

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

THE ANCIENT PERIOD

The Rohtak district which forms a part of Haryana is strategically situated in the passage from the north-west through the Delhi gateway to the broad Ganga plain. The routes from Peshawar and Multan to Delhi converge here. This area, as a whole, witnessed some important historical events and movements. Unlike Kurukshetra which lies to its north, and Delhi which lies 40 miles to its south, Rohtak itself has never been the centre of great and determining events. Nevertheless, lying in an area of much political activity it could survive and maintain its identity because its inhabitants were virile people.

It is not possible to write a connected account of its ancient history because the district, as we know it today, only began to take shape in the early part of the 19th century when the area came under the British. It was in 1912 that the present district with its 4 tahsils was formed.

The earliest reference to the area comprising the Rohtak district goes back to pre-history. The archaeological finds discovered here suggest traces of the Indus Valley Civilization. Possibly the Harappan people, when pressed by the Aryan immigrants, moved south-eastwards and founded their settlements here for sometime. The region is mentioned later in the *Mahabharata* as Bahudhanyaka inhabited by the people called Mattamayuraka. Nakula, the Pandava warrior, advanced on Rohitaka (Rohtak) which was then abundant in horses, cattle and agricultural production. The Yaudheya coinage discovered recently in this region, supports this legend.

Rohtak seems to have been the centre and possibly the capital town of the Yaudheya tribe which ruled over a large area extending over what now forms Haryana, and adjoining tracts of U.P. and Rajasthan, between c.150 B.C. and A.D. 350. This is supported by the discovery of a large number of coin-moulds of the Yaudheya tribe from Khokra Kot.

We next hear about the Yaudheyas in the 4th century A.D. in the days of the Guptas when according to the inscription of Samudragupta on Asoka Pillar at Allahabad, they paid tribute to the Gupta empire. The drummers of Rohtak playing folk music in Yaudheya tunes to the accompaniment of lutes were known as far as the famous Gupta city of Ujjain. There is nothing worthy of note about Rohtak in the years following the decline of the Guptas except that it changed hands between the rulers of Kashmir and the Rajput Gurjara-Pratiharas who ruled over an extensive empire from Kanauj. The Pehowa inscription of A.D. 882 discovered in the Karnal district, proves that it was included in the empire of Bhoja of the latter dynasty. Rohtak and the adjoining area came under the Tomara Rajputs who ruled over the 'Hariyana' country from their capital 'Dhillika', i.e. modern Delhi, traditionally founded in A.D. 736. It appears from the account of village settlements based on local studies made by Fanshawe in his Settlement Report of 1880 that about the 9th and 10th centuries, a number of Rajput clans as well as communities of Jats came to settle in this area. They founded their villages in waste jungle or occupied settled sites. The local distribution of these communities led him to conclude that the Jats followed the Rajputs who had immigrated into India at an earlier period and had become more completely Hinduised by the time the Jats appeared on the scene.

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The Tomara Rajputs ruled over 'Hariyana' from Delhi when the Ghaznavids invaded India from the north-west. The kingdom of Lahore was annexed by the Ghaznavids by 1020. Sultan Masud, the successor of Sultan Mahmud, in the effort to extend his power, advanced towards Hansi and invested the fort. After the fall of Hansi he marched to Sonapat and defeated its governor, Dipal Har.² While the Tomaras of Delhi succeeded in recovering these territories, they made no

1. The word 'Hariyana' occurred in a Delhi Museum Inscription dated A.D. 1328 which referred to this region as a very heaven on earth and included Delhi (Dhillika) in it. It comprised the whole tract of land bounded by the Himalayas in the north, the Rajasthan desert and the Aravallis in the south, the Ganga basin in the east and the Satluj basin in the west.

2. R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. V, *The struggle for Empire*, p. 93.

attempt to oust the Muslims from the kingdom of Lahore. The later Ghaznavids were not able to extend their power. Nor did the Tomaras attempt to oust them. In this way for about a century and a half the Muslims and the Rajputs co-existed side by side. This position however changed with the fall of the Ghaznavids, when the kingdom of Lahore fell into the hands of the Ghuris and the Tomaras of Delhi were overpowered by the Chahamanas.

