The fact that rebellions against foreign rule, parallel in causation, character, and extent to the revolt in India, have occurred in the past and are occurring even now, should counsel caution in all calculations about the nature of the revolt.

But our historian perseveres in the same attitude. Without the least hesitation, he again refers to the case of Bijnor and Moradabad where Syed Ahmad and the Nawab of Rampur respectively were able to hold their own, as illustrations of the fact that even the popular cry of 'drive away the English'

<sup>1</sup> CR. 191-92.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 262.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 293. cf. Charles Ball in *The History of the Indian Mutiny* : Rewards were offered for delivering up rebel sepoys, sufficiently stimulating in ordinary cases—fifty rupees for each one armed, thirty for each disarmed; yet the people did not deliver them up (ii, 597).

lost its force and fervour after the first orgy of riots was over.<sup>1</sup> No thought was given to the fact that there were hundreds of other stations where these loyal elements were simply thrown off their feet. Even the British officers could not fail to record that the fall of Delhi has not been an event of any consequence in checking the progress of rebellion. It was now more than five months since the revolt broke out. Though at the early stages full scale military exertions could not be directed owing to the paucity of troops, the military position was entirely different by October when troops from Madras, Bombay, the Cape, China, Persia and other places were rushed to the battle area and yet the British remained besieged in isolated pockets despite the capture of Delhi and the relief of Lucknow. Basically, therefore, there was some strength in the character and organisation of the revolt which baffled every demonstration of superior arms to suppress it. All seemd to be closing on the English; yet they could not adopt measures to crush the rebellion then raging over Lucknow, Cawnpore, Fatehpur, Allahabad, Bareilly, Bihar and Narbada territories. The situation as it stood in the early part of November, was that the revolt till then had met with no mighty and moral check.<sup>2</sup>

It is to be doubted if the objectivity of treatment would not demand a more cautious and sensible handling of the pro-British materials on a subject like the Mutiny of 1857. It is well-known that 'many also remained loyal and faithful to the British till the last . . . that a large section of them in N.W.P. showed friendly feelings to the British' or else it would not have been possible for English officers to hold important posts 'amidst the swarms of mutineers'. It also cannot be denied that many English fugitives owed their lives to the kindness and sympathy of the Indians both chiefs and common people. This is enough and the *British Paramountcy* observes :

But the existence of a large element of such people certainly takes away from the universal character of the 'popular rising' which has been claimed by some writers.<sup>3</sup>

This view, namely that a considerable section of the people

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 535.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 42-43.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 535.

even of the affected regions remained sympathetic to the English, has been echoed and re-echoed in many contemporary and later works. It is of course evident, and is not disputed, that in many districts quite a few of the chiefs and landholders, large sections of the common people, and specially the English educated classes, actively supported the government in their trial. That some of the Indians gave shelter to the Europeans or harboured good feelings towards them cannot be urged as conclusive against numerous proofs to the contrary. The peculiar feature of the mutiny, as Kaye says, was that though the English were fighting against the Indians 'they were in reality sustained and supported by them'. But these circumstances are of a nature which do not touch the fringe of the problem and are of value only in that they enable us to understand better how the English came out successful in this contest.<sup>1</sup>

As will be evident nothing has been said about the rising at Cawnpore though the military details of the situations and Nana Sahib's claims to the position of a national hero has been discussed in detail. It is very often forgotten by mutiny scholars that the rising at Cawnpore, apart from the mutiny of the troops, had a significance of its own in the overall picture of the revolt that was raging. There was obviously, therefore, no justification in not discussing the 'Revolt of the People' of Cawnpore based on the details furnished in the *Civil Rebellion*<sup>2</sup> as has been done in other cases.

<sup>1</sup> CR. 286.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 102-106. cf. *Nana Sahib* by P. C. Gupta (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963). The author was satisfied with a stray reference he came across in *Parliamentary Papers* in stating that Cawnpore was generally quiet and undisturbed and that only a few petty Zamindars and plundering parties 'troubled the neighbourhood' (p. 157). Even Forrest's *State Papers* which Dr Gupta has used gives a better and detailed account of the 'Rising at Cawnpore', a subject which is not excluded by the title of his book.

## V

### REVOLT OF THE PEOPLE

#### AWADH AND OTHER PARTS OF INDIA\*

In this section on 'Awadh' only the movement at Lucknow has been discussed in detail, but for an adequate appraisal of the war of liberation that was going on there, a study of the response of the people in the neighbouring districts was perhaps necessary with a view to furnishing the background against which the great war was fought in Lucknow. The revolt of Mir Mohammed Hasan of Gorakhpur and the events attending the revolt have been taken note of, but the more important features which would have thrown light on the civil rebellion that followed have been omitted. The *Further Papers* are particularly useful on the rising at Gorakhpur. They record in a collective form the names of at least seventy disaffected chiefs who joined Mohammed Hasan including queens like Rani Digambari Koer and the rani of Amorah. The government established by the chackladar had the merit of order and progress which was strengthened by the co-operation of a large number of servants of the former government who opted for him.<sup>1</sup>

The omission to describe the movements of other districts has resulted in a failure to offer a clear exposition of the role played by each and every part of Oudh in the culmination of the revolt at Lucknow. The *British Paramountcy* argues :

It is unnecessary to describe in detail the rising in different parts of Awadh which followed the pattern of Rohilkhand.<sup>2</sup>

If the implication of the above statement is that communal distemper had exhibited itself also in Oudh, then the pattern was certainly different. The pattern was also different

\* BPIR. 536-54.

<sup>1</sup> CR. 148-49.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 539.

because the civil rebellion of 1857 could best be studied against the background of the district movements of Oudh, in particular. In the Gorakhpur division, the rising of Bahraich was significantly characteristic of the revolt. The summary settlement operated with disastrous consequences, but in a few cases some of the chiefs whose grievances were redressed by the government or who had not suffered from the summary settlement also joined in the attack against the British. The talukdars of Chahlari in the west, the raja of Gonda, the raja of Churda participated in the various offensive and defensive battles which took place in the district. Nanpara in the north, in the foothills of the Himalayas was all through a centre of disaffection, and Tulsipur, the old fort to the north of Bahraich, on the border of Nepal, was turned into a nest of rebel leaders.<sup>1</sup> In the Fyzabad division, Fyzabad in particular, seems to have been a strong outpost of the rebels. The dispossessed and disaffected landed chiefs who were numerous in the district like the palwars of Birhar, the more important of whom were Uditnarayan Singh and Madhoprasad, the raja of Birhar; the bachgotis of Hasanpur, the bhale sultans, the chauhans of Ghatampur and the rajcoomars like Chandresh Singh and Udresh Singh<sup>2</sup> of Akbarpur, all joined the rebel formation. The fact that nearly ten thousand troops were concentrated in Fyzabad in October seems to indicate that it was a part of the rebel strategy to consolidate the rebellion at Lucknow by establishing an impregnable outpost at Fyzabad for defensive purposes against attack from the east.<sup>3</sup> The very constructive part played by Mehndi Hasan of Sultanpur in contesting the British troops in a series of stiff engagements at the battles of Chanda, a town 36 miles from Jaunpur, for the control of the Lucknow road lying across Sultanpur, indicated that the leaders organised a systematic plan to oppose the passage of British forces marching for the relief of the beleaguered garrison at Lucknow.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of the rebellion at Jaunpur and Azamgarh lies in the fact that the high command of the rebels at Lucknow

<sup>1</sup> CR. 144.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 120.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 122.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 123-4.

made elaborate plans for the conquest of Jaunpur and Azamgarh for extending the area of their influence by pushing back the British outpost further east.<sup>1</sup> The rebellion at Azamgarh in particular deserves notice because of its intensity and universal character anticipating in various ways a war of liberation that eventually developed centering round Lucknow. The report submitted by Home, the British Officer at Azamgarh, gives an idea accurate enough of the rebellion that was raging there. He says that the palwars and the rajcoomars had forgotten their blood feuds to unite against the British. The tahsils like Nizamabad, Sagri, Ghorī, Sikandarpur, Mahmudabad and Mahul fell into the hands of the rebels one after another and all traces of British rule disappeared. Koelsa and Atrauli on the border of Oudh were very restive, the former came under the rule of the palwar chief, Madhoprosad Singh of Birhar, and the latter was taken possession of by Beni Madho, the kurmi raja of Atrauli. The rebel leaders formulated many schemes of combined action against Azamgarh under the direction of Mir Mohammed Hussain, the chackladar of Azamgarh, Jaylal Singh, the nazim of Azamgarh,<sup>2</sup> and raja Beni Madho who probably led the attack on 4 November. The nature of the rising at Azamgarh can be judged from the extent of the support it received from the landed communities and the populace in general. An official source estimated that 2,000 rajcoomars of Bandipore, 7,000 to 8,000 palwars of Lohra, 1,200 sepoy of Gogra, and 12,000 irregular levies of Singramau had thrown themselves into the war against the government. The Azamgarh expedition of Kunwar Singh, in the circumstances became a great triumph of popular cause.<sup>3</sup>

The rising of Lucknow is the most central event of the rebellion in the mutinies. The question is obviously of central importance to any understanding of the revolt of 1857 as it leads into the main stream of the history of the civil rebellion by raising in its most insistent form the question whether or not the chiefs joined the war purely for personal reasons. British

<sup>1</sup> CR. 150-51.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 151, 155.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 153-56.

writers in general were of the view that the talukdars in a body came out to fight the British government only when their existence was threatened by the confiscation proclamation of Canning. Innes indeed asserted that the talukdars of Oudh did not join in the attack of the residency till Havelock's withdrawal in the early part of August, and that even on the 10th of the month, the mass of the talukdars was holding aloof. Later on, the presence of their retainers was noticed in the attack on the residency on 5 September, but as a body they had not, he maintained, taken any active part in the war or shown hostility to the British. Similarly, Rice Holmes finds no positive evidence that the talukdars took the field in person on the side of the mutineers and agrees with general Innes in considering that the participation of the talukdars in the war had been more nominal than real until after the proclamation issued by Canning on 20 March 1858. But even among the British officers, those who were actually concerned with the administration of Oudh seem to favour an earlier date for the participation of the talukdars in the war at Lucknow. Thus Sir George Campbell, judicial and financial commissioner in Oudh in 1858, whom Holmes quotes, held the view that only after November 1857, when Sir Colin abandoned the city, did the talukdars go into full rebellion. A still earlier date is indicated in the indirect implications of a statement of lieutenant Crump who served under Havelock in his Oudh campaign. What he said runs thus : 'Before (August 5) we had only a few wrong-headed zemindars to contend with, on the side of the mutineers now, the whole population is against us, and further the great landed proprietors have up to the present time been perfectly still standing at gaze.'

The contention of the British writers has recently been reaffirmed by the historian of the *British Paramountcy* who alleges that the talukdars were all along motivated by sordid interest and fought only when the 'day of reckoning' came<sup>1</sup> after the confiscatory proclamation was issued in March 1858. Back of this interpretation is the desire to show that the attitude of the talukdars divests even the Oudh movement of its popular character though it was generally regarded as indisputably

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 547.

national in form. It will have been noticed from what has been said above that those who doubt the integrity of the intentions of the landed chiefs are not clear in their minds about the particular time when the talukdars threw their weight on the side of the rebellion. While Crump seems to indicate that the whole population went against the British some time after the first week of August, Innes concedes that the retainers of the talukdars joined in the attack on the residency on 5 September though as a body the landed class had never shown hostility to the British. The third issue is that of Sir George Campbell who maintained that only after 17 November 1857 when Sir Colin abandoned the city, did the talukdars go into full rebellion.<sup>1</sup> The fourth view is represented by Rice Holmes, who supports Innes in considering that the talukdars' participation in the conflict did not become real until after the proclamation issued by Canning.

All the above views were thoroughly examined in the light of authentic evidence in *Civil Rebellion*, but the author of the book felt sufficiently justified with a measure of confidence in stating that the talukdars with a few exceptions actively aided the mutineers during nearly the whole of the struggle. This has been strongly challenged by the historian of the *British Paramountcy*. The paragraph covering the points urged against the acceptance of the view that talukdars were actively hostile is reproduced below :

The views of Innes, supported by Holmes, have been bitterly criticised by Dr. S. B. Chaudhuri. But it seems he has not succeeded in rebutting the arguments advanced by Holmes in support of Innes and demolishing the conclusion of Holmes that there is no positive evidence that before the issue of Canning's Proclamation any Talukdar took the field in person, except Man Singh, the three Talukdars who fought against the British at Chinhat and four others, mentioned by Gubbins.<sup>2</sup>

Historical theories cannot be completely demolished specially in a question like this which was concerned with the emotional and political involvement of a class of people whose stakes in the land naturally constituted the major priorities of their

<sup>1</sup> CR. 310.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 543.

exertions. Yet any dispassionate critic might observe the relative soundness or otherwise of the arguments made, and evidence employed, with which contentions have been upheld. On examining the nature of evidence the *British Paramountcy* comments that what Henry Lawrence said on 12 June that talukdars had been arming themselves was very vague, and only related to the 'forcible seizure of lands belonging to others'.<sup>1</sup> But this statement perhaps does not admit of this interpretation. The full statement as in the *Further Papers* distinctly refers to two conditions of the situation, that the talukdars had been arming themselves and that some had already regained possession of the villages from which they had been dispossessed by Gubbins.<sup>2</sup> It seems clear, therefore, that armed preparations in view of the war were made by all the talukdars without any exception, and that some had even gone to the extent of wreaking their vengeance on the iniquitous system of Gubbins. Sir Henry Lawrence who had no liking for the revenue settlement of Gubbins and thought that the talukdars had been severely dealt with<sup>3</sup> would have no objection in stating that all the talukdars were forcibly seizing lands had it been true. He makes a clear distinction that only some had been doing so. Therefore, the argument of the *British Paramountcy* does not stand to reason. Even before 12 June, on 22 May, nine hundred rebels under Abdullah Khan, Akbar Khan and Ramnarayan threatened Chandausi. This would not appear surprising, when it is known, as even Innes states, that at the battle of Chinhat (30 June) three of the talukdars joined the mutineers.<sup>4</sup> It has also to be remembered that Canning while writing to Outram made it clear that 'injustice at the hands of the British government has not been the cause of the hostility' and cited the case of some chiefs in particular to illustrate his point. He referred to the ungrateful conduct of the raja Nanpara whose forces had been fighting against the British at *Lucknow from the beginning*. Similarly the villages of the raja of Dhowrera turned upon captain Harsey. Ushruf *Bux Khan*, a large talukdar in

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 129.

<sup>3</sup> Kaye and Malleon, iii, 266.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 309.

Gonda was also strongly hostile.<sup>1</sup> In view of all these which has not been noted in the *British Paramountcy* it cannot be maintained that the statement of Henry Lawrence was vague.

The second point urged in the *British Paramountcy* is the statement of Crump which has been severely twisted to show that the great landed proprietors had up to the first week in August been perfectly still, standing at gaze. But this is not perhaps what Crump actually meant. He confused the issue, for he definitely asserts that before August 5, that is to say, before the second action at Bashiratganj, the English army had to contend against a few talukdars, and now, that is in the second action at Bashiratganj on 5 August, the whole population was against them. There is no question of missing the 'real import' of this statement; if there is any meaning behind the statement of Crump, it is this that the talukdars were in action, even before 5 August, though the number might not have been large, a fact which agrees to what has been stated above regarding the report of Henry Lawrence. Later on, they carried the whole country with them when Havelock launched his ill-fated expedition and fought a second action at Bashiratganj on 5 August only to fall back on Mangalwar with his miserable remnants, and to recross the Ganges. The interpretation that Crump's statement (that 'the whole population is against us'), stands to represent only the population along the 'line of march' is completely disproved by the fact that Havelock's forces had to confront large concentrations of village people armed to fight the avenging army.<sup>2</sup> Thus it will not appear unreasonable to doubt the veracity of the statement of Crump that 'the great landed proprietors' were only still and 'standing at gaze', until the first week in August. They were 'standing neither at gaze', nor the 'people were indifferent to the fate of Lucknow'. The report of lieutenant-colonel Tytler to the commander-in-chief, dated the 6th August, the day following the second action at Bashiratganj on 5 August, may be quoted at this point to clear up the issue: 'The men

<sup>1</sup> G. F. Edmonstone, Secretary to the Government of India, with the Governor-General to Sir James Outram, dated Allahabad, March 31 1858. Quoted in Ball, op. cit. ii, p. 280. Also Parliamentary Papers (1857-58), XLIII, pp. 403-5.

<sup>2</sup> Ball, op. cit. ii, p. 21., CR. p. 30.

are cowed by the numbers opposed to them, and the endless fighting. Every village is held against us, the Zemindars having risen to oppose us. *All the men killed yesterday were zemindars.* We know them to be all around us in bodies of 500 or 600, independent of the regular levies. I, therefore, had no hesitation in giving it, as my opinion, that the force had no chance whatever of forcing its way into Lucknow, and that it was sacrificing it without a chance of benefiting the garrison.<sup>1</sup>

This statement of Tytler beyond doubt supports the contention of *Civil Rebellion* that in general the talukdars remained in a condition of belligerency even before the month of August and completely invalidates the charge that they were goaded into action only when the 'day of reckoning' came. Further, the official papers as shown in the *Civil Rebellion*, reveal that the zamindars joined in large numbers to oppose Havelock's march across the district of Unao to Lucknow. The following were some of them : Rao Rambaksh of Dundia-khera, the janwars of Bangarmau who were led by Jasa Singh of Taraf Sarai, the sengars of Kantha, the gauris of Banthar including Debi Baksh, the baiswara rajputs of Parwa Ranabirpur and Mansabali the head of the Rasulabad family and many others.<sup>2</sup> This supplements what Gubbins says that many zamindar leaders distinguished themselves by the most active and unprovoked hostility in the *early phase of the war*. They are Mansabali of Rasulabad, the heirs of Jasa Singh, (the talukdar of Fatehpur-Chaurasi) who was killed in action with general Havelock, raja Digbijaya Singh, talukdar of Muhonah in Lucknow, who was the first to throw off the yoke of British rule, raja Nawabali Khan, talukdar of Mahmudabad who as Hutchinson said was the first of the class to raise the standard of revolt, raja Guru Baksh Singh, the talukdar of Ramnagar in Lucknow who was the first to join the mutineers in the siege of the residency, raja Loni Singh of Mithauli who even fired a royal salute in honour of Birjis Qadr when he was placed on the throne after the battle

<sup>1</sup> Ball, op. cit. ii, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 127.

of Chinhat and a host of many others.<sup>1</sup> Many chiefs like Jaylal Singh, Man Singh, raja Balkishan and Jwalaprasad lent their support to the government of the begam of Oudh by accepting office under her.<sup>2</sup> Others like Rana Beni Madho Baksh of Sankarpur, Raghunath Singh and his son Biswanath, Bishan Singh, Bhagavan Baksh of Nain who had entrenched themselves at Lucknow with their respective levies, received *Khilluts* from Hazratmahal as stated in the *Secret Letters from India*, and were bound down to march to the attack of Alam-bagh. Similar *Khilluts* were received by raja Bakht Singh's son and the Miler raja, while copies of official intelligence adverted to the fact that in the month of October and in the preceding months, besides Man Singh and Beni Madho Baksh, as mentioned, Hanumant Singh, Biswanath Baksh and Sugram Singh were also fighting against the English.<sup>3</sup>

The above facts which are considerable enough clearly indicate that at the beginning of the struggle the talukdars had acted very firmly on the adoption of a national policy which had two aims in view, first, to prevent the conjunction of Havelock's forces with the beleaguered garrison at Lucknow, and secondly, to strengthen the defence potential of begam Hazratmahal. The distinction that is made in the *British Paramountcy* between resistance to Havelock and the attack of the British residency would appear to be devoid of any meaning in the overall context of the situation alike in a geographical and historical sense, besides factually, because some leaders like Mansabali and Jasa Singh who fought against Havelock<sup>4</sup> also took part in the attack of the residency. So it stands that the talukdars with a few exceptions, joined the revolt and placed their resources at the disposal of begam Hazratmahal at the beginning of the struggle. This is disputed in the *British Paramountcy* :

If, even the most minute investigations of Dr. Chaudhuri have failed to elicit more positive evidence than what he has collected in a special appendix and has been discussed above, it is difficult

<sup>1</sup> CR. 131-2.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 131.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Ball, op. cit. p. ii, 24.

to avoid the conclusion that the Talukdars, with a few exceptions, did not join the revolt and rally round the flag of Begam Hazrat Mahal *at the beginning of the struggle*.<sup>1</sup>

The historian has possibly read only the Appendix on the subject. The array of facts furnished above with a view to showing that the talukdars did join the revolt from the *beginning of the war* have been taken from the section on 'Lucknow'<sup>2</sup> in the *Civil Rebellion* which he has possibly ignored.

Objection has been taken to the description of Man Singh as taking a prominent part in the rebellion.<sup>3</sup> Man Singh, it is true, has not been consistent all through in his policies. Even so, he was undoubtedly one of the foremost of Oudh leaders who identified himself with the rebel cause quite early. Gubbins noted that Man Singh was in a state of contumacy even towards the end of May.<sup>4</sup> In the month of June he became the head of the rebel government in Fyzabad.<sup>5</sup> In the month of July when the rebel government of begam Hazratmahal was formed he accepted the position of the chief of the field force of Lucknow.<sup>6</sup> Nothing definite is known about his activities in the month of August, but in the month of September he was fighting against the English.<sup>7</sup> Innes says that Man Singh opposed Havelock's advance through the streets of Lucknow on 25 September. Apparently, therefore, governor-general's telegraphic communication to major-general Sir James Outram on September 12 1857 that 'Man Singh may be assured that, if he continues to give to the Governor-general effective proof of his fidelity, his position in Oude will be at least as good as it was before the British government assumed the administration of the country',<sup>8</sup> does not appear to have had any effect. Official intelligence obtained from Lucknow in the month of October quite empha-

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 544 : Italics of the historian.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 127 ff.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 544.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 129.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 119.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 133.

<sup>7</sup> CR. 310.

<sup>8</sup> Ball, op. cit. ii, p. 36.

tically stated that Man Singh, Hanumant Singh, Beni Madho Baksh and others were fighting against the English at Lucknow,<sup>1</sup> and that many other chiefs were working under the general direction of Man Singh. In January 1858 Man Singh was reported to be at Lucknow with 5,000 men.<sup>2</sup> But in February 1858, he remained entirely neutral with his four thousand men,<sup>3</sup> and it was not before July 1858, that he actively joined the English. Though he played a double game at times, his predilections to remain on the side of rebellion till up to January, as evidence goes, would not militate against a very possible situation that he might have thrown his full weight on the side of the begam during the siege of Lucknow in the month of March. At least, there is no evidence from the British side to prove the contrary.

It is also not borne out by fact that Hanumant Singh, Beni Madho Baksh and Mohammed Hasan, the three powerful chiefs, did not rally round begam Hazratmahal and fight unreservedly in the struggle before Lucknow.<sup>4</sup> Hanumant Singh, the brave rajput of Dharupur, was at first loyally disposed but later on turned a rebel to avenge the death of his son killed in the severe contest at Chanda for the control of the Lucknow road which took place on 30 October 1858. But it seems he had already joined the struggle for the official report for the month of October, as already stated, shows that in the preceding period he along with Man Singh, Beni Madho Baksh, Biswanath Baksh and Sugram Singh were fighting against the English. The report of November states that he was trying to raise the country against the British.<sup>5</sup> Judged by the sequence of this attitude, and by the way in which he along with his compatriots resisted British arms after the fall of Lucknow<sup>6</sup> and carried on the struggle up to the middle of 1858, it would not be unreasonable to hold that he was steadfastly loyal to the Oudh dynasty. Similarly the baiswara rajput chief Rana Beni Madho Baksh of Sankarpur was uncompro-

<sup>1</sup> CR. 310.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 131, fn.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 122.

