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The land of the

MARWARIS



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Prof. Chitrarajan Biswas, M.A.



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BIKANER

THE LAND OF THE MARWARIS

BY
Prof. CHITTARANJAN BISWAS, M.A.

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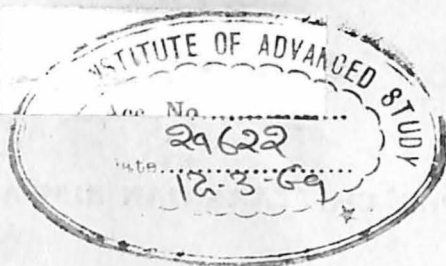


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to the Cause of the People
of
BIKANER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Why I came to Bikaner?

After my release from the detention camp in March 1946, I had been in search of an employment in educational line or journalism which I preferred to any other. Fortunately in the month of May, on the strength of a personal letter of Sj. Sarat Chandra Bose to the Chief whip of Assam Congress Parliamentary party, I was assured of a lectureship in history in the proposed Karimganj College of Arts, Science and Technology, and, as a matter of fact, I was appointed as a Professor in the same college in June. In the month of May while I was staying at Calcutta to contact publishers and editors for the delivery of my writings in course of my detention period, I suddenly glanced at an advertisement column in the Amritbazar Patrika and came to learn that a lecturer in history is required in the B.J.S.R. Jain Inter College, Bikaner. All on a sudden a vision of Rajputana sparkled in the horizon of my mind and quite in a sportive spirit I submitted a petition without caring to attach a copy of my testimonials even, because I was assured of getting a suitable job at Karimganj. Moreover, my friends and my political career and ambition demanded my stay in Bengal. Already I went to Silchar twice in April and May and contacted the public through well organised meetings and parleys. So I was cheered and destined to stay at Karimganj.

In the meantime for some reason or other I pre-

ferred not to join the Karimganj college. I was invited in a Mohamedan Institution. But I hesitated. Quite unexpectedly an invitation for an interview with the principal of the B.J.S.R. College, Bikaner who was staying then at Serampore came to me. I forgot that I submitted any petition there. However, I hastened to find that the said Principal had already left for Bikaner. I was behind the scheduled time. A friend of mine, an important political figure, proposed to me to undertake the responsibility of editing a weekly for which due financial aid could be available readily from an enterprising Banker and press magnet at Calcutta. Alternatively I was offered a seat in the editorial staff of a daily of Calcutta, possibly as an assistant editor. Every thing was settled and I was to launch my career of journalism on the 15th of August. By way of preparing me for the same I came to Mymensingh, my own home. The authority of the above mentioned Mohamedan institution, meanwhile pressed me so warmly to be included in their teaching staff on special grade that I could not simply avoid their endearing approach. I considered it to be a god-ordained chance of contacting a large number of Mohamedan boys in these days of growing Hindu-Muslim divergence and conflict. Probably I was destined to find out a real avenue for Hindu-Muslim unity & brotherhood. It fired up my imagination. I agreed to accept the offer and informed my friends and patrons at Calcutta that I would prefer to join the Nationalist or to undertake the responsibility of editing a weekly after the X'mas, which they could afford to accommodate. So I did not go to Calcutta to start my much-coveted career of journalism. I stayed back in Mymensingh.

For the time being every thing seemed to be settled in my mind and in right earnestness I carried on my political and public activities side by side with my career of teaching.

All on a sudden and again unexpectedly, a letter of appointment from Rampuria Collage, Bikaner, reached me and I was urged upon to join immediately. Rajputana came into my vision with all her past historical glory. Mewar, Jeipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Ajmer, Bharatpur, Kotah, Bundi, Sirohi, Jaisalmer. Sheikhavati hurried into my mind. Rajputana, the land of unparalleled chivalry, matchless heroism, inspiring self-immolation and innate patriotism and straight forwardness; Rajputana, hallowed with the memory of Rana Sanga, Rana Pratap, Rana Rajsingh, Bhamasha, Chandawats & Saktawats, and Padmini, the queen of beauty; Rajputana, the hope of the Hindus during the dark days of Auranzebian repression; Rajputana, the most reliable prop of the mighty Mughal empire: Rajputana which defied the Muslim power persistently and yet served as the strongest pillar of the Mughal domination over India; Rajputana the land of the Jains, ardent votaries of non-violence and yet paradoxically enough, the land of the mighty warriors and heroes; Rajputana, the desert of India and yet producing the wealthiest Marwari community, who have practically monopolised the trade and commerce of Calcutta, and have mighty influence upon the money market of Bombay;—thus Rajputana with all her chequered career of Romance flourished in my imagination. For an emotional and patriotic Bengali mind, Rajputana has always been a centre of Romantic attraction. And I am not an exception to this general rule.

Bikaner,—the name is quite poetic and charming. Much I did not know about her. But Prithviraj was a favourite figure in my mind; Prithviraj, a single stroke of whose pen enlivened the drooping spirit of Pratap and saved him from the prospective ignominy of abject surrender to Akbar. Surajmal Nagarmal, Kanoria, Lohia, Daga, Rampuria, and quite a large number of other Marwaris who form the notorious Burrabazar Bloc of Businessmen hail from Bikaner, and others, if not from Bikaner, at least from Jaipur and Jodhpur—the greater Marwar region, in Rajputana. In Bengal they are a crucial community like the Jews in Germany. Bengali mind is coloured by the hallowed memory of Rajput heroism, patriotism, chivalry and self-immolation; but vitiated by the darkest consequences of blackmarketing, hoarding and corruption of which the springhead was the Clive-Street-Cum-Burrabazar, which was an unscrupulous party to the creation of the horrible Bengal famine of 1943. Burra Bazar is a gigantic problem for the body politic of Bengal. It is not less acute and knotty than the communal problem. So Bikaner loomed large into my mind mixed with joy and pain at once. Joy, because of the sacred memory of the Patriot poet, Prithviraj and pain, because of the scum of Burra Bazar in the body politic of Bengal. A cross current of emotions and passions ruffled the depth of my mind at this unexpected call from Bikaner. My mind wished to visit Rajputana, as a sacred place for an Indian patriot and to study the land and the people of the Marwaris so that while fighting the monstrous Marwari parasites in Bengal we would not injure the susceptibilities of the people of Marwar but would rather find in them a real ally and friend against exploitation and parasitism.

The call of Bikaner offered me a favourable chance for the satisfaction of my desire.

I saw and enjoyed the sea, the blue, the open sea, the boisterous as well as the calm sea, the vast and boundless mystery of life. I climbed and struggled across the mighty Himalayan ridges and I suffered its extreme cold. Hills and seas I experienced to my heart's content. But desert I saw never. Its extreme heat and extreme cold, its desolate sandy bosom had always a romantic attraction for me, no less than the sea and the hill. I saw Bikaner in the map and it was situated in the heart of the Desert of Thar. So the call from Bikaner held out a happy prospect of providing me with the longdesired experience of the Desert in all its effects. I became inspired.

Still I hesitated to make up my mind. Bikaner is a native State, where scarcely there is any political life and where I shall have scarcely any scope for broad political career, because I am not known there. My known political field is Bengal where I have already carved a position of my own in the accredited political circles. All my friends are there. At Bikaner I shall be in an unknown environment and I shall have to struggle hard before I can feel at home. And yet the result is not certain. To leave the known for the unknown, to sacrifice the acquired for the stranger is really a serious and subtle psychological problem. Moreover the job at Bikaner was not more prospective than that I had already in Bengal.

But Bikaner is a pretty big native state which had an old ruling dynasty of great dignity and tradition. The Native States are a great problem of national India

today. They cover more than one fourth of the total area of India as a whole and have a population of nearly one-fourth. In the union of the prospective free-India Republic as a result of the Cabinet Mission Plan, they will have to join for the sake of integrity of India. But they are headed by feudal chiefs who are in subordinate bondage with the Crown of England. They are anti-democratic and dangerously reactionary. Most of them have an ugly history of treachery and surrender in their back. The people underneath them have scarcely developed any voice or character to supersede those chiefs. And yet these people are the hope of the Indian Republic. The solution of this double-storied subjection is a serious problem. These natives are so many scattered pockets of moribund imperialism which would spare no pains to make the best use of them by way of its last trenches of resistance against the onward march of the revolutionary national struggle of India. The native states will be points of ugliest spots before the final expiry of the imperialist monster in India. So Bikaner offered me a fair chance at this juncture of our national struggle to have an intimate knowledge of the socio-political life of a native state. Moreover, the relics of the medieval Indian society are in existence in native states where I, as a student of history, could have a first hand experience of them before India finally clears out the debris of the lingering medieval remnants for her full fledged modernisation. The prospects of gathering these experiences and knowledge was quite alluring for me, although the immediate monetary prospect was scarcely attractive.

The Muslim problem and the problem of the native states are the two major problems which beg solution

before a free and united Indian Republic can emerge out with all its glory, vigour and prospect. So for a serious servant of the nation, an intimate, first hand and dispassionate knowledge of them at this juncture is of urgent need and will stand him in good stead for his future socio-cultural or socio-political activities. His views and analysis are likely to be more practical, than merely statistical and theoretical. I was already placed in a Mohamedan institute, as I have already mentioned. Now comes the chance of coming in close contact with the society of a native state from inside it.

I felt, as it were, a mystic bacon, becking me towards Rajputana. While I don't underestimate personal initiative and aspirations, which I rather value much, I believe in the art of surrendering to the inner and unforeseen mystic urges so that greater prospect of vaster life may open up.

Hitherto I had been only a Bengali. To go to Bikaner I would have to span the whole plain of Northern India from the East to the West. From the land of the plenty of water and profuse greenness, to the land of degenerate trade, from the land of shady bushes, musing rivers and chirping birds to the land of the bare expanse of scorching sands and soundless horizon—it is really romantic. To be a real Indian these extremes must be harmonised. Bikaner offers me the chance of harmonising the imaginative and emotional Bengali mind with the practical and calculative mind of Bikaner. At Bikaner I would get the chance of using Bengali, Hindusthani and English equally. I learnt Hindustani in detention. In Bengal there is scarcely any chance for a Bengali to use Hindustani

in conversation, so this handicap to gain practical mastery upon the prospectice Rashtrabhasha is removed, if I respond to the call of Bikaner.

Besides, 'far from the madding crowd' of intriguing and nerve-racking Bengal politics, I would get a sublime solitude in freedom to study my inner self and and to discover my swadharma so that in the coming phase of the national struggle for reconstruction and peaceful upbuilding of the national life I could find myself quite effective. The time for agitation and crowding is over and the period of organisation and calculation has come. In times of war all can fight—even a Brahman—to save the hearth and home, to save art and gain liberty—primary necessity of life. But in times of peace each individual is to work according to his inner aptitude and inclination—which is known as Swadharma, so that his life could healthily bloom to serve the cause of the community and the nation. For this self discovery a temporary (solitude) at least is essential. Bikaner offers me that chance.—Away from my friends and relatives and beset with the task of teaching and studying only—I would have the possession of real Ashram life. I could have established closer communion with my spirit.

So I felt a mystic inspiration at the enticing beck of Bikaner. At length after a great deal of inner struggle I made up my mind to entrain for Bikaner bag and baggage. I left Bengal for Bikaner in autumn 1946 after the auspicious Dussera festival.

Why I chose this subject for my study and writing?

This work of mine is the result of my study and experiences in Bikaner during a stay of long six months. I have tried to offer my knowledge to the

public in all its aspects, as the chapter divisions would show. I have attempted this treatise not with any motive of propaganda for or against a particular class or order, but with an artistic attitude to draw a socio-political portrait of Bikaner in her historical background and in the perspective of her political aspirations and possibilities. I have, therefore, dealt with the prince and the people, the merchant and the peasant, the Rajput and the Jat, the dynastic tradition and popular aspiration, medieval feudal system as well as modern progressive trends and developments alike without any prejudice or vehemence. By sketching this portrait I mean to serve the cause of the people of Bikaner in their struggle for democracy and progress in consonance with the broader national current of India as well as to enlighten the people of Bengal about the den of the Marwaris so that they can find themselves in a most practical position to fight against Marwari parasitism and to rid Bengal of their monstrous exploitation. With the help of this book I mean to help Bengal and Bikaner to come closer together. Bikaner has hitherto done only commerce in Bengal: her sons who have gone to Bengal have not cared so much to learn the enlivening and spiritualising culture of Bengal as to make profit from speculation in Demand and Supply in the market. It is time for them to enrich their inner being by learning from the rich store of Bengali culture. On the part of Bengal there is much to learn about commerce from Bikaner. The commerce of Bikaner and the culture of Bengal should be harmonised for each other's benefit. Lopsided development, as is experienced at Burrabazar and at Ballyganj, is sure to lead to a dangerous crash. Commerce and culture go ill together no doubt. Burrabazar and Ballyganj can

never meet, as it were. But are a vaishya and a Brahman necessarily to clash to go apart? Was not their integration the aim and practice in the Vedic society? Surely commerce, amounting to speculation and profiteering, is enemy to culture. Whereas one makes a man merely a profit-hunter and thereby dehumanises him, the other helps to nourish and bloom his human and spiritual faculties. The function of a Vaishya was no doubt to facilitate production and distribution, and exchange was undoubtedly a crucial leverage for it at a certain stage, but certainly profiteering was not his characteristic. The fiend fang of profiteering must be broken before a trader can be respected as a Vaishya. This Bania community of Bikaner is as much a problem of Bikaner as that of Bengal, and for the matter of that, of Inda. Democracy in Bikaner cannot be real so long as this problem is not solved. Hence the people of Bengal and the people of Bikaner have got the same problem, so far as the Burabazar Marwari community is concerned. Merely the removal of the corrupt feudal order is not a sufficient guarantee of the popular liberty and equality in Bikaner. So those who are to work for the people's cause must know the character of the people whom they mean to serve as well as, their problems and the system, social, political as well as economic, under which they suffer. Keeping this in view I have developed my analysis in the subsequent pages, as it may help an ardent worker in Bikaner to formulate an effective strategy and tactic of the popular democratic movement in the State.

My labour will be deemed fruitful if this purpose is served.

Besides the bibliography attached with this book, I have used also many personal sources of knowledge. In this connection I cannot but gratefully recollect Mr. Raghubardayal Goel, ex-president of Bikaner Rajya Praja Parishad and present Treasurer of Rajputana Regional Council of the A-I. S.P.C, Mr. Ishwardayal, President, Harijan Hitkarini Sabha, Bikaner, Mr. Bhagat Singh, the state Librarian and a number of my students and others who have helped me in various capacities to proceed with my collection of materials.

CHAPTER II

THE GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF BIKANER.

Bikaner is the seventh largest state in the whole of India and the second largest in the whole of Rajputna, twice as big as Belgium and almost twice as big as Holland. The length of the state from north to south is about 160 miles and breadth from east to west is about 180 miles. It is bounded on the north-west by Bahawalpur, on the south-west by Jaisalmer, on the south by Marwar or Jodhpur, on the south-east by Shaikhawti or Jaipur, on the east by Loharu Pargana in the province of the Punjab, on the north-east by the Hissar district of the same province and on the north by Ferozepur District and a portion of the Bahawalpur State. Its total area is 23317 Sq. miles according to the latest available record. But in 1874 Powlett in his Gazetteer of Bikaner State recorded its area as 23500 Sq. miles having a total population of 300000 only. But the population estimated by Tod was 539250. But according to the census of 1931 its population rose upto 936218 and according to that of 1941 it has been 1292938. But nevertheless it is still sparsely populated considering its vast size and area. The mean density of population was 40 per square mile in 1931. But in the same year the density of population in Assam was 137 per Sq. mile which makes the lowest level of the density of population in the British Indian provinces. Compared with that of Assam the density of population in Bikaner is too low. Even according to the census of 1941 the average density of population in Bikaner is 55.45 per Sq. mile whereas that of Jaipur is

195, Jodhpur 71, Rajputana & Ajmer Merwar 106, Punjab 286, U. P. 518 and India 215. Only the density of Jaisalmer which is 6 per Sq. mile falls below that of Bikaner in the whole of Rajputana.

Situated in the midst of the Desert of Thar in Rajputana, it may be described, without exaggeration, as a land of sands. The climate is extremely dry. The maximum rainfall scarcely exceed 13 or 14 inches and in 1931-32 it went as low as 10 inches only. Whereas in Assam the rainfall ranges from 23.39 to 241.76 inches (according to the census of 1931), that of Bikaner generally ranges from 10 to 15 inches only. Sometimes rainfall goes even below 10 inches e.g. in 1926 it was only 9 inches. It is usually appalling. In Rajputana, excepting Jaisalmer, the rainfall is nowhere so scarce as in Bikaner. The temperature ranges from extreme to extreme. In summer it rises up to the burning degree of 123 and in winter it comes down below freezing point. In contrast with Bikaner we find the temperature of Assam varying from 59 degrees to 84 degrees only. In May, June and July a kind of hot wind sweeps over Bikaner blowing heaps of sand hills in hurricane speed from one place to another. This Scorching and tempestuous wind is known as 'Lu' under the spell of which many people succumb. So unbearable becomes the Sun's rays during the day in summer that people can scarcely dare to come out in the open without the risk of sun-stroke and consequent fatality. Most of the people then take shelter in underground cellars or inside closed door rooms. Paradoxically enough, however, the weather at night even during the summer is very pleasant. The heat of the day subsides totally at night and cool and soothing breeze braces up the people. Most of the people then sleep in the open air. In the

winter sometimes water freezes and all plants and trees assume a desolate look under the influences of the biting winter wind or occasional frost. At midday, however, under the influence of the shining sun, the weather becomes comparatively warm, even during the days of extreme winter. The dry climate of Bikaner, however, has a very energising and healing effect upon the people.

Pannikar in his "His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner" i.e. the biography of the late Maharaja Ganga Singh, has written: "The vast and sandy expanse of Bikaner, in the midst of the Indian desert, is perhaps the driest and the most arid portion of India. Its average rainfall is 12 inches". He is perfectly right in so remarking.

The land of Bikaner assumes a dreary and desolate look and, as the train passes on along that vast and sandy expanse of it, verily seems to be a land of the dead, having scarcely any green verbiage on either side of the line. It is verily an ocean of sands, having scarcely any water. Trees and plants are scarce. Forest is, so to say, non-existent.

"The greater part of the State comprises of an unproductive and ill-watered tract which stretches north and northwest of the Arawalis. The Southern, central and Western portions form a plain of the highest class of sandy soil, broken at short intervals by ridges of pure sand, which, in some parts, attain a considerable height", such is the description of the land of Bikaner recorded in the Bikaner Banking Enquiry Report (1930).

Only the Northeastern portion of the State is to a certain extent fertile and level otherwise the most of the regions is dotted with sand heaps known locally as Tibas

or Tibi. The height of these heaps varies from 20 to 100 ft. The northern limit of the actual desert may be roughly drawn at the old bed of the Ghaggar which runs in a westerly direction through the Suratgarh Nizamat. The country beyond the Ghaggar is the most fertile part of the State, the surface becoming more level and less sandy as one proceeds northward. The soil in the North of the Anupgarh Tehsil and the Suratgarh Tasil consists chiefly of high loam, fertile with irrigation and locally known as 'biggi', while nearly the whole of the Gangana-gar division which is irrigated by the Gang Canal has a good firm loam (kathi) which in places becomes clayish. The loamy soil stretches right across the upper portion of the Hanumangarh Tahsil to the Hissar border, improving if anything, as one goes eastward, it is a yellowish tinge, retains moisture well and with proper irrigation would be capable of producing the highest class of crops.

The area of the Ghaggar bed is known as the Nali and the tract on either side as Dhora and Rohi, according as the quantity of light sandy soil is respectively greater or less. The Nohar and Bhadra Tahsils are fairly level though sandhills of no great height occur here and there, but the latter become less frequent as the eastern boundary is approached and the soil is for the most part a good loam well adapted by a sufficient admixture of sand to the condition of local rainfall. Further to the south sandy ridges and light soil are common while to the west and southwest lies the desert proper. Just beyond the city of Bikaner the land is so dry and sandy that it reminds us of the dreary and arid sands of Arabia.

Traditions assert, according to Tod, that these regions were not always either arid or desolate. "The drying up of the river Hakra, which came from the Punjab and

flowed through the heart of this country and emptied itself into the Indus between Rohi, Bhakkar and Uchh, led to its desolation". From Fagon's Report on Land Settlement in Bikaner State, Dec, 1893, we learn that "in former times, the Ghaggar was no doubt a river of considerable size carrying a large volume of water and probably joined the Sutlej after flowing through Bikaner and Bahawalpur. The bed is now dry except after the rains and even then the water rarely flows more than a mile or two west of Hanumangarh".

The affinity that the word, Hakra, has both to the Ghaggar and Sankra would lead to the conclusion of either being the stream referred to.

Tod concludes that "these deserts were once fertile and populous".

Powlet in his Gazetteer of Bikaner remarks that "the whole semi-desert portion of Rajputana" was once "a bed of an ocean". And as such Bikaner was, in antique times, the bed of a sea. But now, as an irony of fate, water in Bikaner is obtainable only 300 or 400 ft. below the surface ! A land which was once submerged in water, has now only a vast expanse of dry and arid sands! Powlett's remark is based on Dr. Moor's investigation.

Dr. Moor observes: "I investigated the material brought up from a well where water had first been obtained at the depth of 316 ft. the strata passed through was, first, a mass of "Kankar", then a mass of red clay, thirdly, sand stone and lastly white gritty sand or gravel, the latter consisting of white stones from the size of pea to that of an egg, although not round yet with surfaces and angles so smooth as to give rise to the idea that they must, at some time, have been exposed to the

action of running water. Carter, geologist, has I believe, expressed the opinion that the whole of the semi desert portion of Western India did at some time form the bed of an ocean extending from the present shores of the sea to the line of the Aravalli Range and the geological characteristics shown to the extent by the deep walls of Bikaner would seem to support the opinion. On this point I may also observe that I found an unmistakable fossil-shell mark on a stone of the wall of the old fort, built by Bikaji”.