The Chahamanas of Ajmer, after subduing the Tomaras by the middle of the 12th century soon came face to face with the Ghuris. After taking Lahore in 1186, Muhammad Ghuri encountered the Chahamanas under Prithviraja. Beaten in his first encounter in 1190-91 at Tarain (Taraori), fourteen miles from Thanesar in the Karnal district, he came back the following year to defeat Prithviraja in 1192. In conquering that portion of Haryana which now lies in the present district of Rohtak, he destroyed the most important town of Maham which was re-built many years later under settled conditions.

The Sultanate of Delhi established in 1206 depended on the support of Muslim nobles. On account of its nearness to Delhi, the Rohtak area influenced the struggles among the aspirants for the throne of Delhi. The restless Hindu chiefs of the area, ready to assert their independence, were kept in check by the newly-settled Muslim chiefs, whose own loyalty and support were determined by motives of self-interest. The Haryana area in general and the Rohtak area with its population of Jats and Rajputs in particular, could therefore be a source of strength or weakness to the Sultans depending on the political circumstances and the intrigues and proclivities of the chiefs at a given time. To illustrate this point by a few examples from the history of the Sultanate, Kaikhusrav, grandson of Balban and a rival of Sultan Kaiqubad, was murdered at Rohtak, with the connivance of some local chiefs. Again, towards the end of the Tughluq period just before the invasion of Timur, the nobles of Delhi and Haryana were sharply divided in their loyalties towards the rival claimants to the throne. One group supported Mahmud Shah at Delhi but the amirs of Firuzabad, the Doab, Sambal, Panipat, Jhajjar and Rohtak favoured Nusrat Shah who set up a rival court at Firuzabad,

close to Delhi.¹ Khizr Khan, the Governor of Multan, anxious to take advantage of the anarchy prevailing in the Sultanate after the invasion of Timur, eventually succeeded in founding the Sayyid dynasty with the active support of the amirs of Haryana.² On a later occasion when Humayun after his final defeat at the hands of Sher Shah fled the country he met his brother, Hindal, at Rohtak where they concerted their plans to proceed towards Lahore.

The Sultans, and the Mughal emperors after them, took several measures to improve the Haryana tract by constructing canals. Firuz Tughluq is credited with building five canals, one of which ran from the Satluj as far as Jhajjar. Later, Ali Mardan Khan in the reign of Shah Jahan diverted its water to the Rohtak canal.³

During the Mughal period territories in the Rohtak area often changed hands as a consequence of constant fighting between the Sikhs, Jats, Marathas and the Rajputs. Some changes were also made to serve the administrative purposes of the rulers in Delhi. Under Akbar, the present Rohtak district, a part of the subah of Delhi, fell within the *sarkars* of Delhi and Hissar Firuza and enjoyed political stability.

With the decline of the Mughal empire, territorial ambitions were let loose and the royal decree in this area was only heeded if backed by force. Frequent changes in the ownership of estates were effected either by imperial orders in favour of loyal nobles or were brought about by powerful local parties backing their claims with force. Above all, the Maratha chieftains, Holkar and Sindhia were vigorously engaged in extending their territories in this area. Whoever was in authority, it was the cultivator who suffered by having to pay taxes to changing masters. For example, Maham bestowed by Akbar in jagir on Shahbaz Khan Afghan, was plundered by the Rajputs under Durga Das in the time of Aurangzeb. In subsequent years, the Marathas disregarded the imperial decree with impunity. Emperor Farrukh-siyar granted the Rohtak area along with the rest of Haryana in 1718 to his Minister Rukn-ud-din who transferred it a few years later to the Nawab of Farrukhnagar. This family was in possession of a large

1. R.C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. VI, *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 113

2. *Ibid*, pp. 122-23.

3. No trace of any of these two canals remains now.

part of Haryana including the present district of Rohtak when a Maratha army under Raghunath Rao and Malhar Rao Holkar obliged the reigning Nawab to pay tribute. The custom of demanding tribute and levying contributions was not confined to the Marathas. Prince Ali Gauhar, who later became Emperor Shah Alam II, also followed this course when he visited various parts of the district of Rohtak. The Nawab of Farrukhnagar, who had previously paid tribute to the Marathas and taken a lease of his territory from them, was now forced to pay revenue to the prince also. In his campaign of collections the prince attacked Auliya Khan Baluch of Dadri in the Rohtak district, secured a promise of a large tribute and then came to restore his outpost at Jhajjar.¹ This was, however, not the end of the story. The Mughal emperor along with his wazir, ostensibly set out from Delhi to pursue the prince in order to prevent him from collecting revenues but actually finished by forcing the cultivators of Jhajjar, Dadri, Kaliaana and other places on the Rohtak-Gurgaon border to pay again whatever they could.

