

From Local to National Politics of Relief

Natural disasters occur in a political space.¹

Introduction: The Use and Abuse of Aid

According to the official narrative of the aftermath, as discussed in the previous chapter, the government's ability to act swiftly was partly hampered by destroyed infrastructure and administrative chaos. Under these circumstances, the colonial government focused on security rather than mobilising personnel for rescue operations. As a result, the government's organisational goals, preparedness and leadership in terms of organising disaster relief appeared limited and inadequate. It is in this space of weakened governance that Rajendra Prasad, with support from other leading INC members, began organising relief operations, resulting in the formation of the BCRC, a committee formed with the purpose of collecting funds and organising relief.

Disasters as exogenous shocks to which a political system must respond become political in their aftermath. The politicisation of the event tends to increase, rather than decrease, as the affected society moves from emergency response through recovery and reconstruction phases.² As a part of the politicisation of the relief process, new organisational patterns often form to deal with the sudden disruption of a disaster.³ The BCRC was formed in response to the need for relief and built upon established networks of local politicians and relief organisations. This chapter addresses how political space and relief after natural disasters can be used for meeting political ends, arguing that for the INC, the BCRC served as a tool for nation-building and a practice in state formation where the Congress proved its ability to take on governance—even under extreme circumstances. The criticism of the colonial government was not directed at its incompetence and failure in disaster management, but at the systemic failure of the colonial governance in the Indian state. The BCRC, as a 'non-political' relief committee,

carried out relief in the name of the nation, largely achieved by coordinating the work of a number of local, regional and national relief associations. In order to collect funds, as well as to coordinate and provide relief, the BCRC invoked a language of the nation that served its purpose to efficiently unite local relief associations with the wider networks of socially and politically active groups sympathetic towards the INC.

Research on disasters as sites for nation-building finds politics at the core of relief programmes and aid as a political tool.⁴ Carey A. Watt has demonstrated how relief and social service was one site for nation-building by civil society organisations and among them the INC. Relief programmes and social service organisations functioned as sites for nation-building activities and fostered nationalism among an increasingly nation-conscious civil society in early twentieth-century India. Social service organisations, among them many Congress-affiliated organisations, associations and committees such as the Gandhi Seva Sangh and the Servants of India Society engaged in nation-building activities of education, health and relief provisions through local societies and provincial associations.⁵ Philanthropy, charity and relief work came to be practiced in the name of the nation. Focusing on the formation of the state rather than of the nation, William Kuracina argues that the INC by the 1920s was involved in a process of state formation by using what he refers to as parallelism in governance. Since Britain's dominance of the subcontinent obstructed Indians from establishing indigenous governmentality as a logical outcome of politicisation, the INC 'artificially constructed parallel institutions and practices of governance'.⁶ Although not an official policy, this political development took off in 1934 and was marked by 'the construction of an extra-constitutional bureaucracy that ambiguously cooperated with, and opposed, the Raj'.⁷ Interestingly, Kuracina gives the example of disaster relief as a mode of parallelism in governance inspired by 'oppositional discourse', where Congress operations complemented and mimicked the government's relief efforts, only to point out shortcomings and responsibilities of the state. The implications of oppositional rhetoric meant that the Congress was able to safeguard the people, while the government had failed, as illustrated in public allegations of the government's inadequate response to natural disasters.⁸ Kokila Dang has further expanded on the ability of the INC to 'gain credibility' by way of both criticising the government's relief policies and by organising relief for the victims after the Quetta earthquake.⁹ The methods to do so, described by Dang, are next to identical to the political modes described by Kuracina as parallelism and oppositional discourse in governance. Dang's analysis expands Kuracina's example of how disaster relief by the INC became incorporated into

its larger political work. By the time the Quetta earthquake happened in 1935, the Bihar 1934 earthquake had already gained retrospective significance: the Congress used the 'success' in Bihar in its open criticism of the government's relief operation. Seen in the context of relief activities conducted by the INC, Bihar and Quetta became sites where authority was contested by the colonial state and by 'an emerging nationalism'.¹⁰

In the field of disaster research, how and why governance in the aftermath of a disaster is politicised for certain ends and to various degrees is debated.¹¹ When the disaster is seen as a 'tipping point', the event itself is an accumulation of unsustainable social practices and processes that can motivate reform of governance in the aftermath.¹² Accordingly, a disaster entails both political causes and consequences. But a reordering of society might not take place; politics in the aftermath does not necessarily reflect learning and the opportunity to 'focus' disaster policy in terms of prevention or responses.¹³ The 1934 earthquake's sudden and physical devastation in towns, on the communication infrastructure and on human lives (see Chapter 2) was a massive disaster that opened up a space for political transformations. In order to understand how and why disaster relief changed governance, this chapter provides an analysis of the political and social context of the earthquake. Disaster relief reveals how political discourse can be put into practice.

The Congress occupied a space of fundamental importance in the organisational set-up of a parallel disaster administration by using networks and established infrastructural facilities. As this chapter argues, the BCRC was used by the Congress to criticise the colonial government's approach to governance and exemplify its own political philosophy through governance. At the same time, the BCRC represented an organisation larger than the Congress: it made a point out of uniting, cooperating with and coordinating relief associations and funds from across the subcontinent. The administrative apparatus for disaster relief developed by the BCRC was an appropriation of certain government functions. By establishing physical infrastructure, the Congress could practice political rhetoric in terms of rendering assistance to people depicted as 'poor' and neglected by the colonial government. The development described by Kuracina stresses the importance of state-building practices rather than nation-building exercises by the Congress at this point in history, an argument that this chapter supports in the case of relief efforts organised after the earthquake. However, the idea of a nation in the BCRC's and Congress leaders' rhetoric cannot be dismissed as it served the purpose to unite organisations, mobilise relief workers as well as encourage financial

contributions towards the BCRC. As such, the committee was a practice in governance that called for national unity in relief.

The intense response by INC and multiple civil society associations and organisations in relief work was cautiously watched by the local government. In reports and correspondence, an apprehension of the Congress's involvement in the relief work manifested itself in three kinds of suspicions against the BCRC as an organisation. Throughout the chapter, the government's stance towards civil society's relief work will be discussed according to three themes. First, the government feared that the BCRC would gain 'political capital' on behalf of the Congress by outdoing the government in relief provisions through parallelism. Second, even if the BCRC vowed to keep political questions out of relief work, the government was apprehensive that Congressmen, from Bihar and outside the province, would not follow the relief committee's official line and make 'political capital' by starting a political campaign. Third, government officials and other organisations encountered and accused the BCRC of corruption and misuse of funds. According to the government, this was supposedly done either by using funds to finance political activities or by handing out grants and charitable relief as a method of overtly or covertly buying support for the Congress. Compounded, these uses of aid by the BCRC helped the Congress gain political capital.

To begin with, this chapter charts the developments leading up to the INC emerging as a viable relief organiser in Bihar in 1934 and to the formation of the BCRC. The larger part of the chapter discusses how the BCRC conceptualised its relief programme and organised itself as a coordinative relief committee. This process partly took shape in relation to the government's relief organisation and, not the least, the government's approach towards civil society's participation in disaster relief. Building upon previous research discussed earlier, about disaster relief and nation-building, this chapter stresses the importance of cooperating relief organisation in order to collect funds as well as carry out tasks. Though the Congress's organisational networks and workers constituted an integral part of the committee, the cooperating relief organisations provided local contacts and contributed with experiences gained from previous disaster operations. The chapter's central theme revolves around the politics of relief, arguing that the committee's control of fund collections, the display of a political philosophy in practice, its coordinative function and parallelism in governance became political tools that served to prove the ability of the INC to supersede the colonial government. In order to prove its authority and legitimacy in carrying out relief operations, it stressed the government's lack of initiative and organisational power in aiding the victims.

The Indian National Congress and Politicised Relief

Rajendra Prasad, later the first President of India, experienced the earthquake as a prisoner under guard in Patna Hospital where he was being treated for various health problems.¹⁴ According to official sources conveyed to Prasad, the medical board had recommended his release prior to the earthquake but the notice was delayed in the administrative chaos caused due to the partial collapse of the Civil Secretariat in Patna, hence he was not released until 17 January 1934.¹⁵ The newspapers speculated that the need for relief workers or a leader for the organisation of relief motivated his release.¹⁶ It was perhaps not a far-fetched idea since political prisoners in Patna, serving a sentence less than a year and belonging to Tirhut, were released on 19 January 1934 'in view of the earthquake'.¹⁷ Pandit Prajapati Misra, one of the Congress members released from Camp Jail in Patna, proceeded to Motihari where he took charge of the local relief committee.¹⁸ The government denied any connection between the earthquake and Prasad's release; it was done upon the doctors' recommendation due to his seriously deteriorating health.¹⁹ That the earthquake relief work had no bearing on his release is also substantiated by confidential reports prior to the earthquake which stated that 'the release was ordered as the local Government were satisfied that Babu Rajendra Prasad [Prasad] will require medical treatment for some time to come', implying that in his medical condition he would anyhow circumscribe his movements.²⁰

'The un-crowned king of Bihar', as the nationalist friendly newspaper *Amrita Bazar Patrika* ordained Prasad in an editorial praising his efforts in organising relief,²¹ descended from a landed family in north Bihar and was well connected throughout the earthquake area. He had previously acted as a key figure in the organisation of relief work after floods.²² His political work had begun with M. K. Gandhi and the Champaran movement in 1917–18²³ in the same area of the Tirhut division where the earthquake had caused severe damages. In 1917–18, the enquiries into the conditions of the impoverished peasantry under the oppressive indigo planters not only helped to establish Gandhi as a political force on the national scene but also to bind together a network of intellectual leaders in Patna and north Bihar.²⁴ Lawyers and politically active persons who gathered around Gandhi in 1917–18 now became engaged in relief work after the earthquake.²⁵ When Prasad met Gandhi for the first time in 1917 he was a young lawyer; in 1934 he had risen to become a leading Congressman and would act as a central figure in the BCRC.

Firmly rooted in Bihar and active in the INC at national and local levels, the reason for Prasad's imprisonment was, like for most political prisoners at

that time, his participation in the Civil Disobedience movement. The first year of the decade, 1930–31 was marked by the successful spread of the movement. Demonstrations, volunteers going to prison en masse, non-payment of the *chaukidari* tax and boycott of foreign cloth and liquor stores took place throughout the districts of the state.²⁶ However, the imprisonment of Congress leaders and the counter actions of the government in the form of attachment of property made many small landholders pay the *chaukidari* tax again, and the campaign was brought to an end in March 1931. In January 1932, following M. K. Gandhi's Round Table Conference in London, the Civil Disobedience campaign was taken up again. This time it lasted effectively for only three months and 6,000 Biharis and all of the 'prominent' Congress leaders were in jail by March 1932.²⁷ The Civil Disobedience movement wore off in mid-1933 and finally by April 1934 it was called off, but Bihar, being a stronghold for Congress action, was continuously monitored by the government for any possible flare-up of sympathy.²⁸ The earthquake preceded the elections to the central legislative assembly that were to be held in the autumn of 1934. It was the first elections in which the Congress once more participated after three years of agitational campaigns and where the Congress candidates were very successful and emerged as spokesmen for a national economic policy.²⁹

The lay of the political landscape and the role of the Congress in the wake of the earthquake are captured in the notes of William George Archer (1907–79), a young sub-divisional officer stationed in Madhubani during the time of the earthquake.³⁰ Having taken into consideration the physical damages and psychological effects of the earthquake experience, he perceived its political ramification for the Congress to be of greater importance 'historically':

