CHAPTER VI

Resistance and Popular Rising
Advent of Surendra Sai:

The second phase of Surendera Sai's war against the British began in 1857. During the rebellion of 1857 two companies of the Bengal Native Infantry, known as Chhota Burdwan Ka Pultun, were stationed at Hazaribagh. On the 30th of July 1857 they revolted. A Detachment of the Ramgarh Light Infantry Battalion was sent from Doronda1 to save Hazaribagh, but it joined the rebels on the 31st of July. The rebels broke open the jail of the town and set the prisoners free. Surendra Sai, then in conviction in Hazaribagh Jail for Rampur affairs, was released by the mutinous sepoys. He followed these two companies of mutineers for some days. The two companies of mutineers proceeded to Chaibasa and some of them joined with the Raja of Porahat who revolted in the month of September 1857. There was a sympathetic revolt of the Detachment of the Ramgarh Battalion stationed at Chaibasa but the Zamindar of Singhbhum did not support them readily. The prospects of an immediate rebellion with the local support being gloomy, Surendra Sai with his brother Udant Sai decided to back to their native district to reorganise the tribal people and Zamindars for whom they fought seventeen years ago.

The two brothers proceeded through the dense and unfrequented forest of Chhota Nagpur, Singhbhum, Gangpur and Sambalpur. There were many a handicap. Surendra Sai did not know whether his people were indisposed to rise in revolt and whether they were dissatisfied with the administration of the East India Company or not. Further, he was a fugitive and an escaped prisoner. He was declared as a rebel by the British authorities2 and a reward of Rs.250/- had been declared for

1 Being a suburb of Ranchi, it was the Head quarters of Ramgarh-Battalion.
his apprehension and for the arrest of his brother Udant Sai\(^1\). However, they were joined by all nearby Zamindars. The Kolabira Zamindar was the most powerful of these Chiefs and his going in heart and soul for the rebel cause inspired others to join by mere influence. A few, however, held aloof, one of them was Govinda Sing of Jharsuguda who had previously revolted against the Rani Mohan Kumari. The fact was that he looked upon himself as the rightful heir to the Gaddi of Sambalpur and did not, therefore, support the revolution of Surendra Sai\(^2\).

Capt. Leigh was by that time the Principal Assistant Commissioner of Sambalpur. He got alarmed and impatient at the news of the approach of Surendra Sai. Capt. Leigh despatched ‘Purwanas’ to all the Garjat Rajas and Zamindars directing them to be on the alert and to apprehend the rebels and send some of their armed retainers for assistance of the troops stationed at Sambalpur\(^3\). He also approached G.F. Cockburn, the Commissioner of Cuttack for assistance. Accordingly, two companies of the 40\(^{th}\) Madras Native Infantry left Cuttack for Sambalpur on the 26\(^{th}\) of August 1857 under Capt. Hawkins accompanied by Lt. Hart and Ensign Napier\(^4\).

As the Detachment stationed at Sambalpur belonged to the Ramgarh Battalion, Capt. Leigh assembled them on a parade on the morning of the 15\(^{th}\) of August and exhorted them to remain loyal to the

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2 L.S.S.O’Malley, op.cit., p.34.
Government. He despatched spies to ascertain the movements of the Sai brothers. Further, he was of the opinion that the police and military force at Sambalpur should be strengthened as the Calcutta-Bombay Mail commenced passing through the route and Sambalpur was a pass of the utmost importance. Accordingly, Capt. Leigh proposed to entertain one Jamadar, one Duffadar, and 50 extra police Burkandazee add hoped that it would be approved. There used to be regular correspondence at short intervals mainly on three matters, i.e. the whereabouts of the two rebels, the fidelity of the Ramgarh Battalion stationed at Sambalpur, and the assistance, if any, rendered by the Rajas and Zamindars to the British Government. In spite of these steps, the where-about of Surendra Sai and Udant Sai was not known, and the Rajas and Zamindars did not respond to the notice, so a second 'purwanas' was sent by Capt. Leigh.

But the Detachment of the Ramgarh Battalion showed all loyalty to the British Government. Persons like Subadar Sheik Panchkaudi and Jamadar Harinath Sing rendered invaluable services to the British Government. Capt. Leigh declared a reward of Rs.250/- for the apprehension of Surendra Sai and Udant Sai in each case. The services of Capt. Leigh and of the Subedar were appreciated by the Capt. Dalton.

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2 Letter No.43, dated 22.8.1857, from Senior Assistant Commissioner, Sambalpur to Commissioner, Chhota Nagpur (B.R.R., Sambalpur).
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
Both Surendra Sai and Udant Sai entered the Sambalpur District towards the end of September 1857. The Tribal Zamindars and Gauntias who were groaning under the British tyranny, rallied round him and promised to fight against the Government under his leadership. Surendra Sai, having collected a large force, marched straight into the town of Sambalpur and established himself within the precincts of the old fort which was, however, in ruin. He made representation to Capt. Leigh that the sentences on him and his brother should be remitted at once and that he should be recognised as the Raja of Sambalpur. The representation was duly forwarded to the Government. However, Capt. Leigh acted cautiously and sent one purwanah to Surendra Sai and Udant Sai through two sepoys of the Ramgarh Light Infantry. The sepoys returned and informed that Surendra Sai had with him about two thousand men of whom one thousand were match-lock men. Capt. Leigh thought it best to temporise with the rebels for many reasons. First, the troops at Sambalpur had a sick temperament and it was necessary to leave adequate force to protect Sambalpur. Secondly, he also believed that in the event of a disturbance, most of the Zamindars would side with Surendra Sai. Thirdly, he wanted to gain the advantage of getting two more companies from Cuttack. Accordingly, he sent a second purwanah to Surendra Sai and waited for a response from the rebel leader.

On the 7th of October 1857 Surendra Sai and his brother consented to come, if Capt. Leigh would guarantee their safety. When the assurance was given, they came and professed that they had no

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1 L.S.S.O'Malley, op.cit., p.37.
intention of creating any disturbances and that they sought for a remittance of the remainder of their sentences. Capt. Leigh suggested them to disperse their force so that he could listen to their request. Then, Surendra Sai had about 1000 to 12000 armed men with him. Surendra Sai further met Capt. Leigh on the 8th morning and Capt. Leigh strictly ordered him to disperse the force. He requested the Commissioner, Cuttack and Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals that out of four light howitzer, he should send two. He further suggested that a couple of guns and a large Detachment might be kept at the remote station of Sambalpur. In forwarding the two petitions of Surendra Sai giving the terms of reconciliation, Capt. Leigh offered his views that "the petitioner entertains the hope which is, of course, utterly vain" but as regards remission of his term of imprisonment, he could possibly expect a remission.

Ultimately Udant Sai, leaving his brother with some followers, left Sambalpur. Surendra Sai was put under the charge of the Ramgarh Battalion. Capt. Leigh virtually restricted his movement and asked him to stay at Sambalpur till the Government orders on his representation were received. Capt. Dalton, the Commissioner of Chhota Nagpur recommended to the Government of Bengal that the sentence on the Sai brothers would be remitted on the condition that they must reside either at Ranch or at Cuttack but there was no question of considering

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the claim of Surendra Sai to the Gaddi of Sambalpur. G.F. Cockburn, the Commissioner of Cuttack, further suggested to Capt. Leigh to persuade Surendra Sai, and Udant Sai to agree to their removal to Cuttack as a proof of their unconditional submission to Government. Surendra Sai, however, was treated as a political prisoner at Sambalpur, and his residence was closely guarded. Meanwhile, for the sake of reinforcement, three companies of the 40th Madras Native Infantry arrived at Sambalpur. Another company left for Sambalpur on the 22nd of October in-charge of two Mountain Howitzer and a small detachment of artillery under Capt. Hadow of the Madras Artillery. Cockburn thought that these six companies would enable Capt. Leigh "to overcome all opposition to order and good Government". In addition to these troops, the Tahasildar of Baud had also voluntarily come down to Sambalpur with 30 of his sebundies and he with them, was detained at Sambalpur so that they might be helpful in resisting any disturbances. The consequence of all these arrangement was that Surendra Sai scented trouble and made his escape in the night of the 31st of October 1857. He joined his brother Udant Sai at Khinda.

The rebellion of Sambalpur in 1857 was mainly a tribal rebellion. Almost all the tribal Zamindars and Gauntias joined it, espousing the cause of Surendra Sai and played a significant role in it. Their Zamindaries were confiscated, some of them were killed in the battle, some were arrested and hanged and many were imprisoned.

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2 Letter No.211, dated 4.11.1857, from Cockburn to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal (B.R.R. Sambalpur).
3 A. Das, op.cit, p.27.
4 Ibid.
5 Letter No.74, dated 1.11.1857, from Capt. Leigh to Capt. Dalton.
Surendra Sai could challenge the mighty British Government relying solely on the strength and support of these tribal leaders.

The Preparation

After the escape of Surendra Sai, the scene of rebellion was widespread throughout the Sambalpur District. An extensive preparation was undertaken to meet the British authority at every stage. In each village armed people were kept ready to meet the situation. The Zamindars of Lakhanpur, Ghens, Kolabira, Kodabaga, Bheden, Kharsai, Pahadsirgida, Patkulunda, Loisinga etc. joined hands with Surendra Sai. In the early part of 1858, Capt. Shakespeare with the Cavalry Regiment attacked the Singhora pass where Madho Sing, the Zamindar of Ghens, was stationed but could not hold it and had to retreat. In the later part of the year Madho Sing was captured and was hanged. His three sons Hathi Sing, Kunjal Sing and Bairi Sing took charge of the pass and defended it till the last resort. Other strategic forts of the rebels were Pahadsirgida, Pupanga and Maula Bhanja near Rengali. But the central stronghold was at Debrigarh, a peak in the Barapahar range of hills with a height of 691 metres. The fort was a noted rebel stronghold during the revolt of Balabhadora Dao, the Zamindar of Lakhanpur, who was killed here. His three sons Kamal Sing, Nilambar Sing and Khageswar Sing gave their support to Surendra Sai and remained in charge of the Debrigarh fort. The powerful organisation of Surendra Sai with his superior leadership baffled the British power equipped with modern arms and ammunition.

2 Ibid.
War Operation

Capt. Leigh, though informed about the activities, hesitated to take any immediate step until he received the guns which were due to be supplied. However, one company of the 40th Regiment of the Madras Native Infantry with others arrived at Sambalpur on the 4th of November 1857 under the command of Lt. Hadow of the Madras Artillery and on the following day under the command of Capt. J.B. Knocker, they were sent towards Chhota Nagpur road to disperse the hostile combination of men and to apprehend Surendra Sai, Udant Sai and Karuna Gartia of Kolabira. Babu Rai Rup Sing Bahadur, Munsif and Native Assistant was directed to accompany them. When the party arrived at Jharghaty, there was a brief fighting. The rebels dispersed leaving behind them a vast quantity of rice and ration. The casualty on the side of the rebels could not be ascertained. One sepoy of the detachment was wounded. The detachment then proceeded towards Kolabira.

