FOURTH CHAPTER

FIRST CONGRESS MINISTRY AND AGRARIAN QUESTION (1930-37). ATTITUDE OF CONGRESS TO PEASANT MOVEMENTS IN U.P.
The united provinces were a small part in the colossal machinery of the vast British Empire. During 1930 all the economies of the world were under the great influence of great depression which scattered the Britishes as well. As a result united provinces envisaged an unprecedented slump in the prices of agriculture produce; sinking prices created of agricultural imbalances.

The foundation of the rural economy in India received a jolt. The cultivators were not in condition to pay the escalating rents demanded by land lords, taluqdas and zamindars.\(^0\)

Innumerable atrocities were committed on tenants and horrowing accounts emanated from the provincial districts. The kisan distress was also experienced by congress men and the congress workers had to undergo serious ordeals. They were harrassed, gaged, imprisoned and mercilessly chastised in other ways. And the congress patriots had to start a no-tax campaign in the province. The no-tax campaign was a part of civil disobedience movement. The congress party had no other option because the middle class gentry of cities and towns were not showing any interest in Hartals. So tenants emerged as a collective power for the congress party having real issues in their lives. Speaking at Taugan, district Raibareli on 5\(^{th}\) February, 1930, Nehru convinced the people that congress did not want to make relationship with the British Empire as it was exploiting the poor men. Nehru convinced the people that Gandhiji wanted to stop ejectment; so, he had appealed to the Indians for the non-payment of taxes. This involved all
sections of society, professional classes land owners and tenants. After the Gandhi-Irwan Pact of 5th March, 1931 the no-tax campaign was discontinued. During the time Gandhi was having conversations with viceroy regarding provisional settlement and he pointed out that withdrawal of the political no-tax campaign would not solve the problem of economic distress of united provinces and the tenantry would not pay the demand taxes.

The congress organizations in tehsils acted as agents of the peasants in negotiations with the land lords. G.B. Pant was made liaison officer. On 21st March 1931 G.B. Pant sent a copy of the resolution of the executive council of the provisional congress regarding agrarian situation to revenue secretary to U.P. government; and stressed the need to solve the agrarian question so as to avoid state of suspense and uncertainty. The resolution denounced the forcible collection of rent and revenue with the assistance of police and the tehsil staff. The resolution also depicted the widespread scene of ejectment and recommended that land from which tenants has already been ejected should be restored to them and pending suits should be withdrawn. The revenue secretary had long discussion with G.B. Pant and told him that they were prepared to issue orders to their officers that they were not interfere between the taluqdar s and zamindars and the tenant; and advised the congress men not to instigate the tenants for no-tax campaign. The Governor noted, “if tenants refuse to pay, they must be ejected I do not see how can we leave land lords in the lurch.” Revenue Secretary issued a circular to all the Deputy Commissioners enquiring statements of ejectments in their districts. The Deputy Commissioner Fatehgarh stated about 862 ejectment in 1930-31 as compared with 775 in 1928-29 and 736 in 1929-30.
J.H. Darwan, Collector of Agra, wrote that there were 2008 ejectment in 1930-31. Naqsuddin Khan, collector, Mainpuri said that there were 902 ejectments in 1930-31 as compared with 229 in 1928-29 and 304 in 1929-30. The collector, Kanpur intimated that there were 2062 ejectments cases in 1930-31, 831 in 1928-29 and 883 in 1929-30. The collector Fathepur stated that he had issued orders to the tehsildars that those who paid reasonable portion of the arrears were not to be ejected from their holdings. The police force was only used in Khajura tehsil of Fatehpur district to protect tehsildar. This tehsil was much affected by the no-rent campaignt started by the congress party. The Deputy Commissioner, Etawah wrote that the Tehsil Bidhuna was affected by the civil dis-obedience which followed 1036 ejectement in the whole district. The collector, Allahabad wrote that great many tenants would lose their holdings because of the civil-disobedience movement. And those who paid rents, their crops were destroyed by the agents of the congress. Those who did not pay rents in Allahabad were influenced either by political motives or by fearing of the consequences of paying.

On the other hand congress party had opened a register of their headquarters in the city where tenants who have ejected were invited to come and record their names and details of their holdings and have promised them their land back if they were ejected. The main purpose of the congress partly in involving the masses in its activities was to gain political advantage and to pressurize the government to grant concessions. The congress actually was determined to snatch power from the British by organizaing mass struggle against the imperialist powers. By August 1931, the government of U.P. had granted remission of Rs. 70 lakhs in land
revenue and Rs. 2.25 crores in rentals. Considerable hardships were experienced by the large body of tenants who were unable to pay their dues to the taludars. Taking advantages of the fall in prices and the inability of the tenantry to pay rents, the taluqdars began ejecting them in large numbers. Gandhi met Hailey, the Governor of Nainital and issued a manifesto to the kisans and declared that non-payment of taxes was being organized as a part of civil-disobedience for the attainment of Purna-Swaraj and further stated that due to the settlement between the congress and the government civil-disobedience movement was discontinued and therefore also the non-payment of taxes and should be a remission. He also appealed that all ejectements made during the struggle and afterwards should be restored to create proper atmosphere. Gandhiji appealed the taluqdars and zamindars that they should be trustees and trusted friends of their tenants. They should avoid taking forced gifts from tenants on marriage and other occasions or Nazarana on transfer of holdings from one kisan to another.

On the other hand Jawahar Lal Nehru in reply to Gandhi and also to government said that government was using the taludars and zamindars to crush the kisans and the congress would take action against the act. On 14th June 1931 congress appointed a number of committee to enquire into the report on the agrarian situation in ten districts and the reports submitted by them stated that atrocities of the various kinds are being committed on the tenants, members of the congress committees and congress volunteers are being arrested in large numbers. A committee comprised of Govind Ballabh Pant, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and V.N. Tiwari submitted its report and concluded that there was a chronic poverty in peasants and because of agricultural calamities and slump in prices the foundations of rural economy
had shaken. It was also stated that the government was responsible for the
distress and discontent of the peasants. The committee also asserted that
mere remissions in rent and revenue will not solve the problem of peasants.
A devise or a system to ensure the subsistence of tenant was required
according to them; otherwise the committee asserted that millions of kisans
and almost 35 million would lead to hunger and starvation. Their indebtedness
was another serious problem.

The section 107 Cr P.C. was being misused. A person was issued with
a notice for having connection with congress. Even the prominent congress
workers were also bound down under section 109. In Mathura most of the
congress workers of one village came in for their share under section 107. In
Barabanki, blank forms with magistrate signatures were given to the police
to be filled in as occasion demanded. Section 12 A of the Oudh Rent Act
which enables the government to realize rents directly from the tenants was
also applied to certain places. Mahatma Gandhi submitted a charge sheet to
the government of India stating at Baraipur, a regular seize of the village
which lasted for three years; houses were entered into forcibly, property
removed from them, women beaten and illtreated.

