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Author(s): Ratna Ray and Rajat Ray

Source: *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1975), pp. 81-102

Published by: Cambridge University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/311798>

Accessed: 08-04-2020 02:38 UTC

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Zamindars and Jotedars: a study of Rural Politics in Bengal

RAJAT AND RATNA RAY

1. Foundations of the rural order

‘IN England every piece of land is owned by someone—an individual, a public body, a company or perhaps by the crown. In India this is not so.’ Thus writes, in his unpublished reminiscences, a British ICS Officer who acquired experience of revenue work in the United Provinces and Bengal in the course of his career in India from 1915 to 1946.¹ Another ICS Officer, with similar experience of revenue work in Bengal, expresses the conviction that under the land tenure system in Bengal, inherited largely from the days of Mughal rule, ‘there is no ownership of land, but simply a system of possessory interests. These interests are piled one on top of another, and none can be got rid of unless the interest holder fails to pay his dues to his superior landlord’. This Bengal Civilian then goes on to make the following interesting observation: ‘It is quite obvious that with a system like this it is impossible for any one interest holder to plan improvements; and the difficulties of getting all of the interest holders to agree on an improvement policy are very great.’² It is a comment which brings out an important strand in the thinking of British administrators in India: the compulsive idea that a class of men in effective ownership of land is necessary for carrying out agricultural improvements and that a policy of improvement on the part of the government entails either the creation of such a class of proprietors of land or the proper identification of such a class with one of the numerous existing groups in rural society.

The framers of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal believed that the *zamindars* of the province were the owners of land, or, at any rate, the nearest approximation to the English concept of landlord, who would, given the right kind of incentive, carry out the desired improvements

¹ Johnston Papers, *Reminiscences in India 1915–46* (typescript), p. 27. University of Cambridge, Centre of South Asian Studies.

² Bell Papers, File No. 2, 1940–46, ‘Agriculture in India.’ University of Cambridge, Centre of South Asian Studies.

in agriculture. With this idea proprietary rights were conferred on the *zamindars* in 1793 and their tribute-collecting jurisdictions were declared to be 'estates'. When the *zamindars* failed to live up to the model of an improving landlord class, a reaction among administrators led to the spread of the belief that there were no landlords in India in a real sense and that proprietary rights, if any, were vested either in the state or in the body of *khudkast raiyats* (resident tenants). As a matter of fact, both the framers and the critics of the Permanent Settlement failed to make a pertinent distinction, in speaking of landlords in the Indian context, between (a) the various grades of hereditary revenue-collectors with proprietary rights in revenue management and (b) the dominant landed village groups in effective possession of land and commanding the labour of poor villagers. Failure to make this distinction led the framers of the Permanent Settlement to confer proprietary rights in land to a class of men who as a rule did not have land in their actual possession and were entitled merely to collect tribute and pay a part thereof as revenue to the government. The critics of the Permanent Settlement were led, on the other hand, to deny the existence of proprietors of land, although there existed in Bengal, as tenants of the revenue-collecting *zamindars* and *talugdars*, a class of men known as *jotedars* who owned sizeable portions of village lands and cultivated their broad acres with the help of share-croppers, tenants-at-will and hired labourers. The rural scene in Bengal, before as well as after the Permanent Settlement, cannot be analyzed without reference to two distinct structures of land tenure: the tribute-collecting structure over the village and the land-holding structure within the village.

The intricate revenue-collecting structure in Bengal under the *Nawabs* of Murshidabad, which already anticipated much of the tortuous complexity of land tenure for which Bengal became notorious under British rule, reflected the absence of close rule of the countryside by the Mughal government in the eighteenth century. In order to avoid the trouble and expense of collecting the revenue from a numerous body of petty *zamindars* and *talugdars*, the Mughal government under Murshid Quli Khan allowed and even encouraged the agglomeration of large stretches of territory under big *zamindars* dignified with the title of *Raja*. Some of these *Rajas*, such as those of Bishnupur and Chandradwip, were ancient Hindu princes who survived as autonomous chieftains under Mughal rule; others, such as those of Rajshahi, Bardwan and Nadia, were revenue farmers and officials of the Mughal government who turned their revenue collecting jurisdictions into immense hereditary *zamindaris* under the active patronage of the

nizamat. At the time of the British take-over, there were 15 large *zamindaris* in Bengal which paid 60 per cent of the land revenue of the province and constituted nearly half of its *parganas*.³ These resembled principalities within the state rather than estates owned by landlords. The role of the *zamindars*, in functional terms, was to administer territory rather than to hold land (except in the case of small private lands held by the *zamindars* within their territory). The territorial magnates maintained armies, dispensed criminal justice, enforced law and order, decided land disputes, and above all collected the revenues of the country. The all-important task of revenue management was administered through a pyramidal structure of tribute-collecting rights, at the apex of which stood the *zamindar*. Below the big *zamindars* and *Rajas* existed a much more numerous class of high-caste smaller gentry, holding *talucs*, service grants and rent-free lands, who enjoyed a proprietary right of collecting the revenues of a defined territory, a right which, like that of their overlord, was freely inherited, alienated and sold. From the *zamindari* at the top (*sadr*) a chain of revenue-collecting rights went down in the interior (*mufassal*) to the village level, where the system was confronted by the village heads—a class of superior *raiyats* who collected the revenue of the village and paid it to the lowest grade of revenue collector. Because of the existence of a numerous *grihastha* (clean caste householder of middling rank and income) gentry whose prescriptive rights in the produce of the land had to be accommodated within the revenue-collecting structure, the latter was necessarily a complex, hierarchical structure with a built-in tendency towards sub-infeudation. Sub-infeudation was facilitated by the fact that the rights of the *zamindars* and *talugdars* lay, not in the land itself, but in its revenues. In their own villages of residence, the *zamindars* and *talugdars* might keep in private possession cultivable lands called *nij jote*, *khamar* or *nankar*, where they enjoyed the same effective ownership of land as the *jotedars*. Elsewhere they did not hold land, but ruled over territory, collecting its land revenue (*mal*) and customs duties (*sayer*). In these other villages beyond the residence of the *zamindar* or *talugdar*, a class of rich tenants, who came to be designated in the course of the nineteenth century as *jotedars* (originally the term meant simply a *raiyat* or subject who held his *jote* or cultivable plot on a direct lease from the *zamindar*, i.e., a subject who was not an under-*raiyat*), constituted the dominant class of village landholders.⁴

³ James Grant, Analysis of the Finances of Bengal, pp. 267–269, *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. 7, Sess. 1812.