Except in Sujangarh Nizamat (district) there is no hill in the State. The hill that exists in Sujangarh is no better than a hillock, being only 600 ft. higher than the region around it and 1651 ft. high from the sea level. It lies on the borders of Jodhpur.

There is not a single river which has its flow throughout the whole year. There are two streams which have their flow only during the rains and they too lose their current after flowing a little into the arid sands of Bikaner. Fagon's Report records that “a small Nala or shallow depression runs northward across the border of Sheikhawati into a few villages situated to the south of Rajgarh. In years of sufficient rainfall, the stream brings down a certain volume of water, but it is of little or no use for agricultural purposes. The western Jumna Canal runs westwards across the Hissar border so far as Bhadra. Practically only waste water comes down it and the supply for irrigation purposes is uncertain. There are no other streams whatever in the State”, except, of course, the modern Gang Canal.

There are a few ‘lakes’ in Bikaner which scarcely deserve to be so called, although locally they are called

'Sars' derived from the Sanskrit 'Sarobar' meaning lake. One such lake is at Gajner, 20 miles to the Southeast of the City of Bikaner. Its dimension is $\frac{1}{2}$ mile \times $\frac{1}{8}$ mile. Its water is most injurious to health and hence not worth using. Ten miles further south west of Gajner there is another lake at Kolayat. But it is smaller in size and depends upon rainwater. If the rainfall is scanty, it dries up. There is a saltwater lake at Chhapar which is six miles long and two miles broad. But it is not so deep, rather shallow and dries up in summer. The fourth lake known as Lunkaran Sar, is also a salt water lake.

"The principal problem of Bikaner is that of water". The whole agricultural operation depends upon the little rainfall, that nature provides for her in an extremely niggardly way. Paradoxically enough the soil of Bikaner is not so unfertile as it appears to be. With a little touch of water during the rainy season the whole of Bikaner is said to assume a charmingly green appearance. There is a kind of grass here called phog which grows abundantly. But this charm is only too short lived. Scarcity of the rains sometimes creates famine and the people leave their dearest hearth and home in search of food in the neighbouring districts of the Punjab and elsewhere. This caused so much exodus sometimes in the past that it very adversely told upon the finance of the State. Because of this desolate nature of the land, in general, no foreign invader cast their lusty look towards her. Even the Marhattas, whose predatory arms scarcely left any part of India untouched, did not raid Bikaner. Bikaner suffered famines and pestilence of a very serious nature in the past due to natural cause e.g. failure of rains etc. She was exempt from ravages of conquering expeditions of the foreigners. For the very same reason of the desolate con-

dition of the soil, the State of Bikaner was formally exempted from the payment of any regular tribute either to Mughals or to English whom the House of Bikaner agreed to salute as the suzerain or the Paramount authority. The Marhattas also did not care to levy any chouth upon the State or the people of Bikaner.

If such is the acute problem of water in Bikaner, how the Government and the people try to solve it and how far they have been hitherto successful?

From the ancient times the people tried to overcome the weakness of nature by holding rain waters in specially constructed reservoirs known as Kund or in improvised tanks and ponds. In fact each village has such a reservoir of rain water. Most of the villages in Bikaner has a suffix "Sar" attached to their names, because they grew up centring such a tank or reservoir. As such these villages are wide apart, unlike the villages of Bengal which are under the soothing shades of cocoanut trees or under the happy bowers of green bushes on murmuring rivulet or a lake, the villages of Bikaner lie bare under the serene sky amidst the desolate expanse of sands. It is all a dreary spectacle unlike the poetry-inspiring villages of Bengal. The shades of Bengal villages draw the heart, they have charming and soothing attraction; but those Shadeless Bikaner hamlets cast a tragic and dreary gloom upon the mind. They have scarcely any attraction to cool a burning heart or a tired traveller. A Bikaner village is a tragic contrast of a Bengal village.

To turn back to our point of water. The census Report of the year 1931 records that "people generally depend upon rainwater collected in tanks and ponds and when that fails on the supply being exhausted or dried

up, on the few sweet water wells in the country. Every village in the State has at least one tank and some villages have more than one. Generally the rain water collected in the ponds lasts from 4 to 6 months, but in some of them the water dries up within only a month after the rainy season''.

The famine of 1899, due to extreme scarcity of the rains shook the nerves of the late Maharaja Ganga Singh so much that he at once resolved to strike at the root of this fell visitation. Bikaner cannot thrive intrinsically, cannot feel secure and happy so long as her arid sands cannot be overflowed with water. The Maharaja was not an idle idealist, but a man of realistic idealism. As he thought so he began to move and act. Bikaner is a big territory with scanty resources. So the task is to be started somewhere and not every where at a time. So he chose the Ganganagar Area. He projected a canal to have a supply of water from the Sutlej for the irrigation of the arid land of Bikaner and for its transformation into a green and fertile granary for her famine stricken people. The canal has been completed in the year 1929 and has been named after the Maharaja as Gang Canal. "About 1000 Sq. miles have been brought under irrigation as a result of it" according to Pannikkar. The Census of 1941 states that "the Gang Canal irrigates nearly 480770 acres of land in the northern portion of the State. Though it is not a small area, nevertheless it falls far short of the actual needs of the people. None was more conscious of the fact than the late Maharaja. So he prepared the Bhakra Dam Project for utilising the water from the Bhakra Dam in Bilaspur State to irrigate another 2000 Sq. miles of the State. Practically the whole of the northern portion of Bikaner could be brought under irri-

gation, if it could be materialised. But the Maharaja died before it could be achieved. The Bhakra Dam Project is still engaging the most serious consideration of the State authority.

The construction of the Gang Canal, has for the first time in the history of Bikaner, created a green territory lasting all through the year. The face of the desert has been at least partially transformed for the better. "The Ganga Canal Colony is the Oasis in the desert. Now sugar cane cotton and other valuable crops are grown where drinking water had to be fetched from long distances. Eight 'mandis' (markets) buzzing with business have cropped up where desolate desert extended for miles and miles". The population of that area has increased during the last decade by 84%. Lest the sands cover up its bed, the banks of the Canal have been cemented with concrete. It is unique and unparalleled of its kind in the world. Ganga Singh rightly deserves the epithet—"the Bhagirath of Bikaner".

Pannikkar writes in his biography of the late Maharaja, "In imagination he sees the glorious vista of prosperous towns, flourishing villages, busy factories, colonies hardy and industrious peasants, in the barren and forbidden desert, where the water courses dried up thousands of years ago."

"In fact since the opening of the Canal over 500 new villages have come into existence. Four ginning factories, three pressing factories and two sugar factories have already sprung up in the canal area. The population of the area has since increased from 28000 to 180000 in seven years" records Panikkar. But the Census Report of 1941 informs us that 'about 1000 new villages

have sprung up making the whole area animated with cheerful and prosperous life'.

The total capital cost in it amounts to Rs.299 lakhs. It is really a titanic effort. Ganga Singh has earned immortality in the economic history of Bikaner, if for nothing else, at least for the Gang Canal,

The total length of the Canal with all its branches is about 599 miles, according to Panikkar. But according to the Census Report of 1941, the total length of the Canal and its distributories etc. is about 865 miles. The length of the cemented portion is however 84 miles; nevertheless it is the biggest lined and cemented Canal in the world.

Besides these canal projects for irrigation purpose, the Government of Bikaner encourage the people to plant trees so that their leaves might attract the rains. The State authority itself takes initiative to plant trees and distribute plants to the peasantry. Plantation of trees is a part of the effort to solve the problem of water.

Regarding the products of the Desert Col. Tod, in his *Annals of Rajasthan* Vol II records Bajra, Moth, Til, wheat, gram and barley. "Cotton is also grown in a few acres. Water melon (locally called motira) of a gigantic size is also grown in abundance. Cut in slices and dried in the sun it is stored up for future use when vegetables are scarce". But G. H. Ojha in his *History of Bikaner* (Hindi Vol. I,) records Bajra, Jawar, Til, cotton, Wheat, gram, mustard, groundnut, watermelon, "Kakri" (a kind of local cucumber), orange, lemon, guava and plantains among others. Of course the increase in the variety of production is due to the construction of the Gang Canal. The kharif or the autumn crops are the

principal agricultural produce in the State. The Rabi or the vernal crops grow in the Canal area and in some other favourable tracts only. In the Census Report of 1941 Bajra, Gwar, Moong, Moth, Til and others have been included among the chief crops of Bikaner whereas cotton, rice, and sugar which can be grown in the irrigated area, have been mentioned as luxury crops.

Due to the absence of forests in Bikaner, which we have already mentioned, there is no ferocious animals like the tiger. But Powlett records in his Gazetteer of Bikaner that "lions are by no means unknown in Bikaner". Deer of every kind are, however, plentiful and the fox of the desert is a beautiful little animal. Jackals and Hyenas are not scarce. Cows, bullocks, Buffaloes, horses, sheep, goats, donkeys, Boars, wolves, hare, snakes are found in abundance. The camel is, however, the most conspicuous animal in the desert and the most useful too. It is known as the "ship of the Desert". It is an indispensable transport animal in the desert even in these days of railways and other means of transport and communication. It is not only used as a riding animal, but to carry loads and water. It is also used to plough the land. There are two camel forces in the Bikaner State army known as Ganga Risala (Camelry) and Bijay Battery. It is a typical animal of the desert. Upon the four thin and long legs stands high above the ground a bow-like trunk protruding upward, as if to save itself from the scorching sand below. Its neck is projected forward abnormally long, with the two eyes run out of the sockets, as if it is extremely tired of trekking the arid expanse of sands and is searching for the object ground in the endless horizon in front. Its eyes and gaits are as expressionless and monotonous as the desert itself. It

is a meek creature having no care for colliding against anything in front, as there is no river, no hill and no forest. It is interesting too. One day we saw a camel in the street of Bikaner throw off its rider from upon its back and scream aloud with a peculiar and terrible gurgling sound. We learnt on enquiry that it became angry. So I recognised the dormant revolting spirit even in a meekest animal at a moment of its exasperation or desperation. Meekness at its limit may also take a violent shape in a most surprising manner. The caravan of camels in the open desert in a moonlit night looking like silhouettes casts a mystic spell upon the mind. It often really forms a romantic beauty-spot in the otherwise expressionless bosom of the desolate desert and cannot but inspire poetry in a really Bengali mind. So the camel is a point of interest and attraction not only to the common folk of the desert whom it serves in so many capacities, and to the business men, but also to a beauty-hunting and poetic Bengali mind. The desert and the camel are so to say, inseparable and convey almost the same influence upon the mind. The camel is, as it were, the moving soul of the desert. It involves a sense of desolateness in the mind in the same way as the desert does.

The question arises—Wherefrom the fodder is procured for these domestic animals in this arid desert? Powlett writes: "Bikaner abounds in the best cattle grasses. Phog a low leafless shrub is the commonest and the most useful material for building huts, food to camels and its buds are used as condiments by the poor".

Another question relevantly arises—if Bikaner is a land of sands only, and if there is no forest to provide with wood, and Bamboos, what building material is used for the construction of houses. The poor generally use

mud-huts constructed with hard soil that is available in the depth of the ground and the well-to-do persons construct buildings with stones and limes that are available in some places in the desert. A kind of red stones is found at Dalmera 42 miles off from the city of Bikaner and it is a good material for engraving work. The most beautiful and gigantic buildings in the State are made of these stones.

Only a few decades ago there was no suitable means of communication and transport excepting the camels, tongas (horse driven carts), bullock-carts and donkeys. But now while the camel, the donkey, tongas and bullock-carts ply in abundance, they have been supplemented by a net work of railway line connecting almost all the important places in the State with the City as well as motorable roads, as a result of which trade and commerce has greatly flourished in the recent years. In 1898 the total length of Railway was 48 miles. Before 1921 the total mileage of Bikaner State Railway was 498 miles only but the Census Report of 1941 records a total mileage of 883 besides a total of 2478.5 miles of roads of which 296.66 miles are only metalled, the remaining 2181.84 miles being non-metalled. As the irrigation project so the development of the Railway System was inspired by the same objective i.g. to fight out famine Panikkar writes: "Maharaja (Ganga Singh) realised as a result of this appalling experience (the famine of 1899) that the future of Bikaner lay in two-fold policy—railway development and irrigation". As a result of this resolve Bikaner now possesses the Gang Canal which we have already referred to as well as the nearly 900 miles of railway facilitating inland as well as external transport and communication. The "famine of the kind which the State

suffered in 1899-1900 has been rendered imposible, and quick and cheap transport has brought the Maharaja and his Government nearer to the people in the distant villages'' (Panikkar).

Bikaner has been divided, in modern times, for administrative purposes, broadly, into two divisions viz. Ganganagar Division and Sadar Division. These two divisions are again divided into six districts or Nizamats as they are locally called. Bikaner City is however counted as a separate administrative unit and is not included in the Sadar District. Ganganagar division, in the extreme north of the State, consists of Ganganagar Nizamat and Raisingnagar Nizamat. The Sadar division consists of Bikaner or Sadar Nizamat, Sujangarh Nizamat, Rajgarh Nizamat and *Suratgarh* Nizamat. As the map will show, the distribution of the divisions in Bikaner are widely disproportionate in size. But in economic importance the Ganganagar division occupies a much more enviable and strategic position, as a result of the opening of the Gang Canal which we have already referred to, than the Sadar division, ofcourse excluding the city of Bikaner. Though diminished in geographical volume, Ganganagar has been enlarged in productive potency. The extensity of the Sadar division has been counterbalanced by the intensity of the Ganganagar division. The diffusion of the Sadar division over a wide expanse of desolate and sandy desert is rather a disability for her coherent economic development, while the concentration of the Ganganagar division watered by the Gang Canal is a positive advantage for her balanced industrial as well as agricultural growth. The green colony of Ganganagar bustling with the life of growing industrial concerns and commercial marts and ever-growing enterprising popula-

tion is a great relief in the back-ground of a vast, desolate and sandy expanse of the Sadar division, barring ofcourse, some portions of the eastern districts.,

Each district is subdivided into a number of Tahsils or sub-districts a list of which is given below district wise:—

<i>Name of District</i>	<i>Name of Tahsils</i>
1. Bikaker or Sadar Nizamat	(a) Sadar (b) Lunkaransar (c) Nokha (d) Magra (Kola- yat)
2. Sujangarh Nizamat	(a) Ratangarh (b) Sardarshahr (c) Sujangarh (d) Dungargarh
3. Rajgarh Nizamat	(a) Bhadra (b) Churu (c) Nohar (d) Rajgarh (e) Taranagar.
4. Suratgarh Nizamat	(a) Anupgarh (b) Hanuman- garh (c) Suratgarh
5. Ganganagar Nizamat	(a) Ganganagar (b) Karanpur
6. Raisinghnagar Nizamat	(a) Raisinghnagar (b) Padam- pur

The city is as old as the present Bikaner State under its ruling dynasty. It was established in the year 1488 A.D. by Rao Bika, founder of the Bikaner State and of the present reigning dynasty. According to the local popular tradition the present site of the City of Bikaner belonged to a Jat, named Nara or Nera. Rao Bika took it from him for the establishment of his Capital on condition that the name of the Jat must be connected with the name of the city. Thus the combination of the names of Bika and Nara has led to the naming of the Capital as Bikaner. But modern philological critics do not admit the validity of this folk etymology in the absence of more convincing historical evidence. They hold that this name is derived from Hindi "Ner" which is a corruption of sanskrit "Nagara" (city) in local dialects. This is taken to be correct....Bikaner means Bika's city or the

City of Bika. This seems to be valid proposition in view of the fact that there is another important town which was founded by Maharaja Gaj Singh as his pleasure garden and was named Gajner after the name of the founder. If the folk etymology holds good in the case of Bikaner, how are we to explain the name of Gajner?

The City of Bikaner like Delhi stands, in a marked contrast, divided into two distinct parts—new Bikaner and old Bikaner. The old one stands with all her medieval clumsiness, nastiness, narrowness and decrepitude as a pitiable sight beside the glowing and sparkling new city with her cleanliness, charm and youthful vigour and beauty, broad roads and spacious parks. The juxtaposed massive structures in the old City cast a suffocating spell upon a conscious and sensitive mind whereas the tasteful buildings in the new City arranged along the roads and around the parks maintaining respectable distance serves as a relief to a tired mind in the desolate and monotonous desert. The glittering electric lights in the new City in the bosom of the wide desert at night assumes the sight of a charming dreamland. If moving along the narrow and nasty streets and lanes of the old city is repulsive to a modern mind, the old city with her white and red structures arranged along undulating heights of Bikaner overlooked from a distance or from a tower seems to be really a picturesque city. In the Background of the dusky firmament, the sparkling resplendence of the lights in the bristling castles of Bikaner verily reminds us that Bikaner has her beauty, it is not monotonous, not desolate. The City of Bikaner truly deserves to be, then embraced as the lady of the desert.

But then from the flights of poetic excellence let us come down again to the details of reality, however boring

they may be. With all her lurking beauty spots as well as boredom, Bikaner claims to be known as Bikaner. Bikaner does not allow a man to be at poetic flight for a long time. While her mystery impels an appreciative mind to poetic inspiration, her desert compels him to be horribly realistic. After all life is still dearer than poetry, still moored in the quagmire and sands of reality.

Now to our point. While the new counterpart of the City of Bikaner is liberal and modern enough to go without a screen of wall around her, the old one veils her face still behind a well-guarded circular wall of considerable height and thickness. Powlett describes: "The wall of Bikaner is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles in circuit, built wholly of stone with eight gates. It is 6ft. thick and from 15 to 30 ft. high. The names of the gates are (1) Kot (2) Jachusar (3) Nathusar (4) Sitla or Siwal (5) Goga (6) Hammalonki-Bari (7) Uton ki Bari (8) Kassaion Ki Bari.... There is a ditch on three sides only, the depth being about 15ft. breadth 20ft. and the interval between the wall and the ditch from 20 to 30 yards". A veritable medieval City indeed!

"Extreme irregularity of the streets, lanes and spaces in the densely populated interior portion of the town defies any clear description". Dr. Moor, Superintendent Surgeon further adds, "Acquainted as I am with all the Capitals of Rajputana and with most of the provincial cities, I can safely state there is not one viewing with Bikaner as regards the grotesque irregularity of its thoroughfares".

According to Powlett (1874) "the sanitary condition of the city is very bad. People use earthen vessels for night stools and empty them into the streets from the house tops in the morning regardless of the passers-by". Even

today when the City is administered by a modern municipality, the sanitary condition of the old city does not seem to have improved much to differ in opinion with Powlett. People still pass urine and stool freely alongside the public roads, streets as well as lanes within the city walls. The sweepers sweep the sandy streets only to pollute the atmosphere still more to the great disgust of a passerby. None can walk along a way of Bikaner City without polluting himself with refuse of all descriptions. Bikaner Municipality has got no drainage whatsoever. The population of Bikaner City during the time of Powlett was 35,768 (1874 A. D.) but now it has shot up to 127,226 (Census Report 1941) including the suburban population.

Powlett remarks that "the temples of Bikaner possess no striking beauty. The mosques need no notice." This opinion holds good to some extent even now from the standpoint of architectural grandeur. But the temple of Laksminarayanji inside the City walls at its western extremity is really a beautiful sight with a spacious park around the temple and the vast open desert beyond it with its undulating sandy ridges. The sun setting in the Desert is really no less charming than it is in a sea. And the serene and delicate temple of Laksminarayanji is really an artistically favourable site to gaze at the setting sun in the vast open desert underneath a mystic horizon at a great, great distance.

Outside the City wall the temple of Ratanbehariji with a green neat and spacious park having an artificial fountain drizzling water, is also a soothing relief. These two temples are, however of recent origin. The temple of Ratan Behariji was constructed between 1846-51 A. D. The temple of Laksminarayanji was constructed in 1880. The Public park with its spacious green, lawns, and big

leafy banyan and neem trees has created in the heart of the new City quite an attractive site. It also holds within it at liberal intervals, the stately High Court building, the attractive Cinema hall, the stately and giant marble statue of Maharaja Dungar Singh, just beside the park, is unique of its type.

The old fort with its veil of high walls overlooking the modern park—quite open and free—stands as a contrast; yet it attracts people by its age long mystery within its bosom veiled with high and thick walls. The sight of the City from above the fort is really worth coveting especially at a moonlit night. Inside the fort the most interesting feature is the contrast of the old Darbar hall with the modern one—which exist side by side. Besides, the Anup library, a huge collection of ancient literature, and the armoury within the fort offer much to learn and glean for historical studies.

The Bikaner City can also boast of her well-equipped and splendid Bijay Singh Memorial Hospital, State Library, Museum and stately Stadium, of quite uptodate fashion and all of them are quite attractive and deserve appreciation both as regards site selection and buildings as well as equipments. Of course the Museum is not so rich in its collection, nor the library is quite sufficiently upto the mark as regards its cataloguing and variety of stock.

In the suburb 3 miles off from Bikaner City, the Seobari or the temple of Siva is an attractive site and inside the temple is very simple, but serene. Another attractive place is Deokund Sagar 5 miles from the City where the members of the royal family are cremated and contain a park of marble-tombs arrayed in lines at intervals.

The old pleasure garden at Gajner, 20 miles to the Southwest of the City and the new palace at Lalgah, 4 miles to the northeast are also charmingly picturesque. The Lalgah palace is constructed in a modern design.