Surendra Sai, Udant Sai and Karuna Gartia took position in the north and north-east of the district. Capt. Knocker was to lead the expedition with the assistance of Rai Rup Sing Bahadur. With the hills on the right, left and front of this party, the rebels opened firing killing one and injuring many. But they could not withstand the British for long and retreated. A detached party was sent to the hills but could not get any of the rebels. The party encamped at Katarbaga for the night. On the following day Capt. Knocker proceeded via Samasingha on the 7th of November to Kolabira which had been vacated and deserted by

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the villagers who resorted to the jungle. The party halted in front of the Gartia's house and found the walls loop holed for firing and the gates were closed. Lt. Hadow fired at the house and got it destroyed.

Capt. Knocker, then proceeded towards Khinda, the village of Surendra Sai and Udant Sai. But to his disappointment he found the village deserted. He also found the house of Surendra Sai perforated to fire in all directions as a defensive measure. The house was fired and destroyed. Capt. Knocker believed that all the rebels had been dispersed and many killed¹.

Dinabandhu Patnaik, the Tahasildar of Khondmal played his role in helping the British². He, in obedience to Capt. Leigh, deputed spies to Gangpur, Bamra, Rairakhol, Raigarh, Ratanpur and Barpali. The spies reported that almost all the Zamindars of the estates were loyal to Surendra Sai. G.F. Cockburn, the Commissioner of Cuttack regretted to learn that Surendra Sai and Udant Sai had escaped but appreciated the services of Dinabandhu Patnaik³.

The next sensational event was the Jujomura operation. The British troops stationed at Sambalpur were subjected to frequent illness owing to the unhealthy interiors through which they had to operate. The Commissioner of Cuttack made arrangement to send two European doctors Dr. T Moore and Dr. Hanson with corps of sebundies recruited from the Ganjam Hill region. On reaching Rampur, the Headquarters of the Rairakhol king, the party could come to know from the king that the road was not safe owing to the rebels. Dr. Moore therefore,

² Ibid.
³ Letter No.214 (Political), dated 6.11.1857, from Cockburn to Secretary to Government of Bengal (O.S.A.).
requested Capt. Leigh to send out a guard to escort him as well as Dr. Hanson. On the 17th morning Capt. Leigh despatched 25 sebundies to escort the two officers. But in the meantime the party, being escorted by 20 bearers provided by the king of Rairakhol, resumed the journey. The party was attacked by the insurgents led by Madhu Gauntia of Loisingha. Dr. Moore was killed on the spot.

Dr. Hanson was lucky to escape by hiding himself in the jungle and later on was rescued by the Government soldiers sent by Dinabandhu Patnaik of Khondmal. Capt. Leigh on receiving the information made arrangement to proceed to Jujomura with Ensign Napier of the 40th Regiment of the Madras Native Infantry and a detachment of 150 men. But the marches undertaken by him yielded no results. He was attacked by the rebels on the road, two sepoys were killed on the spot, one died of wound, and many were severely wounded. He again requested for more force as the district was in a very disturbed state.

The death of Dr. Moore was the first great shock for the Company's Government. The whole region around Sambalpur was in the hands of the insurgents who were daily firing at Government pockets. The Calcutta-Bombay mail had also been obstructed on the road west of Sambalpur for several days and two Dak houses were burnt down by the rebels. The rebels were taking position in different directions, all the roads were in the possession of the insurgents and no

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1 Letter No. Nil, dated 27.12.1857, from Cockburn to Secretary to Government (O.S.A).
3 L.S.S.O'Malley, op.cit., p.32.
Cockburn had taken a stern attitude to suppress the rebellion. He issued stern warning to the Rajas and Zamindars who nurtured sympathy for the rebels. The Raja of Bamra was suspected and was reminded of the fate of the Raja of Angul who was imprisoned and his estate confiscated for his rebellious conduct. Cockburn now tried to restore confidence by sending more troops. Capt. Woodbridge, Lt. Vallance and Capt. Sweeny were sent to Sambalpur to meet the situation. On the 5th of December 1857, two companies of the 5th Madras Native Infantry left for Sambalpur. On the 7th of December Maj. Bates himself left for Sambalpur with the remaining two companies of the 40th Madras Native Infantry consisting of 140 men. Out of few Mountain Howitzer guns which had been kept at Cuttack, two had already been sent to Sambalpur with Capt. Hadow. Maj. Bates wanted to take the other two leaving the “old and useless guns” for the defense of Cuttack, without any artillery men to use them. Lt. Macneill, the Agent for Orissa Hill Tracts was asked to raise immediately a levy of Ghumsur men, who were peculiarly suited for

jungle warfare, to serve in Sambalpur, and accordingly, the Agent did so and they were despatched to Sambalpur¹.

Sambalpur was transferred to the Cuttack Division on the 19th of December 1857². The reason was that it was difficult to control Sambalpur from the north and the Commissioner of Chhota Nagpur was pressed with work³. Cockburn himself left for Sambalpur accompanied by a wing of the Madras Native Infantry under Maj. Wyndham and arrived Sambalpur on the 20th of January 1858.

A severe fight, towards the close of 1857, took place between the rebels and the British troops at Kudopali, situated near Dhanupali of the Sambalpur-Cuttack road. The rebels were taken by surprise. Instead of attacking them, Capt. Wood pretended a retreat, there by inducing the enemy to come out to the open. Accordingly, the rebels came out and they were charged by the Cavalry waiting for them. Fifty-three were killed, eleven taken prisoners and many wounded⁴. Capt. Wood was wounded on the shoulder with an arrow. Surendra Sai who was reported to be in the encampment escaped⁵. The great loss that the rebels suffered was the death of Chhabila Sai, the fifth brother of Surendra Sai. This was the first great victory of the British against the rebels.

¹ Letter, dated 7.12.1857, from Cockburn to Secretary to Government of Bengal, (B.R.R., Sambalpur)
² L.S.S.O'Malley, op.cit.
⁴ Service message, dated 14.1.1858, from W.M. Gregar to Chief Secretary to Government of India (O.S.A).
The Kudopali battle enhanced the British confidence. Capt. Shakespeare was sent from Raipur with a squadron of Cavalry. He fought his way through the Singhora pass of the Barapahar range and cleared the Raipur-Sambalpur road. The Raja of Patna was fined Ra.1000/- for securing the escape of Ujjal Sai, brother of Surendra Sai. Maj. Bates destroyed the Jharghaty fort, the very stronghold of Udant Sai and opened the Ranchi road.

The rebels led by the Gauntia of Kolabira took position at Champarasa between Sambalpur and Bamra, and burnt it. Maj. Bates marched to Kolabira and after a brief fight arrested the Gauntia and thirteen other influential men. The Gauntia was hanged. The estate was also confiscated. Capt. Leigh with one hundred men of the Madras Native Infantry and thirty of the Ramgarh Battalion attacked Debrigarh, the highest peak in the Barapahar range. Yet he failed to dislodge the rebels. Consequently he repulsed back and a number of his soldiers were killed.

In January 1858, Capt. Shakespeare with his Cavalry regiment attacked the Singhora pass. Hathi Sing, the eldest son of the Ghens Zamindar Madho Sing, was in charge of the garrison there. In a pitched battle, eleven insurgents were killed and Hathi Sing was injured. He was rescued by one of his associates named Kharsal Bhoi. In spite of such reverses it could not be possible for Capt. Shakespeare to hold the pass.

Again in February 1858 Capt. Woodbridge with Capt. Wood were sent to occupy the Singhora pass. They were attacked while they were

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1 L.S.S.O'Malley, op.cit., p.33.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p.34.
4 Sapneswar Das, op.cit., p.74.
marching on a post held by the rebels at Pahadsirigida. Surendra Sai
duly avenged the death of his brother. Capt. Woodbridge was shot-
dead\(^1\). All the rank and files went panic-stricken and fled away
excepting two sepoys of the Ramgarh Battalion. On the 14\(^{th}\) of
February 1858 Capt. Ensign Warlow attacked the position at
Pahadasirigida with a bigger force on the three sides\(^2\). The rebels fled
away. He was able to discover the dead body of Capt. Woodbridge
which was found naked with the head chopped off\(^3\).

Capt. Nicholas, further, made a successful attack on the
inaccessible Barapahar range. Maj. Wyndham opened the Dak road to
Midnapore through the territory of the Raja of Bamra. Capt. Knocker
and Lt. Vallance hunted down the rebels from all directions. Capt.
Dyer destroyed the villages near the vicinity of Sambalpur for
harbouring the rebels. Cockburn confiscated the estates and villages of
those who sided with the rebels\(^4\). Bheden, Lakhanpur, Kharsal,
Kodbaga, Kolabira, Loisinga, Ghens, Patkulundra and Karkutta were the
Zamindaries to be confiscated\(^5\). Then Cockburn left for Cuttack and
Maj. Forster was invested with all civil and military powers with the
rank of a Commissioner. He arrived at Sambalpur on the 23\(^{rd}\) of March
1858\(^6\).

\(^1\) L.S.S.O'Malley, op.cit., p.34.
\(^2\) Letter No.1, dated 15.2.1858, from Capt. Ensign to Capt. Nicholas
(O.S.A).
\(^3\) Letter No.1, dated 15.2.1858, from Capt. Ensign to Capt. Nicholas
(O.S.A).
\(^4\) Letter, dated 7.8.1861, from Secretary to Commissioner, Cuttack to
Secretary to Government of Bengal (O.S.A.).
\(^5\) ibid.
\(^6\) A. Das, op.cit., p.80.
Maj. Forster, being the Administrator of Sambalpur, took stern steps to break the rebellion against the Government. He recommended the confiscated estates of Kolabira, Kharsal, Bheden, Patkulunda and Rampur be granted to Rup Sing for his meritorious services to the Government. The grant was sanctioned by the Government. The Sambalpur jail with a capacity of eighty prisoners had to accommodate three hundred convicts punished by Maj. Forster.

It was in April 1858 a conference of the Rajas and Zamindars was convened where all of them agreed to send contingent to fight against the rebels. The Raja of Patna who had been fined Rs.1000/- for conniving at the escape of Ujjal Sai, subsequently captured him and handed him to the Government. Ujjal Sai was hanged without trial. Government was grateful to the Raja for this act of cooperation and the fine imposed on him was remitted. The Raja of Keonjhar also assisted the Government in preserving order in Chaibasa and in the districts adjoining his state. He sent a force under Dharanidhar Bhanj to help Lt. Birch in suppressing the agitation raised by the Raja of Porahat. Lt. Birch occupied Porahat and hanged Jagu Dewan in front of his palace at Chakradharpur. Also his state was confiscated.