<sup>4</sup> BPIR. 546.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 130, 152, 310.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 139, 141.

missing in his hostility to the British. He had practically made himself the head of a confederacy consisting of many disaffected chiefs including the raja Madho Singh of Amethi.<sup>1</sup> He was in full rebellion in the month of October and in the preceding period as already noted, received a *Khillut* from the Lucknow Court by which he entered into an obligation to attack Alam-bagh.<sup>2</sup> In November he was mobilising a huge rebel force along with others to attack Azamgarh and Jaunpur.<sup>3</sup> The rebel force at Lucknow in January and February which was estimated at 120,000 men by Malleon could not have swelled to such an extent had not Beni Madho who kept in the field an army of fifteen thousand men unreservedly placed his resources at the disposal of the begam.<sup>4</sup> The attitude of this relentless fighter is confirmed by his activities in the period following the fall of Lucknow when he became the soul of opposition to the British avenging army. Mohammed Hasan, the nazim of Gorakhpur, formerly the nazim of Gonda, was also undeviating in his loyalty to the King of Oudh. After consolidating his position at Gorakhpur he assumed a position of strength in the month of November and threatened to invade Azamgarh district in the following month during which period he had to confront Rowcroft.<sup>5</sup> *Secret letters* indicate that in the month of December he sent two lakhs of treasure for replenishing the strength of the rebel government at Lucknow.<sup>6</sup> It also appears from the same *Secret letters* that in February 1858, a month before the final British offensive had started in Lucknow, he had appeared in person and entrenched himself at Fyzabad with 5,000 men and 4 guns.<sup>7</sup>

The facts of the case being what they are, there does not seem to exist any reasonable basis for the contention that the big talukdars of Oudh like Beni Madho, Mohammed Hasan, and Hanumant Singh held aloof during the struggle at Luck-

<sup>1</sup> CR. 118.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 130.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 45.

<sup>4</sup> CR 118, 131, fn.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 51, 147-8.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 136, fn. 6.

<sup>7</sup> CR. 121-22, 306.

now. Referring to these three great leaders the *British Paramountcy* observes :

But it is interesting to note that none of these three, though powerful and valorous, did rally round the Begam Hazrat Mahal, and unreservedly placed his resources at her disposal. None of them played any important part in the life-and-death struggle before Lakhnau which was to determine the fate of the revolt.<sup>1</sup>

No fact or document has been produced to prove that these three leaders did not join in the struggle at Lucknow. On the contrary, the foregoing survey based on hitherto unknown materials clearly shows that in the month of October and in the preceding period Hanumant Singh, Man Singh and Beni Madho Baksh were fighting against the English at Lucknow.<sup>2</sup> So far as Beni Madho was concerned, it was unlikely that the Indian forces which assembled at Lucknow for the consummation of the grand struggle could have swelled to such an extent unless his fifteen thousand men were placed unreservedly at the disposal of the rebel command. Moreover, it does not appear reasonable to suggest that Rana Beni Madho of Sankarpur who was noted for his unflinching loyalty to the begam, as Martin said,<sup>3</sup> and who also considered himself above all, a subject of the nawab of Oudh<sup>4</sup> should have held aloof from the final struggle at Lucknow. Mohammed Hasan, it has been noticed, even remitted lakhs of rupees for the maintenance of the rebel government and so the question of placing his resources at the disposal of the begam need not be doubted. Yet the *British Paramountcy* remarks :

He did not join the mutineers of Awadh at the beginning. Nor does it appear that he flocked to the standard of Begam Hazrat Mahal and placed his resources at her service.<sup>5</sup>

This shows that our historian consulted only Gubbins who does not give the names of the rebel leaders who distinguished themselves by the most active and unprovoked hostility. But

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 546.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 130.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 119 fn.

<sup>4</sup> BPIR. 623.

<sup>5</sup> BPIR. 557.

the comment that 'Dr. Chaudhuri also does not refer to their activities in connection with the siege of Lucknow'<sup>1</sup> is surprising. Attention was drawn to the Commonwealth Relations Office, *Secret Letters*; the Memorandum furnished by W. Forbes in the chain of correspondence originating from general Macgregor which constitutes the only official document from British side so far available regarding the battle formation of the Indian side as it stood towards the end of February 1858, a few days before operations started at Lucknow. The omission to take notice of it cannot be accounted for. There it is distinctly mentioned that Mohammed Hasan of Gorakhpur with his huge host of 5,000 men stood at the battle array ready for the action.<sup>2</sup>

The *British Paramountcy* then refers to the speech of the begam delivered on 22 December as reproduced in the *Civil Rebellion* from the *Secret Letters*.<sup>3</sup> The speech, no doubt, tends to reflect a spirit of frustration and disappointment which overtook the rebel government for the time being but the construction that is made of the speech in showing that 'it was only in the last phase, when forced with the imminent danger of gallows', that the Oudh leaders fought against the English, goes, counter to what has been pointed out from British sources about the number of zamindars killed in action at Bashiratganja in August. It has also to be remembered that numbers of them participated in the severe struggle during the time of the first relief of Lucknow in September,<sup>4</sup> which was only matched by the equally dreadful fighting of the most determined character on 17 November, during the time of the second relief of Lucknow when the British forces had to fight against guns in position and houses loopholed and garrisoned.<sup>5</sup> Where was 'the imminent danger of gallows' in the period between August and November? The situation, as it stood in November was this. From Lucknow, with one line stretching upto Gorakhpur in the east, and another to Cawnpore on the south, it looked like a cordon

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 558.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 305-7. Also CR. 308 (Appendix B-List of Rebels).

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 546-7; CR. 134-35.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 35.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 46-7.

thrown off round the English.<sup>1</sup> The tone of the speech of the begam can only be studied in the background of the contemporary situation. The relief of Lucknow by Sir Colin proved to be a pyrrhic victory. He was convinced that the garrison would be again besieged and so he decided to fall back, and actually marched for Cawnpore on 27 November. On 28 November, Windham was beaten to prostration at Cawnpore. The situation was the gravest of its kind the British had so far confronted in the war of 1857, and necessarily these developments raised high hopes in the minds of the Indian leaders who were soon to be disillusioned by the splendid victory of the British at Generalganj on 6 December. The speech as contained in the *Secret Letters* coming in the sequel to this setback increased the general consternation which was possibly reflected in the 'laconic reply of the chiefs'.<sup>2</sup>

All these developments, as narrated above, put out of court any consideration postulating a desire on the part of the chiefs and zamindars for the re-establishment of British rule which Outram is alleged to have affirmed on 17 September. The *British Paramountcy* which makes much of this statement without referring to its source comments :

Dr. Chaudhuri does not quote this, . . . relevant statement of Outram on September 17, 1857, that his information shows that 'there is a large and influential class in Oudh . . . among the more powerful, and most of the middle classes of chiefs and zemindars, who really desire the re-establishment of our rule; while others, well disposed towards us, have only been induced to turn against us because they believe that our Raj is gone'.<sup>3</sup>

This statement of Outram does not quite agree either to the views and policies, with which he is identified or to the general situation as described above and known from other sources. In a telegraphic message dated the 1st September 1857, brigadier Inglis piteously appealed to general Havelock to come to his help. The message runs : 'I must be frank, and tell you that my force is daily diminishing from the enemy's musketry fire, and our defences grow weaker daily . . . our loss

<sup>1</sup> CR. 43.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 47, 135; BPIR., 547.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 544.

since the commencement of hostilities here, has been, in Europeans alone, upwards of 300'.<sup>1</sup> The official report of 6 September indicated that the Oudh insurgents were pressing down the country on all sides.<sup>2</sup> During the time of the first relief of Lucknow, Sir James Outram's plan of advancing to the besieged residency from Benares by way of Jaunpur became inoperative inasmuch as it was obvious that the advance of 189 miles from Benares to Lucknow must have to be made through a country which was entirely in the hands of the enemy.<sup>3</sup> Even on 17 September 1857, the date when the statement is said to have been made, major-general Outram telegraphed to the governor-general in council from Cawnpore as follows : 'If I find that a brigade of three regiments can surely hold Lucknow, placed in an invulnerable position commanding the city and its resources, shall Lucknow be retained or abandoned ? A large body of troops will be expended in watching Oude than in holding Lucknow in security, the communication from Benares to Allahabad, and along the line of Ganges to Furruckabad.'<sup>4</sup> All these sources obviously point to a situation which contradict the implications of the statement ascribed to Outram. A man of his position could not possibly have issued two dissimilar statements on the same situation on the same day. If he was sure that 'most of the middle classes of chiefs and zemindars' really desired the re-establishment of British rule on 17 September, why on the same day was he thinking of abandoning Lucknow even if it could be held under military occupation ? Here is a contradiction which requires to be checked up from original papers. Charles Ball's quotations from original papers have not been found to be inaccurate and indeed he is one of the most reliable writers who wrote from original sources at a time when they were absolutely free from interpolations. The statement of 17 September ascribed to Outram as given in the *British Paramountcy* apparently from Holmes is not free from difficulties in view of which it was not quoted in the *Civil*

<sup>1</sup> Ball, op. cit. ii, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Ball, op. cit. ii, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Ball, op. cit. ii, p. 38.

*Rebellion* as alleged. In any case, it should not appear difficult to a historian why 'much was made of Outram's statement<sup>1</sup> of March 8 and 30', 1858, to the effect that there 'are not a dozen land-holders who have not themselves borne arms'; and that 'there are few talukdars who have not taken an active part in the rebellion'. The reason is simple; the situation that developed in March 1858 could not be comprehended by the events of August-September. What began as a victory of the mutineers at the battle of Chinhat on 30 June 1857 was increasingly and progressively turned into a vast upsurge of people of all classes by the first week of March. The growth of the movement and the concentration of the talukdars' forces in Fyzabad and Lucknow and neighbouring areas month by month as worked out in the *Civil Rebellion*<sup>2</sup> indicate the gradual increase in the dimension of the movement as is natural in such cases. In the circumstances, it should not appear unaccountable why many of the talukdars should not have joined the war 'at a later date' before the confiscation proclamation of Lord Canning was actually issued on 14 March 1858. The contention that Outram did not make it clear at what stages the talukdars fought against the English<sup>3</sup> would not appear to be of any consequence when it is appreciated that the whole movement was a continuous process growing in volume since June 1857 onwards. The statement of Sir Robert Montgomery, the successor of Outram, who naturally had the whole of the evidence before him to the effect that between June and November the whole country (Oudh) was in arms against the British government<sup>4</sup>, completely vindicates Outram's assertion that 'there are few talukdars who have not taken an active part in the rebellion'. The strongest official confirmation of this fact is available from a letter of Canning which has come to light in Michael Maclagan's remarkably original study on *Clemency Canning*. It appears that a month before Lucknow had actually fallen the governor-general wrote to the commander-in-chief in continuation of their discussion held on

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 544.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 129-31, 305-308.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 544.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 311.

Monday, the 8th February 1858, on the subject of proclamation to be issued. He stressed :

I see no difficulty in dealing with the Talookdars and Landholders. So far as they were concerned I would declare that in as much as the *Population of the Province, high and low*, has with rare exceptions taken part against the Government, or failed to take part with it, the Government resumes to itself the proprietary right over the land of the whole Province, and will re-distribute the lands without reference to the previous settlement. I would specify by name *Some six or eight Talookdars or Chiefs*, who are known to have been faithful, and declare that they are at once re-established in their possessions) such as they held before the annexation.<sup>1</sup>

The theory about the 'Behaviour of the talukdars of Oudh' during the mutiny as adumbrated in the *Civil Rebellion* can now be confirmed. The governor-general categorically states that only with the exception of some six or eight, the whole class of talukdars or chiefs, and indeed the population of the province as a whole, were fighting against the English long before the confiscatory proclamation of Canning was issued. This number, six or eight, agrees wonderfully well to what Outram stated one month after, on March 8, 1858, that there were not a dozen land-holders in the province who have not themselves borne arms. That being so, the contention that 'it was only in the last phase, when faced with the imminent danger of gallows' that the talukdars fought against the English<sup>2</sup> does not appear to be quite a sober fact of history. It is very difficult to understand how by any canon of historical criticism the firm belief of two chief commissioners in close succession, to which there was complete agreement (not to speak of Canning's letter of 8 February now appended), could be ignored to urge that Dr Chaudhuri's contention (that the talukdars with a few exceptions actively aided the mutineers during nearly the whole of this struggle) cannot be accepted.<sup>3</sup> A groundless presupposition alone can account for this attitude that he (Dr Chaudhuri) has not succeeded in rebutting the arguments advanced by Holmes in support of Innes. For the

<sup>1</sup> M. Maclagan, *Clemency Canning*, 179-80; Italics of the author.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 547.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 544.

conclusion of Holmes that there is no positive evidence that any talukdar took the field in person before the issue of Canning's Proclamation<sup>1</sup> can be contrasted with what Canning, the governor-general, said a month before the proclamation was issued, that the whole class of land-holders with the solitary exception of only eight took the field against the British. The theory of Innes, Holmes and Dr Majumdar on this point can now be rejected on unimpeachable ground. The Oxford historian Maclagan who has studied the problem in the light of all possible sources also concurs with the author of the *Civil Rebellion* in reaching the same conclusion.<sup>2</sup>

Our historian continues :

Throughout his work Dr. S. B. Chaudhuri has waxed eloquent over the great war of liberation in Awadh... It is significant, however, that the most important of these activities referred to by him were, ejecting the auction-purchasers, resuming the lost lands, and establishing the personal rule within a prescribed limit... So the detailed account of the activities of the numerous chiefs in Awadh and neighbouring regions which fills the pages of Dr. Chaudhuri's book does not really give an impression of a great war of liberation from the British yoke.<sup>3</sup>

The details of the activities of the landlords apart, it has also been shown that the army concentration then at Lucknow was a little short of a lakh of soldiers. There were about one hundred and fifty military chiefs who supervised the work of defence. Provisions were stored and magazine and treasure were kept in Kaisarbag; every street and every lane was barricaded and all the houses loopholed. The preparations made on an extensive front, and on a wide scale, reflect the totality of effort on the part of the chiefs and their followers which a few thousand mutinous soldiers left to themselves could have scarcely completed. India stood at gaze, at the consummation of the grand struggle. A war in which most of the landed nobility agreed to contribute towards the expense and conduct it by the addition of their own levies and their personal service, a war in which each part of the country,

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 543

<sup>2</sup> Maclagan, *op. cit.* p. 178-9.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 547.

every village and every house was transformed into a miniature fortress<sup>1</sup>, and a war which turned out to be a carnage in which 3,000 Indians perished<sup>2</sup> can hardly be called as anything less than a war of liberation and if the book *Civil Rebellion* does not really give that impression, then undoubtedly enough, the ideas of the *British Paramountcy* will remain paramount in the field of mutiny studies.

But it is doubtful if the historian will not alienate his readers by rubbing the point of sordid motives in each and every case. He reverts to his thesis this time with a kind of vehemence that cannot be ignored.

It is true that many influential landlords joined the revolt and when, after reaping a rich harvest, they were brought to bay by the returning—and avenging—English force, gave a good account of themselves. The fight they fought, *be it remembered, was for retaining the wealth and privileges which they had unlawfully secured*, and not for gaining freedom for the whole or part of India. When the day of reckoning came many of them fought till the last ditch . . .<sup>3</sup>

It will be needless to discuss again the theory that the talukdars joined the revolt only when they were brought to bay by the returning and avenging British army. The foregoing pages will have shown that such an assumption is not based on any authentic statements. The battle of Chinhat in June, the resistance of the talukdars to Havelock's march in July, the death of large numbers of them in the action at Bashiratganj in August, the fight put forth by Man Singh and others during the time of the first relief at Lucknow in September, the rebellious activities of the talukdars in the month of October, the severe fighting that took place during the time of the second relief at Lucknow in November when about three thousand Indians fell at the battle of Sikandarbagh alone, may not tend to show that the landlords fought only when the 'day of reckoning came' under the threat of the imminent danger of gallows. Could any historian show that, there was any 'imminent danger of gallows' in Oudh for the rebels from 30 June 1857, when the

<sup>1</sup> CR. 137-38. *Supra*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Ball, *op. cit.* ii, 282.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 547 : (*Italics of the author.*)

British forces were disastrously defeated at the battle of Chinhat on 23 February 1858, when the road to Lucknow was forced open at the battle of Sultanpur by the British army.<sup>1</sup>

The failure to realise in their proper perspective the deep-seated social implications of the British land settlement policies alone can account for the charge against the landlords that they forcibly seized the lands, heaped a rich harvest and were spurred into action by motives of self interest and personal gain. It has been seen that this charge has been repeated frequently enough.<sup>2</sup> No one has doubted that the severity of land-revenue policy under Holt Mackenzie, or under Pringle in Bombay, or the land settlement of Bird and Thomsen in the North-Western Provinces described as 'fearful experiment' were all calculated to 'flatten the surface of the Society.'<sup>3</sup> That the harshness of the land revenue settlements of the N. W. Provinces and Oudh and the heavy-handed resumption of feudal fiefs in the Maratha country was mainly responsible for the social ferment of the mutiny period has been conclusively proved by the facts of civil rebellion of the Indian mutinies.<sup>4</sup> If despite the testimony of all these incontrovertible data, the historian warns: '*Be it remembered* that the fight they fought was for retaining the wealth and privileges which they had unlawfully secured,' then it follows that, according to the historian the land revenue settlements of the British territories were just, fair and equitable. This is an assumption which no doubt is a novel one but unfortunately lacks evidence for its support.

The fact was that if the Oudh talukdars had forcibly secured possession of their old estates, it was to implement the forces of law as they were quite illegally dispossessed of their villages by the summary settlement. That settlement was made with the occupants of the soil, the village proprietors by depriving the talukdars, or owners of groups of villages of their estates in accordance with the system already introduced in the N. W. Provinces. The objectionable feature of Jackson's administration was that the right to landed property was

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 88-89, 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 497, 498, 504, 532-33, 534-35, 547, 613, 621, 624.

<sup>3</sup> Philips, *Historians* etc. 226.

<sup>4</sup> CR. Intro., pp. xvii-xviii, 8-20.

wantonly violated. Leading men of society possessing estates through several changes of government and for successive generations were made to surrender their estates to village occupants whose rights to land would not stand the test of a judicial investigation, and yet the *ipse dixit* of such occupants of the soil was taken to be judicial evidence in their favour against the proprietors in hereditary possession for the settlement of revenue : the injunction of the government was that the administration should deal with no one but village occupants, and that it was not bound to respect the rights of possession. The policy of the government was clearly directed to win popularity by elevating the agricultural masses at the cost of the upper orders, but the wrongful mutations made in the most arbitrary manner to implement this policy furnished the ground for exciting an insurrectionary feeling and brought into existence a revolution in the laws of property in Oudh.<sup>1</sup> The landlords who suffered in the summary settlement losing many villages, were therefore naturally inclined to oust the new set of village proprietors and this could not be regarded by any consideration as 'unlawful seizure of lands' unless it was demanded that the victimised landlords should have acquiesced in and submitted to this unjust procedure rather than take up arms against the alien government.

Within a month of his installation in Lucknow in March 1857, Sir Henry Lawrence wrote to Lord Canning that in the Fyzabad division of Oudh the talukdars had lost half their villages—that some had lost all. The foremost among these great talukdars was Man Singh of Shahganj who lost a large portion of his broad lands. The new revenue system had also fallen crushingly upon Hanumant Singh, the talukdar of Dharupur. 'At one blow', he said to Captain Barrow, in all friendliness despite his sense of loss, 'You took from me lands which from time immemorial had been in my family'. Rana Beni Madho Baksh of Sankarpur lost one hundred and nineteen out of the two hundred and twenty-three villages of his estate and similarly the palwar chief Prithvipal Singh lost many of his holdings.<sup>2</sup> In the same manner, Rustam Shah of

<sup>1</sup> CR. 18.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 16-17.

Sultanpur suffered greatly in the Oudh settlement. It appears that an order for a fresh enquiry into the title of the villages he had lost was intended in January 1857, but the mutiny found him supporting his family by the sale of the jewels of his ancestors.<sup>1</sup> In the Bahraich district in the Gorakhpur division the summary settlement seem to have crushed the landholders as a class. Nevill writing in the gazetteer of the district commented : 'it is a matter of surprise that so many of the large landholders should have turned against us in the mutiny'. The raja of Tulsipur in particular, was declared a defaulter for the non-payment of government dues, and the demand for the payment of the arrears of revenue ended in the confiscation of his estate comprising one thousand villages.<sup>2</sup> The proprietary right of the talukdars in their estates going back to centuries was evidently not recognised in many cases particularly in the case of raja of Mainpuri in the N. W. Provinces. Of the nearly two-hundred villages which comprised his estate it was held that he was the proprietor of only fifty-one villages, and so the village proprietor who alone were recognised as the legitimate inheritors of the soil were left to engage with the government. Very similar was the case of Walidad Khan of Malaghar and many dispossessed land-owners of Rohilkhand.<sup>3</sup>

But the results of the village system that was introduced were equally disastrous. The liquidation of the talukdars and the exaltation of the village proprietors produced a kind of social imbalance and caused grave economic dislocation. It also indicated in some way that the British administration could not formulate for any practical purpose, a plan of land economy in which large proprietors and village proprietors could co-exist on the soil. The new set of field-owners had also many grievances to complain of in respect of taxes, impositions and imports and the British policy of alienating the agricultural classes from their landlords had very little success. The cultivators showed an increasing tendency to come under the protection of their chiefs to settle accounts with the govern-

<sup>1</sup> CR. 125 fn.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 16, 144.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 10-16.

ment. The rebellion showed that the village proprietors preferred subordination to the talukdars to the independence they gained by the summary settlement.<sup>1</sup> The revolt of the talukdars during the mutinies was therefore *a challenge to the British system of land revenue*, production and property relations. It repudiated the British policy of transferring the ownership of land to a new set of proprietors, the auction-purchasers and the village headmen. Evidence in support of this contention has been profusely noticed. Kaye quotes Henry Tucker to show that in Benares a few days sufficed to produce a revolution of property—so sudden a rising of the ousted land-holders as could never have been thought of.

The Oudh talukdars in particular brought about a revolution of landed property. By the end of September the whole country between Gopiganj and Allahabad was in the hands of the Oudh talukdars who were acquiring quite systematically village after village and collecting rents. In February 1858, G. Couper, secretary to the chief commissioner of Oudh, reported that the powerful landholders were determined to resort to their posts and carry on a guerilla warfare until they get back their former estates. This is an evidence of great value in that it shows that the talukdars were in full rebellion even before the confiscation proclamation and that they clearly anticipated the renewal of the struggle in a more intensive form than any retributory measures might provoke.

It will thus appear that if the talukdars had been wrongfully deprived of their villages, the allegation that they had 'unlawfully secured' their wealth and villages cannot stand. Motives of self-interest and personal gain so freely spoken of regarding their activities also does not bear scrutiny; individual attempt to repudiate the British system of property relation as indicated was only an expression of the firm determination of the landed class as a whole to remove all sources of social and economic affliction. The other statement that the talukdars fought not for gaining freedom for the whole or part of India was not found to be wholly true even by contemporaries. It is strange that the historian of the *British Paramountcy* should have omitted to mention that famous statement of Lord

<sup>1</sup> CR. 19.

Canning in which he posed the problem that none of the feudatories showed more inveterate signs of hostility to the British than the rajas of Churda, Bhinga, Gonda and Nanpara, yet none were more liberally treated than they. In his answer to Sir James Outram he wrote :

That the hostility of the talookdars of Oude who have been most active against the British government has been provoked, or is excused, by the injustice with which they have been treated, would seem to be your opinion. But I am to observe, that there are some facts which deserve to be weighed before pronouncing that this is the case. No chiefs have been more open in their rebellion than the rajahs of Churda, Bhinga, and Gonda. The governor-general believes that the first of these did not lose a single village by the summary settlement, and certainly his assessment was materially reduced. The second was dealt with in a like liberal manner. The rajah of Gonda lost about thirty villages out of 400; but his assessment was lowered by some 10,000 rupees. . . . It is clear that injustice at the hands of the British government has not been the cause of the hostility . . . <sup>1</sup>

It will be evident from above that to Lord Canning at least, the issue was not very clear whether the talukdars were moved only by their narrow self-interest on which our historian had not the slightest doubt. But the governor-general debated the problem, and as he found it, the 'issue stood transcendentally as one of national sentiment leading to national revolt'.<sup>2</sup>

Even though the sepoy disappeared, the landed chiefs remained in the field from the beginning to the end. Ludlow a contemporary observer was able to report that after Havelock's entry into Lucknow the sepoy disappeared in different directions, but simultaneously the talukdars rose as one man against the British.<sup>3</sup> The crowd of landed chiefs who joined the revolt in the whole extent of the country extending from Behar to Rajputana and from Bijnoor to Nurgood gave the movement a unity of purpose transcending the innumerable diversities of India's life. The combination of the landed chiefs all over the country who were bound by a community of interests, added with the grouping of their followers at cross sections

<sup>1</sup> Ball, op. cit. pp. 279-80.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 292; Joshi, *Rebellion—1857*, 168.

