INTRODUCTION

The chapter has been divided into three sections. The first section brings out the geographical, caste and class configuration of Bihar and the relationship of the colonial state with the big landlords. The second section studies the peasant protest in Bihar in the early twentieth century. The third traces the nationalist agitation in Bihar preceding the Non-Cooperation Movement. The third section has been further divided into three parts. The first part traces the nationalist agitation in Bihar till 1919. The second part discusses the nature of Rowlatt agitation in Bihar and the third part discusses the Khilafat agitation in Bihar.

Territorial Configuration of Bihar

Bihar was a province of the Mughal Empire in the early eighteenth century and after the battle of Buxar in 1760 became part of the British administered Bengal Presidency. In 1911, the British separated Bihar from the Bengal Presidency and united it with Orissa to form the province of Bihar and Orissa. In 1936, Bihar and Orissa were separated and the province of Bihar was established. Bihar was bound on the north by Nepal, on the west by present day Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, on the south by Orissa and on the east Bengal. The river Ganga flew right across it from west to east dividing it into two unequal parts, the southern portion was almost double the northern portion. Bihar was commonly described as composed of three parts: the land north of the Ganga called north Bihar; the plain land south of the Ganga called south Bihar; and the uplands in the extreme south called Chotanagpur. The southern part of Bihar, known as Chotanagpur, which extended to about half of the total area of the state, was a hilly and forested region, less suitable for agriculture. But it occupied an
extremely important position on the mining and industrial map of India. In
addition, Chotanagpur was the home of the tribal population of Bihar.

In 1912, Bihar was constituted into four Divisions-Bhagalpur, Patna,
Tirhut and Chotanagpur. Bhagalpur Division comprised of Bhagalpur, Monghyr,
Purnea and Santhal Pargana districts. Patna Division comprised of Gaya, Patna
and Shahabad districts. Tirhut Division comprised of Champaran, Darbhanga,
Muzaffarpur and Saran districts and Chotanagpur Division comprised of
Hazaribagh, Manbhum, Palamau, Ranchi and Singhbhum districts. Darbhanga,
Saran, Muzaffarpur, north Monghyr, north Bhagalpur and Purnea districts were
part of north Bihar and Patna, Gaya, south Monghyr and south Bhagalpur
districts were part of south Bihar.

With an area of 1,74,000 square kilometres, amounting to 5.3 percent of
the total geographical area of India, Bihar accounted for 10.3 percent of the total
population of the country. South Bihar accounted for three-fourth of the state’s
population.¹

Social Division

The population in Bihar was predominantly Hindu. The four upper castes
Brahmins, Bhumihars, Rajputs and Kayasthas, accounting for about 15 percent of
the total population, were the major landed castes. Majority of the landlords came
from these castes. In the middle rank, there were about a hundred castes, Yadavas,
Kurmis and Koeris being the most numerous. They were mostly tenants. The
lowest castes were mostly untouchables. They accounted for about 15 percent of
the population and were predominantly agricultural labourers.² Some Yadavas,

¹ Nirmal Sengupta, “Agrarian Movements in Bihar”, in Arvind N. Das, (ed.), Agrarian
² Ibid, p.17
Kurmis and Koeris, whose holdings were too small to provide subsistence, also worked as agricultural labourers. More frequently, untouchable castes such as chamars, musahars and dosadh performed field labour for which they were paid wages in kind. These castes were distributed more or less evenly throughout the state except for parts of Gaya and Palamau, where they accounted for nearly one-third of the population. As a consequence of the convergence of the twice-born ritual status, concentration of land rights and legitimation of the social hierarchy by Brahmanical ideology, Brahmans, Bhumihars and Rajputs held sway over Bihar society for at least one thousand years. The Kayasthas, as small caste groups, were also accorded elite status primarily because of their occupation as "writers" or "court scribes." 4

It was difficult to disentangle the economic and social basis of upper caste dominance at the village level. Grierson, writing in the 1880s, found that in the villages a clear distinction was made in the treatment of high-caste and low caste tenants that subordinated the economic definition of their ranking to that of ritual status. Tenants of high and low castes were referred to by different generic names, lived in separate quarters of the village and were granted unequal terms of tenure. Commonly, high-caste tenants were assessed at a lesser rate, or received remission of part of the rent. Moreover, cultivators of high caste were not required to do begar or unpaid labour on the landlord's field, although they were expected to send their own field labourers for such work: low caste tenants customarily performed begar and were much more subservient. 5

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3 Ibid.
5 A. George Grierson, Bihar Peasant Life, Delhi, 1885, (Reprinted 1975), p.326.
The same rough correspondence between caste and class applied among the urban population in the few towns. Government servants and professionals came from an upper caste background (predominantly Kayastha), and from upper status Muslims, most of them with links to landlords and rich peasants in the villages. Banking and trade were the preserve of Marwaris and other traditional mercantile castes. The majority of small shopkeepers and artisans were drawn from among low status Muslims, while unskilled labourers were from a low caste or untouchable background.\footnote{6}

The tribals were mainly concentrated in Chotanagpur. Only a comparative handful of tribals, about 0.35 million, were found outside Chotanagpur in Purnea, Bhagalpur, Monghyr and in Champaran district in the Terai forest bordering the Himalayas.\footnote{7} The Muslim population was scattered throughout the rural areas, with concentrations in south Bihar and Chotanagpur below 10 percent and in north Bihar between 10 percent and 16 percent. In Purnea, the Muslims constituted one-third of the population.\footnote{8}

**Alignment between the Big Landlords and the Colonial State**

There was a close alliance between the colonial state and big landlords. The 1857 mutiny drove home to the British exactly how dependant they were on the local Rajas and zamindars to maintain stability.\footnote{9} The British were able to repair their position in Bihar in 1857 because most of the leading zamindars did not join the rebellion. As company rule gave way to that of the crown, the main

\footnote{7} Nirmal Sengupta, “Agrarian Movements in Bihar”, in Arvind N. Das, (ed.), *Agrarian Movements in India*, p.17
\footnote{9} Ibid, p. 59. This entire para is based on this source.
imperative for the British in Bihar became a closer alignment between the big landlords and the colonial state. The government began the practice of conferring upon zamindars titles such as Maharaja Bahadur, Raja Bahadur and Rai Bahadur and associating them with local government as honorary magistrates and as members of municipal councils and district boards. The first Indian appointed to the Lieutenant-Governor’s Executive Council was Rameshwar Singh, the younger brother of the Maharajah of Darbhanga. The landed interests, in addition, enjoyed a dominant position in the Legislative Council. The maximum benefit of the government-zamindar alliance went to the old Hindu families in possession of great estates, especially the Darbhanga Raj, which dominated Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur, and exercised control (through relations and gomastas, agents) over substantial estates in the northern parts of Bhagalpur and Monghyr, and in Purina. Other major beneficiaries included the Hathwa Raj, which owned the northern part of Saran district, and controlled smaller estates in Champaran, Shahabad, Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur; the Bettiah Raj in Champaran; the Dumraon Estate in Shahabad; and Ramgarh Raj, a princely state in Chotanagpur.

In 1878, the Bihar Landholders Association was formed, with the Maharaja of Darbhanga as President. The membership of the Association reached out to most of the prominent zamindars. It welded together local elites of separate regions, castes and religious communities in conscious defence of their shared economic interest against the tenants demand for the amendment of Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885, for which a strong pressure had been building up in Bihar. In fact, right up to the pre-war period, the close relationship between the
government, big zamindars and upper castes created an almost complete overlap between dominance at the level of society and power in the realm of the state.10

**Peasant Agitation in the Early Twentieth Century**

North Bihar during the early twentieth century was marked by a strong anti-planter and peasant agitation. In fact, it was this popular protest in north Bihar that overshadowed the nationalist agitation in the early twentieth century. The anti-planter agitation will be discussed in a separate chapter. In this section, an attempt has been made to look at the nature of peasant agitation preceding the Non-Cooperation Movement. The study of peasant agitation would also throw some light on the nature of Non-Cooperation Movement in Bihar.