The forts of Ghens and Kharsal were occupied after a pitched battle and the Zamindars were hanged. The Zamindar of Bheden was killed in the battle. In spite of these repressive measures the rebels were not cowed down, and the rebellion against the British now concentrated around Debrigarh. The rebels used to hide themselves in

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1 Ibid., p.81.
3 Ibid.
4 Letter, dated 3.3.1858, from Cockburn to the Secretary to Government of Bengal (O.S.A.).
'Bada Bakhara', a large cave in the hillside in the day time, and in the night there was constant inroad to the Government pockets.

But the activities of Surendra Sai were now extended as far as Rewa in Madhya Pradesh. The Zamindar of Pendra informed Lt. B.V. Ashe, the Deputy Commissioner, Raipur that a large force of rebels under two insurgent leaders, named Goorur Sing and Runwant Sing and some rebel leaders of the district of Sambalpur had entered the Sohagpur Taluk and endeavoured the Malguzars to either join or assist them with men and money; they were encamped at Kodree Koder in Rewa. These rebels also mediated on making an inroad to Sambalpur. Though the leaders were not known definitely yet it appeared that due to the series of reverses at his own end Surendra Sai got himself prepared for a fresh inroad to Sambalpur with the connivance of the insurgents at Rewa. Further, to corroborate it, Surendra Sai was reported to be in Jaspur, a village in Udayapur where he was met with sympathy and got shelter.

For sometime, the activities of Surendra Sai were not coming to the forefront. In the mean time the royal proclamation of amnesty in the last part of 1858 A.D could bring tranquillity in those states who participated in the Indian War of Independence of 1857. Sambalpur could not participate in the War of Independence because it had no leadership. Surendra Sai, being a prisoner in the Hazaribagh jail from 1840 to 1857, could not organise the people against the British authority on the eve of the 1857 revolution. Further, the rebels of Sambalpur had no modern war implements in comparison with the British Army. Therefore, they resorted to the 'Guerilla warfare'.

Though tranquility came to be restored in other parts of India after 1858, the flame continued to be there in Sambalpur as late as 1864, since the royal proclamation of amnesty failed to win the submission of Surendra Sai.

Surendra Sai and his party now made the border area their stronghold to extend their operation to the Raipur district.

Deoree was a small Zamindari of fifteen villages attached to the Tahasildari of Raipur. Maharaj Sai, the Binjhal Zamindar of Deoree was at enmity with his uncle Narayan Sing, the Zamindar of Sanakhan and helped Lt. Smith in his capture in November and December of 1857. Narayan Sing was executed on the charge of rebellion towards the close of 1857. In July 1859 Narayan Sing's son Govinda Sing and his relatives, captured and temporarily detained in Nagpur, were released and kept under the surveillance of the Deoree Zemindar. But Govinda Sing, in order to avenge the death of his father, sought the help of Surendra Sai. On the 16th of July 1860 a party led by Kunjal Sing was despatched. After killing Maharaj Sai and plundering his house, the party retreated to the hill of Kolhagarh in the Khariar State. One of the rebels could not escape and he was arrested by the people of Pithora Thana. According to his statement the rebels were about five hundred in number, indifferently armed under Surendra Sai, along with whom were Zamindars of Ghens (father-in-law of Govinda Sing), Kamal Sing, Hathi Sing, and Kunjal Sing. The Zamindar of Thanode (Tanwat) was helping Surendra Sai with men and money. These rebels

1 A. Das, op.cit., p.88.
2 Letter No.76, dated 28.7.1860, from Maj. Forster to Capt. Elliot, Deputy Commissioner, Raipur (M.S.A.).
3 A. Das, op.cit., p.88.
4 Letter, dated 24.7.1860, from Capt. Elliot, Deputy Commissioner, Raipur to Maj. Forster, (M.S.A.)
had been termed 'Chor' (thief) and 'Badmas' (Nuissant) by Maj. Forster. Purwanahs were issued by Maj. Forster, the Officiating Commissioner of Sambalpur, to the Chief of Khariar, Patna, Borasambar, Bindra-Nuagarh, Phuljhar and Sarangarh calling upon them and in particular urging on the Raja of Khariar for assistance and to adopt measures to capture the rebels.

Intense efforts were made in all directions to capture Surendra Sai and his party. Local sources of information were gathered for the purpose. It so happened that before Lt. Cockburn left the scene of operation due to sickness, two 'ambassadors' of the Zamindar of Tahnoot to whom Manikgarh belonged, came to him with an offer to give the whereabouts of Surendra Sai and Govinda Sing on the condition of pardon to the Zamindar for all his past misdeeds. Accordingly, the message was passed on to Maj. Forster for his opinion. Maj. Forster gave his observation that he had no faith in the honesty and ability of Lal Sah, the Tahnoot Zamindar.

Accordingly, on the night of the 6th of November 1860 Lt. C.B. Smith, the Assistant Commissioner, with a party of armed Beldars from Raipur and Lt. D. Vallance in command of a detachment of the Sambalpur Sebundy Levy numbering two hundred twenty men in all, proceeded to the Manikgarh Hill. After detaching a party to hold in check and cut off the retreat of the rebels by the Sundara pass, Lt. Smith and Vallance made directly for Tirsola, a village on the Jonk

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1 Letter No.81, dated 8.8.1860, from Maj. Forster to Capt. Elliot, (M.S.A.)
2 Letter No.77, dated 28.7.1860, from Maj. Forster to A.R. Young, Secretary to Government of Bengal (O.S.A.)
4 Letter No.10, dated 12.11.1860, from Maj. Forster to Officiating Secretary to Government of Bengal, (O.S.A.)
River having a stone breastwork thrown across its road by the rebels. The rebels, however, did not stand to defend it and followed the policy of retreat. In their hurried flight they left several herd of cattle which were captured by Lt. Smith and Lt. Vallance.

Subsequently the rebels, about 150 in number, took position in a valley near Manikgarh. It was protected in the front by two breastworks of "considerable strength".

On the 9th of November 1860 Lt. Smith and Lt. Vallance divided their force into three parties; one to protect their camp, one sent in advance to watch the breastwork from the front and the third to attack the rebels under Lt. Smith and Lt. Vallance. The party ascended the high and precipitous hill of Manikgarh and attacked the rebels from the rear. The rebels gave a dogged defense but could not withstand for a longer time. They fled to the Junagarh Ghat which was one of the many outlets. Three of the villages built by the rebels behind their defence were set on fire and destroyed and some more cattle were captured.

The Raja of Khariar was called upon to occupy with his paiks all the localities which had been cleared off the insurgents. He was further directed to punish the rebels, maintain suitable 'Thanas' and not to permit any congregation of armed rebels in his 'elaka'. In case the Raja fails in his duty, he would be answerable to the British Government for all misdeeds enacted by parties sheltered within his Garjat District.

In December 1860, Capt. Smith received the charge of Sambalpur from Maj. Forster. It was now proposed to raise a police force at the

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1 Ibid.
2 Letter, dated 12.11.1860, from Maj. Forster to Secretary to Government of Bengal (Madhya Pradesh Secretary record room Judicial Department, File NO.7 of 1880).
3 A. Das, op.cit., p.88.
expense of the Garjat Chiefs to be employed against the rebels but no satisfactory results followed. The climate, the face of the country, and the sympathy of all the Chiefs and indeed, of all the people were palpably in favour of the Chauhan brothers. The repressive policy of Maj. Forster failed in all respects.

**The Reconciliation**

In April 1861, Maj. Impey was appointed as the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur. He at once drew his attention to the circumstances. In spite of the military outposts and parties of police and Paiks patrolling throughout the district, the rebels evaded all vigilance. Surendra Sai and his party could not be traced even after intensive efforts. Though the predecessors of Maj. Impey had no lack of initiative or energy in pursuing the rebels and in coercing the Rajas, still the rebels had not been induced. Maj. Impey, therefore, in his letter No.2 dated 6th of May 1861 to E.T. Trevor, the Commissioner of Cuttack, strongly pleaded for reconciliatory measures. He urged to tone down the administration from one of military oppression to that of conciliation. Further, it was reported that Surendra Sai had separated himself from his brother Udant Sai and his son Mitrabhanu Sai. As regards Hathi Sing and Kunjal Sing, the former had turned deaf and the latter was somewhere in Borasambar. He believed that Surendra Sai was always attended by one or two rebel Zamindars by turn. He did not think it desirable to disturb them until they committed fresh acts of rebellion.

Accordingly, Maj. Impey recommended a full pardon being granted to every rebel Zamindar and to their followers with the restoration of the Estate, provided they brought in the two Chauhan

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brothers Surendra Sai and Udant Sai, the latter to be guaranteed their lives and fair trials. This policy was supported by Commissioner of Cuttack and was approved by the Government of Bengal. But if the offer to be pardoned be rejected, it was determined to take large and decisive measures for putting down the rebellion with a strong hand. The measures were finally adopted. Durya Sing, the Zamindar of Rampur, who had long since submitted, was restored his estate which had been confiscated and was bestowed on. Similarly, another ex-rebel, Pitambar Sing was restored to his estate of Patkulunda which had been bestowed to Rup Sing. Orders were also given by the Government for the release of the surviving convicted rebels.

Finally, the first proclamation was issued on the 24th of September 1861 offering free pardon and re-institution of property to all the rebels with the exception of Surendra Sai, Udant Sai and Mitrabhanu Sai.

On the other hand, the officiating Deputy Commissioner of Raipur was very keen on capturing the rebels. He, through the Raja of Kankar, deployed spies to different directions to ascertain the position and strength of the rebels. The party of Surendra Sai being dispersed from Manikgarh was then divided into several small detachments. Surendra Sai himself had taken position at Guda Pahar in a village called Sona Behera, Govinda Sing being the leader of the 2nd Detachment was stationed at a distance of some three Koss (9 kilometres) from Surendra Sai. Hathi Sing and Kunjal Sing were in

1 Letter, dated 18.6.1861 from Commissioner of Cuttack to Secretary to Government of Bengal, (G.O.R.).
2 Letter No.49, dated 31.3.1862, from R.N. Shore, Commissioner of Cuttack to the Secretary to Government of Bengal, (O.S.A.).
Khorichpani Pahar at a distance of five Koss (15 kilometres) from Surendra Sai. It is with this information it was thought necessary by the Nagpur authorities to retain the Beldar Levy for the protection of the frontier villages. But Maj. Impey had been adamant and according to him, reconciliation was the best measure for restoring the order in the long disturbed province. All this time Maj. Impey was on the line of negotiation.

However, the proclamation at first appeared to have failed. Some small Zamindars came in. Mahohar Mohapatra of the tributary Garjat of Bamra did indeed surrender, and was eventually, after some demur reinstated by the Bamra Raja in his hereditary estate. The two rebel Zamindars with some sixty followers belonging to Rampur also came in the last moment, but no rebel Chief of any note of the Sambalpur district made his appearance before the Deputy Commissioner. It was under these circumstances that on the 11th of October 1861 the second proclamation was issued offering free pardon to Mitrabhanu Sai and a guarantee of life to Surendra Sai and his brothers provided they surrendered before the 20th of November 1861.