<sup>3</sup> CR. Intro., p. xix.

united a big portion of India against foreign domination as never before. This tended to create possibilities for the foundation of a national front because despite the undoubted feudal framework of these movements, the war of the landlords during the mutinies was primarily and unquestionably anti-British and anti-Colonial. The distinction between baronial and popular risings against the ruling power, the one for *status quo ante*, and the other for a future, had no special import in the Indian situation as the factor of foreign rule impinged on all alike and this blurred the edges of purely feudal motives. Moreover as nearly all classes and disaffected communities thronged round these landed chiefs, the natural leaders of the country, the talukdari movement naturally gained a representative character. In this way, old feudal instincts and anti-alien patriotism became mixed up in a curious process; while combating the anti-feudal tendencies of the British settlement operations, the talukdars became the unconscious tool of a vague feeling of patriotism. This yearning for freedom eventually stood out as the outward emblem of a national outburst against foreign rule.

#### OTHER PARTS OF INDIA

In the treatment on the revolt in Eastern India nothing new has been added in the 'detailed study'; on the contrary the very salient features of civil rebellion raging in different parts of Chotanagpur and Bihar have been completely ignored. The *British Paramountcy* writes that the mutiny of the sepoy did not lead to the revolt of the civil people on a large scale, except in a small part of Bihar, particularly the Shahabad district and the Santal parganas.<sup>1</sup>

This is misleading in the extreme. If we find the revolt extend from Ghazipur to Shahabad spreading to Palamau, and as far south as Sambalpur, and to Singhbhum and Serai-kella in the southeast, touching Mayurbhanj, and engulfing in the east, Patna, Gaya and Santal Parganas it would be more correct to say that the entire country encompassed by the Ganges on the east and north, from Mirzapur at one end,

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 548.

and Birbhum and Mayurbhanj on the confines of Bengal on the other was consumed by the fires of rebellion. While the mutiny and Kunwar Singh's participation in the revolt have been critically described, the popular upsurge that followed in the wake of Kunwar's coming to power has been side-tracked. *Civil Rebellion* has been quoted to refer to the wholesale destruction of European property effected by the rebels but the *British Paramountcy* comments :

The basic feature of the rebellion in Shahabad, says Dr. Chaudhuri, 'is reflected in the wholesale destruction of European property' . . . This shows that the 'nature of the upsurge' in Shahabad did not materially differ from that in Rohilkhand.<sup>1</sup>

If the analogy is maintained on the impression that there was an overtone of communalism in the Shahabad rebellion, the presumption is entirely wrong, and if again, the similarity is claimed on the ground of dispoliation of European factories in the two countries, the comparison cannot stand, in so far as the extent of such work of destruction is concerned. Moreover the factor of Kunwar Singh's leadership of the Bihar movement elevated the movement to a level to which there were few parallels in the history of the Revolt of 1857. It has been shown that the rebellion became universal. Seven to ten thousand men rose up in arms in Shahabad. The warlike population of the rajput villages headed by their brave chieftains took up the cause of Kunwar. The police fled in every direction and the government remained subverted. It has already been pointed out that the rebels wanted to exact full retaliation for all the acquisitive tendencies of the European factory owners. Nothing better would illustrate the spirit of the rebellion than this fury to wipe away all traces of colonial exploitation.<sup>2</sup> The number of indigo factories of Shahabad and of the neighbouring areas destroyed by the rebels, in all about ten, affords a clear picture of the extent of the conflagration.<sup>3</sup> The impact of the ill-fated expedition of Dunbar for the relief of Arrah shattered all feelings of complacency and brought the English to realise the intensity of the

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 552.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 43. *Infra*, p. 124.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 173-74.

revolt,<sup>1</sup> which was further deepened by the disaster attending Captain Le Grand's expedition to Jagdispur on 3 April 1858. But any account of the revolt of the people should be deemed to be incomplete without a reference to the most harassing kind of warfare that ensued after the death of Kunwar. If ever a dead man continued a struggle, it was Kunwar Singh of Bihar. The rebels were entrenching themselves in different parts of the Jagdispur jungle and established a chain of outposts at Arrah, Jagdispur, Latawarpur, Hetampur, Bihia, Piru and Chitaura and by the end of April, the rebel force was stated to have reached nearly nine thousand of which thousands and thousands were armed villagers.<sup>2</sup> But all these find no place in the *British Paramountcy*.

In the account of Gaya what was stated in the *Civil Rebellion* could have been reproduced in full instead of abbreviating the account by pruning it of its more significant shades.<sup>3</sup> The report of Bayley, the assistant-magistrate of Bihar, shows that an organised attack was made on the British power, by all the villagers in the union, a combination of some two hundred men. The leaders proclaimed the fall of the English raj and prevailed upon the shop-keepers and *baniyas* to sign bond not to pay dues (*Sarkhatt*) to their erstwhile masters.<sup>4</sup> In Singhbhum, Seraikella and Kharswan, the rebellion of the Kols raged furiously of which only a brief account has been furnished but the revolt of Palamau as presented in a short paragraph of twenty-one lines<sup>5</sup> does not convey any impression about the extent and depth of the rebellion, so patently focussed in the report of Davis, the British Officer. He confessed that the whole of the inhabitants were on the side of the rebels. Indeed, the long list of persons convicted of rebellion as found in the old correspondence volumes in Ranchi showed that the infection had spread far and wide among all classes of people, villagers and village headmen called Manjis—military pensioners and among cross sections of people. The destruction of coffee plantations, European factories and indigo

<sup>1</sup> CR. 177.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 241-57.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 552.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 183.

<sup>5</sup> BPIR. 553.

houses was carried out on a vast scale. It was abundantly clear that the aim of the rebels was to terminate all sources of European exploitation and wipe out all traces of British rule.<sup>1</sup> Similarly the revolt at Sambalpur has not been properly discussed. Its popular character could be judged from the list of notable leaders furnished in the official despatches as also from the extension of the act X of 1858 to Sambalpur which showed that the authorities were adopting measures other than those necessary for the suppression of a mutiny. As reported, the principal zamindars collected their paiks and organised strong defences round their strongholds and threw up a cordon of outposts at a distance of not more than three to four miles. Punitive expeditions led by British officers were often ambushed in dense jungles. By the middle of December, the *dak* between Calcutta and Bombay had been stopped and all traffic communications suspended and the whole country remained in a state of deep revolt from the close of 1857 to the beginning of 1862.<sup>2</sup>

The *British Paramountcy* takes no notice of these features of the movement; yet it is observed that there was nothing new in the revolt of these regions :

The rebellion in these hilly regions was no doubt of a 'popular character' but there was nothing new in it. They had similarly rebelled many times before, and in several cases, as in Sambalpur, the outbreaks in 1857 were mere legacies of the past. To describe it as 'a people's war' fought with the passions roused up by deeply stirred political sentiment' can only be regarded as hyperbole.<sup>3</sup>

If the outbreaks were mere legacies of the past, it only proves the settled nature of the disaffection of the people against the British rule which, as shown in the *Civil Rebellion*, clearly anticipated the sweeping participation of the masses in the revolt of 1857. So, the continuation of the earlier movements in the epoch of 1857-59 only proves the basic strength and justifications of the anti-British uprisings of the Mutiny period. That the civil disturbances of the pre-mutiny period formed the background to, and culminated in the rebellion of 1857, has

<sup>1</sup> CR. 184-92.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 196-201.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 554.

been accepted as such in the *British Paramountcy*. The *Civil rebellion* made the point clear that in few cases the civil commotions of the pre-mutiny period culminated in the uprising of 1857, and as an illustration of this point referred to the cases of Surendra Sai, Chakra Bisayi, Delan Sha and others.<sup>1</sup> There may not be anything new in their struggles but the renewal of the old struggle with new strength, and in a wider context, reaffirms the loyalty and devotion of the masses to their ideals and objectives.

On the point of political sentiment of the masses which is considered as hyperbole one wonders if the contemporary British officers could have shared the same view. The troops were despatched from different quarters, the Madras Troops from Cuttack, a column from Nagpur, and the Shekhawati battalion marching from Ranigunj to quell the rebellion at Sambalpur. The January report from Chaibasa showed no change in the situation at Kolhan, the ex-*raja* of Porahat having thrown the whole of Singhbhum into a welter of disorder and chaos. The rebels made successful attacks at Chakradharpur and surprised and routed Captain Hales' troops at Mogra.<sup>2</sup> By the end of the year 1858 the Palamau region passed entirely under the possession of the rebels. They dominated it without hindrance, and as Davis reported, the area of rebel occupation was extending still further.<sup>3</sup> This debacle of the British political power, as reported in the official sources, could not have taken such a grave turn had not the people fought with passion and determination to terminate the British rule. Arjun Singh's bold stand to sweep away the *feringhi Kafirs* and his assumption of the ruling powers of the Kol Country of Singhbhum and Seraikella by issuing a *Khutba*,<sup>4</sup> the determination of the bhogtas fighting under Nilambar and Pitambar to liquidate the British capitalists<sup>5</sup> in Palamau, and the upsurge at Sambalpur under the leadership of Surendra Sai undoubtedly stirred up anti-British sentiment and gave edges of political intensity to the rebellion, the

<sup>1</sup> CR. 297.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 56.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 187-8.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 194-5.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 191.

springs of which, as Dalton, the commissioner of Chotanagpur found, 'lay at the bottom of the society'.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, to describe these movements, as the *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* has done, as a rising confined to a small and discontented section of primitive tribes<sup>2</sup> amounts to a denial of the validity of the basic sources of the mutiny period. In regarding as mere 'hyperbole' the political and popular frame-work of these movements, the *British Paramountcy* has only equated truth with hyperbole.

The account given of the Punjab disturbances in about half a page follows the same line. The popular overtones of the relatively strong movements which developed in Karnal, Jullundar, Hissar, Sialkot and other places have not been properly treated.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, 409.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 534.

## VI

### THE NATURE OF THE OUTBREAK OF 1857\*

The views expressed in this chapter are in the nature of value judgements most of which have already been noticed. The whole chapter represents the climax of the trend of thought of our historian whose superior technique of handling the same type of materials to prove or disprove a thesis would appear baffling to any one not his peer. But even a great work cannot possibly redeem the way in which truth and evidence have been overshadowed by preconceived notions, the declared intention of pursuing objective principles notwithstanding.

After adverting to the divergent opinions expressed regarding the nature of the great outbreak of 1857, the *British Paramountcy* states that those views may broadly be divided into two classes—those which regard the outbreak as really a rebellion of the people rather than merely a mutiny of the soldiers, and those that hold that it was primarily and essentially a mutiny of sepoys. In upholding the second view which has been consistently maintained it is observed :

That the second view had a large body of supporters among Englishmen, immediately after the suppression of the Mutiny, will be evident from the following extract from an article in the *Edinburgh Review* (April, 1859) : "Throughout its whole progress it has faithfully retained the character of a military revolt . . . Except in the newly annexed state of Oudh it has not been taken up by the population. Now it is this circumstance which has saved India to Englishmen." The *Times* also expressed similar views.<sup>1</sup>

It has been pointed out a number of times that such passing comments can hardly be regarded as conclusive evidence in support of a particular case as the opposite view coming from the same school of thought tends to weaken the trustworthiness

\* BPIR. 603-25.

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 603.

of the same. The *Englishman* of Calcutta, which knew more about the situation in India than possibly most of the papers in Great Britain, made it clear to the government in its editorial on 17 December 1857 that 'Contemporary British opinion was emphatic on this point that the heart of every Indian was against them.' It need not be said that by that time Delhi was conquered and Lucknow was relieved for the second time. Even if it does not meet the situation, as the Calcutta Daily's observations do not relate to the period following the suppression of the mutiny, the *London Times* may be referred to as sharing the reactions of the *Englishman* of Calcutta and refuting the views of *Edinburgh Review*. The *Times* duly noted : 'We have seen the tide of war rolling from Nepal to the borders of Gujarat, from the deserts of Rajputana to the frontiers of the Nizam's territories, the same men over-running the whole land of India and giving to their resistance, as it were, a national character'.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the tendency to quote casual statements without processing them leads to a difficult position, for the *Times* referred to by the *British Paramountcy* in support of the *Edinburgh Review* also expressed diametrically opposite views. In bringing further evidence in support of its case the *British Paramountcy* continues unhesitatingly :

It is, however, significant that all contemporary Indian writers, some of whom occupied very high positions in public life, unanimously held the second view and looked upon the outbreak as essentially a military insurrection. Thus Kishorichand Mitra, an eminent Bengali, writing in 1858, says : The insurrection is essentially a military insurrection. It is the revolt of a *lac* of sepoys . . . It has nothing of the popular element in it. The proportion of those who have joined the rebels sinks into nothingness when compared with those whose sympathies are enlisted with the government. While the former may be counted by thousands, the latter may be counted by millions.' The same view was expressed by Sambhu Chandra Mukhopadhyaya, and Harish Chandra Mukherjee, two eminent Bengali public men, and Sir Syed Ahmad.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence*, 534-35.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 603-4.

In as much as those who 'occupied very high positions in public life' are mostly Bengalis, it is necessary to examine a little concretely the attitude of Bengal in particular towards the 1857 uprising. It is a fact that the Bengalis were looked upon with suspicion and that they were subjected to hardships and persecution by the insurgents in most areas of the revolt. The reason for this Bengali-baiting policy is not however far to seek. In the Address presented by the 'Bengalees' headed by Maharajah Mahatab Chand Bahadoor of Burdwan to Viscount Canning, the governor-general of India, it was frankly stated that because they had entirely 'identified their interests with those of their Rulers, the natives of Bengal, men, women and children have in every part of the scene of the mutinies, been exposed to the same rancour, and treated with the same cruelty, which the mutineers have displayed towards the British within their reach'.<sup>1</sup> This is also confirmed by Charles Raikes, a judge at Agra, who observed: 'A Bengalee Baboo at Farruckabad or Cawnpore was almost in as great peril as a Christian, so long as those cities were in the hands of the rebels. Not that the Baboo had personally any taste for the honours of martyrdom; for to tell the truth he was the veriest coward under the sun, but simply because the sepoy instinctively hated the *English scholars, as part and parcel of the English Community*'.<sup>2</sup>

All this would make it clear that the fidelity of the Bengalis and their attachment to English education made them the targets of attack. It is quite true to say that they were a part and parcel of the English community and regarded themselves to be so; but this stemmed from various factors, their likings for English education in particular, as also their sense of loyalty to the British which flowed from their aversion for warlike pursuits. Raikes' remark that they were the worst 'cowards under the sun' was the resultant effect of a corroding factor that characterised the political attitude of Bengal during the period. The testimony of H. Strachey, the judge and magistrate of Midnapur, in reply to some official questions may serve

<sup>1</sup> *The Mutinies and the People or Statement of Native Fidelity During the outbreak of 1857-58* by a Hindu, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in BPIR. 614-5. Italics of the author.

to show how deep the decadence went in national life in the early part of the nineteenth century. As he derisively stated : 'And can it possibly for a moment be supposed, that the people of Bengal dream of subverting the government ? They are in this respect, the most ignorant of all people, and the most helpless having no power to combine'. Similarly Bayley, another noted civilian, recorded his deposition (Feb. 1832) with a grim satisfaction which he could not possibly conceal : 'Our own subjects (Bengalis) have lost their military character (?), they now follow commercial and agricultural pursuits in preference.' And Holt Mackenzie, in reply to a question whether the tenure of India must be in a great measure the 'tenure of the sword', replied that while this could be true of other parts of India, 'in Bengal the case was entirely different, there the people do not think of resistance.' A whole community, as Macaulay said, in course of his famous speech in the House of Commons on 10 July 1833, was drugged by the pousta.<sup>1</sup> It would not appear surprising that Bengalis could not think of offering any resistance to British rule or joining the revolt in the uprising of 1857 when the question of the 'tenure of the sword' was going to be decided. An unmerited slur and ridicule therefore characterised the literary compositions of Bengali poets and literateurs on mutiny and mutiny heroes. It was not very creditable that this total want of energy, spirit and strength in Bengali character for which the British imperialists could not help smiling in their sleeves was glorified in the most vainglorious way. Thus, the *Hindu Patriot* wrote on 4 June 1857, when the tide of rebellion and mutiny had engulfed the whole country : 'The Bengalees never aspired to the glory of leading armies to battle, their pursuits and their triumphs are entirely civil.' In view of such a piece of shameless defence of a people holding back, it is no wonder that the Bengalis mostly were opposed to the Indian Revolt of 1857.

A probe into the socio-political history of Bengal will show that certain economic factors had blunted the political sentiments of the people. Long association with foreign *entrepreneurs* led to the development of a 'compradore' class, the

<sup>1</sup> *Civil Disturbances During the British Rule in India*, 212-13.

capitalists and millionaires who were closely associated with foreign merchants and derived great profits from trade with them. The economic interests of such persons were bound up with the English merchants and naturally enough there is no reason why these touts of the Company and the British merchants called *gomasthas* and *baniyas* should not play the role of sub-agents of foreign capital and be pro-British in their attitude to the 1857 uprising. Again, the Permanent Settlement of Bengal created a category of zamindars whose interest and security, unlike that of the talukdars of the N. W. Provinces, depended on the continuance of British rule. The contemporary British opinion was that it was the Permanent Settlement which saved the British Empire in India in the east. What Bentinck, the governor-general from 1828 to 1835, had said long before came out to be remarkably true of the situation obtaining in 1857-58. He had observed: 'If security was wanting against extensive popular tumult, I should say that the Permanent Settlement . . . has this great advantage, at least, of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of the British domination, and having complete control over the mass of the people'.<sup>1</sup> Thus these zamindars who owed their wealth, status and eminence in society to the English rulers threw their whole weight in strengthening the hands of the government whenever any tension came on the surface. Among these zamindars of Bengal who swelled the rank of the new bourgeois society there were many who engaged themselves in trade and commerce as brokers and agents (*baniyas* and *mutsuddis*) besides looking after their investment in land, thus building up a huge fortune from both these sources. So three factors namely the Permanent Settlement, the English education and entrepreneurial pursuits operated in quite a methodical way to bring into existence the new urban milieu where 'intellectual entrepreneurs were also becoming economic entrepreneurs.' A competent writer has observed that even the famous humanitarian Iswar Chandra Vidya-sagar was not free from the influence of that age.<sup>2</sup> All the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in R. P. Dutt, *India to Day* (London, 1939), 211-12.

<sup>2</sup> Benoy Ghosh in *Rebellion-1857*—A Symposium by P. C. Joshi, 103 ff.

facilities, all the opportunities which the British Empire in India could offer were exploited to the full by this wealthy intelligentsia of Bengal to advance their own status and position. In such circumstances it will not be difficult to rationalise why Kishorichand Mitra, Sambhu Chandra Mukhopadhyaya, Rajnarayan Basu, and many others, like Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Debendra Nath Tagore, Ramgopal Ghosh, who belonged to this class,<sup>1</sup> should have opposed the sepoy revolt in defence of their particular socio-economic interests created under the conditions of the earlier advent of British rule in Bengal.

The opinion of all the Bengalis referred to in the *British Paramountcy* would have therefore no more value in historical judgements than hostile evidence in a court of law.<sup>2</sup> *Native Fidelity*, ascribed to Sambhu Chandra Mukhopadhyaya written deliberately to demonstrate the loyal disposition of the rajas, maharajas, zamindars and talukdars, typically reflects the attitude of the educated people of Bengal in general.<sup>3</sup> In seventy-two pages the author gives tabular statements of instances of native fidelity and inserts a list of persons rewarded for acts of loyalty. The numerous loyal addresses exhibited in that book of the different chiefs, including the one presented to the governor-general by the Indian aristocracy of Bengal expressing their deep sense of gratitude for several measures of security adopted, could not have been more flattering in content than any panegyrics one could think of. Nothing perhaps could be more revealing than the following excerpt from the address of the Bengalis presented to Canning, signed by upwards of two thousand five hundred inhabitants of Bengal. It runs: 'The establishment of British supremacy

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> The *British Paramountcy's* comment that Harish Chandra Mukherjee also shared the same view is wrong. It has been shown that as early as 21 May 1857 he wrote that the Mutiny was turning into a rebellion (see *supra* p. 20; CR. 259).

<sup>3</sup> Professor Hiren Mukherjee quotes Kaye, Duff and Sen to show that the condition of Bengal was not as undisturbed as it appeared to be. Discontent lurked in the hearts of millions. He observes: 'If it was not for the massive help which, for instance, the Maharaja of Burdwan rendered to the British, the situation in Bengal might well have turned very different' (*New Age*, 1857, Centenary Special, p. 10).

was considered to have been completely effected a century ago, when Clive led a few ill-trained battalion against the preponderating and well-equipped force which represented the Moghal power in the plains of Plassey. But whether the 'inadequacy of the means or the magnitude of that achievement were more deserving of admiration has not yet been determined by history.' And in continuation: 'that in Bengal proper there has been no disturbance not even a symptom of disaffection; but that on the contrary, the people have maintained that loyalty and devotion to the British government which led their ancestors *to hail, and as far as they could to facilitate the rising ascendancy of that power*'.<sup>1</sup> The above address holds that the people of Bengal hailed the rise of British power in 1757, and down to 1857 continued to show the same sense of loyalty and devotion to the alien government, and the *Native Fidelity* considered itself fortunate in paying its tribute of respect and admiration for the almighty British. It would be 'against all canons of historical criticism to accept.' as the *British Paramountcy* has done, the evidence of the loyal Bengalis as proving the essential military character of the revolt of 1857. If no better evidence can be furnished than these outpourings of a host of loyalists, the tribe of 'Raibahadurs' and pensioned rajas, the least that one can do is to 'profess ignorance' of the nature of the outbreak of 1857. The reference to the resolutions passed by the British Indian Association and the Muhammadan Association denouncing the outbreak of the mutiny and trusting that it will not evoke any response from the civil population<sup>2</sup> would not help the study better as these associations were made of the same stuff as the book on *Native Fidelity*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Native Fidelity*, op. cit. p. 232-33.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 604.

<sup>3</sup> Another Bengali writer considered it very important to refer to the resolution passed by the Hindu inhabitants of the Bhowanipur area of Calcutta emphasising loyal sentiments and the need to be impressed about the mightiness of the British government with a view to showing that the 'entire Hindu community refrained, from rising in arms in 1857' ('Varieties of Rebellion' in A. T. Embree's 1857 *in India*, pp. 75-76). In selecting evidence for evaluating the character of a movement which was denounced by the Bengalis one can think of other sources.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's views no doubt carried weight. His analysis of the causes of the mutiny was both objective and impartial. He had been in the storm-centres of rebellion at Bijnor and negotiated with the rebel leaders. But despite his righteous indignation against the menacing danger of religious interference which was the most important cause of the rebellion, he also remained undeviating in his loyalty to the British government. What he said to the effect that the population of no part of the North-Western Provinces tried or even thought of rendering any assistance to the native rebellious chiefs,<sup>1</sup> certainly cannot be regarded as quite a reliable authority, for this goes against all known evidence as shown in the *Civil Rebellion*. Furthermore, as an outstanding leader of the Muslim community in India, he looked to the interest of the Indian Muslims closely, and showed a disposition to vindicate the loyalty of the Muslims somewhat in the same fashion as the *Native Fidelity* did in respect of the Hindus. Sir Syed argued that if Muslims had not been placed in the same regiment with the Hindus they might not have bolted. The pernicious policy of discriminating between Hindus and Muslims so clearly vindicated in this line of thinking went to strengthen the traditional British policy of 'Divide and Rule' which was used with devastating effect to undermine the 1857 uprising. To prove that no educated or respectable Muslims took part in the revolt, Syed Ahmad Khan went to the extent of denouncing the maulavis who joined the 1857 war as 'impostors'.<sup>2</sup> This shows that even reputed political thinkers and eminent loyalists could not keep the balance even during the outburst of 1857 for whatever may be said of other maulavis, the Fyzabad Maulavi, Maulavi Ahmadulla, the Gorakhpur Maulavi and some others at least were on all accounts staunch fighters in the national cause.

All that has been said above will thus tend to expose the basic weakness of the 'available evidence' arranged by the *British Paramountcy* in developing the theory that the contemporary Indians had unanimously represented the outbreak, as essentially a mutiny. Dadabhai Naoroji's statement has

<sup>1</sup> CR. 286, 288.