The Jats under Suraj Mal dislodged or expelled the Nawab of Farrukhnagar from his estate. Later while Jhajjar passed into the hands of Walter Reinhardt, husband of Begum Samru of Sardhana, Gohana, Maham, Rohtak and Kharkhauda were held by nominees of Najib Khan, Amir-ul-umara to Emperor Shah Alam. Between 1785 and 1803, the area of Rohtak was possessed by several parties. The northern part of the present district was with the Raja of Jind, while the southern and western parts were held precariously by the Marathas who were defied by the Jats and constantly attacked by the Sikhs. At this stage, we should turn our attention to the colourful personality of George Thomas who carved out a principality in Haryana in 1798 including Beri, Maham and Jhajjar.

George Thomas, an Irish adventurer, whose name is intimately connected with historical events in the Rohtak district was a remarkable character. Coming to India in 1780-81, he remained for a short time in the service of Begum Samru before being adopted by Appa Kandi Rao 'as his son'. This Maratha chieftain operating under the overlordship of Mahadaji Sindhia, gave the parganas of Jhajjar, Beri, Mandothi and Pataudah to George Thomas in return for the forces which he was required to maintain. It was a gift only in name. In the beginning, George Thomas only succeeded in obtaining possession of Beri; eventually, he asserted his authority over the adjacent territory and

1. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 116.

made Jhajjar his headquarters and erected the fort of Georgegarh (the modern Jahazgarh or Husaingunj). A little later, when he was required to raise troops for Sindhia, he was put in possession of the parganas of Panipat, Sonapat and Karnal. His growing power filled his mind with ambition. After consolidating his position at Jhajjar, he thought of establishing an independent principality for himself in the tract known as Hariyana which owing to the troubled state of the times had for many years past acknowledged no master.¹ Accordingly, Thomas established himself at Hansi from where he commanded a circle of 800 villages including Maham. He had to campaign against the Rajputs, Sikhs and Marathas to retain his territories. Sindhia now became jealous of Thomas's progress and ordered General M. Perron (Governor of the Ganga Doab) to attack him in 1801. The operations launched by the Marathas incited the rulers of neighbouring territories, the Sikhs, Jats and Rajputs to join hands against their formidable adversary. Thomas was outmatched in numbers when the siege of Georgegarh began, but he decided to fight. Betrayed by several of his chief officers, he proceeded towards Hansi where he abandoned his claims to power. He died soon afterwards at Burhanpur while on his way to Calcutta. It was not, however, the Marathas under Sindhia who were destined to become supreme in this area.

THE BRITISH PERIOD

Within two years of the abandonment of his dominion by George Thomas, the rising power of Sindhia in North India was completely broken by the British forces under General Lake in the Second Maratha War. The Rohtak district, with other possessions of Sindhia west of the Yamuna, passed on to the British East India Company by the treaty of Surji Arjungaon in 1803.

General Lake was of the view that the British should not hold large territories beyond the Yamuna. Accordingly, he established a number of estates to serve as buffer outposts between the British border and the Sikhs. Territories were thus granted to the chiefs of Dujana, Jhajjar, Bahadurgarh, Pataudi, Jind and Kaithal. Out of all these, the history of Dujana, Jhajjar and Bahadurgarh estates which now form part of the Rohtak district is given below.

The Dujana family was descended from Nawab Abd-us Samad Khan. Beginning his career as a *risaldar* in the service of Peshwa

1. *Rohtak District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 77.