R.N. Shore, the Commissioner of Cuttack did not appreciate such liberality. To get firsthand knowledge of the affairs in Sambalpur, he left for Sambalpur with the 8th Military Police Battalion. He had the opinion that Maj. Impey exceeded his instruction by re-institution of property. But all this time Maj. Impey was on the line of negotiation and securing the surrender of the rebels. As a result of the efforts made by Impey, the Kolabira Zamindar Karunakar Naik surrendered on a guarantee of life. His brother Khagu Naik and nephew Kanhai Naik

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1 Letter, dated 8.6.1861, from Maj. Impey to R.N. Shore, Commissioner of Cuttack (O.S.A.).
2 A. Das, op.cit., p.94.
also surrendered\(^1\). The return of these rebels was very significant as they were men of influence. The submission of these two rebels was duly reported to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal by R.N. Shore, the Commissioner of Cuttack\(^2\). But a mistake was committed by the British authority. Karunakar Naik, Zamindar of Kolabira who had surrendered under the terms of proclamation of Maj. Impey, was sent by Lt. Robinson who remained in command in the absence of Maj. Bates. He was tried by Lt. Cockburn and hanged as Cockburn had no knowledge of the promise of pardon\(^3\). This incident greatly influenced the mind of Shore in changing his opinion about the measure adopted by Maj. Impey. On reaching Sambalpur Shore called for a report from Maj. Impey. Ultimately he praised Maj. Impey’s judicious and conciliatory measures\(^4\).

Meanwhile Maj. Rathray arrived at Sambalpur on the 28\(^{th}\) of December 1861 with the bulk of the 9\(^{th}\) Battalion. But active operation was postponed for some time. The conciliatory policy of Maj. Impey was approved by R.N. Shore, the Commissioner of Cuttack and the Government of Bengal was moved to concede to the policy of re-institution of the confiscated estates to the rebels who had surrendered. The Government of Bengal expressed deepest regret for the breach of faith with Karunakar Naik and accordingly the estate of Kolabira was restored\(^5\). The conciliatory measures of Maj. Impey were further

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5 Letter, dated 21.1.1862, from R.N. Shore, to Secretary to Government of Bengal (O.S.A.).
extended to include restoration of such properties which had been settled with others in case of the rebels who surrendered. The Zamindaries like Kharsal, Bheden, Patkulunda, Rampur etc were settled with Rai Rup Sing with the sanction of the Government during the time of Maj. Forster. Now an arrangement was made with Rup Sing to give up these Zamindaries and in lieu of these to take Padampur and Chandrapur which were in significant possession of the Government.

Shore, himself, assisted Maj. Impey in having direct negotiation with the rebels. The restoration was made in the most public manner. Reliable and influential Gauntias were deputed for pacification. Loknath Panda, the Brahmin Gauntia was made the Zamindar of the nineteen villages assessed on half rate for a period of forty years. Mrutyunjaya Panigrahi and other rebel Chiefs were similarly benefitted. Surendra Sai was fully aware of this changed situation and saw that almost all the rebels were won over except few trusted and faithful associates like Hathi Sing and Kunjal Sing of Ghens, Kamal Sing Dao and Khageswar Dao of Lakhapur.

The first man to surrender in the family of Surendra Sai was his son Mitrabhanu Sai. He met Maj. Impey on the 7th of January 1862 and was assured that two lekhraj villages would be restored to him. He, as well as Kanhai Naik, remained at Sambalpur by their own choice. They were free to go anywhere they wished and Kanhai’s father Khagu Naik remained on the family estate.

The next man to open negotiation for Surendra Sai was Udant Sai. He was apprehensive of immediate imprisonment as the proclamation gave him no assurance. He, however, opened
communication with Maj. Rathray. R.N. Shore issued him a purwanah to meet him and gave an assurance of free pardon, and, further, that he would be at liberty to return safe if the negotiation failed. But Udant Sai still hesitated. Meanwhile the rebels in the southern part declared that they would not come in unless the "Ancient Raj" was restored. Udant Sai withdrew too.

As there was little hope of the rebels giving in to the British authority, there was the thought of making a forward movement against the rebels. But at the entreaty of some of the Gauntia emissaries, Shore consented to postpone the march for few days. Consequently Dhruba Sai, another brother of Surendra Sai, who had no means of subsistence and had a large family was prevailed upon by his starving children to come to terms. He submitted on the 17th of January 1862 along with his brother Udant. As the natural sequence of Udant's submission, other important surrender took place. Krupasindhu Behera, the leader of the Khonds of Bamra, surrendered.

The surrender of Udant Sai was the turning point of the British undertaking. He was persuaded to induce his brother Surendra Sai to come to terms with the British Government. He was given assurance that the Government would not call on him to act against his brother or against the man who had sacrificed everything for the family. Udant Sai met the rebels assembled in the south-west corner of the district.

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1 H.K. Mahatab, op.cit., p.34.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
These leaders were Surendra Sai himself, Hathi Sing, ex-Zamindar of Ghens, Kunjal Sing his brother, Khageswar Dao and Kamal Sing Dao of Lakhanpur and Janardan Sing, ex-Zamindar of Pahadsirigida. Every one of them except Surendra Sai had at one point of time or the other opened communication with the British but had to hold back, because of their desire to see the Chauhan dynasty restored. However, Udant Sai succeeded in winning over Hathi Sai. The Lieutenant Governor sanctioned a free pardon to Udant Sai and accordingly Maj. Rathray, with the 9th Police Battalion, was withdrawn from Sambalpur. R.N. Shore also felt his presence unnecessary, and accordingly, left Sambalpur on the 20th of February.

Udant Sai and Hathi Sing made their appearance within a few days after Mr. Shore left Sambalpur. In conformity with the instruction given by Mr. Shore to Maj. Impey, the estate of Ghens was restored to Hathi Sing at an enhanced 'jummah'. This arrangement was duly reported to and approved by the Government.

The surrender of Hathi Sing and the persuasion of Udant Sai influenced Surendra Sai to change his mind. His son had already left for Khinda to enjoy his jagir. Dhruba Sai had showed definite sign of loyalty to the British. Further, the Garjat Chiefs, the aides-de-camp were taken to task. The Chiefs like the Raja of Patna, Khariar, Bindranuagarh, Zamindar of Phooljhar and of Borasambar were fined Rs.1000/- each because they did not meet the Commissioner on his arrival at Sambalpur. Surendra Sai was fully aware of this changed situation. He realised it impossible with his primitive bows and arrows.

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1 Letter, dated 2.2.1862, from Maj. Impey to R.N. Shore (O.S.A).
2 Letter No.18, dated 24.2.1862, from R.N. Shore to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal (O.S.A.).
3 Letter No.109, dated 21.5.1862, from R.N. Shore to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal (O.S.A.).
to withstand against the well-organised British forces. With the Indian War of Independence coming to an end throughout India, the British Government might concentrate the whole army against him at Sambalpur.

In spite of the changing situation, Surendra Sai still mooted his claim to the Gaddi of Sambalpur and conveyed his desire to Maj. Impey. On the 4th of May 1862 Maj. Impey conveyed to him in a letter sent through the police Jamadar Raj Kumar Misra that the Gaddi of Sambalpur would never again be established. He, however, assured that the Government would make liberal provisions if he surrendered. Trusted Gumastas were sent to contact Surendra Sai. Further Surendra Sai pleaded that the party of Kamal Sing would not leave him unless they were paid their arrear salaries. Accordingly an amount of Rs.500/- was sent by Maj. Impey to be distributed among Kamal Sing’s followers who were then in open rebellion. Now Surendra Sai could make up his mind for surrender and intimated Maj. Impey accordingly. Both Surendra Sai and Maj. Impey met somewhere near Sambalpur. The impression of Maj. Impey about Surendra Sai was that “Surendra Sai was in rather a fidgety way”.

Ultimately Surendra Sai surrendered on the 16th of May 1862 on the guarantee of ‘life’, liberty and free pardon. The Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur duly reported the matter to the Chief Commissioner. Along with Surendra Sai also surrendered his two staunch adherents Gajraj Sing and Khageswar Dao. There still remained two men Kunjal Sing and Kamal Sing. These two trusted

1 H.K. Mahtab, op.cit., p.38.
2 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
captains refused to surrender and accepted fugitive life in the jungle. They continued their adherence towards the cause of freedom and became the chief rebels to organise the people against the British. However, Surendra Sai took most solemn oath of allegiance in the principal temple of Sambalpur.

Though Surendra Sai surrendered, his family was considered by the whole of Sambalpur to be the heir not of the last Raja Narayan Sing but of his predecessor Maharaja Sai and the family had been allowed by the Government Officers to stand next in the succession to Gaddi. The question of Gaddi, being settled at the time of lapse, could not be re-opened. So the British Government having resumed the inheritance would make the provision for the family. Accordingly Maj. Impey pleaded for the provision to be made for the support of the family. He argued that the total amount of pension recommended to the Sai family would be much less than Rs. 12,000/- granted to the Ranis of Sambalpur including the pension of Rs. 8000/- enjoyed by Rani Mohan Kumari which had then lapsed. Further he gave concrete amount of pension and suggested for sanction in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mitrabhanu Sai</td>
<td>Rs. 1000/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udant Sai</td>
<td>Rs. 1200/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhruba Sai</td>
<td>Rs. 1200/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medini Sai</td>
<td>Rs. 600/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of Ujjal Sai</td>
<td>Rs. 600/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rs. 4600/-</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. Letter No.C, dated 16.5.1862, from Maj. Impey to Secretary, Chief Commissioner Central Provinces (NAI).
As Sambalpur was then under the Government of the Central Provinces, Maj. Impey had also recommended to the Central Provinces Government for the grant of pension of Rs.12000/- per annum for Surendra Sai. The Chief Commissioner forwarded this recommendation to the Governor General in Council¹.

The Governor General in Council finally sanctioned a total sum of Rs.4600/- to the family of Surendra Sai and Rs.1200/- per annum to him². The recommendation of the Deputy Commissioner, of Sambalpur for a higher pension for Surendra Sai, being the head of the family, was withdrawn because of his lead in the rebellion. Further, recommendation for a “Shawl” of the value of Rs.60/- as a mark of the Government’s favour to Udant Sai for his sincerity in procuring Hathi Sing and Surendra Sai, was also turned down. All the above recipients were childless except Dhruba Sai who had eight sons and four daughters. Udant Sai would be having the village of Dhama and Talub with their hamlets. Similarly Dhruba Sai was to have the village of Tabla at an estimated jummah of Rs.577/-. Mitrabhanu had already been provided for in the village of Khinda and Talbera at a jummah of Rs.580/-.³.