From being dormant, if not as good as dead, Congress has suddenly come to life. Congressmen who were in prison have been released and under the leadership of B. [Babu] Rajendra Prasad, have formed the [Bihar] Central Relief Committee. This dominates every newspaper, except the 'Statesman.' (...) Its [BCRC's] cooperation with Government has been offered and accepted. Thus, from being lost in prison, Congress is again in the position of telling Government what to do, (for this is the meaning of cooperation) and Government is in the position of having to listen. (for cooperation cannot be rejected) Consequently, while the [Bihar] Central Relief Committee sits prudently on its funds, waiting for Government to exhaust its finances, the *Searchlight* prints tales of the earthquake area, Government money mis-used [*sic*], suffering unrelieved, no adequate steps taken. In eighteen months

time, the Council elections will be ripe, Government re-construction will be finished, and with a Relief Fund still of ample size, Congress will distribute relief. With the whole press more or less Congress, no counter-propaganda is possible. Congress will receive all the credit and Government all the criticism. Whatever else the earthquake has done, it has jerked Congress into future power.³¹

In his autobiography, Prasad describes how the organisation of relief work started from his hospital bed.³² First, he appealed to 'non-official agencies' and 'all Congressmen and women' to join the relief work on 18 January,³³ and two days later he founded the committee of four people, followed by more appeals.³⁴ Prasad notified the local government that he had started a 'non-official organisation ... formed under the name of the Bihar Central Relief Committee',³⁵ promising to 'assist and cooperate with other organisations, official or non-official, working for relief'.³⁶ Prasad made it plain that in this regard, 'in humanitarian work of relief', he, in his role as the committee's president, intended to cooperate with any other organisation engaged in relief.³⁷ The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa welcomed the initiative and forwarded a copy of Prasad's letter to the Commissioners of the affected districts, assuring his approval, 'provided it [BCRC] works in consultation and cooperation'.³⁸

The BCRC was, however, not the first attempt by the INC to organise relief for people in distress. The Congress had extensive experience in setting up relief funds in various regions of the subcontinent; however, nation-wide appeals for relief in instances of natural disasters did not appear until the 1934 Bihar earthquake and after the 1935 Quetta earthquake.³⁹ The Congress' relief collections covered a wide range of activities in the 1920s to the 1940s. At the beginning of the 1920s, the Congress founded several local committees and expanded its relief activities to also include relief and financial compensation to political sufferers.⁴⁰ The Tilak Swaraj Fund was most prominent and served several purposes for the Congress, spanning from compensation to 'victims of natural disasters, support to families of political prisoners, to propaganda, organization, khaddar production', and funding education. The vast amounts collected by this fund also served as an eye-opener for the government which, by 1922, put forward a proposal for an audit of all public funds raised by way of subscriptions for charitable, religious, political and educational purposes.⁴¹ The result of Congress's larger organisational scope and growing significance enabled it to include all forms of activities under the term 'relief', from overtly political objectives of the Congress to seemingly non-political support in disaster relief.⁴²

It was perhaps no wonder then that the government's stance towards potential Congress involvement in relief was cautious. Preceding the earthquake, in the aftermath of a severe flood in Orissa in September 1933, the government suspected that the situation would be used for 'Congress propaganda' and it instructed the local administration 'to anticipate Congress action in connection with movements in themselves unobjectionable, e.g. relief in calamities, legitimate grievances, assistance to depressed classes, etc., by direct action taken by Government'.⁴³ In accordance with directives, the government supervised the administration of funds collected by 'Congress agents' through regular Flood Committees in order 'to prevent the establishment of a definite Congress organisation'.⁴⁴ More than a year after the Bihar earthquake, in the aftermath of the Quetta earthquake on 31 May 1935, the imposition of martial law closed the city for outsiders and only a selected number of relief organisations could enter. The government twice declined Prasad's request on behalf of the Congress to send relief teams. The Bombay Provincial Congress Committee prompted Prasad to start the All India Non-official Relief Committee for relief of the victims, and the majority of its funds came from provincial Congress collections.⁴⁵ If the committee was allowed to enter Quetta, Prasad promised 'not to take to any kind of political propaganda',⁴⁶ a promise he did not need to honour since he remained confined to helping refugees evacuated in nearby states.⁴⁷ The government was explicitly against the involvement of Congress in relief work and 'deliberately refrained from suggesting that they should collect funds as it would mean encouraging another Congress Earthquake Fund'.⁴⁸ The government's attitude towards Congress' involvement in relief was defensive at best and was directed at preventing the formation of a fund of BCRC's proportions.

As the president of the BCRC, Prasad cooperated with the local government in relief work, a decision many Congressmen supported according to his autobiography.⁴⁹ Despite Prasad's claim of having the support of other Congress members, police intelligence reported loud disagreements in the Congress regarding cooperation that foremost rested on the will of M. K. Gandhi, Prasad and 'other elderly people'.⁵⁰ Nehru, who until his arrest on 12 February 1934 was an important person with regard to appeals for funds and someone who had been accredited with giving the first donation towards the BCRC,⁵¹ disagreed with Prasad and others willing to cooperate with the government.⁵² His arrest was based on political content in three speeches, but several 'extremist papers' in Bombay claimed the government's disapproval of his reluctant attitude towards cooperation in relief work as the actual reason.⁵³ His approval of any kind of cooperation with the colonial government appeared as unlikely in view of one of

his articles published two days before his arrest, in which the earthquake and the relief response posed as an allegory of current political developments:

We have stood up bravely to face the unthinking cruelty of nature and have tried to fight it and lessen its tragic effects. Nature is often pitiless and cruel. We feel helpless and bow to it, or we try to control it, according to our temperaments and the measure of strength and will within us. But there are other earthquakes which are not caused by unthinking nature but by thinking man. Human masses, when their lot becomes unbearable, rise up and smash the order that enslaves them. And there are political earthquakes when a government, fearful of its existence, loses all self-control, all sense of perspective, all dignity and begins to behave as a mob that has no clear purpose except that of destruction and the desire to revenge itself on its adversaries.⁵⁴

Nehru's stance in the matter of relief work was to continue a firm political non-cooperation policy with the government and, contrary to Prasad, making no exception for cooperation in relief work. According to an intercepted telegram, he encouraged relief organisations to 'co-operate with everybody except government'.⁵⁵ His official attitude against cooperation with the government in disaster relief swayed as police and local administration mapped his whereabouts and conversations with the press and officials in the area. Subsequently, he ensured in an article in *The Searchlight* 'that the Congress organisation would co-operate provided it was allowed to work in its own way', yet he soon made 'an attack' on the local government published in a local newspaper.⁵⁶ Contrary to Prasad, he took a political stance in the relief work by calling for a suspension of taxes and rents based on the damages.⁵⁷

Though the BCRC agreed to cooperate with the government, the fear of non-cooperation might have been fuelled by the released political prisoners in Patna. Even if a non-cooperation campaign was not on the agenda, former political prisoners from outside the province and Congress workers from Patna showed a symbolic display of the capacity of the Congress. These relief workers were described as '[a] much-needed army of workers for relief work' according to the nationalist *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.⁵⁸ M. K. Gandhi mentioned, in particular, the mobilisation of male Congressmen who had suspended their civil resistance.⁵⁹ Although, as Gandhi pointed out, the political programme of civil disobedience was cancelled in the context of the disaster relief work, to spend time and personal resources on volunteer work in Bihar was perceived as political mobilisation.

The BCRC carrying out 'manual labour' in the form of relief work was in 1935 recognised as 'valid manual labour' under the Congress Constitution.⁶⁰ The active participation in relief work under the leadership of the BCRC in 1934 qualified participants for political participation.

As the workforce of the BCRC's organisation was reinforced by Congress members from outside the province, the government was kept on its toes by the fear of the Congress trying to 'make capital' out of including the politically charged question of rent remission for the peasantry and revenue, or tax, remission for the *zamindars* into the relief programme. Any concession by the government in these questions would possibly appear as giving in to political demands of a no-rent campaign, a feature of political turbulences preceding the earthquake. The beginning of civil disobedience in 1930 coincided with an agrarian crisis in Bihar and the Great Depression of 1929.⁶¹ It was difficult for tenants to pay their rents,⁶² and unlike prior downturns such as the post-1918 inflation, this depression did not strike the poorest the hardest but enhanced the burdens of revenue, rent and interests for the 'middle' peasants with a surplus to sell. The economic situation for these classes resulted in a mobilisation, mainly led by the Congress and the Kisan Sabhas, so-called Peasant Committees, for reduction of revenue, irrigation charges, rent and debt burdens, and the abolition of *zamindari*.⁶³

Hence after the earthquake, attempts by the politically active to argue or send petitions for remission of rents, *chaukidari* taxes and revenue were closely watched in the districts.⁶⁴ In the Tirhut division, the local government officers reported Congressmen who raised the issue of rent payments, intervened by intercepting telegrams and issued warnings to 'Congress leaders' that 'any attempt to make capital out of the calamity by exaggerations or false reports, or by inciting tenants to withhold rents and taxes will be promptly dealt with by Government'.⁶⁵ Police reports from the end of February 1934 recorded talks in the districts about how the BCRC would 'move the authorities to remit rents'.⁶⁶ According to the government, Congress members were eager to regain political support among the peasantry by drawing attention to a lack of relief measures for the rural population:

It seems certain that Congress have given up the idea of making capital out of charges of supine and apathy on the part of the Government officials, and are now going to concentrate upon the slogan of rent and tax remission in order to win back popularity. Intercepted telegrams this morning bear this cut. The *raiyyat* [a peasant paying land revenue directly to the government] is to be represented as totally ruined and with a hard-hearted Government

and landlords pressing him for full payment of rent, cess, and taxes. It is imperative that steps be taken to counter this propaganda.⁶⁷

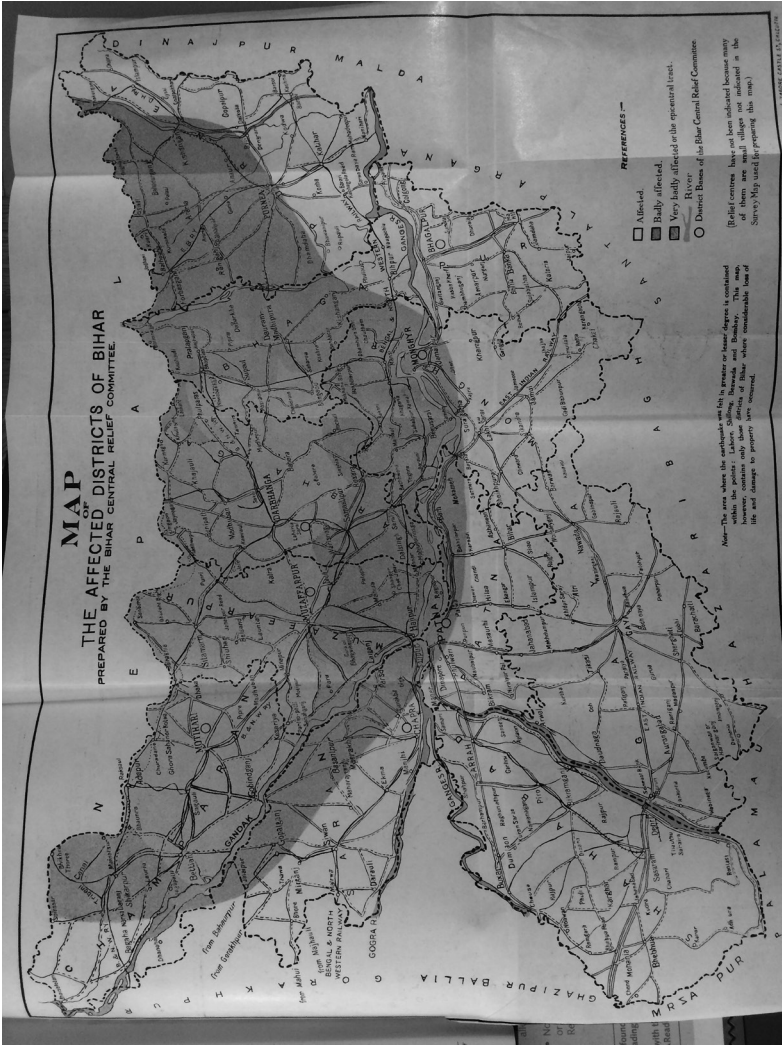
Significantly, however, the local colonial government perceived the Congress members from outside the province as central in spreading such propaganda. The intercepted telegrams referred to before were sent by 'two leading Congressmen' from Bombay,⁶⁸ one described as 'of the blatantly military and un-reasonable type' and the other as 'utterly un-reliable' to the nationalist newspaper the *Bombay Chronicle*.⁶⁹ It was stories like theirs—of 'want starvation nakedness and death' and 'harassment of peasants by government and *zamindars*'—that the government wanted to stop before catching fire in national papers. It was in this context, in February until towards the end of March, that the issue of rent and revenue was repeatedly argued for by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati,⁷⁰ the founder of the Bihar Kisan Sabha (Bihar Peasant Association/Movement) and the All India Kisan Sabha.⁷¹ By March, the police reported instances of Congressmen encouraging or instigating peasants not to pay rent to *zamindars*. Throughout Tirhut and Champaran there was widespread interest in the remission of rent and revenue, resulting in, for example, a collection of thumb impressions and signatures for a petition for remission of rent to the Darbhanga Raj.⁷² Sahajanand Saraswati wanted the BCRC to raise the issue for the peasantry and the *zamindars*; Prasad, however, in the formative meeting of the BCRC in March 1934, threatened to resign if they were going to 'bring politics of any kind into this organisation'.⁷³ Their difference of opinion reflects their general positions at that time when the Congress in Bihar nurtured a close relationship with the landholding classes, while Sahajanand worked for the improvement of peasants' conditions.⁷⁴ The form of 'cooperation' with the local government in relief entered by Prasad, and thereby the BCRC, should be seen in the context of non-cooperation used as a political tool by the Civil Disobedience movement. Cooperation in relief meant that the BCRC intended *not* to non-cooperate with the local government. The promise to leave political questions out of the relief work by central leaders such as Rajendra Prasad did manage to convince the local government that although the BCRC was a Congress organisation in terms of leadership and support, yet not on paper, the committee would stick to disaster relief. The political stance of Prasad in this specific context reflected his relationship with the Kisan Sabhas and the agrarian power relations in Bihar. It was clear that his loyalties lay with the land-owning classes who also formed a strong political base for the Congress in the region.⁷⁵ Sahajanand continued to propagate non-payment of rent in the press as well as in person in Tirhut, but only with sporadic support by Congress