⁴ The best readily available description of this pyramidal revenue-collecting

Whereas the *zamindars*, *taluqdars* and other grades of revenue-collectors in Bengal were very often drawn from the ritually high-ranking literati of Brahmans (priests), Kayasthas (scribes), Vaidyas (physicians), Saiyads (aristocratic Muslims) and Maulvis (learned Muslims), the backbone of the *jotedar* tenantry was made up of respectable agricultural castes (Sadgops, Aguris and Kaivartas in West Bengal and Sheikh Muslims in East Bengal) as well as by the higher intellectual castes, who together formed a dominant village land-holding class ruling over the untouchable landless groups in the villages. The existence of this class of people, whose holdings might run from 50 to 6000 acres, implied a very considerable concentration of land-holding. During his survey of Dinajpur district in 1808, Buchanan Hamilton found that 6 per cent of the cultivating population enjoyed 36.5 per cent of the land leased by *raiya*s from the *zamindars*, whereas 52.1 per cent of the agricultural work force had no land at all and worked either as share-croppers or as agricultural labourers under the rich tenant-landlords.⁵ With this concentration of land-holding went another remarkable feature of the village economy, namely, the combination of grain-dealing and money-lending with land-holding, which gave the *jotedar* families enormous economic and political power within the village. The greater part of rural credit was supplied, not by professional bankers and money-lenders, but by well-to-do villagers who combined agriculture with money-lending. According to Buchanan Hamilton, at least half of the whole cultivation of the country was carried on with the money or grain advanced by the *jotedars*, to whom the share-croppers and small farmers were more indebted than the whole value of their stock.⁶ Through the credit mechanism the *jotedars* enjoyed command of the labour force of the village. Share-croppers, possessing ploughs but lacking seed and food, cultivated for a half share with grain loans advanced by the *jotedars*. Agricultural labourers, with no means except their labour power, pledged their labour to the *jotedars* for a few rupees of loan, becoming bonded labourers in the course of their perpetual borrowings.⁷ The operations of the rural credit mechanism, through which the *jotedars* were assured of the labour power of the village and political control of the villagers, were facilitated by

structure in print is Sir John Shore's famous minute of 18 June 1789, printed in the appendix of the Fifth Report on the Affairs of the East India Company, *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. 7, Sess. 1812.

⁵ Francis Buchanan (Hamilton), *A Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of the District, a Zilla, of Dinajpur, in the Province, or Soubah, of Bengal* (Baptist Mission Press 1883), pp. 236, 244.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 243-245.

the structure of the market for agricultural produce. The poor farmers and share-croppers, lacking holding power and means of transport to the market, sold their produce immediately after the harvest, when the ruling prices of grain were lowest during the year, to the local grain-dealer (*bepari*), who was often the *jotedar*. The grain-dealing *jotedars*, who were equipped with stores (*golas*) and means of transport, were under no pressure to sell their produce after the harvest and could afford to wait until the prices rose again in the middle of the cultivating season, when they could either send their produce by bullock-cart to the nearest market or lend it as seed or food to poor villagers on exorbitant terms. The latter received grain at the high rate which prevailed for six months before the harvest and were compelled to pay it back at the low rate after the harvest when the market was glutted with corn sold by necessitous cultivators. The turn of the agricultural cycle thus ended in enormous losses to the poor of the village, and corresponding profits for the rich.⁸

It might have been expected that the rich agriculturists, as the headmen (*mandals*) and leaders (*mathbars*) of the village, would try to resist the pressure of the revenue-collector over the villagers, but this was seldom the case. H. T. Colebrook, in a treatise on agriculture written in 1794, argued that the rich tenant class itself arose from a process of rack-renting during the decline of Mughal rule, the incidence of which was highly differential. Under the system of revenue farming introduced by Mir Qasim, the revenue farmers attached the aid of leading cultivators in levying fresh imposts from the villages by granting reductions of revenue to the latter. The leading cultivators became under-farmers of the revenue, in which capacity they granted reductions in the revenues of the lands occupied by themselves, throwing the deficiency on the lower *raiyats*.⁹ It is open to doubt whether the *jotedar* class sprang up suddenly during the decline of the *nizamat* as a result of revenue-farming, but it is certainly true that the large and under-assessed holdings of the rich *raiyats* were protected by the crucial position which they occupied in the revenue-collecting structure. As Collector Henckel of Jessore wrote to the Board of Revenue on 25 June 1788, the low rate on the tenancies of the *jotedars* and *gantidars* did not reduce the revenue, since the latter were usually the revenue-farmers of their villages and having profitable tenancies were expected to remit to the

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 236. Buchanan Hamilton Manuscript (India Office Library), Mss. Eur. D. 75, Account of Ronggopur, Vol. 11, p. 103.

⁹ H. T. Colebrook, *Remarks on the Husbandry and Internal Commerce of Bengal* (Calcutta 1804), p. 85; Shore's minute of 18 June 1789, *op. cit.*

zamindar the entire collections of their revenue farms.¹⁰ The old *zamindars*, dependent in an extraordinary measure on the cooperation of the principal *raiya*s for the collection of revenue, acquiesced in the unfair distribution of revenue. The village headmen had sufficient power in the village to frustrate any attempt on the part of the *zamindars* to equalize the assessment. In 1780 the *zamindar* of Birbhum, Muhammad Wali Khan, directed an actual measurement of his *zamindari* as a means of imposing an equal assessment, but the village heads of Birbhum diverted him from this proposal by promising to raise a new cess from the villages. From this new cess the *zamindar* was easily persuaded to exempt the principal *raiya*s, so that a plan for relief of the inferior *raiya*s by equalization of assessment was converted into a means of increasing their hardship.¹¹ During the decennial settlement operations in Birbhum, a fresh attempt to equalize the assessment was frustrated by riotous combinations of villagers all over the district, instigated by the village heads who demanded a change in the managerial staff of the *zamindari*.¹² The British government was obliged to intervene with a military force in order to anticipate disturbances. The head *mandals*, reported the Collector of Rajshahi to the Board of Revenue on 23 May 1788, 'are become the real Masters of the Land, and the first object of a zemindar should be a gradual reduction of their Power'.¹³

How far successful were the *zamindars* in attaining this object after the Permanent Settlement, which declared them unambiguously as landlords? The policy of agricultural improvement outlined by Lord Cornwallis might have indicated a settlement with the actual controllers of land—the *jotedars*—through a modified form of *raiya*twari management. But the British government in Bengal was too weak as yet to sweep aside the various grades of revenue-collectors, and the exigencies of revenue collection compelled it to vest the proprietary rights in those who did not actually hold land.¹⁴ This did not mean, either in

¹⁰ Cited in J. Westland, *A Report on the District of Jessore, Its Antiquities, Its History and Its Commerce* (Calcutta 1874), pp. 76–77.