The Governor General in Council praised the conciliatory policy of R.N. Shore and Maj. Impey. The Governor General wrote on the 22nd of November 1862, reporting to the Secretary to State for India that Surendra Sai “the Sambalpur rebel” had surrendered and he was

¹ Letter No.60, dated 25.5.1862, from Secretary to the Chief Commissioner Capt. Mackenzie to Col. Duran Secretary to Government of India (N.A.I. Foreign Department).
² Letter No.657, dated 15.7.1862, from the Secretary to the Government of India to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces (N.A.I., Foreign Department).
³ A. Das, op.cit, p.97.
granted pension. The Central Provinces Government also supported the conciliatory policy of Maj. Impey and suggested that the village Bargoon might be settled with Surendra Sai in part commutation of the pension of Rs.1200/- granted by the Supreme Government.

The rebel families had stipends settled on them; villages were also bestowed on each. One Muktiar named Champat Lal who rendered a great personal assistance in effecting the surrender of Kanhai Naik and Khagu Naik, was paid Rs.165.2.8 as travelling expenses. An amount of Rs.759/- was paid to many people, mostly to the lower class who acted as emissaries during the transaction which resulted in the surrender of the other rebels and Rs.18/- to the runners and spies.

The other kind of reward was the grant of land. Of all the persons, Loknath Panda of Rampela was conspicuous for his loyalty. His services in bringing out submission of all the northern rebels including Mitrabhanu and Udant was noteworthy. He was confirmed in his own Zamindari but to make him the nucleus of a large estate, several adjacent villages were added to the Zamindari. Dasarathi, the Gauntia of Chakra Kuan was made the Zamindar of the same estate. Bhawani Sing obtained the village of Tampurgarh. The two brothers Trilochan Panigrahi and Mrutyunjaya Panigrahi were mainly

1 Letter, dated 28.8.1862, from the Commissioner, Chhattisgarh to the Chief Commissioner (M.S.A.).
2 Letter, dated 30.8.1862, from Commissioner, Cuttack to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces (O.S.A.).
3 Ibid.
4 Letter No.66, dated 14.4.1862, from R.N. Shore to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal (O.S.A.).
instrumental in bringing Udant Sai and his brother Dhruba Sai. They were given the villages of Huma and Chuchanpali.

For some time after the surrender of Surendra Sai, the country remained quiet. But the surrender of Surendra Sai and others was not really effective and peace could not be restored in Sambalpur. The spirit of freedom from the foreign yoke remained dormant in the heart of the rebels for some time; and the moment the opportunity commenced, it was on the surface. It was in the early part of 1863 that fresh political upheavals commenced to be felt. Consequently it accelerated the spread of the agitation.

**Rebellion of Kamal Sing**

Richard Temple, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces visited Sambalpur in March 1863. The Gauntias, Brahmins and influential people of Sambalpur advocated, through a grand petition, for the restoration of a Chauhan to the Gaddi. Temple categorically refused to consider the demand. But the situation took a very serious turn. The whole party of Kamal Sing was in full operation in tune with Surendra Sai and his advisors. Soon after the departure of the Chief Commissioner, the rebels with the leadership Kamal Sing started committing most savage outrages in the Khalsa villages. The desire for freedom was again in the forefront. Mohan Sing and Salekram Bariha also joined hands with the rebels.

The agitation against the British authority was found in the form of a dacoity first in the neighbourhood of Ambabhona, a village not far

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from the Barapahar hill, on the 28th of August 1863. The party was pursued by the police who succeeded in arresting six of the men. The second occurred on the 12th of September at Kondapali. The village was attacked by the party and the Gauntia was killed in the strife. His house was plundered. The police was not very successful on this occasion. After a long fatiguing pursuit they could capture only one of their members but were able to recover the plundered property and the arms of the party which they threw when firing was opened.

Apart from the leadership of Kamal Sing, independent parties were also perpetrating outrages under the leadership of Mahadev, a Jamadar of Kamal Sing and Mohan Sing, once a Zamindar under Surendra Sai and now convicted. However, no less than fifteen or sixteen dacoities, attended with aggravated circumstances, took place in six weeks. They took up their residence in the Barapahar Hills. Forty two persons were arrested; three killed, and twenty one had been transported. Every precaution was taken. The police force was reinforced. A garrison of the Native Infantry from Cuttack was deputed to Sambalpur. The out-posts were strengthened. The Chief Commissioner further directed the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur, accompanied by the Deputy Inspector General of Police and sufficient military escort, to proceed to the estate of the Maharaja of Patna, the Raja of Khariar and the Raja of Bindranuagarh. By his presence, better general and political control would be effected.

In spite of these details Kamal Sing and other rebels remained at large. He, along with his party took position in the north-western portion of the Barapahar Hills and the people in that locality, to a

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1 Letter, dated 14.9.1863, from Capt. Mackenzie, Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Chhattisgarh to Col. Durand, Secretary to the Government of India (N.A.I.).
2 Ibid.
certain extent, were attached to him. Kamal Sing Dao further proceeded towards Goragurh in the area of Khariar. Here Mohan Sing, Selekram Bariha, and Babu Saheb joined the party to be preparing for further outrages. Though no Garjat Chiefs showed any act of active connection with these rebels, still it appeared that either they or their people had sympathized with and assisted them. But the baffling for the British Government were the Raja of Khariar and the Raja of Bindranuagarh. These Rajas, in the face of all odds and risks, extended their support to the rebels.

Both the Rajas that of Khariar and Bindranuagarh gave no assistance to the officer who was in pursuit of the rebels in 1860. Both were fined Rs.1000/- each in 1861-62 for refusing to attend, with all Garjat Chiefs, on the Commissioner of Cuttack during his visit to Sambalpur.

The Central Provinces authorities took worst attitude against the Rajas of Khariar and Bindranuagarh. The local authorities wanted nothing but their dismissal and deportation. Maj. Impey was so very furious that he suggested these two states be annexed to the Central Provinces. While enumerating the various charges against these two Rajas in his report to the Government of India, the Chief Commissioner observed that the fine had been resorted to without effect. In reality, fines levied on these Chiefs fell not on them but on their people, on whom exaction was made. That is why he did not recommend any measure for their deportation and installation in their places of their kinsman. He suggested a fixed date within which they would appear before the Commissioner and make their submission and to promise full obedience in all feudatory services. They were also required to

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appear before the Deputy Commissioner¹. Kamal Sing declared that there would not be tranquility in Sambalpur unless a Chauhan succeeded to the Gaddi. The activities of Kamal Sing raised suspicion in the mind of the authorities about the relation of Surendra Sai with Kamal Sing. Surendra was suspected to have a secret liaison with Kamal Sing. But Maj. Impey could not believe that Surendra Sai had no hand in the outrages of Kamal Sing or in any conspiracy against the Government and got himself prepared to launch an expedition with an elaborate plan to capture Kamal Sing and Salekram Bariha and proceeded to the Barapahar range with an escort of 60 infantry men and a dozen of Sowars and a contingent supplied by the Raja of Khariar² but was unsuccessful. The operation in the unhealthy jungles told upon his health and he died subsequently in December 1863.

The Conspiracy

The Government of the Central Provinces, which had already been biased against the conciliatory measures of Impey and Shore, took the earliest opportunity to reverse their policy. The district of Sambalpur which originally belonged to the Chhota Nagpur Division was proposed to be permanently transferred to the Cuttack Division³. In Notification No.101(A), dated 23rd of January 1861 the district of Sambalpur with the surrounding Garjats were transferred to the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Cuttack. Again by a notification of

¹ Letter No.4035, dated 12.9.1863 from H. Mackenzie, Secretary to Chief Commissioner to Col.H.M. Durand, Secretary to the Government of India (NAI).
² Letter No.1 SD, dated 12.11.1863, from Maj. Impey to Col. Balmain, Commissioner of Chhota Nagpur Division (N.A.I.).
³ Letter No. 2185, dated 24.8.1860, from A. Money, Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Secretary to Government of India (N.I.A).
30th of April 1862 it was transferred to the newly constituted Central Provinces\(^1\). The Police department in Sambalpur had been reconstituted and J.N. Berill had been newly appointed as the Superintendent of Police. To fit in to the activities of Berill, a new Deputy commissioner Capt. Cumberlege assumed the charge of administration of the district of Sambalpur on the 19th of January 1864 and carried out reverse policy. Two companies of the 43 Regiment of the Madras Native Infantry arrived at Sambalpur with an additional force at the disposal of the local Officers for employment against Kamal Sing and his followers.

Capt. Cumberlege was seeking an opportunity to see that all the leading rebels were available for a surprise attack and arrest. It was apprehended that Kamal Sing and Khageswar Dao in connivance with Surendra Sai and his party were making arrangements for an immediate attack on Sambalpur. One Malin Sing, a lieutenant of Kamal Sing Dao, was captured and Berill succeeded in getting the information that Surendra Sai still kept Kamal Sing and Kunjal Sing in arms in order that they might keep the Gauntias and other supporters of the British rule in perpetual dread of being plundered or murdered. To strongly corroborate this fact was a letter written on palm-leaf. This letter was purported to be from Kamal Sing to Surendra Sai.

Again one Dayanidhi Meher informed the police that there was a plot, long in existence, to restore the native rule in Sambalpur. When his assertion was doubted, he arranged a meeting in his house between Khageswar Dao and Maj. Impey, Capt. Stewart, the Deputy Inspector of Police and Mohan Sing, the Police Inspector. There Khageswar divulged the details of the preparation for an out-break. Since 1863 Dayanidhi Meher had been a regular spy of Berill. It seemed to the

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\(^1\) L.S.S.O'Malley, op.cit., p.49.
authority that the feeling in Sambalpur was so strongly in favour of the native rule that the readiest means of restoring tranquility in the district would be to hand over the throne to Surendra Sai. But the authority would not agree to the condition and consequently sought opportunity to trap Surendra Sai, who was calm and quiet but a source of inspiration to the rebels all the while.

A situation arose recently and gave the authority the long-awaited opportunity of baffling Surendra Sai. The Zamindar of Thanode requested the Raipore District Police, to assist him in exterminating some dacoits who were creating troubles in his Zamindari. In an attack made by the police in assistance of some Zamindars and Paiks, on the dacoits, probably of Kamal Sing's band, some weapons and a quantity of other articles fell into the hands of the police. Among other things an Oriya letter written on a palm-leaf could be forged by the police to implicate Surendra Sai. This letter was addressed to Surendra Sai by Kamal Sing which, according to the authority, evinced that Surendra Sai was plotting mischief and could not be trusted. Hence, the Chief Commissioner did insist on his immediate removal with his family and relatives from Sambalpur district. Accordingly, the Chief Commissioner, whilst giving the Commissioner of Chhattisgarh full authority to use his own discretion, pointed out that even if Surendra Sai be innocent of all treasonable designs, still, if he possessed influence in the country, and that influence had a disturbing effect, it was desirable that Surendra Sai and his family would reside elsewhere.