members whose official stance was to fully cooperate with the government.⁷⁶ Later in 1934 when floods worsened the conditions in the countryside, the very cautious and selective critique of landowners' privileges by the Congress played a decisive role in Sahajanand's disassociation from the party.⁷⁷ These conflicting stances within the Congress and BCRC reflected political undercurrents in prioritising certain groups in the distribution of relief. The local government was, however, certain of Prasad's and M. K. Gandhi's commitments to keep political questions such as a no-rent campaign out of the relief work.

The BCRC's cooperation with the government to a large extent appeared to be based on an agreement with Prasad, or as a government official wrote, 'the pact made by Rajendra Prasad'.⁷⁸ The government endorsed BCRC's work (Map 3.1) and welcomed its cooperation in providing relief while keeping a constant eye on the undertakings of the committee and the political figures involved in the relief work. According to the local government, its objective was to maintain cooperation with the BCRC in order to prevent overlapping of the relief programme and thereby potential competition. Even if Prasad claimed and to a large extent appeared responsible for sustaining a smooth cooperation with the government, the local government remained suspicious regarding the Congress's use of relief operations for broadening its political support. Per se, the BCRC's official disassociation from the Congress was rhetorical, though Prasad may have, as noted in the aforementioned quote, sensed a need to call on a larger audience than the Congress due to organisational issues. Although the BCRC had pronounced its work to be detached from a political agenda, the government and the public regarded it an extension of the Congress's political work, an image that members and supporters of the BCRC did not do much to dissuade. Both in the eyes of the public and the government, the BCRC's association with the Congress was evident from references to 'the Congress fund' and 'Babu Rajendra Prasad's fund'.⁷⁹ The 'apolitical' and at the same time political image of the committee was an enduring duality which could be negotiated according to the situation.

Towards 'National' Relief

The BCRC grew as the result of its expanding networks as well as persistent appeals for contributions to the committee. In the initial phase, the committee and a modest mobilisation of relief efforts essentially relied on participation by established relief organisations from outside the affected area. The idea of national support was further articulated in the rhetoric of the committee as it became



Map 3.1 Map of affected districts in Bihar. BCRC's map of the area with the district bases of the committee marked.
Source: Map from BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*.

increasingly institutionalised in the period leading up to its reconstitution in March 1934. A vision of 'national' relief was realised by including a network of leaders for social service associations and committees from other parts of India.

Outside agencies are often the first to take on emergency measures after a sudden catastrophe⁸⁰ and in Bihar many associations from outside the worst-affected area arrived soon after the earthquake. Nehru, on his tour of the area, noticed the 'energy and capacity' of the large number of relief workers who had arrived at Monghyr to be in contrast with 'a very painful absence of self-help among the residents'.⁸¹ The BCRC listed 74 organisations and associations carrying out relief work in the earthquake area, many of them from Bihar and Bengal such as the established larger organisations—the Ramakrishna Mission⁸² and the Marwari Relief Society.⁸³ The government recorded 36 'non-official' relief organisations at work in Muzaffarpur, out of which only one had been formed locally,⁸⁴ while the BCRC claimed that 'more than 35' came from outside Muzaffarpur and 'some' had a local origin and, in addition, 'individual philanthropists' and 'private parties' took part 'without much fuss and went away silently'.⁸⁵ The *Indian Nation*, the Maharaja of Darbhanga's newspaper, wrote that as many as 45 relief organisations started working in Muzaffarpur within two weeks of the earthquake.⁸⁶

Among the first relief societies to arrive from outside the earthquake area were the Marwari Relief Society, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Vivekananda Mission from Calcutta whose teams arrived in north Bihar on 18 January 1934.⁸⁷ In the newspapers, from 20 January 1934, several appeals from regional relief organisations of all sizes filled the pages asking for contributions to carry out relief operation in north Bihar, Jamalpur and Monghyr. The Vivekananda Mission financed the first team with remains from an old relief fund and appealed for further funds, as well as medical students, blankets, money, food-stuffs and medicines, according to the standard format used by many relief associations: a list of names of the office bearers, details of the transactions and a promise of acknowledgement in public print as well as a receipt for every contribution. The Hindu Mission in Calcutta sent relief teams to Monghyr and Muzaffarpur and appealed to individuals to start fund collections and volunteer.⁸⁸ The Bengal Hindu Sabha, or the Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha, also collected funds and encouraged 'all *Hindu Sabhas* in Bengal, Orissa and Assam' to send contributions to the secretary in Calcutta.⁸⁹ These organisations, like the Ramakrishna Mission Association from Calcutta, had established regional experience in relief work, foremost famine relief,⁹⁰ and the Marwari Relief Society, the Bharat Sewak Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha would again take part in relief work

in Midnapore and Calcutta in the Bengal famine of 1943–44.⁹¹ Their previous record in relief work facilitated the participation of these relief societies as the Government of Bihar and Orissa gave concession on railway freight only to the Marwari Relief Society and the Seva Samaj societies. Together with the St John Ambulance Association and the Indian Red Cross Societies,⁹² they counted as established relief organisations.⁹³ This policy was unfavourable to the many smaller associations and emerging relief organisations. Other large organisations entertaining a good relationship with government officials were the Memon Relief Society, the party of Baba Gurdit Singh, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and the Sankat Tran Samiti under Satish Chandra Dasgupta, all of which made prominent contributions according to Prasad.⁹⁴ The Seva Samitis and the Sankat Tran Samiti were fundamental in providing initial funding and regional support to the BCRC. One of the first to mobilise funds and relief workers for BCRC, Madan Mohan Malaviya, a prominent person in the INC, founder of the Banaras Hindu University and the Allahabad and Akhil Bharatiya Seva Samiti (the All-India Service Committee/Society), was known as a major force behind organised social service initiatives in northern India.⁹⁵ By 18 January 1934, Malaviya had initiated an earthquake fund in Benares and used the local Benares Seva Samiti as well as the national organisation, the Akhil Bharatiya Seva Samiti, to organise relief work and raise an advance of 5,000 rupees to the newly initiated earthquake fund.⁹⁶ Even though earthquake relief was a departure from the Seva Samitis' regular function to provide social services such as education, 'unofficial policing' during melas, disposal of corpses and distribution of medicines, the organisational capacities deployed in emergency relief during epidemics and famines proved useful.⁹⁷ The support of Malaviya and the Seva Samiti ensured funds and manpower from both the local and 'national' branches of the established social service organisations.

The Sankat Tran Samiti of Bengal in Calcutta,⁹⁸ a relief society started by Congressman Subhas Chandra Bose⁹⁹ for flood relief in north Bengal in September 1922, initially held a similar function as the BCRC: it aimed to unify relief societies on a working committee in order to agree on an agenda for the relief programme and prevent overlaps.¹⁰⁰ With its previous experience and organisational network between relief organisations in Calcutta, it was quick to appeal for donations, calling on students to donate money rather than spend it on Saraswati puja, and holding a meeting to organise the collection of funds which would be disbursed in collaboration with the BCRC.¹⁰¹ These initial contributions by established organisations relied on local networks outside the earthquake area and helped to portray the BCRC as a national committee.

The second phase of the BCRC's existence, a rebirth in terms of constitution, began in early February with a wider mobilisation of funds and workers, which meant an expansion of the organisation in terms of size and numbers. The reconstitution made the committee 'more efficient and business-like' according to its own account. A constitution of the committee was adopted after the resignation and re-election of the office-bearers in a meeting on 18 March 1934, presided over by M. K. Gandhi. It was registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 (Act 21 of 1860).¹⁰² Since 1860, the act regulated charitable endeavours for public benefit, including the relief of poverty to the advancement of education and religion.¹⁰³ The BCRC was founded with the aim: *a)* to raise funds for the relief of the distressed; *b)* to organise and distribute relief; *c)* to take such steps as may be necessary for the purpose of achieving the aforesaid objects and *d)* to work in cooperation with other organisations with similar objects. In total, 29 members represented donors and relief societies from all over India.¹⁰⁴ Organisations and individuals became members of the committee by contributing 5,000 rupees towards its relief programme. Its composition, it claimed, represented 'all shades of public opinion and all communities' and it willingly cooperated with all organisations.¹⁰⁵ According to Charles Freer Andrews, who campaigned nationally and internationally for the donation of funds to the BCRC and published the book *The Indian Earthquake*, the committee's office-bearers were meant to represent the two major religious communities of Hindus and Muslims in the province.¹⁰⁶

Preceding the reconstitution of the BCRC, the governing committee's members had all come from Bihar. In preparation for the re-election, the committee took help from the nationalist press that published appeals across the subcontinent.¹⁰⁷ The purpose was to invite 'leading individuals from other provinces' in order to mobilise the 'resources and energies of the whole country', according to the committee's own account.¹⁰⁸ People regarded as leaders were wanted as members on the 'All-India Committee' in order to strengthen its 'All-India character'.¹⁰⁹ The process of including persons of public importance was a strategy of the BCRC to establish 'national' cooperation, in order to develop into a relief organisation 'representative of the people of India', thereby expanding its scope to incorporate the 'nation'.¹¹⁰ The transformation from a local gathering into a national organisation was accredited to Nehru who initially encouraged the local committee of 'Gentlemen of Bihar only' to form an 'All-India Committee'.¹¹¹ He described BCRC as 'by no means a purely Congress organisation', but rather an 'all-India body'.¹¹² The committee's members and work were portrayed by him as surpassing the political aims of the political party. Yet such claims may largely

be seen as attempts to portray the BCRC as a 'national' organisation. Even if its relief programme was supposedly 'free' from Congress politics according to its leaders, the political organisation was integral to its organisation and work, and further strengthened as the work progressed.