<sup>2</sup> *An account of the loyal Mohammedans in India*, Part II.

been found to be faulty;<sup>1</sup> Kishorichand Mitra and Sambhu Chandra Mukhopadhyaya of the *Native Fidelity* group were only panegyrists, Harish Chandra Mukherji cited in support has let down the case by misrepresenting (?) that the mutiny was a rebellion; Sir Syed Ahmad was the Muslim counterpart of Kishorichand Mitra and of the *Native Fidelity* school. Of the three Indians who were eye-witnesses of the events, Munshi Jivanlal's account was a day-to-day record of what he was told and not what he saw for himself; Mainuddin again misrepresented (?) the case by stating that there was in fact a rebellion;<sup>2</sup> and Durgadas Bandyopadhyaya's book is a mere record of his personal mishaps than a faithful account of the events. Godse Bhatji's account, written twenty six years after the event, could not necessarily be anything better than an afterthought fed by his imagination. The pro-British resolution of the Calcutta associations referred to only reflect the obsession of a Bengali historian to regard anything emanating from Bengal as valuable in disregard of the fact that Bengal had forfeited her right to speak by her obvious entanglements with British interests. This being the case all the available evidence, on which the contention of the *British Paramountcy* (that the contemporary Indians represented the outbreak as essentially a mutiny)<sup>3</sup> is based, is found to be unreliable and unconvincing. If, therefore, the assumption that it was the Indians who unanimously represented the outbreak as a mutiny is wrong, there cannot be much conflict of opinion between the contemporary Indians and their descendants who regard the outbreak of 1857 as a general revolt of the people. The charge levelled by the *British Paramountcy* against the Indians that it is a curious fact that they accuse the Europeans of deliberately misrepresentating a rebellion as a mutiny and that there is not the least truth in this accusation has already been discussed in detail.<sup>4</sup> It will be clear from what has been pointed out that the point of curiosity which the historian envisages does not exist in the accusation referred to, but in

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 17-18, 21, 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 604.

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, pp. 12-13, 18.

the curious way the *British Paramountcy* has made the contemporary Indians responsible for bearing testimony against the well-founded accusation that the Englishmen have deliberately misrepresented<sup>1</sup> the great popular rebellion as a mutiny.

In continuation of this idea, the *British Paramountcy* refers to the views of V. D. Savarkar and discusses at great length the question of a general conspiracy. It asserts that the available evidence does not prove the existence of any organisation in India, political or military, prior to 1857, resulting from a secret plot or conspiracy which 'a general revolt or a war of independence necessarily implies'.<sup>2</sup> All the arguments employed to show that there was no pre-concerted conspiracy or plot to drive out the English are a reproduction of the whole case as stated in the *Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857*.<sup>3</sup> But whereas in the above book the conclusion about the absence of any conspiracy has been utilised to debunk the famous leaders of the movement, in the *British Paramountcy* the same conclusion has been highlighted to demolish the *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies*. The argument runs :

As regards the revolt of the civil population, it is possible to take a dispassionate view of its true nature only if one dismisses the idea of a general conspiracy, or even of a concerted action on the part of its so called leaders like Bahadur Shah, Nana Sahib, Rani of Jhansi, Kunwar Singh and others.<sup>4</sup>

It would be extremely fallacious to suggest as the historian has indicated that the rebellion could not exist or its real nature investigated independent of the plan or organisation which might have been formed by the famous leaders. The assumption that these four leaders alone counted and that the essence of the revolt depended only upon their personal aims and particular interests involves a total denial of the nature of the situation in India in 1857. It must not be forgotten that the general mass of the people had also their reactions to and grievances against the British system of rule

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 605.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 605-12.

<sup>4</sup> BPIR. 612.

to ventilate, distinct from merely obeying the orders of their superiors. Indeed, the great peculiarity of the civil rebellion of the mutinies was that in general it was neither sponsored nor prompted from above. The popular movements of the pre-mutiny period as illustrated in the *Civil Disturbances*, reached their peak in the uprising of 1857. It need not be repeated that every class of Indian society suffered at the hands of the British rulers. The analysis of social discontent, class by class, as made in the famous Azamgarh Proclamation which is addressed to the zamindars, merchants, public servants, artisans and intellectuals undoubtedly confirms what is basic to the question, that the upheaval of 1857 stemmed from the bottom of society. The rapidity with which the revolt developed and the preparedness of the villagers to accept rebel authority suggest a general readiness for revolt. In Meerut, the commissioner reported that the situation was perfectly normal on the fateful day, the shops open, the vendors plying and travellers journeying unarmed, but fearful scenes were enacted the same day. In Mathura, according to official reports, the people were in profound tranquillity a month before the outbreak, and the sudden change to anarchy struck the magistrate as incomprehensible. Similarly in Benares, the suddenness with which the rebellion developed in the interior was astounding. It was not due to the instigation of the sepoys, as Kaye says, 'but a great movement from within was beginning to make itself felt upon the surface of the rural society and all traces of British rule were rapidly disappearing from the face of the land'. So also in Allahabad, the character of the general rising of the people was such that it could not have been any the stronger and more formidable even if it had been skilfully planned and deliberately matured.<sup>1</sup> Not to speak of Lucknow, and many other places, even in Chotanagpur, Dalton, the British officer, found that the springs of the rebellion lay in the hearts of the people.<sup>2</sup> Apparently enough the upsurge appears to have been erratic, isolated, and even sporadic but it is not less obvious that the revolt

<sup>1</sup> CR. 277-78. Allan Hume had exactly the same situation to report in regard to Etawah (Narratives, i, p. 168.)

<sup>2</sup> CR. 191.

also presented evidence of consistency in so far as the pattern of the far-flung movement was concerned. The people or the sepoys starting the conflagration according as the situation developed, the local leaders setting up independent governments, the landed chiefs re-occupying their estates, and the masses rising in the interior, and all these taking place in utmost regularity as though in response to a mysterious clarion call, point unmistakably to the existence of a spontaneous national feeling. That being so, it may not be difficult to appreciate that despite the absence of plans and organisations which might not have been formed by leaders, and also irrespective of individual apathy or even betrayal which counted very little in the surging tide of revolt that swept over the country in the tempest of 1857, the civil rebellion of the mutinies ran its course and resulted in the establishment of the independent governments in many areas of India at least for the time being.

The general characteristics of the revolt as summed up in the *British Paramountcy* are as follows :<sup>1</sup>

First, the civil population in each locality revolted only when the British authority had left it and the administrative machinery had completely broken down.

It is not a fact that the civil population in each locality revolted only when the British authority had left it. It has been indicated that the cause and effect relation between the mutiny and rebellion is not so clear. The contention of the *British Paramountcy* that the peoples' revolt was the effect and not the causes of the mutiny stands completely at variance with many known instances of disaffection coming out in the surface even before the mutiny.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it has been seen that it is the civil rebellion and not the mutiny of the sepoys that resulted in the complete subversion of the British power<sup>3</sup> and hence, the people rising up when the British authority had left cannot be regarded as an invariable feature of the revolt.

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 613.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 37-41.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*. pp. 64-68.

Secondly, there was no coordination between the different groups of rebels or their leaders except in the very last phase when they were pushed to the corner by the advancing British army.

This is not a very correct appraisal of the situation. Even before the last phase of the revolutionary war, there was actually some understanding and co-ordination between the different groups of leaders. Henry Mead, the earliest writer on the Sepoy Revolt, felt 'that a careful perusal of the above narratives will strengthen the theory that there was no plot to create a rebellion, but the outbreak was the result of a sudden impulse, hardened into purpose and plan by the sense of general disaffection'.<sup>1</sup> In the circumstances it is not unlikely that the idea of a confederacy of Indian States should emerge out of the impact of the revolutionary wars. The appeal of Bahadur Shah to the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Alwar inviting their help and co-operation at this juncture<sup>2</sup> and the further suggestion that he would be willing to resign the imperial power into their hands should they combine, clearly anticipated the birth of a strong confederacy of Indian States based on principles of service and sacrifice. The appeal was not indeed heeded to, but this appeal of the emperor of Delhi had certainly a strong political overtone which weakens the force of the remark that there was no co-ordination between the different groups of rebels.

It has been shown that a very significant feature of the movements of the rebel leaders was that they did not confine their activities merely to their respective regions but moved to the neighbouring areas to carry on the general struggle against the English. Not to speak of the Fyzabad Maulavi, Firuz Shah, Tantia Topi, the rani of Jhansi, Rao Sahib and Kunwar Singh, a host of other leaders also made themselves conspicuous in many fronts of the war throughout the struggle. Raja Tej Singh of Mainpuri came to the support of other rebel formations against the British power in the neighbouring districts and allied himself with the nawab of Farrukhabad.<sup>3</sup> The same official papers reveal that Rahulamin, the naib-chackladar

<sup>1</sup> *Sepoy Revolt*, 101.

<sup>2</sup> Sir T. Metcalfe, *Two Narratives of the Mutiny at Delhi*, 220.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 84.

of Nawabganj, held sway over a confederacy of disaffected chieftains including Golab Singh, Beni Bahadur Singh of Nasratpur and Madho Singh of Bhoginpur. The confederacy was sustained by the levies contributed by the Shyampur rani, the thakurani of Budri, Sugram Singh, Fakir Baksh, and other ex-zamindars. An order from Lucknow called upon all talukdars and zamindars to assist the naib-chackladar in the war.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Nazim Mehndi Hasan of Sultanpur was actively supported by all the talukdars of Sultanpur and Fyzabad. With about fifteen thousand men the nazim dominated over the western portion of Sultanpur and even extended his influence so far down as Allahabad. A severe contest was raging for the control of the Lucknow road and the way in which Mehndi Hasan obstinately contested the passage of British arms to prevent general Franks from adding his strength to the British garrison at Lucknow at the two battles of Chanda and finally at Sultanpur (23 February 1858) indicates that the rebel leaders organised a systematic plan to oppose the passage of the British forces marching for the relief of the beleaguered garrison at Lucknow.<sup>2</sup> Mehndi Hasan also led the expedition in accordance with the very elaborate plans and organisations made by the high command at Lucknow for the conquest of Jaunpur in the middle of October 1857. He was backed by talukdars, rajcoomars and other chiefs. Tahsildars and sazawals were appointed and Mansabali of Serai Mir and Beni Madho, the kurmi raja of Atrauli, were appointed joint-commandants of the regiment.<sup>3</sup> Similarly the rebel confederacy of the baiswara rajput communities were led by their famous chief Rana Beni Madho Baksh of Sankarpur in Salone in Rai Bareli who with a 'halter round his neck' fought at Allahabad and later on joined the ranks of the rebels at Lucknow, not to speak of the fact that to the last he tried to organise the anti-British war of resistance. The same stand was taken by Mohammed Hasan of Gorakhpur who carried his arms as far as the borders of Fyzabad, and also Prithvipal Singh who covered a wide field of military operations. Man-

<sup>1</sup> CR. 92-93.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 123-4.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 150.

sabali fought many a smart action resisting the advance of British forces all the way from Cawnpore to Lucknow on the one side, and on the other, in the Sultanpur road. Liakatali of Allahabad stuck to the last fighting in many fields. The palwar chief, Madhoprasad Singh, the raja of Birhar extended his activities as far as Azamgarh. Udresh Singh was present in the fight at Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Azamgarh and in the same way Amresh Singh of Akbarpur came to the support of the rebels at Gorakhpur and Azamgarh. Very similar were the activities of another rajcoomar chief Chandresh Singh. The importance of the historic march of Kunwar cannot be minimised as his great intention according to official sources was to unite his veterans with Central Indian Revolutionary Forces, the Gwalior Regiments in particular.<sup>1</sup> And when the old lion was digging in at Azamgarh, Pargan Singh, Indrajit Singh and Rana Beni Madho and others assembled together to take their force over the Gogra. In the country to the south of the Jumna, Barjor Singh dominated the entire region from Kunch to Kalpi, and the Sagar leader Daulat Singh swept through Jalaun, Jhansi, Hasangabad and Rajputana. There are many instances to show that the leaders of the rebellion looked beyond their own immediate circle and showed a combination of wide vision and patriotic solidarity. Though they were mostly engaged in local rebellion they frequently united their forces against the English in many sectors of the war to deliver the country as a whole, and not simply parts of it, from the yoke of the British rule. This combination is all the more remarkable as it cut across all barriers of social classes and of regions and provinces.<sup>2</sup>

These details notwithstanding which have not been carefully weighed, the *British Paramountcy* remarks :

Thirdly, each group or individual leader fought for self-interest and had no allegiance to a common cause. This is strikingly illustrated by the assumption of supreme authority, by Bahadur Shah, as Emperor of Hindusthan, and Nana Sahib as the Peshwah. Sundry other Chiefs declared themselves rulers in their own localities.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CR. 315.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 279-81.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 613.

But the foregoing survey will, it may be presumed, show that each group of individual leaders did not fight merely for self-interest without any awareness of an allegiance to a common cause. Though the revolt was apparently characterised by the absence of a common and concerted plan of action it did not, as shown above, prevent sundry chiefs from acting in accordance with a spirit of wide vision and understanding with a view to uniting India in a common endeavour against the British as never before. The reference to the assumption of power by Bahadur Shah and Nana Sahib as an illustration of the separatist principles that were at work only shows a failure of perspective in the assessment of Indian problems. To judge the 1857 uprising in terms of the sophisticated outlook of modern times does not appear to be strictly proper. P. E. Roberts perhaps correctly stated the position that the mutineers tried alike to revive the vanished glories of the Mughal Empire and to re-establish the power of the Maratha Peshwa.<sup>1</sup> This is confirmed by what Nana announced in his famous proclamation that he has been commissioned by God to annihilate the 'Kaffurs', to re-establish the Hindoo and Mahomedan Kingdoms as formerly.<sup>2</sup> The attitude is clear enough, so that there was no inherent contradiction in restoring the rule of the emperor as well as the peshwa. The political theory of the Revolt of 1857 as reflected in the proclamations, and in actual practice, seems to be running on these lines that the broadest national unity against British domination could be forged by restoring Bahadur Shah, and the Peshwas, and Nawabs and Chiefs, the traditional rulers of the country, in their respective spheres.<sup>3</sup>

The fourth characteristic according to the *British Paramountcy* was that :

From the very beginning the goonda elements of the population, particularly the marauding tribes like Gujars, Ranghars, etc., took a prominent part in the local risings. Even the ordinary people were animated more by subversive than constructive activities.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Hiren Mukherjee in *New Age* (1857 Centenary special), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Source Materials for a History of the Freedom Movement* etc. op. cit. p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, p. 34. cf. also the discussion on the confederacy of Indian states as above.

The result was that plunder, rapine, massacre and incendiarism, on a large scale, directed against . . . characterised these outbreaks. In addition to these, personal vendetta, a desire to gain by force what was lost by legal process, settling old scores, and satisfying personal grudge played a large part in the popular upsurge almost wherever it occurred.<sup>1</sup>

The above paragraph does not make out any new points but merely reiterates what has already been said a number of times that the 1857 uprising should be dismissed as a string of depredations of the gujars and ranghars and other anti-social elements. It has been pointed out that every act of the so-called goonda element whether against persons and property could be related specifically to one or other causes of discontent which produced the convulsion of 1857.<sup>2</sup> The charge against the landlords that they made unlawful seizure of lands has also been found to be wrong.<sup>3</sup> Yet the way in which these arguments have been repeated a number of times in the *British Paramountcy* shows a lack of attempt to assess the historical importance of the forces set in motion by the British administration which resulted in the disintegration of the old village community. If care was taken to find out why the old rural classes from the zamindars to the peasants were obliged to surrender their lands to the new sections of merchants, money-lenders and the Company's other officials and suffer other economic hardships, then much of the casual nature of this observation regarding the 'Goonda elements' could have been avoided. The destruction of the ancient land system had a direct bearing in turning the 1857 uprising into a social war, a war of the rural classes against the new land grabbers who had seized their traditional lands and the usurping foreign powers that had made this possible through its law courts and administrative agency. A number of official statements as given in the *Civil Rebellion* give a picture of the alignment of the different classes arrayed against the British. It has been shown that in ejecting the new zamindars or new men, the old proprietors were assisted by their former

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 613.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 43-46.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, pp. 107-112.

tenants. If the ancient proprietors lost their lands to the new men owing to settlement operations, the peasants similarly lost their ancestral occupations to the operations of the new sale law.

In this background we must examine the attitude of the insurgent rural masses. The gujars and ranghars described as 'Goondas' actually formed a solid mass of peasantry, many of whom were expropriated peasants. The antipathy of the people to the judicial and revenue system of the British was clearly manifested by their systematic destruction of the revenue records not only in the district towns but also in the interior. As Kaye says, almost all that the English had decreed had been wantonly destroyed as though the British settlement was purposely done in violent scorn of the genius and instincts of the people. The sale of real property in execution of decrees issued by the British courts which reduced whole families to ruin was a potent factor in producing social restiveness. Every year large number of estates were put up to sale under the decrees of courts in satisfaction of arrears of revenue and sometimes even for simple contract debts. This explains why in many places the chance to burn and destroy *baniya* houses and property acted as an inducement to revolt. Three district officers, Edwards of Budaun, Robertson of Shaharanpur and Thornhill of Mathura observed that the first proceedings everywhere were to take revenge on the *baniyas*. The *baniyas* were mostly outsiders who purchased with avidity, the proprietary rights of the zamindars and peasants when they came under the operations of the sale law. By this process a vast number of estates had been purchased by these 'new men' and a large number of families of rank and influence had been alienated. As village money-lenders they also practised unmitigated usury. The English courts which offered facilities to the most oppressive money-lenders in executing a decree for the satisfaction of an ordinary debt against an ignorant peasantry produced the greatest resentment amongst the agricultural population and a dangerous dislocation of social structure. The protection thus afforded to this class through the medium of English courts is the sole reason why the peasants and other inferior classes of wage earners to whom borrowing was the only resource were so vindictive

and uncompromisingly hostile against the English during the rebellion. It was not so much the fear for their religion that provoked the rural classes and the landed chiefs to revolt. It was the question of their rights and interests in the soil and hereditary holdings, which excited them to a dangerous degree.<sup>1</sup>

Viewed in this light the activities of the so-called marauding tribes like gujars and ranghars etc. would appear to be only the outward emblem of a tremendous social distemper that was expressing itself in various forms. Robber-bands, the riff-raffs and other anti-socials certainly joined the revolt as they do join in every country when law and order is threatened. We may search all history in vain for a movement of emancipation which was not joined by people harbouring impure motives. But there were certainly others, possibly the bulk of rebels who were not *goondas* but people of decent social status to whom the revolt appeared to be the only legitimate means of redressing their grievances. The failure to appreciate this social background of the 1857 uprising leads our historian to lodge a caveat :

It would be a travesty of truth to describe the revolt of the Civil population as a national war of independence.<sup>2</sup>

The revolt of the civil population during the mutinies may not conform to the concept of a national war of independence in a technical sense, but not many will perhaps concede that truth was on the side of the *British Paramountcy*. The interpretation given of the rebellious proceedings as arising from the designs of the *goonda* elements and motives of personal vendetta of the landed classes goes counter to what has been expounded above about the social and economic consequences of the operative part of British land system and civic law. If the revolt appeared to be a legitimate means of establishing social justice and equity which could only be done by upsetting the existing government then it may not remotely differ from a national war of independence. A broader conception of historical values and a breadth and flexibility of understanding would

<sup>1</sup> CR. 19-21.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR 613.

have led to a different conclusion but the historian explodes after passing the verdict against the *Civil Rebellion* :

National it certainly was not, for the 'upsurge of the people' was limited to a comparatively narrow region of India, comprising at best the greater part of U.P. and a narrow zone to its east, west and south. The whole of Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Rajasthan and greater parts of the Panjab, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh as well as the whole of India south of the Narmada hardly witnessed any overt act of rebellion on the part of the people.<sup>1</sup>

The emphasis given to the statement is striking. It is understandable that this attempt to mensurate accurately the area of the revolt has been made only to buttress the non-national character of the revolt which is fundamentally untrue. It is to be admitted that the revolt of 1857 did not engulf the entire sub-continent. To some extent it was due to physical difficulties and barriers between the north and the south, and particularly and primarily to the traditions of subsidiary and treaty alliances to which the princes were wedded, but to challenge the national character of the revolt on the ground that it did not cover the entire country would seem like missing the main point by a long margin. Without going to historical parallels to illustrate the point it can safely be asserted that judged by the area of the revolt the uprising of 1857 was certainly national, for the movement was not indeed confined to a narrow region of India if facts are to be faced and not twisted or staggered.

In fact excepting a narrow margin of India in the eastern, western and southern fringe there was hardly any part of the country which had not witnessed any overt act of rebellion on the part of the people. It is patently wrong to suggest that the greater parts of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh were not affected by the convulsion.<sup>2</sup> Similarly eastern Punjab was likewise disturbed.<sup>3</sup> The statement that the whole of India south of the Narmada lay outside the orbit of the revolt is also not wholly true.<sup>4</sup> The great bulk of the people in the southern

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 613.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 60-65, 69.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 231 ff.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 229-231.

Maratha country rose against British rule. Seditious conspiracies were fomented in Belgaum, Hyderabad and Poona and popular risings took place in far distant Kolhapur, Savant Vadi and Nargund, while in the west, as Malleson said, the rapidity with which the revolt spread had so much threatened the security of British supremacy in Rajputana and Malwa that it became absolutely necessary to check its progress.<sup>1</sup> In view of this situation, it will not be fair to play down the national character of the revolt of the civil population on this erroneous assumption that the revolt was limited to a narrow region of India. Attention may be drawn to Asoke Mehta's calculation that the rebels controlled no less than 100,000 square miles, where lived some 33 million people.<sup>2</sup> It has been also pointed out that according to Dr S. N. Sen the venue of the war extended roughly from western Bihar to the eastern confines of the Punjab, and that the areas like Bengal and Assam, Bombay, and the Madras Presidency were by no means without 'Signs of restlessness'.<sup>3</sup> Attention may also be drawn to what Dr S. N. Sen significantly added in this connection that 'in estimating the popularity of the movement of 1857 we must not forget that only a determined minority takes an active part in a revolt and that nowhere did a revolt command universal support'.<sup>4</sup>

The loyalty of the ruling chiefs as a factor making for the success of the British has been the most popular theme with the writers having a basic imperialist bias. The *British Paramountcy* writes :

The ruling chiefs in the East Panjab,—Maharajas of Patiala, Nabha and Jhind—Nawab of Karnal, the Sindhia of Gwalior, Holkar of Indore, the Nawabs of Bhopal and Jawra, the Rajas of Jhabua and Dhar, and the entire landed aristocracy of Bihar, with very few exceptions, firmly and consistently stood by the British Government.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CR. 231-33.

<sup>2</sup> Mehta, *The Great Rebellion*, 26-31.

<sup>3</sup> *New Age* (1857 Centenary Special), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> S. N. Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, 411.

<sup>5</sup> BPIR. 613-14.

It is no doubt a fact that the princes remained passive and even loyal and lined up behind their British masters but it has not been realised that these 'facts' do not fit in with the truth of the matter, namely, that the British in India were standing on the brink of destruction. If only one of the big states of India had stirred, the position could not have been retrieved even with the help of the rest. The rise of Hyderabad, as Norton was able to realise, would have thrown the whole of the Deccan into flames.<sup>1</sup> The grave consequences of Sindhia's participation in the war were calculated by all known contemporaries. Malleson wrote that had Sindhia turned against the English it would have been disastrous indeed,<sup>2</sup> and Innes had the satisfaction to observe that India was saved for the British by the loyalty of that chief.<sup>3</sup> Even Canning, it is said, was prepared to pack off had Sindhia acted otherwise.<sup>4</sup> Maharaja Gulab Singh of Kashmir occupied a similar position in deciding the fortunes of the war and, as Lawrence observed, the position of the British in the Punjab was to a great extent at his mercy.<sup>5</sup> It has also to be considered that the loyalty of the princely order with the difficulties and dangers attending them only brings out in bold relief and renders more prominent the universal rebellion surging round them.<sup>6</sup>

The contention that even among the sepoys of the affected areas a certain number remained loyal till the last<sup>7</sup> is quite true but it does not carry any specific import. It cannot be urged that the revolt of the Bengal Army was not universal in character because small numbers remained loyal. Historians writing under the conviction that the 1857 uprising was a military insurrection only have not in general probed into the motives which led some sepoys to stand firm by the side of their rulers and others joining their compatriots in the war after saving or trying to save their officers first. There were many complex situations which often arise when one's loyalty to the

<sup>1</sup> *Topics for Indian Statesmen*, 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Red Pamphlet*, 194.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Sepoy Revolt*, 301.

<sup>4</sup> H. Mukherjee in *New Age*, op. cit. p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Dharm Pal, *Administration of Sir John Lawrence*, 26.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 286.