Letter No.C, dated 22.1.1864, from Assistant Secretary to Chief Commissioner to Secretary to Government of India (N.A.I.).
The Commissioner, Chhattisgarh, then gave some coincidences. The fact that Surendra Sai was plotting against the Government and intended to join Kamal Sing was corroborated:

First, by the conversation between himself and Khageswar Dao overheard by European Officers detailing how recruits were being procured from Jeypore,

Secondly, by letters from the Assistant Government Agent at Jeypore virtually admitting that such was being done,

Thirdly, by the finding, by the Raipore Police, of a “Talpatta” (Palm-leaf) letter written in February 1863 from Dharani Mishra, Surendra’s factotum, with Surendra Sai’s cypher attached, to Kamal Singh in the latter’s house at Tahmoda in which Surendra Sai thanks him for having gained the support of the Jeypore Raja and promise to join him.

Fourthly, by the informer’s communicating to Berill a conversation which had occurred a short time previously (9th December) in his presence between Surendra Sai and a Kabulee, supposed to have returned from North-West in which the Kabulee narrated the arrangements mentioned in the above letter, Surendra Sai further detailed the causes which had prevented the out-break last season,

Fifthly, he declared that Surendra Sai’s son, Mitrabhanu Sai had been to the Sarangarh Raja and had returned with Rs.1500/- contributed by him. A letter found at Thanode from that Raja alongwith Surendra Sai’s
showed that the Raja had been in correspondence with Kamal Sing. The Raja had stated that there was no hope of restoration of the native rule but promised to join the attempt, provided the Raja of Patna and Sonepur joined. Mitrabhanu Sai had again gone off on a secret mission, it was stated, to secure the co-operation of his sister's husband's family, Zamindar in the Chhota Nagpur province.

Sixthly, Surendra Sai, his brothers and Khageswar Dao used to frequent the Sambalpur town but recently held aloof but again, all, excepting Udant who was reported to be sick, came stealthily,

Seventhly, the informer told Berill that after Surendra Sai appeared in the court as defendant in his criminal cases, he declared that if he was again summoned, he would appear "as the head of thousands in the hills",

Eighthly, there was a general rumour and the information received from a new Chief Constable arriving from Nagpur that he had learnt from the Gauntia whom he met on the way, that a movement was very shortly expected,

Ninthly, the spy also gave the information that Jayram and Sitaram, Bhatas and servants of Surendra Sai acted as go-between with Kamal Sing. Jagat, a dacoit who was recently sentenced, confessed that he had seen these two men in the haunts of Kamal Sing,
Tenthly, the informer also stated that men of Kamal Sing used to cross the river and visit Surendra Sai at his village on the bank,

Eleventhly, he informed about the contemplated mission of Surendra Sai's Vakil Kartika Babu, who had been just discharged from the Head Clerkship of Maj. Impey's office to Calcutta; this man was then on his way to Calcutta, and

Twelfthly, information was brought that Kartika Babi had written to Surendra Sai from Cuttack to come personally and Surendra Sai decided to send Dharani Mishra.

From the whole mass of concurrent evidences and corroborative circumstances the Commissioner, Chhattisgarh strongly pleaded that unless Surendra Sai, his son, brother, Khageswar Dao and certain of their subordinate agents were removed to a distance from Sambaipur, there was no hope of restoration of peace and confidence, nor even of catching Kamal Sing who was, aided by them in his hostility against the British.

Meanwhile Berill escorted with his spy reported that Gajaraj Sing, brother of Kamal Sing, Chaitya Sing, the Sub-Zamindar of Thanode had gone off to the hills. Further, he reported that Khageswar Dao was sending his family to a place of safety and Kamal Sing had about one thousand followers (of whom 160 were good match-lock men). So the Commissioner solicited the order of the Chief

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1 Letter No.38, dated 19.1.1864, from Commissioner, Chhattisgarh to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces (M.S.A.).
Commissioner to apprehend Surendra Sai and all others, and to send them to Raipur under a strong escort.

There was some delay in launching the operation in order to secure all the parties simultaneously as Mitrabhanu Sai, the son of Surendra Sai, had proceeded to Chhota Nagpur to a relative’s house. Mitrabhanu returned to Sambalpur in the afternoon of the 22nd of January 1864. The Deputy Commissioner at once hatched a plan in consultation with Capt. Stewart, the Deputy Inspector General of Police, to secure simultaneously all of those whose arrest had been previously determined, for example, of Surendra Sai, his son Mitrabhanu Sai, his brother Udant Sai, Dhruba Sai, Medini Sai, Harihar Sai, Aglu and Brajamohan, sons of Dhruba Sai, Chaitan Sai, Murdhan Sai and Gurgar Sai, illegitimate sons of Dhruba Sai, Lokanath Gauntia, Dharani Mishra, friends and counsellors of Surendra Sai, Khageswar Dao, Mohan Dao, Murali Dao, three brothers. The authorities kept the plan most secret and did not disclose it to any sepoy or policeman to be in readiness until came the moment of striking. At sunset on the 23rd of January 1864 the Deputy Inspector General of Police Mr. Berill and the Deputy Commissioner finalised the plan and obtained the approval of the Commissioner on the spot.

At half past 10 p.m. Mohan Sing, the Police Inspector informed the Deputy Commissioner that Surendra Sai and his son were in the same house. Capt. Stewart, J. Walker, the Company’s Irrigation Engineer at Sambalpur, Lt. Rideout of the 43 Madras Native Infantry, Dr. Gross, the Magistrate and Lt. Bowie, the Assistant Commissioner, assembled at the residence of Cumberlege, the Deputy Commissioner of

2 Mohan Sing, a relative of Rai Bahadur Rup Sing, came to prominence in service career and was promoted to Inspector of Police for his work of espionage.
Sambalpur. They along with Mohan Sing went stealthily along the bed of the river until they came to the Ghat leading to Surendra Sai’s house situated near the river bank. They surrounded the house with the police guards, withdrawn from the nearest police station, and completely surprised the inmates who surrendered without resistance. Surendra Sai, his son Mitrabhanu Sai, Dharani Mishra, Mundha, a nephew of Surendra Sai were captured. The servants and others were kept under restraint lest they should give the alarm to others whose capture had still to be effected. Immediately after this Capt. Stewart and Cumberlege went to the house of Abhagee and sent Dr. Gross to capture Lokanath Panda. Abhagee could not be traced but he was captured on the following morning across the river at a relative’s place by a party of policemen which was sent to search him out. Meanwhile Dr. Gross had succeeded in arresting Lokanath Panda. The raiding party seized all “Talputtri” found in the house of Lokanath Panda and Abhagee.

The arrests in the city having all been made, Capt. Stewart, Lt. Rideout, Lt. Bowie and Mr. Walker proceeded to Talub, the village of Udant Sai at a distance of nine kilometres and arrested him and his brother Medini Sai. Then they pushed on to Tabla, seven kilometers further, the village of Dhruba Sai and there captured him and his sons. While this was going on, Berill and Cumberlege left for Bonda and arriving at dawn, completely surprised Khageswar Dao and his

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1 Letter No. 186, dated 24.1.1864, from Commissioner, Chhattisgarh to Secretary, Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces (O.S.A.).
2 Letter No. 110, dated 25.1.1864, from Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh (O.S.A.).
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
brothers¹. They were so taken aback that they were captured before they had time to do anything. Cumberlege, the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur reported that Khageswar Dao was engaged in building a high wall round his premises enclosing a space of 95 metre square. It was regularly loopholed and rapidly approaching completion. Several match-lock weapons, swords and materials such as sulphur for manufacturing gun-powder were also found in his house².

Further, Mr. A.B. Cumberlege wrote to all the Chiefs and Zamindars regarding the arrests. He also issued “Istaharas” with a view to pacifying the people. The Officiating Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces commended the services of Cumberlege and Berill for the successful result of the coup³. The Commissioner decided that those, against whom there could not be sufficient evidence, should be deported as a political measure⁴.

Kunjal Sing, one of the main rebels, was still left out. An attempt was made to apprehend him but it failed.

As to Hathi Sing, it was reported that he was deeply involved in Surendra Sai’s conspiracy. He was further suspected to have harboured his rebel brother. The Deputy Commissioner was of the opinion that Hathi Sing should also be arrested and sent from Ghens to be tried along with other prisoners.

After the arrest of Surendra Sai and other rebels, the next move for the Sambalpur authority was to see that all these prisoners were

³ Letter No.550, dated 3.2.1864, from Capt. H. Mackenzie, Secretary to Chief Commissioner to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh.
⁴ Letter, dated 11.2.1864, from Commissioner, Chhattisgarh to Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur.
deported away from Sambalpur. The Deputy Commissioner was under the impression that Surendra Sai and his partisans were held in such dread that as long as one of the family was in Sambalpur it would be impossible to restore order in the country. Their removal from the district was urged upon, primarily that there may be less chance of rescue, secondly that witnesses may not be tampered with and thirdly that witnesses may speak with less chance of their disposition being blazoned about. Accordingly on the 2nd of January 1864 Surendra Sai, his brother Udant Sai, Dhruba Sai, Medini Sai, his son Mitrabhanu Sai, four sons of Dhruba Sai, Khageswar Dao and his two brothers, Lokanath Panda, Dharani Mishra and Sradhakar Mallik were sent to Raipur as State prisoners. They were escorted by a company of police guard of 20 Sowars and 20 foot police under Lt. Rideout. Subsequently Padmanav Guru, one of Surendra Sai’s confidential man, was arrested and the Commissioner, Chhattisgarh expressed his satisfaction over the manner in which it was done by the Raja of Sonepur. Likewise Jagabandhu Hota and Mrutyunjaya Panigrahi were apprehended and deported for trial.

The Central Province Government thus reversed the policy of conciliation and decided to prosecute Surendra Sai, his relations and close associates for conspiracy to wage war. Under Section 35 of the

1 Letter No.110, dated 25.1.1864, from Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh.
2 Letter No.38, dated 19.1.1864, from Commissioner, Chhattisgarh to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Central Province.
3 Letter No.124, dated 26.1.1864, from Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh (O.S.A.).
4 Letter No.354, dated 8.2.1864, from Commissioner, Chhattisgarh to Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur (M.S.A.).
5 Letter No.Nil, dated 1.2.1864, from Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh (M.S.A.).
Code of Criminal Procedure, the case was transferred from the Court of the Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to the court of the Deputy Commissioner, Raipur. Accordingly the Secretary sent a report of the arrest of the accused persons to the Government of India. The Under Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, was directed to express the Viceroy’s and the Governor General’s satisfaction with the efficient manner in which the arrests were made.

The Trial

The Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur, being instructed by the Commissioner in his letter NO.254, dated 1st of March 1864 submitted a compendium of the case against Surendra Sai and 13 others deported to Raipur. He was satisfied that the available evidence was enough for holding a trial against them under section 122 of the Indian Penal Code. Accordingly he instructed the District Superintendent of Police to collect every scrap of evidence, “for until this is done, it would be impossible to decide under what section of the Penal Code the prisoners should be tried”.

The witnesses of the trial were Abhagee, Damo, Narain, Sukru, Fagmura, Pandab Pande, Bhuban, Nakul Sahi, Dayanidhi, Inspector Ram Mohan Sing, Capt. Stewart, Berill, Jagat, Chief Constable Baldev Tewari, Head Constable, Huri Sohar and Govind Bahadur.