A significant feature of these recent constructions is that they are mostly built with local red stones.

A new extension of the City is under construction known as Sadulnagar towards the Southeast after the name of the reigning Maharaja. In this part each and every house will be planfully constructed having a park attached to it—so that each will be a picturesque garden house or a Banglow.

The Bikaner City has got a good supply of electricity generated from a local power house from which current is supplied to some of the districts also. Conspicuously enough Bikaner City offers no spectacle of poverty: Even the wage-earners are found to have sufficient earning and there is scarcely any house visible other than a stone or brickbuilt one. Even a person who earns his livelihood by selling milk or as an wage earner is generally found to occupy a pucca house consisting of more than one room. People say that before 1942-43 house rent at Bikaner was incredibly low. In some cases the owner allowed a man to remain in his house even without rent, so that his house might remain in order through use. But as a result of the bombing of Calcutta in 1942-43 and fall of Burma, many people have come to stay here and the house rent has gone up and it no longer can be said to be cheap.

In a State having a population of less than thirteen lakhs, a city with a population of more than one lakh twenty seven thousand really deserves to be treated

separately. Minus the growing Ganganagar Colony and the populous City of Bikaner, the State of Bikaner scarcely retains any other attractive geographical feature than the monotone and desolation of the vast and dreary desert with her widely scattered and sparsely populated villages and hamlets. Of course the towns of Churu, Sardarshahr and Sujargarh with their population of more than 25000 deserve mention. Besides these three others e.g. Ratargarh (20961), Ganganagar (16136), Rajgarh (12261), and Dangargarh (11671) who have more than 10000 populations. Eleven other towns have a population below that. Tod records that "Rajgarh was the great commercial mart of Bikaner and the point of Rendevous of caravans from all parts, Punjab, Kashmir, Delhi, Malaw, Sind". It must have been, therefore, more populous and floursighing in earlier times. As a result of the anarchy during the latter part of the 18th and earlier part of the 19th century, it must have decayed.

CHAPTER III

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF BIKANER

"Bikaner holds a secondary rank amongst the principalities of Rajaputana". Thus remarks Tod in his *Annals of Rajasthan* Vol. II. In aristocratic dignity and honour, the House of Bikaner stands second only to Mewar. The House of Bikaner claims its origin from Rathores of Kanauj, which is, however, open to controversy. The Rathor kingdom of Kanauj was overthrown by the Mussalman invaders in 1194 A.D. In 1212 A.D. Seoji and Sait Ram, grandsons of its last king, Jai Chand, who sought the help of Mahamed Ghorî against Prithviraj and paved the ground for the Mohe-medan domination over Hindusthan, abandoned that land of their birth and journeyed westward with only 200 retainers, the wreck of their vassalage.

Seoji is said to have established a state in the wilds of Marwar. Jodha, a descendant of Seoji founded the City of Jodhpur, the present Capital of Marwar, in 1459 A.D. and established the present state of the same name.

Bika, a son of Jodha, was the founder of the principality of Bikaner. He was born in 1438 A.D. and in 1472 A.D. he conquered the present territory of Bikaner and formally established the Bikaner State, as a separate entity from that of his father, namely Jodhpur, where one of his brothers occupied the throne. Thus the Houses of Bikaner and Jodhpur owe their origin to common ancestry. Bika, it is said, relinquished all claims for himself and his descendants upon the throne

of his father at the latter's request. Thus the State of Bikaner came into existence at a time when the Lody dynasty, the last of the Pathans, conquered the throne of Delhi.

Bika, at the instance of and in collaboration with his uncle Kandhal, with a band of only 300 fell upon the Sankhlas of Janglu or Jangaldesh, as the region of Bikaner was known at that time, and massacred them. This exploit brought them in contact with the Bhattis of Pugal, the chief of which gave his daughter in marriage to Bika.

On the eve of Bika's conquest, however, nearly the whole of the territory forming the boundaries of Bikaner was possessed by the following six Jat clans: (1) Godara (2) Punia (3) Sarans (4) Asaich (5) Beniwal and (6) Johya or Joiya. The Godaras voluntarily acknowledged the authority of Bika. The reason of their voluntary submission was to have the protection of the powerful arms of Bika from the Johyas and the Bhattis. Thus Bika's conquest of Godaras was, so to say, bloodless. Tod attributes the causes of this surprising success of Bika against the Godaras to the following cogent facts: Firstly (1) "The jealousy of the Johyas and the Godaras, the two most powerful of the six Jat cantons was the immediate motive to the propitiation of the "son of Jodha". Secondly (2) "Besides, the conquest of the Mohils by Bida, brothers of Bika, brought a troublesome neighbour. With the Mohils the Jats had been living in amity. Thirdly (3) "They were desirous of placing between them and the Bhattis of Jaisalmer, a more powerful barrier. Lastly (4) "They dreaded the hot valour and thirst for land of Bika and his retainers, now contiguous to them at Janglu."

Tod further adds: "For these weighty reasons, at a meeting of the "elders" of the Godaras, it was resolved to conciliate the Rathor".

They, however, agreed to accept the supremacy of the Rajput Princes, on the following express conditions.

(1) "To make common cause with them against the Johyas and other cantons with whom they were then at variance.

(2) "To guard the western frontier against the irruption of the Bhattis,

(3) "To hold the rights and privileges of the community inviolable."

On the fulfilment of these conditions they relinquished, to Bika and his descendants, the supreme power over the Godaras.

Bika's was, thus, not a conquest by force; but he received sovereignty from the hands of a willing people under the exigencies of certain historical circumstances. Bika bound himself and his descendants to receive the tika or inauguration from the hands of the descendants of the two elders of the Godara clan who led the deputation to Bika and signed the protocol mentioned above and that the gaddi (throne) should be deemed vacant until such right was administered. It is still scrupulously observed by the descendants of Bika. It, however, involves a great constitutional question of the king's responsibility to the people from whom he receives the Crown. Herein lies the germ of popular sovereignty behind the throne of Bikaner which they cannot refuse to respect, true to history. With the help of the Godaras, Bika invaded the Johyas. This community extended over the northern region of the desert even

to the Sutilej and reckoned 1100 villages in their canton. According to Tod, the Johya tribe represents the ancient Yaudheya tribe or warlike people. The remnants of this tribe are still found on the banks of the Sutilej, in Bikaner, in the old bed of the Ghaggar river below Bhatner, their ancient seat, in Lahore, Ferozepur, Derajat, Multan and the salt range. (Cunningham, "Ancient Geography", Rose, Glossary").

The Patriarchal head of the Johyas, Sher Singh, who resided at Bharapol (110 miles N.N.E. of Bikaner City), mustered the strength of the canton and for a long time withstood the continued efforts of the Rajputs and the Godaras. Ultimately, however, the Johyas succumbed to Rathor domination, on account of treachery.

After this Bika conquered Bagor from the Bhattis in the west. It was in this district originally wrested by the Bhattis from the Jats, that Bika founded his Capital, Bikaner.

His uncle Kandhal went northward and successively subjugated the communities of Asaich, Beniwal and Saran which cantons are mostly occupied by his descendants styled Knadhalot Rathors, at this day. Although they form an integral portion of the Bikaner State, they evince that their estates were a gift of their own swords and they paid in the past but a reluctant and nominal obedience to the authority of the Maharaja.

At Hissar Kandhal's conquering expedition was stopped by the Imperial forces of Delhi. Kandhal died fighting against the imperial forces.

The Punia Jats, the last who preserved their ancient liberty, were, however, not conquered till the

reign of Rai Sing (1571-1611 A.D.). The Punia Jats however gave a desperate resistance, as a result of which Ram Singh, the brother of Raisingh, was slain. Thus with the subjugation of the Punias the political annihilation of the six Jat cantons of the desert was accomplished.

Who are these Jats?

Col. Tod holds that "Jats or Getai had for ages been established in these arid deserts."

Tod further adds: "In the 4th century A.D. we find a Jat kingdom established in the Punjab, but how much earlier these people colonised those regions we are ignorant. At every step made by Mohamedan power in India it encountered the Jats". Their memorable defence of the passage of the Indus against Mahmud and the war of extirpation waged against them by Timur, both in their primeval seats in Mawarolnahr (the land beyond the Oxus) as well as to the east of the Sutlej—bear eloquent testimony to Jat heroism and tenacity. Babar in his commentaries informs us that in all his irruptions into India, he was assailed by multitudes of Jats during his progress through the Punjab, the peasantry of which region who are now proselytes to Islam, and Sikhism, are chiefly of this tribe.

They also constitute a vast majority of the peasantry of western Rajwara and perhaps of Northern India. More than 23% of the total population of Bikaner are Jats, mostly agriculturists. Tod writes: "They are now occupied in agriculture and their old pastoral pursuits and are an industrious tax-paying race under their indolent Rajput masters".

At what period these Jats established themselves in the Indian desert, we are entirely ignorant.

But at the time of the Rathor invasion, they led chiefly a pastoral life, were guided, but not governed by the elders and with the exception of adoration to the universal mother (Bhawani) incarnate in the person of a youthful Jatni, they were utter aliens to Hindu theocracy.

Under the influence of a Muslim saint (Saikh Farid) their "pagan rites brought from the Jaxortes" were overturned and without any settled ideas on religion. the Jats of the desert jumbled all their tenets together. They considered themselves as a distinct class.

The Jats, who occupied nearly the whole of the territory forming the boundaries of Bikaner, as we have already said, had a pastoral common wealth at the time of Bika's invasion. Through the conquest of Bika, it transformed into a monarchical State.

The Jats are also counted among the 36 royal races of India, although there is not inter-marriage of a Jat with a Rajput, and now belong chiefly to the agricultural classes. The chief of Bharatpur is a Jat and the greater portion of the husbandman of Rajasthan are Jats. The tradition of the Jats claims the regions west of Indus as the cradle of the race and make them of Yadu extraction. The Yadus are scattered over India and many chiefs of consequence amongst the Marhattas are of this tribe. The House of Jaisalmer is said to belong to this race. This race is considered to be direct descendants of Krishna and Baldeva of the same Yadu clan of the Kshatriyas as mentioned in the Mahabharata. Tod is of opinion that "the Getaes. Juts or Jats" had had their original homes in the region of Sakatai (in Central Asia). They were a nomadic tribe and have

affinity and probably are of common blood with the Germans and the Scandinavians which is evident from their dress, habits, theogomy and customs of war.

Of the first migration from Central Asia of this race we have no record. It may have been from the wars of Cyrus the great of Persia or his ancestors. The Jats and the Yuechi, of whom Kanishka was a great monarch in North western India, are of common origin.

The 5th Century A.D. is a period of interest in Jat history. The Jats continued as a powerful community on the east bank of the Indus and in the Punjab till the 10th century. In 440 A.D. we find a Jat prince in this region with Salivahanpur as his Capital (from an inscription of this time).

How much earlier than this the Jat penetrated into Rajasthan must be left to more ancient inscriptions to determine. When they were expelled from Salivanpur and forced to seek refuge across the Sutlej in the Indian Desert, many from compulsion soon embraced Islam.

That the Jats continued as a powerful community on the east bank of the Indus and in the Punjab, fully five centuries after the period our inscriptions and their annals illustrate. We have most interesting records in the history of Mahmud, the Gaznite Conquerer of India, whose progress they checked.

In 1026 A.D. Sultan Mahmud marched an army against the Jats who had harassed and insulted him on the return from his last expedition against Saurashtra. The account refers: "The Jats inhabited the country on the borders of Multan along the river that runs by the mountains of Jud.... A terrible conflict ensued, but

the projecting spikes sunk the Jat boats while others were set on fire. Few escaped from this scene of terror; and those who did, met with the more severe fate of captivity".

Many doubtless did escape, and it is most probable that the Jat communities, on whose overthrow the State of Bikaner was founded, were remnants of this very warfare.

Still the Jats maintained in the Punjab and constitute the bulk of the Sikh Community. Ranjit Singh was of Jat blood.

The Joiya or Johya, whom we have referred to as one of the six Jat clans in Bikaner, has been enumerated as one of the 36 royal races of India separately. They were in ancient chronicles entitled "Lords of Jangal-dhar". Jangaldhar is a tract which comprehended Haryana, Bhatner and Nagor (Col. Tod). The Mohil, whom we have referred to already, was also one of the 36 royal races referred to above and inhabited a considerable tract of Bikaner so late as the foundation of the present State of Bikaner, the Rathor founders of which expelled, if not extirpated them.

Bika died in 1505 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Lunkaram who married the sister of Rana Sanga of Mewar (daughter of Rana Rai Mal), the first matrimonial relation between the houses of Mewar and Bikaner. Lunkaran died in 1526, the very same year when Babar, the founder of the great Mughal dynasty of India, defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the last of the Lodi kings, in the field of Panipat and conquered Delhi.

Lunkaran was succeeded by his son Jetsi during whose reign the Mughal first attacked Bikaner under

the command of Kamran, son of Babar and brother of Humayun. Jetsi repulsed the imperial troops. So the first Mughal attack upon Bikaner met with failure. In 1542 Jetsi died. He was thus a contemporary of the Mughal emperor, Humayun.

The fortunes of Bikaner were at its ebb during the reign of Kalyanmal, son and successor of Jetsi. Before Bikaner could recover from the ravages of the Mughal expedition under Kamran, Maldev, king of Jodhpur, fell upon her and captured the capital including the fort and half the Bikaner territory. Kalyan Singh tried to recover his territory with his headquarters at Sirsa. His brother, Bhimraj went with 50 horsemen to Delhi and entered into the service of Humayun and after the overthrow of Humayun by Sher Shah, got into the Durbar of the latter. He succeeded in securing the patronage of Sher Shah to recover the lost territory of Bikaner. Hitherto Kalyan Singh had been occupying the field against Maldev all alone, his Sardars, almost all, standing aloof. This news of the imperial patronage inspired the Sardars to join Kalyan Singh. This characteristic of rank opportunism is evident in the character of Bikaner, unlike Mewar. The fortune favoured Kalyan Singh who soon recovered all his lost territory with the help of the imperial troops (of Sher Shah) and the assistance of his Sardars. Kalyan Singh, in return, owed, allegiance to Sher Shah. Thus within 40 years of the death of Bika, the founder of the State of Bikaner, his kingdom lost independence and sovereignty and would continue so all along changing master after master. Henceforth Bikaner would submit to that power and personality who would rule over Delhi without a fight and would owe allegiance to them without a

break and without even an effort to throw off the yoke. After Sher Shah to Humayun and his successors and after the Mughals to the English. Bikaner can with so facility and easy conscience change her face and dress. She can swallow the pills administered by the Mughals and the English alike. Nothing sticks at her throat. Of course the land of Bikaner is all sandy. It is not sticky. With every sweep of western wind her face changes. Kalyan Singh died in 1571 A.D. He was thus contemporary of Sher Shah, partly of Humayun and partly of Akbar.

Kalyan Singh was succeeded by his son Rai Singh (1571—1611 A. D.). Raisingh joined with his armed Rathors in almost all the expeditions of Akbar. He helped the imperial army against Jodhpur and Mewar with his band of Rathors. Rae Singh's daughter was obtained as wife of Selim (Jehangir) by Akbar to strengthen his tie with the valorous Rathors. Rae Singh was a mansabdar of 4000 under Akbar, and Jehangir raised the number to 5000.

Until his reign the Jats had in a great degree preserved their ancient privileges. Their maintenance was found rather inconvenient by the new superabundant Rajput population and they were consequently dispossessed of all political authority. With the loss of independence their military spirit decayed and they sunk into mere tillers of the earth. Thus in this reign "the Jats parted with their liberties to the Rajput". And "the latter, in like manner, bartered his freedom to become a Satrap of Delhi" (Tod).

The next important reign was that of Anup Singh. He ascended the throne in 1669 and died in 1699. He was thus a contemporary of Aurangzeb and fought in his

army as a Mansabdar of 5000 in almost all his expeditions, even against Sivaji, the great Marhatta chief. The House of Bikaner was thus all through loyal to the Mughal authority and they continued the same tradition of loyalty and submission to the British rule too. "The reign of Anup Singh" has been characterised as "the golden age of Bikaner" in valour and fame, by Powlett in his Gazetteer of Bikaner.

The next important reign, is that of Surat Singh, a landmark in the history of Bikaner. It marks the darkest period in her history. Surat Singh obtained throne in an immoral and nefarious way. After the reign of Gaja Singh (1788) his son Raj Singh ascended the throne, but was poisoned to death by the mother of the 5th son, Surat Singh, who then became king. "The Crown thus nefariously obtained, this worthy son of such a parent determined to maintain his authority by like means, and to leave no competitor to contest his claims. He has accordingly removed by death or exile all who stood between him and the Gaddi of Bikan". (Tod)

There was a general discontent against his vile method of wearing the crown and the Sardars became rebellious. But the usurper collected foreign troops from Bhatinda and other parts sufficient to overcome all oppositions. The infant prince, Pratap Singh, son of Raj Singh and legitimate heir to the throne was strangled to death and it is said, by Surat Singh's own hands.

In 1801 the elder brothers of the usurper, surthan Singh and Ajit Singh who had found refuge in Jaipur, after their escape on the murder of Raj Singh repaired to Bhatner and assemble the vassels of the disaffected

nobles and Bhattis in order to dethrone the tyrant. But it failed.

Besides these rebellions of the Sardars, the existence and security of the State was threatened dangerously by an armed clash with Jodhpur as well as by "continued attacks of organised bands of robbers from without". Necessarily to feed his mercenary troops Surat Singh's treasury became exhausted and to supply the exhausted treasury he resorted to extortions which knew no bounds. Those who refused to respond to his rapacious demands were murdered or tortured.

With this system of terror, his increasing superstitions and diminished attention to public duties the country deteriorated in population and wealth. Commercial caravans which passed through this State and enriched its treasury with the transit duties, almost ceased to frequent it from the increasing insecurity of its territory. Besides the personal loss to the Prince (in finance), the country suffered from the deterioration of the commercial towns of Churu, Rajgarh and Reni, which as entrepôts had supplied the country with the product of Sind and the provinces to the westward, as those of Gangetic India. The miseries of the people knew no bounds. The cup of their consequent discontent were filled to the brim. The thakurs of Churu, Bhadra, Dadreva, Nima, Jassana, Rawatsar and Birkali made common cause with the Bhattis, the Jogyas and the Sikhs, rose in rebellion and captured Ratangarh and other forts in 1815. In 1817 they joined their forces with Amir Khan Pindari who was raiding Bikaner.

At this time the rebellion was so great, widespread and desperate that it was impossible to subdue it with the already depleted forces and straitened resources of

the Maharaja. So he decided to seek help from the English and therefore sent an envoy to enter into an agreement with Mr. Charles Metcalf, the then resident at Delhi.

A treaty was signed in 1818 with the British Government by which political sovereignty of Bikaner was surrendered by Surat Singh in lieu of British protection against his internal and external enemies, which is evident from the terms of the treaty the relevant clauses of which are quoted below:—

“Article 2. The British Government engages to protect the principality and territory of Bikaner.

“Article 3. Maharaja Surat Singh and his heirs and successors will act in subordinate co-operation with the British Government and acknowledge its supremacy and will not have any connections with any other chiefs or States.

Article 4. The Maharaja and his heirs and successors will not enter into negotiations with any chief or State without the knowledge and sanction of British Government.

“Article 7. The British Government on the application of the Maharaja will reduce to subjection the thakurs and other inhabitants of his principality who have revolted and thrown off his authority.

Article 8. The Maharaja of Bikaner will furnish troops at the requisition of the British Government according to his means”.

Article 9. The Maharaja and his heirs and successors shall be absolute rulers of their country and the British jurisdiction shall not be introduced into that principality.”

The grace of the 9th clause has been marred and the clause has been virtually rendered invalid in view of the treaty of 1879 by which Bikaner State had to give up its right to manufacture salt within its territory and that of 1889 by which the State had to cede to the British Government full and exclusive jurisdiction of every kind over the lands within its bounds required by the Jodhpur-Bikaner, Bikaner-Bhatinda Railway systems and later over the lands occupied by the Southern Punjab Railway and in view of the fact that the State was bound to abstain from coining silver and copper in its own mint—an essential symbol of sovereignty. There are also many instances of British interference even into the internal administration. The British Government interferes whenever they please, claiming for themselves "the responsibility for maintaining good administration and good order in the State". In fact Bikaner, as any other native State in India, is bound in subordinate vassalage to the British Crown and its representative in India, the Paramount power, in the same way as she was to the Mughal emperors in the medieval period. The House of Bikaner was bound to attend in succession on the person of the emperor at the head of a fixed quota of troops during the Mughal period. During the British period if there is no such explicit rule, in actuality it is all the same and it was amply and practically demonstrated during the Durbar, held at Delhi in 1878 on the occasion of proclaiming the Queen of England as the empress of India and on the occasion of a similar Durbar held in 1911 on the occasion of Emperor George V's visit to India, when native princes of India were all required to wait upon the Emperor as vassals. So the treaty of 1818 despite

its ninth clause marks the practical surrender of the sovereignty of Bikaner.

Thus Surat Sing's reign marks the darkest period in Bikaner's history politically, economically as well as socially. Tod writes, "In three centuries (16th, 17th and 18th more than one half of the villages, which either voluntarily or by force submitted to the rule of the founder Bika, are now without memorial of their existence and the rest are gradually approximating to the same position. In fact the 18th century is a dark age in Indian history as a whole and Bikaner proves no exception. In accepting the British Suzerainty in the year 1818, she was not alone in Rajputana. Almost all the States of Rajaputana entered into similar subordinate treaties with the British Government in the same year in quick succession.