¹¹ Home Miscellaneous, Vol. 385, 'Beerbhoom (including Bissenpore).'

¹² Bengal Revenue Consultations, 25 February 1789, Collector Keating of Birbhum to the Board of Revenue, 13 February 1789.

¹³ Home Miscellaneous, Vol. 385, Rajshahi, letter from Mr. Speke, 23 May 1788.

¹⁴ It is not implied by this statement that a settlement with the *jotedars* in 1793 would have led to the desired improvements in agriculture. A massive investment in agriculture by the government certainly needed a rationalization of the revenue system by setting aside its various grades of revenue collectors, as was done by the Zamindari Abolition Acts after independence, but the subsequent dismal performance in agriculture shows that the causes of agricultural backwardness are more deep-rooted.

practice or in law, that other existing landed rights were liquidated by the regulations of 1793. The *zamindar's* rights were specifically limited in these regulations by the rights of the *raiyats*, and the government reserved the right of legislation to regulate their relations, a right which it later utilized by passing the Rent Act of 1859 and the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885. The rights that the Governor-General-in-Council and the Court of Directors proposed for the *raiyats* under the Permanent Settlement were very different from those of tenants under English landlords and quite inconsistent with the existence of the proprietor of the land in the person of the *zamindar*. As Cumming observed in an interesting minute on the rights of the *zamindars* under the Permanent Settlement, 'The rights conferred upon the zemindars with whom the Permanent Settlement was concluded, consisted of the perpetual assignment of a portion of the Circar dues from the land, which was payable by the ryots, at the period when the arrangement took place, and what would be the Circar dues from the lands then waste, when brought into cultivation; in consideration of which, the zemindars undertook to pay a fixed annual sum to Government, subject neither to increase nor abatement. The rights granted to the zemindar on the above condition are proprietary rights in the Circar share of the produce of the land and not in the land itself; and these he can sell, mortgage, and bequeath, in any way he pleases, subject to the performance of the tenure under which they were granted. If the zemindar be not the actual proprietor of the lands within his zemindary, they are not his landed Estate, nor is it correct to describe as "Lands" the zemindarry property derived from the Permanent Settlement. . . . The restrictions and limitations of the rights of zemindars, under the Permanent Settlement as prescribed by the Bengal Regulation VIII of 1793 . . . are irreconcilable with their being proprietors of the land within their zemindarries and of the zemindarries being distinct landed estates . . .'¹⁵ In other words, the *zamindars* were not proprietors of the land before 1793, nor did they become landlords in the strict sense of the term after 1793. In the absence of any radical change in the social basis of production after the Permanent Settlement, the *zamindars* were afforded no opportunity for converting their title to tribute into actual possession of land.

This is not to say that the *zamindars* derived no new advantage *vis à vis* the *raiyats* from the rural order set up by the Permanent Settlement. The new structure of rule created by Cornwallis' administrative, revenue

¹⁵ Home Miscellaneous, Vol. 530, pp. 493-500, 'Rights Conferred on Zamindars by the Bengal Regulations (i.e., the Permanent Settlement), Cumming's Observations on a Memorandum from the India House.'

and judicial reforms for controlling the countryside afforded the *zamindars* considerably increased powers for obtaining enhanced rates from the villages. In the first place, new powers of distraint and sale of *rai-yati* property were granted by the dreaded Regulations VII and V of 1799 and 1812, passed with a view to strengthening the hands of the *zamindars* for collecting the revenue at a time when punctuality of revenue payment was an over-riding consideration of the government. The regular police establishments and law courts set up by the Company gave the *zamindars* an opportunity to exploit these legal advantages effectively. In effect, the *zamindars* obtained access to the means of coercion acquired by a modern bureaucratic state in the process of centralizing the administration. The range of opportunities for exercising compulsion over villages by revenue collectors was considerably widened, and the result was reflected in the rapid enhancement of rates of assessment after the Permanent Settlement. In the *zamindari* of Bardwan, for instance, rates of assessment had increased by the 1850s by nearly 3 times since the Permanent Settlement, and by the 1870s, by 4 or 5 times (see Table 1). Since the revenue demand was permanently limited, this great increase in assessment provided an incentive towards the solidification of the intricate tribute-collecting structure, reflected in the increase of the number of 'estates' through sale and subdivision and the elongation of the tenorial chains under these estates. It was the smaller *grihasta* gentry—from whose ranks the urban professional and service groups were largely drawn—who

TABLE I
Rates of Assessment in Bardwan from the Permanent Settlement to 1872

Kind of Land	Rates of Assessment at the Permanent Settlement	Rates of Assessment in 1852	Rates of Assessment in 1872
1st Class <i>Sona</i>	Rs. 1- 0-0	Rs. 2-8-0	Rs. 4 to 6-0-0
2nd Class <i>Sona</i>	„ 0-12-0	„ 2-0-0	„ 3- 0-0
3rd Class <i>Sona</i>	„ 0- 8-0	„ 1-8-0	„ 2- 4-0
4th Class <i>Sona</i>	„ 0- 6-0	„ 1-0-0	„ 1-12-0
1st Class <i>Sali</i>	„ 1- 0-0	„ 2-8-0	„ 4- 0-0
2nd Class <i>Sali</i>	„ 0-12-0	„ 2-0-0	„ 3- 0-0
3rd Class <i>Sali</i>	„ 0- 8-0	„ 1-8-0	„ 2- 0-0
4th Class <i>Sali</i>	„ 0- 6-0	„ 1-0-0	„ 1- 8-0

Source and notes: 'The Territorial Aristocracy of Bengal', No. 1, the Bardwan Raj, *Calcutta Review*, 1872, Vol. LIV, p. 187. *Sona* lands grew autumn rice, potatoes, mustard, sugar-cane, etc. *Sali* lands grew winter rice, summer rice and jute.

benefited in the greatest number from this process in the decades after the Permanent Settlement. The break-up of the large *zamindaris* between 1793–1820 made them independent small proprietors; and as sub-infeudatory *rentiers* they intercepted much of the increasing rents of the country.