The discontentment of the peasants can only be understood in the context of Permanent Settlement. The Permanent Settlement had provided the setting against which agriculture in Bihar developed till the first half of the twentieth century. The Settlement was in reality the culmination of a long series of endeavours to adjust the share of the state in the produce of the soil and to perpetuate the friendship of a class of collaborators, the landlords, to buttress the nascent British Empire. The Settlement, which made the zamindars the landowners, is regarded as a decisive point in the history of changes in land rights. The Settlement, instead of making any provision for the protection of the class of actual cultivators, armed the zamindars with more power to enable them to realize their demands on the tenants so as to secure the public revenue payable by the zamindars.11

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10 Ibid, p. 66.
The firm support which the Imperial Government had provided to the zamindars through the Permanent Settlement made the zamindars complacent and arrogant. The zamindars demanded exorbitant rents from the peasants. Under Regulation VII of 1799, the landlords were even empowered to distrain the crops, cattle and personal property of their tenants and, in certain cases, to arrest them for non-payment of rent, without reference to any court. Later regulation tried to mitigate the harshness towards the peasants but it did not have much effect. Tenants were never presented pattas, that is, a document given to the revenue payer indicating his obligations, so that they could know the exact sum payable by them. The peasant who before the permanent settlement had in theory at least his definite right to cultivate and a definite share in the produce of the land became, in the course of the next hundred years, the tenant at will.12 Apart from this, the growing indebtedness of the zamindars made them extract more and more from the tenants or transfer much of their proprietary rights to money-lenders and usurers, who had few scruples in matters of surplus extraction from the tenants. The increasing land values, the stability of income from landed property and the diminishing rigour of sale laws had gone a long way towards interesting the money-lenders and usurers in land transactions.13 Along with economic exploitation based on the system of rent, the zamindars perpetrated many types of extra-economic coercion also. Zamindars extracted several types of labour rents and illegal payments (abwabs). Abwabs were collected on flimsy pretexts, varying from marriages in the zamindars families to the education of the

zamindar’s son abroad, the purchase of elephants by the zamindars or the celebration of the Holi festival. Illegal cesses levied on the peasantry, for matters such as the transfer of occupancy holdings of tenants, formed another important source of exploitations. 14 The high caste zamindars had even put restrictions on ritual observances by lower-caste tenants. In fact, as the zamindars got alienated from the village social structure and settled in the cities, they became more oppressive and harsh. 15

The size of the zamindaris was by and large small, in spite of the existence of mammoth estates like Darbhanga, Bettiah, Banailie and Dumraon. But the small size of the estates did not mean better and more personalized zamindari management. Direct participation of the zamindars in matters of management of estates was considered to be demeaning. The average landlord maintained elaborate establishments with officials equivalent to secretaries, money-changers, record-keepers, messengers, constables, rent-assessors and rent-collectors at the minimum. The *amlas*, who looked after a zamindari, were very oppressive and dishonest. 16

The zamindars hardly invested anything in increasing production. The reluctance of the zamindars to spend anything on the upkeep of the indigenous irrigation works, once the produce rent was commuted to fixed cash rent, led to large-scale decay of the irrigation system and the tenants of south Bihar, unable

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15 Ibid.
to produce sufficient so as to meet the rent, lost large parts of their holdings in rent-decree sales.\textsuperscript{17}

The position of peasants had further deteriorated after 1850 with the growth of population. Population growth led to rapid increase in the partition of estates and arbitrary rent enhancements by large numbers of petty landlords, intent on keeping up their position. The increase in land values and the population pressure on land also motivated the zamindars to evict tenants from their holdings on some pretext and settle these with other tenants at higher rents and salamis (initial payments).\textsuperscript{18}

Legislation to protect the rights and interests of the tenants did not come until the passing of Act X of 1859 and the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885. These Acts abolished the landlords' power to compel tenants to attend when summoned to their offices, protected the tenants from summary eviction, guaranteed the continued occupancy of those tenants, who could prove that they had rented land from a zamindar for a period of 12 successive years, and required zamindars, who wished to raise rents, to prove legally that their claim was reasonable.\textsuperscript{19} But legislation alone could not secure the position of the tenants. It was very difficult for a tenant to prove his occupancy right on land because he did not possess any documentary evidence as rent-receipts were seldom granted. The tenants also knew little about their rights and often found that in legal contests the zamindars because of their influence benefited the most. The zamindars also had advantage

\textsuperscript{17} Nirmal Sengupta, "Agrarian Movements in Bihar", in Arvind N.Das, (ed.), \textit{Agrarian Movements in India}, p.19.
\textsuperscript{19} Kaushal Kishore Sharma, \textit{Agrarian Movements and Congress Politics in Bihar}, pp.29-30.
in these legal battles because they commanded more resources as legal struggles were also tests of financial endurance.\(^{20}\)

Even the survey settlement operations work did not benefit the tenants. The settlement operations provided the record of rights and indicated a predominating class of occupancy tenants with important tenancy rights. But the occupancy rights were recognized only in theory. Widespread litigation was resorted to by the landlords in civil courts to defeat the object of the record-of-rights, while the publication of survey settlement operation was still in progress, and the litigation continued even after the record was published. Many tenants gave up the fight and agreed to whatever the landlords demanded, and that too after ruinous expenses in law courts.\(^{21}\)

The First World War further aggravated the condition of the peasants.\(^{22}\) War brought about economic dislocation, increasing the prices of consumer goods. In early twentieth century, there was also a tremendous increase in population in north Bihar. All this led to scarcity of land, timber and grazing areas for cattle. Rights to resources became increasingly contentious. The zamindari system impinged upon the peasants with ever greater force because of demographic pressure. The zamindars competed keenly with their tenants for control over land, collected their rents rigorously and intensified their exaction of *abwabs*. Some of the grievances of the peasants concerned the interference by the zamindars with what the tenants regarded as their rights both in the light of long established custom and under the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885,

\(^{20}\) Stephen Henningham, *Peasant Movements in Colonial India*, p. 71


\(^{22}\) This para and the next para is based on Stephen Henningham, *Peasant Movements in Colonial India*, pp. 70-89.
relating to waste lands, mutation fees, disputes over rights in timber, the interference by the landlord with occupancy rights, exactions and oppression of amlas.

In 1919-1920, a strong agrarian unrest developed in north Bihar. There were peasant protests even before 1919 but these were sporadic, small scale and localized. The movement in 1919 and 1920 involved a larger number of peasants and covered a wide area. The campaign was mainly concentrated in Darbhanga, north Bhagalpur, north Monghyr, Muzaffarpur, Samastipur and Purnea. The rise of this movement owed much to the leadership and organizational skills of Swami Vidyanand.

The campaign began in June 1919 and was initially concentrated in Darbhanga district. A number of meetings were held in the villages of Madhubani in Darbhanga in June. In Narar village in Khajauli, a meeting of peasants was held on 27, 28 and 29 June. Jainath Singh of Narar presided over this meeting. Vidyanand delivered lectures on all these days. This meeting was attended by 400 villagers, many of whom came from neighbouring villages. In these meetings, grievances of the peasants were aired. The leaders also talked about the need for education and establishment of schools. After these meetings, petitions were sent to the government. In July, the inhabitants of Narar addressed a petition to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar and Orissa complaining that their landlord denied them their customary rights to the fruits and timber of the trees; mutation fees were charged when their holdings changed hands; the landlord unjustly resumed some of their lands; they were forced to supply

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23 Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1919, 5.7. 1919, Bihar State Archives, (hereafter, BSA)
24 Ibid.
without remuneration, labourers, ploughs and carts for the cultivation of zamindar's land; the "well-to-do people of the village", who refused to supply labour and utensils, were denied the grazing land because former grazing lands were settled for cultivation; and that "even in days of fearful scarcity" the amlas pressurized the vendors of oil and ghee to give them a free supply of these commodities.  

There was also a request for the appointment of a Commission to make enquiries into the peasants' grievances.  

This petition initiated a long series of similar petitions. Even other villages sent their petitions. The petitions varied in detail but usually featured complaints relating to the tenants' rights in trees, the disappearance of grazing lands, the levying of mutation fees, the interference by the landlord with occupancy rights, and the exactions and oppressions of amlas.  