Surat Singh was succeeded by his son Ratan Singh in 1818. With the help of the English Crown, order was restored in the State; the rebellious Sardars were brought under control. In the Afghan wars (1839-42), and in the Sikh Wars (1845-48), Ratan Singh helped the English with men, money and arms true to the tradition of the House of Bikaner during the Mughal period. In 1851, Ratan Singh died and was succeeded by Sardar Singh who was the only among the Rajput princes who volunteered his services to the English for the suppression of the Sepoy Mutiny (1857). He actively fought for the English against the sepoys with a large force of whose, the entire expense was also borne by him. He also sheltered Europeans till the Mutiny was quelled. The English rewarded the Maharaja with 41 villages of Tibi Pargana in the district of Sirsa.

Sardar Singh died in 1872 and was succeeded by Dungar Singh. During his reign Bikaner State surrendered its right of manufacturing salt and agreed to import only English salt. Formerly the Jagirdars or Sardars used to serve the State with their military services. But now it was decided to receive cash in lieu of service. Surveying of land was done and each Sardar's rate of payment was fixed. Thus the dispute between the State and the Sardars over rent was settled.

Civil and Criminal cases had been so long disposed of by Tahsildars. Imperial justice was scarcely available. The Maharaja established 4 separate courts. A procedure code was prepared and the punishable crimes were enlisted with due description. Police stations were established for the maintenance of local law and order and to arrest the offenders. Circle officers were appointed to supervise the Thana officers.

The customs department was established (1884). In the same year post office was opened, modern schools and hospitals were inaugurated.

Khalsa lands were surveyed and cash rent system was arranged with the peasants, abolishing various payments in kind.

Salary of soldiers and officers were raised and they were being paid in cash. Hitherto they used to get land and small pay as a result of which they used to receive bribes from the people.

Electricity was brought in the fort in the city of Bikaner in 1886.

The State had incurred much debt as a result of corrupt officials. An adept enquiry committee was set up who estimated the total amount of debt to be 39,36,987

rupees. But deducting the improperly enhanced interests, paid hitherto, the Committee finally determined the amount of debt to be only 7,04,799 rupees. The debt was immediately paid up and economy was introduced in the State expenditure. The State income at the time of his accession was only 6 lakhs of rupees annually. During his time it was trebled up. Railway and irrigation systems were started. Thus Dungar Singh laid the foundation of the modern development of Bikaner. His stately and imposing marble statue erected by public subscription in front of the old fort and beside the Public Park is a symbol of gratitude and loyalty of the people of Bikaner to the memory of Dungar Singh. The policy of modernisation inaugurated by Dungar Singh was pursued by his brother and successor, Ganga Singh, who ascended the throne after his death in 1887. Maharaja Ganga Singh was quite young at that time. Hence a Regency Council was formed to administer the State on his behalf during his minority till the year 1898 when he took up the reign of the Government in his own hand. His is a long reign spanning over two centuries from 1887 to 1943 and saw two great wars shaking the modern world. Whatever development in modern Bikaner we find, is the creation of Ganga Singh. Minus Ganga Singh modern development of Bikaner dims into insignificance. His manumetal work, the Gang Canal has already been dealt with. In 1898 when he personally took up the reign of the Government, the total length of railway in Bikaner was only 98 miles or so, but the Census report of 1941 informs us that it is nearly 900 miles now. The population of the City of Bikaner was something below 50,000, it is now 127 thousands, a remarkable growth. The income of the State was something about 16 lakhs at the time of his accession to the

throne but he left an annual income of nearly 130 lakhs. The new city of Bikaner outside the walls of the old city which we have dealt with in the previous chapter is all the creation of Ganga Singh. Bikaner in 1898 had no institution of local self Government and no legislature, no High Court, no codified law, no efficient Secretariat, no college, no female education, but she is now endowed with them all with which we shall deal in subsequent chapters critically. Suffice it to say here that Bikaner possesses every thing, in form at least, which a modern state ought to have. The impress of the personality of Ganga Singh is discernable everywhere in the modern development of Bikaner. He may be said, with due apology, to be the Bismarck or Kaiser Wilhelm II of Bikaner in stature and energy, as well as in aspiration and achievement. After all these phenomenal achievements Ganga Singh was a true descendant of Rai Singh, Anup Singh, Ratan Singh and Sardar Singh so far as his tradition of loyalty to the paramount power is concerned. There he scrupulously followed in the wake of his predecessors. Despite his energy, ambition and personality, he was too political to break in the traditional loyalty of the House of Bikaner. In pursuance of this tradition he offered his help to the English in the Boer war, and during the Buxar war (China) in 1900 the Maharaja offered his services to the English against the Chinese nationalists. Only Ganga Singh personally went to Buxar War among the horde of Indian Princes and hence he was awarded the title of K.C.I.E. In 1914 during the Great War the Maharaja offered his military and other services to the British Government and spent a sum of one crore of rupees totally. In the annual report of the administration of Bikaner (1946) it has been proudly remarked that on the outbreak of

war(1939) too he (Ganga Singh) had the proud privilege of being the first among the Ruling Princes of India to place his sword, personal services and the entire resources of the State at the Command of His Imperial Majesty".

The total amount donated to war effort from the State exchequer and other sources upto the end of the year 1945 is Rs. 17,22,718/-, besides investment in Government of India war bonds Rs. 62 lakhs in addition to over rupees 4½ crores invested in the Government of India loans and securities. To this must be added the total expenditure of Rs. 90,600/- under the head of recruitment, plus Rs. 8,94,982 on the account of hospitals for the accommodation of wounded soldiers and officers, plus Rs. 10,800/- for the maintenance of the Polish refugee children, plus 5 railway engines, 50 covered wagons, 11 open trucks and 6 more locomotives. The Government of Bikaner also undertook the charge of Prisoners of War Camps in 1911 strength of which was at the start 685 rising upto 1801.

3137 tons of gram and 8944 tons of barley were also supplied, besides, 25,000 male goats and rams every year for military purposes. 590 technicians were also supplied to the Government of India, besides exempting the canteen stores from payment of state customs duty.

The present ruler of Bikaner is Maharaja Sadul Singh, son of Ganga Singh.

He has inaugurated a new era of progress by joining the Constituent Assembly and Indian union.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF BIKANER

"Bikaner, like many an other state in Rajputana, is a full-fledged feudal state with its Maharaja as the autocrat at the top, his near relations or Rajvis, many male collaborators of the House of Bikaner as Tazim Pattadars and other Jagirdars and Thikanadars—all enjoying estates worth an annual income of 30 lakhs of rupees at the minimum and paying a permanently fixed rekh of a little of three lakhs per annum. This payment is in lieu of military services which they were previously required to render to the Maharaja". Thus states Mr. Sarangdhar Das in his 'Bikaner'.

There is no doubt whatsoever that Bikaner is a princely state having a hierarchy of feudal order, with the prince called Maharaja, as an autocrat at the top; but nevertheless in outward show and form at least, the administrative system and the Government of Bikaner has got all the outlines of a modern State. What is true still in the statement of Mr. Sarangdhar Das, is that despite all outward semblance of modernism Bikaner inherently remains the same old feudal state. Although there is a Legislative Assembly, a body of ministers and an organised and Central Secretariat in charge of various well-demarcated departments of the Government, although there is a system of urban as well as rural self-Government institutions apparently quite a prototype of a modern democratic State, and although apparently the judiciary, the Legislature and the Exe-

cutive are separated following the principles of modern democracy, nevertheless we shall forthwith see by an introspection of those institutions that the state of Bikaner, after all her show of modernism and democracy, is not a whit better than an autocratic feudal State.

The announcement of the establishment of a people's Representative Assembly for Bikaner was made by H.H. Maharaja Ganga Singh in 1912, the first of its kind in Northern India. It was formally inaugurated by the Maharaja on the 10th November, 1913. The Assembly as constituted consisted of 35 members of whom 6 (ministers) were ex-officio, 19 were nominated and only 10 were elected. It was given powers of passing resolutions, of interpellating the Government, initiating and passing legislation subject to the right of veto by the ruler. In fact it was modelled after the Central Assembly under the Minto-Morley Reforms which could not satisfy even the mildest moderates.

In 1917 the number of elected members was increased from 10 to 15 granting the right of election to all towns having a population over 2500. The total number of members was also raised from 35 to 45.

In 1921 an Advisory Board of Zamindars—landholders and cultivators—was created and it was empowered to elect three representatives to the Assembly, thus increasing the representatives of the agricultural classes to 5.

The constitution of 1921 provided representation as follows:—

Members of Executive Council	6	(ministers)
„ elected by Chiefs & Nobles	3	
„ „ Municipalities	12	
„ „ Agricultural Boards	3	
„ „ Canal Area Dist.		
„ „ Board	3	
„ nominated to represent the		
„ Ruling Family	2	
„ nominated to represent the		
„ Chiefs and Nobles	3	
„ nominated to represent the		
„ Agricultural Classes	2	
„ nominated to represent the		
„ Municipality of Bikaner	1	
Others Nominated	11	
Total	45	„

In 1937 Maharaja Ganga Singh raised the number of elected members to 26 and that of nominated members to 25. By the Edict of 1945 the number of elected members has been raised to 29 and that of nominated members has been reduced to 22. Thus apparently the State of Bikaner has launched its career of constitutional Government probably after the example of its paramount, the British Crown, adopting the principle of "progressive realisation of Self-Government".

But what are the powers and scope of the Assembly?

The Assembly enjoys the right of voting on the appropriation of Revenue on the following specified heads only:—

- (a) Education
- (b) Medical and Public Health Department

(c) Works of Public Utility and other Nation-building activities.

On the other heads of the Budget, the Assembly can discuss and elicit relevant information only. If we take into consideration the expenditure of the year 1941-42, we find that only something about 25% of the total expenditure in the budget is votable and the rest is non-votable. In 1941-42 the expenditure on education, medical and public health department, Benefit departments, Irrigation & P.W.D. was Rupees 669781/-. Rs. 679191/-, Rs. 17,42,974/-, Rs. 5,79,336/- and Rs. 7,61,945/- respectively, or a total amount of Rs. 44,33,227/-, the total expenditure in the Budget being Rs. 179,07,553/-.

The following items of expenditure in the Budget are excluded from discussion whatsoever:—

(1) Devasthan (2) Privy Purse and the Civil List of the ruler, (3) Privy purse and the Civil List of the members of the Reigning family (4) Expenditure arising out of the existing treaties with the British Government and of the future or the ruler or Government of any State (5) Ceremonial Department (6) Births, marriages and demises and other ceremonies connected with the reigning family (7) Debt charges, pensions, gratuities, providend fund and rewards or honoraria, contributions and grants made or continued by the ruler (8) salaries of officers whose appointment is made by the ruler and (9) the expenditure which may from time to time be specified by the ruler as not being open to discussion by the Assembly.

The Assembly is constitutionally considered to be nothing better than a gift of grace by the ruler of the

State whose constitutional position is supreme and absolute. In the Bikaner Legislative Assembly Edict of 1945 his Constitutional position has been thus defined.

"All sovereign rights, prerogatives and privileges all sovereign authority in the State of Bikaner including all legislative, executive and judicial powers are and have always been vested in the Ruler of the Bikaner State for the time being and they are inherent in me as the Ruler of Bikaner State.

"In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the provisions hereof nothing in the Edict shall affect or be deemed to have effected my power as the Ruler of Bikaner state to promulgate from time to time such laws for the Governance of my subjects as I may deem fit....and every order passed by me and every thing done in pursuance thereof shall continue to have force and validity as if the Edict had not been issued".

Even in the composition of the Assembly he retains his absolute authority which is evident from the following words in the Edict:—

"The Assembly shall consist of as many members and the proportion of elected to nominate members shall be such, as I may from time to time determine".

Besides, although it is provided that every Assembly shall normally continue for three years from its first meeting, the ruler reserves the right to extend its life for any further period or to dissolve it earlier or to prorogue it for any length of time.

Ordinarily the Assembly will have its two sessions—one in the spring and another in autumn.

The President of the Assembly is appointed by the Ruler and holds office during his pleasure.

The Deputy president has the same position as regards his appointment or removal, the only speciality being that he must be picked up from among the members of the Assembly.

The Secretary of the Assembly is also appointed by the ruler and holds office during his pleasure.

The Assembly has the power to pass laws enforceable in the State of Bikaner subject to the consent of the Ruler and within the following limits:—

(1) Ruler's prerogative rights, power, duties, privileges or status (2) Rights and privileges of the members of the reigning family (3) management or control of the ruler's household or that of the members of the reigning family (4) Ruler's relations with the British Government or with the Government of any state in India; Discipline, strength, organisation, control and maintenance of the army (6) Rakam Rekh payable by the Jagirdars to the State (7) Removal of a chief or a Jagirdar from his Jagir and (8) such other matters as may from time to time be excluded by the ruler from the purview of the Assembly.

If any question arises as to whether any bill or resolution is or is not within the restrictions stated above, the question shall be decided by the President who is responsible to the ruler only.

The board of ministers, who are appointed by the ruler and hold office during his pleasure, are by no means responsible to the Assembly. Thus the executive is quite irresponsible. The Assembly has got no power to remove them from office.

So far we have analysed the constitutional status of the Assembly and its position in relation to the ruler. We have found that the Assembly stands absolutely sub-servient to the ruler who enjoys absolute powers and privileges. From this it is also clear that the State is considered to be private estate of the ruler who as such retains all ultimate authority to manage or mismanage it. The executive is by no means responsible. The powers of the ruler are unlimited despite all show of the existence of a Legislative Assembly.

Even in the matter of interpellation the absolute authority of judgement has been given to the President. He may disallow any question or part of any question on the ground that it is not consistent with the public interest that such a question be asked.

Regarding resolution His Highness's Government is to decide on the admissibility of a resolution and may disallow any resolution when in their opinion it does not comply with these rules and may disallow any resolution if it infringes the provisions of the Edict as to the subject matter of the resolution or if it cannot be moved without detriment to public interest.

Now let us see through the actual composition of such a phantom legislature.

In addition to the 51 members above specified the ruler of the State may nominate two additional members whether official or non-official, having special knowledge or experience of subjects connected with pending or proposed legislation before the Assembly. Of the 29 elected members, 3 are elected by the Tazimi Sardars or the feudal privileged nobility, 12 by the district boards and 14 by the municipalities. But the validity

of the election or eligibility of a particular candidate depends absolutely upon the ruler. If any person having been elected is declared by His Highness's Government to be of such reputation, character and antecedents that his election would in their opinion be contrary to the public interests the ruler may declare his election or nomination to be void.

The elected members are chosen by the District Boards and municipalities which serve as electoral colleges. But the composition of these bodies is so preponderant with nominated elements that all grace of democracy is marred first by indirect elections and secondly by the preponderance of nominated elements in the so-called electoral colleges.

Thus for all practical purposes the modern democratic form of Legislature in the State of Bikaner is all merely windowdressing having scarcely any reality behind.

For efficient direction of the administration a Central Secretariat was created by Maharaja, Gangasingh. It is known as Mahkama Khas. The different departments of the Government were grouped into five portfolios and each was entrusted to a Secretary who worked directly under the ruler. This secretariat still continues.

But a Board of ministers exists to guide the general policy of the State. A chief minister is in charge of the general control of the whole government and 5 other ministers are in charge of 6 different portfolios, e.g. (a) Finance and Army (b) Health, education and public works (c) Revenue (d) Law (e) Home & Development (f) Rural Reconstruction. They are all appoin-

ted by the ruler, hold office during his pleasure, receive directions and orders from him and are ultimately responsible to him alone. The ministers are ex-officio members of the Legislature and face the relevant criticism and discussion in the Legislature concerning their respective departmental functions. But the Legislature has no power to remove them.

Thus the ministers and the secretariat have been created only to do the various functions of the Government. The Secretariat and the Board of ministers are, in other words, no better than the multiplication of his personality for the efficient guidance and control of the complex administrative system under a modern environment. In short despite all paraphernalia of the modern system of portfolios, it is none-the-less a direct personal rule. The system inaugurated by Ganga Singh reminds us that of Louis XIV. Certainly Louis the XIV reorganised the French state with all the paraphernalia of a modern State, nevertheless it was the continuation of the same personal rule on the principle of divine right monarchy of the semi feudal order. Louis XIV frankly admitted the fact by the following words:—

“I am the State”.

In Bikaner it applies most precisely. The Ruler of Bikaner is so to say the State of Bikaner. Whatever is granted to the people is nothing but a matter of grace and gift of the ruler and not as a matter of a popular right, as it were.

The Legislature has been created only to render to the ruler the maximum possible contact with the people so that the ruler may be in a better position to enforce

his will consciously and effectively. The basis on which the Legislative Assembly of Bikaner is constituted, is therefore local Self Government.

Hence the organisation of Village Panchayats, Municipalities and local boards. In every town municipal boards were established in 1917 and today there are about 27 municipalities in the State and 5 District Boards and 100 Panchayats. In the villages Panchayats have been given certain civil and criminal powers and have been entrusted with executive authority.

Each municipal Board shall be constituted by members not less than 9 in number. These Boards shall consist of both nominated and elected members. But there is provision that unless H. H. Govt. shall otherwise direct not less than $\frac{3}{5}$ of the seats shall be open to election in those municipalities in which the mode of election has been introduced. As in the case of the Legislative Assembly so in the case of the constitution of the municipal Boards, H. H. Government enjoys certain absolute powers e.g. (a) number of seats on any board may be increased or decreased by it (b) Any member, if his continuance in office is in the opinion of H. H. Govt. dangerous to public peace or order, and on such other grounds, may be removed (c) Every President of the Board shall be either appointed by H. H. Government or if H. H. Government, so directs, elected by the Board, Provided that no elected President shall take office till his election has been confirmed by H. H. Government. The Vice President shall be elected by the members from amongst their number, but subject to the approval of H. H. Government.

A Board has the power to appoint its Secretary or to remove him from office. A Board may also employ

such other officers and servants as may be necessary or proper for the efficient execution of its duties and may remove or dismiss any officers or servants so appointed. But the Chief Controlling Revenue Authority of the State, however, may compel the Board to dismiss any officers or servants appointed by the Board. Against such action the officer or servant so grieved may appeal to H. H. whose decision is final.

The Budget will have to be passed in a meeting of the Board, but the sanction of H. H. Government must be taken before it can be deemed valid.

Taxes, which may be imposed by a municipality are also subject to previous sanction of H. H. Government, or of the chief controlling Revenue authority in some cases.

No bye-law of a municipal Board shall come into force until it has been confirmed by H. H. Government who may also cancel the confirmation of any such bye-law.

The Chief Controlling Revenue Authority or, except in the case of Bikaner Municipality, the Revenue Commissioner may suspend any action of the Board or may make it work under emergency. Of course a statement of such an action must forthwith be made to H. H. Government who enjoys the right to confirm, modify or rescind the order.

Thus in case of Municipalities we find the absolute control of His Highness the Maharaja through his Govt.

Let us now examine the qualifications of the voters in Municipal elections. The following persons enjoy municipal franchise:—

(a) who own house property situated within Bikaner Municipality of a value of not less than Rs. 1000/- and of other municipalities of a value of not less than Rs. 500/- or (b) who pay a rent of not less than Rs. 10/- p.m. in Sadar and Rs. 5/- p.m. in the district municipalities for house or shop within the municipal area or (c) who are in the service of H. H. drawing a salary of not less than Rs. 100/- p.m. or draw a pension from H. H. of not less than Rs. 50/- p.m. or (d) a graduate of any recognised university or (e) a licensed Vali or Mukhtar of the Bikaner High Court. Such persons must not be however under the age of 21 years. Females are disqualified from voting.

This shows how extremely restricted is franchise. In the case of the Assembly it is still more restricted, because municipal and District Boards constitute its electoral college. Still the proportion of nominated members has been kept at a high level so much so that virtually they preponderate over the elected.

The following table will give as an idea what an important position is held by the nominated members over the elected ones in the Municipalities of Bikaner.