On 20th June, 1931 some congress workers were beaten by the
quanoongo in Dadra. On 27th June 1931, the Deputy Commissioner called
the tenants and their Gandhi caps were removed and warned them against
the use of Gandhi cap and Khaddar. Inspite of the great economic distress,
coercion processes, ejectements and attachments continued.
Agrarian situation became critical, forcible collection of rents continued in U.P. Many ejected tenants proceeded against for criminal trespass. Fresh demands were made for current seasons. Inadequate remissions, threat that if full payment not made within one month remission might be cancelled. So, this way condition of kisans became deplorable. The summit of the crisis was now reached. The kisans losing all the hope of redress from the congress and the government was desperately raising money to avoid eviction and the loss of their crops. They sold their cattle, dumped their grain on the markets, thus further reducing the price and borrowed from money lender and paid not only the current rent in full, but often some arrears and heavy cost. Those who had been evicted paid very much more to recover their lands. All out efforts were made by the U.P. government to impede J.L. Nehru. In the village of district Gonda ditches were dug and people were harassed. In Bahraich people were told to receive the remission slips on the same dates when Nehru visited to them.\textsuperscript{69}

**Congress Policy towards the improvement of the peasants**

In the later half of 1931, moreover a growing number of congress leaders in U.P. began to adopt a more militant and radical line than before on agrarian question. They spoke of the need for immediate action to alleviate the distress of tenants especially in Oudh. They were stressed to remove intermediaries between the cultivators and the states. The congress socialist party (C.S.P.) was formed in 1934 by a group of intellectuals who aimed at radicalizing the Indian National Congress and were determined to initiate a process which would ultimately lead to the establishment of a socialist society. But actually it never left the congress.\textsuperscript{10} They rightly
believed that the Indian National Congress was in a position to usher in a social revolution at that stage, especially when Jawahar Lal Nehru had emerged as a foremost radical inside the congress. The C.S.P. was not a political party in the traditional sense; it was neither a separate political party, nor did it function as one. Its membership was open only to congressmen. Nehru raised his powerful voice equally in favour of the dispossessed, deprived and oppressed sections of the peasantry. He did not differentiate between the rich, middle or poor peasants. The C.S.P. had a considerable following in north India, especially in Bihar and the United Provinces where its leaders established contacts with the peasantry either by organizing new kisan sabhas or by infiltrating those that were already functioning under the congress banner. Although ideologically the C.S.P. leaders were closer to marxism and Fabian socialism, they were equally influenced by Gandhism. With respect to agrarian questions the C.S.P’s policies and programmes were certainly more radical than those of the congress and reflected better understanding; their resolutions and demands were on abolition of zamindari, recognition of occupancy rights of tenants in all the land lord-tenant areas. Later in his presidential address at Lucknow in 1936, Nehru spoke almost the language of revolution and emphasized on the representation of workers and peasants organization in congress committee.

This suggestion of Nehru alarmed the right wing elements in the congress who were quite powerful in the central bodies and provincial committees of the congress. An agrarian programme resolution drafted by J.L. Nehru, which proposed the abolition of zamindari, a 50% reduction in rent and a moratorium in all agricultural debts, was welcomed by all the
sections. This resolution had to be modified, leaving it finally to the congress agrarian enquiry committee.

And the U.P. Congress Agrarian Committee (1935) called for the abolition of zamindari system in the long term; and recommended a great reduction in rent, the exemption of un economic holdings from all rent or land tax. The abolition of all feudal dues and illegal demands, the tackling of the problem of rural indebtedness and the introduction of co-operative forming. The movement led by C.S.P. under the leadership of J.H. Nehru, Sri Prakasa and Tandon was left-oriented, though they insisted on following the path of non-violence to achieve their objectives.

The Mass Contact Programme launched by the congress particularly among Muslims; was checked by Jinnah by warning the congress to “leave the muslims alone”. But when the congress and J.L.Nehru declared that the ultimate destiny of India was to form not only a democratic state but also a socialist one; the land lords both Hindu and Muslim, felt threatened. The C.S.P. programme at its formation in 1934 was radical enough. But it was not clear how the C.S.P. would achieve their objectives. Some of the important items of its programme were:-

1. Transfer of all power to the producing masses.

2. Economic life of the country should be planned and owned by the state.

3. All the key industries should come under the direct control of the state.
4. State monopoly of foreign trade.

5. All the princely states and land lords should be eliminated without any compensation.


7. Adult franchise on a functional basis.

8. Liquidation of debts of peasants and workers.

The strategy to achieve these objectives was not clear. Congress itself was divided on these issues. Sardar Patel described the socialists as suffering from brain fever and other eminent leaders of the congress like Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari had little sympathy for the ambitious programme. They were against any such programme or policy which could lead class conflict. They were also opposed to any policy which threatened to produce even a semblance of class conflict. In the colonial setting the C.S.P. programme seemed un-workable, unless one was prepared to follow the path of class struggle.

Keeping in view the peasant problems the state tried to pacify the tenants in some ways which could help peasantry. The increased burden of the debt in united provinces had made the peasant’s life miserable. So, the state introduced a mass of debt legislation to improve the condition of indebted peasantry. The main objects of debt legislation in the words of the agricultural commission was to relieve the debtor of what he can not pay; while insisting on his paying the atmost he can within a reasonable time.\textsuperscript{12}
After he has paid the utmost he can with his assets he should be allowed to start a new life. And with these objects united provinces agriculturists relief act was passed.

The Act had provided in particular, the following facilities to the agriculturist debtors.

1. It made provision for a legal process by which an agriculturist debtor could apply to a civil court to get his account settled and to fix instalments for the payment of the decree.

2. The court was empowered under the act to determine the future rate of interest which may be allowed on any decree.

3. It had enabled a debtor to deposit in a court a sum of money in discharge of his debt for payment to his creditor.

4. It has limited the period of unsufratuary mortages for a term not exceeding twenty years.

5. Every agriculturist debtor was entitled to demand from his creditor a full and correct statement of the amount outstanding against him.

6. It had been made a penal offence for a creditor to enter in his books of accounts a sum larger than that actually lent. The creditor was also bound in to deliver to the debtor a receipt for any payment made by him. The act has been more extensively used them any other debt
relief measure. The vast majority of cases had been for the grant of instalments or for the reduction of interest on decrees.