<sup>7</sup> BPIR. 614.

rulers conflicts with his duty towards his country and all the available records cannot be rationalised to find out any single specific cause which would explain the wavering attitude of small groups here and there. The mutiny of the regiments of the Bengal Army was in a sense complete. The regiments of the regular cavalry without any exception, and all of irregular cavalry excepting ten, and 63 out of 74 regiments of infantry revolted. This revolutionary spirit even permeated the soldiers of the princely states. The Indore troops emulated the examples of the Bengal regiments. The troops of Sindhia deserted him when the rani of Jhansi and Tatyá Tope appeared before the gates of Gwalior. According to Kaye and Malleison the troops of the maharana of Udaipur, the Jaipur troops, the Kotah contingent exhibited their disaffection and contumacy to a marked degree when employed to defend British positions at various stations.<sup>1</sup> The same was true of the Sihor cavalry, the Karauli men, and the Bharatpur horse. Similarly, the statement of the *British Paramountcy* that the Sikhs and the Gurkhas not only remained loyal to the British but actively helped them<sup>2</sup> cannot have much weight when examined in the context of the real historical background. If the Sikhs remained well-affected towards the government it was because, as Cooper analysed it, they had not much to complain against 'assessment and rights and interests in the soil'. The Dooranees grounded the people to dust, the Sikh government levied annually 12 lakhs from Swat alone, while the British collected only six lakhs.<sup>3</sup> The Gurkhas remained under complete British grip after the Nepal War and further, it is not unlikely, that Rana Jung Bahadur who was 'centralising Nepal' was won over by the promise of a large share in the tracts of Terai at the cost of Oudh.<sup>4</sup> The Rajputs had their historic memories of the domination of the Mughals and Marathas, and similarly the Marathas had their memories of historic feuds with the Mughals. The pull of history, no less than the inhibitions of a feudal past of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in P. C. Joshi's *Rebellion—1857*, 175.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 614, 619.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 21n.

<sup>4</sup> Joshi, *op. cit.* p. 178.

disunity and civil wars, prevented the biggest ever anti-British combine of 1857 from being completely effective. That the general attitude of the people towards the English, even in the worst affected areas, was not uniformly hostile,<sup>1</sup>

cannot be denied but it is difficult to follow what particular point can be made out of the citation of such cases when the whole history of the 1857 war is replete with facts proving the contrary. If Messrs. Phillipps and Bramly testified to the good feelings of the people from Farrukhabad and Etah in the Doab, and from Budaon in Rohilkhand, there were possibly hundreds of other Europeans who could tell the mournful story of how they were pursued by revengeful villagers while they were in quest of food and shelter. The experiences of Mowbray Thomson and Delafosse and two others, Sullivan and Murphy, who survived the massacre at the Sati Chaura ghat on 27 June 1857, and reached a place of safety of Murar Mau only after two successive days and nights of incessant toil, as also the fate of the first division of the Fatehgarh community which left that station on 4 June, and of those who left that place on the morning of 4 July in three boats, need not be repeated here to demonstrate the untenability of the same old British thesis that the revolt of 1857 was not popular in character. The views of Raikes quoted in the *British Paramountcy*<sup>2</sup> cannot be regarded as a conclusive evidence. It is indeed difficult to get 'confirmation and illustration of Raikes' views at every step.' His assumption that the country returned to normal conditions after the fall of Delhi is entirely wrong.<sup>3</sup> Dr S. N. Sen did not agree with Raikes that because small parties of Englishmen did not find the countryside unsafe, the inhabitants of the area were necessarily loyal<sup>4</sup> to the government. As for the statements of Bengali writers which are supported by Raikes that, the English-educated classes as a rule did not join the movement we have too many effusions of that sort originating from the same group to

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 614.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 614.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 288.

<sup>4</sup> Sen, op. cit. p. 410.

which they belonged. All these converge round a discussion on the loyal elements in the anti-British war of 1857. The background of the *Native Fidelity* has been analysed,<sup>1</sup> and in that light the meaning will be clear why the *British Paramountcy* recalls with pleasure the 'sympathy and friendly attitude of the Indians towards the British.'<sup>2</sup> Similarly the *London Times* quoted<sup>3</sup> can hardly strengthen the view that the Indians were not against the British for on other occasions it expressed views to the contrary.<sup>4</sup>

The *British Paramountcy* could also have quoted the views of William Muir, secretary to the government of North-West Provinces, the greatest protagonist of the theory that the revolt of 1857 was only a mutiny of troops. From the lack of excitement in some places, and welcome given to British soldiers in other places, and sundry other signs of returning loyalty of the people, from the desertions of the rebel forces, the splendid crop of a few isolated stretches, and above all, from the occasional manifestations of communal distemper, he argued that there was no controversy between the people and the government.<sup>5</sup> A very simple answer to this line of argument is that if there was no controversy between the people and the government then there was no necessity of committing inhuman atrocities upon the unarmed populace with which the history of 1857 is full. Brigadier Neill's course from Benares to Allahabad was marked by corpses of villagers and demolished houses. As he saw it, the rising was becoming something more than a military mutiny and he had not the tenderness to deter him from striking root and branch at the people who were rising into rebellion on the ruins of the native army. The Trunk Road passed through a desert, the inhabitants having fled to a distance of four or five miles. In Arrah, in consequence of the general nature of the rebellion, the wholesale burning and destruction of villages was recommended. In other parts, the general destroyed villages and

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 123 ff.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 615.

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

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, p. 119

<sup>5</sup> CR. 284.

seized all the grain stores there.<sup>1</sup>

The faulty nature of the observation of William Muir will be evident from the above. In a vast upsurge like the revolt of 1857 engulfing a major portion of a sub-continent like India, variations and fluctuations of conditions cannot be regarded as anything unusual and should not have any undue bearing on the overall historical estimate. The *British Paramountcy* follows exactly the same line of argument as Muir, and shows a knack of picking up exceptional cases to prove what is opposite of truth. The partisanship of imperialist historiography is strikingly in evidence in the selection of the evidence of Raikes. For obvious reasons it would not make any use of Edwards of Budaun, Mark Thornhill of Mathura, H. D. Robertson of Saharanpur, J. W. Sherer of Cawnpore, F. Thompson of Allahabad, major Williams of Meerut, besides Duff, Norton and Kaye. The results of their investigations as incorporated in the *Civil Rebellion* have necessarily been ignored.

On the same consideration our historian has exploited to the full the communal question to underplay the significance of the Indian revolt.

To complete the picture, reference must be made to the tension between the Hindus and Muslims. Many have cited the outbreak of 1857 as a shining example of the perfect accord and harmony between the two communities. But though the Sepoys and the common people of both the communities fought together against the English, we miss that real communal amity which characterizes a national effort. It is a significant fact that the contemporary Englishmen generally regarded the outbreak mainly as a handiwork of the Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

It is not merely contemporary Englishmen who regarded the movement either as a Hindu or as a Mahomedan movement but it was the attitude of the British imperialists in general that the Indian Revolt of 1857 was characterised by communal strife. One can understand British statesmen and historians advancing this thesis but if Indian historians wink at facts and repeat the same outmoded theories it can only be explained by the traditions of 'Native Fidelity' to the paramount power

<sup>1</sup> CR. 265.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 616.

of the British. It is never the contention of present work that the Hindus and Muslims always remained united and formed a compact mass of people. The differences between the two communities remained as unbridgeable as ever; the recent division of the sub-continent into two parts only highlights the undercurrent of antagonism and animus that has persisted in the mutual feelings of the two communities. Even so, so far as the Mutiny period is concerned, all the available evidence go to show that there was a feeling of understanding between the two communities to a remarkable degree unlike any the recorded history of India can show. The celebrated proclamation of the mutineers from Delhi justly regarded as an extraordinary document, extraordinary because it presented a combination of mutually repulsive principles, for a specific purpose like of which, as Ball said, was not to be met with anywhere in history.<sup>1</sup> Nothing could be more exhilarating than the incident during the siege of Lucknow, when the Hindus swore on the Ganges and the Mahomedans, on the *Koran* and rushed out together crying *chalo bhai* ('forward, brothers') to wipe out the English at Alambagh. In a sense the importance of the 1857 rising lies in the fact that it leaves an abiding impression of what was once a united India. Repeated references to cases of communal distemper, which occurred only in Rohilkhand in the vast area of India, without mentioning those specific facts which tend to show that in so many areas of the rising, the Hindu-Muslim unity was a prominent characteristic only shows a kind of unwillingness to face facts. Forrest, than whom there was no other historian who studied the mutiny records more extensively, observed: 'Among the many lessons which the Indian Mutiny conveys to the historian and administrator none is of greater importance than the warning that it is possible to have a revolution in which Brahmin and Sudra, Mahomedan and Hindu, were united against us'.<sup>2</sup> Disraeli's observation in the House of Commons that for the first time in 1857 the Hindus and Muslims had made a common cause against the British\*

<sup>1</sup> Ball, op. cit. i, pp. 644-45.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 282.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 281.

anticipated in many ways the findings of the archivist-historian. The repeated emphasis on communal harmony which the leaders of the movement gave in their proclamations and addresses<sup>1</sup> cannot be ignored.

The *British Paramountcy* has liberally quoted from Raikes, its favourite author, and also other analogous views from Roberts, Mrs. Cooplund, P. G. Scot, Sir Alfred Lyall and Sir Syed Ahmad to show that the 1857 insurrection was a Mahomedan movement. The assumption of independent power by the muslim chiefs in many localities and the appeal of the muslim leaders to the Hindus and their ardent importunities have been interpreted to show that the great difference between the Hindus and the Muslims loomed large even in the territories where the revolt of the civil population was most widely spread.<sup>2</sup> The communal question has been discussed. It would be interesting to know in what other stations excepting in Rohilkhand, the rivalry between the two communities flared up. Reputed authors like Forrest have not been consulted by the *British Paramountcy*. Neither was Kaye to the extent necessary. Kaye writes: 'But before the end of the month of April, it must have been apparent to Lord Canning, that nothing was to be hoped from that antagonism of Asiatic races which had ever been regarded as the main element of our strength and safety. Mahomedans and Hindus were plainly united against us'.<sup>3</sup> Many others recorded their disappointment that in this instance they could not play off the Mahomedans against the Hindus.

As for the muslim character of the movement, theories have changed so often that it is idle to speculate on the subject. During the time of the mutiny, and in the years following, the British writers freely gave vent to the idea that the hindu grievances were exploited to the full by the Muslims who took the lead in forming the conspiracy and indeed considered themselves as senior partners in the upheaval. This attempt to write up the mutiny as a muslim national revolt however did not find favour with the loyalist muslims like Sir Syed

<sup>1</sup> *Infra*, pp. 151-53.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 616-17.

<sup>3</sup> Kaye, *A history of the Sepoy War*, i, 565, 617.

Ahmad, and the imperialists like Sir William Hunter who in their attempt to revive the memories and traditions of old internecine wars between the Hindus and Muslims played down the muslim's share in the mutiny. Pertinently they recalled that the Muslims constituted only one out of seven sepoy in the army. This exculpation of the Muslims from the charge of being disloyal helped the British to pursue their policy of 'Divide and Rule' with devastating effect in the post-mutiny period, eventually leading to the division of the country. But to-day the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, now free from the inhibitions of British rule, claims to establish the Islamic inspiration of the revolt of 1857, by relating the origins of the Mutiny to the activities and ideals of the Wahabis. The *British Paramountcy* in characterising the Revolt as a muslim movement, the communal spirit being too deeply rooted to be wiped out,<sup>1</sup> will have certainly helped the Pakistani historians to mature their plan of representing the Freedom Movement of India as essentially a muslim movement.

It was the proclaimed aim of the *British Paramountcy* to find out the objective truth<sup>2</sup> about the Sepoy War. The above discussion will have shown to what extent it has been successful in its truth-finding mission. The following excerpt will indicate that the problem is not one of bringing the truth to light but of salvaging it.

We may now proceed to discuss whether it (the outbreak of 1857) can be regarded as a war of independence, even though restricted to a limited area. In order to reply to this question, it is necessary to have a clear and definite understanding as to the precise meaning of the phrase 'war of independence'. There are not a few who seem to think that any fight by any group of Indians against the British must be regarded as a struggle for independence. The validity of this contention may be easily tested by the two specific instances of the grim and prolonged struggle carried on against the British by the Pindaris and the Wahabis. There is no doubt about the severity of the struggle against the English in each case, backed by an organisation to which the outbreak of 1857 could

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 617.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. Preface, p. xxxiii.

lay no claim. Yet, it would be absurd to maintain that the Pindaris fought for independence of India.<sup>1</sup>

One may feel helpless before this kind of provocative logic. It may be difficult to maintain that the Pindari war was not anti-social in character though it may be somewhat dogmatic to assert that the Pindari commotion was out and out anti-social, so long as a revaluation of the movement from a new angle of approach has not been attempted. Even so, the validity of this contention namely, the resemblance of the Pindari war to the outbreak of 1857, may be tested by two specific points. Historical studies are supposed to restore correct perspectives of standards and values but the equation of the Pindari raids so far as they are known at the present state of our knowledge with the outbreak of 1857, which suggests an approximation of the outlook of Nana Sahib, the rani of Jhansi, Bahadur Shah and Kunwar Singh on the one hand, and the activities of Karim Khan, Wasil Mohammad, Chitu and Amir Khan, the Pathan freebooter on the other, may not be regarded by many as anything less than absurd. That question apart, the equation will not work on the ground of the severity of the war of 1857, to which the Pindari campaign could lay no claim. In a few months time the whole Pindari war was over during the cold weather of 1817-18 in operations mainly conducted in the Narmada valley leaving no trail of bitterness anywhere in the body politic of India. It was a mopping up operation planned and executed according to schedule and did not call for any consummate ability on the part of the British generals who hardly faced any grave situations in liquidating the Pindari organisation if there was any. But historians who make a parade of loyalty to the objectivity of the historical outlook have failed to estimate that the 1857 revolt was such a war of extermination on either side as national interests of the Indians and imperial interests of the British alone could provoke. That Sir John Lawrence was prepared to surrender the Punjab to the Afghans and Wilson to abandon Meerut,<sup>2</sup> that Henry Lawrence died under the jagged roofs of defeat and Havelock was hurled

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 618-19.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 28.

back many a time, that Outram faced a precarious situation in the beleaguered city of Lucknow, and Taylor was constrained to issue orders of retreat to his district officers, that Erskine was at bay in the Narbada districts and Venables risked a critical situation at Azamgarh, that Longden had to fall back to Jaunpur for safety and Windham was beaten to prostration at Cawnpore, that Lushington was ambushed at Mogra and both Dunbar and Le Grand met their doom in the war at Shahabad seem to have been completely ignored. But historical propriety demands that those who have taken the responsibility of equating the Pindari war with the upsurge of 1857, on grounds of severity of the struggle and the importance of the issue involved, will have to show if there were any incidents of the type mentioned above in the Pindari campaign. Failure to do this would be a grave dereliction of duty, for this mistaken and misleading historical parallel is likely to taint the attitudes of the young learners of history for whom this 'standard' work is primarily meant.

As to the Wahabis, the comment runs :

they fought heroically against the English with a grim determination to drive them out of India in order to establish a Dar-ul-islam, or 'Kingdom of the Muslims.' They began to fight against the Sikhs with the same object . . . Now, if we regard their fight against the English as a war of independence, by no logic can we withhold this nomenclature from the fight of the Wahabis against the Sikhs. In other words, we are reduced to the absurd position of regarding a war to drive out the Sikhs from the Panjab as an Indian war of independence.<sup>1</sup>

The statement recorded above cannot be disputed. The fight of the Wahabis against the Sikhs or even against other non-muslims of India cannot invest the Wahabi movement with the character of a war of independence, for according to the Wahabis every non-muslim whether he was a Christian or a Hindu or a Sikh was a *Kafir* fit only to be sent to hell. There is nothing absurd in this line of thinking, but the absurdity lies in the assumption that the Wahabi commotion was a

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 619,

part of the 'Indian war of independence' because it was a matter of ideological and religious conviction with the Wahabis that India was a foreign country to them so long as it was not converted into a *Dar-ul-Islam*. In the circumstances, the Wahabi movement took the appearance of a foreign war of aggression directed against the ruling powers of India, the presence of the English being only an accident. Thus, this muslim national war of independence as the movement is called, does not enter into the main stream of the Freedom Movement in India for had the movement succeeded it would have led to the independence of a community, but not to the freedom of the country and its people. The historical reality of the situation would be a source of embarrassment only to those who ignore the fundamental differences that exist between the two communities, a difference that was accentuated by the iconoclastic zeal of the muslim rulers since the inception of muslim rule. From the Wahabi movement of 1830 to the adoption of the name of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, there runs the same trend of muslim thought of establishing a homeland exclusively for the Muslims, a *Dar-ul-Islam* in India. If the Wahabis fought against the Sikhs in the first part of the nineteenth century, the Muslims fought against the Hindus in the first part of the twentieth century.

It will appear that the discussion on these hypothetical matters have been carried on to relate the outbreak of 1857 with the conditions of the two examples. The historian prepares the ground by stating that merely a fight against the English, even with the distinct object of driving them away, cannot be regarded as an Indian war of independence because the 'English stood as a symbol, either of ruling authority or of heretic religion,' respectively to the Pindaris and Wahabis, and not merely of an alien rule. 'In other words' as he says, 'they did not take up arms with the conscious and definite object of freeing India from foreign rule'. It is perhaps nobody's assumption that they did so; it is only a gratuitous assumption of our historian that, like the Pindaris and Wahabis, the rebels of 1857 also took up arms without the conscious and definite object of freeing India from foreign

rule. If however,

the crucial point is the ultimate object with which such a fight is carried on, or rather the light in which the British are looked upon,<sup>1</sup> then the Revolt of India certainly stands on a different footing. For the leaders of 1857 looked upon the British not merely as a symbol of ruling authority or of heretic religion but much more as alien rulers, the *Kafirs* and *feringhis*, whose expulsion, because they were foreigners, became the primary object in a struggle for independence.

To this our historian would not agree, and to bring the War of 1857 on a line with the Pindari and Wahabi commotions he urges two points, repeated many times over :

In the first place, it had nothing to do with the achievement of independence or freedom from British control, for that task was already done for the people by the mutinous sepoys. If there was any war, it was for maintaining and not gaining independence.<sup>2</sup>

Here it seems it is conceded that the mutinous sepoys did secure the freedom of the country, an achievement to which neither the Pindaris nor the Wahabis could lay any claim. This alone may point to the basic differences in the parallel sought to be established. As for the statement that the popular upsurge had nothing to do with the independence or freedom from British control, the question has already been discussed at full length with a view to showing that the cause and effect relation between the mutiny and civil rebellion is not very clear and that even if it was so, available evidence do not indicate that the mutiny of troops alone led to the total subversion of British power.<sup>3</sup> The independence that was gained for a short period was achieved by the people as well and even maintained by them without the help of the sepoys. The second point that is urged is that,

during the period of independence, thus gained, there is unimpeachable evidence to show that the people were engaged in all kinds of subversive activities, and individuals, classes, and States were fighting with one another for their own interests. On the other hand, one looks in vain for any evidence to show that the civil popu-

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 619.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 619-20.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, pp. 64-68.

lation realized the value and importance of the recovery of lost independence, and made an organized and determined effort to maintain it by evolving a suitable plan of defence.<sup>1</sup>

This is again a repetition of the same point. The numerous recorded instances based on 'unimpeachable evidence' of how people were making hectic preparations to build up their military strength both for offensive and defensive purposes at particular and collective levels with a view to consolidate their position, as already shown in the foregoing pages, will demonstrate the utter untenability of any such allegation.<sup>2</sup>

The Proclamations of the period are then taken up for discussion and it is observed :

It is quite obvious that the idea of a common national endeavour to free the country from the yoke of the British is conspicuous by its absence in these proclamations. Indeed one could hardly expect such an idea in those days from people of this class.<sup>3</sup>

But the historian contradicts himself in so far as a common national endeavour was concerned, for in the paragraph immediately preceding this statement he refers to the proclamations of the muslim chiefs of Oudh and Rohilkhand containing an appeal to the Muslims to fight against the infidels, and adds that to the Hindus also, and to 'the native rulers too' the appeal was made. A wider survey of the proclamations of the period would have shown that the idea of a common national endeavour to free the country from the yoke of the British was tangibly conspicuous by its presence in the proclamations.<sup>4</sup> In confirmation of it, reference may be made to the Delhi Proclamation addressed to the Hindus, Muslims, citizens, servants and officers stating that they 'have all combined solely on account of their religion' and have not spared alive one infidel and have re-established the Delhi dynasty.<sup>5</sup> The political and religious forces making for a combination of all the elements of Indian national life against the English and the exertion to deliver the country from the

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 620.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 75-80.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 620.

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> *Supra*, pp. 48-49. also Quoted in BPIR. 513.

yoke of the infidels have been beyond doubt clearly exhibited in this proclamation. In fact, joint alliances between the Hindus and Muslims for the common objective of freeing the country from the yoke of the British is frequently noticed in the political literature of the period. The following sample, 'I conjure the Hindus in the name of Ganga, Tulsī and the Muhamedans by the name of God and the *Koran* to join us in destroying the English, for their mutual welfare'<sup>1</sup> also serves to confirm that the idea of delivering the country from the rule of the foreigners by a common national endeavour became an article of faith and constituted the essence of the proclamations of the revolutionary period. The object of the 1857 struggle lies abundantly in evidence in a number of statements, manifestos, incendiary addresses and proclamations as already referred to in connection with the speech of Sarfarazali,<sup>2</sup> and if all these documents cannot prove that the primary object of the Indian leaders and their followers in the 1857 struggle was the expulsion of the British by a common national endeavour than those who demur will have to state how much of these source-materials regarding the ideals and activities of these leaders are not genuine. To denounce the validity of a series of documents if they tend to show that the positive aspect of the anti-British national uprising of 1857 was the expulsion of the foreign rulers and the establishment of indigenous rule, and to accept as true the same sources, the proclamations, if they help exhibit the communal character of the rising<sup>3</sup> certainly points to the adoption of a double standard in the assessment of historical situations. The reference to Nana Shahib's proclamation in the *British Paramountcy* is a point at issue. The importance of that 'unique' proclamation can hardly be over exaggerated. Nana states that he has been commissioned by God to destroy the Kaffurs with a view to re-establishing the Hindu and Mahomedan kingdoms *as formerly*. It has been noticed that nowhere in the proclamations of the period has there been such a clear enunciation of the political ideals of the movement as in this

<sup>1</sup> CR. 281, fn. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 29 ff.

<sup>3</sup> See BPIR. 620.

declaration.<sup>1</sup> The *British Paramountcy* quotes this passage without adding a single word on its significance. On the contrary, the proclamation has been characterised as a 'ridiculous one' and, since Nana concluded his message with the usual warning that those who would not join the revolt would be sternly dealt with, the construction is put that the proclamation lost the character of a declaration of war of independence by the people. It is very difficult to justify this line of thinking, for in an address going out in the name of Nana Sahib the declaration of war, as such, by the people cannot have any relevancy unless the point was covered by repeated references to the determination of driving away the English in the proclamation,<sup>2</sup> so quietly ignored.

After stating that the proclamations of the period do not indicate that there was common national endeavour to free the country from the yoke of the British, the historian turns to the question of patriotic motives, and comments :

There is thus no positive evidence in support of the view that people were inspired by a *sense of patriotism* to fight for retaining the freedom of the country which they had obtained so *cheaply and unexpectedly* without having to wage war. It has been urged that the very fact that the people and the Chiefs fought heroically against the British when the days of retribution came, proves that they fought for independence. But . . . mere fight against the British does not constitute a war of independence. One must look to the object of the fight. In the particular case . . . the most obvious inference is that the people fought for retaining what they *had wrongfully secured*, and avoiding chastisement, . . . The protracted or heroic character of the resistance against the avenging British forces cannot, by itself, be regarded as such evidence. For the people had burnt their boats and had only two alternatives before them, either to fight or lose their lives . . .<sup>3</sup>

It will be difficult to say, if the above paragraph contains value judgements or insinuations. It has been categorically stated that there was no patriotic urge behind the peoples' fight despite evidence to the contrary as shown in the *Civil*

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 30-34.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 621.

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

*Rebellion.*<sup>1</sup> So it is insinuated that when the days of retribution came, the people were compelled to resist the avenging British forces only to avoid chastisement and to retain what was wrongfully secured. If all the numerous instances of elaborate defensive measures which the people and their chiefs had taken in the whole extent of the country as shown above<sup>2</sup> do not constitute 'positive evidence' to show that the people were inspired by a sense of patriotism, then one would naturally expect the historian to give his opinion of what historical evidence is. But whatever kind of evidence he was thinking of in coming to the conclusion that the people were fighting not from patriotic motives but for 'retaining what they had wrongfully secured,' no evidence can be regarded as conclusive so long as he cannot prove that the people had actually secured wrongfully what rightfully belonged to alien rulers. In other words, it will have to be shown that the confiscation and seizure of land by wrongful mutations under an iniquitous system of revenue settlement and other alien pressures was a just and honest policy and its challenge by Indians was definitely unjustified. The social and economic background of the struggle had already been explained in the *Civil Rebellion*,<sup>3</sup> but the tendency to disregard facts which go against conclusions already made persists, and this explains the dictum why the 'protracted or heroic character of resistance against the avenging British forces cannot by itself' prove the existence of any patriotic motive. The resistance so offered is assumed to be provoked by fear of 'British retribution' which stiffened their back. If the historian was not satisfied with the existing evidence that the people fought from patriotic motives, he could as well have professed ignorance of the motives which led the people to fight back 'heroically' when the days of retribution came. For such motives which he has imputed, that the people fought because they had burnt their boats and were therefore compelled to fight or die, are based on his own imagination and not upon any unimpeachable testimony of actual evidence.