Peasant agitation rapidly spread in Darbhanga. Braja Kishore Prasad was active in Darbhanga. The peasants even stopped taking their cases to the zamindars but settled them amongst themselves through their panchayats, which were formed in a number of places. In Champaran also, tensions built up over grazing right. Gorakh Prasad was very active in Champaran.  

Vidyannand compiled and printed a pamphlet in which he vividly described the oppressions of the tenants of the Tirhut by landholders. In this
pamphlet, he also incorporated petitions and memorials, which tenants had addressed to the Viceroy, the Lieutenant-Governor and other high officials. He circulated this pamphlet not only amongst the Tirhut tenants but also amongst tenants of other districts so as to give publicity to the grievances of the Tirhut tenants and also to educate the tenants of their rights and privileges. Vidyanand also planned to establish Kisan Sabhas in every district in the Province.

The campaign, which began in Darbhanga district, soon spread to other districts. Attempts were made to spread the movement in Bhagalpur. In November 1919, Vidyanand went to Supaul subdivision in north Bhagalpur, intending to address a meeting, but the officials of the Darbhanga Raj, in collusion with the local representatives of the British administration, deterred him from doing so. Later in December 1919, he visited the Sonbarsa area, which lay on the banks of the Ganga in north Bhagalpur, and enquired into the grievances of the local peasants. Campaign was also built up against Grant, an European planter and a considerable landed proprietor of the Bhagalpur district. In Alamganj also, campaign against the zamindar built up.

On 25 January 1920, Bihar Provincial Peasant’s Conference was held in Muzaffarpur. A number of resolutions were passed in this Conference. In February 1920, Vidyanand toured Supaul subdivision of Bhagalpur. A meeting was held in Supaul on 5 February which was attended by around 20,000 people.

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31 Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence 1919, 13.12.1919, BSA.
32 Ibid.
33 Stephen Henningham, Peasant Movements in Colonial India, p.76.
34 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of December 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 44/1919, NAI.
35 Ibid.
36 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of February 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 88/Feb/1920, NAI.
37 Ibid.
A number of demands were put forth in this meeting. Some of these demands were that in areas of Permanent Settlement rents should be immune from increase; that common grazing lands be provided in all villages; that peasants should have an unrestricted right to all the trees standing in their holdings; and that peasants should be allowed to build houses and dig wells in their occupancy holdings without taking the permission of the zamindar.\(^{38}\) By March 1920, peasant protest also developed in Purnea and Madhepura, the more southerly of the two subdivisions of north Bhagalpur.\(^{39}\)

Thus, the peasant movement drew extensive support. The peasants came in large numbers to these meetings. One of the meetings in Darbhanga was attended by 10,000 people.\(^{40}\) Another meeting in Supaul in Bhagalpur was attended by 20,000 people.\(^{41}\) In addition to being extensive, support for movement also came from a broad spectrum of the social hierarchy.\(^{42}\) Vidyanand planned to institutionalize peasant activism through the creation of an extensive organization, with branches in every village, but this project did not come to fruition. However, there were many peasant activists who toured different villages.\(^{43}\)

Most of the meetings concentrated on two categories of grievances which were of central importance to most of the peasants.\(^{44}\) One category of grievances concerned the oppressive and dishonest behaviour of the amlas. The other

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\(^{38}\) Ibid.  
\(^{39}\) Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of March 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 90/March/1920, NAI.  
\(^{40}\) Stephen Henningham, *Peasant Movements in Colonial India*, p. 79.  
\(^{41}\) Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of February 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 88/1920, NAI.  
\(^{42}\) Stephen Henningham, *Peasant Movements in Colonial India*, p. 81.  
\(^{43}\) Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence 1919, 13.12.1919, BSA.  
\(^{44}\) Stephen Henningham, *Peasant Movements in Colonial India*, p. 79. This entire para is based on this source.
category of grievances concerned the interference, on the part of the management of the Darbhanga Raj, with what the tenants regarded as their rights both in the light of long established custom and under the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885. In the period 1896 to 1907, survey and settlement operations had helped create a new awareness among the tenants of their rights. Besides, with population increase the demand for land had multiplied which magnified disputes over the possession of holdings and tempted zamindars to rent out "waste lands" that had formerly been used for grazing. The demand for land created a market in land tenancies. Rich villagers acquired occupancy rights as an investment and then profited by sub-letting the holdings to sharecroppers and short-term tenants. Landlords benefited from the transfer of tenancies by levying mutation fees both on transfers by sale and transfers by inheritance. The fees were widely resented by both the rich and poor peasants because they interfered with the investment strategies of the better-off and they obstructed the taking over of land by the poor. With the disappearance of large tracts of standing timber, destroyed for building and fuel, wood assumed an unprecedented scarcity value, and disputes over rights in timber multiplied.

Besides addressing meetings, the leaders also made efforts to raise peasants problems in other platforms, too. A large number of tenants of Darbhanga Raj attended the Bihar Provincial Conference, which was held at Laheriaserai on 17 and 18 August 1919. Their spokesperson addressed the assembly setting forth a series of grievances against the Raj management and in particular against the assertion by the Raj of rights over the timber of trees.
growing on tenant's land.45 They also circulated a leaflet in this Conference regarding the grievances of the tenants of Pargana Bucchaur of the Darbhanga Raj.46 Vidyanand attended the Amritsar session of the Congress in December 1919, along with 200 peasant delegates, to raise the peasant's grievances on Congress platform, too. However, before attending the Congress session, Vidyanand had met prominent political leaders in Patna to request them to take up the grievances of the Tirhut tenants in the Congress session at Amritsar.47 He also held a meeting in Bhagalpur district to consider the proper representation of tenants grievances at the Amritsar Congress.48 Vidyanand also strongly advocated proper representation of the tenants in the Legislative Council so that the amendment of the Bengal Tenancy Act could be pursued in the Council.49

The government looked at the development of peasant movement with increasing concern. Echoing the fear, one of the government's report stated “the Vidyanand’s frequent attacks on the police and on European landlords is producing attempts among the villagers to lodge unfounded complaints against the police and against their landlords”.50 Peasant agitation was looked upon with increasing apprehension by the Darbhanga Raj, too. The administrators of the Darbhanga Raj used a variety of coercive means to dissuade people from supporting the movement. The policemen and officials helped Darbhanga Raj vis-à-vis the movement.51

45 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of August 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 44/Aug/1919, NAI.
46 Ibid.
47 Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence 1919, 13.12.1919, BSA.
48 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of January 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 41/Jan/1919, NAI.
49 Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence 1919, 22.11.19, BSA.
50 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of June 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 97/1920, NAI.
51 Stephen Henningham, Peasant Movements in Colonial India, p. 85.
Nationalist Agitation preceding the Non-Cooperation Movement

Initially, the national movement had not made much impact in Bihar. Bihar in the early twentieth century was very active in the movement for separation of Bihar from Bengal. The rationale for the separation of Bihar from Bengal was that Bihar was ethnically, culturally and linguistically different from Bengal. History was appropriated to buttress claims for a separate identity. A political argument was also made that no administration running from Calcutta could take care of the interests of Bihar. It was said that a local government would be more responsive to the welfare of the people. There was strong resentment amongst Biharis against the Bengalis, who were seen as dominating the interests of the people of Bihar. The Bengalis, contrary to their ratio of population, had captured a much larger number of places in the provincial civil service and subordinate civil service because in comparison to Biharis they were more educated. Very few Biharis had taken to English education. At the end of the nineteenth century, when the population of Bihar reached 20 million, there were less than 800 students enrolled in Bihar’s six colleges. Even of this small number, the immigrant Bengalis provided a larger proportion, while Kayasthas and upper status Muslims accounted for most of the rest. The proponents of the separation movement, with the help of facts and figures, pointed out the

53 Ibid, pp. 85, 86, 102-104.
54 Ibid, pp. 87, 105.
55 Ibid, pp.34-35.
56 Ibid, pp. 32-33.
discrimination which the people of Bihar faced in matters of public employment and in the grant of funds for various purposes.\textsuperscript{58}