1 Letter, dated 22.2.1864, from the Under Secretary to Government of India to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces (M.S.A.).
2 Letter, dated 3.2.1864, from Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to Superintendent of Police, Sambalpur (B.R.R., Sambalpur).
3 Letter No.908 of 1865 from F.A. Function, Deputy Commissioner Raipur to Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur (N.S.R.R.).
There appeared to be altogether 20 witnesses and 20 documents (Oriya) letters found with the prisoners or their partisans which formed the subject matter of the case and only 16 persons as stated above were summoned for appearance.

The accused persons were charged with the following offences:

a. Preparing to wage war against the Queen during the months of December 1862 and January 1864 and previously there-to under section 109 of the Indian Penal Code.

b. Abetting the preparation to wage war against the Queen during the above period under section 109 and 123 of the Indian Penal Code.

c. Concealing the existence of the design to wage war against the Queen.

After a brisk enquiry, the Deputy Commissioner, Raipur, committed the case against Surendra Sai and others to the Sessions Court. After a lengthened trial, the Commissioner of Chhattisgarh, who was the Sessions' Judge passed the sentences on the 23rd of June 1864. Surendra Sai, Udant Sai and Khageswar Dao were found guilty under section 122 of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced to transportation for life with forfeiture of all their properties. Dhruba Sai, Medini Sai, Loknath Gartia, Sradhakar Mallik, Mrutyunjaya Panigrahi and Jagabandhu Hota were found guilty of charge No.(b) and (c) and sentenced to transportation for life with forfeiture of all their properties. Mitrabhanu Sai, Mohan Dao, Dharani Mishra and Padmanav Guru were found guilty of the 3rd charge and sentenced to
imprisonment for 7 years each. The results of the trial were duly communicated to the Governor General at Simla.

**The Judgement**

An appeal against those orders was filed by the accused persons in the court of the Judicial Commissioner John Scarlett Campbell which was the Principal Court of Appeal in the Central Provinces. In the month of August 1864 John Scarlett gave his judgement. He reversed the judgement of the Session's court and acquitted all the prisoners. In his opinion, the Police “unable to cope with Kamal Sing and other rebels who were committing dacoities” thought the next best thing to do was to get punished those whom they considered to be the friends of the dacoits and accordingly got up this case without any real proof against the accused.

The Judicial Commissioner found both the documentary and oral evidences fabricated and concocted to entangle the accused persons. He criticised the proceedings of the Sessions Court as “very far from being clear or satisfactory”. The judgement of the Sessions Court was, in his opinion, confused and wanting in point.

The Judicial Commissioner gave a detailed analysis of all the evidences.

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1. Letter No.3523, dated 1.8.1864, from Bernad Esq. Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces to Col. H.M. Durand, Secretary to Government of India (N.A.I.).
2. Letter, dated 23.8.1864 from J.S. Campbell to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces (O.S.A.).
Obviously Surendra Sai considered himself ill-used in not getting the Gaddi of Sambalpur and accordingly he went into rebellion against the Government during the Mutiny. He so remained in the rebellion till May 1862 when he and certain of his followers took the advantage of the conciliatory policy of the then Sambalpur authority and settled down with certain provisions for their maintenance.

Next, when Surendra Sai and others came under the amnesty, a party still remained in the rebellion and the head of this party was Kamal Sing, the party seemed to have been more professional free-booters or dacoits than rebels. In May 1863 a series of dacoities took place in the Sambalpur District. The Police came to the conclusion that these outrages were perpetrated by Kamal Sing and his party in getting the rule transferred to the prisoner Surendra Sai. They concluded that the outrages were instigated by Surendra Sai.

The Police, then considering that they had sufficient evidence to go upon, made a sudden arrest of the persons believed to be in the plot. Twenty-four translated documents were produced by the prosecution. But the court saw no treason in most of these letters. The Judicial Commissioner considering the circumstances under which the letters were found held its genuineness in doubt. Further the judge opined that the incriminating letter, addressed by Surendra Sai to the Raja of Jeypore, was a “most treasonable production”. He pointed out that the letter bore the date 26th of September 1862, which meant a year and half before the arrest and only some four months after Surendra Sai’s submission.

The Court also scrutinized ‘the most important class of documents’ i.e. the letters written by Kamal Sing and Kunjal Sing to Surendra Sai dated 3rd and 29th of December 1863 and to Roop Rai dated 29th of December. Those three letters, the court pointed out,
referred to an organised plan of the prisoners, or atleast some of them, for joining Kamal Sing’s party and raising the country in rebellion. But these letters were produced by the man in charge of Surendra Sai’s stable from the thatch of the roof, wrapped together in a bit of rag. The court had no hesitation in expressing its opinion that those three documents were ‘gross forgeries’ produced weeks after the arrest of the prisoners to bolster up a case that was palpably weak.

All these documents taken collectively showed that the party of Surendra Sai was by “no means pleased with the abolition of the native rule from Sambalpur and nothing else like waging a war.

As regards oral evidence, the first witness was Berill, the District Superintendent of Police, who while capturing Khageswar Dao and his brothers had seized some fire arms besides swords and battle-axes, and witnessed the construction of a strong wall with loop holes. The court scrutinized the evidence of Berill. “Leaving what is mere here-say and what are merely ideas of the witness”, it was found out that Berill’s evidence ‘really accounts to nothing’.

The second witness for the prosecution was Capt. Stewart, the Deputy Inspector General of Police who had heard the parties carrying a discussion in Oriya. Considering his imperfect knowledge of the language in which the parties spoke, it was doubted how much he actually understood and how much he fancied which was confirmed to him by Mohan Sing.

The next witness was Mohan Sing, the Inspector of Police. The court could not place much reliance on the evidence which was most untrustworthy in nature. That the Sessions’ Court should have accepted such evidence is much to be wondered at. There is positively nothing in the whole case to prove that in December 1863 and January 1864
Surendra Sai, Udant Sai and Khageswar Dao were making any preparation whatsoever towards waging war against the Queen'.

Though the Judicial Commissioner acquitted the prisoners, all of them were not released. Surendra Sai and six other prisoners¹ were detained under Regulation III of 1818 by order of the Chief Commissioner². The Governor General in Council approved the recommendation of the Chief Commissioner that Surendra Sai and other prisoners be confined under above Regulation, ‘until the pleasure of the British Government, and that their place of detention be Nagpore³. His Excellency concurred with the Chief Commissioner that the conduct of the prisoners merited forfeiture of the pensions granted to them in 1863⁴.

The Judicial Commissioner's order of acquittal had a serious effect on the police and Magisterial administration of the Sambalpur District. The documentary proof, as the Chief Commissioner admitted, broke down. The Chief Commissioner, further, admitted that the oral evidence was also unsatisfactory⁵, that the legal proof was defective

¹ They were Surendra Sai’s brothers Udant Sai, Dhruba Sai, Medini Sai, son Mitrabhanu Sai, Khageswar Dao and Lokanath Panda.

² Letter dated 23.1.1865 from Secretary to Chief Commissioner to the Secretary, Foreign Department, Government of India (N.A.I.).

³ Letter dated 28.3.1865 from Secretary, Foreign Department Government of India to the Secretary, to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces (N.A.I.).

⁴ Letter, dated 17.4.1865 from Secretary, Foreign Department, Government of India to the Secretary, to the Chief Commissioner (N.A.I.).

⁵ Letter, dated 23.1.1865, from C. Bernad, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner to Secretary to the Government of India, (Foreign Department), (N.A.I.).
and finally, that there was not even moral presumption that the prisoners attempted or even contemplated the Commission of overt or active treason. He conceded that they were making an agitation, 'strictly of a peaceful character'. They promoted representation to the Chief Commissioner for the restoration of the native rule in the district.

The Chief Commissioner, after making such observation, put forth the following reasons for detaining the prisoners:

i. The systematic raids on the wild frontiers were compassed by men with whom the prisoners had once closely associated. As the prisoners had communication with them, it was likely enough that the prisoners had secretly and indirectly encouraged those outrage and troubles.

ii. The existence of Surendra Sai in Sambalpur was regarded by the rebels and outlaws and the followers as a possible rallying point and that the restoration of this party to power was looked on as an object worth-fighting for. This got corroborated by the circumstances that after the arrest of Surendra Sai "there has been no more troubles and no more outrages".

iii. Though the prisoners were not guilty of treason, they were guilty from 'a moral and political point of view'. Though Surendra Sai had no claim to the Gaddi of Sambalpur he raised rebellion in Sambalpur with a view to making himself the Chief of that territory.

iv. The prisoners were allowed to reside at Sambalpur under general surveillance. But they became parties to an agitation, which

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1 The Chief Commissioner quoted from a letter from the Inspector General of Police.
though ostensibly peaceful, nevertheless, unsettled the minds of
the British subjects.

v. The outrages of Kamal Sing were committed with a view to the
restoration of Native Rule in Sambalpur with Surendra Sai as its
head.

vi. The procession of the paper purporting to come from the Raja of
Jeypore was itself improper.

vii. The conduct of the prisoners at Sambalpur had been partly the
cause of the outrages and peace could never be secured unless
these prisoners were detained.

The Chief Commissioner carried a biased view and deliberately
distorted the facts to justify the conduct of A.B. Cumberlege who
arrested Surendra Sai and his friends with the approval of J.G. Balmain
during the Chief Commissioner's absence. Set against a number of
adverse factors, Kamal Sing could not stand long against the British\(^1\)
but Surendra Sai's arrest was intentional and both the episodes had no
link whatsoever.

In regard to the third point argued by R. Temple, even Maj.
Impey admitted that the claims of Surendra Sai to the Gaddi of
Sambalpur, ‘if it should have been maintained on the demise of
Narayan Sing, had been officially recorded\(^2\). Shore also pointed out
that the family was ‘allowed by a Government order to stand next in
succession to the Gaddi\(^3\). The Chief Commissioner had argued that

\(^1\) Letter, dated 12.12.1863 from Maj. Impey to Col. Balmain,
Commissioner of Chhattisgarh, (O.S.A).


\(^3\) Letter, dated 25.2.1862 from R.N. Shore to the Secretary to the
Government of Bengal (O.S.A).
Surendra Sai was allowed to reside at Sambalpur under surveillance and he was in no way to take part in any agitation. Moreover he was permitted by Maj. Impey to submit any representation he liked after his surrender¹.

The Chief Commissioner blamed Surendra Sai to have countenanced the outrages committed by Kamal Sing. But the Court of Appeal held that the letters said to have been written by Kamal Sing and Kunjal Sing to Surendra Sai in December 1863 were gross forgery. Equally forged was the 'highly suspicious and even dangerous paper purporting to come from the Raja of Jeypore that clearly bore the date the 20th of September 1862.