Local Networks in Aid

The INC was significant in terms of leadership and in collecting funds for the BCRC. Yet the cooperation of relief societies and associations proved essential in order for the committee to substantiate its claim to embrace 'the nation'. Even though the growth of the BCRC into a larger body was an organic development resulting from cooperation between the numerous organisations joining in the relief and reconstruction phase, its relief programme and institutionalisation was the outcome of political aims. Nevertheless, relief societies carried out work according to their own relief programmes and in cooperation with other members of BCRC by taking on certain tasks or carrying out relief in areas according to wards.¹¹³ They thereby continued to collect and distribute aid partly independently and partly in agreement with the decisions taken by the BCRC. The BCRC's report, however, highlights the committee's role in the organisation of relief as central.¹¹⁴

In order to reach local communities, the BCRC to a large extent relied on an established network of member societies and associations. The most evident example can be found in the networks of the well-established Marwari Relief Society from Calcutta, founded in 1913 by reformist Marwaris for volunteerism in public health.¹¹⁵ Its cooperation with other societies in the region facilitated relief work and the distribution of aid collected in Calcutta. Even though a great number of relief societies initially flocked to the earthquake area, sources indicate that they, to a great extent, carried out relief tasks in close cooperation with local 'earthquake-born' or established organisations already engaged in social welfare work or relief work. Such locally initiated relief tends to have better survival chances in terms of sustainability and catering to the grassroots of the communities affected.¹¹⁶ Considering the ability of the Marwari Relief Society to establish local cooperation partners, source urban funding as well as maintain a relationship with other relief organisations, the BCRC's role as a provider of relief appeared marginal. The Marwari Relief Society's ability to work both with networks of local relief organisations and the newly founded BCRC appeared to have been based on civic networks among Marwaris, facilitated by personal acquaintances and trust.

As mentioned earlier, the Marwari Relief Society was among the first to establish relief centres in Muzaffarpur, Monghyr and Darbhanga¹¹⁷ where a large number of the merchant community had died in the bazaars.¹¹⁸ An observer visiting the earthquake area described the Marwari Relief Society as 'purely Indian', most likely referring to the absence of Europeans on its managing committee and among its major donors.¹¹⁹ The 'reputable Birla Family and the Calcutta Corporation' provided 'very liberal and generous support' according to its own account,¹²⁰ and in a list of funds contributors in a newspaper the 'Birla Brothers' from Calcutta had given 27,000 rupees out of the 200,000 rupees collected in February.¹²¹ In 1934–35, the president of the Marwari Relief Society was Braj Mohan Birla, the brother of the wealthy industrialist G. D. Birla, a contemporary well-known supporter and financier of the INC. Marwaris were generally sympathetic towards the political position of the INC and, since the 1920s, leading Marwari businessmen and industrialists such as G. D. Birla, Prabhu Dayal Himmatsinka (also known as P. D. Himatsingka) and Jammalal Bajaj had become involved in nationalist politics.¹²² In 1934, both P. D. Himatsingka and Jwala Prasad Kanoria (the Marwari Relief Society's Honorary General Secretary) actively participated in BCRC's 'Cheap Shops Sub-Committee' under Jammalal Bajaj, treasurer of the INC, Gandhian and president of the Marwari Agarwal Sabha.¹²³ The close relationship between leaders of the Marwari Relief Society and the INC was an obvious advantage in cooperation that facilitated interaction with other service organisations. For instance, Sriram Bajpai was in charge of the Servants of India Society's relief work in Bihar in 1934, and represented the society as a member of the BCRC, while simultaneously assisted the Marwari Relief Society's centre at Muzaffarpur.¹²⁴ According to Dang's research on the organisation of relief work by the INC in the same period, the overlapping commitments between relief-oriented associations and political work was common; for instance, the Servants of India Society and the Indian Mahasabha shared leaders and workers with the Congress committees and helped with the organisation of its political activities.¹²⁵ Relief work was a form of social service for the country, described by the founder of the Servants of India Society as 'nation-building through active citizenship'.¹²⁶

The inflow of resources from urban centres and wealthy patrons appears to have been a valuable strength of the Marwari associations from outside the earthquake area. As Ritu Birla has noted, making a gift for *dharma*, whether to a local temple or social welfare, was a way to negotiate the mobile commercial community's entry as immigrants into a new social world. The practice of gifting did not claim wide political authority but served to display local market dominance and 'a

kind of localized sovereignty'. Gifting was an important social function among Marwaris where 'the community's economic ethics' was emphasised as a method to achieve social progress, thereby disciplining expenditure and excess.¹²⁷ The Marwari Relief Society received funds from other Marwari associations based outside the earthquake area, such as the Oswal Navyuwak Samity from Calcutta, which helped with both funds and volunteers in Minapur and Muzaffarpur, and the Marwari Sahayak Samiti in Ranchi which also contributed to the fund.¹²⁸ In appeals to residents of Calcutta, the Marwari Relief Society collected funds towards the mentioned towns, often stressing local affinity to 'their brethren of Bihar' and providing dramatic eye-witness accounts of the devastation encountered by the relief workers,¹²⁹ for instance, the death of 25 schoolboys in the local Marwari *pathshala* (school).¹³⁰ The link between the Marwaris in Calcutta and the bazaars across north Bihar turned out to be vital for the inflow of resources and funds.¹³¹ Marwaris in Bihar had strong links to Marwari businesses in Calcutta, their principal trades in Bihar and Bengal being cloth, jute and moneylending.¹³² Gifts in kind consisting of jute, a well-known Marwari trade in the area, featured on the long list of donations and to a certain extent reflected the business network of the Marwari community. Hessian, in particular, which is a jute or hemp fabric that the Marwaris generally acted as brokers for, was widely distributed in the relief centres. The Oswal Marwaris were especially prominent in the jute trade,¹³³ and the same name featured in the Oswal Navyuwak Samity from Calcutta and Assam, and the Oswal Earthquake Relief Fund, all of which donated substantial amounts towards the relief society. A large share, 203,615 rupees out of 216,762 rupees, of the Marwari Relief Society's collection came from Calcutta through these networks.¹³⁴ Urban funding and the established social and financial ties between Marwari businessmen and members of the INC appear to have facilitated a close cooperation between the society and the BCRC. Though this cooperation contributed to increasing both the committee's and the society's scope, the latter's reach in the earthquake area depended on cooperation with local Marwari organisations. The ability to develop cooperation locally was fundamental in establishing the society as an important actor in the relief work.¹³⁵ The society in general upheld a good relationship with local government officials, partly maintained by providing unofficial reports regarding its relief programme.¹³⁶ To some extent the relief society appeared to take charge of the work begun by smaller local associations, for instance, clearing debris in Monghyr,¹³⁷ a task initiated by the Bhagalpur Marwari Sudhar Samiti.¹³⁸ The society's negotiation into cooperation with local associations is not always clear as in Muzaffarpur, where it jointly headed the Marwari Earthquake Relief Fund

together with the local Marwari Panchayat Seva Samiti, and even though the two associations cooperated in running and setting up relief centres, financial accounts and tasks were managed separately. The local Marwari associations played a central role in the distribution of relief, for instance, the relief centres opened by the Marwari Relief Society were in the course of time taken over by the local Marwari Panchayat Seva Samiti in Darbhanga and Samastipur, and the Marwari association, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, was deputed to handle the relief centre in Rampurhari.¹³⁹ Notably, local Marwari relief organisations could organise and manage relief centres of their own accord: the main function of the Marwari Relief Society was to bring in manpower and funds. The society perhaps worked under ideal conditions for carrying out relief. Based in a metro unaffected by the earthquake, it had readily available finances, access to necessary equipment and cooperation partners in local and regional Marwari associations which may have shared similar organisational structures, as well as leading members who had important roles in cooperating relief organisations such as the Servants of India Society and the BCRC.

Adding to the established relief providers at ease in cooperation with local networks and political actors in the BCRC, emergent relief providers like the Memon Relief Society in Calcutta expanded its scope in the aftermath.¹⁴⁰ The society's founder, Adamji Haji Dawood (1880–1948) of the Adamjis, belonged to the Memon community, often referred to as a Muslim mercantile community hailing from western India. The community had traded in Calcutta since the late eighteenth century, specifically in Burma rice, and in the 1920s they started investing in the jute and match industries.¹⁴¹ Before 1934, the society had operated in flood relief in Gujarat in 1928, and could send, relatively swiftly, about 70 volunteers to north Bihar within the first five days after the earthquake. Its activities were to repair and build *pucca* and *kuccha* houses, that is, houses of bricks and those of lighter materials such as grass, straw and mud,¹⁴² including schools and mosques, set up grain shops, and distribute food and clothing worth 60,375 rupees in 344 towns and villages in a span of five months. The BCRC had a say about where it carried out work, for instance, rebuilding in Muzaffarpur, Motihari and Olai (alt. Aurai, Awrai or Orai) in particular had been assigned to the society by the committee.¹⁴³ At the same time, its work clearly extended beyond these areas, as the society approached the local government to address rural distress in Katra and the need for additional funds to provide relief, as well as to rebuild huts for homeless village people.¹⁴⁴ Though few sources provide data of the Memon Relief Society's contribution in Bihar 1934, the mention of it repairing *kuccha* houses indicates that it also directed its relief work towards

people of lesser means, a task rarely mentioned in connection with other relief societies. The BCRC recognised, in particular, its ability to construct and repair houses 'at incredibly cheap cost' in Muzaffarpur.¹⁴⁵ Building upon its experience in organising flood relief, the society's expansion in operations and organisational set-up appears to have emerged as a consequence of the earthquake.¹⁴⁶ After the 1934 earthquake, the society organised relief operations and reconstruction work after the Quetta earthquake in 1935, as well as during the riots in Rangoon and at the refugee camps for Indian Muslims from Rangoon in Calcutta in the 1940s.¹⁴⁷

Relief societies based on community, such as the Marwari Relief Society and the Memon Relief Society, did not appear to have attracted criticism for being communal. At least in official publications, relief societies distributed relief independently of religious identity and communalism gave way to seamless cooperation with other relief societies according to eye-witnesses involved in the distribution of relief.¹⁴⁸ One exception would be the care of '[one] hundred' Muslim orphans organised by the Memon Relief Society at two Muslim orphanages in Kanpur¹⁴⁹ and Calcutta.¹⁵⁰ The local government initially claimed that local institutions had taken care of the 'very few cases' of orphans in the earthquake,¹⁵¹ but later appears to have supported private initiatives by granting 7,500 rupees from the Viceroy's Earthquake Relief Fund (henceforth VERF) in order to provide for an undisclosed number of orphans at the Muslim orphanage in Kanpur.¹⁵² Rather than giving preference to Muslims, the Memon Relief Society was, according to a government official, prioritising the 'middle classes' by distributing cash and providing temporary quarters.¹⁵³ The claim was substantiated by the relief society's own report until 15 March 1934, according to which it had distributed 24,005 rupees in cash to 'thousands' of middle class people in villages and towns while the reconstruction of three mosques had been granted only 1,500 rupees.¹⁵⁴ The BCRC, however, accepted donations earmarked for 'Hindu Relief', 'Khathari Sufferers', 'Kayastha Relief', 'Hindu Temple Repair', 'Guru Nanak Langar' (a Sikh relief association providing food), and though these amounts were minimal as part of the collection, it was relief set aside according to communal belonging.¹⁵⁵ The local government accused local workers from the BCRC in Muzaffarpur of 'misappropriating money and clothes', 'peculation, favouritism and inactivity' and instigating communal tensions by giving old clothes to Muslims and new clothes to Hindus.¹⁵⁶ The editorial of *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, a newspaper with a predominantly Bengali readership, questioned the accusations of communalism among relief societies as perhaps being based on personal grievances rather than biases in

distribution.¹⁵⁷ Accusations had been raised against relief operations conducted by 'Benarees, Mahomedans and Marwaris' in the government administration, including a Muslim Deputy Magistrate, who were said to have conducted the distribution of relief along 'strictly and bitterly communal lines'. The editorial in *Amrita Bazar Patrika* described the treatment as expressions of 'anti-Hindu' and 'anti-Bengali' sentiments, the former community a majority in the area and the latter considered a privileged minority. Bengalis in the area reported what they perceived as a grudge against them among their Bihari neighbours, according to the editorial, perhaps due to the presence of Bengali relief organisations which may have favoured their 'own' according to regional ties.¹⁵⁸ Discontent regarding the government's preferences in relief communities lingered as questions were raised regarding the distribution of loans and gratuitous relief to Muslims as opposed to other religious denominations in Muzaffarpur.¹⁵⁹ The government was not prepared to undertake the task of collecting the statistics and the questions came to an end.