There was undoubtedly a great increase after 1793 in the tribute drawn from the villages by the urban sector of the economy, and it was this increased agricultural surplus which supported the new social order of urban *zamindars*, merchants, lawyers, service-holders, etc. But the remarkable feature of rural society under the colonial dispensation was that, although a much greater surplus was now extracted from the villages, the dominant village groups were by no means levelled down by the new outside pressures.¹⁶ 'There are many well-to-do substantial yeomen in Dinagepur and Chittagong,' commented a Divisional Commissioner in 1875, 'who possess more influence within their own village or immediate neighbourhood, and are moreover better off than many zemindars.'¹⁷ Without the cooperation of these *jotedars* an auction purchaser of an estate stood little chance of obtaining general enhancements, and such cooperation had to be purchased by the grant of favourable tenures at a low revenue. In 1828, at a time when rates were rising very fast, the European indigo planters of Jessore noted in a communication to the Board of Revenue that whenever *zamindaris* belonging to old proprietors were sold to new auction purchasers, the latter were confronted with *jotedars* possessing old leases who were in a strong position to resist any attempt to dispossess them or increase their rates. In such *zamindaris*, where the rates levied by the old proprietors were usually low according to prevailing standards, the new proprietors invariably tried to assimilate the rates to the highest standard in existence. They seldom failed to gain their purpose as they secured the cooperation of the larger *jotedars* by confirming their old pattas.¹⁸ There was thus an informal alliance between the hereditary revenue-collectors and the village land-holders which facilitated the great increase of tribute after 1793 without any large-scale disturbances. When there was no understanding between a *zamindar* and his large *rai-yats*, the former, if he was weak and unskilful, stood no chance whatever against a few energetic village land-holders,

¹⁶ *Bengal Village Biographies*, Reprinted from the Calcutta Review, No. LXI (Calcutta 1858).

¹⁷ Richard Temple Collection (India Office Library), Mss. Eur. F. 86. 161, 'The Condition of Peasantry Bengal 1875,' Commissioner, Chittagong Division, to Private Secretary to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, 16 September 1875.

¹⁸ Bengal Revenue Proceedings, 7 March 1828, No. 27.

'backed by the spears, bamboos and clubs of the cultivating tenants'.¹⁹ If, on the other hand, the *zamindar* happened to be rich and strong, the issue of the conflict remained wide open. But although in such cases the *zamindar* might succeed in obtaining substantial increases from the *jotedars*, it does not seem that he generally succeeded in levelling down the village land-holding class with the rest of the villagers. This point is illustrated by the issue of the prolonged conflict between the Kasimbazar estate and the Baharband-Gayabari *jotedars*, and the Tagore estate and the Patiladaha *jotedars*.

2. *Zamindars versus Jotedars*

The Patiladaha and Baharband estates were carved out of the traditional *zamindari* of Natore by members of the new Bengali merchant class which rose in association with, and under the service of, European officers of the East India Company. Interestingly enough, in both new estates the rates of assessment had increased much faster by 1872 than in the neighbouring estate of Kankina under its traditional *zamindar*, where the increase of the total dues seemed merely to have kept pace with the extension of cultivation.²⁰ Patiladaha was purchased in 1793 at auction sale for arrears of revenue by the founder of the Tagore family of Calcutta, Darpanarayan Tagore, who made his money in commercial enterprises. The Tagores did not resort to the well-established contemporary practice of farming out the revenues. An organized bureaucratic management with a collecting agent (*gomasta*), an accountant (*muhir*) and a registrar of lands (*amin*) was set up in each smaller division (*taraf*) of *pargana* Patiladaha.²¹ Much of the *pargana* lay waste at this time, and there was a big forest within the *pargana*. The remarkable social characteristic of the *pargana* was the absence of the usual sub-infeudatory class of high caste Hindu *taluqdars*. The *pargana* was dominated by large Muslim *jotedars*, some of whom held up to 700 acres of land which they had let out to under-tenants (*chukanidars*). But the majority of the big *jotedars* held about 50 acres and cultivated their lands by employing share-croppers.²² A giant *jotedar*, who held a lease for about 1100 *bighas* (550 acres), refused to submit to the demands of the new *zamindar* and applied to the Collector

¹⁹ *Bengal Village Biographies*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²⁰ *Report on the Statistics of Rungpore for the year 1872-73* by Gopal Chunder Dass, Special Deputy Collector (Calcutta 1874), p. 44.

²¹ Buchanan Hamilton Manuscript, Mss. Eur. D. 75, Account of Ronggopur, Vol. 11, p. 148.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

for a surveyor; but the measurement by the surveyor, far from strengthening the case of the *jotedar*, revealed the extent of *jote* to be 1500 *bighas* (750 acres).²³ From the beginning, therefore, there was simmering conflict between the Tagore estate and the big Patiladaha *jotedars* regarding assessment rates. But cultivation was expanding very rapidly—in two decades after the decennial settlement the cultivation was estimated to have more than doubled—and the scope for further expansion mitigated the conflict of interests. To avoid the trouble of finding settlers and the expense of collecting dues in small sums, the *zamindar* leased out extensive *jotes* in new alluvial formations (*chars*) to his own subjects in nearby settlements who had gained his goodwill. By 1840 the area not already cultivated before 1793 by resident *jotedars* was settled in huge blocks of new *jotes* with settlers of exactly the same class, origin and functions as the older resident *jotedars*. Some of these new *jotes* ran into 800 acres.²⁴

It was at this stage, when cultivation had reached the fullest extent in the *pargana*, that the government passed its first piece of tenancy legislation, the Bengal Rent Act of 1859, which brought out in the open the fundamental conflict between the Tagore estate and the Patiladaha *jotedars*. Immediately after the passing of the Act, the *zamindar*, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, defined the legal characteristics of the *jote* in his Rule Book of the Estate, in which, although admitting the semi-permanent character of the *jote* to a certain extent, he restricted the privileges which had accrued by custom to the old *jotedars* of the estate to those specifically conferred on occupancy tenants by the Rent Act of 1859. But the issue was not resolved and during the settlement of 1908–1919 the question arose as to whether *jotedars* employing under-tenants were to be given permanent rights. After considering the problem the government recognized the permanency of the *jote*, with a view to promoting the interests of a prosperous and influential class which represented all that was stable and enlightened in the *pargana*. The Tagores were, however, determined to resist the claim of permanency, since the establishment of such a claim would result in the loss of fees (*nazars*) derived by the *zamindar* during the transfer of a *jote*. The case was therefore taken to the courts, where the *jotedars* gained a partial, but by no means complete, victory. During Lord Ronaldshay's tour of Mymensingh²⁵ in 1918, the local Muhammadan Association, which

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

²⁴ *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Mymensingh 1908–1919*, by F. A. Sachse, pp. 69–78.