Baji Rao, he transferred his allegiance to the British. General Lake granted him the estate of Dujana for his services at Bharatpur and in the pursuit of Jaswant Rao Holkar. Finding himself incapable of holding a large jagir, he retained only the grant of villages of Dujana and Mehrana in 1811. His grandson Hassan Ali Khan was the Nawab of Dujana when the Uprising of 1857 took place. General Lake granted Jhajjar and Bahadurgarh to Nawab Nijabat Ali Khan, a leader of free lances, who, like Abd-us Samad Khan had also transferred his allegiance to the British. The Bahadurgarh jagir was included in the Jhajjar grant but specifically in favour of Mohammad Ismael Khan, brother of Nawab Nijabat Ali Khan. The Nawab's family claimed a brilliant military tradition of service, first under Ali Vardi Khan, the Mughal Viceroy of Bengal, then under the Nawab of Oudh and finally under the banner of the Mughal imperial army. He is described as having been a fine soldier and a cool-headed and farseeing man. While he lived in Delhi, his son Faiz Mohammad Khan, on assuming charge of the jagir, constructed many buildings at Jhajjar, introduced and encouraged the manufacture of salt, re-established deserted villages and built the Badli bund. He gathered at his court poets and learned men and altogether showed himself to be an able and worthy chief until his death in 1835. His grandson Nawab Abd-ur-Rahman Khan built the palace in the Jehanara garden, and the residence and the tank at Chhuchhakwas. Both the jagirs of Jhajjar and Bahadurgarh of this family were confiscated after the Uprising of 1857.

Uprising of 1857

The greater part of the population in the country between the Yamuna and the Satluj showed sympathy with the Uprising of 1857. In the Rohtak district,¹ the Ranghars and Jats who had been serving in the regular regiments of the East India Company in large numbers were discontented with their British masters. The sepoys of these regiments coming home on leave spread disaffection among the villagers. Noticing these symptoms, John Adam Loch, Collector of Rohtak, took steps to preserve order by calling into headquarters all the sepoys who were on leave in the district. The

1. The formation of the Rohtak district dates from 1809 when the Dujana chief abandoned the gift. It assumed its status as a district in 1824. The territorial changes, additions and alterations which took place thereafter have been detailed in Chapter I.

horsemen sent to Rohtak for help by the Nawab of Jhajjar in response to the demand of the Collector proved very unruly and in fact inflamed the villagers as they came along. As the days passed, the dissatisfied sections of the population began to stir the entire population against the British. The arrival of Tafazzal Hussain, an emissary of Emperor Bahadur Shah with a small force in Rohtak added fuel to the fire. The Collector, John Adam Loch, found himself in a difficult situation. Failing to give fight to Tafazzal Hussain, he fled to Gohana with Thanedar Bhure Khan. The other officials and Europeans followed his example to run away. Unopposed, the troops burnt the offices, courts and bungalows of the British officials. They destroyed official records, plundered the wealthy people in the town and forced their way into the District Jail to set free the prisoners inside it. On his way back to Delhi with a part of the Rohtak Treasury in his possession, Tafazzal Hussain attacked the town of Sampla where he burnt all the buildings in which the Europeans lived. The customs bungalows at Maham, Madina and Mandothi were also burnt down. True that the troops of Tafazzal Hussain did not soil their hands with British blood but they had done enough damage in the Rohtak area before returning to Delhi. All outward signs of law and order now disappeared for a time. The Ranghars hoisted their own flag. Hearing how things had gone well, the Emperor of Delhi issued a proclamation to the people of Rohtak forbidding acts of violence and enjoining obedience to the landlords who were loyal to his cause.

The arrival of the 60th Regiment of Native Infantry under Thomas Seaton, accompanied by Loch, the Collector, checked disorder for a while. This regiment was encamped in the compound of the District Courts but its loyalty could not be relied upon in view of its deteriorating morale. The expected happened on the afternoon of the 10th June when the grenadier company which had all along been the spearhead of insubordination revolted and seized their arms. As the European officers rode away, they were fired upon by their men. Turning their back on Rohtak these officers made for Delhi and reached the Ridge on the morning of the 11th June. Loch fled on foot to Sampla and thence on horseback to Bahadurgarh from where he reached Delhi.