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 82-84, 115-16.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 75-80.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, pp. 107-9, 133-36.

The other statement that the people had obtained the freedom of the country '*cheaply and unexpectedly without having to wage war*' shows a disposition to think lightly of the revolt and a lack of acquaintance with recent researches on the subject. Available evidence tend to show that the sepoys had little to do with the freedom of the country.<sup>1</sup> It has been maintained on the basis of authentic evidence that the real subversion of British power was brought about not by the military insurrections but effectively by the people who rose up on the ruins of the Bengal Army or even earlier. It has also been seen that the sepoys had not the capacity nor the leadership to put themselves at the head of the movement and so naturally accepted a host of native dignitaries as leaders who were carrying on the struggle at different fronts.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the charge that the people '*had not to wage any war*' would appear to be baseless. But a factual survey of the reactions and response of the villagers, and of the sweeping participation of the common people in the struggle, is perhaps necessary to dispel wrong theories about the part played by the masses in the anti-British uprising of 1857.

At Meerut the spirit of rebellion infected many villages and it was the villagers who rallied round Shahmal to combat the avenging British army at the battle of Baraut on 18 July 1857. A festering body of nearly four thousand Jats fought to the last ditch under the inspiring leadership of Shahmal who could not be overtaken and was only finished by the sword. The mantle of Shahmal fell on his grandson who continued the struggle.<sup>3</sup> In the above case it will be clear that the 'day of retribution' did not come on July 18, and neither were the jat insurgents sepoys. This one single instance will demonstrate the weakness of the theory that the people had not to wage any war. Exactly similar are the other instances with which the history of the revolt is full. In Muzaffarnagar vast masses of people reacted to the outbreak of the anti-British struggle. Tension was high specially in the Kandhla pargana and Thana Bhawan in the month of September. The action that took place for

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 619-20; *Supra*, pp. 64-78.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 65.

the possession of Samli was a fierce one. Mohir Singh, the jat zamindar, took the station by assault but one hundred and thirteen men were killed in the defence of the tahsil of Samli. The rebel insurgents were so furious that they did not even spare those of the defenders who fled to the mosques for shelter. Equally in Saharanpur the villagers showed a grit and determination to fight. What took place on 22 June was a war of villagers. The whole of the battle area was covered with rebels, in some places ten and twenty deep, which would number not less than three thousand.<sup>1</sup> No less desperate were the Koil rebels who fought bravely at the battle of Aligarh on 24 August, under their leader Gausemohammed Khan who brought to the field insurgents numbering five to six thousand, besides a mixed body of sepoy and zamindari levies amounting to six or seven hundred men.<sup>2</sup> In Agra the Dholpur leader Deohans mustered an army of nearly three thousand men ready for action, while in Akrabad, Jaydayal, Mangal Singh and others organised the villagers to fight against the government.<sup>3</sup> Etawah fell into the possession of the rebels from the very beginning. In the fierce encounter that took place at Ajitmal in Etawah in March, 1858, the people of the neighbouring villages formed the bulk of the army and defended the place from the attacks of the English.<sup>4</sup> Attention has already been drawn to the report submitted by F. O. Mayne, the joint-magistrate of Gopiganj to the east of Allahabad, showing the deployment of rebel forces in the first part of October. These were all zamindari levies kept constantly on the move in the Gangetic tracts. In the struggle for the possession of the fort of Dahain on 14 July 1858 more than one thousand rebels were killed.<sup>5</sup> In the war at Cawnpore the villagers joining the war far exceeded the number of the sepoy. Statements of British officers that about the middle of July there were near about twenty-thousand fighting men of all classes in Cawnpore appear to be rather an under-

<sup>1</sup> CR. 76-77.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 79.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 83.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 85-86.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 92.

estimate. The contingents supplied by different tribes such as the gaurs, chauhans, powars, chandelas and the paliwallahs numbered near about sixty thousand men.<sup>1</sup> It has not been noticed that it was the revolt of the gaur and chauhans that excited the Gwalior contingents to march to Cawnpore. And Nana Sahib was persuaded to believe that should he make a common cause with the Gwalior troops the whole of the thirty-six villages inhabited by the chauhans would flock to his standard. This actually came to pass. On 27 November 1857 when the British forces were beaten back to retire within the entrenchment there were present with the Gwalior troops many rebel leaders of Cawnpore and Kalpi, retainers and agents of many zamindars, and indeed many zamindars, of the chauhan and gatum tribes of the 36 villages along with their followers. 'Kooer Singh' of Jagdispur along with raja Durgaprosad also participated in the engagement. All of them also took part in the battle of Generalganj on 6 December 1857, besides numerous other notables like Kalindargir Goshain, Kuber Singh, Bhopal Singh, Narpal Singh and others. All this will show whether the people had to wage war or not either to win or to retain their freedom.<sup>2</sup>

In Fatehpur it was also an affair of the country leaders like Gurdal Singh, Rambaksh Singh, Maharaj Singh and others. In the action in the village of Khajwa in the interior of the district on 1 November 1857, the rebels numbered about four thousand men of which only two thousand were sepoy. The official return shows that the loss on the side of the British was very considerable.<sup>3</sup> At Shahjahanpur the leaders raised armies and took part in the expedition to Haldiwani on 10 February 1858. When the Fyzabad mauilavi beleaguered Hale's troops on 30 April in the local jail, every house in town was found to be loopholed.<sup>4</sup> Official estimate of the concentration of rebel forces at Fyzabad in February 1858, as contributed by rajas and zamindars, shows that there was about sixteen thousand active enemies in the field which may give

<sup>1</sup> CR. 104.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 106-7.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 108.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 117-18.

an idea accurate enough of the proportion of civil population taking part in the war of 1857.<sup>1</sup> Nazim Mehndi Hasan of Sultanpur played a very significant role in the war of the mutiny. He had his headquarters at Hasanpur, 20 miles from the Jaunpur frontier, and was supported by all the talukdars of Sultanpur, Jaunpur, and Fyzabad. The nazim's force at Hasanpur did not exceed six thousand men but later reports indicated that his army swelled from eight thousand to ten thousand men consisting of new levies. A speedy move on Jaunpur was contemplated and about five hundred villagers were seen collected at Chanda by the middle of October.<sup>2</sup> In the first action at Chanda (31 October 1857), the non-professional soldiers fought stubbornly. In the second action (19 February 1858) general Franks encountered strong opposition from nazim's troops numbering ten thousand men. Another leader Banda Hasan mustered an army of eight thousand men of whom two thousand and five hundred were sepoys. But the passage was stormed and Mehndi Hasan being out-manoevred eventually took a determined stand at Sultanpur to prevent Frank's passage to Lucknow. The nazim's force now numbered twenty-five thousand men of whom only five thousand were sepoys and one thousand and hundred cavalry.<sup>3</sup> At Lucknow overwhelming numbers joined the war. Official lists furnished by Probyn, of the zamindars and talukdars who with their retainers were in arms in Lucknow in October 1857 shows that the total amounted to 76,335 men and 40 guns. In the middle of December 1857, the talukdari forces at Lucknow according to another official estimate stood at 32,080. Forbes-Mitchell writes that the total strength of the enemy was computed at one hundred and thirty thousand fighting men of which sixty thousand were regular mutineers.<sup>4</sup> In Lucknow it was a war of the people of all classes.<sup>5</sup> If the talukdars and their men failed to retain Lucknow they displayed the qualities of consummate fighters at the battle of

<sup>1</sup> CR. 121.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 151.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 123-4.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 130-31 fn.

<sup>5</sup> *Supra*, pp. 105-6.

Nawabganj in the Bara Banki district. This battle of the landlords on 14 June 1858 was one of the most memorable battles of the Sepoy War and showed the intensity of the spirit of revolt animating the zamindars, as brigadier Hope Grant himself a combatant in the war, testified.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Basti district during this period is the history of peoples' exertions at all levels. After the reconquest of Gorokhpur on 5 January 1858, the rebels moved westward and formed a double entrenchment at Amorah in the southwestern part of the Basti district to obstruct the march of Rowcroft from Gorokhpur. Rowcroft was making repeated incursions to effect a passage into Gonda from the Amorah side. Mehndi Hasan, the rebel nazim of Sultanpur, the rajas of Gonda, Nanpara, Atrauli and the raja of Churda in the Bahraich district, and many other talukdars including Gulzarali, the rebel Syed of Amorah, united their forces numbering about fifteen thousand men and stood by this formidable entrenchment. In this national war at Amorah which is one of the most memorable events of the Sepoy War, the rebel army, as estimated above, contained of a few stragglers of the 1st, 10th and 53rd regiments. Rowcroft was unable to storm the position on 2 March 1858, but took it by assault a few days after.<sup>2</sup> In the Bahraich district, the battle of Nawabganj (27 November 1858) was another triumph of the peoples' cause. The raikwars of the district, the talukdars of Chahlari in the west, and the rajas of Gonda and Churda joined the coalition of rebel powers and fought against the British.<sup>3</sup> Similarly Mohammed Hasan, the rebel leader of Gorokhpur who fought several times with the British, had no mutinous regiment with him. According to one official report the total number of his force amounted to ten or twelve thousand men of which only five thousand were sepoys.<sup>4</sup> The Jaunpur, leader Muzaffar Jahan also commanded a huge army of trained men and united his militia with the rebel force at the first battle of Chanda. His people fought well and though defeated

<sup>1</sup> CR. 126-7.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 145-46.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 144.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 147.

assembled again under his inspiring leadership. In the tense situation that prevailed in the last part of November, when the position of the British was rendered precarious by Indian offensives, the Gwalior troops at Cawnpore, the begam from Lucknow and the Jaunpur rebels advancing from the east, Muzaffar Jahan's militia swelled from ten thousand on 22 November to sixteen thousand on 28 November.<sup>1</sup> After the fall of Lucknow, Sheikh Ghulam Hussain, the chackladar of Jaunpur and Mehndi Hasan of Sultanpur again collected in the northern and western part of the district nearly three thousand men, only one third of whom were trained sepoy. Khudabaksh the *soi disant* chackladar of Jaunpur, had, it is said, a force of two thousand men of whom only two hundred were sepoy.<sup>2</sup> The nature of the vast popular upsurge at Azamgarh has already been indicated. 2,000 rajcoomars and 8,000 palwars completely outnumbered in the popular militia the sepoy who were only 1,200 in strength.<sup>3</sup> In Shahabad all classes of people were affected which explained why the magistrate recommended the wholesale destruction of all villages. It has been noticed that seven to ten thousand men arose as if by magic in Shahabad. Wake says that as the mutiny came numbers of the lower classes joined the war.<sup>4</sup> Dunbar's ill-fated expedition for the relief of Arrah on 29 July 1857 is a proof of popular participation in the war; the execution was done mostly by the infuriated villagers who cut up the wounded soldiers into small pieces,<sup>5</sup>. At the village of Dullaur, where the rebels made a resolute stand against the offensive of Major Eyre on 12 August 1857, the sepoy formed only half the total strength of the entire force.<sup>6</sup> The various estimates made by the officials of the army of Kunwar Singh when he came back to Shahabad showed that the village people and other non-professionals formed a good portion of the army.<sup>7</sup> By the end of April 1858, the Shahabad army, as already

<sup>1</sup> CR. 151-52.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 152.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 156.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 173.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 175.

<sup>6</sup> CR. 178.

<sup>7</sup> CR. 243.

noted, reached the total strength of nearly nine thousand men of whom only three thousand were sepoys and the rest, thousands of armed villagers.<sup>1</sup> The rebel tribes at Palamau numbered five or six thousand. They were armed and very powerfully disposed.<sup>2</sup> The same was true of the Kols of Singhbhum and Seraikella.<sup>3</sup> The proportions of the people and their chiefs organising war efforts and taking part in actual conflicts in countries to the south of the Jumna was even more preponderating as there were not many mutinous sepoys to go round the rebel camp. There the initiative lay essentially with the people and all these instances of the war waged by the countryside as in Banda, Jalaun, Jhansi, Sagar and Narbada territories have been clearly indicated.<sup>4</sup> Even in far distant Kolhapur the insurgents were mostly villagers and not sepoys.<sup>5</sup>

The vast mass of facts recounted above certainly point to one conclusion, that the people everywhere were struggling to win and to retain their freedom. Inasmuch as the total subversion of British power in many places was effected by these popular risings mainly,<sup>6</sup> peoples' share of winning the freedom of the country, though only for a temporary period, cannot be deemed to be anything less, in the broad historical perspective, than that of any other agency. It cannot in the face of these facts be disputed that in the first phase, the people fought for winning freedom, and in the second phase, for retaining the hard-won freedom against the avenging British army. In any case, whether for winning or for retaining freedom or both, the Indians had to face many stiff engagements and sacrifice their lives in many a battle of very cruel and exterminating forms. That the war of 1857 was a war of revenge, 'a war to the knife', has also been generally admitted even by British historians. Therefore, the observation that the people had achieved their independence *cheaply*

<sup>1</sup> CR. 247.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 184.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 194.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 207 ff.

<sup>5</sup> CR. 230.

<sup>6</sup> *Supra*, pp. 64-68.

and unexpectedly without having to wage any war may appear to be tendentious, if not basically false.

There is yet another aspect of the question. If the historian is to be believed one will have to admit that all these 'unimpeachable historical facts' of war as stated above were wars waged to retain what was 'wrongfully secured'. If it was so, it will have to be proved that each and every one of the thousands and thousands of people and their leaders who carried on the struggle against the British had glutted themselves with the spoils of the treasury and plunders of the riches. This is of course an absurd demand, unreasonable and unthinking, as by no earthly evidence can this statement be upheld. But this is the only reply one can furnish to the inherently impossible and incomprehensible line of thinking of the *British Paramountcy*, so frequently repeated, that 'those who demur will have to prove how many of the rebels in 1857 were prompted by disinterested and patriotic motives of freeing the country from the yoke of foreigners'.<sup>1</sup> So if it cannot be proved that the people fought for retaining what was 'wrongfully secured', in respect of every individual case the other premise that they combated the avenging British army not from any patriotic motives is not equally amenable to any historical approach. The *British Paramountcy* has devoted a chapter on the 'Atrocities' and indeed there is a plethora of evidence to show that the Indians were killed by the civil sword and destroyed by the army of retribution. When there was no doubt about it that the government meditated a general bloody prosecution,<sup>2</sup> a national reaction could not but have emerged—a sense of righteous indignation to fight the evil and drive back the British army of occupation. This is an attitude which cannot by any calculation be far removed from a feeling of patriotism, so conspicuously absent, as our historian claims, in the military exertions of the Indians in 1857.

To reinforce his contention the editor of the *British Paramountcy* goes to the extent of maintaining that even the people of Oudh cannot be credited on evidence with patriotic intentions. Dr S. N. Sen's statement that the 'patriots of Oudh

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 624.

<sup>2</sup> CR. 264-7.

fought for their king and country' has been questioned on the ground that :

he does not make it quite clear whether he regards the chiefs and people of Awadh as patriots because they fought for their king and country, or whether he regarded as patriots only those who fought for their king and country. But, then, he does not give us any idea of their number<sup>1</sup>.

The burden of this tortuous logic is difficult to understand. The distinctive character of these two alternative propositions has not come out in clear shape and indeed appears confusing. The first proposition seems to implicate that since the immediate political objective of fighting for the king and country was conspicuously absent in the case of the rebels living outside the dominion of Oudh, they could be excluded from the category of patriots. The second proposition possibly implies that, since the patriots of Oudh fought for their king and country only, they were excluded from the war of independence of India if that could be shown to have existed. Taken together, these two alternative propositions as the historian seems to have in view may be interpreted to show that the so called Indian war of independence was of no concern to the patriots of Oudh, nor was it fed by patriotic urges of the people living outside the dominion of Oudh. In support of this view the *British Paramountcy* refers to the spirited reply of Mohammed Hasan, the rebel leader of Gorakhpur, to the letter of Sheikh Khairuddin, wherein he frequently refers to his devotion and loyalty to the king of Oudh, holding that his business was with 'the king of Oude', and that the rebellion arose solely out of the annexation of Oudh. More specifically Hasan asserted : We servants and dependents of the King of Oude consider it essential to our prosperity in both worlds to display devotion in protecting the kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

To this the *British Paramountcy* comments :

But it is not easy to understand why the princes and people of Hindusthan living outside the dominion of Awadh would find themselves in the same predicament. Such a general statement

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 622.

<sup>2</sup> Sen, op. cit. pp. 388-89.

shows that Hasan assumed the outbreak of 1857 to be a war of independence of Awadh and not of India . . .<sup>1</sup>

But the historian has not quoted in full the statement of Mohammed Hasan. Mohammed Hasan very emphatically asserted that the English were guilty of faithless conduct in seizing the kingdom of Oudh perfidiously from a dynasty which had never opposed them and in deposing the king. Thus the chiefs and people of Oudh had not only a political grievance to complain of but a moral wrong to avenge.<sup>2</sup> The question of doubting the patriotic motives of Mohammed Hasan and his followers and of other chiefs does not arise. But the construction that is put on Hasan's statement that he was thinking exclusively of Oudh, and that it was a cry of independence for Oudh only, and not of India, does not appear to be correctly held. Did not Hasan say that the *rebellion of the Chiefs and Peoples of Hindusthan* arose solely out of the annexation of Oude? This is what he said: 'The Princes and Peoples of Hindosthan, witnessing this perfidious oppression took the opportunity of the revolt of the army and the outbreak took place.' That the princes and people of Hindusthan took up the cause of Oudh and made it a common cause in their fight against the British and were completely arrayed on the side of the patriots of Oudh is made more clear in the assurance which he held out that 'if even now, Her Majesty shows disposition in giving back the kingdom to the king of Oudh all the *chiefs of Hindosthan* will return to their allegiance'.<sup>3</sup> This is a clear illustration of the fact, in so far as the statement of Hasan was concerned, that the cause of the chiefs and people of Oudh was the cause of the 'princes and people of Hindosthan', and so the assumption of the *British Paramountcy* that there was no valid reason to suppose why the princes and people of Hindusthan would find themselves in the same predicament as Hasan would appear to be manifestly wrong. But the historian far from accepting this position as above thinks that Hasan's statement 'even if restricted to the chiefs and people of Awadh may justly be regarded as

<sup>1</sup> BPIR . 622-23.

<sup>2</sup> Sen, op. cit. pp. 388-89.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 388.

suspect.' The case of Beni Madho who refused to surrender his person on the ground that he was not a subject of the British government has also been cited but the very familiar argument that there was nothing to show how far any of them represented correctly the views of the rebels as a body or indeed of any one but themselves<sup>1</sup> has again been advanced to question the patriotic urges even of the Oudh chiefs and people. This negative approach does not make any sense in history. For, if the point is a little stretched, the validity of all such documents on which the history of the Mutiny has been written may as well be questioned. In the point at issue it has not been noticed that the obligations of the feudal society created conditions for the representative character of these proclamations and letters. What Dr S. N. Sen says is quite appropriate that 'Feudal loyalty at one time served for patriotism and the overwhelming majority of the people shared the feelings of their leaders.'<sup>2</sup>

The analysis of Mohammed Hasan's statement as made above may serve to show conclusively that the rebel leaders had no doubts in their minds about the objectives they had in common, that the princes and people of Hindusthan took up the cause of the chiefs and people of Oudh in fighting for their king and country against the British. Hence the assumption that the rebels living outside the dominion of Oudh or the princes and people of Hindusthan were fighting without any patriotic impulse of a concrete character is patently untenable. What has been argued in a bantering tone, to the effect that the patriots were nowhere to be seen at the time when the king of Oudh was ignominiously driven and that they had not dared to display their patriotism until after the soldiers broke out,<sup>3</sup> does not fit in with the nature of historical processes. A revolution comes, when it comes, nobody can predict when the volcano will erupt. The other point urged in the same tone that, if patriotic feeling was that strong, should not they have rallied round the banners of the begam in large numbers, can be answered by what has already been stated regarding

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 623.

<sup>2</sup> Sen, *op. cit.* p. 412.

<sup>3</sup> BPIR. 623.

the concentration of talukdari levies and other non-professional soldiers at Lucknow all throughout the period from October to March, and the grim nature of the struggle that followed.<sup>1</sup>

The second proposition as already indicated stands thus : that if the patriots of Oudh fought for their king and country alone, they are automatically excluded from the war of independence, if any, going on.<sup>2</sup> This also cannot be accepted as a valid proposition either from the statement of Mohammed Hasan himself or from the testimony of other facts. Hasan makes his position quite clear : 'Just as you and all other employees of the government hope to attain worldly advantage and also prosperity in the world to come by fighting determinedly as in a *Jehad*, on the side of the English government, so I also consider it ennobling and sure to benefit one now, and hereafter, to fight and die in the tenets of my creed and in the cause of my illustrious sovereign.'<sup>3</sup>

The two objectives of Hasan's stand, as stated above, are that he was fighting for his religion as well as for his 'earthly sovereign.' The feudal lords of Oudh summoned their tenants not only in the name of their king but also in the name of religion. Of these two issues, the one on religion was indisputably of an all-India character though the local issue of fighting for the king and country of Oudh had undoubtedly attained a national dimension inasmuch as the chiefs and people of Hindusthan had taken up the cause of Oudh rebels. But religious discontents provided the rallying point of the anti-British uprising of 1857 and in the absence of wider territorial patriotism the revolt began as a fight for religion.<sup>4</sup> The contention that the people of Oudh fought for their king alone and not for religion thus turns out to be equally fallacious.

Winding up the controversy the historian reiterates his views :

It would thus appear that the outbreak of the civil population in 1857 may be regarded as a war of independence only if we take that term to mean any sort of fight against the British. But, then,

<sup>1</sup> CR. 130-38.

<sup>2</sup> BPIR. 623.

<sup>3</sup> Sen, op. cit. p. 387.

<sup>4</sup> CR. 260, 281-82.

the fight of the Pindaris against the English and the fight of the Wahabis against the Sikhs in the Panjab should also be regarded as such. Those who demur to it should try to find out how much the rebels in 1857 were prompted by motives of material interest and religious considerations which animated, respectively, the Pindaris and the Wahabis, and how much by the disinterested and patriotic motive of freeing the country from the yoke of foreigner.<sup>1</sup>

This is the same stuff repeated once again<sup>2</sup> and the arguments offered are not amenable to historical proof. The Pindaris are not an unfamiliar element in this country and the people of this type abound in the pages of Indian history. If 'any sort of fight against the British' may be regarded as a war of independence then 'it is difficult to deny' in another context, 'the same honour to the arduous struggle carried on by' the Mewatis against the muslim rulers of the country in an earlier period. On grounds of sheer logic this cannot be challenged. Those who demur to it should try to find out how much' of the Mewatis were not prompted by motives of plunder which animated the Pindaris. If it were so, namely, that there was not much of a difference between a Mewati and a Pindari one will have to take the absurd position that the Mewatis also fought for the independence of India.

But assuming, however, that the rebels of 1857 and the Pindaris offer a parallel to each other in Indian history in the sequence of political background and interests, has any historian ever shown that the Pindaris, either in groups or as individuals, showed any interest in stating their grievances through proclamations, statements, addresses and manifestos and the like, which characterised the activities of the Indian rebels of 1857? Is there anything to show that apart from their marauding activities, which are common to all lawless elements which take advantage of a warlike situation in a country, they were out of conviction anti-British in particular, bent on tearing away all traces of British rule and destroying those records, documents and papers only and exclusively which bound the people down to the ensnaring laws of British revenue, legal and economic systems? If nothing of that

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 624.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 146-48.

sort has been discovered the least that can one do is to profess ignorance of the intention of the Pindaris to fight for independence and leave that matter to the more sedate elements of civil population of 1857. From the most positive point of view again those who assert that the civil rebellion of the Indian mutinies did not partake the character of the war of independence and took the responsibility of starting the hare of the Pindaris will have to prove to the satisfaction of the mutiny scholars that Bahadur Shah, Lakshmibai, Nana Sahib and Kunwar Singh were freebooters of the type of Karim Khan, Wasil Mohammad and Amir Khan and lived by plunders like them. The wanton character of such an un-historical judgement will make even those who are slightly aware of the truth of the problem unhappy. Apart from individual cases, here and there, no evidence has been brought to light which support even a remote similarity between the rebels of 1857 and the Pindaris who had no cause to fight, no religion to defend, nor a country to secure against the aliens.