Invoking the Nation through Images: Devastated Women, Devastated Bihar

As mentioned in the Introduction to this chapter, a way of collecting funds for earthquake relief was by selling special newspaper issues or reports of the earthquake. Two publications that sold in support of the BCRC relied on imagery and language which depicted Bihar as a suffering woman in what is analysed as a personification, localisation and feminisation of the disaster. Their imagery was in stark contrast to publications by the colonial loyalist press that used photographs of ruined buildings, town landscapes of bricks and spectacular land damages side by side with advertisements of goods and materials for reconstruction such as the *Statesman's* special issue, *Record of the Great Indian Earthquake*, sold for 6 annas 'to help the earthquake relief work' through the VERF.¹⁶⁰

A number of nationalist publications also described the disaster through imagery that relied on material destruction, but at the same time connected it to the experience of individual suffering. A book-length publication in Hindi with a collection of often tragic stories by survivors who had barely made it out of their crumbling houses such as *Stories of the Victims of the Earthquake: Bihar's Earthquake Victims' Most Astonishing and Pitiful True Own Narrations*,¹⁶¹ and articles in the Hindi press,¹⁶² as well as the eye-witness account of the aftermath by Nehru, *Devastated Bihar through Jawaharlal's Lenses*,¹⁶³ all focused on material destruction, yet individual losses and tragedies featured as examples. In particular,

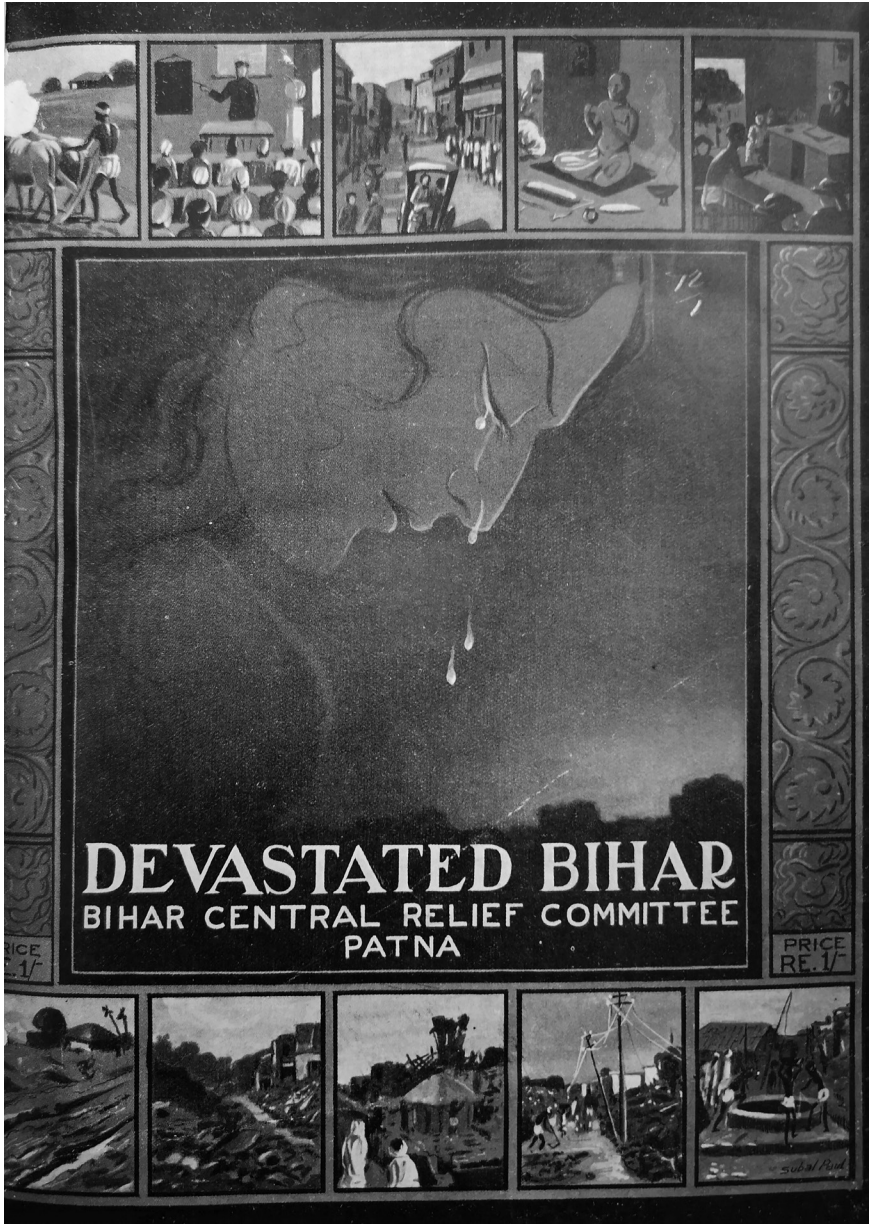


Image 3.1 Cover of *Devastated Bihar* by BCRC.

Source: BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*.

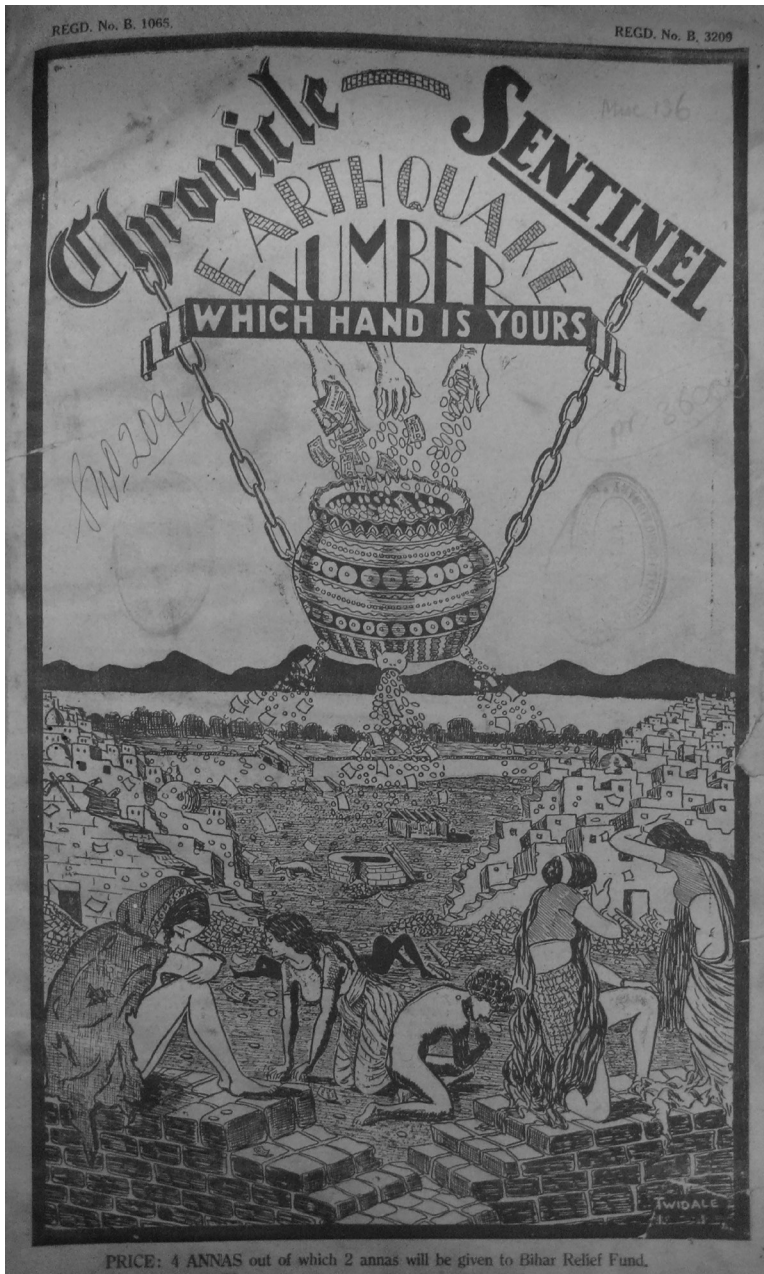


Image 3.2 Cover of *Earthquake Number: Which Hand Is Yours*, published jointly by *Bombay Chronicle* and *Bombay Sentinel* under the name *Chronicle-Sentinel*.

Source: Cover of Syed Abdullah Brelvi and B. G. Horniman (eds.), *Earthquake Number: Which Hand Is Yours*, special issue by *Chronicle-Sentinel*, Bombay, March 1934.

Nehru's brief narrative relied to a great extent on spectacular photographs accompanied by texts describing the destruction. Notably, it was one of three publications which used 'Devastated Bihar' in the main title, the other two being Rajendra Prasad's *Devastated Behar: The Problem of Reconstruction*, and BCRC's *Devastated Bihar: An Account of Havoc Caused by the Earthquake of the 15th January 1934 and Relief Operation Conducted by the Committee*.

Two major publications by the nationalist press, *Devastated Bihar* published by BCRC and the special *Earthquake Number: Which Hand Is Yours* by *Chronicle-Sentinel*,¹⁶⁴ a collaboration between the two newspapers *Bombay Chronicle* and *Bombay Sentinel*, paired images of women in distress with images and text depicting a ruined Bihar in their call on 'the nation'. The publication *Devastated Bihar* was sold after BCRC's reconstitution in March 1934.¹⁶⁵ The sales proceeds from the report that was sold for 1 rupee went towards the fund of the BCRC.¹⁶⁶ The cover (Image 3.1) appealed for contributions with an image of a dejected woman's face in profile, literally shedding tears over Bihar's ruined landscape. The woman appeared devastated, just as Bihar was 'devastated' according to the title of the report. In the frame of small squares around the central image, a number of scenes contrast life before and after the earthquake. One line of images depicts everyday life scenes: a farmer ploughing his field, students attending class, and the next line showed flooded land, a ravaged landscape, towns in ruins and peasants struggling to get water. The images constructed a narrative of a prosperous life in towns and rural areas before the earthquake and the destruction in its aftermath. Central to this narrative of destruction was the devastation of Bihar.

The *Chronicle-Sentinel's* special issue *Earthquake Number: Which Hand Is Yours* (Image 3.2) was a Bombay publication; the number appealed especially to people of western India and the metropolis, portrayed as a centre for wealth and power as opposed to Bihar's helplessness after the earthquake.¹⁶⁷ The issue was published in March 1934 by the editors of two important nationalist newspapers in Bombay, B. G. Horniman of the *Bombay Sentinel* and Syed Abdullah Brelvi of the *Bombay Chronicle*—the latter was a member of BCRC by way of having donated 5,000 rupees to the committee.¹⁶⁸ The issue's cover used dramatic imagery depicting human bodies, dead livestock, a naked youngster and women in torn saris kneeling and sitting in the ruins of what was once a town. Above the scene of destruction hangs a collection urn into which hands are depicted giving money ('Which Hand Is Yours') that is simultaneously being distributed over the landscape and ruins. As will be discussed later, the issue called on specifically 'Congressmen' to act, and its content was to a large

extent written by Congress members repeatedly invoking the nation as the rescuer. These images of Bihar left in ruins, ‘devastated’ women in agony and in need of rescue, dressed in torn saris and bent in dejected poses called for funds from the nation, an entity united and embodied in the largely male leadership of the BCRC. Bihar, or the woman, needed rescue by the nation, which was represented by the BCRC.