With no one in command of the administration, chaos reigned supreme. The local chiefs engaged themselves in fierce feuds to settle old scores. The Ranghars used the opportunity to collect in large numbers under the leadership of one Babar Khan. The British feared that these rebel forces in the Rohtak area would

impede the advance of the siege train on its way to Delhi from Ferozepur. Capt. Hodson of the British army was sent from Delhi with a small force to prevent the rebels from doing so. After dealing with the men of the irregular corps whom he encountered at Kharkhauda, Hodson proceeded towards Rohtak where he successfully engaged the Ranghars in an action. He then returned to Delhi trusting that the loyal Raja of Jind would be able to maintain a semblance of order in the area.

The authority of the British Government in Rohtak was not restored until 13 days after the fall of Delhi. In September, General Van Cortlandt marched into the district to punish all concerned in the Uprising. The villages which were prominent in their opposition to the British were fined a total of Rs. 63,000 while the lands of those who were considered guilty were confiscated. The worst sufferers were the Ranghars.

Abd-ur-Rahman Khan, Nawab of Jhajjar, was suspected of having abetted the rebels and others who were waging war against the British Government. While he had ignored the appeals of the British authorities for assistance, he had most readily put into effect the orders of Emperor Bahadur Shah, furnished him troops, presented him with a *nazar* and had remained in regular correspondence with the imperial court. The suspicion against him was strengthened by the fact that his father-in-law, Abd-us Samad Khan, had fought against the British at Delhi. Col. Lawrence summoned the Nawab to come to Chhuchhakwas and surrender himself, which he did on the 18th October, after which the fort of Jhajjar was occupied. The Jhajjar territory was placed under the management of Col. Lawrence pending the result of the Nawab's trial, which took place at Delhi in the Audience Hall before a Military Commission on the 14th December. Having been found guilty, the Nawab was sentenced to be hanged. He was executed on the 23rd December in front of the Red Fort and his body was consigned to the ignominy of a nameless pit.

Bahadur Jang Khan, Nawab of Bahadurgarh, was at Dadri in May 1857, and remained there until he surrendered to the British like his cousin, the Nawab of Jhajjar. He had not taken any active part against the British except that he had sent an offering to the emperor and addressed him a letter of praise. Besides, the rebels of Delhi had drawn supplies from Bahadurgarh. Taking all these things into consideration, together with his old age, it was decided not to

try him for life, but to confiscate his possessions. The Nawab was removed to Lahore where he was given a pension of Rs. 1,000 a month.

Political Upheaval

Apart from the jagirdars who were punished for their anti-British activities during the Uprising of 1857, the Rohtak district itself suffered a set-back. The district along with the south-east Punjab, roughly comprising Haryana, which had hitherto been a part of the North-Western Provinces was tagged to the Punjab. It was not included in any of the development programmes though the Government was not averse to using the martial spirit of the people by turning it into a recruiting ground for the British army. Rohtak thus became a backward district in which the pace of change and development was slow. In such circumstances, various factors combined to engender discontentment. The resources of the peasants were crippled by many years of drought and famine after 1895. Many of them, immersed in debt, would have been dispossessed of their lands but for the Land Alienation Act of 1900. Moreover, the Jats returning home after service in the First World War became deeply conscious of the backwardness of their land. They realised that their lot could be improved only through political awakening and by and by this feeling was shared by a large number of people.

The Arya Samaj movement in its own way accelerated the desire for reform. Starting in about 1890 with a *mandir* in Rohtak, the Arya Samaj movement soon spread to Sanghi, Maham, Jhajjar and Mahra. It laid great stress on starting educational institutions and removing untouchability. This programme, creating a new social consciousness, spread gradually from urban to rural areas.

Political consciousness was engendered by the Indian National Congress whose programme began to attract attention. On October 12, 1888 a Congress meeting attended by many lawyers and Honorary Magistrates was held at Chopal Dehri, Rohtak, under the presidentship of Torabaz Khan where Lala Lajpat Rai spoke. About the same time the Arya Samaj added to excitement by focussing public attention on its programme of anti-cow slaughter. The Government met the situation in 1910 by proclaiming the district under the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1907.

At this stage, a local leader appeared on the scene whose dynamic personality was to exercise a deep influence on public life of the Punjab for many years to come. This personality was Chhotu Ram. Born in a Jat family of Garhi Sampla, he shifted to Rohtak to practise as a lawyer towards the end of 1912. As a member of the Arya Samaj, he soon became a popular figure in social and legal circles. The emphasis he laid on social, economic and educational advancement created a consciousness among the peasantry of their political rights also. The Jat Sabha which Chhotu Ram founded, aroused their feelings against indebtedness, litigation and bribery. The *Jat Gazette*, founded at Rohtak in 1916, began to publicise the interests of the zamindars in general.