²⁵ Patiladaha was transferred from Rangpur to Mymensingh in the nineteenth century.

represented the interests of the *jotedars*, lobbied the Lieutenant-Governor on this issue. Ronaldshay promised that the question would be considered when the next amendment of the Tenancy Act came up. In the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Act of 1928, the *jotedars* achieved a victory when landlord's fee for transfer of occupancy rights was abolished.

Like the Patiladaha estate, *pargana* Baharband, acquired by Warren Hastings' diwan 'Canto Baboo', was settled with giant Muslim *jotedars*, some of whom held 6000 acres. More than half of the *pargana* was held by these giant *jotedars*, holding 1000 acres or more.²⁶ The new landlord, instead of farming out the revenues, introduced an organized, though top-heavy, estate management, which collected dues directly from the *jotedars*. 'Canto Baboo's' son, Lokenath Nandy of Kasimbazar, carried out a survey and measurement of the whole *zamindari* in 1784, on the basis of which he fixed the dues at Rs. 3 lakhs.²⁷ The *jotedars*, however, were sufficiently influential to stir up an agitation and in a petition to the government the *raiya*s denied the *zamindar's* right of measurement. But on enquiry the Collector discovered that this was by no means the complaint of all *raiya*s, but only of the principal *raiya*s who had possession of much more land than their leases specified. The poorer *raiya*s, who had so far been compelled to pay irregular taxes to make up for the deficiency caused by the fraud of the *jotedars*, were actually relieved by the new assessment, in which the *zamindar* abolished the illegal cesses on the poor *raiya*s.²⁸ Nevertheless, the Committee of Revenue, on the advice of the native officers, ruled that the *zamindar* had no right to carry out a measurement and that the new assessment was invalid. In spite of this setback, Lokenath Nandy managed to collect the enhanced sum of 3 lakhs, with trifling balances. But the proposed equalization of rates, putting the big *jotedars* on a par with the smaller *raiya*s, could not be carried into effect. By bribing the *zamindari* officials, some of the principal *jotedars* were able to hold much more land than was entered in the books, and to have the lands actually entered in the books described as third or fourth class though they were really first or second class.²⁹

From 1818 to 1839 the Kasimbazar *Raj* had no direct relations with the Baharband-Gayabari *jotedars* since the two *parganas* was let out in temporary farms to various revenue-farmers who granted

²⁶ Buchanan Hamilton Manuscript, Account of Ronggopur, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-165.

²⁸ Bengal Revenue Proceedings, 21 August 1787, Late Collector of Ghoraghat to BR, 12 April 1787.

²⁹ Buchanan Hamilton Manuscript, Account of Ronggopur, *op. cit.*, pp. 162, 165.

confirmatory leases to the *jotedars* for the period of their farms.³⁰ From 1845 Maharani Swarnamayi of Kasimbazar assumed direct administration of the estate by granting leases to the *jotedars*, and the privileged *jotedars* were made to feel for the first time in many years the full blast of the enormous power and financial resources of the Kasimbazar *Raj*, which by successive contracts hedged in the rights of the *jotedars*. Maharani Swarnamayi in her leases to the *jotedars* made the right of transfer conditional on payment of arrears of dues and bound them to appear and take fresh settlement after the expiry of their leases. At the same time an attempt was made from 1853 to levy a progressive assessment, but it was seldom realized. At the passing of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, the estate management seemed in doubt at first as to its legal implications and as an insurance policy, the Persian term *raiya*t which had been given an exact definition in the Act with certain accompanying rights, was substituted in the leases by the Bengali term *praja*, which literally meant subject. At the same time the newly worded leases stipulated that the right of transfer could not be enjoyed without the consent of the landlord, in other words, without payment of transfer fee, which was a source of substantial profit to the landlord. From 1911 the estate adopted the policy of treating the Baharband *jotedars* as middlemen tenure-holders and not as *raiya*ts, and the term *madhyasvatta* (middling right) was used in the leases. In 1926, a new clause in the leases introduced the condition of non-inheritability. During the settlement operations in Rangpur from 1931 to 1938, the manager of the Kasimbazar estate informed the Board of Revenue that he would treat all *jotes* which were not actually cultivated by the holders as temporary tenures liable to termination at the end of the period specified in the leases. The *jotedars*, however, gained the victory when the revenue department, after several hearings, entered the majority of the *jotes*, which were not *raiya*ti holdings cultivated by the *raiya*ts themselves, as permanent.

The history of the Gayabari *jotes* was identical with that of the Baharband *jotes* until 1891 when a new survey was carried out in the *pargana*. The estate tried to fix new rates on the basis of the survey, but in spite of great pressure by the organized staff of the estate no enhancement could be obtained. The struggle continued in the form of suits for arrears of dues. One of these suits went in 1907 to the High Court, which adjudged the *jotes* to be inheritable and transferable. Alarmed by this reverse, Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy, the

³⁰ The account which follows is based on *Final Report on the Rangpur Survey and Settlement Operations 1931-38*, by Arthur Coulton Hartley, pp. 56-58.

successor of Maharani Swarnamayi, paid a personal visit to the place and by granting permanent leases to some of the more influential leaders he persuaded the *jotedars* to execute fresh settlements and accept a progressive settlement every 15 years from the prevailing rate of Rs. 9 per *bish* to the *pargana* rate of Rs. 21 per *bish*. The *jotes* were settled for 60 years with the option of renewal for another 60 years, and although the leases clearly defined them as *madhya-svatta asthayi* (temporary middling right), the 120-year lease was really a victory for the *jotedars*. For all its power and financial resources, the Kasimbazar *Raj* could not level down the *jotedars*, who, in spite of the loss of important privileges, continued to hold the villages in their control.