Besides the usurious loans (united provinces amendment act 1934) was passed so as to define the excessive rate of interest. The act had provided that;

1. In the case of loans secured by a first mortgage the interest exceeding 12 percent per annum is excessive.

2. In the case of unsecured loans the interest rate is excessive if it exceeds 24 percent per annum.

3. In the case of secured loans the court shall not deem the interest excessive if the rate does not exceed 7 percent per annum.

4. In the case of unsecured loans the interest is not excessive if the rate does not exceed 9 percent per annum.

The act has afforded considerable relief to debtors of all classes. The relief under the act has often been given in exparte cases also; and it has some effect in checking usury.

Besides these two acts which were of permanent value the government passed three other acts. Though, these were temporary in their application. They were; (1) the united provinces encumbered Estate Act and; (2) the united provinces Temporary Regulation of Execution Act and the third one (3) the united provinces Regulation of Sales Act. The united
provinces Encumbered Estates Act was to assist land owners, paying land revenue of more than rupees ten from becoming insolvent, owing to the slump in prices. The act ensured the liquidation of debt by equated instalments over a period of years, coupled, if these proved to be insufficient, with the transfer of the least possible area of land. In order to give more opportunities to take advantage of the act the time for the filing of application under the Encumbered Estates Act was extended up to October 29, 1936.13

The united provinces Temporary Regulation of Execution Act was a supplementary measure to the Encumbered Estates Act. It provided relief to all land lords paying land revenue of less than rupees ten and to all cultivators. The Act was not advertised, so little use was made of it; only few could obtain considerable reduction in the rate of interest. The object of the united provinces Regulation of Sales Act (1934) was to prevent an undue amount of land passing from the hands of the old land-owing classes.

The act was extended till December 15; 1936 and saved a large number of debtors from the loss of much of their property and gave considerable relief.

On the other hand the British parliament after some years of Commissions Committees and debates passed a Government of India Act in 1935. The act strengthened the alliances between the British Government and the princes, land lords and other reactionary elements in India.

In the U.P. Congress Committee meeting of 15 March 1936 Congressmen decided to initiate widespread movement and to demand
reduction in revenue from government and to prepare a minimum programme for the peasants.\textsuperscript{14} The C.S.P. meeting held at Merrut in 1936. In the meeting many communist leaders took part and discussed the peasant’s problems vividly, Swami Sahjanand Saraswati stated it an important event in the history of kisan sabha and further added that several communist leader gathered at Meerut discussed an urgent need of All India Kisan Sabha as a strong organization.\textsuperscript{15} Then on 11 April 1936 in congress Lucknow session congress decided to take part in elections which were to be held in 1937 under the new constitution. J.L. Nehru, presiding over the Lucknow congress, exhorted the delegates to adopt a new programme of the united front of all forces of national freedom.

Nehru recommended the affiliation of peasant organization (kisan sabhas) which had already spring up in the country; so that the mass basis of the nationalist movement led by the congress might be consolidated.

Within the congress the socialist party on the entire India basis was formed and outside the congress kisan organization with a programme of the abolition of landlordism and immediate demands for the reduction of tax, rent, and debts had been organized under the leadership of Swami Sahajanand, Prof. Ranga and Indu Lal Yagmik. The influence of these forces was reflected when All India Kisan Sabha meeting was held at Lucknow. Nehru, Swami Sahajanand, Indul Yaznik, N.G. Ranga, J.P. Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohiya were the main leader who were present in their conference; where Swami Sahajanand discussed the miserable condition of the tenants and condemned the land revenue system. He also talked about the abolition of zamindari.\textsuperscript{16}
Congress party though half-heartedly agreed to direct the provincial committees to conduct enquiries into the agrarian situation in their respective provinces and to formulate provincial agrarian programme. All India Kisan Sabha coincided with the congress and pressurized the congress leaders, particularly Nehru, to commit the congress to a definite agrarian programme.

The All India Kisan Sabha passed the following resolution in Lucknow conference.

1. To provide economic and political freedom to the peasants and to fight against the Kisan exploitation, to for peasants organization so as to prepare peasants to fight for their rights.17

2. To abolish zamindari, taluqdari systems and all rights should be given to real tenants.

3. The rent of Rayatwari areas should be reduced.

All the delegates took keen interest in ameliorating the conditions of peasants in zamindari estates and discussed over high rents, interest-rates, illegal exactions.18

The programme (comprised all the demands of Lucknow session) including rural indebtedness were discussed by the congress and some economic and political demands came forward in the All India Peasants Committee meeting held in August, 1936 in Bombay. These demands were –
1. 50% reduction in the revenue and rent on land and in means of irrigation.

2. Deduction in revenue on unproductory lands.

3. Income tax on zamindars.

4. Exemption in rent and revenue at the time of famine or at ruins.

5. End of illegal Bedakhali.

6. Reduction of taxes on agricultural equipments and their transportation.

7. Reduction of taxes from sugar, tobacco, matchboxes.

8. Checking on hoardings of grains.

9. Demanding peasant’s union act to ensure the security of the peasants.

10. Fixation of minimum wages, improvement of irrigation facilities.

11. Availability of cheap and high yield variety seeds.

12. Agricultural insurance was demanded.

13. All the peasants should get permission to keep weapons for private security.\(^9\)

After the meeting of All India Peasants Committee Swami Sahajanand Saraswati urged the peasants and kisan sabha worker to celebrate 1\(^{st}\) September as (Kisan Diwas) peasant’s day; and to discuss the agrarian demands of Bombay conference and Lucknow conference with other peasants in country side. Congress and meeting of peasant’s congress
adopted an agrarian programme, but much to A.I.K.S.’s chagrin, it was not sufficiently radical as it did not include the item of “zamindari abolition.”

And in the A.I.K.S. meeting 500 delegates from Manmad reached on first December 1936; chanting the Kisan Sabha Slogans. J.L. Nehru, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, Narendra Dev, Yagnik Ranga, J.P. Narayn received them with great enthusiasm.

In this meeting new constitution was declared and congress agricultural programme was discussed. This agricultural programme was declared as the Congress party manifesto for the forthcoming elections of 1937. The programme comprised the following main demands –

1. Rent and revenue should be fixed keeping in view the present circumstances and should be reduced upto 50%.

2. Agricultural income must be estimated and income tax should be imposed on extra income.

3. All types of nazaran, beggar should be stopped.

4. Tenants must get right of ownership on the lands.

5. Grazing lands for the cattles should be arranged.

In this way congress party recognized the demands of peasants and paid attention on the agrarian situation and these organizations.
Government prepared a note on the congress activities and its agricultural programme. The note stated that peasants committee in united provinces is a socialist communist organization and congress man was showing keen interest in agrarian problems. Their meetings were presided over by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and the item of zamindari abolition was raised from time to time.²¹

The electoral campaigning was started in U.P. it was two edged. There was a familiar stress on nationalist, but a policy of moderate agrarian reform added a further dimension to the congress appeal as was mentioned in its manifesto.²² This was particularly appropriate plateform catering not only to general interests of the tenants and small zamindars but enquiring even more relevancy in view of their deteriorating economic situation. A.I.K.S. overwhelmingly supported the congress in the 1937 elections and Swami Sahajanand Saraswati was the star; campaigning for the congress party. During the campaign the older congress men met the zamindars of urban and rural areas. Congress workers declared the emancipation of peasant’s problem and promised a total deduction in revenue after election in the programme of congress ministry. In influence of these statements of congress peasants did not pay their rents particularly in eastern Uttar Pradesh i.e. in Banaras and Gorakhpur districts.