1. Bikaner Municipality (Capital City)

President (nominated)	..	1
members (nominated)		
(a) officials	..	9
(b) non-officials	...	5
Total nominated members	..	15
Vice-President (elected)	..	1
Members (elected)	..	24
Total elected members	..	25
Grand Total	..	40

2. Gangashahr—President (nominated)	1
Members (nominated) ..	7
Total nominated ..	8
Vice-President (elected) ..	1
Total ..	9
3. Bhinsar—President (nominated)	1
members (nominated) ..	7
Total nominated ..	8
Vice-President (elected)	1
Total	9
4. Nokha—President (nominated)	1
members (nominated)	7
Total nominated	8
Vice-President (elected) ..	1
Total ..	9
5. Lunkaransar—President (nominated)	1
members (nominated) ..	9
Total nominated	10
Vice-President (elected)	1
Total	11
6. Napasar—President (nominated)	1
Members (nominated) ..	7
Nominated members total ..	8
Vice-President (elected) ..	1
Total ..	9
7. Dungargarh—President (nominated)	1
Members (nominated) ..	5
Nominated members Total ..	6
Vice-President (elected)	1
Members (elected) ..	3
Elected members total ..	9
Grand Total ..	15

8. Sujangarh—President (nominated)	..	1
Members (nominated)	..	7
Nominated Total	..	8
Vice-President (elected)	.	1
Members (elected)	..	11
Elected Members Total	..	12
Grand Total	..	20
9. Chhapar—President (nominated)	..	1
Members (nominated)	..	3
Total nominated members	..	4
Vice-President (elected)		1
Members (elected)		6
Total elected members	..	7
Grand TOTAL	..	11
10. Bidasar—All are nominated		
Total members		9
11. Ratangarh—President (nominated)	..	1
Members (nominated)	..	7
Total nominated	..	8
Vice-President (elected)	..	1
Members (elected)	..	11
Total elected	..	12
Grand Total	..	20
12. Rajaldesar—President (Nominated)		1
Members (nominated)	..	4
Total nominated	..	5
Vice-President (elected)	..	1
Members (elected)	..	6
Total elected	..	7
Grand Total	..	12

13. Sardarshahr—President (nominated)	1
Members (nominated)	7
Total nominated	8
Vice-President (elected)	1
Members (elected)	11
Total elected	12
Grand Total	20
14. Churu—President (Nominated)	1
Members nominated	7
Total nominated	8
Vice-President (elected)	1
Members (nominated)	11
Total Elected	12
Grand Total	20
15. Rajgarh—President (Nominated)	1
Members (nominated)	4
Total nominated	5
Vice-President (elected)	1
Members (elected)	9
Total elected	10
16. Taranagar—President (Nominated)	1
Members (nominated)	3
Total nominated	4
Vice-President (elected)	1
Members (elected)	7
Total Elected	8
Grand Total	12
17. Bhandra—President (nominated)	1
Members (nominated)	2
Total nominated	3

Vice-President (elected)	1
Members (Elected)	7
Total elected	8
Grand Total	11
18. Nohar—Nominated	5
Elected	7
Total	12
19. Suratgarh—Nominated	7
Members Elected	8
Total	15
20. Hanumnagarh—Nominated	4
Elected	6
21. Sangaria—Nominated	11
Elected	1
Total	12
22. Ganganagar—Nominated	9
Elected	11
Total	20
23. Karanpur—Nominated	6
Elected	5
Total	11
24. Raisinghnagar—Nominated	4
Elected	5
Total	9
25. Hindumal Kote—Nominated	3
Elected	1
Total	9

26. Gajsinghpur—Nominated	..	8
Elected	..	1
Total	..	9
27. Anupgarh—Nominated	..	3
Elected	..	1
Total	..	9

From the above table we find that 11 municipalities out of a total of 27 have preponderance of nominated members over elected ones and in others also the numbers of nominated and elected members are almost proportionate to each other with a few exceptions only.

Now let us examine the position of the District Boards. The number of district boards is five in all each consisting of a number of Tehsils. Each Tahsil consists of a number of circles.

A District Board shall consist of so many elected and nominated members whose number will be determined by H.H. Government. The chairman of the Board shall be appointed by H.H. Government. The vice-chairman shall be however elected by members from among them, but subject to the approval of H.H. Government. A Board can appoint or dismiss its Secretary and other necessary servants and officers. But H.H's Government however retains the power to interfere into such appointments and dismissal or non-compliance with prescribed rules by the Board, and to supersede the Board itself. A Board has the right to impose and collect taxes, but with the previous sanction of H.H's Government. The Budget of the Board also must be placed before H.H's Government for sanction. H.H's Government may either sanction it, reject it, modify it or return it to the Board for reconsideration.

(1) The Chief Controlling Revenue authority or the Revenue Commissioner may inspect or cause to be inspected the property of the Board as well as its documents and records.

(2) H.H's Government may inspect its institutions and work by any of its officers.

(3) The chief controlling Revenue Authority or Revenue Commissioner may prohibit the execution or further execution of a resolution or order passed, if in his opinion such resolution or order is of a nature to cause or tend to cause obstruction, annoyance or injury to the public or to class or body of persons lawfully employed or danger to human life, health or safety or a riot or affray.

(4) If at any time, it appears to H.H's Government that a Board persists in making default in the performance of any duty or duties imposed upon it. H.H's Government may either dissolve the Board or supercede it for a specified period.

Thus as in the case of the Municipal Boards so in the case of the District Boards of Bikaner, the tightened and absolute grip of the ruler through his Government is felt at every step. They can by no means move or act against the wish or will of the ruler, who is legally as well as practically a semi-feudal despot.

The following are entitled to be enrolled as electors of the District Boards:—

(a) A Patteddar. (b) In Ganganagar division every landowner, occupancy tenant or tenant holding land directly from Government by written constitutions or in khatedar rights who pays or is liable to pay fixed

land revenue of Rs. 25/- or more per annum.

(c) In Khalsa villages every landholder, khatedar or Asami who pays or is liable to pay Rs. 25/- as Rakm annually, (d) In alienated villages every chhutbhai or landholder or Asami who pays or is liable to pay Rs. 30/- as Rakam annually. (e) Every tenant of agricultural land who is a subject of Bikaner State and who pays or is liable to pay Rs. 50/- as rent annually (f) Every person ordinarily residing in the rural area who has passed middle school examination or any other examination equivalent to or higher than the middle school standard. But every such person must be above 21 years of age, of sound mind, adjudged by a competent court and a subject of Bikaner State.

The village Panchayat is another self-government institution of Bikaner. The establishment of village Panchayats has been undertaken to assist in the administration of civil and criminal justice and in the development of local administration in rural areas as late as 1928. In his inaugural address in connection with the Village Panchayat Bill in the year 1926, Maharaja Ganga Singh said: "Popular assemblies and responsible legislatures, municipal boards, town councils, and district boards, all must commence with the humble beginnings of village communities. *A village is the lowest administrative unit.* . . . Village Panchayats besides being entrusted with the management of simple village needs and daily requirements of the rural populace, can also as their name signifies, be made to subserve the purpose of simple civil tribunals and rural magistracy. Justice administered at the threshold of their own homes is often more equitable and certainly cheaper and quicker".

A Panchayat shall consist of not less than 5 or more than 9 members to be elected. H.H's Government may suspend or dissolve any Panchayat for reasonable grounds. The following suits are cognizable by a Panchayat:—

- (a) suits for sums not exceeding Rs. 50/-. The Tahsildar shall cause the decree to be executed.

Offences cognisable by a Panchayat are:

- (a) a riot (b) committing a public nuisance (c) obscene acts and songs (d) assault or use of criminal force (e) theft of property not exceeding ten rupees (f) Receiving stolen property (g) criminal intimidation (h) insulting the modesty of a woman.

The following are the maximum penalties that may be inflicted by a Panchayat (1) A fine not exceeding Rs. 10/- or double the damage or loss caused, whichever is greater.

No legal practitioner shall be allowed to appear on behalf of any party. Parties shall appear personally and by agents such as a servant, or a partner or a relative. Cases to be decided by majority opinions in case of disagreement among the members of the Panchayat. No courtfee shall be levied by a Panchayat from any party in any suit or case.

Administrative duties and powers of Panchayats are as follows: (a) Management of Schools (2) Public Health and supply of drinking water (3) Protection of tanks (4) Works of public utility (5) maintenance of burial grounds (6) Planting and preservation of trees.

For every circle in which a Panchayat has been established, there shall be a village fund which shall be

administered by a Panchayat for the improvement of the circles and for the well being of the residents thereof.

The village fund shall consist of:—(1) sums contributed by Government or local bodies or private persons (2) Receipts on account of the cess levied by a Panchayat.

For the purpose of meeting expenditure in the performance of any duty, the Panchayat may with the previous sanction of H. H. Govt. levy a cess not exceeding 6 pies per rupee of the land revenue demand.

The Revenue ministers shall exercise general powers of inspection, supervision and control over the performance of the administrative functions of the Panchayats.

Every member of the Panchayat shall be deemed to be a public servant.

Whatever may be the defects in these self-government institutions, at least in form they offer to the public an idea of modern democratic institutions and a chance to develop civic sense and qualifications to manage public affairs working through them. Of course those who will work on the principles of modern democracy and constitution must not forget the limitations inherent in them, limitations which are fundamental and gross. Before these self government institutions as well as the Legislature can be developed into real, and not merely phantom democracy, a fundamental change is to be wrought in their conceptions as was done in England during the constitutional conflicts in the 17th century between the Parliament and the Crown. The existing personal rule of the Maharaja must be changed into a rule of law. At present the constitution of Bikaner is bound to the ruler, but what is needed

now is that the ruler must be bound by the constitution. Sovereignty now lies with the ruler; it will then lie with the people and will be expressed through their votes and through the Legislature. The forms of popular Govt. have been introduced in Bikaner with all their limitations but a conceptual change is to be worked out. For this purpose, the ruler need not be removed, but he should be shorn of his despotic character, as has been done in the case of the crown of England. This can be achieved through the existing forms with the least jerk, provided the ruler of Bikaner takes lessons from the experiences of England. The ruler of Bikaner however should not hesitate; because in fact his ancestor, Bika, received the crown from the people on condition of respecting their political rights. If the people lost them through historical reasons, they may verily reassert them now. It cannot be sedition. Rather it will be gross misappropriation of a sacred right of the people by the ruler of Bikaner, if he denies the people's right to sovereignty. History will take toll of it blindly or consciously. If the ruler of Bikaner acts conscientiously and consciously, it is all for the best.

From all external appearances Bikaner seems to be a land of the rule of law. No less than 70 Acts were passed between 1908-1931 and the laws of Bikaner have been duly codified. Of course most of these are based on British Indian legislation.

The judicial administration in Rajputana was generally speaking on medieval lines; in no state was there a chief court with full appellate powers. In most the ruler himself sat as the final court of appeal and the boundaries between judicial and executive authorities were left undefined.

But in Bikaner in the year 1909-10 the Executive and judiciary were completely separated and a thorough overhauling of the judicial system was made.

The main feature of the new judicial system was the establishment of a chief court, later changed into a High Court with a chief justice and two puisne judges, as the highest court of appeal and of original jurisdiction in the State; but certainly under the Maharaja. It was empowered to pass any sentence authorised by law; but no sentence of death could be carried into effect unless it had been confirmed by the Maharaja. From sentences of death, transportation for life or imprisonment for a period of 10 years or over there lie an appeal against the decision of the High Court to the Maharaja.

In civil cases all orders and decrees of the Chief Court were final except where the amount was Rs. 10,000 or over.

The Chief Court was also given the right of supervision and control of the lower courts.

To help the Maharaja to discharge his highest judicial powers there is a judicial committee of seven members, something in imitation of the Privy Council of the British Crown. This judicial Committee may be said to be the highest court of justice.

So in all appearances a well ordered legal system has been introduced in Bikaner, separated from the executive. But as the members of the judiciary owe their appointments to and subjects to dismissal by, the judicial committee of the Maharaja on their recommendation, it is impossible to expect them to be independent in their judgments. So everything is dependent upon

a single man's pleasure. Thus as the Legislature and the Executive, so the judiciary is absolutely dependent upon the ruler and derive all its powers and privileges from him and enjoy the same during his pleasure.

In revenue matters and in criminal cases in which the state is the prosecutor, it stands to reason that the members of the judiciary would be influenced by the whims of the higher authorities, including the Maharaja, who is the final authority in all matters, civil, criminal and revenue.

Maharaja Ganga Singh during his reign has established a replica of the British system of justice in name only, such as High Court and Judicial Committee, but the principle is lacking.

This situation is inevitable as long as the Maharaja refuses to be the constitutional head and remains the autocrat.

Mr. Sarangdhar Das in his "Bikaner" writes: "For all outward appearances the State (of Bikaner) is administered by regular laws, which are codified to a certain extent. There are qualified lawyers licensed to practice in courts. But lawyers from outside the State are not allowed, when required by the litigants. The judiciary is not independent and their judgements are often interfered with by the executive."

He further adds: "The people have been conceded the right to sue the State as a corporate body, but such cases are hardly ever successful. They have the right to sue the officials with the permission of the head of the department concerned. However such permission is practically never granted."

With all the complex and overwhelming paraphernalia of a modern state, its multiplicity of burdensome departments, its highly paid secretariat, its board of ministers, its High Court, and Judicial Committee, its Legislature, its Local Self Government institutions, its brazen-hearted bureaucracy and so on, a topheavy administrative system has developed in Bikaner which add considerably to the burden of the people, without giving them in return the due benefit of a truly democratic state. The people do not enjoy real rule of law, they have no truly democratic rights, yet they are to shoulder the burden of the complex democratic forms. While they have got to bear the burden of a modern state, they have been denied the boon of it.

Civil liberty practically does not exist. Certain newspapers and journals which criticise the administration are banned from the State. There is an old press law, but never has any newspaper been published in the State excepting a magazine named 'Pushkarnendu', the proprietor of which was ordered not to touch politics. During Sir Manubhai's ministership one Agar Chand Bania had applied to start a newspaper but no permission was granted. A teacher had once written a book for publication, but the manuscripts were seized. Modern administrative system has been introduced, yet the study of civics and politics have been denied to all the colleges of the State. Only in this session a non-official college, (Rampurja Jain College) has accommodated Civics in its intermediate course.

"The fundamental rights of free speech and free association were so effectively scotched by the Bikaner Public Safety Act of 1932 and by the application of this Act so many deportations and confiscations of pro-

perty have been effected during recent years that the people are terror-stricken and every one says, "Bikaner is a prison-house and we can't open our mouths!" writes Mr. Sarangdhar Das in his "Bikaner". Even today as late as 1947 the situation does not seem to have changed.

Let us have an idea of such a monstrous Act as the Public Safety Act of 1932, so that we can be in a position to estimate the real democracy in Bikaner.

This Act under section 4 prohibits any agitation among labourers in order to demand higher wages and among kisans for the reduction of rents etc.

Section 16 prohibits the entry by post or by mail of any book or newspapers or any other literature containing matter which is likely to create disaffection against the Maharaja or his government or against any other Raja or Government which the Maharaja's Govt. may declare by notification in the State Gazette.

Section 27 makes it obligatory to apply for permission to hold a public meeting three days prior to such meeting to the Inspector General of Police or to the magistrate. No meeting can be held without such permission. Any meeting held in a private home or with tickets for admission are considered public meetings. The Inspector General of Police or the Magistrate has the authority to prevent the holding of such meetings without permission.

Section 34 empowers the District Magistrate to declare such meetings without permission unlawful and to attach the place or the house where the meeting is held.

The Bikaner Public Safety Act was amended in January 1940.

An amendment prohibits display of any uniform emblem or badge on any one's person indicating membership of any association or body likely to cause disaffection. Section 21 B prohibits the practice of any exercise, movement, or drill of a military nature by persons other than members of the State army or of the police force of H. H. the Maharaja.

Instigating or organising a hartal is prohibited by Section 21F.

It is, therefore, no wonder that the people have nick-named their state a "prison-house".

Persons are often detained without trial. Persons who are subjects of the State but may somehow incur the displeasure of the authorities are deported and in many instances their properties confiscated.

Some years ago, on the death of the junior Maharaj-Kumar, it was verbally announced in the State that there would be no cooking in the State for 12 days. A gentleman had to cook on the Sradh ceremony of his father and he was, therefore, deported out of the State and his properties confiscated (P. 46 Bikaner—by Saran-dhar Das).

In 1933 another individual fell out of favour for having delivered a speech at Churu criticising the policy of the State in enhancing rents etc. and his property was confiscated.

About 1925 Seth Jamnalal Bajaj on his arrival in Bikaner station, was ordered to leave the State. He refused to do so and was taken bodily and put into a train on its journey outwards.

There are numerous other deportations and confiscations which all cannot be referred to for want of space.

There is no trade union organisation in the State. A recent case shows the injustice done to this class. The labourers of the power house in a joint application to the authorities protested against long hours of work with no intervals for meals. The men were immediately dismissed and new men brought in from Jaipur and other places. The position is more or less the same in other industries also.

Even the most innocuous Khadi Bhandar had been closed by orders of the State.

The Trade Disputes Act of 1931 lays down that a strike or lockout shall be illegal which—

(1) has any object other than the furtherance of a trade dispute within the trade or industry which the strikers or employees locking out are engaged;

(2) is designed or calculated to inflict severe general and prolonged hardship upon the community and thereby to compel H. H. Government to take or abstain from taking any particular course of action.

It shall be illegal to commence or continue or apply any sums in direct furtherance or support of any such illegal strike or lockout.

These all prove beyond doubt that 'my-word-is-law' principle is working in Bikaner and not 'Rule-of-Law' behind all outward show of democratic institutions of the Government.

Now, let us have a glimpse into the administrative divisions and departments of the Government of Bikaner. For the purpose of administration Bikaner has been divided into six districts called Nizamats, each of which is under an administrative officer, known as Nazim. The Nazim is equivalent to a district magistrate, in the

British Indian Provinces. But unlike the latter, the Nazims in Bikaner are not recruited through any competitive examination. But they enjoy first class magisterial powers and the ordinary powers of an additional District Magistrate confined to hearing non-cognizable cases and complaints.

Each Nizamat or district is divided into a number of Tahsils, each of which is placed under an administrative officer, known as Tahsildar. The Tahsildars enjoy second class magisterial powers. Where there is no district judge or munsiff, the Tahsildar also exercises civil powers upto Rs. 200/- except the Ganganagar division, where owing to heavy revenue work they have no civil powers.

The six Nizamats or districts are (a) Sadar (b) Sujangarh (c) Rajgarh (d) Suratgarh (e) Ganganagar and (f) Raisinghnagar. The City of Bikaner has a separate administrative system.

The following is the list of Tahsils in Bikaner:—
 (1) Sarder Shahr (2) Taranagar (3) Sadar (4) Ratanagarh (5) Sujangarh (6) Bhadra (7) Nohar (8) Malmandi (9) Rajgarh (10) Dungargarh (11) Churu (12) Lunkaransar (13) Magra (14) Nokha (15) Canal (16) Hanumangarh (17) Suratgarh (18) Raisinghnagar (19) Padampur (20) Anupgarh (21) Karanpur (22) Ganganagar.

Subordinate to Tahsils there are Naib Tahsildars or deputy Tahsildars.

In each district there is also a district and an assistant session judge. An assistant session judge hears original appeals against sentences of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months or fine not exceeding

Rs. 100/- passed by a first class magistrate of second class. A district judge enjoys civil powers up to Rs. 10,000/-.

There are also Munsiffs, besides the district and the assistant session judge in each district. They enjoy first class magisterial powers on the criminal side and civil powers up to Rs. 2,000/-.

Besides there are honorary magistrates enjoying judicial capacity.

The Police Department is in charge of an Inspector General of Police, who is the highest police officer in the Bikaner State. He is in charge of administration and control of the whole State police force.

The District Superintendent of Police, next lower police officer, is empowered to control the police maintained in a district. The chief police officer in the City of Bikaner is a Deputy Superintendent of Police.

The chief police officer of a circle in a district is an Inspector of police. A sub-inspector of police is placed in charge of a police station or Thana. Jamadar is a police officer, in charge of an outpost or chowki.

The other important administrative departments of Bikaner are:—

(1) Revenue Department. It is under a Revenue Minister. He has immediately under him two revenue commissioners—one for Ganganagar division and another for Sadar division.

(2) Rural Reconstruction Department. It is also under a Commissioner, having an assistant commissioner under him.

(3) Cottage Industries Department under a Director assisted by a marketing officer and an assistant director.

(4) Co-operative Credit Societies under a Registrar, assisted by Inspectors.

(5) Agricultural department under a director.

(6) Forest Department under a director.

(7) Account and Audit Department under an Accountant and Auditor General assisted by an Asst. Accountant General and an Asst. Audit Officer.

(8) Treasury and Stamps—under a Treasury Officer and Superintendent of Stamps.

(9) Income Tax Department under a Commissioner of Income Tax.

(10) Customs & Excise Department under an Inspector. General.

(11) Education Department under a Director of Education, an Asst. Director, and a number of Inspectors and Inspectresses.

(12) Public Health and Sanitation Department under a Director of Public Health and one Deputy Director.

(13) Public Works Department under a chief Engineer assisted by district executive engineers and an executive engineer for the City.

(14) Department of irrigation under a chief engineer assisted by two divisional executive engineers.

(15) Electrical and mechanical Department under an Electrical and Mechanical engineer.

(16) Railway Department under a General Manager, a Deputy General Manager, a Chief Auditor, a Traf-

fic Manager, a Chief Mechanical Engineer and a chief engineer.

(17) Government Press and stationery Department under a Superintendent.

(18) Mineral Department under a manager.

(19) Geological Department under a geologist.

(20) Civil Supply & Control Department under a Director of Civil Supplies and Textiles Commissioner.

(21) Veterinary Department under a Superintendent.

(22) Army Department under a Commander in Chief.

(23) Prison Department under an Inspector General of Prisons.

The principal sources of income of the State quoted from the Budget estimate of 1939-40 are as follows:—

• Land Revenue	..	Rs. 18,44,579/-
Customs	..	„ 19,93,664/-
Excise	..	„ 8,53,786/-
Salt	..	„ 92,261/-
Irrigation	..	„ 15,29,651/-
Railway	..	„ 57,64,303/-
Justice	..	„ 2,12,108/-
P.W.D.	..	„ 4,98,120/-
Minerals	..	„ 1,99,690/-
Stamps	..	„ 62,775/-

In 1941-42 the total receipt of the State was estimated Rupees 1,78,67,000/- and the heads of expenditure estimated in the same year as follows:—

Extraordinary (?)	„	19,91,275/-
Devasthan	„	1,25,672/-

Palace	„ „	15,90,240/-
Direct Demands on Revenue (?)	„	10,59,400/-
State Railway	„	33,31,844/-
Irrigation	„	5,79,336/-
Minerals	„	81,980/-
Civil Administration	„	7,99,168/-
Protection	„	7,89,720/-
Benefit Departments	„	17,42,974/-
		(including education, public health, agriculture, co-operative societies etc)
Industries	„	12,479/-
Debt Services	„	65,700/-
Army & Defence	„	7,98,550/-
P. W. D.	„	7,61,945/-
Karkhanas	„	1,82,744/-
Misc.	„	2,93,124/-
Extraordinary (?)	„	19,91,275/-
Capital Expenditure	„	12,01,402/-
Payment of loan	„	25,00,000/-

Under the head "Extraordinary" is included expenditure due to war. But what does "Direct Demands on Revenue" include?