The struggle for the separation of Bihar started in 1870. Public associations raised the issue of a separate identity for Bihar. Newspapers greatly contributed to the construction and articulation of Bihar’s identity. They ventilated the grievances of the local people and pointed out the incongruity of the union of Bengal and Bihar and the harmful effects on the people of Bihar resulting from the union. They coined the slogan “Bihar for Biharis”.\textsuperscript{59}

The first opportunity for making the demand for separation from Bengal was provided in 1894, when the colonial government planned to make territorial rearrangements in the Presidency of Bengal to reduce the administrative burden on the Lt. Governor of Bengal. The leaders of Bihar pointed out that the best method of solving this problem was to separate Bihar, as it was a homogenous territory and did not want to remain with Bengal.\textsuperscript{60} The second opportunity was provided when the government contemplated the partition of Bengal in the name of reducing administrative burden of Bengal. The leaders of Bihar repeating the same arguments that they had made in the 1890s pointed out that it was but fair and proper that Bihar be separated rather than Bengal be divided.\textsuperscript{61} As an alternative to the partition, the leaders of Bihar argued that partition of Bengal be annulled. They pointed out that administrative efficiency would be improved by reducing the size of the reunified province and creating a separate province of Bihar and Orissa.\textsuperscript{62} When the Swadeshi Movement started in 1905 against the

\textsuperscript{58} Narendra Jha, \textit{Aspects of Regional Consciousness in Bihar}, pp. 117-118.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, pp. 65-74.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, pp. 81-91
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid, pp. 91-112.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid, pp. 92, 96.
government's proposal of partitioning Bengal, Bihar leaders consciously kept
themselves away from the movement. The Bihar leaders did not want to offend
the government as it could have resulted in the neglect of their demand by the
government. They put all their energy into the movement of separation, and on
the whole, they showed their loyalty towards the government. The British
wanted to consolidate support among the educated classes of Bihar, who had
demonstrated their loyalty by refusing to join the nationalist agitation against
partition, and became somewhat receptive to their ideas. Once the attitude of the
government became receptive, even the big landholders moved to support the
demand. Thus the partition of Bengal brought a qualitative change in the
separation movement in Bihar, new social groups like those of native aristocrats
and upper class Muslims joined it, which had till then been dominated by the
Hindu educated class. In 1908, the three leading public associations of Bihar,
the Bihar Landholders Association, the Bihar Provincial Conference and the
Bihar Provincial Muslim League submitted a joint memorial to the Lieutenant
Governor of Bengal detailing the grievances of the “entire Bihar community”.
In 1911, on the occasion of the Delhi Durbar, Viceroy announced that the
partition of Bengal would be annulled, the seat of Government transferred from
Calcutta to Delhi, and a separate Governorship in Council created to administer
the new province of Bihar and Orissa.

63 V.C.P. Chaudhary, The Creation of Modern Bihar, Darbhanga, 1964, p.91; Narendra Jha, Aspects of Regional Consciousness in Bihar, p.97
65 V.C. P. Chaudhury, The Creation of Modern Bihar, p. 91; Narendra Jha, Aspects of Regional Consciousness in Bihar, p.97.
The movement for separation of Bihar from Bengal drew major support from the high caste, middle class and educated elite. The creation of the new province to them meant opportunities for both private professional advancement and for public social and political activity.68 The Kayastha community participated in large numbers in this movement. Bihar Kayastha Provincial Sabha played a leading role.69 Leading Muslim lawyers such as Ali Imam and Mazharul Haq also played a very active role. They organized the Bihar Provincial Conference, which in its first session at Patna in 1906, passed a resolution supporting the separation of Bihar from Bengal.70 The movement did not have a base amongst the masses. In fact, the movement made little or no impact on the lives of the vast majority of the inhabitants.71

Thus, the politics of regional autonomy dominated the political scene in Bihar in the early twentieth century. The Swadeshi Movement did not have much impact in Bihar.72 The Home Rule Movement also did not have much impact in Bihar. When Gandhi came to Champaran in 1917, he found that “the Congress was practically unknown to those parts”. According to Rajendra Prasad, a nationalist leader from Bihar, even those who had heard the name of the Congress shrank from joining it or even mentioning it.73

Political actions in Bihar at that time consisted mainly of passing resolutions in Provincial Conferences, attending annual sessions of the Congress,

70 Ibid.
contributing to the Congress fund, writing articles in the newspapers and participating in the debates and asking questions in the Legislative Council. There was no contact of any kind whatever with the general mass. If public meetings were ever held, they were held in towns and speeches were usually made in English.\textsuperscript{74} Even the Congress party organization in Bihar was loose. The constitutional procedures for enrolling members were not followed. Those who wished to become members of the Congress had simply to declare their intention. If the organization was lax, the competition for different posts in the party structure was practically non-existent. The election of representatives to the Indian National Congress and members of the All India Congress Committee (hereafter, AICC) depended upon the availability of persons, who would be prepared to serve in these capacities.\textsuperscript{75}

Most of the members of the Congress were small zamindars and/or lawyers. Landlords and lawyers dominated its leadership. Below is given the table of occupations of Bihar delegates to the Allahabad Congress Session, 1910, which throws light on the nature of the social base of the Congress in Bihar\textsuperscript{76}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation(s)</th>
<th>Number of Delegates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zamindar</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landholder*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamindar and Lawyer</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banker and Zamindar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member, Servants of India Society</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of delegates:</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{74} Rajendra Prasad, \textit{Bapu ke Qadamon Me}, Aligarh, 1953, pp.74, 95.
\textsuperscript{75} Rajendra Prasad, \textit{Autobiography}, p.51.
\textsuperscript{76} K.K.Datta, \textit{History of the Freedom Movement in Bihar}, pp. 526-531

* The term 'landholder' is generally used as a synonym for a tenant or to refer to a lessee or proprietary rights. In this instance it probably refers to lessees.
The bigger zamindars kept themselves aloof from the Congress. Many of them were anxious to protect their opportunities for titles and appointments to official positions from the Government. They preferred, for this reason, to keep aloof from the Bihar Provincial Congress.77

**Rowlatt Agitation**

The Rowlatt agitation changed to some extent the existing state of political affairs in Bihar, although as compared to other Provinces the impact of Rowlatt agitation was not much in Bihar. Rowlatt agitation was the first all-India agitation. The call for the nation-wide protest was given by Gandhi in February 1919 against the unpopular legislation that the British threatened to introduce. The bill, known as Rowlatt Bill, which aimed at severely curtailing the civil liberties of Indians in the name of curbing violence was introduced in the Legislative Council. This act of the government was treated by the whole of political India as a grievous insult, especially as it came at the end of the First World War when substantial constitutional concessions were expected as India had helped British in the war. Initially, there was constitutional protest but constitutional protest having failed, Gandhi stepped in and suggested that a satyagraha be launched. The form of protest finally decided upon was the observance of a nation-wide hartal, accompanied by fasting and prayer. In addition, it was decided that civil disobedience would be offered against specific laws. 6 April 1919 was fixed as the date for the launching of satyagraha. Satyagraha Sabhas were set up to carry on a campaign against the Rowlatt bill.

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The members of the Satyagraha Sabha took a pledge to disobey the Act and to court arrest and imprisonment. 78

However, even before the satyagraha week, protest against the bill had already started in Bihar. A meeting was held in the Town Hall in Patna on 16 February 1919 to protest against the Rowlatt Bills. 200 people, including leading pleaders and zamindars, were present in the meeting. Resolutions were passed opposing the Bill. 79 There was a protest meeting in Muzaffarpur on 16 February 1919, which was attended by 200 persons. 80 There was also a meeting at Mansurganj on 27 February 1919 to mark protest against the Rowlatt Bill. 81 In Bettiah Estate in Champaran, the bazaars remained closed on 6 February 1919 to mark the protest. 82 Monghyr and Chapra also had protest meetings. 83 There was a huge mass meeting on Qilla ground in Patna City on 23 February. People came from far of places like Gaya to attend the meeting. 84 There was also a protest meeting in Gaya on 22 February. 85 The Bihar Provincial Association and Bihar Provincial Congress Committee (hereafter, BPCC) held a joint meeting in Bankipore in Patna City on 2 March to protest against the bill. In most of the meetings, a large number of zamindars and lawyers were present. 86

The Rowlatt agitation in Bihar had a great impact in Patna. 87 In Patna, the decision to participate in the hartal on 6 April, “the day of humiliation and

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79 Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1919, 17.2.1919, BSA.
81 Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1919, 28.2.1919, BSA.
82 Ibid.
83 *Searchlight*, 23 February 1919.
84 Ibid, 27 February 1919.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid, 6 March 1919.
87 Freedom Movement Papers, SCRO 57, BSA, “Note on Satyagraha, DIG to Commissioner, 6 April 1919”.
prayer”, was taken at a meeting held at the Qilla in Patna City on 4 April.  
This meeting was attended by 10,000 people. Rajendra Prasad, Mazharul Haq, Rai Bahadur Purnendu Narain Sinha and Hasan Imam addressed this meeting. Many “baniyas, shop-keepers and labourers” were present in the meeting.