Younger congressmen specially member of congress socialist party were very different. They went in small villages where the zamindars, their agents and the village accountants were often antogonestic and sometime violent. In Bareilly the tenants often met the congressmen outside the villages and told them they could not held a meeting in the village because
of the hostility of the zamindars or his agents but that they would vote for the congress anyway. Thus the so called functional alliance benefited the congress alone organizationally. The A.I.K.S. as an All India body could not be stronger then its constituent provincial units. Apart from a nucleus of some office bearers, a more elaborate party network probably did not exist except in a few stronghold district.23

Meetings sessions, conference, held from time to time, were organized on an adhoc basis; no serious attention was ever given to the need for building a strong party apparatus. Financial support was derived from personal friends or wealthy well wishers of some A.I.K.S. leaders, particularly of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati.

In campaigning the congress socialist were also promising that zamindars would be dispossessed of their land, clearly they were using the elections not only to attack the British through the zamindars but also to build up pressures for radical agrarian changes which would either undermine their opponents in the congress or force them to come into time with congress socialist party. The peasants believed that congress party would do something for their immediate exemption in revenue and in the eastern districts in situation as compared to the western districts was worse. They were told by the congressmen to pay rent and revenue as per their capacities.24 In the first month of May, 1937 Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant stressed on the need of agrarian programme and a seven member committee had to do the job. Congress party during the campaign revealed that government is hampering the bills pertaining to the land legislation. According to the government report it all led to the conflict between tenants
and zamindars in Gorakhpur district and there was tension in rural society. In the month of June several peasants’ conferences were held in several places of united provinces. At many places Swami Sahajanand Saraswati condemned the government.

The other type of approach used by the congress in election campaigning was through the magnetic appeal of J.L. Nehru. J.L. Nehru believed that land lordism was a relic of the passed feudal structure and should be done away with. He stated that;

“Regarding zamindars and taluqders, I should like to make the position of congress as well myself quite clear. The congress for the removal of the hardships of the masses and the masses being chiefly the peasantry and congress has to stand for their interests….. The interest of the masses must prevail. That is so far as I have been able to understand the congress view point. My personal view point is the same but in addition I am convinced that the zamindar system is a system which is injurious to society.”

J.L. Nehru thought that, so long as colonialism and feudalism persisted in India the agrarian problems would continue to plague the country side. C.W. Gynanne, Chief Secretary of the U.P. reported that Nehru’s appeal to the villages was quite different, he was concerned to identify Swaraj (National Goal) with panchayat raj where in authorities will be the humble servants of the public and not the petty tyrants that they often are with its direct voicing of the immediate demands of the peasants and
industrial workers, played a big part in mobilizing the overwhelming mass support won by the congress in election campaign.

After coming to the power congress paid attention to miserable condition of the peasants and Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant gave a statement in council that the government is serious about agrarian problems.

Reform of Congress Ministry
(1937-1939)

One of the major reforms initiated by the congress ministry during the governorship of Haig was related to the upliftment of the down trodden peasantry of the provinces which had for long, been grooming under the tyrannical exactions of the landed aristocracy there of. The actual tillers of the soil been reduced to a state of utter distraction and chilling pemury under the existing tenancy laws which governed the two parts of the province of Agra and Awadh. While the tenantry in Agra was comparatively on firmer footings, a tenant in Awadh, where the pernicious Taluqdari system was in vogue, was not sure whether the same piece of land that was under his cultivation would remain with him during the next croppings. In such conditions it was not surprising that united pprovinces experienced several peasant movements like EKA movement and the organization of Kisan Sabhas in all districts of Awadh till the congress took up the cause of the suffering peasantry in real earnest which ultimately voted it to power in
1937. The congress achieved handsome majorities in six provinces. And the so called functional alliance benefited the congress above whereas the A.I.K.S. was totally disillusioned not only by the congress agrarian programme but also by the performance of the congress ministries during assumption of office from 1937-39.

The malaise did not altogether lie with the land lords themselves as the petty revenue officials like the patwaris, qanungos and tehsildars aided and abetted them in their nefarious and illegal exactions for their own benefits. So, the main item of the programme of the interim government was tenancy reforms. They (ministers) were intending to set up a committee very shortly to recommend immediate action. And the main item expected was grant of occupancy rights to all tenants in chief; to remove the grievances. The tyrannies and grievances of the peasants here in the form of hari (unpaid tilling of the land lords) begari (wageless labour) realization of Bhuse (Chaff), ghee, ghorawan (contribution for purchase of horse) hathiowan (contribution for purchase of elephants) etc.

Administration was fully aware of the arbitrary powers of land lords in matters… such as grant of land for building houses or the right to plant trees and the opportunities for the land lord’s servants to bully the tenants etc. Yet Mr. Haig considered them small matters when the prices of agricultural produce were falling and the peasantry was extremely exploited in the hands of money lending shylocks.

The money lender charged from Sawai (quarter of the sum lent) to DERHI half of the sum) as interest and failing repayment after a year,
calculated the debt on compound interest basis. Though the problem of insecurity to tenants throughout the province was the main issue; there were two other factors that plagued the life and living of the peasantry in general. There were the rent and indebtedness which attracted the notice of the governor and his interim ministry. Haig the governor instead of advising the ministers to consider some immediate relief; felt satisfied that the matter was already being tackled by the comprehensive re-settlement and revision (of rents) programme^{29}……. He was even against the small concessions to the peasants through lowering of the exhorbitant canal rents, though the ministry desired to make some concessions in the rates. So, far as second problem of rural indebtedness was concerned the ministry had hardly any time to take any position action due to perhaps to its short stay in office.

And the land lord community which was bewildered, frightened and angry after the result of the 1937. An election was blaming their defeat to the British Connection and Haig (the governor of province) hoped that the land lords would try to pull themselves together and organize resistance. After some time interim ministry headed by cheetari resigned. And after the assumption of office the congress ministry passed a series of regulations which added to their worst fears.