## VII

### MUTINY AND REBELLION

Dr R. C. Majumdar's views on and interpretations of the revolt of 1857 have been examined in the foregoing pages with appropriate attention to details and such objectivity of approach as could possibly be maintained in the perspective of controversy adopted in the treatment of the subject. The two chapters, chapters seventeen and twenty, the Revolt of the people and the Nature of the Outbreak of 1857 taken together, cover most of the problems of the upsurge, whether the revolt of 1857 was mutiny or a rebellion. The most astute calculations have been made by our author and incisive intellectual insight has been shown in highlighting the military overtones of the revolt. The mutinies of 1857 being what they were, this aspect of the revolt has had to be established not by a reference to the military insurrections, too obvious to be emphasized, but by discounting and controverting those features of the anti-British war of resistance which militate against the alleged dominant military character of the revolt. This has obliged the historian to land in a field full of acute controversies and many ticklish issues which, however, have been handled with a feat of skill and dexterity rarely to be seen in Indian historiography.

But the assurance of a detailed and objective study as held out in the preface has not been completely fulfilled : the treatment has not been detailed nor particularly objective. Even within the limits of a work not devoted exclusively to the Revolt of 1857, the *British Paramountcy* could have incorporated materials more basic to the subject by the exclusion of sundry other features not germane to the topic. Full use has not been made of all the original sources, the *Narrative of Events* in particular, as shown in the Appendix. The warlike measures adopted by the people for a defence in depth and their actual military exertions besides other significant features of the countrywide upsurge have not been taken up for scrutiny and

appraisal. The short notice taken of the movements at Shahabad and the Narbada Territories is particularly striking.

The point regarding the lack of objectivity can be illustrated by a painful neglect of well-known facts having a bearing on the popular character of the revolt, in the mutilation of the generally adopted perspective, and not unoften in the staggering and twisting of evidence. The magnitude of the popular uprising at Allahabad and Cawnpore has not come into proper shape; the military exertions of the talukdars have been understressed; and their moral demeanour has been questioned. The Proclamations of the leaders have been staggered, either to highlight or 'lowlight' crucial questions, according as they appeared convenient to formulate generic statements. The rejection of incendiary addresses as evidence on the ground that they are highly polemical and lack representative character and acceptance at the same time of loyal effusions, no less incendiary and far more unrepresentative, shows a kind of double standard very difficult to justify in the methodology of historical research. The subjectivity of the treatment has been no less clear in the selection of statements and views in which personal predilections are strikingly in evidence. The frequent reference to the opinions and loyal professions of the pro-British elements with the exclusion of the pro-Indian views of the European writers indicates the extent to which an objective approach has been vitiated. The total denial of the patriotic motives of the rebels on the ground of absence of evidence, yet imputing motives to them that they fought out of despair at the last stages, without any convincing evidence to support such a charge, brings into relief the subjective attitude as much. The uneven nature of the treatment has been frequently in evidence in the repetition of the same points and arguments in between one topic and another. The communal tension, the participation of the so-called *goondas* and *budmashes*, and the allegation that the people fought for securing what was wrongfully secured, are some of the points repeated in such a manner as leaves the impression that the historian had not hesitated to stretch his ideas and hypothesis to their breaking point. Particularly lamentable is the attitude when the historian is seen going out of his way and speaking like a

propagandist. 'Be it remembered', he urges, that they fought not for their country 'but for retaining their wealth and privileges'.<sup>1</sup> This is indeed somewhat jarring. Besides the very argumentative character of the whole treatment as in the case of the participation of the talukdars of Oudh in the conflict, the discussion as to whether they joined before or after the 'Proclamation', and the tendency to rely upon skilful and partial interpretation of evidence and interests have only served to underline the seeming weakness of the historian's case rather than disqualify the opposite point of view. And the repeated claims at exclusive truth, or at having the last word added, has tended to give the impression of an uncompromising rigid historical attitude unrelieved by a flexibility of understanding. But intrigued by the history and future of his own discipline, our historian feared, perhaps justifiably, that a tendency to reject his views would continue. The genius of the historian was therefore employed in building up in sharp outlines the edges of a stiff baffle wall which could withstand the challenge coming from the wider perspective of studies of the Indian Revolt.

But despite all these features which are matters more of technique than of anything else, there are flashes of masterly observation and spectacular value judgements presented in a seasoned style that would seem almost impossible to repudiate. In particular, as already mentioned, the very superb way he was able to handle two very subtle points, not stressed or treated with the maturity of historical thought by any of the mutiny scholars, is a real contribution of highest importance to mutiny studies. The cause and effect relation between Mutiny and Rebellion was something entirely lost sight of by many, and the importance of that issue as a determining factor in the appraisal of popular uprisings of the period hardly received attention in books professing to deal with the subject. By focussing attention on this important point the historian has initiated a discussion on the main currents of the revolt and indicated a line of study which will prove fruitful to future scholars. The other point of great historical significance which he has carefully worked out is the question

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 547.

of the total subversion of the British power. With his flair for critical approaches he rejected the theory that the rebellion culminated in the subversion of the British power and put a construction, that would seem difficult to controvert, that the sepoys, more than the people, could possibly be credited with the task of overthrowing the British Government. While, therefore, these points and some other allied matters will be found to be particularly elevating, having regard to the cogency of arguments and reasonableness of interpretations with which they have been presented, the attitude of the historian on the uprising of 1857 on the whole however shows a kind of disregard to the spiritual and historical content of the subject.

It is no compliment to the scholars engaged in the studies of Indo-British Relations to maintain in the typical English style, even after the lapse of a century when surely the time for restoration of perspectives had come, that the Mutiny of 1857 was emphatically not a popular, national or progressive movement. 'National it certainly was not' the historian asserted<sup>1</sup> on the ground that it was limited to a comparatively narrow region of India. This has been shown above,<sup>2</sup> particularly with reference to the Narbada territories,<sup>3</sup> as nothing less than a 'travesty of truth'. National historians have a great responsibility in evaluating men and things of the crucial moments of history and it only shows a weakness of national thought if there is any lack of awareness of this problem. Any one-sided verdict given with the full weight of a great historian held in universal esteem has this danger that it becomes difficult to redeem the historical truth so jeopardised. The judgement in its final form on the revolt of 1857, as recorded in the *British Paramountcy*, raises such a problem. 'On the whole', so the historian thinks, 'it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the so-called *First National War of Independence of 1857 is neither First, nor National, nor a War of Independence.*'<sup>4</sup>

The case perhaps has been overstated, and thereby a

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 613, 618.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 137-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, pp. 60-3.

<sup>4</sup> BPIR. 625.

concession has been given to the imperialist point of view. But both from the structural and historical aspects the statement presents certain difficulties. The point of integration sought to be established between each of these three component features, which according to our historian did not characterise the revolt of 1857, appears least convincing. The word 'National' need not be integrated either with 'First' going before, or 'War of Independence' coming after, for the War of Independence of 1857 could have been the first War of Independence without being a National War of Independence. If it is maintained that the 'Outbreak of 1857 has little claim to be hailed as the first War of Independence,'<sup>1</sup> the assumption is that it could have been so without being national. In other words, the first War of Independence in India need not have been necessarily national in character. That the revolt of 1857 was both the first war of its kind, and a War of Independence at that, without being national in form, has actually been admitted by him in the following words :

The outbreak of 1857 would surely go down in history as the first great and direct challenge to the British rule in India, on an extensive scale.<sup>2</sup>

If, therefore, the outbreak of 1857 was the first of its kind which took place on an 'extensive scale', it must have produced conditions of a war of independence. For, the 'great and direct challenge to the British rule' could have resulted only from the anti-alien patriotism of the Indians aiming to drive out the foreign rulers and not from any other motive which was less than great or not directly political. Here is an objective approach to the revolt of 1857 which in its indisputably authentic form stands as the First War of Independence. First War of Independence it certainly was, as in the whole canvas of the recorded history of India it would be difficult to find a parallel to this gigantic anti-foreign combine of all classes of people and of many provinces of India. There was never a war in India lasting continuously for more than a year and simultaneously in all the regions which had for its objec-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 624.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. i, p. 275.

tive the abasement and ejection of the alien ruling power.<sup>1</sup>

The historian's contention that the war was not national in character has not been convincingly established. If the war was on a massive scale, as he says, it could not have been confined to a few provinces of upper India. The whole question regarding the extent of the revolt has already been discussed with full reference to facts and figures.<sup>2</sup> Excepting the far South where there was hardly any echo of the revolution, all other parts of India felt the shock of this convulsion. The attempt to build up the theory that the revolt of 1857 was not national in character on the ground that the country to the south of the Narbada had not been the scene of any action and did not participate in the revolt possibly ignores the reasons for the opposite reactions of the old and new provinces of the British Empire in India, so clearly reflected in general in the history of the revolt.<sup>3</sup> But the attitude of the far South was possibly due to causes far more basic. For geographical and other factors the response of the people of the far South to movements originating from upper India had not been always very deep. In particular the people of that region had shown an aversion to political extremism as even the history of the Indian Freedom Movement in the twentieth century would show. It may be noted that in the centenary year of the Mutiny not a single book of importance on the subject came from the far South. In judging about the national character of a movement in India, one has to take into account the vastness of the country and the accompanying differences of various levels of existence. How many national movements in recorded history have actually covered the whole of the countries concerned ?

The second point stressed to underline the anti-national character of the movement is the absence of patriotic urges. This goes against what the historian has himself said about the 'great and direct challenge to the British Rule' which could not very well have occurred without the incentive of political and patriotic urges. The attempt to rivet the issue by the two-

<sup>1</sup> CR. 296-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, pp. 136-38.

<sup>3</sup> CR. 295-96.

fold interpretation of the statement of Dr Sen that the 'patriots of Oudh fought for their king and country' is not very convincing. That the chiefs and people of Hindustan were not patriots because there was no reason why they should find themselves in the same predicament as the patriots of Oudh who were fighting for their king and country appears meaningless as the former did take up the cause of Oudh as stated by the Oudh patriot Mohammed Hasan. That the patriots of Oudh are to be excluded from the war of independence, for they were patriots because they were fighting for Oudh only and exclusively and not for an Indian issue again runs counter to what Mohammed Hasan said to the effect that they were fighting for the cause of their religion as well. It is therefore difficult to accept what is suggested in a subtle way that neither the people of Oudh nor those living outside the dominion of Oudh had any common objective in the 'so-called War of Independence' and so could not be credited with any patriotic intentions in the broad sense of the term. The main trends of the Revolt may also serve to show that patriotic feelings were roused by two factors—in the first place, in the absence of territorial patriotism religion became the most potent force in moulding the patriotic feelings of the people for the country. This is also the genesis of Indian Nationalism; the over-riding compulsions of history tended to bring about a mixture of politics and religion in a curious process and laid the foundation of Indian National thought. Secondly, during the period of Rebellion, loyalty to the feudal chiefs served as a plank on which larger loyalties of the people could grow and develop.

The third point urged not infrequently to underline the non-national character of the revolt was that Hindu-Muslim tension ran high during this period which stood in the way of a combination of all classes of people against the British. The communal question has been discussed<sup>1</sup> and it has been shown that despite communal outbreaks, which occurred only in Rohilkhand and nowhere else, the stress was always laid in the direction of communal peace and harmony. In fact the episodes of the Mutiny leave the impression of what was

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 47-49, 52-53, 71-74, 87, 143-45, 151-2.

at least once a united India. The communal killings of the period when the Congress Movement was at its height are too fresh to be retold. If despite these violent communal distempers of the present century the Freedom Movement in India under the aegis of the Congress is held to have attained the status of a National Movement, none should make a fetish of communal harmony in judging the national contents of other movements. The two-nation theory has been baptised by the blood of the people and confirmed by the verdict of history. Nationality in India is therefore to be understood within the narrow limits of the conflicting claims of two separate and distinct entities and any reference to European parallels in this particular case would appear to be too doctrinaire. And even in post-reformation England, the persistence of a Catholic entity and its virtual ostracism did not militate against the existence of an English nation.

On the whole therefore, it is difficult to agree with Dr Majumdar's views that the anti-British movement of 1857 was not national in character. The verdict lacks convincing evidence for its support, whether measured by the extent of the revolt or judged by motives of the people or even the communal situation. It is puerile to stick to an unduly restricted meaning of nationalism, an idea which changed from age to age. Some sort of crude nationalistic feeling was concealed in the individual and collective loyalties of the people to their landed chiefs fighting against an alien power and indeed in the profound desires of the rebels to end foreign domination for all, and in the general popular support extended to the movement. Otherwise one would have to deny the honour of a national war to medieval French resistance under Joan of Arc against England or to the pre-Mazzinian *Carbonari* who had not yet dreamt of a united Italy. The historians speaking of nationalism must not lose sight of the fact that nationalism is after all a tendency, an impulse, a developing attitude of mind, rather than an objective, fixed, determinate thing.<sup>1</sup> And if further, nationalism is a form of loyalty whose object is the totality of a nation, it is difficult to see how far the concept of such a nation has become a reality

<sup>1</sup> David M. Potter in *The American Historical Review*, July 1962, pp. 92 ff.

in the ideologies of Indian societies. The recent anti-national distempers in Assam which excited the fury even of sedate elements not to speak of other recent trends, may serve to show the limited extent to which India has been integrated. If Indian nationalism, the National Movement of the Congress notwithstanding, has not yet attained the desired standard and fixed specifications, the vaunted Freedom Movement in India in the twentieth century was also not national in character any more than the Revolt of 1857 was. Yet from a functional rather than a formalistic view of all historical phenomena, both these movements were indeed national because they represented the evolutionary, though variable, and undoubtedly developing nature of the manifestations of nationalism. Therefore, Dr R. C. Majumdar's characterisation of the Revolt of 1857 as neither First, nor National, nor a War of Independence appears to be neither appropriate nor indeed, just.

In looking back at this Great History of the Sepoy War as a whole, one will not take a just account of it unless it is considered that the uprising of 1857 was both a Mutiny and a Rebellion, perhaps more of a rebellion than of the undoubted mutiny which either followed or preceded the sweeping participation of the people. 1857 was a great epoch in the long annals of Indian history. The traditions of a struggle against foreign domination keep a nation upright for centuries, so commented the celebrated historian of the Dutch War of Independence. The same was true of India. The historical memories of the 'Mutiny' supplied the main spring of the national exertions of the Indians in the post-mutiny period. The force of this legacy stands confirmed by later events, a view with which Dr R. C. Majumdar has full concurrence. Despite the European orientation of his studies, the historian in him has not failed to resolve the ambivalence of the character of this human tempest, the revolution that began in a quest for freedom and ended with the return of the British to India. Like an unerring draftsman he has traced with wonderful accuracy the institutional shape of the forces flowing out of this volcano of anger and resentment in a way which will stand as one of the masterpieces of historical writings. The great historian reflects :

It has been said that Julius Caesar, dead, was more powerful than when he was alive. The same thing may be said about the Mutiny of 1857. Whatever might have been its original character, it soon became a symbol of challenge to the mighty British power in India. It remained a shining example before nascent nationalism in India in its struggle for freedom from the British yoke, and was invested with the full glory of the first national war of independence against the British. Nana Sahib, the Rani of Jhansi, Bahadur Shah and Kunwar Singh became national heroes and champions of national freedom and stories of their heroic struggle animated the fighters for freedom more than half a century later.<sup>1</sup>

The year Eighteen Fifty-Seven was a turning point in Indian history at which India failed to turn. Yet the Sepoy War marked the beginning of a new era which ended with the transfer of power by the British in 1947.

<sup>1</sup> BPIR. 661.

## APPENDIX A

### NARRATIVE OF EVENTS REGARDING THE MUTINY IN INDIA OF 1857-58

#### AND THE RESTORATION OF AUTHORITY

#### VOLUME I\*

1. Narrative of events Attending the Outbreak of Disturbances and the Restoration of Authority in the Allahabad District in 1857-58.

No. 376, dated Allahabad, 9th November, 1858.

From F. Thompson, Officiating Magistrate of Allahabad.  
To E. C. Bayley, Officiating Commissioner, 4th Division. pp. 1-10.

#### Enclosures

- (a) From H. D. Willock, Joint-Magistrate of Shahjehanpur.

To C. B. Thornhill, Commissioner of Allahabad.  
Dated the 7th December, 1858. pp. 10-17.

- (b) Memorandum of the particulars of the escape of Mr. Corrigan and family, eleven in number etc. (Sd.) T. H. A. Corrigan. pp. 17-21.

- (c) Supplement to the Narrative of Events & etc. in the Allahabad District. pp. 21-23.

2. Narrative etc. in the District of Futtehpoor in 1857-58, by J. W. Sherer. pp. 23-27.

3. Narrative etc. in the District of Benares in 1857-58. No. 523, dated 6th November, 1858.

\* Calcutta Foreign Department Press, 1881.

National Library (Calcutta), No. G. P. 954 N, 168C.

The title NARRATIVE OF EVENTS ATTENDING THE OUTBREAK OF DISTURBANCES AND THE RESTORATION OF AUTHORITY being common in every official report the full title is abbreviated as Narrative etc.

Other Abbreviations will be readily intelligible.

From F. B. Gubbins, Commissioner.  
 To William Muir, Secretary to Government of North-  
 Western Provinces. pp. 27-31.

#### Enclosures

- (a) The Rebellion of 1857 in the Province of Benares, by Robert Taylor, Officiating Joint-Magistrate, Jounpoor, dated the 15th October, 1858. pp. 31-48.
  - (b) Supplement to the Narrative etc. in the Benares Division, by R. Taylor, Offg. Joint-Magistrate, Jounpoor. Dated the 19th November, 1858. pp. 48-51.
4. Narrative etc. in the District of Goruckpoor in 1857-58.  
 No. 196, dated 5th July, 1858.  
 From C. Wingfield, Commissioner of Goruckpoor.  
 To William Muir, Secy. to the Govt. of N.-W. Provinces. pp. 52-57.
5. Narrative etc. in the Agra District in 1857-58.  
 No. of 1858.  
 From A. L. M. Phillips, Magistrate of Agra.  
 To Commissioner of Agra Division, dated the 9th October, 1857. pp. 57-78.

#### Enclosures

- (a) Appendix No. I. Memorandum in the Defence of a Station of Agra. pp. 78-81.
- (b) Appendix No. II. Proceedings of the Council of Administration of 4th July, 1857. pp. 81-82.
- (c) Appendix No. III. List of murders committed in the city during July 1857. pp. 83-85.
- (d) Appendix IV. Memo. dated 13th October, 1857, by W. Muir, dated Agra, 13th October, 1857. pp. 86-89.
- (e) Appendix V. No. 1, dated Agra, 19th January, 1858. From A. L. M. Phillips, Collector, Agra. To Secy. to Govt. of N.-W. Provinces, Agra. pp. 89-90.
- (f) Appendix VI. Memo. dated Agra, 24th December, 1857, by E. A. Reade, Financial Commissioner. pp. 90-91.

6. Narrative etc. in the District of Muttra in 1857-58.  
 No. 102, dated Saharunpore, 10th August, 1858.  
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 To G. F. Harvey, Commissioner of Agra Division. pp. 91-96.
7. Narrative etc. in the District of Cawnpoor in 1857-58.  
 No. 268, dated Allahabad, 28th April, 1859.  
 From C. B. Thornhill, Offg. Commissioner Allahabad Division.  
 To Secy. to the Govt. of N.-W. Provinces.  
 Forwarding the reports received from Messrs. Sherer and Freeling, dated 13th January, 1859. pp. 96-112.

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- (a) Memo. by Lt.-Col. Williams, Military Secretary to Govt. North-Western Provinces. pp. 112-15.
8. Narrative etc. in the Furruckabad District in 1857-58.  
 Report by W. Probyn, formerly Offg. Magistrate and Collector of that District.  
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- (a) Names of Europeans at Futtehghurh who went down at the commencement of the outbreak and those that remained. pp. 122-23.
- (b) No. 2, dated 20th December, 1858.  
 Report by C. R. Lindsay, now Offg. Magistrate and Collector of Furruckabad. pp. 124-147.
- (c) From Gavin S. Jones.  
 To C. R. Lindsay, Magistrate, Futtehghurh.  
 Dated Futtehghurh, 19th May, 1858. pp. 147-149.
- (d) From Mr. M. G. Churcher.  
 To Geo. B. Robertson, Edinburgh.  
 Dated Futtehghurh, 18th March, 1858. pp. 149-53.
- (e) Decisions by Mr. H. D. Robertson, Deputy-Commissioner, for the trial of rebels are added as illustrative of the progress of events at Furruckabad. pp. 153-58.
9. Narrative etc. in the District of Mynpoory.  
 No.           dated   Eta, 16th November, 1858.

From A. Cocks, Special Commissioner.

To W. Muir, Secretary to the Government of North-Western Provinces.

Forwarding the report by J. Power, Collector and Magistrate, dated 12th June, 1858. pp. 158-67.

10. Narrative etc. in the District of Etawah.

Report by Allan Hume, Magistrate and Collector, dated Etawah, 18th November, 1858. pp. 168-80.

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(a) Appendix I. Extract from letter of Magistrate of Etawah to Commissioner of Agra Division.

Dated 16th May, 1857. pp. 180-81.

(b) Appendix II. Letter of Magistrate of Etawah to Secretary to Govt. of N.-W. Provinces.

Dated 20th May, 1857. pp. 181-83.

(c) Appendix III. Extract of Report by Captains Ross, Corfield and Mr. A. O. Hume, addressed to the Secretary to Govt. of N.-W. Provinces.

Dated 25th May, 1857. pp. 184-5.

(d) Appendix IV. Extract Paragraph 4 of Magistrate of Etawah's Memorandum of the 25th October, 1857, and other such extracts from A. O. Hume's Memorandum. Including similar statements of Major Hennessy, W. R. C. Alexander, Commanding Alexander's Horse at Etawah, and of ors. pp. 185-205.

11. Narrative etc. in the District of Etah in 1857-58.

No. 61, dated Agra, 9th June, 1858.

From A. L. M. Phillipps, Joint-Magistrate of Etah.

To G. H. Harvey, Commissioner of Agra Division.

pp. 206-210.

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(a) Sketch of Occurrences in the Etah District during the Rebellion of 1857. By C. J. Daniell, Offg. Joint-Magistrate, Etah, dated 22nd April, 1858. pp. 210-12.

12. Narrative etc. in the District of Allygurh in 1857-58.

No. 11, dated Allygurh, 17th November, 1858.

From W. J. Bramly, Magistrate and Collector of Allygurh.

To A. Cocks, Special Commissioner. pp. 212-18.

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(a) Appendix A. Letter No. 54, dated 4th May, 1858.

From W. J. Bramly, Collector and Magistrate. pp. 218-21.

(b) Appendix B. No. 922, dated Allahabad, 30th July, 1858.

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To W. Muir, Secretary to Govt. of North-Western Provinces. pp. 221-23.

(c) Appendix C. From A. Cocks to William Muir.

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## 13. Narrative etc. in the District of Meerut in 1857-58.

No. 406, dated 15th November, 1858.

From F. Williams, Commissioner 1st Division.

To W. Muir, Secretary to Govt. of N.-W. Provinces, Allahabad. Including Reports of Events at Sheharunpoor, Mozuffernuggur, Meerut, Boolundshuhur. pp. 225-290.

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(a) Memo. on the Mutiny and Outbreak at Meerut in May, 1857.

By Major G. W. Williams, Commissioner of the Military Police, N. W. Provinces. pp. 290-303.

(b) Deposition taken at Meerut by Major G. W. Williams, Superintendent of Cantonment Police, N. W. Provinces. pp. 303-348.

## 14. Narrative etc. in the District of Mozuffernuggur in 1857-58.

Signed by R. M. Edwards, Magistrate, dated Mozuffernuggur, 16th November, 1858. pp. 348-366.

## 15. Narrative etc. in the District of Bareilly, during the year 1857-58. Signed by J. F. D. Inglis, dated Bareilly, 30th November, 1858. pp. 366-379.

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(a) List of Europeans at Bareilly etc. pp. 379-87.

(b) List of Persons who served under Khan Bahadur Khan. pp. 387-390.