Another meeting was held in the evening of 5 April at the residence of Mazharul Haq to settle the programme for 6 April. Around 3,000 people, including a very large number of students, attended this meeting. In this meeting too, a large number of “baniyas and shopkeepers” were present. Hindu-Muslim unity was emphasized in these meetings.

The leaders in these meetings exhorted “Indians to awaken from the slumber and work for the good of the country, and no longer remain the slaves of Europeans”. One of the leaders, while addressing the meeting held at the residence of Mazharul Haq on 5 April, said:

Indians were the sons of heroes and it was not proper for them to sleep, when the foreigners were enjoying all the benefits of their country. India was the birthplace of Rishis and heroes like Budha, whose followers the Japanese had taught a lesson to the Russians during the late Russo-Japanese War. Indians, who were once reckoned to be great heroes, were now becoming slaves of Europe. Foreigners were sucking their blood, while they were sleeping.

In Patna, on 6 April, almost all the shops in Bankipur and Patna City remained closed and all business, including traffic, was suspended. Two arches were erected near the chauk. Since early morning on 6 April, people of all classes

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88 *Searchlight*, 6 April 1919
89 Ibid.
90 Freedom Movement Papers, SCRO 57, BSA., “DSP, Patna City to S.P, Patna, 5 April 1919”.
91 Ibid; *Searchlight*, 6 April 1919.
92 Freedom Movement Papers, SCRO 57, BSA., “Note on Satyagraha, DIG to Commissioner, 6 April 1919”.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 *Searchlight*, 10 April 1919.
walked bare headed and bare footed to the ghat. They carried with them Bande Mataram flags and shouted slogans such as “Bande Mataram”, “Ram Chandra ki jai”, “Mahabir ki jai” and “Mahatma Gandhi ki jai”. They bathed in the Ganga. On their return, they offered prayers at different temples for deliverance from the difficulties, which had befallen them by the passing of the Rowlatt Act. The Muslims also offered prayers in different mosques. The prayers at chauk were offered by Muslims in the Madrasa mosque and at Bankipur in the mosque opposite the maidan. The majority of the Hindus and Muslims observed the fast in connection with the satyagraha. Students also observed the fast. At 4 p.m., a procession was taken out to Qilla. The people in the procession throughout kept shouting “Bande Mataram”, “Shri Ram Chandra ki jai”, “Mahabir ki jai”, “Mahatma ki jai”, and “Allah-o-Akbar”. One of the government’s report stated that 75,000 people were in the procession. Most of the students of Patna were present in the meeting and took part in other celebrations of the day. A large number of people from the mufassil were also present. Even a large number of Marwaris of the city participated in these activities. Proscribed literature was hawked and unregistered newspapers sold.

Satyagraha day was observed in other places, too. In Bihar Sharif, all shops were closed. A large number of people fasted. The bazaar presented a solemn scene. There was a mass meeting, which was attended by 1500 people. Both Hindus and Muslims participated in large numbers. They joined together in prayer part of Maghrib Namaz and havan puja at the Dhaneshwar Ghat. They both enthusiastically proceeded to Bari Dargah, the tomb of Makdum Sharfuddin,

\[96\] Freedom Movement Papers, SCRO 57, “Satyagraha Movement”.
\[97\] Ibid; Searchlight, 10 April 1919.
\[98\] Ibid.
and offered their homage. Satyagraha was observed in some of the villages of Bihar Sharif, too. In Hajipur, there was a large meeting, which was attended by 3000 people. This place had not witnessed such a big meeting before. In fact, most places had not witnessed such large meetings before. On satyagraha day, Hajipur gave the appearance of a deserted village. People from all sections observed satyagraha. This day was also observed in Lalganj, Mahnar, Bhagwanpur, Sarai and in almost every important village in the interior of Hajipur, where all shops were closed and business remained suspended. In Muzaffarpur, all shops and business premises remained closed. Even articles such as fish, meat and vegetables were not available. The bazaar gave a gloomy appearance. Even the shops near railway station and dharamshala remained closed. No hackney and ekka plied. There was a mass meeting on the ground of Town Hall. 20,000 people, belonging to all classes, attended the meeting. The people were bare headed and bare footed. Satyagraha day was also observed in Chapra. Shops remained closed in Sahibganj, Katra and other places. A large procession, under the leadership of Mahatma Kirpa Ramji, marched to Sarju river. Two black flags flew ahead the procession. The number of people increased to thousands when the procession reached the river bank. All sat on the bank, and, after the prayers were offered, the leaders addressed them. After the people bathed in the river, a general prayer was again offered, with all people standing in long files. Afterward, the procession shouting slogan like “Bharat Mata ki jai” proceeded through Sahibganj and Dahiawan to Datra bazaar. In

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99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
Danapore, shops in the town, Nizamat and Cantonment remained closed. *Ekkawala* and *ghariwal* also did not ply. Even farmers left their thrashing and winnowing. In the morning, a large number of people went to Digha Ghat. In the evening, a meeting was held at river bank. In Buxar, a large meeting was held near *chausk*. A large number of Mahajans and Marwaris were present in the meeting. Fatwah also observed a satyagraha. Even many women in Fatwah observed fast. Women bathed in the Ganga and offered prayers to the sun god to save their beloved sons and husbands from the threatened disaster. In Gaya, a large number of people observed fast. They offered prayers at Vishnupad temple after bathing in the Phalgu river. Many females of “respectable family” in Gaya also observed fast. Satyagraha was also observed in Jharia, where 5000 men attended the meeting. At Bakhara in Muzaffarpur, shops were closed and speeches were delivered in several places by “leading men” of the village. In Motihari, bazaar remained closed. Tahsildars of Bettiah Estate and Motihari factory went to the market and threatened the shopkeepers to open shops. The police assisted them. But the shops remained closed. Ranchi was also largely affected by the satyagraha movement. Groups of young men went round Ranchi shouting “Gandhi ki jai”. A meeting was also held at Sewan in Saran on 21 April. Around two thousand people, most of them from Sewan and the neighbouring villages, attended this meeting. Meeting was also held in the

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104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid, 26 April 1919.
112 Ibid, 19 April 1919.
interior of Shahabad district to further the satyagraha agitation against the Rowlatt Bill. There was a satyagraha meeting at Massaurhi in Patna district under the leadership of Mithila Saran Singh.113 One sanyasi from Punjab was active at Barharwa. He traveled in river steamers explaining satyagraha to travellers.114 In a public meeting in Bhagalpur in May 1919, Landholder’s Association and Domiciled Bengalee Association protested against the bill.115

A number of people signed the satyagraha vow.116 Amongst the prominent leaders who signed the pledge were Mazharul Haq, Parmeshwar Lal, Chandrabanshi Sahay, Nageshwar Prasad Singh, Syed Hassan Imam, Braja Kishore Prasad, Rajendra Prasad and Devaki Prasad Sinha.117 Amongst the signatories were many students. The following people in Patna, Arrah and Gaya signed the pledge:118