But how did the mechanics of rural power work out in areas where the *jotedars* were not over-arched by a hereditary revenue-collecting class in whom proprietary rights had been vested by the state? As we have seen, the title of 'landlord' had been conferred, by what might almost be described as a case of mistaken identity, on the local magnates whom the Mughal government had designated as *zamindars*, some of whom had been independent princes at one time. It happened that in Bengal one ruling princely house, the *Rajas* of Kuch Bihar, escaped conquest by the Mughals, and were not reduced from independent rulers to the status of *zamindar*; consequently, under British rule, there was no question of conferring landlord rights on the *Rajas* of Kuch Bihar, who continued as subordinate native rulers rather than permanent *zamindars*. As in the rest of Bengal, so in the native state of Kuch Bihar, the land was held by *jotedars*; but here, unlike British territory, there was no *zamindar* class over the *jotedars*, but only the state (i.e., the house of Kuch Bihar) and its temporary revenue farmers (*ijaradars*). All revenue-paying lands in the state were included in some *jote* or other, which was a hereditary, transferable tenure. In greater accordance with reality than in British Bengal, the Kuch Bihar state recognized the right of land-ownership in the *jotedar*, subject to payment of revenue according to rates.³¹ There were three categories of *jotedars* in the state: the *huzuri jotedars* who paid directly to the treasury; the *sarasari jotedars* who paid to *ijaradars* or revenue farmers; and the *mokarari jotedars* whose revenue was fixed. Since there were no *zamindari* or *taluzi* rights which might be purchased by persons wishing to stake out a proprietary claim to revenue collection, and since revenue farms (*ijaras*) gave no such permanent title to tribute, the pressure on the *jotedar* class in the state assumed a different form. There was an

³¹ Bengal Revenue Proceedings, Land Revenue Branch, Survey and Settlement, July 1872, No. 210. The following account is based on this particular source.

invasion of rural society in Kuch Bihar by educated Bengalis from British Bengal employed in the service of the native state, who, in the absence of *zamindari* or *talugi* rights, began to acquire the *jotes*, turning them from land-holding titles to revenue-collecting rights.

Originally the *jotedars* were all residents of the state and personally participated in agricultural operations. But with the influx of foreigners from outside the state, usually educated Bengalis from British territory, many of the *jotes* were acquired by the non-cultivating classes in the nineteenth century. In many cases, resident *jotedars*, in order to escape the oppression of the ladies of the palace and the officers of the state who took most of the revenue farms, gave up their *jotes* to influential foreigners and became their under-tenants (*chukanidars*). In other instances influential foreigners who happened to be farmers of the state revenue utilized this position to acquire *jotes* by unfair means; the ladies of the palace and the officers of the state similarly exploited their position as revenue farmers to acquire *jotes*. A revenue farmer who had influence at the court would quietly enter all *jotes* in his *ijara* containing the best lands in his or her own name and reduce the resident *jotedars* to under-tenants (*chukanidars*) without their knowledge for many years, until a change of the revenue farmer would bring home to the latter that they were no longer the registered *jotedars* in the state revenue records. In this way 54 per cent of the registered titles to revenue-paying lands in Kuch Bihar had by 1872 passed to foreigners. Of the remaining 46 per cent, less than a third was held by cultivating *jotedars* and the rest by non-cultivating *jotedars* who collected rent from *chukanidars*.

It must not, however, be concluded from these statistics that the old resident *jotedar* class of the state was destroyed in the process. They continued, as land-holders below the new *jotedars*, to employ the large body of peasants called *adhiars* (share-croppers), who cultivated for them for a half share of the crop. In the *jotes* which passed to ladies of the palace, officers of the state or influential foreigners, the old resident *jotedars* continued in effective possession as *chukanidars*, and their *chukanidars* became *dar-chukanidars*. The *chukanidars* and *dar-chukanidars* were residents of the state and their tenures were, like *jotes*, transferable and heritable, though subject to the consent of the *jotedar*. Many *chukanidars*, who had presumably been *jotedars* at one time, enjoyed large holdings. In the *jote* of Jogendranath Karzi, containing 380 *bighas*, there were only 6 *chukanidars* and *dar-chukanidars* who occupied the whole *jote*, keeping a large body of cultivators under them. The state itself stepped in to protect the position of the old resident *jotedars* and an

order of the state in 1853 prohibited deeds called *istafas* and *ikrars* by which *jotedars* used to give up their *jotes* to influential persons. By degrees a tribute-collecting superstructure was imposed over the village land-holding class in Kuch Bihar, but here, as in British territory, they continued in effective possession of land and in actual control of landless labour.

The position in the native state of Kuch Bihar stood in strong contrast with that prevailing in the estates of the Kuch Bihar *Raj* in neighbouring British territory, where the task of the *Rajas* of Kuch Bihar, as 'land-lords' rather than rulers, appeared to be one of reducing rather than protecting the *jotedars*. Wherever the title of landlord was conferred on a class of people super-imposed over the actual holders of land, there was bound to be an element of tension in the situation. Relations were strained in the 1870s between the Kuch Bihar *Raj* estate and its *jotedars* in British territory in North Bengal. The *jotedars* had allowed their payments to fall in arrears for many years past, and the greatest difficulty was experienced in making them pay. There was no open quarrel between the *zamindar* and the *tenantry*, but the *jotedars* offered strong resistance when the *zamindar* tried to enhance rates, which were generally very light and had not been enhanced for years. The *jotedars* had succeeded very largely in enhancing their undertenants' rents, and had increased their *jotes* surreptitiously by encroaching on the private lands of the *zamindar*, which were steadily diminishing. The *jotedar* class had thus succeeded in appropriating nearly the whole of the benefit arising from the great increase in rents for many years past. The independence of some *jotedars* was such that they refused to attend when summoned to the *zamindar's* office. As they rarely agreed to compromise on any point or settle any difference reasonably, the manager of the estate was compelled to institute a very large number of suits against them. Since judicial procedure involved considerable delay, no decision could be obtained in many cases for a long time to come. In other cases in which decisions were given in favour of the estate, the manager's difficulties really commenced only after he got favourable decisions, for the execution of a decree proved to be a much more difficult matter than the successful conduct of a preliminary suit. The records of the *zamindari* office contained no reliable information as to the area or situation of the *jotes*. In every case in which it was necessary to sell a *jote* under a decree for arrears of dues or to obtain possession of a *jote* under a decree of ejectment, the agents of the *zamindar* in the interior had to institute local inquiries to discover the boundaries of the tenure. Since the *jotes* often consisted of scattered plots in different