Principal heads of Revenue in the year 1941-42 included:

(1) Land Revenue	28,74,200/-
(2) Misc. Revenue & Duties	.. 2,09,600/-
(3) Income Tax	.. 1,00,000/-

(4) Sale of Govt.	
Property	.. 3,77,800/-
(5) Stamps	.. 79,800/-
(6) Customs	.. 20,77,000/-
(7) Excise	.. 11,91,200/-
	(sale proceeds from opium being 8,00,000)
(8) Salt	.. 1,10,000/-
(9) Registration	.. 13,600/-
(10) Forest	.. 35,000/-
	<hr/>
Total	70,36,700/-
	<hr/>

Total receipts from customs duties in 1944-45 was Rs. 29,09,751/- and total receipt from opium Rs. 19,53,339/-.

The total receipts of the State during the same year was Rs. 3,09,20,364/-.

Let us here quote the main heads of the income of the State of Bikaner during the 19th century (given by Col. Tod), so that we may form a comparative estimate of the change in the character of the State finance as

1. Khalsa or fiscal income from	
khalsa villages	.. Rs. 100,000/-
2. Dhuan or hearth tax	.. „ 100,000/-
3. Angah or body tax on men and	.. „
animals	.. 200,000/-
4. 'Sayar' or imports	.. „ 75,000/-
5. 'Puseti' or plough tax at Rs. 5 per	
plough	.. „ 125,000/-
6. 'Malbah' or land tax at Rs. 2/- per	
100 bighas	.. „ 50,000/-
	<hr/>
Total—	.. 650,000/-

Whereas the modern heads of the receipts of the State indicate sources other than land to be growing in importance, those of the 19th century are all linked up with land mainly. Thus whereas those of the 19th century are rigid and inflexible due to the inherent character of the land those of the modern time are flexible, based as they are on trade and industry besides land. So, as regards Public finance also State of Bikaner has assumed all the external semblance of a modern state no doubt, although it is still linked up with the feudal land system.

Let us now turn to have a look at the growth of political consciousness of the people of Bikaner and the corresponding popular organisations—an essential characteristic and test of democracy. Democracy without political organisations of the people and without enjoying civil liberty, is meaningless. Organisations are the barometers of the people's political growth and consciousness.

Let us first trace the growth of political awakening in the Bikaner State in a brief outline.

The evidence of political awakening can be traced not earlier than 1921. There were certain commotion among the local students in that year when they were debarred from attending the reception given in honour of the Prince of Wales with Gandhi Caps on their heads. But it was only occasional and did not take any organized shape of a movement.

In the year 1926 when Seth Jammalal, a leading member of the Indian National Congress visited Bikaner not evidently with any political mission but ostensibly with the sole aim of selling 'khadi', he was forcibly turned out from the Bikaner railway station on his

refusal to obey the orders of the authority to go back. This is the first instance of civil disobedience offered on the soil of Bikaner, but not by a citizen of Bikaner, but by an outsider. But it died with the expulsion of Seth Jamnalal Bajaj creating no organized reaction in the popular mind of Bikaner.

In the year 1930-31 a pamphlet, on Bikaner in which the financial condition of the newly started 'Bikaner State Savings Bank' was depicted, displeased the Ruler who was then attending the Round Table Conference. He at once came back to Bikaner and got arrested a number of persons on suspicion and a conspiracy case was started under Section 125A and 121 I.P.C. A drama of investigation and trial was played which took full three years for its completion. The accused persons were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment ranging from three months to three years.

In the year 1932, a Public Safety Act was passed which we have dealt with already.

The organised shape of the political awakening of Bikaner is discernible as late as 1937 only when a political organisation named "Praja Mandal" was formed with a view to rouse the dormant political aspirations of the people and to move for the achievement of Swaraj or self-government of the people. But it was nipped in the bud by the ruthless repressive policy of the State.

A second attempt was made in the year 1942 by another set of workers to start a political organisation named 'Praja Parishad'. It was also smothered to death on the 7th day of its birth with the help of the monstrous Public Safety Act.

In the year 1944 persons engaged in the most innocuous activity of collecting subscriptions for "Kasturba Memorial Fund" were arrested and interned and the persons contributing to the fund were also threatened. Repeated appeals for granting civil liberties have been coldly turned down by the authority.

Following in the wake of their sovereign the Jagirdars also began perpetrating atrocities on the peasantry to exact arbitrary cesses in the form of forcible ejection. Special police and military force were deputed in villages to overawe the peaceful peasants so that they might yield under arbitrary actions of the Jagirdars. All appeals and applications having failed, the mute peasantry rose in non-violent revolt and hundreds of them migrated to Bikaner City to seek redress of their grievances. But they met here with no better fate. They were surrounded by the police and the military and forced to leave the Capital on pain of starvation. For the first time in the history of Bikaner, peasant men and women paraded the streets of the capital with the tricoloured national flags in their hands shouting national slogans. The President of the Praja Parishad was arrested together with the members of his working committee on the 6th June, 1945 and were subjected to inhuman torture, it is reported. The police even did not spare the old mother of the president. No legal aid was allowed freely and those who attempted to defend were served with externment orders.

The Khadi Mandir the only symbol of constructive work was also ordered to be closed.

The kisans of Rajgarh were also lathicharged and sustained severe injuries.

Repressive measures went amock and at Raisinghnagar the police resorted to firing resulting into one death. The National flag was strictly prohibited in any public display. Through the intervention of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru towards the latter half of 1946 a compromise was made between the Government of Bikaner and the Praja Parishad, whereby the Government agreed to allow the National Flag to be hoisted on all the offices of the Parishad, in public meetings and on ceremonial occasions. The Government also promised not to use the Public Safety Act until a new responsible Government comes into being after His Highness' proclamation of 31st August, 1946.

But in order to weaken the Parishad rival institutions like 'Praja Sewak Sangh', 'Praja Mandal' (so called), and communal organisations like "Muslim League" 'Jat Sabha' etc have been brought into existence towards the second half of the year 1946, presumably with the direct or indirect backing or instigation of the State authority. Nazims and Tahsildars and even higher authorities propagate not to have any association with Parishad workers.

Students' organised stand or activity of any sort on their own initiative is not looked upon with favour. Recently seven students were rusticated and two employees dismissed from state services for demanding better sitting accommodation on the occasion of the convocation ceremony held in the State college for the conferment of degrees.

Thus in short is the outline of the growth of the people's movement in Bikaner.

Now let us see how many organisations do exist in

the State of Bikaner and what is their respective character.

(1) The Praja Parishad whose reference we have already made above is certainly the genuine people's national organisation in the State. It uses the tricoloured National flag of the Indian National Congress as its flag. Its number of members is nearly 40,000 mostly belonging to the peasantry of whom the Jats are predominant. Mohamedans are very few among its members.

Its object is to enjoy responsible Government under the ruler. It works at the instance of the Indian National Congress and owes allegiance to the All India States' People's Conference (A.I.S.P.C.). Its activity consists of holding mass meetings, membership campaign, observing the national days e.g. Independence Day (26th January), Gandhi Jayanti (2nd October), National Week (6th to 13th April); popularising khadi, doing Harijan uplift etc. Non-violence is its policy. Its influence is greater in the eastern portion of the State e.g. Rajgarh, Churu and Nohar. It stands on the tradition and history of the Bikaner People's movement.

(2) Praja sevak Sangh—It is sponsored by the State authority to checkmate the Praja Parishad. It has been formed in August 1946. But it has scarcely any influence upon the masses. It uses the State flag as its symbol.

(3) Muslim League has also been started in August 1946 and presumably encouraged by the State obviously to divide the people in communal compartments so that their growing national spirit may be confused. Pakistan is their object and slogan. It held a few public meetings during the days of Noakhali Riot.

(4) Hindu Mahasabha. It has also been formed in 1946 after the Calcutta and Noakhali Riots and held a few largely attended public meetings since then.

(5) Praja Mandal is a self-styled organisation having scarcely any influence upon the masses. It hoists the national flag side by side with the State flag.

(6) Jatsabha—has also been formed in 1946, presumably sponsored by the State in order to wean over the Jats from the fold of the Parishad. Its organiser was formerly a member of the Praja Parishad, but resigned from it and became the minister of the State.

(7) Rajput Sabha also has sprung into existence in the year 1946. Its real object is to keep the masses under its influence and cast its pressure upon the State so that the vested interest of the Rajput Jagirdars might control the State policy. The Jagirdars who are Rajputs, are the originators of it. They generally hold their meetings, fully armed with guns, swords and other lethal weapons.

Besides the above political organisations there are also a few religious and social organisations e.g. (1) Arya Samaj (2) Sanatan Dharm Sabha (3) Jain Sabha (4) Panthik Akalis (5) Harijan Hitkarini Sabha.

There is also a students union in the Bikaner State named Bikaner State Students Union formed in 1946, but it is till an infant organisation with all democratic aspirations, but scarcely having any achievement as yet to its credit.

There is no women's organisation excepting a nominal one sponsored by a minister's wife. Its name is Mahila Mandal. It has been formed in the year 1946.

but as yet having no attraction of women towards it. It holds cultural classes—physical as well as intellectual with very few women attending the same.

Thus 1946 seems to be a very important year marking the growth of various public organisations and ushering in a new era in the political life of Bikaner. After His Highness' proclamation of 31st August, 1946, a constitution making body has been set up and it has invited suggestions from various individuals, institutions as well as organisations for the new constitution of the coming Responsible Government of Bikaner. Besides the ruler of Bikaner has already cast his dice to join the Constituent Assembly of India, despite its objective resolution for the formation of Republican State of United India comprising also the native states. Thus Bikaner has got a very momentous future immediately lying before her, especially in view of Atlee's Declaration of H.M. G.'s intention to Quit India by the June of 1948. It is for her people to prepare them to bear the coming responsibility of freedom and democracy, so that they may not be caught napping. It is for them to study the existing conditions of Bikaner in view of their own aspirations and in the background of the all India situation. Things are developing today more swiftly than we can imagine. So for the people of Bikaner what is required is an integral approach to the whole. Their's is no longer the duty to agitate alone, but to build too. The people are still considerably dormant, having little political consciousness and little administrative ability. So the immediate duty of the national workers of Bikaner is to rouse the people from their still lingering slumber of ages, through popular agitation and movement; but at the same time to hold

political and cultural study circles to build up responsible and equipped cadres able to bear the coming constitutional responsibility and also organise centres of constructive work to link up the scattered and undeveloped masses whose votes would determine the future of the State. It is a gigantic task requiring the guidance of an astute brain, large and robust heart, inflexible determination and spirit of superb self-sacrifice. Verily a miniature Deshabandhu Das, whose magic personality could work wonders out of a huge chaos, is what is of urgent need immediately in Bikaner.

Is the man ready for such a responsibility? Not yet it seems so. Bikaner has got scarcely a personality yet ready to satisfy the expectation. May God help the Bikaner people. Her organisations are infant, her personalities are dwarfish and scarcely having any broad political experiences, her people are illiterate, and her cultured middle class is negligible. So things within Bikaner are not so prospective as yet for the people to play their due part in the immediate future of the State's political system.

CHAPTER V.

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF BIKANER

Bikaner is pre-eminently a pastoral and agricultural land. As her Census Report of 1931 shows, 79 per cent of her total population depends on the exploitation of animals and vegetation, whereas industry, trade and transport maintain only 12 per cent. So for the study of her economic condition it is essential to start with her land system and her agricultural problems. Before we enter into the study of the actual land system in Bikaner, let us begin with a table of the distribution of the population wholly and directly connected with it:

1. Non-cultivating landlords	..	3208
2. Cultivating landlords	..	9184
3. Tenant cultivators	..	146384
4. Agricultural labourers	..	215777
		<hr/>
	..	374553

—Census Report 1931

The total population of Bikaner according to the same census was 936218.

From the Banking Enquiry Committee's Report (Bikaner) 1930 we gather that there are four kinds of lands in the Bikaner State. They are: (1) **Khatedari Lands**—These lands are held by cultivators under perpetual tenancy without any right of sale, mortgage or transfer as long as they regularly pay the rent. A Khatedar will not be allowed to abandon his land if he

continues to reside in the village. If he leaves a village and does not arrange to cultivate the land and makes regular payment of his rent for a period of three years he will lose the right to cultivate that land and the State would lie at liberty to give the land to any body for cultivation. Khatedar rights are however heritable and divisible.

(2) **Patta and Bhogta Lands:**—These lands are given to Pattedars and Bhogtas in Jagir by the State.

(3) **Private ownership Lands:**—These are the lands only in Tibi Pargana and Canal Colony with occupancy and proprietary rights and are both heritable and alienable. An occupancy tenant cannot alienate his rights by sale, gift or mortgage. But he can sublet his tenancy. The right of inheritance is attached to an occupancy tenant. Occupancy right is granted, now in areas other than Tibi Pargana, by the Revenue Minister with the sanction of H.H. Government. No tenant shall acquire a right of occupancy by mere lapse of time. (Vide Bikaner State Tenancy Act 1945).

(4) **Lands for temporary cultivation:**—These lands are given to persons desiring it on a certain fixed land revenue determined according to the quality of land for a certain period, generally for 4 years. A temporary cultivator, neither having a right of occupancy nor of Khatedari, may be ejected, however, at the end of any agricultural year. A temporary cultivator has got no right of alienation of the land in any way.

The rural area of Bikaner is divided into two parts viz. the Khalsa area i.e. directly under the State Government covering $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total land and the Patta, Jagir and Thikana area covering the remaining two-third.

Barring 41 villages in Tibi Pargana, nowhere in Bikaner the actual cultivator has any right over his lands. He is a tenant-at-will and can be ejected even after the possession of the land during five generations. Rents are taken either in cash or in kind by division of the produce (Batai).

The following is an outline of the system of land-tenure that prevails in Bikaner:

(1) Khalsa Lands—The occupiers of these are tenants-at-will, but enjoy hereditary rights without having the right of proprietorship. They are of two kinds (a) Rayatwari and (b) Khatedari.

(2) Direct grants to Rajput Chiefs. These are of three kinds—

- (a) Tazimi Sardars
- (b) Sardars—having the right of adoption
- (c) Hamri—having no such rights.

(3) Jagir Lands—They are not hereditary. On the death of the Jagirdar, the Jagir lapses to the State. But it is ordinarily granted afresh conditioned on the loyalty to the Durbar. They are of 4 kinds:

- (a) Girassia—possession before the advent of Rao Bika.
- (b) Bhaibete—Jagirs granted to descendants of the Raj family.
- (c) Jagir for unique services.
- (d) Parsangi—granted for love and friendship, marriage, relation and unique services.
- (4) Tribute Villages—formerly auctioned to highest bidders. They are of two kinds:
 - (a) Be-talab—without any revenue demand in consideration of unique services.

(b) Talab—with a revenue demand.

(5) Bhumiya tenure—comprises the land held by the original inhabitants and tillers of the land before Bikaner was founded. They are of two kinds:

(a) Mafidars who do not pay anything to the State

(b) Those who pay a nominal rent.

With solitary exceptions the Pattas, Jagirs or Thikanas are all held by the Rajputs.

Patta in Rajputana means Jagir or inam of one or more village granted by the ruler. A Jagirdar, pattadar or a Tazimi Sardar is, so to say, a feudal baron who stands between the Prince and the tenants. The Khalsa area is the portion in which the tenant pays direct to the Government of the State and there is no middleman. The Pattadars are the lords and masters of the people under them and in dealing with them they often act with impunity against the laws of the land. The inhabitants of the Patta area are worse off than their brothers in the Khalsa area. Most of these Pattadars are related to the house of Bikaner and are styled nobles or Tazimi Sardars.

130 of these Sardars own 11,115,000 acres of land in 1445 villages out of 2742 in the State.

The total income of all these Pattas in 1894 was Rs. 696,559/- while the revenue was permanently fixed at Rs. 167,795/- in lieu of the military services formerly required of them.

No settlement has taken place in the Patta. The Pattadars have been frequently enhancing rents arbitrarily and the present rate is twice that in Khalsa area. Many kinds of illegal cesses are in vogue in the Patta areas. They are:

(1) Mapa or salt tax of $\frac{1}{4}$ anna per rupee of the

value of goods brought by a trader in the village. This tax is in addition to the customs duty levied by the Government of Bikaner.

(2) Khunta-pheral—a tax on the sale of cattle collected from the seller.

(3) Sales tax on grass, ghee etc.

(4) 'Lag' or forced contribution collected on the occasion of every marriage in the Pattadar's family.

(5) A collection of 4 to 5 rupees per marriage in the tenant's family.

With the help of the Nazim and the Tahsildar, the Pattadar forcibly collects every kind of due.

Begar or forced labour is not, however, prevalent in the Khalsa area except that some petty officials at times stealthily exact forced labour for carrying luggages. But in Patta areas it is still prevalent.

In addition to Tazimi Pattadars, as we have already mentioned, the state maintains a large number of jagirdars and Thikanadars all of whom are merely middlemen living on the labour of the tillers of the land. Their position is comparable to the Talukdars and Zamindars of U.P., Bihar, Bengal and Orissa.

Out of 2742 villages in Bikaner only 654 villages lie in the Khalsa area, the rest being in the Jagir and Patta areas.

Fiscal History:—

The question of the status of the cultivator in the Khalsa villages of the state and the tenure on which he holds appears to be involved in considerable obscurity. Although they certainly enjoy certain rights connected with the soil, they have no proprietorship, which we have already referred to.

Prior to the advent of the Rathors, the Jats, the

inhabitants of the locality, appear to have been organised into communities forming joint or landlord villages enjoying common rights over land. But at the advent of the Rathors the land was divided among various families for the convenience of cultivation.

Over communities of this type the Rathor domination was established in the latter half of the 15th century. The Rathors did not come in sufficient number to be a colonising tribe. The minor chiefs appropriated or were assigned certain areas of land which they held as overlords or local rulers in quasi feudal subjection to the leader of the invasion, who probably appropriated as his fise or Khalsa as much as he could. He was, in fact, the leader of a confederacy of chiefs who rendered him services of feudal nature rather than an independent ruler. The dominions of the superior chief or Raja and of minor chiefs or Thakurs have developed after many changes into the modern Khalsa and Patta areas of the State.

It appears probable that originally the Raja in his Khalsa and the minor chiefs or Thakurs in their Patta estates did not maintain or exercise a definite soil claim to the land as landlords, but rather held their estates as rulers without having any direct concern with the land beyond realising dues from the cultivator. The Raja took nothing in the shape of land revenue from the minor chiefs or Thakurs.

By assignment to younger brothers of portions of estates by way of maintenance and in other ways the original estates have been divided into a number of smaller ones. Again small grants from the Khalsa made in favour of relatives of the Maharaja, retainers etc. have increased the number of small estates held in Patta.

As these estates have decreased in size the claim of the Thakur to be ruler or overlord has developed into a claim on the part of his descendants to be the actual landlords of the soil, but as a very general custom this claim, however, recognises the right of the cultivator to continuous possession of land.

In the Khalsa villages the Raja's claim probably developed on similar lines, but as his connection with the land could not be so close as that of the Thakur or baron in his smaller estate the development did not probably go so far as in the latter case, though the landlord claim to waste-land appears to have been clearly asserted and recognised.

In place of a joint landlord claim on the part of the descendants of the original founder to the whole village area, that claim has now been generally transferred to the Thakur. These villages are thus now as a rule merely collections of independent families of cultivators, the old bond of hereditary joint landlord claim to the village area having been dissolved. In some special cases however, owing to the weakness of individual Thakurs or other causes, the joint landlord claims continue.

The Pre-Rathor villages which have been continuously Khalsa have preserved their original constitution better and still maintain the tradition and show traces of the joint organisation, but as a fact there are very few such villages.

New villages grabbing the waste land were formed in later times and a new landed interest grew up. On payment of a more or less heavy fee called Nazarana, a person received permission of founding a village in a certain area from the king. He received the investiture of headman of the new village and was called

chaudhari. But this class received no title or right as soil-owners or landlords in a defined area. They rather became State officers and their duty was to realize the customary dues from them on behalf of the Raja and as their own rents. For the performance of these duties they were remunerated by being allowed to hold a certain area of land, rentfree and to realise and appropriate certain dues such as fees at marriages, weighment fees etc. from the cultivators within their respective jurisdictions. In some Tahsils, in addition to the above they received a fixed sum called 'rankor' (subsistence) and an allowance of 5 p.c. (pachotra) on the collection of rent from the village.

Each cultivator that was brought and allowed to settle in the area would, after building his house on the spot selected for the village site, break up and bring under cultivation as much land as he thought proper. Each cultivator had a right to hold the fields which he broke up and a certain area of waste around them. This right descended to his heirs in accordance with custom.

In the Khalsa villages, then, with the exception of those founded prior to the Rathor conquest, we have no body of persons invested with a joint landlord right to a definite area, but a body of independent cultivators each cultivating his land separately. The Chaudharis, in addition to being cultivators of the soil, were also the servants of the Raj, were in position superior to other cultivators and developed a sort of vested interest although having no landlord claim, in a legal sense.

The position of the Chaudharis as such in most cases have them considerable authority and power in the village and in addition to the dues to which they

were entitled by the terms of their original sanads they generally managed to collect many perquisites of a more or less irregular nature from the cultivators over whom they were placed. In the Suratgarh Nizammat they frequently appear to have collected, in addition to rent (Rakam) and cesses due to the Raj, from each cultivator, an equal or nearly equal amount under the name of Malba or village expenses which was shared between the Chaudhris and the local Raj official. The post of Chaudhri became hereditary and his authority and rights were transferable and heritable but the heir or transferee had generally to pay a fee to the Raj and to obtain a Sanad.