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patna</th>
<th>Arrah</th>
<th>Gaya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manoranjan Prasad (2nd year class)</td>
<td>Choudhuri Karmat Hussain (Pleader)</td>
<td>Rai Prasad Lal, (a zamidar,)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daroga Prasad (1st year class)</td>
<td>Pandit Bishundatta Pattak (Pleader)</td>
<td>Pandit Bajrang Dutta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janardhan Prasad (2nd year class)</td>
<td>Ramanand Singh (Mukhtar)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhirginath Prasad (2nd year class)</td>
<td>Ramdeo Marwari</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandrika Prasad (1st year class)</td>
<td>Mathura Prasad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haldhar Bhuiya</td>
<td>Ramaprasad Marwari</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulab Tiwari</td>
<td>Jungi Lal (Mukhtar)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbhajan Tiwari</td>
<td>Shenonandan Lal (Vakil)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bando Mali</td>
<td>Maulavi Zoha (Mukhtar)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lachmi Tiwari</td>
<td>Maulavi Mohammad Wasi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sankar Teli</td>
<td>Nandlal Gupta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raghunandan Bhuiya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lachman Lal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldeo Halwai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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113 Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1919, 12.4. 1919, BSA.
114 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of May 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political), File no. 48/1919, NAI.
115 Searchlight, 8 May 1919.
116 Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1919, 17.5. 1919, BSA.
117 Searchlight, 1 April 1919.
118 Ibid, 9 March 1919.
Rowlatt agitation marked an entrance to a very different political world. This movement heralded to some extent the change in the social base of the Congress. From around 1919, the membership of the organization broadened. Merchants and businessmen, particularly Marwaris, began to participate in the movement. Rich peasants and a large number of small landlords gravitated towards the Congress.\textsuperscript{119} One of the government reports stated that “the local zamindars are anxious to know particulars regarding the Act and seem to be under the impression that some great zulum has been done”.\textsuperscript{120} A large number of lawyers and students also participated.\textsuperscript{121} But, despite the widening of the Congress base, the movement still remained largely confined to urban centres, with lower middle class groups and artisans on the whole more important than

\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Patna} \\
Jagdeo Sahai \\
Lachman Sahu \\
Chunnu Singh \\
Bindra Singh \\
Ramjas Lal \\
Gunu Sahu \\
Moti Sahu \\
Mohammad Ismail \\
Bansi Sahu \\
Janki Tamoli \\
Parmeshwar Datta \\
Mishra \\
Balbhadia Tiwari \\
Beni Pathak \\
Nathu Ram Marwari \\
Sageser Master \\
Bhagat Tamoli \\
Ajobhya Ram Dusad \\
Bihar Lal Basu \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{120} Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence 1919, 24.5.19, BSA.
\textsuperscript{121} Freedom Movement Papers, SCRO 57, BSA.
The leadership of the Congress was still drawn largely from the upper, highly educated strata of the society. These leaders believed in the constitutional methods of agitation. The big landholding section kept itself aloof from the movement. The Bihar Landholder's Association held a meeting at Patna in May 1919, where passive resistance was condemned and the duty of loyal cooperation with government in maintaining law and order was inculcated. Maharaja of Darbhanga presided at this meeting.

The Khilafat Movement

In 1919, a strong resentment built up amongst the Muslims over the adverse terms imposed on the Ottoman Empire or Turkey by Britain and its allies after Turkey was defeated in the First World War. Britain and its allies partitioned Turkey and took away Thrace from Turkey proper. This was in violation of the earlier pledge of the British Premier, Llyod George, who had declared during the First World War: "Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace, which are predominantly Turkish in race". The Sultan of Turkey was also the Khalifa, that is, the temporal and the spiritual head of all Muslims of the world. After the war, the ruler of Turkey was deprived of his Khalifadom, and thus, could no longer retain control over his empire's holy places. This enraged the Muslims. The discontentment of the Muslims took the form of a movement, which came to be known as the Khilafat Movement.

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122 Ibid.
124 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of May 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 48/1919, NAI.
A Khilafat Committee was formed under the leadership of the Ali brothers, Maulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Hasrat Mohani, and a country-wide agitation was organized. Khilafat branches were set up all over India to act as a pressure group for securing the retention of the temporal powers of the Sultan of Turkey as Khalifa and ensuring his continued suzerainty over the Islamic holy places. In meetings, resolutions opposing the dismemberment of Turkey and the Khilafat were passed. The Bihar Khilafat Committee worked in close association with the Congress. Mazharul Haq, Abdul Sami, Ghulam Imam and Narul Hasan in Bihar played an active role in the movement.

All India Khilafat Day was observed on 17 October 1919, when all business was suspended. Prayers were offered to the Almighty Allah for the safety and preservation of the integrity, dignity and power of the Turkish Empire and Khilafat of the Sultan of Turkey. The hartal in Patna was very successful. Business came to a halt. Most of the shops in Patna City and suburbs were closed. In the evening, there was a mass meeting on the ground of Madrasa mosque, which was located on the bank of the Ganga in Patna City. Nawab Sarfaraz Hussain Khan presided over this meeting. A large number of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs participated in the meeting. Hafiz Ahmad Ghani led the prayer. In the meeting, it was resolved to maintain the honour and integrity of the Khilafat.

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127 The Indian Annual Register, 1919, p.250
130 Searchlight, 16 October 1919.
131 Ibid, 19 October 1919.
132 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of November 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 5/Nov/1919, NA1; Searchlight, 19 October, 23 October 1919.
Khilafat Day was also very successful in Darbhanga where business was entirely suspended. Even the butchers restrained from slaughtering and the *thika garis* stopped plying for hire. In the evening, a public meeting was held in the premise of the Darbhanga Trading Company. This meeting was attended by 6,000 people. Many resolutions were passed. Muslims offered prayers at Idgah, Killaghat and Badshai Mosques and Hindus offered prayers in different temples.

Khilafat Day was also observed in Gaya, Bihar Sharif, Chapra, Monghyr, Ranchi and Bhagalpur. Both Hindus and Muslims participated in these meetings in large numbers. They unanimously resolved to maintain the honour and integrity of the Khilafat. In Bihar Sharif, there was a public meeting after the Juma prayer. One thousand Muslims offered Juma prayer. In Bhagalpur, a large number of Muslims kept fast. There was a public meeting after the Juma prayer at the Talarpur mosque. In Phulwari Sharif, men and women kept fast and recited koran. Shops remained closed. After the Juma prayer, there was a large meeting, where many Maulanas and priests were also present. In Chapra, shops remained closed. A large number of Muslims assembled in mosques to pray for the divine protection of the Khalifa. Prayers were held even in remote places such as Gudri and Salempore. In Gaya, shopkeepers, businessmen and legal practitioners suspended their business. Many Hindus and Muslims observed fast. In the afternoon, more than 2000 Muslims assembled at the Jama Masjid and offered

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133 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of October 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 16/Oct/1919, NAI; *Searchlight*, 23 October 1919
134 Bihar and Orissa Police Abstracts of Intelligence, 1919, 25.10.1919, BSA; *Searchlight*, 23 October 1919.
135 Ibid.
prayer. This was followed by a public meeting, which was also attended by a large number of Hindus.\textsuperscript{136}

In November 1919, a call was given by Gandhi to abstain from the peace celebrations of the treaty of the First World War to protest against the British government, which had betrayed the Muslims sentiments.\textsuperscript{137} Meetings were held at many places in Bihar. Several resolutions were passed seeking an honourable peace settlement with Turkey and integrity of the Khilafat and Holy places of Arabia. Mazharul Haq, Hasan Imam and Wasi Ahmed were the main organizers of the anti-peace celebration and the Khilafat agitation.\textsuperscript{138} Leaflets and posters issued by the Delhi Anti-Peace Celebration Publicity Board and the Calcutta Khilafat Committee were distributed.\textsuperscript{139} A public meeting was held at the Anjuman Islamia Hall in Patna on 30 November 1919 under the presidency of Maulana Shah Rasheedul Haque. A large number of Hindus and Muslim leaders of Bihar were present in this meeting.\textsuperscript{140} Maulana Shah Sulaiman reiterated Gandhi’s appeal not to participate in any celebration of victory or peace.\textsuperscript{141} Hasan Imam thanked the Hindus for sharing with the Muslims in sorrow and grief. Sarfaraz Hussain Khan remarked that the Muslims could not rejoice when their Caliph was in distress. One significant aspect of this meeting was the presence of a large number of Maulanas.\textsuperscript{142} M.A.Jinnah, S.A.Sami, Mazharul Haq and Hasan Imam resigned from the Peace Celebration Committee in protest stating that they