On 2^{nd} August 1937, Pant announced the government’s intention to form two committees of the legislature to consider the forms of tenancy and land revenue law (in the provinces) and to examine the rural indebtedness as well and the committees were asked to send their report by 1^{st} January 1938 and further Pant stated that bedakhali, illegal rent would be checked by a law
and cases against peasants would also be cancelled.\textsuperscript{30} All the district officers were told to stop revenue activities for some time.

The congress ministry was under the pressure of peasantry which was not in condition to pay off rental dues. The poverty of peasants led them to sell even their daughters to meet the demands of the money lenders and their small tracts of land under their cultivation after passed into other hands. As a result an immediate action was required; so, the congress ministry took two important steps.

1. The board of revenue was asked by the government to issue instructions for the stay of proceedings for recovery of arrears of rent previous to Rabi 1344 fasli by ejectment.

   This step could really reduce the misery of the peasants to some extent.\textsuperscript{31}

2. It issued instructions also for the “stay of proceedings for the liquidation of debts under the encumbered estates act. Two stay of proceedings acts, one effecting civil courts and the other affectings revenue courts, were also passed so as to validate the stay for old rental and civil debts.

   Though the above two steps were taken keeping in mind best interests of the tenants, but these steps were not enough to remove all the ills that had accumulated during the course of a rule of some two centuries by the British who had all along favoured and land lordism.\textsuperscript{32} On the functioning of the congress ministry in the provinces majumdar made criticism, according to
him “hopes were raised very high when the congress accepted ministry and
the disappoiment was also prevailing because there was no immediate
relief; there was frustration among the kisans.\textsuperscript{33}

After the elections when the congress assumed the ministry congress
party was supposed to maintain the law and order of the province and now
its government was facing lots of problems regarding emancipation of the
peasants. Still some congressmen was instigating the peasants against
government and zamindars; as a result provincial congress ordered the
district committees not to motivate the peasants for non-payment of taxes
and revenue; but to make their minds in favour of the payment of revenue
and other dues.\textsuperscript{34} The relation between tenants and zamindars were
deterioting and agrarian problems were more for the politicians. In Zhansi
region congress workers and police registered their complaint against each
other and an enquiry was set up on the incident.

On the other hand the landed aristocracy began organizaing a series of
conferences and the united provinces zamindars conference held at Lucknow
in which three thousand zamindars participated from Agra and Awadh
regions. The conference passed the following resolutions;

1. They would not allow their legitimate vital interests to suffer.

2. They strongly disapproved the stay orders which were deliverately
   unjust to zamindar and condemned the activities of those avowed object
   was destruction of the propertied class.
They also demanded “to respect the terms of contracts in permanently settled districts of U.P.”; where as the peasants were determined to take receipts of the rents and not to pay excess rent. And every forntnights report on political situation by U.P. government to the Government of India reveals that authorities had faced problems in extracting rents from the peasants although the ministers of congress were advising the peasants to pay rents.\(^{35}\)

Meanwhile a peasant’s conference was held on 6\(^{th}\) and 7\(^{th}\) December at Pilibheet where peasant’s demands were decided and discussed. Peasant’s organization of U.P. which was by then a separate body was not connected to All India Kisan Sabha. In this period Swami Sahajanand Saraswati visited at money places in Awadh and urged the peasants to demonstrate before council house and celebrate peasant’s day. According to the report of Lucknow commissioner in the neighbouring district Raibarely Kisan Sabha was very active.\(^{36}\) District collection and authorities in Unnao and Gorakhpur revealed the fact that peasants had boycotted the zamindars and their men.

Swami Sahajanand evaluated the situation of peasants and stated that congress workers did not show any interest in his visits, he also discussed the peasant’s problems with the leaders of the Western Uttar Pradesh. He emphasized on the need of agitational character of the peasants organizations.\(^{37}\) At Hamirpur district one thousand peasants gathered and genuine peasant grievances were discussed. On first March 1938 assembley session was started and twenty thousand peasants from Unnao demonstrated infront of council house. Peasants with red flags and tricolour flags and showed their unity with congress. Provincial Congress Committee had
passed a resolution to participate in the demonstration but later the idea was dropped after the advice of U.P. Congress chair person Mr. Mohan Lal Saxena.

But the congress workers of Unnao did not pay attention and took active part in agitation. Pt. J.L. Nehru and Narendra Dev spoke on the meeting and stressed that imperialist British Government and Zamindars should not hamper the works of the popular congress ministry. Narendra Dev emphasized on the need of organizational alliances between Kisan Sabha and Congress Party. Pt. Vishambar Dayal put the agrarian demands before Mr. Pant, (then acting prime minister) who assested full co-operation to the peasants meanwhile Pd. Govind Ballabh Pant had formulated his government’s proposals for tenancy and land revenue reforms which was circulated to the members of the tenancy and land revenue committee appointed by the U.P. legislature.38

Pandit Pant stated in his introductory notes that the programme embodies the government’s decision as to the main points on which land laws must be reformed in order to give relief to the cultivating tenants and the peasant proprietor; he stated that the peasantry is the backbone of the provinces and on their security and welfare depends the future of a liberty enjoying society and a democratic system of government. Government had examined many valuable suggestions in and outside the tenancy and land revenue committee. “So far as possible governments have tried to test each proposal with reference to its being both beneficial and workable.”39
Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant stated that the land lords would approach the proposals without rancour and without suspicion of class warfare and asserted that class warfare can only arise when class interests are elevated above the common good and the good of the rural populations. The proposals were related to unification of the law of hereditary right for tenants, Sir and Khudkast rights in their holdings regarding sub-letting, orders of succession, division of tenancies, improvement of buildings and trees, persons occupying land without title, etc. It was intended to have a consolidated tenancy Act to govern both the Agra and the Oudh and land revenue act with certain amendments if necessary. Every person who, at the commencement of the proposed Act is a statutory tenants on the heir of a statutory tenant in possession of a holding of a deceased statutory tenant; who is tenant in chief of land in a tea garden or of land or land in an alluvial “Mahal” granted under the waste land rules or if land in the Paraganas of Nighasan, Palia or Khairagarh in the Kheri district, who have also a proprietary and under-proprietary right in the village Pahikasht; tenants in Oudh and every person admitted as tenant in-chief on or after the commencement of the Act, shall be a hereditary tenant. The ministry also proposed that every person who is a tenant of Sir but is not entitled to become a hereditary tenant shall not be liable to ejectment or when the Sir-holder requires land for his own cultivation and has given at least a year’s notice of his intention to eject to the tenant. And if on ejectment a Sir holder within two years from the date of the ejectment fails to cultivate the land himself or leases it to any other person; the ejected tenant may apply to be restored to possession of the holding; whereupon he shall become a hereditary tenant. If on ejectment a Sir holder cultivates land for three years
continuously he shall then have the same right of subletting as are allowed as follows;

1. A *sir* holder may lease the whole or part of his *sir* for a period not exceeding five years.

2. A *sir* holder shall not again lease a holding or any part there of until three years have elapsed from the date of termination of the lease.