During the First World War the effort of the Rohtak district in supplying manpower to the army and making substantial contributions to various funds placed it among the first five districts of the province. Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy made a special visit to Rohtak as a mark of appreciation.

Chhotu Ram's mind was already leaning towards the interests of the rural masses. The war became a turning point in his political career. Realising that before long, India would benefit by political reforms, he aligned his programme to the amelioration of the zamindars and rural masses in the whole of the province. This extended field of activity turned him into a prominent figure in the national affairs of the country. He began to take a leading share in the welfare of zamindars. Judging in terms of the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1919, which gave a distinct political advantage to the rural areas by creating special constituencies of great landholders and giving a commanding majority of rural seats in the Provincial Council, this effort was entirely worth-while.

During these years, while the Government was going ahead with its programme of political reform, the programmes of the Indian National Congress were also being actively carried out in the district. In response to the call given by Mahatma Gandhi in 1919, hartals were observed and demonstrations were held in March-April at Rohtak, Sonapat, Bahadurgarh, Jhajjar and other places as a protest against the Rowlatt Acts which were passed to give more executive powers to the government to intern people without trial. Meetings were also held to protest against Gandhiji's arrest at Palwal when he was on his way to Delhi. The proximity to Delhi intensified all these programmes in the district.

The news of the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh on April 13, 1919, struck the people of Rohtak with horror. On April 14, demonstrations were held throughout the district and public property was damaged by angry mobs at Rohtak, Samar Gopalpur and Gohana. Excitement ran high. The Government strengthened the executive authorities with greater powers to suppress the disturbances with a strong hand.

The Indian National Congress was not taking the acts of repression lying down. In 1920, Gandhiji in alliance with Ali Brothers, the Khilafat leaders, launched an All-India campaign of non-violent non-co-operation to bring the British administration to a standstill. A district conference, organised at Rohtak in November 1920, and attended by ten to fifteen thousand persons, passed a resolution to launch non-co-operation. Being strongly opposed to this move, Chhotu Ram and his followers severed their connection with the Congress. But under the influence of Gandhiji in the country the non-co-operation movement progressed in Rohtak. A Swaraj Ashram to serve as office, reading-room and hostel for workers was established on Railway Road, Rohtak. In response to Gandhiji's call to do away with Government sponsored institutions, Jat High School and Vaish High School, Rohtak, disaffiliated themselves from the University of the Panjab. Gandhiji and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad addressed a large public meeting at Kalanaur after an attempt to hold a Khilafat meeting at Sonapat had been thwarted. In 1921, following the all-India line, the District Congress Committee decided to propagate the Congress programme in depth by forming Tahsil Congress Committees. Jhajjar responded to this effort by hoisting the Congress flag at the town hall. The Government damped the spirits of the people by arresting the leaders from Jhajjar, Rohtak, Maham and a few villages. The non-co-operation movement had not made much headway but the Congress tried to keep up the public morale by organising a provincial political conference at Rohtak towards the end of 1922.

The Congress had not participated in the general elections of 1920, held under the Government of India Act, 1919. The dissidents, Chhotu Ram and Lal Chand, however, contested the election and won. Two years later, the question was hotly debated in the Congress circles as to whether any change was desirable in the Congress attitude towards the legislatures. This resulted in the emergence of the Swarajya Party whose aim was to win as many seats in the legislative bodies as possible and to hinder the working of the legislatures from within.

A branch of the Swarajya Party was formed at Rohtak under the Leadership of Shri Ram Sharma, whose local paper, the *Haryana Tilak* came to be regarded as the organ of the Congress in this region. The candidates of the Swarajya Party were returned from the urban constituencies whereas rural seats were captured by the Zamindara League of Lal Chand and Chhotu Ram. The Swarajya Party came to an end in the district after the death in 1925 of Deshbandhu C. R. Das, one of its founders.