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid, 6 November 1919
\textsuperscript{138} Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of November 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 5/1919, NAI.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence 1919, 2.12.1919, BSA; Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of December 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 45/1919, NAI; Searchlight, 4 December 1919.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
could not observe the death anniversary of the Caliph.\textsuperscript{143} In Patna, Vidyanand actively participated against the peace celebrations.\textsuperscript{144} The lawyers in Patna absented themselves from peace celebration.\textsuperscript{145}

The Muslim community in Ranchi took no part in the celebrations. Their houses were not illuminated and Muslim boys did not take part in the school sports. Many shops in the bazaars were also closed. On the night of the 14 November, Muslims went round the bazaar explaining their grievances and requesting people to abstain from celebrations. The 13 December was a holiday at the Madrasa but the students did not observe it as a holiday. They attended the school wearing black bands on their arms. The government attributed the success of the programme to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who held considerable influence amongst the people in Ranchi.\textsuperscript{146} Anti-peace celebration was observed by both Hindus and Muslims in Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Madhubani, Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur.\textsuperscript{147} In a meeting in Gaya, which was attended by thousands of people, the Gaya citizens resolved not to participate in peace celebrations.\textsuperscript{148} The lawyers of Gaya absented themselves from peace celebrations.\textsuperscript{149} The police took strong action. They searched many places and seized the Khilafat posters,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{143} Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of November 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 5/1919, NAI.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of November 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 5/1919, NAI.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{146} Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of December 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 45/Dec/1919, NAI.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{148} Searchlight, 11 December 1919.
\item \textsuperscript{149} Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of December 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 44/1919, NAI.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
which were signed by Fazl-ul-Haque, Abdul Kasim, Hasrat Mohani, Tazuddin, a journalist, and Muhammad Akram Khan.\footnote{J.C.Jha, “The Khilafat and the Non-Cooperation Movement in Bihar (1919-22)”, in P.N.Ojha, (ed.), \textit{History of Indian National Congress in Bihar}, Patna, 1985, p. 198.}

19 March 1920 was fixed for the second Khilafat Day and an all-India protest against the dismemberment of Turkey. This day was observed as the day of “National Mourning” - a day of fasting, prayer and hartal.\footnote{P.C.Bamford, \textit{Histories of the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movements}, Delhi, 1974, p. 150.} Hartals and meetings were held all over Bihar. In meetings, resolutions were passed stating that Hindus and Muslims recognized the Sultan of Turkey as Khalifa and that for Muslim loyalty it was absolutely necessary that peace terms with the Sultan of Turkey be made strictly in accordance with injunctions of Islam. In Arrah, prayers were offered and shops remained closed. A meeting was also held, which was addressed by Motilal Nehru and C.R.Das. In Pachampa too, shops remained closed and business were suspended. The meeting in Pachampa was attended by a large number of Hindus and Muslims. A significant number of the labourers of the neighbouring coal mines abstained from work. In Chapra, complete hartal was observed. Even the Hindus joined the prayer in Jama Mosque, also known as Kazi Saheb’s mosque, when the special prayer (Juma Prayer) was over. A special meeting was held in the Chainpur Haat. In Bhagalpur, a large meeting, attended by over ten thousand people, was held. All shops were closed and business remained suspended. The whole town presented a mourning look. The Muslims in Gaya, numbering 5000, offered prayers at Jama Masjid. A mass meeting was held under the Presidentship of Krishna Prakash Sen Sinha. Around 25,000 people attended this meeting. In Barh, even the title holders and Honorary Magistrates were present in the meeting. In Madhepura also, there was a mass
meeting in a mosque. Khilafat day was also observed in Aurangabad, Giridih and Hazaribagh. In Bihar Sharif, prayers were offered in all temples and mosques. Sabzi bazaar in Bihar Sharif gave a deserted look. Around 2,500 people attended meeting in Daltonganj. In Muzaffarpur, printed notices were issued giving a call for the hartal. The notice was signed by “leading” Muslims and Hindus. All shops were closed. Even articles like vegetables, meat and fish were not available. Hackney carriages and ekka ceased to ply and the golas (rice market) were shut. The meeting at Muzaffarpur was attended by 10,000 people. 152 The hartal was very successful in Patna. Md. Sami, the Secretary of the Provincial Khilafat Committee, took a leading part. 153 Khilafat day was also observed in Ranchi and Darbhanga, where meetings were held and resolutions against the peace terms were passed. 154

In April 1920, Shaukat Ali visited Bihar. He was invited by the Khilafat leaders, Mazharul Haq, Dr Mahmud and Md. Sami. 155 He addressed meetings at Patna on 24 and 25 April 1920. In these meetings, he warned the government to solve the Turkish problem on honourable term, otherwise, he threatened the Muslims would boycott and non-cooperate with the government. He also indicated that they would adopt Hijrat and Jihad. 156 Maulavi Narul Hasan, a Patna High Court lawyer, also made a stirring speech at this meeting. Shaukat Ali also visited Gaya and Monghyr, where he addressed large meetings. 157 At the

152 Searchlight, 25 March 1920.
153 Ibid.
154 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of March 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 91/March/1920, NAI.
155 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of April 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 92/ April/1920, NAI.
156 Ibid; Md. Muzaffar Imam, Role of Muslims in the National Movement, p. 130.
157 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of May 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 94/May/1919, NAI.
Gaya meeting, Krishna Prakash Sen Sinha announced that he had returned to the Collector his certificate of honour, which was granted to him in recognition of his services for recruitment during the war.\textsuperscript{158} In the meetings, Hindu and Muslim unity was stressed. Hindus were thanked for supporting the cause of the Khilafat and Muslims were advised to abstain from cow-sacrifice. Shaukat Ali addressed a meeting in Monghyr on 27 April, which was attended by 5,000 people. While addressing this meeting, he said that if Khilafat question was not satisfactorily settled, it meant slavery for Muslims for the next 200 years. He advised young Muslims that they should follow the mandate of God, which was to declare Jihad if the wishes of the Indian Muslims in respect of the Khilafat were ignored.\textsuperscript{159} In Patna, Shah Badaruddin renounced his title of Shamsul-Ulema as protest against the Khilafat wrong.\textsuperscript{160}

The turning point in the Khilafat movement came with the publication of the very harsh terms of the Treaty of Sevres with Turkey on 14 May 1920. The Treaty of Sevres made it amply clear that the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire was complete.\textsuperscript{161} This built up further resentment amongst the Muslims. After this, the nationalist leaders seriously thought of non-cooperating with the government. One of the strong proponents of Non-Cooperation was Gandhi. Gandhi was sympathetic to the Khilafat cause and was in close touch with the Khilafat leaders. In fact, Gandhi looked upon the Khilafat agitation as a golden opportunity for cementing Hindu-Muslim unity and bringing the Muslim masses

\textsuperscript{158} Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of May 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 94/1920, NAI.

\textsuperscript{159} Bihar and Orissa Political Special File no.143/1920; Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of May 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 94/May/1920, NAI.

\textsuperscript{160} Md. Muzaffar Imam, \textit{Role of Muslims in the National Movement}, p. 130.

\textsuperscript{161} Gail Minault, \textit{The Khilafat Movement, Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilisation in India}, p. 90.
into the national movement. Early in 1920, he had declared that the Khilafat question overshadowed that of the constitutional reforms and the Punjab wrongs and announced that he would lead a movement of Non-Cooperation, if the terms of peace with Turkey did not satisfy the Indian Muslims. Very soon, Gandhi even became one of the leaders of the Khilafat movement.