On the decease of a Chaudhri, thus, his post with its emoluments descended to his heir by the rule of primogeniture.

This form of the founding of new villages in the khalsa area is also applicable to the area held in Patta by the minor chiefs or Thakurs or barons.

Thus the state of tenures in the khalsa villages prior to the settlement of 1885 indicates that there was no joint landlordship. The villages consisted of groups of independent cultivators. All cultivators (except in the Eastern Tahsils) were on an equal footing, but the Chaudhris, as being servants of the Raj had generally obtained a position of considerable authority and influence. By the virtue of his position in the village the Chaudhri's status developed into a more or less a recognised system of landed aristocracy virtually.

Effect of Summary Settlement on Tenures (1885 A.D.).

Khalsa villages were settled, as a very general rule, with the chaudhris who in the capacity of farmers or

Thikanadars (Thikedars) were made responsible for the due payment of the lump sum assessed on their respective villages for a term of years. They were allowed to collect Rakam or rent from the cultivators at the rates used for fixing the lump assessment and also to appropriate any miscellaneous profits from waste or from increased area of cultivation which might remain after the payment of the lump assessment. They also received an allowance of 5 p.c. on the fixed assessment. There was no decision as to what in future was to be the chaudhari's relation to the land of the village, but it seems clear that there was no intention to confer a landlord claim on him: his intended status appears to have been that of a farmer or lessee for a term of years. On the whole the settlement of 1885 does not appear to have had any fundamental change in the tenures. They are, in reality, in much the same position as they were before the settlement.

Fiscal arrangement prior to the Settlement of 1885:

The area held by each cultivator was measured every second or third year and assessed at a cash rate per bigha cultivated. The rent so calculated on each holding was paid by the cultivator with the addition of cesses (lag) which were fixed with no reference to the area of land held. There was thus under this system no assessment fixed for each village in the lump and the state lost or benefited by any yearly decrease or increase in the area held and cultivated. Occasionally a share of the actual produce of the fields either by actual division (baṭai) or by appraisement ('kankut') would be taken from each cultivator, sometimes instead of, and sometimes in addition to the cash rent.

In other cases (mostly in eastern Tahsils) a lump assessment (ijara) would be annually fixed for a village.

The Chaudhris and cultivators would then measure up each separate holding with the exception of those of the Chaudharis and of some of the menials who rendered customary services to the rest of the cultivators and the lump sum would be distributed over the total cultivated area.

The fiscal arrangements were to a large extent left in the hands of the Havalgars or local officials. The Havalgars not infrequently used the Chaudhris as agents in extortion. Where the cultivators could not pay, it was a common practice for the Havalgar to compel a 'bohra' or trader to pay in the amount due leaving him to recoup himself as best as he could from the cultivators. The Havalgar would fix the sum to be collected from the villages of a whole tract, the leading Chaudhris of which would distribute the amount in lump sums over the individual villages. Thus the extortions of the Havalgars (local Government officials), the Chaudhris (ijaradars) and the Bohras (trader-farmers) combined to exploit and oppress the cultivators.

In villages in the Central sandy tract the revenue was collected by a system called 'Anga bach'. This system is still common in Patta villages. It was a combination of ploughs and cattle with a poll tax and some additional items. In a few villages the Raj demand was assessed from house to house not by any definite rate but at lump sums varying with the poverty or wealth of the inmates. This was called "Chit ka bach" and is still common in Patta villages.

Subsequently in Suratgarh Tahsil Rakam at 1½ annas per bigha cultivated was realised in addition to a variety of other cesses e.g. Dhuan (smoke) per house Re. 1/-, Lahassya or two labourers per house

2 annas. This constituted the revenue taken from the Jats, Brahmans and Rajputs who as favoured classes paid at a lower rate. Others had to pay at a higher rate. Thus though the cultivators were as a rule placed on an equal footing, there prevailed preferential treatment and inequality in actuality.

The whole tract was formed for five years at the progressive assessment to the leading Chaudhris of the tract, some Banyas and one or two Raj officials who apparently all had a joint interest.

Revenue methods however varied in the state greatly. The general principle was to assess and collect the revenue by holdings at a uniform rate through the Chaudhris; but when whole tracts were given on farm to Havalgars and Tahsildars, who were constantly being changed, the status of the Chaudhris often became that of a subfarmer responsible for a fixed sum rather than that of rent collector pure and simple.

In order to introduce certain uniform system of collection, a summary settlement was applied practically to all the Khalsa villages of the state. Formerly the Chaudhris were responsible for the collection of rents actually due from resident cultivators at a uniform rate. In the Summary settlement each village was assessed at a lump sum for the payment of which the Chaudhri became responsible. The status of the Chaudhri was thus changed from an official rent collector to that of a farmer of the revenue.

Under the new arrangement the cultivators were not placed in the position of being tenants of the chaudhris who could not eject them so long as they paid the proper rent. But the chaudhris were no longer permitted to hold any land rent free. Instead, he was to receive an allowance of 5 p.c. on the fixed assessment of his

village, but he was allowed with previous custom to enjoy marriage and weighment fees ('dhol ghar' and 'Dharat mapa) from the cultivators. So even by the new settlement their landed claim was not legally recognised.

The unoccupied waste lands that existed at the time of the new settlement were formed into Blocks of 'chaks'. The persons, with whom a chak was settled, were practically lessees of the 'chak' for a term of years. The lessees of the chaks were in the same position as the 'chaudhris' or farmers in the villages with the only difference that whereas no landlord claim of any sort was conferred upon the chaudhuri, the lessee of a chak received it in order to have a greater inducement to develop cultivation in the chak; such claim was, however, to be of a temporary nature at first and to ripen into a permanent one during the period of his lease, the lessee fulfilled the conditions imposed upon him.

In Jagir villages a Jagirdar is considered as a landlord, and in khalsa villages state landlordism prevails. But all treasure troves, mines of metal and coal, quarries, saltpetre, and earth oil are however deemed the property of the state throughout the state and the state reserves all powers necessary for the proper enjoyment of its rights thereto.

At any time after the Rakm Rekha (rent) or other Government due has been in arrear for two months, the Revenue minister may, cause the estate or holding, in respect of which the arrear is due, to be attached and put under the management of the Tahsildar known as Kham Tahsil. In case of a Jagirdar the property shall not remain Kham Tahsil for more than a year; in case of a Hazuri whose annual income is less than rupees

five thousand, the property shall remain Kham Tahsil until the arears are cleared.

If the arear cannot be recovered in this process the estate may be put under the superintendence of the Court of Wards.

The area in acres of the whole state roughly is 1,53,87,065. Out of this 1,11,15,500 acres or more than $\frac{2}{3}$ are situated within the Patta villages. About these no reliable returns are available. As regards the khalsa land, below are given figures in acres of land that was available for cultivation in various Nizamats in 1929-30.

Total area	Cultivable	Actually cultivated	Non-culti- vable
4271565	4156442	1421636	115123
Percentage of total area cultivable		97.3	Percentage 33.3

of cultivated area to cultivable area.

34.2

It is evident from the above statement that a large area is available for cultivation in the State. But most of the land is lying undeveloped. Much improvement in the economic lot of the (Peasantry) can be possible with proper approach and enterprise of the State.

Now let us see the condition of the peasantry of Bikaner. The cultivators residing in areas which produce only the Kharif crops remain busy for 6 or 7 months only, while those residing in areas which produce the kharif as well as the Robi crop remain engaged for 9 to 10 months in a year of agricultural operations. It is an important problem how they can best use the spare time in order to improve their condition. The volume of agricultural indebtedness comes to about Rs. 174 per head, while non agricultural indebtedness

comes to about Rs. 290 per head. The peasantry of Bikaner are thus over head and ears in debt.

The following are the causes of agricultural debt in Bikaner.

1. Repayment of ancestral debts (moneylenders pay no receipts of repayment and hence the illiterate and helpless villages remain in perpetual indebtedness to them).

2. Marriage, death and other social ceremonial occasions.

3. Famine and other kinds of distress.

4. Seed, plough and manure.

5. Litigation and purchase of cattle.

Hindu customs and scripts are deep-rooted in their veins, the social status and customs, as also the fear of the Pancha of the community, the insistence to perform a particular social function in a particular way and with particular pomp and glory, force the man to raise the loan either to provide a dowry, a caste dinner and the like or for death dinner and funeral expenses and similar other social functions. A cultivator of Bikaner is not however ordinarily extravagant or of litigation propensity. He does not usually come to the law courts. But when he is sued by his creditor he has to raise a loan to defend himself. Once a cultivator incurs debt he can never hope to be out of the grip of the moneylender. The moneylender is the only man who maintains the books of accounts, the cultivator being illiterate and not understanding the technicalities of the interest calculations etc., signs the Khata of the moneylender in whatsoever manner required by the influential moneylender. The cultivator is never given any receipt or pass book and has therefore no chance to vouch for the accuracy or otherwise of the accounts of

the moneylender. The inevitability of indebtedness gives to the moneylender enormous powers. The helplessness of the debtors make them (debtors) indolent, unprogressive, believers in quismat (fate) as the last resort of the destitute.

Agricultural indebtedness is general in case of small farmers.

The crowding of people on the land, the lack of alternative means of securing a living, the difficulty of finding any avenue of escape and the early age at which a man is burdened with dependents, combine to compel the cultivators to submit to the dictates of the moneylender.

Peasants go to money lenders, because of (1) the hereditary system of clientele (2) laxity in repayment of debts (3) acceptance of any type of security and advancing even without security (4) readiness to advance in and out of season and (5) absence of formalities.

The cultivators (except in Tibi Pargana and Ganganagar colony) have no proprietary rights and therefore the money raised is either on blank credit or in the mortgage of moveable property e.g. cattle, sheep, crop and ornaments. Every type of bank except co-operative societies has, therefore, refused to advance money to them and they have to approach their ancestral moneylenders. Co-operative Societies can meet only one per cent of the total requirement. Besides Co-operative Credit Societies do not grant long term loans and are incapable of meeting all the demands of their members. The Societies are yet in their infancies and have not got enough of working capital. Takavi loans are advanced by the State on application from any agriculturist for seed or purchase of cattle. But these have

been also of little practical use of the cultivators.

The village moneylender is a capitalist and a usurer and a parasite upon industry. But his function is so important in view of the present situation of the credit machinery, that he cannot be dispensed with immediately or so easily without causing a widespread uneasiness amongst the agricultural community of the State as a whole.

There are different classes of moneylenders. (1) There are well-to-do land holding classes e.g. Rajputs, (2) There is another class of wandering moneylenders (called Banjaras). (3) There are also professional moneylenders in villages.

Wandering money lenders visit the villages from the adjoining towns at intervals laden with salt, chillies, tobacco and like goods and sell the wares to the cultivators on credit. They turn the transaction into cash loans in their account books.

The professional money lenders are creditors to the extent of 17% rich Zamindars 20%, Bikaner Government Takavi loans $\frac{1}{2}$ %, co-operative societies 1% and wandering moneylenders $1\frac{1}{2}$ %.

The rate of interest varies from 18% to 75% per annum. The rates of interest charged by the co-operative societies and by the Government are, however, $12\frac{1}{2}$ % and 6% respectively.

There are 4500 indigenous bankers and money lenders working as credit agencies in Bikaner State. These indigenous bankers and moneylenders combine business with credit. It may be stated that in this State pure and simple moneylending does not exist to any appreciable extent and generally all the money lenders combine other business with money lending. Some times they allow cultivators to buy live-stock,

corn, seed and hay on credit on condition that the moneylender takes the cultivators' produce when the crops are ripe. In addition the farmer is charged interest on his account. This often results in the farmer having to buy in the dearest market and sell in the cheapest. He cannot choose his own time and must accept the creditor's price for his produce. In lending money in this manner these people are naturally more concerned with their own business than with assisting the cultivator. The terms of interests are seldom reasonable. The cases of victimisation do frequently occur.

Thus the money-lenders, side by side with the landed aristocracy, have developed a serious vested interest in the rural economy of Bikaner. They are hostile to the growth of the co-operative societies. It is reliably given to understand that a regular propaganda on behalf of the moneylenders is going on since the inception of the co-operative movement to wreck the working of the Co-operative Societies. Coupled with this hostile attitude of the moneylenders, backwardness of the masses in education, their poor economic life and absence of local honorary workers are retarding the growth of cooperative societies in Bikaner.

Money lenders also appropriate the profits of agricultural produce. Before the railways the unit of the economic life of the people was the village. The village grew most of its food supplies and provided from its own resources. The villagers had their own weavers and their own artisans. Railways have opened markets both for exports and imports. Villagers generally sell their produce to mahajans or middlemen who market them in Mandis or export the surplus goods to other Indian markets. Moneylenders take stock of

agricultural produce on his credit and thus usurp all the profit due to the influence of the market. They force the villagers to part with their produce immediately after the harvest at the terms dictated by them. The peasants on pain of dire needs agree.

Land revenue to the state ranges from -/2/6 to -/5/6 per Bigha of land in Barani districts (nonirrigated) while in the canal colony it is -/7/- per bigha. per capita taxation has increased nearly 5 times during the reign of Gangasingh. The idea is, as of yore, to increase the revenue in order to lavish money on palaces, to appropriate more for the Privy purse of the Maharaja and to maintain a top heavy administration which is but a veneer to cover the real and old feudal system. The people received nothing in return. 17.5% of the revenue is appropriated for the Maharaja's Privy purse while only 0.3% is expended for primary education.

The total assessment of water-rate and crop-rate yields an average figure of Rs. 3/11/- per bigha in some Nizamat. Thus the whole of the produce goes in payment of rates and there is nothing left for food and clothes and other necessities in Ganganagar Nizamat.

The taxation per capita is Rs. 7/2/5. The increase since 1887-88 is 257%.

Pasture grounds have not been provided for in the villages and yet a new tax, called "Bhoonga" on all kinds of cattle is levied at the following rates in both khalsa and Pattedari areas:—

A Camel	Rs. 5	0	0	per annum.
A Buffalo	„ 3	0	0	„ „
A Cow or a Bullock	„ 2	0	0	„ „
A Goat or a Sheep	„ 0	6	0	„ „

These rates fluctuate from place to place and are sometimes increased and at other times decreased.

“Neota”, a levy from the people for weddings in Raj family is still in vogue. It is called voluntary, but in practice there is compulsion.

Import duties are to be paid twice—once in the State and another in the British or other state area. Every article from one state exported into another, has to pay export duty in the former as well as import duty in the latter. This is an indirect taxation on the consumers.

The 200% increase in the State receipts from customs duties since 1887-88 A.D. is not due so much to the growth in the volume of trade as to the absolute increase in customs duties on various articles of everyday use. The following table will show how the 200% increase in customs duties has obtained in order to increase the revenue.

Name of article	Import		Export		P.C. of Increase
	1887-88	1939-40	1887-88	1939-40	
	Rs.A.P.	Rs.A.P.	Rs.A.P.	Rs.A.P.	
1. Rice per md.	0 8 0	0 12 0			50%
2. Wheat „	0 3 0	1 0 0			433%
3. Indian Cloth	1 8 0	3 2 0			108%
Present duty is Rs. 6-4-0 ad Valorem and a md. of ordinary cloth will be worth about Rs. 50/- per war calculation)					
4. Gur	0 9 0	1 5 3			136%
5. Sugar	2 0 0	4 0 0			100%
6. Cotton	1 4 0	1 8 0			20%
7. Smoke and Tobacco	1 0 0	3 2 0			212%
8. Chewing tobacco and snuff	1 0 0	7 8 0			650%
9. Opium	90 0 0	500 0 0			455%
10. Wool			2 0 0	4 8 0	125%
11. Camels			3 0 0	5 0 0	66%
12. Bullocks			0 10 0	1 8 0	140%
13. Cows Sheep Goat			0 1 6	0 6 0	300%

These increases were not affected suddenly, but from time to time.

In 1887 the expenditure under the head "Privy Purse" was 1,57,379/- and it was nearly 10% of the total revenue receipts. But in 1935-36 it has been raised to Rs. 22,16,062/-. The Privy Purse in 1919-40 is stated to be Rs. 1,572,936/- but if we add all the perquisites under the heads as in the year 1935-36 budget, the actual Privy Purse mounts up to Rs. 22,55,937/-. This is 16.6 p.c. on the total revenue receipts. The increase under this head in 50 years is 1308 p.c.

The average per capita income of the citizens of U.S.A. is Rs. 1080/- and the revenue receipts of the Government are about 10 times those of the Government of India yet the annual salary of their president is fixed at Rs. 2,25,000/-. The per capita income in India is variously estimated at between Rs. 36 and Rs.75/-. But the Viceroy of India receives a salary of Rs. 2,56,000/- per year.

If the salary drawn by the Viceroy is pronounced disproportionate how much more so is the actual Privy Purse of the ruler of Bikaner. It amounts to 9 times the salary of the Viceroy. Besides the Privy Purse, the financial burden of the top heavy administrative system is also too much for the people of Bikaner. The following heads of expenditure against the total receipts of the receipts of the State in the year 1941-42 bears testimony to our point.

Total receipts in the year 1941-42 were Rs. 178,67,000/-. Against it the expenditure in paying the salaries of Civil, military and Railway staff including allowances only was Rs. 55,04,730/-.

Let us give here a list of salaries of some of the highly paid officials of the State:

Prime Minister	Rs. 3500/-	per month
Finance Minister	„ 1500/-	„
Minister for Public Works		
Health & Education	„ 1200/-	„
Revenue Minister	„ 1200/-	„
Minister for Law	„ 1600/-	„
Home & Development		
Minister	„ 1200/-	„
Minister of Rural		
Construction	„ 1000/-	„
Chief Justice	„ 2000/-	„
Puisne Judge	„ 1000/-	„
Revenue Commissioner	„ 900/-	„
Chief Medical Officer	„ 2800/-	„
Chief Surgeon	„ 1500/-	„
Chief Engineer (P.W.D.)	„ 2500/-	„
Chief Engineer (Irrigation)	„ 1750/-	„
Electrical and Mechanical		
Engineer	„ 1500/-	„
General Manager (Bikaner		
State Railway)	„ 2200/-	„
Deputy General Manager	„ 1500/-	„
Chief Auditor	„ 1200/-	„
Traffic Manager	„ 1250/-	„
Chief Engineer (Railway)	„ 1375/-	„
Chief Mechanical Engineer	„ 1075/-	„
Inspector General of Police	„ 1100/-	„
State Geologist	„ 1500/-	„
Director of Civil Supplies	„ 1500/-	„

Every man, woman and child with an annual income perhaps below Rs. 36/- pays Rs. 2/6/- per year for the maintenance of the ruler and his family.

Thus the feudal vested interests of the landed aristocracy e.g. the Tazimi Sardars, Jagirdars, Thikanedars,

Chaudhris and others, the extortions of the blood sucking mahajans and the exacting system of direct or indirect taxation to feed the top heavy administrative system and the ruling dynasty have all nastily combined to bleed the masses of Bikaner white. If we take a view of the degenerate landed aristocracy, the unscrupulous businessmen and mahajans and the pampered officials only, Bikaner may appear to be really a land of affluence and pleasure despite her desolate desert. But if we look through them to real Bikaner in her rural areas where more than 80% of her population live we are soon disillusioned. Poverty and distress of rural Bikaner beneath the surface of the parasitic upper classes. beggar description. The masses of Bikaner are as desolate economically as her arid desert.

Before we close this chapter, however, let us give an idea about the commerce and industries of Bikaner.

As many as 43647 people have been engaged in carrying on the internal trade of the State in various branches (Banking Enquiry Report 1931): They have been doing their work on individualistic lines and there is no organisation either within themselves or the state as a whole to watch or supervise and regulate their business operations. 'The existing commercial credit facilities are the cash money employed by the traders themselves. There are no credit facilities of any kind beyond this'. (Banking Enquiry Report 1931). Recently however Bank of Bikaner has been started with its branches established in almost all the important localities of the State.

Let us here give a table of the imports and the exports of Bikaner to understand her commercial position.

Imports.		1927-1928		Exports.	
Articles		Volume	Articles		Volume
Rice	Mds.	119078			
Cloth	Rs.	36,773/-	Wool		42125
Made up clothing	„	14,10,705/-	Hides		7217
Perfumery	„	1,39,311/-	Sarsum		43955
Ghee	Mds.	9498	Bones		43234
Oil	„	2756/-			
Tobacco	„	22,304/			
Gold and Gold ornaments					90668/-
Silver & Silver ornaments					12,92,355/-
Lead, Zink, iron tin					52872 Mds.
Molasses					1,39,388
Unrefined sugar					50,446/-
Sugar					1,06,086/-
Fancy Goods					10,49,513/-
Coal					2,36,994 Mds.

From the above figures it is clear that the imports of Bikaner are more than the exports.

There are not many organised industries in the State and the following are only a few of them:—

(1) Glass industry (2) Wool pressing factory (3) Cotton pressing factory (4) Carpet industry. The last one is a flourishing industry of the State. There is an appreciable demand for Bikaner carpets in various markets of India and other Countries Banking Enquiry Report 1930) Besides these the following state-owned industries are also remarkable:—

(1) Palana Coal mine (2) Fuller's earth (Multani mitti) (3) Gypsum (Sweet lime) (4) Sand stone.

There are no joint stock companies in Bikaner State and nearly all the industries are either owned by the State or run by private individuals.