Both *Devastated Bihar* by the BCRC and the *Chronicle-Sentinel’s Earthquake Number: Which Hand Is Yours* invoked a paternalistic language to elicit gifting from the general public. Women and children were used in images and the province Bihar was portrayed as a female in need of help. Images communicate culture-specific values and, at the same time, children and women in need are well-known universal themes for aid agencies to arouse generous gifting or paternal funding.¹⁶⁹ The publications, in turning Bihar into a feminine object, borrowed rhetoric from nationalist depictions of the ‘nation’ in the form of a female figure, as a ‘Motherland’. *Bhārat Mātā* (Mother India) as a nationalist symbol in literature and political writings became popular in nationalist discourse during the late nineteenth century, as Manu Goswami has lucidly analysed.¹⁷⁰ The modern nation of India was imagined as an ancient goddess, *Bhārat Mātā* who embodied ideas and values and served to arouse reverence ‘among her citizen-devotees’.¹⁷¹ As Ramaswamy notes, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the vision of *Bhārat Mātā* was accepted by ‘secularists’ as an embodiment of the geopolitical space India. She was often depicted as a mother situated in a globe, with the Indian tricolour or a map delineating the borders of India, thereby turning her devotee–citizens into ‘geopiety’.¹⁷² The image of Bharat as a goddess or national space was not infrequently depicted as invaded, raped and assaulted by foreign rulers and in need of rescue by specifically masculine and upper-caste Hindu political agency.¹⁷³ Similarly, disaster imagery and imagination in the two nationalist publications after the earthquake alluded to a woman in need of rescue, an embodiment of the province Bihar ‘devastated’ by the earthquake.¹⁷⁴

The portrayal of Bihar as a female was further reinforced by the use of nationalist language in the *Earthquake Number*. Sarojini Naidu, the first female president of the INC in 1925 and a prominent politician of the 1930s, in a short introductory note titled ‘Our Supreme Duty’ depicted Bihar as a physically and emotionally hurt female in need of the nation’s help:

It is not enough that on the first poignancy of Bihar’s anguish and affliction the whole country was moved to render her instant succour and solace.

Every hour brings fresh revelation of the magnitude of her disaster and the magnitude of her need. Does it not, therefore, behove us all to make Bihar the central burden of our daily thought and duty and offer her our love and consolation transmuted into unstinted and unceasing service for her redemption from the sorrows and perils that beset her.¹⁷⁵

The devotional ('offer her our love and consolation transmuted into unstinted and unceasing service for her redemption') and at the same time patriotic language ('central burden of our daily thought and duty') coupled with ascribing Bihar human emotions ('Bihar's anguish and affliction') and a physical state ('her need') that could be remedied ('redemption from the sorrows and perils') served to encourage contributions to the fund based on the same nationalist language as depicted in the images. Naidu's introductory note was followed by a string of short notes and articles calling on the nation for support in the relief work. Headings such as 'Rajen Babu [Rajendra Prasad] Appeals for Funds: Task Ahead of Bihar Is of Tremendous Magnitude, but God Willing We Shall Face It with Backing of Our Nation', 'A National Disaster', 'A Calamity Code: All Natural Disasters of a Major Kind in Whatever Province Should Be Viewed by the State as National Burdens', and 'Country's Response Still Inadequate: Bihar Minister Urges Further Nation-Wide Effort to Aid Stricken Province'¹⁷⁶ left no one in doubt that the rescue of Bihar necessitated a 'national' response.

A print of a woman juxtaposed with a ruined town appeared inside the issue as well (Image 3.3), notably the same components as on the cover as well as on the BCRC's publication *Devastated Bihar* (Images 3.1 and 3.2). The drawing by Palin Bihari Dutt was made in aid of BCRC's fund collection. Again the nation was called on to rescue Bihar: 'The Agony of Bihar: The Nation's Call'. The relief providers, the embodiment of 'the nation' had legitimate grounds to act as 'the agony of Bihar is a nation's agony' and they, as the embodiment of 'the nation', were the saviours of the 'woman', or Bihar. However, the physical and mental appearance of the woman in this drawing is remarkably different from the dejected pose of the devastated women on the cover. The woman, a young mother holding a baby on her shoulder, has an almost triumphant posture as she towers over the ruined town. In her determined outlook, the woman with her head raised high appears to look beyond the damaged town as she protectively holds her baby and looks into the future. The imagery may here have communicated a vision of the resurrected mother, a young nation with a bright future.

THE AGONY OF BIHAR

The Nation's Call



It is impossible to measure at this moment the dimensions or amount of damage to life and property caused by the earthquake disaster in Nepal and Bihar.

But what is already known is sufficient to arouse the sympathy and ensure the support of feeling humanity the world over. The agony of Bihar is a nation's agony. And, the nation now calls for help from every quarter in the world to thousands who have been rendered homeless, to thousands who have experienced untold misery, the pangs of inclement weather and unprecedented helplessness and poverty.

The task of reconstruction of the afflicted areas is, obviously, colossal. But the task of providing temporary relief, food, shelter and medical assistance, whatever its magnitude, must be tackled immediately and every pie that can be collected either in India or outside must be utilised for that purpose—here and now.

We are obliged to Sgt. Pufia Bihari Dutt for the drawing reproduced above executed by him in aid of the Bihar Relief Fund.

Image 3.3 'The Agony of Bihar: The Nation's Call'.

Source: Illustration by Palin Bihari Dutt, in Brelvi and Horniman, *Earthquake Number: Which Hand Is Yours*.

Relief Programme: Administration, Distribution and Priorities

The experience of leading Congress members and the INC's institutional organisation and networks helped the committee to collect funds, outline a relief programme and set up an administration for the distribution and management of relief. In all, the committee created an administrative apparatus that paralleled the government administration in providing relief. The Viceroy noted that the Congress held considerable sums and feared 'that Gandhi and his friends are going to make a desperate effort to restore their position by being extremely active, if they can, in the devastated areas'.¹⁷⁷ According to the local police reports, the BCRC, and thereby the Congress, threatened to gain 'parallel control' in relief work.¹⁷⁸ At the same time, a personal account from a government official claimed BCRC to have worked 'side by side with the officers of Government', stressing a cooperative spirit rather than the running of two separate organisations.¹⁷⁹

As the BCRC was reconstituted in March it formalised its relief programme and closed the 'immediate relief' programme.¹⁸⁰ The reconstruction phase, in comparison to the immediate aftermath, involved much larger funds. Reconstruction, beginning in April, included repairs of houses and infrastructure, agricultural land restoration, building wells and tanks outside the towns, as well as other types of aid such as grants to small traders and artisans as well as training of volunteers in first aid in case of epidemics.¹⁸¹ By June 1934, the BCRC Head Office, located on Exhibition Road in Patna, coordinated and served as storage for the considerable national and also international contributions pouring in from purse collections, charity organisations and private persons before being sent to the districts.¹⁸² In addition to a publicity department, the office contained 15 departments, including a medical, an agricultural and an engineering department and seven branch offices in the districts. The BCRC's costs for administration by the end of June 1934, amounted to 1,33,423 rupees, covering the costs for travelling, volunteers and office equipment, huts, cars and cycles. The amount spent on administration reflected the set-up of a fairly large organisation for relief which included 258 centres and 2,277 workers by June 1934.¹⁸³ Administratively experienced politicians such as Jawaharlal Nehru advised in the organisation of the Head Office, and J. C. Kumarappa, a chartered accountant, was sent by M. K. Gandhi.¹⁸⁴

According to official data, the BCRC, in the end, collected almost 3 million rupees and a large number of donations in kind.¹⁸⁵ Initial government reports acknowledged the committee's active participation in relief work and noted,

in particular, its 'large reserves of money' received from the public.¹⁸⁶ Appeals by M. K. Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarojini Naidu helped to collect national and international funds, supported especially by C. F. Andrews who was urged by Rajendra Prasad to appeal for relief in Europe and Africa.¹⁸⁷ Contributions from abroad were added to by private initiatives such as the Indian Earthquake Relief Fund in Great Britain.¹⁸⁸ Foreign collections were modest compared to the large domestic collections from Bengal, Bombay and Gujarat, as illustrated in Table 3.1.¹⁸⁹ Confidential reports by the local governments described the administrative organisation of the INC provincial offices as the base for the BCRC in collecting funds.¹⁹⁰ Papers by the All-India Congress Committee confirm the active involvement of the *Desh Sevika Sangh* and the *Gandhi Seva Sena* in collecting funds on behalf of 'the national relief committee' BCRC. Since these organs of the INC financed political work, such as an INC session,¹⁹¹ the BCRC was supported by collections meant for both overtly political purposes and humanitarian relief. The BCRC's report until June 1934 supports the government's perception of the INC's regional offices as the backbone in collecting funds. In particular, the larger collections from Bombay and Ahmedabad (Table 3.1) were substantial and may have been facilitated by the fact of them being strongholds of the INC as well as the strong presence of business communities in these two cities. The Congress shared close ties with Gujarati merchants in particular—a regional and community tie which has been explained by Gandhi's personal connection with Gujarati merchant communities.¹⁹² Many merchants, in general, supported Gandhian movements, often generously, without themselves engaging too openly with the activities.¹⁹³ The good relationship between the Congress and the Marwari merchants in particular formed the foundation for BCRC's cooperation with the Marwari Relief Society from Calcutta, an influential relief provider with a far-reaching local network that will be examined in the following section of this chapter.

In the reconstructive phase, the committee prioritised clearing wells and tanks in order to address the problem of clean drinking water. M. K. Gandhi, who suggested to the committee to focus on water-related issues, claimed the BCRC to know 'better than any other agency' the needs of the rural population and the necessity of water to sustain livelihoods.¹⁹⁴ The space carved out by the committee in the relief programme stressed its ability to provide relief in a better way than the government and also proved it to be more attuned to the needs of the people. According to Nehru, no other agency but the BCRC, 'not even the Government', had the same ability to provide relief among the peasants. The reason, according to Nehru's retrospective account, was the availability of the

Table 3.1 Donations from the provinces and abroad to BCRC:
20 January–30 June 1934 (in rupees)

	20 January to 31 March 1934	1 April to 30 June 1934
Bihar & Orissa	65,044	11,329
Bengal	247,112	31,983
Burma	57,527	9,124
Assam	9,004	865
Bombay	782,771	85,918
<i>Bombay city</i>	723,435	74,341
Gujarat	346,133	66,003
<i>Ahmedabad</i>	229,082	51,634
Kathiawad	76,881	13,794
Khandesh	14,392	1,205
Central Provinces	53,470	5,074
Central India	32,198	7,046
Sindh	63,073	14,727
Rajputana	30,373	5,212
Baluchistan	1,031	190
Madras*	173,165	31,105
Canara	3,598	-
The Punjab	166,835	12,779
N.W.F.P.	6,936	3,365
Kashmere State	4,583	218
United Provinces	196,545	46,301
Foreign	42,615	76,889
Total	2,308,247	423,128

Source: Based on 'Summary of Annex A: Donations Received from 20 January to 31 March 1934' and 'Summary of Annex B: Donations Received from 1 April to 30 June 1934', in BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 112, 126. All data are in round numbers.

Note: *Data on Madras includes donations from Mysore, Hyderabad and Malabar.

Congress' organisation and its workers being at its disposal, many of whom hailed from a peasant background.¹⁹⁵

In practice, the task of securing water sources proved difficult to implement. According to the proceedings from the committee's second general meeting in August 1934, 484,000 rupees were allotted to solve issues related to water, which included reconstruction of wells, re-excavation of tanks, repair of embankments and water channels and drainage of water-logged areas. By the end of June, the committee had constructed 3,519 new wells, repaired 2,781 wells and re-excavated 552 tanks, and some 700 tanks were to be completed by early 1935 (Table 3.3).¹⁹⁶ It may have looked like a large figure, but considering that the number of wells and tanks damaged or destroyed amounted to 'anything between 75,000 and one lakh [100,000]' according to the BCRC, the effort was in the committee's own words 'poor'.¹⁹⁷ BCRC started boring tube-wells but found it a waste of time since it could only be used by one person at a time, apart from the fact that they were difficult to maintain. Instead, the construction of masonry wells was favoured since it could be used by several people at a time and the villagers could be employed in the construction work rather than engaging contractors from outside, as in the case of the bore wells.¹⁹⁸ Repairs of embankments and roads provided an opportunity for so-called unemployment relief in order to help the rural population. The 44,192 rupees spent on unemployment relief reflected a relatively modest undertaking considering the allotment of 167,000 rupees by the end of June 1934 (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3). Still, water issues, huts and building materials, and unemployment relief were the three main categories of aid in the period until the end of June (Tables 3.2 and 3.3).