places and as the owners of the tenures and their dependent neighbours combined to withhold information, the estate agents were not often successful in their quest and consequently the decree remained unexecuted. The manager reported sorrowfully to the Court of Wards: 'In more than one case I have been informed that a ryot for whose ejectment from his jote I had obtained a decree, has laughed at and twitted the amlah who went to discover, by local inquiry, the boundaries of his tenure, telling him that he would not succeed in finding out the boundaries and therefore that the ejectment decree could never be executed.' It was the established practice of the *jotedars* in the estate to withhold the money payable as revenue and to lend it out at high rates of interest. In this way they obtained economic influence which enabled them to control large numbers of villagers in their disputes with the *zamindar*.³²

3. Rural pressures and the growth of a provincial structure of politics

It must not be assumed, from the examples given above, that the relationship between *zamindar* and *jotedar* was one of perpetual antagonism. In the mechanics of rural control, the crucial factor from the point of view of a British Civilian concerned in maintaining agrarian peace in his district was the local relationship of *zamindars* and *jotedars*; and this relationship, in ordinary circumstances, was one of collaboration rather than opposition. The effective control of villages by big farmers (enjoying the social authority of village heads and the economic influence of creditors-cum-employers) meant that there was little likelihood of conflict between *jotedars* and *bargadars* (share-croppers). Any break-down in the system of rural control was, therefore, likely to be local and partial, and a consequence of break-down of collaboration of owners of estates and village leaders in particular estates. As a rule the tensions in rural society arising from the exploitation of small farmers, share-croppers and agricultural labourers were kept in check by local alliances between the estate and its superior tenants, which helped in maintaining a remarkable quietude in the countryside during the first half of the nineteenth century.³³ Strains were likely to develop

³² Bengal Revenue Proceedings, Land Revenue Branch, Wards, etc., December 1876, Appendix A.

³³ There were few rural outbreaks of disorder between 1800-1858, and such disorders, when they took place, occurred within small areas.

in this mutually advantageous connection only in a period of general attempt at enhancement of assessment by *zamindars* which did not spare the special privileges of the superior *jotedars*. The tensions in agrarian society would then pour through this breach in the relationship, but for the same reason the tensions would not be allowed to burst the dams of social control, sweeping away existing property relations in which the village leaders had a substantial stake.

There was considerable unrest in rural Bengal in the second half of the nineteenth century and a concentrated spell of peasant combinations and agrarian leagues in East Bengal between 1872–1886.³⁴ The agrarian leagues were formed under the leadership of the village landholders to fight enhancement of rates and exaction of illegal cesses by the *zamindars*, but it was never contemplated to stop payment of dues at prevailing rates and there was very little actual violence. The leaders, who as *jotedars* had a substantial stake in the existing system, had the movement too tightly under their control to allow it to get beyond a certain point and to affect landed property. Since the whole movement turned on rates of assessment, a matter in which only occupancy tenants (*khudkast raiyats*) enjoyed customary rights, the really serious disputes occurred between *zamindars* and occupancy tenants led by their headmen. Tenants-at-will or share-croppers had no stake in the movement and did not rise against their superiors. This period of agrarian unrest saw a rather general attempt on the part of the *zamindars* to increase dues, owing to the increased cost of living, increasing number of dependents, wider use of urban consumers' goods, new cesses like the road and postal cess imposed by the government, and the enormously increased cost of collection of assessment due to the break-up of estates into small disjointed parcels and undivided aliquot shares. This new pressure on the *zamindars* was accompanied at the same time by an appreciable increase in the value of agricultural produce in East Bengal, which made the resident or absentee proprietors owning estates in East Bengal anxious to claim a share in this increase. In the Munshiganj subdivision of Dacca, containing the *pargana* of Bikrampur, it was calculated in 1873 that the price of staple crops had risen by more than 100 per cent in the last 20 years due to depreciation in the value of money, increased population and better transport. The marked rise in the price of agricultural produce started in the year of the Mutiny, but the

³⁴ For an account, see two articles by Kalyan Kumar Sengupta, 'The Agrarian League of Pabna', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, June 1970, and 'Agrarian Disturbances in Nineteenth Century Bengal', *IESHR*, June 1971; see also, Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri, *Agrarian Economy and Agrarian Relations in Bengal 1859–1885*, Oxford Ph.D. thesis 1968.

chief impetus to prices was given by the famine of 1865–66, when the rice crop of East Bengal, though not much below the average, realized famine prices. At the same time jute cultivation spread in districts like Pabna and Dacca, bringing new sources of income to the agricultural economy which had not been taken account of in customary rates of assessment based on the rice crop. It was significant that the first major outbreak of peasant unrest occurred in the subdivision of East Bengal which became the earliest centre of the jute trade and jute cultivation, Sirajganj in Pabna district.³⁵ The agrarian unrest then spread from Pabna to other districts in East Bengal. During the decade 1875–1885, peasant combinations occurred in Dacca, Mymensingh, Tripura, Bakarganj, Faridpur, Bogra, etc. However, nowhere did the authority of the government really face a serious challenge, for the *jotedars* had the movement well in control.

But the situation caused anxiety to the government and forced it to undertake tenancy legislation in order to gain ground for manoeuvre between *zamindars* and *raiyats* in the role of a mediator. In 1885 the Government of Bengal passed the Bengal Tenancy Act, restricting the grounds on which *zamindars* could claim increased dues from occupancy tenants; but at the instance of the big *zamindar* lobby (i.e., the British Indian Association) the right of free sale of occupancy rights, proposed in the draft bill, was withdrawn in the final Act. In the decade which followed, the interpretation of the Bengal Tenancy Act by the courts in their judicial awards on disputes went uniformly against the *zamindars*.³⁶ Because of peasant combinations, government acts and judicial decisions, collection of dues became an increasingly difficult operation in the late nineteenth century, even for the biggest and richest *zamindars*, though powerful *zamindars* could and did obtain substantial enhancements of assessment. A measure of the difficulties faced by the tribute-receiving classes may be obtained from the recorded rates of realization of dues in the attached and wards' estates in Bengal. Collections were generally better under the Court of Wards than under the proprietors and the debts of many estates were cleared under its more efficient administration. Between 1887 and 1922, collection of dues in wards' and attached estates never exceeded 62.34 per cent of the total assessment, which was the highest proportion collected in 1901–02. After a bad period in the eighties, collection improved in the

³⁵ BRP, Land Revenue Branch, Miscellaneous, January 1874, Collection 14, Nos. 26–27.