A Conference of the Ulemas was held at Phulwari in Patna on 15 and 16 May 1920. This meeting was addressed by Maulana Azad Sobhani, Maulana Abdul Bari, Hasrat Mohani and Shah Mohiuddin. Maulana Kadir Azad Sobhani and Maulana Abdul Mazid, the Ulemas from Kanpur and Mathura, also attended this meeting. In this Conference, it was resolved to continue the movement for another six months. On 5 June 1920, Abdul Sami, Khwaja Abdul Majid and Syed Mahmud arranged a mass prayer meeting in Bankipur Maidan to offer a prayer for the success of the movement. Maulvi Etmad Hussain and Pesh Imam of Bakerganj Mosque joined the prayer meeting. There was also a signature campaign to present a memorandum to the Viceroy. The signature campaign was organised in Patna, Monghyr, Gaya, Bhagalpur and Muzaffarpur. Anti-government leaflets and booklets were distributed everywhere in the province. Maulana Shah Badruddin prepared a fatwa appealing to the Muslims of Bihar to follow Non-Cooperation and renounce all titles and honour given by

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165 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of May 1919, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 95/May/1919, NAI.
167 Ibid..
168 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of June 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 97/June/1920, NAI.
the government. On the Id day at Patna, printed leaflets and posters received from the Central Khilafat Committee of Bombay describing the obligations of Muslims to the Khilafat and appealing for funds were freely distributed. Ghulam Imam of Patna City was very active. He delivered speeches at different places in the province, advocating Non-Cooperation and condemning the peace terms. The Honorary Magistrate in the Gaya district Maulvi Zamir-ud-din Haidar resigned his post.

On 9 June 1920, the Khilafat Committee at Allahabad unanimously accepted the suggestion of Non-Cooperation and asked Gandhi to lead the movement. A programme of four-stage Non-Cooperation was announced consisting of boycott of titles, civil services, police and army and finally non-payment of taxes. Gandhi began pressing the Congress to adopt a similar campaign around three issues- the Punjab wrong, the Khilafat wrong and Swaraj. Shaukat Ali wrote a letter to the Bihar Provincial Khilafat Committee in July asking them to mobilize people for active and full Non-Cooperation. The Bihar Provincial Khilafat Committee met at Patna to consider the letter of Shaukat Ali. It responded in positive terms and provided full support to the movement. A meeting was held at the Madrasa mosque in Patna City on 25 July 1920, where Mazharul Haq, Rajendra Prasad and others explained the

169 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa, July 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 105/July/1920, NAI.
170 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of June 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 97/June/1920, NAI.
171 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of May 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 95/May/1920, NAI.
172 Bipan Chandra, et al., India's Struggle for Independence, pp. 184-185.
174 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the first half of July 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 106/July/1920, NAI.
principles and ideas of Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movement. Mohammad Shafi made a tour of the entire district of Muzaffarpur and explained to the people the scheme of Non-Cooperation. In Bhagalpur, the Khilafat Committee met at the residence of Deep Narayan Singh, where the problems of Khilafat and Non-Cooperation were discussed. On 30 July 1920, a meeting was held at Patna under Mazharul Haq, where full faith in Gandhi was expressed. The BPCC appointed a committee on 31 July 1920 with Mazharul Haq, Hasan Imam, Ganesh Datta, Rajendra Prasad and Ayudhya Prasad. This committee adopted the programme of Non-Cooperation as the only way for the redressal of Muslim grievances.

The Khilafat Committee formally inaugurated Non-Cooperation on the Khilafat Day on 1 August 1920. On this day, hartal was observed in the whole province. A public meeting was held in the Madrasa mosque in Patna City under Mazharul Haq. Mazharul Haq explained the purpose of Non-Cooperation and urged the people to maintain national unity. Around 2,000 people attended the meeting. Many of them came from nearby villages. Besides the educated section from Bankipur, Phulwari and Patna City, many students and “bazaar people” also attended this meeting. Meetings were also held in Muzaffarpur.
and Darbhanga. Hartals were also observed in Arrah, Chapra, Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Ranchi, Gaya, Palamau and Hazaribagh. The hartal was very successful in Daltonganj, Arrah and Monghyr. On 4 August, Maulana Atanullah of Amritsar delivered a lecture at Mazharul Haq’s house in Patna. Around 500 people attended the meeting. The local students were in a majority in this meeting.

On Khilafat Day, resignations of titles and honorary offices were announced. Shah Badruddin Saheb of Phulwari resigned the title of Shams-ul-ulema. Nurul Hasan resigned his membership of the Provincial Legislative Council and appealed to the countrymen to follow his example. Shah Sulaiman of Phulwari resigned his honorary magistracy. A barrister of Monghyr, Muhammad Zubair, also gave up his lucrative practice at the bar.

“Bihar mourning” was observed after Tilak’s death. A procession was taken out in Patna on 6 August to mourn his death. The procession was led by Mazharul Haq, Rajendra Prasad, Hasan Imam and Nurul Hasan. The people went bare headed and footed to this procession. Mourning was also observed in many other places in Bihar, where the people pledged to follow Non-Cooperation. The Tilak Memorial Committee, comprising of Mazharul Haq, Hasan Imam, Sarfaraz Hussain, Ganesh Dutta, Rajendra Prasad and others, was formed to collect funds in Bihar. In Gaya, Abu Mohammad Hasan resigned

183 Ibid
184 Ibid; Searchlight 6 August 1920.
185 Bihar and Orissa Political Special File no. 242/1920, “Copy of a Special Branch Officer’s report dated the 5th August 1920”.
186 Searchlight, 4 August 1920.
187 Ibid.
188 Ibid, 11 August 1920.
189 Ibid, 6 August 1920.
190 Ibid, 11 August 1920.
his post of Honorary Magistrate and Malik Mukhatar renounced his title and honour.\footnote{Ibid, 6 August, 15 August 1920.}

In August 1920, many Muslims moved out from the British Raj into Darul-Islam (Afghanistan) under the Hijrat Scheme.\footnote{Md. Muzaffar Imam, \textit{Role of Muslims in the National Movement}, p. 132.} On 15 August 1920, a meeting was held at the house of Mazharul Haq where a Hijrat Committee was formed, with Shah Mohiuddin as its president, to enable Muslims to migrate to Afghanistan.\footnote{Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of August 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 112/Aug/1920, NAI.} In order to maintain unity and co-operation, Maulana Shah Suleman urged the Muslims not to sacrifice cows on the eve of Bakrid. A similar move took place in Gaya by Maulavi Fazbur Rahman and Khwaja Mohammad Noor to stop cow sacrifice and maintain communal unity.\footnote{\textit{Searchlight}, 20, 29 August, 3 September 1920.} Mazharul Haq announced his withdrawal from the Council election and his letter of resignation published in the Searchlight on 19 September declared:

\begin{quote}
I, as a Mussalman, can never cooperate with the government, which was bent upon destroying Islam. As an Indian, I cannot work with the government, whose hands were stained with the blood of many countrymen of the Punjab.\footnote{Ibid, 19 September 1920.}
\end{quote}

A large number of students, including Mohammad Sher, Abdul Bari and Mohammad Saqi, left their schools and colleges. Several metric examinees boycotted their examination. Maulana Shah Badaruddin and Syed Ali Nabi gave up the title of Khan Bahadur. Many lawyers suspended their practice. In fact, out of 44 lawyers who gave up their legal practice 22 were Muslims.\footnote{Ibid, 22, 29 September 1920.} 25 students of Nurul Huda withdrew from the school and expressed their eagerness to serve

\footnote{\textit{Searchlight}, 20, 29 August, 3 September 1920.}
the Khilafat cause. Khilafat meetings were held in Sitamarhi, Giridih, Monghyr, Fatwah, Kako, Sasaram, Champaran, Gaya, Muzaffarpur and Bhagalpur, where the people adopted the principle of Non-Cooperation with the government.

Mazharul Haq and others made an extensive tour of Bihar and Orissa and made highly inspiring speeches in favour of Non-Cooperation and Khilafat agitation. In a meeting at Hilsa on 27 October 1920, Shah Ghafoor compared Mazharul Haq with Lord Krishna. He said that as "Lord Krishna was born at the time of distress, similarly Mazharul Haq was born to help us in trouble".

Gradually, the Congress became sceptical of any possibility of political advance through constitutional means and seriously thought of non-cooperating with the government. When the Congress met in September 1920 at Calcutta, it accepted Non-Cooperation as its own programme, and once the Non-Cooperation Movement picked up in Bihar, the Khilafat Movement merged with it.

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197 Fortnightly Report of Bihar and Orissa for the second half of October 1920, Govt of India, Home Department (Political) File no. 66/Oct/1920, NAI.
199 *Searchlight*, 3, 6 October 1920.