The large sums for so-called middle-class relief mainly constituted grants for rebuilding houses and were distributed in September, after the rains, when reconstruction could be initiated in north Bihar. Even though middle-class relief as a category was not initially given priority in the relief programme, a sub-committee of eight members dedicated to this type of relief was an evident sign of the classes' presence in the relief programme in a longer perspective. Like the local government's relief programme, the BCRC, too, equalled house grants or assistance in reconstruction with middle-class relief: 'the particular form of relief which can be given to this class is in rebuilding houses'.¹⁹⁹ Out of the allotted 500,000 rupees towards middle-class relief largely concentrated in the towns of Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Monghyr, only 23,471 rupees had been spent by June 1934.²⁰⁰ Similar to how the local government defined the middle classes as a relief category based on foremost property (Chapter 5). Until June, the committee had prioritised securing water supplies for the cost of 379,285 rupees. Although

Table 3.2 BCRC budget allotments: 1 April–30 June 1934 (in rupees)

District	Wells, tanks, etc.	Huts, etc.	Doles and un-employment	Seeds	Debris	Middle-class relief	Famine	Total
Muzaffarpur	170,000	25,000	10,000	10,000	3,000	113,000	6,000	331,000
Champaran	91,000	30,000	73,000	10,000	1,000	65,000	-	276,000
Darbhanga	100,000	25,000	50,000	10,000	1,000	112,000	-	298,000
Monghyr	36,000	40,000	15,000	2,000	5,000	90,000	-	188,000
Bhagalpur	40,000	10,000	9,000	-	-	25,000	-	84,000
Saran	27,000	10,000	10,000	-	-	32,000	-	79,000
Patna	-	20,000	-	-	-	35,000	-	55,000
Gaya	-	-	-	-	-	6,000	-	6,000
Shahabad	-	-	-	-	-	6,000	-	6,000
Purnea	20,000	-	-	-	-	16,000	-	36,000
Total	484,000	160,000	167,000	32,000	10,000	500,000	6,000	1,359,000

Source: Based on 'Budget Allotments: Since 1st April 1934', in 'Proceedings from the Second General Meeting', in BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 135–36 and unnumbered pages after 129.

Table 3.3 BCRC relief from 20 January to 30 June 1934: main heads for payments (in rupees)

	Audited 20 January– 31 March 1934	Preliminary Audit 1 April– 30 June 1934	Total
Water supply	11,382	367,903	379,285
Huts, semi-permanent buildings and building material	97,277	98,602	195,879
Immediate aid	26,702	38,385	65,087
Unemployment	14,366	29,825	44,192
Stores and freight	20,764	20,116	40,881
Aid to middle classes	-	23,471	23,471
Total	170,491	578,302	748,795

Source: 'Bihar Central Relief Committee. Receipts and Payments Accounts from 20 January to 30 June 1934'. See 'Proceedings from the Second General Meeting', in BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 135–36.

water was the priority to begin with, 'Middle-Class Relief' was granted an almost equal amount in aid as water-related issues (Table 3.2). The initial modest expenditure on middle-class relief was explained by three factors: immediate relief needs such as water issues were prioritised; second, the committee's strategy was to wait for the government to act first since it was a larger expense than the committee could cover; and last, the beginning of the rains in the summer made it practically difficult to rebuild houses.²⁰¹ Although the committee, judging from allocations, readily provided substantial funds to the middle classes for the reconstruction of private property, its relief programme stressed broader support of public goods in the form of water and livelihoods in rural areas.

The BCRC's success in organising relief work should also be viewed against the government's partial failure to carry out the same task. For instance, in Muzaffarpur, the government attempted to coordinate relief organisation after BCRC had already started the same task. Five days after the BCRC had started work,²⁰² the district administration attempted to set up 'The Central Relief Committee' (*not* the BCRC) to coordinate relief work in Muzaffarpur. However, relief organisations turned out to be reluctant to participate as evidenced by the fact that only 15 leaders of 36 'non-official' relief organisations joined and

only a few submitted reports.²⁰³ The BCRC could claim legitimacy as a relief provider and coordinator based partly on a general unwillingness on behalf of the relief associations to recognise the government as a partner in relief work. The government records of the district administration's failure in organising relief associations locally show that descriptions in the nationalist press of the BCRC and not the government as the central provider of relief was not merely part of a rhetoric.

Rhetoric, however, served as an efficient tool. The nationalist friendly press helped in advertising the BCRC as practically oriented and efficient compared to the government's attempts. Implicit criticism of inadequate government efforts emerged in articles mentioning the work of the respective fund collections of the BCRC and the VERF. While giving marginal space to a visit by the Governor of Bihar and Orissa in the earthquake area, and providing 'examples of self-help' by government officials who with 'spades and baskets' would repair a *bund* in a village, a writer described how 'non-official relief agencies' made efforts to get support on an 'All-India basis' and to find 'the best technical skill available in the country'.²⁰⁴ The government's attempt at reconstruction with basic labour appeared less skilled in comparison with the relief organisations' focus on technical expertise. The press helped in making prominent the presence of Congress leaders in the worst-affected areas known. Muzaffarpur, which had turned into a 'place of pilgrimage' for 'great men', mentioned Nehru, Santosh Kumar Basu, Mayor of Calcutta, and Rajendra Prasad among the first to visit, only to be followed by the Viceroy, the Governor of Bihar and Orissa and M. K. Gandhi.²⁰⁵ The accounts emphasised the presence of a 'national' spirit in the work of relief organisations, which was portrayed as being faster and more able than the government's response. The importance of the BCRC's contribution in the relief work was strengthened by the wide acclaim it received in the nationalist friendly press for its relief programmes, hailed as more generous and successful than the government's efforts.

Despite clearly favouring the BCRC and a variety of relief societies, the nationalist press was careful while delivering criticism of the government's operations at a local level. The press in Bihar was in the local government's yearly report of the political situation for 1934 described as having 'displayed a distinctly helpful attitude and refrained from the bitter and immoderate criticism which generally characterises their remarks on every activity of the local Government'.²⁰⁶ The local government administration in Bihar acknowledged leading members of the BCRC for upholding a cordial relation. The change in the attitude of *The Searchlight* and the other 'more extremist papers' was ascribed

by the government to 'the improvement in political feeling which was manifest during the relief operations'. In the case of *The Searchlight*, it remained a 'bitter critic' of the central government throughout the year, though the withdrawal of civil disobedience had diminished the use of 'violent language'.²⁰⁷ While the government appeared content with a relatively cooperative ambience in the relief work locally, Congress members in other parts of the country were accused of using the nation-wide press to launch verbal 'attacks' against the government's lack of engagement in the relief work.²⁰⁸ In February, the government deputed a publicity officer to Bihar whose primary responsibility was to secure more space for approving articles of the local government in the press. The articles were based on 'old material' and material obtained from persons whom the officer had met with in Bihar. He used the signatures 'An Earthquake Sufferer' and a 'Visitor' in the newspaper articles he published.²⁰⁹ It was not considered propaganda against the Congress but an attempt 'to create a more favourable and accurate impression outside Bihar of what this Government really has done and is doing'.²¹⁰ Lauding the government's relief effort served to counter reports featured in the 'advanced nationalist newspapers' in Calcutta and Bombay, while the local press remained comparatively cooperative in reporting the government's work mainly through communiqués.²¹¹

Corruption and Aid as 'Political Capital'

A major concern of the government was the committee's large fund collection of 3 million rupees out of which half was still undistributed by the end of 1935. In the second general meeting held by the BCRC in early August 1934, the committee claimed to have spent 2.2 million rupees out of the 2.7 million rupees collected by then, leaving a balance of 500,000 rupees.²¹² According to the government's calculations, however, the BCRC had at the end of 1934 a balance of about 1.4 million rupees.²¹³ In the early months of the aftermath, the government feared embezzlement of funds for private use or for political work, the latter a concern that grew with the large balance left unspent by the end of the year. Suspicions were almost exclusively directed towards distribution and the local organisation of relief while the management, mainly Prasad, remained in good faith regarding his intentions among the government officials in Bihar.

The central government feared that money collected by the BCRC would 'stick' and instead of being used for relief, it would be used for political ends;²¹⁴ it feared that Congressmen engaged in 'filling their own pockets', either for their

personal gain or perhaps for the Congress, which would be more worrisome.²¹⁵ The government suspected first of all the BCRC's co-opted workers and so-called unorganised volunteer helpers from across India to have come for the 'very large sum of money' collected by the BCRC. Among these 'undesirables', the members of the Hindustan Seva Dal were prominent. The centre of activities was first Patna, but by the end of the first week of February, Muzaffarpur had become a hub for relief workers.²¹⁶ Police reports claimed Bihar to be 'flooded with questionable characters since the earthquake (...) some with a revolutionary taint (...)'.²¹⁷ In Madhubani district, the BCRC distrusted its local workers and a vigilance committee of mostly pleaders in Muzaffarpur accused it of discriminating 'in favour of their own servants and sympathisers',²¹⁸ and 'extensive corruption', particularly in Champaran, was observed by the local government.²¹⁹ Suspicions of corruption surfaced regularly regarding the relief workers' distribution locally as well as regarding a more widespread systematic use of aid as a form of bribe.

Brett, throughout 1934, remained assured that Prasad showed little interest in using the inflow of INC members and financial resources against the government.²²⁰ He dismissed the Home Department's concerns with the charges of corruption against BCRC and disagreed with the *Indian Nation*, described as the mouthpiece of Darbhanga Raj, which claimed that the BCRC workers used relief money to buy votes,²²¹ presumably referring to the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly in 1934. The local colonial government administration, in general, had a positive image of Prasad's leadership and showed concern that he would increasingly dedicate his time to politics, as he was expected to become President of the INC in October 1934 and thereby have a diminishing influence on the committee. The government feared his absence further escalated the misuse of funds driven by political ambitions and corruption.²²² In the elections for the constituencies to the Legislative Assembly, the INC made a clean sweep of the non-reserved seats,²²³ and it had been 'freely suggested' according to the local government that the BCRC fund came in useful.²²⁴ The Congress was perceived to have revived itself with the help of relief funds; from having been under embargo just a few months earlier, with no funds to spend, it had emerged as the only political party that could be counted on in the province.²²⁵

After the government report *India in 1933–34* caused a public outcry early in 1936,²²⁶ with its insinuations of corruption or mismanagement by the BCRC,²²⁷ Brett revisited his experience during 1934. According to Brett, the BCRC was regarded as incapable of distributing considerable sums in house grants without being 'abused', because it lacked organisation and was at a risk of corruption at the local level. The level of cooperation between the Congress and government

officials varied; in Champaran and Muzaffarpur, some of the leading members were described as 'extremely helpful' in cooperating with district officers, while BCRC workers in other areas obstructed the government's work.²²⁸ Brett unofficially confirmed that Rajendra Prasad and M. K. Gandhi had themselves been concerned with the waste of money.²²⁹

Some substance to the suspicions of corruption may have been there since in the same month, early in June 1934, M. K. Gandhi sent a letter to J. C. Kumarappa regarding the management of funds, sharply criticising the Managing Committee and Prasad for giving 'blank cheques to officers in charge' and for the neglect of the committee's work.²³⁰ The problems with alleged corruption in distribution were addressed by Gandhi who recognised 'the absolute control and discretion vested in the officers in charge at the districts' as the 'weak point' of the BCRC.²³¹ Such suspicions were supported by an intercepted letter from Kumarappa who confirmed the misuse of funds by workers of the BCRC and unofficially called for the complete reorganisation of the committee's work.²³² The first audit of BCRC accounts by end of August 1934 did not directly address accusations of embezzlement, though the last point of the auditor urged for the adjustment of 'debit balances of long standing' in 'some of the personal accounts, which are said to be for expenses', perhaps hinting at misuse of funds. To this point, Prasad could only confirm that the Managing Committee was 'quite alive', and had already taken steps to call in the advances.²³³