3. If a *sir* holder allows a tenant to continue in possession beyond five years or if on ejecting a tenant he fails to cultivate the land for three years or within three years lets it out to some other person, the tenant shall become a hereditary tenant of the land which was leased to him and such land shall cease to be *sir*. In future *sir* rights shall not accrue in *Khudkast*.

The ministry also proposed all hereditary tenants shall have the same rights of subletting as ex-proprietary and occupancy tenants will have. Hereditary tenants shall have the same rights as ex-proprietary and occupancy tenants to make improvements.

All such tenants shall have the right to erect to a dwelling house or a cattle-shed of a permanent character on their holdings. A tenant shall be entitled to plant trees on an area not exceeding one-tenth of his entire holding without the consent of the land holder.
Regarding rent rates the ministry proposed that rents shall be based on rent rates suitable to each class of tenant and fixed after a proper inquiry with reference to soil classification, the rents on which tenants were admitted to holdings between 1896 and 1905, changes in conditions such as the nature of the crops grown and the amount of produce from 1896 to 1905, prices of agricultural produce in recent years as compared with the prices of 1896-1905, an analysis of the present rents and the amount of deduction required in the case of rent rates suitable for ex-proprietary or occupancy tenants.

About the suspension of the rent the ministry proposed that remission or suspension of rent may be allowed when the loss or damage to crop exceeds one third and when the loss amounts to two thirds, government may remit rent in whole or in part. Every land holder shall give a printed receipt in a prescribed form for each sum of rent or sayar received. He shall be bound to receive the amount offered whether it is a part payment or payment in full. Printed forms of counterfoil and receipt shall be made available by the government at reasonable prices.

The tenant shall have option to make payment of rent by postal money order or by deposit in a court. No tenant shall be required to pay anything more than recorded rent for his holding. The rate of interest allowable on arrears of rent, whether by agreement or under decree, shall not exceed 6¼ percent simple interest. Limitation for application or suit for recovery of arrears of rent shall be three years.
A tenant shall not be liable to arrest or detention for arrears of rent in any circumstances. Distraint shall be made by an order of a court. Not more than one-quarter of a standing crop shall be distrained and no distraint shall be ordered for arrears if less than Rs. 10. In a Mahal where the number of revenue-payers is large and their circumstances are poor, the rate of assessment shall not exceed 25 percent of the net assets, as nearly as may be.

Agricultural income tax may be imposed on any individual in respect of profits of any mahal to which the system of periodical re-assessement of land revenue does not apply or of any Mahal in respect of which land revenue is not payable. There shall be no arrest or detention for non-payment of land revenue or of sums recoverable as arrears of land revenue without necessarily issuing coercive processes. 41

These proposals of the government for the reform of the tenancy and land revenue law were communicated to the landlords and land lords were very critical of these proposals and had shown sign of getting together to oppose them. There was even some talk of congress land lords M.L. as throwing in their influence to secure modifications. They maintained and probably with justice that 55% percent rate of land revenue was excessive and a strong effort would be made to get this reduced. 42 The land lord class also felt that if the rate of percentage of land revenue is now put up as proposed by the government even on the understanding that an agricultural income tax will not be imposed it is possible that another government in a few years time might impose an agricultural income tax on of this and taxation on such a scale would completely ruin them.
The kisan leaders were dissatisfied with government proposals as not going far enough and there was talk of another big kisan demonstration to be held in front of the council house.

Though the proposals were for reaching as they did not close the chapter of the agrarian reforms. On 17th April 1938 on kisan day celebrations at Allahabad Pandit Nehru spoke on the proposals of the agrarian reforms in U.P. and stated that “we are kisan because for many years the congress in the province has stood for the betterment of the kisans a lot. We have worked among the kisans, carried out enquiries and published them.”

He stated that the congress has on many occasions conferences and congress committee had passed resolutions about the kisan’s grievances and demanded relief. He stated that party had laid great stress on the agrarian problem. Most important of all questions is, of course, the question of Swaraj that is panchayat raj in which the people should have power to do what they choose and without that these can be no final relief. He asserted that congress can not delay agrarian reform and he must therefore give relief to the peasantry as for as possible. He told the people that congress ministry took immediate steps to give effect to the promises made in the election manifesto. The first thing it did was to issue stay orders for the arrears of rent suits and debt suits and now the government’s proposals would be incorporated in a bill. He also asserted that Kisans would approve the proposals for they are based on their own demands. He added that mere approval is not enough, we have to face a stiff opposition from the taluqdars and big zamindars, there he stressed the need of unity.

He appealed the peasants to strengthen the congress organization in every village and to follow carefully the proceedings of the agrarian bill and give opinion
whenever necessary. He stated that for the present, we must concentrate on
the agrarian measure already before us and get it passed. That will bring
considerable relief to a large number of people who have suffered for long;
but will not solve the problem of land for there are many persons without
land an money and are un-employed; and in future he stated they may have
to consider the whole question of abolishing the zamindari system. The
united provinces tenancy bill was introduced in the legislative assembly on
20th April, 1938.

Meanwhile IIIrd A.I.K.S. conference was held at Kumilma from 11th
May to 14th May 1938 in which 60 thousand representatives took part.
Swami Sahajanand Saraswati became the president of the A.I.K.S. for the
second time. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati condemned the government for
not fulfilling the demands of the peasants. He also stated that congress
ministry could not work with accordance to its manifesto and the suppressed
peasants were remained helpless. Resolution on agrarian conditions were
passed and said that the aim of peasant movement is agricultural revolution
which could not be possible without attaining Swaraj. He urged the
peasants to co-operate the congress in its aim of attaining Swaraj.