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- (d) List of ex-Government servants. p. 392.
  - (e) Memo showing the pay of the whole force under Khan Bahadoor (Grand Total spent in ten months stands at Rs. 26,55,990-0-0). p. 393.
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  - (i) Narrative etc. at Pilibheet, by C. P. Carmichael, Offg. Magistrate of Burdwan, dated 23rd November, 1858. pp. 397-99.
16. Narrative etc. in the District of Moradabad in 1857-58.  
From J. C. Wilson, Commissioner on special duty.  
To G. F. Edmonstone, Secretary to Govt. Allahabad.  
Dated Calcutta, 24th December, 1858. pp. 400-442.
17. Narrative etc. in the District of Shahjehanpoor in 1857-58.  
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From G. P. Money, Magistrate and Collector, Shahjehanpoor.  
To R. Alexander, Commissioner of Rohilkhund. pp. 442-52.

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- (a) Appendix A. From Charles Jenkins.  
To Secretary to Govt. of N.-W. Provinces.  
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  - (b) Appendix B. List of Govt. Servants who took service with the Rebels and those who did not and list of other notables who joined the rebels. pp. 453-59.
18. Narrative etc. in the District of Budaon by C. P. Carmichael, Offg. Collector and Magistrate of Budaon. 23rd November, 1858. pp. 459-67.
19. Narrative etc. of Saharunpoor in 1857-58.  
No. 84, dated Saharunpoor, 26th September, 1857.  
From R. Spankie, Magistrate, Saharunpoor.  
To F. Williams, Commissioner of the first Division, Meerut.  
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- (a) Correspondence between H. D. Robertson and R. Spankie. pp. 481-88.
- (b) Report of Proceedings at Roorkee during the Disturbances of 1857-58, by Lt.-Col. R. Baird Smith, C. B. pp. 488-504.
20. Narrative etc. in the District of Bijnour in 1857-58. No. 106 n.d.  
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To R. Alexander, Commissioner of Rohilkund. pp. 505-515.  
Appendix From G. Palmer, Offg. Joint-Magistrate.  
To A. Shakespeare, Magistrate of Bijnour.  
Dated 2nd June, 1857. pp. 515-16.
21. Narrative etc. in the District of Kumaon in 1857-58. No. 258, dated Nynetal, 22nd July, 1858.  
From Major H. Ramsay, Commissioner of Kumaon,  
To W. Muir, Secretary to Govt. of N.-W. Provinces.  
pp. 517-19.
22. Narrative etc. in the District of Banda in 1857-58.

## Part I

From F. O. Mayne, Magistrate and Collector of Banda.  
To C. Chester, Commissioner, Allahabad Division.  
Dated Allahabad, 11th September, 1857. pp. 520-26.

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No. 496, Dated Banda, 10th November, 1858.  
From F. O. Mayne, Magistrate of Banda.  
To E. C. Bayley, Offg. Commissioner for the 4th Division.  
pp. 526-538.

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- (a) Appendix A. Description of the condition of the different Pergunnahs. pp. 538-42.
- (b) Appendix B. List of Govt. servants in the employ of the rebel government. pp. 542-44.
23. Narrative etc. at Humeerpoor, by G. H. Freeling, Collector and Magistrate. pp. 544-49.
24. Narrative etc. in the Division of Jhansie in 1857-58, by Captain J. W. Pinkney, Commissioner.  
Dated 20th November, 1858. pp. 549-74.

25. Narrative etc. in the District of Jaloun in 1857-58.  
 No. 18, dated Calpee, 12th June, 1858.  
 From Capt. A. H. Ternan, Deputy-Commissioner of Jaloun.  
 To Capt. F. W. Pinkney, Commissioner of the Jhansie  
 Division. pp. 574-75.

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(a) No. 41, dated Calpee, 29th May, 1858.  
 From G. Passanah, Deputy-Collector of Jaloun.  
 To Capt. A. H. Ternan, Deputy-Commissioner of Jaloun.  
 pp. 575-78.

(b) No. 12, dated Calpee, 9th June, 1858.  
 From G. Passanah, Deputy-Magistrate of Jaloun.  
 To Capt. A. H. Ternan, Deputy-Commissioner of Jaloun.  
 pp. 578-80.

(c) From Syud Oomur Duraz Ali, Deputy-Collector and  
 Deputy-Magistrate of the District of Jaloun. n.d.  
 pp. 580-81.

(d) From G. Passanah.  
 To Major R. R. W. Ellis, Political Agent for Bundel-  
 kund.

Dated Cawnpoor, 27th March, 1858. pp. 581-84.

26. Narratives etc. in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories in  
 1857-58.

No. 368a, dated Jubbulpoor, 10th August, 1858.

From Major W. C. Erskine, Commissioner of Jubbulpoor  
 Division.

To W. Muir, Secretary to the Govt. of N.-W. Provinces.

Including various statements of military officers and a letter  
 from J. Sleeman, Offg. Under-Secretary to the Govt. of  
 India.

No. 715, dated 12th February, 1858. pp. 584-637.

#### Enclosures

- (a) A free translation of a seditious verse composed by  
 Shankar Shah (the last of the Gonda chiefs)  
 "Shut the mouth of slanderers,  
 Bite and eat up backbiters,  
 Trample down the sinners

You 'Sutesingharkha' (one of the names of 'Devee')  
 Kill the British, exterminate them  
 'Mat Chundee' (name of the goddess 'Devee')  
 Let not the enemy escape,  
 Nor the wives and children  
 Of such, oh ! Singharkha ! (another name of goddess  
 'Devee')

Show favour to Shunker,  
 Support your slave,  
 Listen to the cry of Religion,  
 'Mathalka' (another name of the goddess 'Devee')  
 Eat up the Uncleans,  
 Make no delay,  
 Now devour them,  
 And that quickly, 'Ghormat Kalka' (another name of  
 goddess 'Devee').

(Sd.) W. C. Erskine, Commissioner. pp. 637-38.

(b) Proceedings of War Council composed of  
 Col. Millar, Major Erskine, Major Jenkins, Capt.  
 Ludlow, Capt. Pinkney and Lt. Nembhard held at  
 Damoh on the 20th September, 1857. pp. 638-39.

(c) No. 69, dated 28th September, 1857.  
 From Col. J. Millar, Commanding Kamptee.  
 To the Adjutant-General of the Army, Fort St.  
 George. pp. 640-41.

(d) Various other lists. pp. 642-47.

(e) Memo. of the state of Districts in the Jubbulpore Divi-  
 sion, dated 6th February, 1858. pp. 647-49.

(f) No. 20, dated Jubbulpore, 15th February, 1858.  
 From Major-General G. e. Whitlock, Commanding  
 Saugor Field Division.  
 To Major W. C. Erskine, Commissioner, Jubbulpore  
 Division. pp. 649-50.

27. Narrative etc. in the District of Nimar in 1857-58.

No. 157, dated Mundlaiser, 25th May, 1858.

From Capt. R. H. Keatinge, Offg. Political Agent, Western  
 Malwa.

To Sir Robert Hamilton Baronet, Agent, Governor-General  
 for Central India. pp. 651-54.

## 28. Miscellaneous

- (a) Letters of Lt.-Col. H. M. Durand, Offg. Agent, Govr.-Genl. for Central India, Captain R. H. Keatinge, Brigadier Stuart, C. B. Thornhill and G. F. Edmonstone. pp. 654-56.
- (b) No. 105, dated 24th July, 1857.  
From S. J. Nahar, Deputy-Collector and Joint-Magistrate, Nimar.  
To Capt. R. H. Keatinge, Nimar Political Assistant, Nimar. pp. 656-57.

## 29. NARRATIVE OF EVENTS IN THE LOWER PROVINCES UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

## Special Narratives—Government of Bengal, Judicial

- (a) No. 15, Dated Fort William, 15th Aug., 1857. pp. 657-68.
- (b) No. 17, Dated Fort William, 21st Aug., 1857. pp. 668-73.
- (c) No. 18, Dated Fort William, 22nd Aug., 1857. pp. 673-78.
- (d) No. 19, Dated Fort William, 25th Aug., 1857. pp. 678-81.
- (e) No. 20, Dated Fort William, 29th Aug., 1857. pp. 681-91.
- (f) No. 21, Dated Fort William, 31st Aug., 1857. pp. 692-703.
- (g) No. 22, Dated Fort William, 5th September, 1857. pp. 704-11.

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS REGARDING THE MUTINY  
IN INDIA OF 1857-58

## AND

## THE RESTORATION OF AUTHORITY

## VOLUME II\*

Narrative of events in the Lower Provinces under the Government of Bengal, Special Narratives, Government of Bengal, Judicial.

1857

1. No. 23, dated 9th September, 1857. pp. 1-12.
2. No. 24, . . . 12th . . . . . pp. 13-23.

\* Calcutta Foreign Department Press, 1881.  
National Library (Calcutta), No. G. P. 954 N, 168C.

3.	No. 25, .. ..	19th .. . . . .	pp. 23-33.
4.	No. 26, .. ..	26th .. . . . .	pp. 33-44.
5.	No. 27, .. ..	10 October, 1857	pp. 44-51.
6.	No. 28, .. ..	17th .. . . . .	pp. 51-58.
7.	No. 29, .. ..	24th .. . . . .	pp. 58-66.
8.	No. 30, .. ..	31st .. . . . .	pp. 66-74.
9.	No. 31, .. ..	7th November, 1857.	pp. 74-82.
10.	No. 32, .. ..	14th .. . . . .	pp. 82-88.
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12.	No. 34, .. ..	28th .. . . . .	pp. 96-105.
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## 1858

1.	No. 1, Dated	2nd January, 1858.	pp. 133-142.
2.	No. 3, .. ..	22nd .. . . . .	pp. 143-152.
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4.	No. 7, .. ..	30th .. . . . .	pp. 159-167.
5.	No. 8, .. ..	6th February, 1858.	pp. 168-173.
6.	No. 9, .. ..	8th .. . . . .	pp. 173-179.
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8.	No. 11, .. ..	15th .. . . . .	pp. 184-192.
9.	No. 12, .. ..	20th .. . . . .	pp. 192-196.
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13.	No. 18, .. ..	22nd .. . . . .	pp. 216-221.
14.	No. 20, .. ..	3rd April, 1858.	pp. 221-225.
15.	No. 21, .. ..	8th .. . . . .	pp. 225-230.
16.	No. 22, .. ..	15th .. . . . .	pp. 230-35.
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18.	No. 26, .. ..	30th .. . . . .	pp. 238-243.
19.	No. dated	30th April, 1858	pp. 243-246.
20.	No. 28, .. ..	12th May, 1858.	pp. 246-250.
21.	No. 29, .. ..	17th .. . . . .	pp. 250-255.
22.	No. 30, .. ..	31st .. . . . .	pp. 256-259.
23.	No. 31, .. ..	2nd June, 1858.	pp. 269-64.
24.	No. 32, .. ..	9th .. . . . .	pp. 265-267.
25.	No. 33, .. ..	16th .. . . . .	pp. 267-274.

26. No. 34, . . . . 23rd . . . . . pp. 274-278.
27. No. 35, . . . . 30th . . . . . pp. 278-282.
28. Narrative etc. in Rajpootana.  
No. 107a, dated Aboo, 27th July, 1858.  
From Brig.-Gen. G. St. P. Lawrence, Offg. Governor-General's Agent, Rajpootana States. To G. F. Edmonstone, Secretary to Govt. of India with Governor-General.
- Confidential Reports about the native states of Western India, their attitudes and behaviour during the Mutiny and rebellion. pp. 282-315.
29. Narrative etc. in Central India from May 1857 to the 20th of June, 1858. pp. 315-330.
30. Report of Major Ellis of the Services rendered by Certain Chiefs of Bundelcund during the disturbances with His recommendations in every case.  
No. 312-1384A, dated Gwalior, 14th July, 1857.  
From Sir Robert Hamilton Bart, Agent, Governor-General, for Central India.  
To G. F. Edmonstone, Secretary to Govt. of India.  
pp. 330-35.
31. List of Europeans who rendered good services to Govt. during the Mutiny. [This long list of the activities of nearly 447 officers gives valuable information on many aspects of the Mutiny.] pp. 336-393.
32. Minute by His Excellency The Right Hon'ble The Governor-General of India, dated 2nd July, 1859.  
*Services of civil officers and others during the Mutiny and Rebellion.*  
Fort William (Sd.) Canning  
The 2nd of July, 1859. pp. 394-401.
33. Abstract of the contents of a despatch to the Secretary of State for India. No. 125, dated 16th July, 1857.  
pp. 402-404.
34. Minute by His Excellency the Right Hon'ble The Governor-General of India,  
Dated 30th December, 1859. pp. 404-407.

## APPENDIX B

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS ATTENDING THE OUTBREAK OF DISTURBANCES AND THE RESTORATION OF AUTHORITY in all the districts of North West Provinces, in 1857-58. (This is a compilation of 'Narratives' furnished by the various Magistrates, Collectors and Other District Officers and Special Officers and the Divisional Commissioners and contains almost a day to day account of the incidents that happened under the very eyes of the officials concerned).\*

### In One Volume

- (1) Narrative etc. in the district of Meerut.  
From F. Williams Commissioner 1st Division.  
No. 406 of 1858, dated 15th November, 1858. pp. 68.
  - (a) Supplement to the Narrative of events in the Meerut Division from. F. Williams dated 3rd January, 1859, p. 1.
  - (b) Memorandum on the Mutiny and Outbreak at Meerut in May 1857, by Major G. W. Williams, Commissioner of the Military police N. W. Provinces, Allahabad, 15th November, 1858. pp. 12.
  - (c) Appendix : Roll of men of the District Volunteer Force Raised at Meerut by G. W. Williams, Major Commanding District Volunteer Force. p. 1.
  - (d) Narrative of events connected with the outbreak in 1857, which fell under the observation of Major Williams in the Meerut Division by G. W. Williams, Commissioner of Military Police, N. W. Provinces, 15th December, 1858.
- App. I—Roll of Officers and Men of the District Volunteer Force raised at Meerut in June, 1857, by G. W. Williams, Major Commanding District Volunteer Force. pp. 3.

\* National Library, Calcutta, No. G.P. 954, N. 819.

- App. II—A few instances to show that the mass of the Regiment had no ill feeling against their officers. p. 1.
- (e) Deposition taken at Meerut by Major G. W. Williams, Superintendent of Cantonment Police, N. W. P. of 73 persons.
- (2) Narrative etc. in the district of Allygurh.  
 From W. J. Bramly, Magistrate and Collector of Allygurh.  
 No. 11 of 1858, dated 17th November, 1858. pp. 7.  
 App. A—From W. J. Bramly, No. 54, dated 4th May, 1858. pp. 3.  
 App. B—From Lt. W. H. Greathed, Deputy Consulting Engineer to Govt. dated 30th July, 1858. pp. 3.  
 App. C—From A Cocks, Special Commissioner, Camp Landour, dated 5th October, 1858. pp. 3.
- (3) Narrative etc. in Mozuffernuggur.  
 From R. M. Edwards, Magistrate, dated 16th November, 1858. pp. 19.
- (4) Narrative etc. in the district of Saharunpore.  
 From R. Spankie, Magistrate, No. 84, dated 26th September, 1857. pp. 29.

Including :

- (a) Return etc. No. 29, dated 13th February, 1858.
- (b) A letter of W. C. Plowden, Asst. Commissioner to R. Spankie, Umbella, 3rd February, 1858.
- (c) A letter from R. Spankie, No. 51, dated 6th March, 1858.
- (d) A letter from R. Spankie, No. 152, dated 9th June, 1858.
- (e) A letter from R. Spankie, No. 213, dated 4th August, 1857.
- (f) A letter from H. D. Robertson, No. 241. n.d.

Appendix to the Seharunpore Narrative : Report of proceedings at Roorkee during the disturbances of 1857-58 by Lt.-Col. R. Baird Smith C.B. pp. 16. n.d.

- (5) Narrative etc. in the Agra District.  
 From A. L. M. Phillips, Magistrate of Agra, No. . . . . of

- 1858, dated 18th November, 1858, with six Appendices of various dates. pp. 39.
- (6) Narrative etc. in the Agra Division.  
From G. F. Harvey, Commissioner of Agra Division, No. A—dated 21st December, 1858, with appendices of various dates. pp. 56.
- Supplement to the narrative etc. in the Agra Division. pp. 5.
- (7) Narrative etc. of Mynpoory.  
From A. Cocks, Special Commissioner, No. . . . . of 1858, dated 16th November, 1858. pp. 1-12. Including notes, From J. Power, Collector and Magistrate of Mynpoory, dated 12th June, 1858.
- Supplement to the Narrative in the Mynpoory district from John Power, Magistrate and Collector, Mynpoory, dated 25th May, 1857. pp. 5.
- (8) Narrative of Occurrences in the district of Etawah by Allan Hume, Magistrate and Collector, dated 18th November, 1858. pp. 16.  
Appendix to Occurrences, pp. 20.  
Postscript to Etawah Narrative. pp. 8.
- (9) Narrative etc. in the District of Furruckabad.  
From W. G. Probyn, Magistrate and Collector, No. I, dated 3rd June, 1858. pp. 1-8.  
No. II. From C. R. Lindsay, Magistrate and Collector, dated 20th December, 1858. pp. 9-39.  
Appendices by H. D. Robertson, Deputy Commissioner, pp. 41-46.
- (10) Narrative etc. in the district of Muttra.  
From Thornhill, late Magistrate of Muttra, No. 102, dated 10th August, 1858. pp. 6.
- (11) Narrative etc. in the District of Etah.  
From A. L. M. Phillipps, late Joint-Magistrate of Etah, No. 61 of 1858, dated 9th June, 1858. pp. 8.  
Including a sketch of occurrences in the Etah district during the Rebellion of 1857 by C. J. Daniell, dated 22nd April, 1858.
- (12) Narrative etc. in the District of Moradabad.  
From R. H. Dunlop, Magistrate, No. 88, dated 18th November, 1858. pp. 30.

- (a) Narrative of the Mutinies of the 29th N. I. at Moradabad. pp. 8. n.d.
  - (b) A statement by the Moolvie and Native Doctor. pp. 2. n.d.
  - (c) Narrative from J. C. Wilson, Commissioner on special duty, dated 24th December, 1858. pp. 43.
  - (13) Narrative etc. in the District of Bijnore.  
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- (b) Narrative etc. in the Allahabad District.  
From F. Thompson, Magistrate of Allahabad, dated 9th November, 1858, No. 376 of 1858.  
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- (c) A Supplement to the Narrative of Events in the Allahabad District. pp. 2.
- (5) Narrative etc. in Cawnpore.  
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(The Paragraphs within brackets are verbatim from Lt. G. Watson's Narrative). Includes also reports from J. W. Sherer, Magistrate of Cawnpore and Memorandum by Lt.-Col. G. W. Williams, Military Secretary to Government of N. W. Provinces and Commissioner of police, dated 29th March, 1859. pp. 21.
- (a) Review of Evidence taken at Cawnpore regarding the Revolt at that station in June and July 1857 by Lt.-Col. G. Williams, Commissioner of Military police, N. W. P., dated 31st December, 1859. pp. 5.
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- (a) A Narrative of Personal Adventures at Banda and elsewhere During the Rebellion of 1857 by Edmonstone, Junior, Late officiating Judge of Banda. pp. 10.
- (7) Narrative etc. of Futtehpoor by J. W. Sherer. pp. 5. n.d.
- (8) Narrative etc. in the Division of Benares, No. 523 of 1858.

- From F. B. Gubbins, Commissioner 5th Division, 6th November, 1858. pp. 1-5.
- (a) The Rebellion of 1857 in the province of Benares by Robert Taylor, Offg. Joint Magistrate, Jounpore, 15th October, 1858. pp. 7-24.
- (b) A supplement to the Narrative of events etc. in the Benares Division by R. Taylor, Offg. Joint-Magistrate, Jounpore, 19th November, 1858.
- (9) Narrative etc. of Gorruckpore in 1857-58. No. 196 of 1858, from C. Wingfield, Commissioner of Gorruckpore, 5th July, 1858. pp. 6.
- (10) Narrative etc. of Kumaon in 1857-58. No. 258, from Major A. Ramsay, Commissioner of Kumaon, 22nd July, 1858. pp. 4.
- (11) Narrative etc. in the Ajmere District in 1858, Part I. No. 149 of 1858 from Brigadier-General G. St. P. Lawrence, Offg. Commissioner, Neemuch and Ajmere, 30th December, 1858. pp. 6.
- (a) Same as part II, No. 321 of 1858 from Captain J. B. Dennys, Superintendent, Neemuch, 31st March, 1858. pp. 6-10.
- (12) Narrative etc. of Nimar in 1857-58. No. 157 of 1858 from Captain R. H. Keatinge, Offg. Political Agent, Western Malwa. In temporary charge of Malwa, 25th May, 1858. Including correspondence from Lt.-Col. H. M. Durand, Brigadier Stuart, C. B. Thornhill, Secretary Government of India, G. F. Edmonstone, S. J. Naher, Magistrate of Nimar. pp. 9.
- (13) Narrative etc. of Saugor and Nerbudda Territories in 1857-58. No. 368A of 1858 from Major W. C. Erskine, Commissioner of the Jubbulpore Division, 10th August 1858. Including many appendices of which the following are some. Notes and observations by
- (a) Major J. Slecman
- (b) D. C. Vanrenen, Captain, Artillery
- (c) Major W. C. Erskine
- (d) W. P. Jenkins
- (e) Major J. Miller
- (f) Col. R. Gordon, Executive Engineer

- (g) S. O. E. Ludlow
  - (h) F. D. Pinkney, Captain, Deputy Collector, Jubbul-pore, 6th August, 1857.
  - (i) Prayer of Shunker Shah
  - (j) Revolutionary Council of war at Dumoh
  - (k) List of killed and wounded
  - (l) Memorandum of the state of di tricts in the Jubbul-pore Division, 6th February, 1858, by W. C. Erskine
  - (m) Notes by G. C. Whitlock, Major-General, Saugor Field Division. pp. 73.
- (14) Narrative etc. connected with the Mutiny at Humeer-pore, n.d. from G. H. Freeling. pp. 5.
- (15) Narrative etc. of Jaloun in 1857-58.  
No. 18 of 1858 from Captain A. H. Ternan, Deputy Commissioner of Jaloun, Dt. Calpee, 12 June, 1858. Including, correspondence from E. Passanah, Deputy Collector, Jaloun; from Syud Oomur Durez Alee, Deputy Collector and District Magistrate, Jaloun. pp. 12.
- (16) Narrative etc. of Jhansie in 1857-58.  
From Captain Commissioner J. W. Pinkney, 20th November, 1858, including list of European and Anglo-Indians murdered at Jhansie. pp. 25.

## APPENDIX C

### CHECK-LIST OF FURTHER PAPERS

(The printed Further Papers of the British Parliament form an invaluable source of the Mutiny and Rebellion of 1857-59. They are numerous and varied but only those have been cited which are very revealing in nature in so far as the civilian side of the Mutiny was concerned.)

FURTHER PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE MUTINIES IN THE EAST INDIES, London. Harrison and Sons, 1857. Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.)

#### VOLUME IV

Notes/Reports by Sir J. Outram  
by J. N. Birch  
by Major Eyre  
by the Officer Commanding at Allahabad.

#### VOLUME V

(a).....by W. F. Macdonnell, Magistrate of Saran  
by the Magistrate of Tirhut  
by H. C. Wake, Magistrate of Shahabad  
by W. Tayler, Commissioner of Circuit, Patna.  
(b).....Narrative of Events to 12th September, 1857.

#### VOLUME VII

(a) Notes/Reports/Minutes by M. H. Court, Collector of Allahabad  
by P. Carnegy  
by E. A. Samuells of Patna  
by F. O. Mayne, Joint-Magistrate,  
Gopiganj  
by A. Money, Magistrate of Gaya  
by C. Beadon, Secretary to the  
Govt. of India

by R. Strachey, Secretary to the  
Government of Central Provinces  
by C. Chester, Commissioner of  
Allahabad  
by the Lieutenant-Governor of  
Bengal  
by the.....  
of Central Provinces.

(b) Narrative of Events.

### VOLUME VIII

Report by R. Strachey.

### VOLUME IX

- (a) Notes/Reports/Minutes by W. C. Erskine, Commissioner  
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Azamgarh  
by A. R. Pollock, Magistrate,  
Azamgarh  
by R. Strachey  
by W. Muir, Secretary, Allahabad  
by R. J. H. Birch, Fort William,  
Calcutta  
by C. Chester, Commissioner,  
Allahabad  
by M. H. Court  
by Commissioner of Benares  
by the Commander-in-Chief, Field  
Operations.
- (b) Narrative of Events by A. R. Young  
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From 25th April to 1st May 1858

From 9th May to 15th May, 1858.

- (c) Narrative of Events (other Accounts)  
to 15th February, 1858  
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- (d) Long Lists of Rebel Leaders, quite a few in number,  
specially pp. 479-82.

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