A few years later, another factor which kept the agitation against the British at a high pitch in the whole country was the appointment of the Simon Commission in 1928. Rohtak and Jhajjar Municipal Committees expressed their dissatisfaction by adopting a resolution protesting against the Commission. In March 1929, a provincial political conference held at Rohtak was addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru. A few months later, the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in Lahore reached a momentous decision. It was resolved that the goal of India henceforward would not be dominion status but complete independence. The All-India Congress Committee was required to launch a programme of civil disobedience and to observe the 26th of January as Independence Day throughout the country. The Rohtak district responded to this programme well. The national week was celebrated with great enthusiasm. Shops selling foreign goods and liquor were picketed. Vigorous propaganda dissuaded large numbers of students from attending local educational institutions where many students gave up their studies. Foreign cloth was burnt in bonfires. The leaders who organised this programme and called a meeting at Rohtak to advise people to remain firm were arrested and drafted to different jails all over the province. They were only released with prisoners from other districts when the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was made in 1931. The Congress on its part called off its programme of civil disobedience. All hopes were then fixed on the decisions of the Round Table Conference in London which Gandhiji was to attend as the sole representative of the Congress.

While the District Congress Committee of Rohtak suspended its programme of civil disobedience as required, it did very useful organisational work during the Gandhi-Irwin Pact period. Conferences were held and more than 200 Congress Committees were formed. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, invited to address a provincial conference stressed the need of Hindu-Muslim unity. This conference was attended by a large number of ladies and for the first time a Sewa Dal camp

was started at Rohtak in November 1931, to impart training to Congress volunteers.

The talks in London failed and Gandhiji returned home to renew the programme of civil disobedience which had been suspended. Congress workers in the district once more responded to the national call and despite the repressive measures of Government continued to carry out the programme of civil disobedience until the Congress High Command terminated it in 1934.

After the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Congress decided to participate in the elections to the legislatures and the local bodies which were to be held after the passing of the Government of India Act, 1935. Unlike six other provinces in India in which the Congress ministries formed the Government, the Punjab came to be governed by the Unionist Party based on the programme of the Zamindara League.

The District Congress Committee however continued to carry out its programme of establishing contact with the masses in rural areas.

The outbreak of World War II overshadowed all other events. The Congress refused to co-operate with the Government because the Governor General and Viceroy had declared without consulting representative governments in the provinces that India would join the Allies. The Congress ministries resigned office in protest and the Civil Disobedience Movement was revived in the district. *Satyagrahis* who shouted slogans were arrested. Among the imprisoned *Satyagrahis* was Shri Ram Sharma who made a whirlwind tour of the district before courting arrest.

The District Congress Committee unanimously supported the 'Quit India' resolution adopted by the Congress in 1942. The arrest of Gandhiji in August 1942, was followed by hartals and processions over nearly the whole of the district. The repressive measures of the Government provoked arson and violence at many places. An effort was made to set at fire the library of the Government College, Rohtak, on October 31, 1942. Telephone wires were cut, fish-plates were removed from railway lines and letter-boxes were burnt by reactionary elements in the movement. A sizeable number of people courted arrest.

The national upsurge expressed itself in another way during the war. Subhash Chandra Bose organised the Indian National Army from

among those serving on the south-east Asia front in the British Indian army. Bose's death was mourned in Rohtak as a great national loss and the I.N.A. week was observed with great enthusiasm.

After India achieved independence on August 15, 1947, the princely States were merged in the Indian Union. The Rohtak district assumed its present form in 1948 by the merger of the erstwhile Dujana State into it. The migration of large numbers of people from West Punjab created numerous problems of settlement and social re-adjustment. The last two decades have witnessed change in many directions. The subsequent Chapters will throw light on what developments have been made in different spheres of activity during the last two decades.

One of the most significant of these changes has been the formation of Haryana as a separate State on November 1, 1966. Since then the following ministries have existed under the leadership of the Chief Ministers whose names are given below:

Name	From	To
Bhagwat Dayal Sharma	November 1, 1966	March 24, 1967 (Forenoon)
Birender Singh	March 24, 1967	November 21, 1967 (Forenoon)
Bansi Lal	May 21, 1968	Continuing

During the period between November 21, 1967, and May 21, 1968, the State remained under the President's rule.

We are too near the present to view the historical importance of these changes.