Before the Kumillnia conference on conference on 2nd and 3rd April
kisan sabha member of U.P. met at Lucknow and declared that kisan sabha
would co-operate congress party in its struggle against British imperilism.
On the one hand the peasants were organizing against the government, on
the other hand the land lords were making vigorous protests and were trying
to organize their opposition. In the villages they were exploiting the peasants
and at the same time they had good relations with the congressmen. And the
land lords were trying their best to manipulate the government’s policies by their powers through associations. On 8th and 9th April 1938 the conference of the land lords was held in Lucknow under the presidency of Maharaja of Darbanga in which they appealed government to safeguard their rights granted under the sanads. In this conference they formed a committee to proceed their talks to the national level congress leader.47

In the month of May 1938, on 28th again Oudh zamindar conference was held at Lucknow and the conference described the U.P. tenancy bill as unjust and mischievous and urged zamindars and other capitalists to join hands against the socialist and communist menace of the country. They stated that new U.P. Tenancy Bill confirms that object of the bill framers is to put end to the zamindari system. They condemned the congress policies and stated that congressmen today are disposed to claim a monopoly of patriotism.48 They stated that congress had destroyed the root of zamindari system. According to them the propogation of such a doctrine had already wrought infinite mischief. It has occasioned false hopes among the tenants, and poisoned their old harmonious relations with the land lords. The zamindars can not swallow all this quietly. Congress party took the conference seriously. J.L. Nehru remarked on Oudh Zamindar conference and stated that tenants of U.P. will accept the challenge and remarked that congress in the U.P. as elsewhere in India had tried to proceed on a national basis, keeping in mind the interests of all groups and classes. He asserted that in United Provinces the agrarian problem has occupied the congress these many years because of the utter poverty and the wretchedness of the tenantry under the zamindari system. He added that after tremendous labours congress has tried to evolve proposals to lighten the burden of the peasants
while retaining the present system. He stated that U.P. government is going to stick to these proposals and threats are not going to deflect it from its stand. Nehru warned the zamindars that if they invite a conflict on this bill that is before the U.P. Assembly, they may have to struggle to retain even a semblance of the zamindari system. 49

So, regarding the problem of kisans, the congress adopted a clear stand. It had already recognized the right of kisans to organize themselves in Kisan Sabhas. The congress itself, it was claimed, was mainly a kisan organization, vast numbers of kisans were its members and they influenced its policy also. 50 The congress championed their claims and wanted that the organization should spread in every village in India, but as the same kisan organizations followed agitational methods, leading to violence and problems of law, the congress made it very clear that while fully recognizing the right of the kisans to organize kisan sabhas. The congress can not associate itself with any activities which were incompatible with the basic principles of the congress and would not countenance any of the activities of those congressmen who as members of the kisan sabhas helped in creating atmosphere hostile to congress principles and policy.

Thus the kisans were permitted to work within the frame work of the congress programmes but not to be indulging in any hostile action violating its principles. Again on 24th June 1938 about twelve thousand farmers demonstrated before the council house at Lucknow and the farmers after that gathered at Aminabad Park under the leadership of Mohan Lal Saxena. Peasants demanded to abolish zamindari system and condemned the police
for its suppression on kisans. At Sitapur and Moradabad peasants in their meetings demanded to abolish zamindary system.

Zamindars of the united provinces pressurized the congress with the help of the government officers and the unity of the zamindars and government officials could be seen at Matigaon near Varansi where meeting on 24th June 1938 was proposed; and the government officials declared section 144 in Chandauli tehsil. After 3000 peasants were gathered violating the rule of the officers.

In the month of July the peasants achieved a big victory in Allahabad district. He villagers of Rohi, Amha, Faridpur and Madaripur organized the kisan sabha peasants and demanded their rights. Zamindars; afraid to their unity, tried to terrorized the peasants and attacked the main leader. Even the Muslim zamindars tried to instigate the Muslim peasants against Hindu majority but failed to do so. After long term agitation the officers decided that the fruits of the trees should be under given to the peasants and the zamindars have no right on it. In Allahabad district it was a victory of the peasants in which Lal Bahadur Shastri and Saligram Jayaswal helped the main district kisan sabha leader Bhisma Arya. Now it was very clear that the peasants were demanding radical changes in the agricultural society; where as the attitude of the congress party did not seem very much in favour of the peasantry.51

If we look into the attitude of the congress towards the landed class we can conclude that the main leaders were not in favour of standing completely for the interest of the peasantry. But J.L. Nehru from the very
beginning thought that so long as it was colonialism and feudalism which are responsible for the agrarian problems and would continue to plague the country side and no progress would be made. H.W. Emerson, who had been the home member of the government of India once recorded that Nehru had expressed his deep commitment to initiating radical changes in socio-economic relations; once the congress gained the power. Even at a time when the congress was not in power, Nehru toyed with the idea of purchasing the estates of land lords and redistributing them among peasants.\textsuperscript{52}

Although Nehru believed in the inherent weaknesses and incompatibilities of land lordism he was not in favour of solving the problem by initiating a class war or by means of a peasant revolt. His commitment to democratic values and freedom was so strong that he sought to introduce measures for radical social transformation only by using non-violent, peaceful methods and in gradual stages. He was also deeply conscious of the constraints imposed on the Indian Social System under colonial rule. In his speech at Faizpur congress session on 27\textsuperscript{th} December 1936 he had said, “the congress stands today for full democracy in India and fights for the democratic state, not for socialism; it is anti imperialist and strives for great changes in our political and economic structure. I hope that the large of events will lead it to socialism for that seems to me the only remedy for India’s ills”.

Thus, he wanted to get rid of the foreign power and within the frame work of the democratic system, he wanted to introduce a system which would work ultimately for the establishment of socialism. In the same
address he had pointed out that the alien government was a hindrance to the social progress and stated that for social reform could be introduced unless British rule was ended. He also stated that even if one had to sell soap in the country, the congress had to take note of the interference of the government, if it did not suit their economic interest. Nehru from the very beginning had shown his interest for the down trodden people of the country. On the eve of 27th December 1936 in the Faizpur congress session he gave the following message:

“When we consider the problem of India we find that essentially it is a problem of removing poverty and unemployment, and the building up of a new political and social order which removes all obstacles and hindrances from the path of freedom and progress. This removal involves political freedom, for without the power to shape our destiny we are helpless victims of external forces which keep us down and exploit us.”