³⁶ BRP, Land Revenue Branch, January 1896, Nos. 9–11: Minute by the Lieutenant-Governor on the question of amending the Bengal Tenancy Act.

1890s to some extent, but from 1907 collections dropped sharply below 50 per cent. With the outbreak of war and the slump in the jute market, there was an even greater crisis of tribute collection, which became less than 40 per cent during 1914-16 and again during 1920-1922.³⁷ If this was the situation in the wards' and attached estates, the situation was even less favourable for the petty estates of the smaller *grihashta* gentry.

We have seen earlier that the smaller *grihashta* gentry of good caste acquired most of the proprietary or leased-out revenue-collecting rights which proliferated after the Permanent Settlement. They also took advantage of the new opportunities offered by British rule in the field of business, service and professions and from their ranks were drawn the urban English-educated classes who provided the leadership as well as the crowd of the national movement up to the First World War. By 1875, having consolidated their position in Calcutta as lawyers, doctors, journalists, educationists, clerks and officials, these people started 'middle class' political associations which culminated in the Indian National Congress. In the early years of the Congress, however, political agitation was confined to the respectable classes in Calcutta; and try as they would, the 'national' leaders could not stage any campaigns involving the interior. Although there were substantial links between the English-educated groups in Calcutta and the smaller gentry in the interior, the latter remained parochial in their outlook, deeply involved in the local politics of their villages and estates, but indifferent to the wider world of politics in Calcutta. There was, therefore, no genuinely province-wide structure of politics in Bengal until 1905, when the contours of a provincial structure of politics emerged as a result of the agitation against the partition of Bengal. The political response of the smaller rural gentry to the appeal of the Calcutta leaders which made the *Swadeshi* movement possible was a direct result of the growing pressures which were put upon their economic existence by the resistance of the *jotedar* class. If the response of the gentry to new opportunities in the first half of the nineteenth century led to the emergence of organized national politics in Calcutta, their response to new difficulties in the last decades of the nineteenth century led to the spread of this organized politics from the metropolis to the interior. During a period when prices of commodities were rising sharply, the smaller *zamindars* and *taluqdars*, unable to obtain increases

³⁷ These figures have been calculated from the annual reports on wards' and attached estates by Dr. Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri, who generously supplied the information to us.

of tribute proportionably to the price rise, suffered from a decline in their real incomes. The result, as the Settlement Officer for Dacca reported, was 'the creation of an extensive body of men, sprung from respectable families, whose energies are perverted to the abolition of law and order. To those who know the petty landlord classes of Dacca, there can be no doubt that the anarchist has been bred from the accumulation of this economic impasse'.³⁸

The fact that the petty *zamindar* class of high caste Hindus became the spear-head of the *Swadeshi* movement in East Bengal was the clue to the ultimate failure of the movement, for their interests set them apart from the mass of Muslim cultivators in general and the leading body of large Muslim *jotedars* in particular. The social peculiarity of East Bengal which fed the growing political conflict in the province was that the *zamindars* and *taluqdars* in the area were mostly high caste Hindus, while the large *jotedars* under them were almost invariably Muslims of peasant stock. From 1907 onwards, when large-scale communal rioting in Mymensingh destroyed the basis of the *Swadeshi* movement, there was a growing self-assertiveness among the prosperous Muslim *jotedar* class in East Bengal which reflected itself in their attempt to capture union boards and local boards from the high caste Hindus who monopolized these local self-governing bodies.³⁹ The ally of the Muslim rural rich in this attempt to capture local power was the urban Muslim service and professional class, which made a determined bid for capturing political power in the province as a whole through the reformed legislative council set up by the Act of 1919. This attempt to capture political power became successful under the leadership of Fazlul Haq, whose Krishak Praja Party (Cultivator Tenant Party) rode to power in the Legislative Council on the vote of the Muslim villagers secured by the *jotedars* of East Bengal. It was the conflict between *zamindar* and *jotedar* in East Bengal which constantly fed the Muslim separatist movement in the province as a whole and led ultimately to the partition of Bengal in 1947. The national movement in rural Bengal, in the period of the mass upheavals of the non-cooperation, civil disobedience and quit-India campaigns, scored its greatest successes in those areas where the conflict between *zamindar* and *jotedar* was not sharp, as in Contai and Tamluk in Midnapur district, where both classes happened to belong to the same cultivating

³⁸ *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Dacca 1910-1917* by F. D. Ascoli.

³⁹ Bengal Legislative Council Proceedings, 24 November 1921, speech of Ekramul Haq.

Mahishya caste.⁴⁰ In each area of Bengal the strength or weakness of the nationalist and separatist movements bore a close relationship to the local relationship of *zamindar* and *jotedar*. The Congress failed to create a broad mass base in East Bengal because here it was allied with the Hindu *zamindars* and *taluqdars* against the Muslim *jotedars*, who therefore naturally backed the Krishak Praja Party and, subsequently, the Muslim League. On the other hand, the Congress became a genuine mass party in Midnapur, where it identified itself as the party of the Mahishya *jotedars*. In general terms, the Muslim League secured the support of the *jotedars* of East Bengal, while the Congress in its civil disobedience campaigns attached the aid of the *jotedars* of West Bengal. Neither the Muslim League, nor the Indian National Congress, nor the Krishak Praja Party of Fazlul Haq, ever showed a disposition to support share-croppers and agricultural labourers against rich farmers. After independence the *jotedars* reaped the profit of their investment in political parties in the form of *zamindari* abolition acts in East Pakistan and West Bengal. They thus became the ruling element in the countryside in both Bengals.

⁴⁰ R. K. Ray, *Social Conflict and Political Unrest in Bengal 1875-1925*, manuscript thesis, pp. 515-517.