About Surendra's brothers and his son, Khageswar Dao, the confidential advisor Lokanath Panda and specially Udant Sai, the Chief Commissioner held that the conduct of these men at Sambalpur was partly the cause of the outrages and of a certain sort of ferment within the British territory, it was found necessary to detain them in custody, with the sanction of the Supreme Government, so as to secure the peace of the district².

Thus Surendra Sai and six others namely Mitrabhanu Sai, Udant Sai, Dhruba Sai, Medini Sai, Khageswar Dao and Lokanath Panda were treacherously re-arrested and wrongfully confined under a Regulation which was not applicable to their case as was pointed out by M.J. Pearson, the Attorney of Surendra Sai.

The prisoners were confined at Raipur, which was at a distance of 245 kilometres from Sambalpur. But the Sambalpur authority

² Letter, dated 23.1.1865, from C. Bernad to Secretary to Government of India (N.A.I.).
represented that these political prisoners, if kept at Raipur, would be too near their friends and there was suspicion of communication of those friends with the prisoners, who entertained hope of some escape or release. The Chief Commissioner concurred the opinion of the Commissioner that these persons should be placed under personal restraint for "reasons of State and Security of the British Dominions from internal commotion". Accordingly on the 19th of November 1864, the seven political prisoners were sent to the Nagpur jail and were detained under Regulation III of 1818. "To prevent rescue", they were accompanied by a party of mounted police and a company of Infantry under British Officer.

The selection of the Asirgarh Fort under the circumstances and as stated by the Chief Commissioner for the safe custody of the prisoners, was approved by the Governor General in Council in cancellation of their previously suggested accommodation at the Sitabaldi Fort and the building built for Police Hospital. The necessary warrant of commitment, under section III of the Regulation III of 1818 was also enclosed. The prisoners were removed to the fort of Asirgarh.

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1 Letter, dated 2.12.1864, from C. Bernad to Commissioner, Chhatisgarh (N.A.I.).
2 Letter, dated 12.12.1864, from Commissioner, Chhatisgarh to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces (M.S.A.).
3 No. 40-B WARRANT OF COMMITMENT
To
The Chief Commissioner and Agent to the Governor-General, Central Provinces.
Whereas the Governor General-in-Council for good sufficient reasons has deemed fit to determine the Soorundhur Sahi shall be placed under personal restraint at the Fort, Asirgarh in Nimar, you are hereby required and commanded in pursuance of that determination to receive the person above named into your custody and deal with him in conformity to the orders of the Governor General-in-Council and the provisions of Regulation III of 1818.

By order of Governor General-in-Council
FORT WILLIAM
17 April 1865
Officiating Under Secretary to Government of India
between the months of January and June 1866. Hathi Sing, Zamindar of Ghens had been arrested, tried and sentenced to seven years imprisonment. His estate Ghens was entrusted to his brother for the maintenance of his family and the village Kurondal in his possession was taken away and bestowed on Dasarathi Gauntia for his loyal services. Kunjal Sing, brother of Hathi Sing was also arrested. The Commissioner, Chhatisgarh was informed that, if there were no charges against him, he might be detained under authority of the Chief Commissioner pending sanction of the Governor General. Further, the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces sent a report to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department regarding the capture of Kamal Sing. He was arrested by the Raja of Sarangarh in whose capital he was found disguised in the garb of a "Fakeer". Accordingly a reward of Rs.2000/- was declared in his favour for capturing Kamal Sing.

After the detention of Surendra Sai, his brothers and sons, Khageswar Dao and Lokanath Panda, the Chief Commissioner held that the pensions granted to them when they surrendered should be stopped as they had forfeited such claims by their conduct. However, he directed that enquiries should be made into the status of the females

1 P.Mukherjee, op.cit., p.68.
2 Letter No. Nil, dated 23.9.1864, from Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh (OSA).
3 Letter, dated 23.9.1864, from the Commissioner of Chhattisgarh to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces.
4 Letter No.1864, dated 20.1.1865, from Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh (M.S.A.).
5 Letter No.1273, dated 8.5.1866, from Secretary to Chief Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government of India (OSA).
and other helpless persons belonging to the families of Surendra Sai, Lokanath Panda and Khageswar Dao.

Cumberlege, the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur, after consultation with the Settlement Department, recommended that the Sai family be kept to the enjoyment of the Mauza Khinda, which was made over to Mitrabhanu Sai rent-free for life by Maj. Impey in 1862. The annual income was estimated at Rs.577/- but actually it was Rs.200/-. He found no valid claim to other villages, like Talub and Tubla and he wanted to recommend those villages to 'certain individuals who had done loyal services to the Government in time of need'. Thus the Sai family suffered for the part they played for the liberation of Sambalpur.

Khageswar Dao and his brothers forfeited their hereditary title to the village of Bonda on the ground that the family 'had the worst name throughout the district and the three brothers were bad characters'. The three villages belonging to Lokanath were ordered to be left in charge of Krishna Panda, brother of Lokanath; and he had to look after the wife and daughters of Lokanath.

With this the fate of Surendra Sai was sealed. In 1866, M.T. Pearson, the Attorney for Surendra Sai and others filed a petition, on behalf of his clients, to the Governor General of India-in-Council.

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1 Letter, dated 17.1.1865, from Secretary to Chief Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government of India (O.S.A).
3 Letter, dated 11.2.1865, from Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh (O.S.A.).
4 Maj. Impey with Balmain's sanction 'trusted' Khageswar.
5 Letter No.341, dated 11.1.1865, from Cumberlege to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh (O.S.A.).
against the illegal detention of the prisoners under the orders of the Executive Government issued under the provisions of Regulation III of 1818. He pointed out that the prisoners had been confined “without any offence against the laws of the country”. They had been tried for certain offences with which they were falsely charged and had been acquitted. The Attorney, therefore, prayed the Governor General to release them from the custody. But it was replied that the Governor General saw ‘no reason for modifying the order’. Further the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces was requested to report whether he would suggest any probable time to the detention of the petitioner. The Chief Commissioner regretted that he could not foresee “any immediate or even early prospect” of his being able to recommend the release of these persons “in consistence with maintenance of peace” in the district of Sambalpur.

The question of the release was next raised when the Governor General in his order dated 28th of January 1869 called for the views of Richard Temple whether the prisoners could be released. Richard Temple apprehended that they would begin to intrigue again once released. Accordingly the proposal was turned down by the Governor General in his order dated 29th of January 1869.

In 1871 the Chief Commissioner enquired whether some of the prisoners could be released. Cumberlege, the then Commissioner of

1 Letter, dated 23.1.1865, from M.T. Pearson to Assistant Secretary to the Government of India (N.A.I.).
2 Letter, dated 22.2.1866, from J.T. Wheeler, Assistant Secretary to Government of India to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces (N.A.I.).
3 Letter No.462-37, dated 27.2.1866, from Secretary to Chief Commissioner to Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department (N.A.I.).
Chhattisgarh pointed out that Surendra Sai and Udant Sai had been desperate characters and deserved no mercy. Their release would have the 'very worst effect' upon the Zamindars of Sambalpur and the surrounding Feudatory States and would disturb the peace of the country.

Medini Sai, the younger brother of Surendra Sai, died in the prison on the 18th of October 1875. In 1876 the question of the release of the prisoners was again taken up. The Commissioner, Chhattisgarh in consultation with Capt. Bowie, the then Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur, considered that on no account Surendra Sai, Udant Sai, Kamal Sing and Khageswar Dao be released. But time had come when Dhruba Sai and Mitrabhanu Sai might be released on the condition that they would not enter Sambalpur District. Further, the Raja of Bonai, a Tributary State then under Chhata Nagpur would stand as security for the good conduct of Mitrabhanu Sai.

Consequently, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces sanctioned the release of Dhruba Sai and Mitrabhanu Sai on the condition that the Raja of Bonai should furnish a security to the

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1 Letter, dated 20.5.1871, from Cumberlege to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, (N.A.I.)
2 Letter No.124, dated 18.10.1875, from the Medical Officer, in charge of Garrison, staff and details, Asirgarh to Secretary to the Government of India (NAI).
3 Letter, dated 24.4.1876, from Capt. Bowie, Deputy Commissioner Sambalpur to Cumberlege, Commissioner, Chhattisgarh (O.S.A).
4 Letter No.1585, dated 1.5.1876, from A.B. Cumberlege to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces (O.S.A.).
amount of Rs.5,000/-\(^1\). In the middle of November 1876, Mitrabhanu Sai and Dhruba Sai were released from the Asirgarh fortress and arrived at Nagpur in the custody of Lachman Pathak, the Chief Constable. The District Superintendent of Police arranged to send them to Sambalpur via Raipur.

Both Mitrabhanu Sai and Dhruba Sai were released from the jail on the 1\(^{st}\) of January 1877 on the occasion of Queen Victoria’s assumption of the title of Empress of India, and were immediately externed from the district of Sambalpur. Mitrabhanu was taken by the uncle of the Raja of Bonai and Dhruba Sai accompanied him\(^2\). The Raja of Bonai subsequently made a petition to the Commissioner of Chhota Nagpur for being freed from the obligation of keeping Mitrabhanu in the State and to allow him to return to his native place. The application was rejected. In 1889 Krishnapriya Devi, wife of Mitrabhanu and in 1902 Mitrabhanu Sai himself filed petitions to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces to allow him to return to Khinda. But the applications were not entertained. After the transfer of the district of Sambalpur to Bengal, Krishnapriya Devi sent another petition\(^3\). The Government of India accepted the recommendation of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and allowed Mitrabhanu to return to Khinda.

In 1907 Mitrabhanu returned to Khinda after a period of 30 years’ stay in Bonai and about 12 years of imprisonment. The eventful story of the great freedom fighter Surendra Sai ended with the return of

\(^1\) Letter No.1538, dated 11.8.1876, from the Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to Commissioner, Chhota Nagpur, (O.S.A).

\(^2\) Letter No.334, dated 9.2.1877, from the Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur to Commissioner, Chhota Nagpur (O.S.A.).

\(^3\) Letter, dated 12.1.1907, from Secretary to Government of India to Chief Secretary to Government of Bengal (N.A.I.).
Mitrabhanu Sai to Sambalpur. We have no records regarding the last days of Surendra Sai. The last hero of the Freedom Movement of 1857 did not come out alive from the Fort of Asirgarh. It was reported by the Commandant of the Fort of Asirgarh that Surendra Sai, one of the State prisoners died at 1.00 p.m. out of hospital at the age of 90\(^1\).

\(^1\) The true copy of the Garrison and detailed hospital casualty report is given below, (N.A.I).

**ASIRGARH 28TH FEBRUARY 1884**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age about</th>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Date of admission</th>
<th>Date of death</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Surendra Sai</td>
<td>90 years</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>General Debility</td>
<td>3rd March 1883</td>
<td>28th Feb. 1884</td>
<td>Died at 1 p.m. out of hospital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sd/- M. Callies  
Officiating Garrison Surgeon, Asirgarh