At the same time arguing in favour of the peasantry, Nehru was absolutely clear that the zamindari system was most detrimental to the interest of peasants. In the same session he said “Land is considered to be the property of the zamindars. The zamindar does not work on but enjoys its fruits sitting at home. He gives his land to the peasants on rent and is always on the look out for extracting as much rent as he possibly can. It is my belief that the land should belong to the person who tills it and not to the zamindar or taluqdar….. We should also try to have Swaraj in our country not of the capitalist but of the poor and the peasants….. The present day zamindars and taluqdars are in fact a burden on country”.
In other words, Nehru was not only in favour of reduction of rent and legislation against eviction of tenants from their land but he was also convinced that the socio-economic system which was based on a feudal structure had no right to exist. Ideologically, therefore he was determined to sweep off the land lords as a class, which he considered to be an essential condition for the removal of mass misery and poverty. On the other hand Gandhiji was not in sympathy with socialist ideology; which laid stress on the extinction of private property and the inevitability of class war. He expressed serious misgivings concerning the efficacy of a social transformation brought about by an expropriation of property and achieved by engineering social conflict and violence. J.L. Nehru even recorded at length his differences with Gandhi on this vital issue, although Nehru was also not in the least enamoured of class conflict and violent methods to resolve it.\textsuperscript{55} Nehruji believed that socialism is an article of faith, but he hoped that a socialist society could be built without violence through peaceful means, through laws. He did not believe in doctrinaire socialism and aimed at establishing an egalitarian society based on social justice and economic equality. And this society had proposed an overthrow of feudalism, a destruction of privileges of all kinds and a guarantee of equal rights and freedom to all. The sources of Gandhiji’s idealism, social values and beliefs can be traced to the highest Hindu philosophical traditions. He dreamt of building a new social order based on concepts of non-possession, non-violence in action, and duty. He considered the universe as the kingdom of the God; in which all beings are the part of cosmic system and all individuals had equal lights to attain material, moral and spiritual happiness. He extolled the virtues of love, piety, austerity and charity and of brahmacharya, i.e. a belief in the negation of sexual indulgence-sex being
primarily a means for procreation, to sustain the universe-and the varnashram system; all of which, no doubt, were in conformity with the ideals of the Hindu ways of the life.

The idea of social transformation which Gandhi envisaged, and the society which he sought to build, was a kind of society in which the individual would have full liberty and opportunity to attain moral and spiritual heights, by leading a single life, with the minimum of desires and wants, with the bare necessities of life sufficient to maintain the body and soul. In his ideal society neither the rich acquired too much wealth nor did the poor live in misery. In such a society there was no place for acquisitiveness or exploitative relationships. Gandhiji therefore exhorted the virtues of religion and idealized the simple peasant life. J.L. Nehru considered that such a society, which perpetuated poverty, would be based on an utterly wrong and harmful doctrine. He was critical to Gandhi and observed that Gandhiji has also no desire to raise the standard of the masses beyond a certain very modest competence for higher standards and leisure may lead to self indulgence of sin. Gandhi denounced the western industrial society because of its quisitiveness fierce competition, unbridled consumerism and the domination of machine over man. Gandhi in his classic work, Hind Swaraj, published in 1909 and reprinted in 1938, after having been proscribed by the British Governemnt, the metaphysical elements of his thought, blended with his simple social theory, emerge in sharp contrast to the ideas propounded by western social philosophers, who extalled the virtues of modern science, rationalism and technological innovations which were designed to promote the material welfare of the society.
Nehruji wanted to eliminate the poverty and misery of the toiling masses particularly in the villages. He called the villages dung heaps and wanted to transform them through science, technology and agricultural revolution. Gandhi on the other hand believed in the philosophy of self sufficient village republics.

There philosophical interpretations of the human situation, human life and its needs, were evolved through the ages in India and Gandhi derived inspiration from them. However it should not be concluded that Gandhi Ji’s philosophy was totally unsuited to the fast changing society or that he was against modern changes and needs. He was a critic of west and it should be stressed that he was not an inveterate enemy of science and rationalism. He was opposed to what he called inslavement of man to machine.

But the modern radical, J.L. Nehru did not wish to impose a classless society on India through violence, as had achieved in Russia, nor was he in favour of a rationalistic social order which was devoid of spiritualism. He aimed at establishing a classless society with equal economic justice and opportunity for all, a society organized on a planned basis for the raising of mankind to higher material and cultural levels, to a cultivation of spiritual values, of co-operation, unselfishness, the spirit of service, the desire to do right, goodwill and love ultimately a world order.57

Returning to the issue of socialism, however, Gandhi as well as many outstanding leaders of the congress was not agreed with Nehru. The Indian National Congress was also divided on this issue. A considerable bulk among them was against a socialistic social order; they were Sardar Patel,
Dr. Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajagopalachari. Mahatma Gandhi looked the congress a party of all the classes and a party representing the whole. He said; “I may tell you that the congress does not belong to any particular group of men. It belongs to all; but the protection of the poor peasantry, which forms the bulk of population, must be its primary interest. The congress must therefore, truly represent the poor. But that does not mean that all other classes—the middle classes, the capitalists or zamindars must go under. All that it aims at is that all other classes must subscribe to the interests to the poor.”

He further added that to him Hind Swaraj was the rule of the people and rule of the justice. Gandhiji believed in conversion, change of heart, as an instrument to bring about social transformation. Gandhiji advocated the principle of the trusteeship of property in which the feudal princes, the capitalists, the big land lords, were expected to do their duty to the poor and the needy. Gandhiji urged the zamindars “My objective is to reach your heart and convert you so that you hold all your private property in trust for your tenants and use it primarily for their welfare.”

Gandhiji opposed all forms of exploitation, and suggested the panacea of non-possession to end the exploitative relationship of the society. Gandhiji believed that the principle of non-possession would pave way to the end of the exploitation in any form. Non-violence according to him was the main weapon in Swaraj and in non-violent Swaraj there can be no encroachment upon just rights.
These ideas were no doubt of seminal importance, but they were highly complex, philosophical and seemingly opposed to normal human instincts. And it was very difficult to achieve these ideas. Nehru believed that Gandhiji were like medieval Christian saint. Nehru believed that “it is an illusion to imagine that a dominant imperialist power will give up its domination over a country or that a class will give up its superior position and privileges unless effective pressure amounting to coercion is exercised.”

Gandhi on the other hand insisted that class war is foreign to the essential genius of India and… he added that he wanted to throw the whole weight of his influence in preventing class war. But this issue was not discussed because this issue could have lead the nation at that critical juncture and besides this issue could not have been solved till India had achieved freedom from alien rule.

If Gandhi derived his inspiration, faith and value system from Hindu philosophy and religion; he was also influenced by the teachings of the great religions of the world. He was a nationalist but at the same time he was a humanist too; having a deep faith in humanity. Similarly, J.L. Nehru as an internationalist believed in building a new world order on the foundations of international understanding, peace, equality and humanism; at the same time he had faith in Indian culture; although Nehru had also experienced the radical social theory of the west, including Marxism which open new vistas of knowledge and ideas before him. He was deeply committed to Indian values Indian culture and heritage; he learnt the highly sophisticated religions doctrines and the wealth of literature from the Indian history.
In his society, J.L. Nehru wanted to work out a synthesis between the best elements of Indian culture and the best of the west. Whether it was a agrarian question on economic planning or framing of the Indian constitution, or passing a social legislation he never lost sight of the India’s history and heritage. With the dawn of independence, the zamindaris were abolished, but as an Indian and humanist, he allowed the zamindars fair compensation.\textsuperscript{80} He considered the peasants as the backbone of the country and economy, they had suffered were removed; thus laying a foundation of a silent and peaceful revolution in the countryside.
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