Pastoral industry, which is by far the most valuable industry of Bikaner State, accounts for $\frac{1}{4}$ of her total exports. Bikaner have more sheep and cattle than any other State in Rajputana and many a province in British India. There is great demand of Bikaner wool in U.S.A., Persia, Germany and also in various markets of India. This industry has so far been carried on in individualistic lines and no co-operative effort has been made to produce nor to market the product.

In 1926-27 the number of sheep exceeded 10,60,000

Goats	3,46,528
Camels	1,35,994
Cows	3,84,273
Buffaloes	62,253

In 1944-45 the number of sheep was reduced to 893670

Camels	122296
Buffaloes	57395

Only the number of goats shows an increase to 420468

Goats are valuable for their flesh, milk and skins, camel for riding, and carrying loads, cows and buffaloes for milk and ghee.

Weaving industry ranks second in importance. Handloom weaving and spinning are practised everywhere in the State.

Hides and skins industry is also a very important industry of the State. But it is at present very much disorganised and is restricted to a certain castes.

Dairy industry is again an important industry in the State. But up till now it has not been developed in modern lines.

During the time of Col. Tod wool and woollen products besides ghee formed important items of export trade of Bikaner, but from the recent table of exports and imports, we find ghee has now become an item of import rather than of export. Besides, Bikaner, during the time of Tod worked well in iron and made sword blades, matchlocks, daggers, iron-lances etc., and had expert artists in ivory of which bracelets were of common use. Coarse cotton cloths for internal consumption were made of considerable (Quantity). The decline of village and cotton industries of Bikaner state has weakened the economic position of the small farmer whose energies are not absorbed entirely by agriculture, as also of other small artisans who are, more or less, indirectly concerned with agriculture. These industries were once the most important in Bikaner State.

According to the industrial Census of Bikaner (1931) there were in the State in all 192 factories distributed in the following order:

Kinds of Industry	Number
Colliery	1
Multan Mitti Quarry (fuller's earth)	1
Stone quarries .. .	2
Sweet lime quarry .. .	1
Cotton ginning factories ..	3
Wool Pressing Factory ..	1
Wool Cleaning concern ..	1
Carpet, Cloth, Durri weaving factories (all jail industries) ..	3
Gold, silver and lace factories ..	3
Iron foundry	1
Glass works ..	1

Brick Kilns	..	..	17
Saltpetre	..	..	1
Soap factory	..	..	1
Flour mills	..	..	53
Bidi concerns and cigarette factories			4
Pulse mill	..	..	1
Lime kilns (including 35 sweet lime kilns)			73
Tile factory	..	..	1
Railway workshop	..	..	1
Motor Repairing shop		..	1
Electrical Power House and Workshop			1
Electric storage, distribution centre and dynamos	..	..	2
Cinema Concerns	..	..	3
Printing Press	..	..	4
Total			192

Of these 192 factories returned in the industrial census 75 were worked by some kind of mechanical power such as steam, oil or electricity and 117 are worked by hand.

No less than 107 of the total factories in the State are located in the Bikaner City. Leaving aside the mines, quarries, Railway workshop, the electrical power House and Workshop and the Government Printing Press which are all State concerns, what may be called the largest private industrial establishments have all come into existence after 1920. Of them the most important are the cotton ginning factories and the cotton press in Ganganagar Nizamat. The flour mills are the only concerns which are to be found in all the Nizamats.

The 192 factories employed in all 3536 workers. Of these the 75 power driven factories had an establishment of 2017 and the 177 hand worked factories had an establishment of 1519.

These figures give an average establishment of 27 for the former and 13 for the latter. But if the largest State concern, namely the Railway workshop with an establishment of 344 is left out of account, the average establishment of the remaining power-driven factories would fall down from 27 to only 12.

Leaving these alone, the glass works with an establishment of 98 and the 3 cotton ginning factories with the cotton Press combined with an average establishment of 82, are the largest in the State.

Of the 192 factories in the State, 144 are perennial and 48 seasonal. Of the total number of factories 17 are Government concerns, and 175 are private owned. The Government concerns consist of the mines, quarries, Railway and Electric workshops, Printing Press, an ice factory, jail industries and a brick kiln. None of the private owned factories is of the type of a joint stock business. But from the administration Report of the State (1945) we come to learn that Joint Companies are growing in the State.

Excluding, the total number of factory workers (3536) from the total number of industrial workers (41,203) we have a rough idea of the extent of persons employed on home industries (37,667). Generally speaking one in every 12 industrial workers is employed in a factory and the rest in home or cottage industries.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL FABRIC OF BIKANER

Bikaner's is a feudo-commercial society with a sprinkling of modern industry in recent times, as we have known in the previous chapters. Her social fabric is, therefore, rigid and perverted having little liberty and equality. Politically we have seen, Bikaner is a monarchical State based on the principle of divine right and unalloyed autocracy, behind all facades of modern Governmental institutions. Economically we have learnt that Bikaner is under the three fold exploitations of landed aristocracy, the Mahajans and top heavy autocratic administrative system. In the exclusively social field we find, the people are caste-ridden, ignorant, conservative and superstitious. Thus the society of Bikaner is full of economic and social cross sections of classes, castes and communities which offer hindrances to smooth progress in the right direction of freedom and equality for all life irrespective of caste, creed, class and sex.

Politically and economically speaking, the social life of Bikaner is based on a feudal hierarchy having the ruling family at its top with absolute privileges and status. The ruling prince who is at the topmost position, is the source from whom spring out all political and social powers and privileges and to whom they all end. He is absolute and above all criticism. In ceremonial occasions when he condescends to give audience to the public, all are required to stand with folded hands on both the sides of the routes along which he passes and are to utter most respectful expressions as "Bho Annadata (Hail, giver of life).

Next comes the order of feudal nobility e.g. the Tazimi Sardars who are about 139 in number. They are all Rajputs and in their respective fiefs they enjoy as much powers and prestige as the Prince in the whole State. They hold their estates in feudal subservience to the Prince. In the middle ages up to the third quarter of the 19th Century they used to hold them in lieu of rendering military and personal services in lieu of fixed amount of cash payment. Next in the ladder come the other Jagirdars and Thikanadars, and then the Chaudhris—all forming into a wider bloc of landed aristocracy—however graded they may be among themselves. So far as their vested interests in land are concerned they are all common. In the past they have records of revolt and defiance against the ruling Princes especially against Surat Singh. But at present inspite of all their cliques and incipient clan-nish or personal feelings and ambitions within themselves, they feel that their fate is irrevocably sealed up with the existing state. Hence they, like the French nobility prior to 1789, cling to the ruling order under all circumstances with an instinct of preservation of the vested interests. Underneath them stand the vast mass of peasantry—most of whom are tenants-at-will (khatedar). Despite all show of judicial system, codification of laws, local self-government etc. the real power everywhere is held in the firm and ruthless grip of the degenerate nobility. For all intents and purposes in their respective fiefs and areas, they exercise supremacy over the so-called codified law or legal system. The meek, mute, poor and illiterate peasantry obey them as they have been doing so long, because they feel helpless. The king and the nobility move hand in hand. What hope is there for a poor and unorganised peasantry. About the origin and development of these classes we have dealt in the previous chapters.

Side by side with the landed aristocracy, there is still another class of ex-politers viz. Mahajans and businessmen of whose character we have got an idea in the previous chapter. This is known in Bikaner as the Bania class and in Bengal as the Marwaris. They are the wealthiest section in the society, having no other consideration than money. They have scarcely any sense of prestige or sentiment. Lust for money, more money—is the be-all and end-all of their life. They can understand only in terms of silver and gold. They are blood suckers, but all ranks cowards. They cannot personally face a deadly struggle, yet they can have hundreds and thousands of innocent souls butchered through the payment of gold and silver to the goondas and also can suffer without being affected the least the death of millions through starvation as a result of their black marketing and profiteering. Yet they will contribute sums to relief societies and Devasthanas following the tenets of their religion as a matter of routine, in order either to propitiate the unseen God so that he may bless them, or to bluff the public so that they may not be totally hostile against their sinister profiteering. The Banias are the whole and soul of Bikaner, as it were. The whole wealth of Bikaner is in their grip.

Where is the origin of this typical class? Tod writes: "The Banias appear to trace their origin to Rajputana and it seems not unlikely that their ancestors were the trading community among the inhabitants of Rajputana." But they are not Rajputs, neither they are jats. They form a separate caste. Inside the Bania caste the three most important divisions are the Oswals, the Agarwals and the Maheswaris. There is another less important section known as Saraogi. The Agarwals are said to have their origin in Hissar district of Eastern Rajputana. The

Oswals trace their origin to Jodhpur or Western Marwar. The Maheswaris claim to be descended from the Rajputs who took to commerce and sank to the level of other Banias. The Maheswaris came to Bikaner with the conquest of Bikaji. There is another caste, though separate from the Banias, yet akin to their profession. They are the Saraswat Brahmins who were, according to Tod, the original money lenders in Bikaner. At present the Mahajans or the indigenous bankers and money lenders of Bikaner are distributed among the Agarwals, Maheswaris, Oswals, Saraogi, Modi, Brahmins, Zamindars (Rajput & Jats) and Sikhs.

During the Mohammeden invasions when there was much insecurity of life and property in the Punjab and the plains of the Ganges, the Agarwals, Jains and Modis migrated to the Bikaner State. Agarwals, Oswals, Saraogis and Modis migrated and settled mostly in the Nizamat of Sujangarh during Mohamedan period. They seem to have come from Meerut, Multan, Saharan, Ambala, Rewari and other adjoining places. Many of them grew wealthy and their descendants carry on extensive business in the remote parts of India. Some are cultivators also.

The harmonious relation of the Bikaner rulers with the Mughal kings had an impetus to trade and industry and the soldiers of the Mughal army used to be paid by cash orders through Marwari Bankers on various treasuries of the kingdom.

Many of the Marwari Bankers were the hereditary treasurers and ration suppliers of the Mughal contingents.

According to the Census report of 1921 the population of communities engaged in business in the State is:—

(1) Oswals 24,551 (2) Agarwals 18,401 (3) Maheswaris 12,694 (4) Saraogis 449 (5) Modis 1,841.

The Sikhs have come very recently and have attained prominence with the advent of Gang Canal, while Rajputs and Jats conducted the business of money-lending as a subsidiary industry.

The Oswals and Saraogis are Jains, while Agarwals are partly jains ond partly vaisnavas. The Maheswaris are all Vaishnawas as well as the Modis, Jats and Rajputs.

Peasantry

The agricultural and pastoral classes of the State comprise, according to the Census report of the year 1931 79 p.c. of the total population. Of the purely agricultural tribes the most important are the Jats who form 24.3 per cent of the total population.

The bulk of the population of the western Tahsils of the Suratgarh Nizamat consists of pastoral tribes of Mohammedans, the chief of which are the Johyas and the Bhatias who claim descent from Jadu Rajputs. The Mohammedan tribes in this part, known as Rathis, cultivate little or no land of their own and stealing other people's cattle. They own in some cases immense herds. When grass and water fail the Rathis will desert their villages and trek over to Sind and the Punjab, to return with the advent of better seasons. The agricultural Jat whose migratory instincts are not so strong as those of the Mohammedan Rathis, also leaves his field and home in years of scarcity. So the population in northwestern part of the State is shifting, But in the eastern Tahsils it is comparatively speaking more fixed and permanent. Among the peasantry there are also Rajputs and Brahmans.

In Powlett's Gazetter (1874 A.D.) as many as 52 castes have been named, besides the Jats, the Banias, the Rajputs and the Brahmins. In the Census of 1931

however, we find the names of the following important 19 castes including their occupations:—

1. Brahman—Priestly class, but many have been reduced to the status of cultivators.
2. Rajputs—Warrior class—but now $\frac{3}{4}$ of them are cultivators.
3. Jats—almost all are agriculturists.
4. Bishoni— " "
5. Khati—Craftsmen and artisans.
6. Sunar— " "
7. Kumbhar— " "
8. Chhipa— " "
9. Daroga—Service 10. Nai—Service 11. Mali—
Labouring class. 12. Agarwal—Traders. 13. Mahes-
wari—Traders. 14. Oswal—Traders. 15. Meghwals
—Untouchables. 16. Chamar—Untouchables. 17.
Ranghar—Musalmans (local converts) 18. Kayam
khani—Musalmans (local converts. 19. Teli—Musal-
mans (local converts.)

Besides the above list, we find the list of the following depressed classes in the Bikaner State:—

1. Rajigars 2. Bhangis 3. Bavaris 4. Chamars
5. Churas 6. Dhanaks 7. Doms 8. Goriya 9. Kalhelias
10. Kajyars 11. Khatiks 12. Nats 13. Nayaks (Thoris)
14. Regars 15. Sansis.

There are also a few other castes among the depressed classes. Their total number comes to 125284. The depressed classes or the untouchables have no right of entrance into public temples, wells, institutions, schools, vehicles etc. They are forced to render services without pay (begar). Their women are not allowed to wear gold ornaments, though there is no law prohibiting it: nevertheless the custom has the force of law for all

practical purposes. A Harijan Hitkarni Sabha has been formed in the year 1943 to remove untouchability.

In all, however, we find 158 castes in Bikaner. Charans form an important caste and are as highly esteemed as the Brahmins. Slaves form another caste and they are known as Chelas. The 19 castes mentioned above as important after the Census 1931, however, form 80% of the total population of the State. One typicality of the caste in Bikaner is that the name of a caste does not necessarily denote its religion. In many cases several religions claim one and the same caste. The system of caste being an institution based on occupation and not on religious belief, it is quite natural that several religions should have common castes.

Caste is essentially a Hindu institution and although Islam does not recognise distinctions of caste, the majority of Muslims in the State being converts from Hindus, such distinctions exist among them. Muslims of real foreign stock are Saiyads, Pathans, Mughals, or Sheikhs. They form a little less than 7% of the total Muslim population in the State. The most important of the Muslim castes in the State are (1) Jaunjgobu (2) Teli (3) Kasai (4) Rangad (5) Shiekh (6) Mirasj (7) Bhisti (8) Chippa (9) Dholi (10) Fakir (11) Mali (12) Rangrez (13) Dhobi (14) Jat (15) Khalal (16) Khoja (17) Kumbhar (18) Kunjra (19) Lohar (20) Mulla (21) Nai (22) Sipahi.

The only important caste among the Jains is that of Oswals. Next to it comes the Saraogi.

The Sikh caste with the largest population is that of the Jats with a return of 26,537 (Census 1931). Other Sikh castes of importance are (1) Bhangi (2) Labana (3- Khati (4) Baori (5) Kumbhar.

The Baoris, the Sansis and the Thoris form the three most important criminal tribes in the State of Bikaner who number in all about 21,000.

They belong to a strong and sturdy race and are likely to prove a very useful community if their hand can be turned from crime to honest labour. They are generally not averse to work. They are often employed in field work and other labour and are found to excel others in hard work. But generally the employers either avoid them owing to their criminal habits or pay them less than the market rate for their work. The rules which forbid the adult male members of the criminal tribes to leave without permission the place where they are registered and require them to report themselves several times a day in the police station, so necessary as they are, prove also a hindrance in their finding work. Thus it is a vicious circle. They must leave off crime before they can find work. But until they find work (which they cannot as long as people are not convinced that they have become peaceful and law-abiding) they choose to live by crime.

Slavery has existed all along in Bikaner and in many other other Rajputana States.

The origin of the slave community of Bikaner as of any Rajputana State, can be traced to the young maids who come as a part of the dowry with the Bride to the Raj family. They remain in the palace as mistress of the particular bridegroom or of the other male members of the family. The children from the extra-marital unions are called Chakars, Hazuris, Chelas, Golas and Darogas and they are slaves owned either by the ruler of the state or by the Thakurs or Rajput nobles. as the latter are styled in modern times. They are al-

lowed neither to have any property rights nor any private rights whatsoever. In return for their services they are allowed only food and clothes. If at any time they run away and take shelter elsewhere they are forcibly brought back under the roof of the original master. The slaves, known as Daroga, in Bikaner, according to the census of 1931 number 13629 or 1.5% of the total population of the State.

But there was, however, no practice of slave trade in Rajputana. The feudal chiefs purchased slaves no doubt, but they never sold them as was the usage in the Mohamedan world. Some times the parents of a girl are persuaded to give their daughter in marriage to a Gola (slave) in lieu of money and such girl is also treated as a slave.

Slaves were severely persecuted by their owners. They are even sometimes beaten to death and perpetrated inhuman torture upon them. Akbar objected to the word 'Gulam' and it was, therefore changed into 'Chela'.

This slave system was prevalent even in the latter part of the 19th century and even today the slaves exist and have no freedom of association in the society. They are given only food and clothing just sufficient to subsist them and they have no right of property.

Although caste exists among the adherents of almost all the religions in Bikaner, nevertheless it is more rigid and orthodox among the Hindus than among others.

We have considered above various cross sections by caste and class. Now let us see the cross sections by creed and religion. According to the Census of 1941, the principal religions that exist in the State are: Hin-

duism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, and Christianity, besides animism. Of the total population of 1292938 in the State 992601 or more than 75% are Hindus. Among the Hindus there are various sects of whom the Vaishnavs are most important. The Muslims number 1,85,323 of whom 93% are converts from local population and only 7% are of foreign extract. Though it is popularly known as the land of the Jains, nevertheless they are only 34,425 in number. But certainly they hold the crucial position in the socio-economic life of Bikaner by virtue of their commercial position. The Sikhs are 78,815 in numerical strength and hold an important position in the Ganganagar colony. The Christians are only 420 in number.

Inter-communal relations in Bikaner have always been influenced by a healthy spirit of mutual tolerance and amity. But of late a fissiparous tendency is growing as a result of the shocks of communal storms in other parts of India.

Sex inequality is a prominent feature in Bikaner. As we have already noticed in Chapter IV, women had no franchise in the State as late as 1946, in which year voting rights in municipalities have been granted and as such they enjoy legislative franchise also. But they have no right to inherit property excepting that of her husband in the absence of any male child. They are blacked out from the free social environment by the imposition of a strict Purda System. Among Rajputs, Jains and Hindus it is scrupulously and rigidly observed. But their women come out in the public with their faces awkwardly veiled. But surprisingly enough the local Muslims do not observe the Purda. But certainly among the lower classes insistence on the seclusion of

females is scarce and hence the proportion of females among workers is not low. In 1921 there were 609 female workers to 1000 male workers. In 1931 the ratio of female workers was however reduced to 467.

There is no practice of widow remarriage among the upper castes including Rajputs. Among the lower caste Hindus including the Jats, however it prevails.

Education among women has been horribly neglected so long. According to the Census of 1931 in every 100 literate persons 92 were males whereas the number of woman per 100 literate was only 9. Even now the position has not appreciably improved, although the state has undertaken the task of encouraging female education.

Dowry system prevails among all the sections of the people of Bikaner and has developed, so to say, into a sort of social evil under which parents of marriageable children are to suffer much. This dowry system is not uniform but is various among different classes and castes. Among the Brahmans the father of the girl takes money from the boy's side, but amongst the rich there is exception. The rich generally pay to the boy's father. Among the Banias it is generally the father of the girl who pays dowry and even purchases boys. Among the Rajputs also the father of the girl has to pay. But among Jats it is just the opposite that of the Rajputs *i.e.* the father of the boy is to pay, and so is also among other classes. Dowry is very high among the Rajputs and Banias, as a result of which in olden days girl children among them were generally murdered at the time of birth. Among other classes it is not so high, although compulsory.

Early marriage is almost a universal evil widely practised in Bikaner.

The following table taken from Census Report of 1931 will give us an idea of the proportion of early marriages in Bikaner.

Number of married per 1,000 between the ages 0-10

		Males	Females
Hindus	..	21	61
Jains	..	19	64
Muslims	..	33	61
Sikhs	..	15	23

The Hindu Marriage Act, making penal the marriage of a boy under 16 years and of a girl under 11 years was passed only in 1928. 3 boys and 3 girls under 5 years per 1,000 each sex are married in the State against 3 and 8 in 1921.

Taking the age period of 5-10 separately the figures of married males in the state are 41 and of married females 363.

Between 15-20 males 536 females 869

Between 20-40 males 729 females 857

The above figures not only indicate the wide prevalence of child and early marriages, but also the prevalence of polygamy, more females being married than males.

Another widely spread social evil in Bikaner is the use of opium, smoking and intoxicating drugs. The Rajputs have developed this habit inordinately degenerating them certainly as a martial race. "The Piyala or cup is a favourite with every Rajput who can afford it". It is almost a universal evil.

Before we conclude this chapter let us give an idea about the spread of the light of education among the people of Bikaner. The Census of 1931 informs us that only 5% of the population aged 5 and over are literate in the State. In the whole state 108 males and 14 females only out of every 10,000 persons aged 20 and over are literate in the English language.

Let us see the progress of education since 1901.

Year	Number of Educational Institutions.	Number of pupils
1901	15	1563
1921	167	9814
1931	251	15,550
1944-45	606	34,513

The girl schools and girl students rose from 1 and 100 respectively in 1901 to 33 and 2299 respectively in 1931. Female education has made considerable progress during the years after 1931. Co-education in the Dungar college, the premier educational institution in the State has been introduced, besides an intermediate college exclusively for girls has been recently started.

The following table gives an idea of progress of literacy since 1901 considering all ages 10 and over:

	Literate per thousand				
	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941
Males	59	71	87	95	148
Females	2	3	7	9	31

This tables show how much backward are the females of Bikaner even now. If we make an average male and female percentage of literacy taken together

we get only 9% whereas in India as a whole has 12 p.c. literate in the average. So Bikaner falls far behind the All India average of literacy. In fact even now almost all the high schools and colleges of Bikaner are run by non-Bikaneri staff and the high administrative offices are all monopolised by people hailing from outside Bikaner. Graduates among the Bikaneris may be counted in fingers.