However, as Brett's retrospective account of the alleged corruption also discloses, the local government had in September 1934 pressurised the BCRC's management to allocate further sums to middle-class relief. According to Brett, Rajendra Prasad discussed plans for the BCRC to distribute its remaining funds as house-building grants in cooperation with the government, a plan that eventually did not materialise since it was turned down by 'the more extremist elements' in BCRC, or in other words, a number of unidentified persons who opposed the committee's cooperation with the government in terms of sharing funds.²³⁴ The pressure to steer more funds towards middle-class relief did, however, also come from the districts and BCRC's own workers. Preceding the proposal, the district workers of the BCRC demanded more house-building grants in its second general meeting in August 1934.²³⁵ They claimed to have insufficient funds for middle-class relief, describing it as 'very inadequate' and mentioning that 'at least' four times the amount was needed.²³⁶ At this point, the government saw a need for as large funds as possible for the reconstruction of houses while the BCRC's diversion of funds towards flood relief was viewed as a means of 'getting more money to spend on vague forms of so-called "relief"'.²³⁷ The need for additional

funds to middle-class relief, expressed by both the BCRC and the local government, resulted in an attempt by the latter to make Prasad hand over the committee's relief fund for middle-class relief to the local government to cooperate with it in its distribution. Prasad provided a plan for such cooperation in distributing grants but the local government did not find it 'workable'²³⁸ and Brett instead proposed three schemes by which one million rupees from the BCRC would be distributed by the government through the collectors, none of them acceptable to the committee.²³⁹ All three schemes were designed to use the funds for grants to persons who had insufficient security to raise a house loan, or who, in addition to a loan, needed an extra grant, as these were the needs for relief according to the local government at that time.²⁴⁰

The BCRC emerged as an opportunity for INC, not only for political action but also for material gain and possibly broadened popular support in the province through the distribution of relief. Relief work was not only the display of good governance in practice, but also a distribution of help, or aid as a 'gift' that entitled the giver to initiate a reciprocal relation to the aid-takers.

Conclusion: From the Local to the National

Relief work after the Bihar earthquake offered a space for political organisations as well as associations to fill a void in the provision of relief. For the INC, Rajendra Prasad and other politically active persons in Bihar, relief carried out through the BCRC became a way of showing a political ability to take on responsibilities that the state may be expected to carry out. In the formation of the BCRC, the contemporary political climate and Bihar being an important seat for the INC shaped its success. While the committee claimed to be a separate organisation 'free from Congress politics', it, to a large extent, relied on contributions and manpower from the INC and at the same time, gained further popular legitimacy by coordinating the work and fund collections of other relief societies. The language of nationalism in the images of publications collecting funds on behalf of the BCRC and in the rhetoric of Congress leaders ('Towards National Relief' in this chapter) strengthened the idea that the disaster was a 'national' concern taken care of by the BCRC. The nationalist imagery and participation by organisations from across India served to project an image of the BCRC, and thereby the INC, as the legitimate provider of relief for the nation.

The committee's legitimacy rested upon local and national support: by combining local and national resources it managed to collect information,

manpower and funds that created an aid apparatus running parallel to the government's relief programme. While Congress offices in the provinces functioned as a foundation for collecting funds, the local and national links of the committee were strengthened by the participation of cooperating relief associations that upheld offices in localities of the earthquake area and secured funds from the cities of their origin, for instance, the Marwari relief organisations. Though relief funds sometimes appeared to represent communities, such as in the case of the Marwari Relief Society, the cooperation with the BCRC showed their wider scope. At the same time, community identity made the Marwari Relief Society cooperate with other Marwari societies in Bihar, and local networks facilitated the BCRC's work and scope. Such a concerted effort in relief work among Marwaris and between the relief societies and the BCRC seems largely to have built upon existing networks.

While the government controlled relief work by setting priorities in relief and by legislation, the agency and organisational skills of Congress workers and cooperating relief organisations were integral to the committee. The conceptualisation of the committee should be understood in relation to the government's response and regulations circumscribing aid; both the government and the networks of civil society, running parallel to or separate from the Congress, patterned the committee's activities. In this way, the committee's organisation of relief reflected a state formation 'from below' in the sense that political opposition, civil society organisations and, not to forget, the victims of the earthquake were central to its existence.²⁴¹ Early on, however, the representatives of peasant interests were to a great extent marginalised in the process as Swami Sahajanand's concern to demand relief for the poorer agricultural classes was considered to border on political agitation. Instead, representatives of the BCRC and collaborating relief societies had closer ties to the interests of the urban middle classes and the affluent landholding classes of the *zamindars*. The BCRC's success was to a large extent based on its ability to capitalise on social networks, especially the trust established among communities by local organisations, which efficiently made its scope wide and localised. This ability of the committee to address earthquake relief by social capital rather than technical or financial resources represented a form of community resilience that helped to create a coordinated response.²⁴² Although there is little that indicates that the committee and cooperating organisations represented the interests of the poor or marginal groups,²⁴³ the local roots of some of the cooperating partners may have provided platforms to consider local needs. At the same time, the participation of the numerous small and large organisations and associations, local as well as from cities such as Bombay

and Calcutta, served to create an identity of the committee as representing the nation. It, to a large degree, justified its existence with the need to coordinate the relief efforts to prevent an overlap of the activities of the numerous organisations involved. Such an explanation of the committee's formation primarily served to justify its purpose while it continued to encourage leaders and organisations to join in the relief work, further expanding its organisational branches. While the committee's administrative infrastructure and scope expanded beyond that of the co-opted organisations, its work was partly conceptualised based on their organisational skills. With their established ability to provide help by carrying out tasks such as collecting funds, mobilising volunteers and relief materials in previous instances of floods, famine or social relief, the committee's core function was to coordinate and invite more relief organisations to take part. Such proven organisational abilities, sociological research on disaster argues, are important for the organisation not only in carrying out its tasks, but also for its public image as it gains credibility by performance.²⁴⁴ The establishment of a larger relief fund, as compared to numerous small ones headed by individual organisations, held significance as a political 'tool' in the hands of civil society. In the next chapter, I will discuss the colonial government's collection of relief funds and how it aimed to appropriate subscriptions from the public.

Notes

1. Charles Cohen and Eric D. Werker, 'The Political Economy of "Natural" Disasters', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no. 6 (2008): 795–819, 795.
2. Richard Stuart Olson, 'Towards a Politics of Disaster: Losses, Values, Agendas, and Blame', *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 18, no. 2 (August, 2000): 265–87, 266.
3. Russell R. Dynes, 'Interorganizational Relations in Communities under Stress', in *Disasters: Theory and Research*, ed. E. L. Quarantelli, 49–64 (London: Sage Publications, 1978), 60–61.
4. Famine relief as part of the nation-building project in Andrea Janku, 'From Natural to National Disaster: The Chinese Famine of 1928–1930', in *Historical Disasters in Context: Science, Religion, and Politics*, ed. Andrea Janku, Gerrit J. Schenk and Franz Mauelshagen, 227–60 (New York: Routledge, 2012). For a similar discussion, see Kathryn Jean Edgerton-Tarpley, 'From "Nourish the People" to "Sacrifice for the Nation": Changing Responses to Disaster in Late Imperial and Modern China', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 73, no. 2 (May 2014): 447–69. For Indian famine relief, see

- Georgina Brewis, "‘Fill Full the Mouth of Famine’: Voluntary Action in Famine Relief in India 1896–1901", *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 4 (2010): 887–918. The links between volunteerism, association and nationalism on an everyday basis and times of crisis are discussed in Watt, *Serving the Nation*.
5. Watt, *Serving the Nation*, 173–76. *Seva*, or service, as a concept has changed and keeps changing depending on the sociopolitical context, R. Srivatsan, 'Concept of "Seva" and "Sevak" in the Freedom Movement', *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 5 (Feb. 4–10, 2006): 427–38.
 6. Kuracina, *The State and Governance in India*, 4.
 7. *Ibid.*, 25.
 8. *Ibid.*, 21, 25–26.
 9. Dang, 'The Congress and the Politics of Relief: 1920–1940', 110.
 10. *Ibid.*, 108.
 11. Borland, 'Capitalising on Catastrophe', 875.
 12. Mark Pelling and Kathleen Dill, 'Disaster Politics: Tipping Points for Change in the Adaptation of Sociopolitical Regimes', *Progress in Human Geography* 34, no. 1 (2010): 21–37, 34.
 13. Thomas Birkland, 'Natural Disasters as Focusing Events: Policy Communities and Political Response', *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 14, no. 2 (1996): 221–43. Thomas Birkland, *Lessons of Disaster: Policy Change after Catastrophic Events* (Georgetown University Press, 2006). Also see Butler, 'Focusing Events in the Early Twentieth Century'.
 14. Prasad had been sentenced to 15 months of 'rigorous' imprisonment in January 1933. 'Fortnightly Report for the First Half of January', B&O Local Government's Reports, 1934, IOR/L/PJ/12/59.
 15. Prasad, *Autobiography*, 351. Prasad was released on the evening of 17 January 1934. 'Babu Rajendra Prasad Released', *Behar Herald*, 20 January 1934.
 16. 'Release of Political Prisoners' (Comments section), *The Behar Herald*, 24 January 1934. 'Medical Grounds; Why Babu Rajendra Has Been Released', *ABP*, 18 January 1934. Prasad, *Autobiography*, 349–50.
 17. 'Political Prisoners Released; In View of the Earthquake Disaster', *The Leader* (Allahabad), 22 January 1934.
 18. The Bihar Central Relief Committee, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934 as Adopted by the Managing Committee*, vol. I, Patna: s.d. [probably issued July or later in 1934], 51; henceforth referred to as BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*. Mathura Prasad and Satyanarain Sinha from Hazaribagh Jail joined the relief work. Prasad, *Autobiography*, 355.
 19. Prasad, *Autobiography*, 350–51.

20. 'Fortnightly Report', B&O Local Government's Reports.
21. 'Bihar Relief Work: A Warning' (editorial), *ABP*, 1 February 1934.
22. Prasad was involved in flood relief for Bihar as a student in Calcutta in 1914, and organised relief in the district of Chapra in 1921. Prasad, *Autobiography*, 144–45.
23. See chs. 7 and 8 in Jacques Pouchepadass, *Champaran and Gandhi: Planters, Peasants and Gandhian Politics* (French Studies in South Asian Culture and Society) (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 167–229. Gandhi had in the years between the Champaran movement and the earthquake in 1934 risen to being the Congress's major leader and driving force behind the Civil Disobedience campaign launched in 1930. Brown, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope*, 214–15; Sarkar, *Modern India*, 183.
24. Pouchepadass, *Champaran and Gandhi*, 190–91, cf. chs. 7 and 8.
25. Dharanidhar, J. B. Kripalani and Anugraha Narayan Sinha. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 60–61 and Appendix A, 'Members and Office Bearers of the Bihar Central Relief Committee' in *ibid.*; Pouchepadass, *Champaran and Gandhi*, 168–69; Sarkar, *Modern India*, 183.
26. G. McDonald, 'Unity on Trial: Congress in Bihar, 1929–39', in *Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle 1917–47*, ed. Donald A. Low, 289–314 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004 [1977]), 295–96; Ghosh, *The Civil Disobedience Movement*.
27. McDonald, 'Unity on Trial', 297. Henningham, *Peasant Movements in Colonial India*, 134.
28. Ghosh, *The Civil Disobedience Movement*, 58, 257–58.
29. Dietmar Rothermund, *An Economic History of India: From Pre-Colonial Times to 1991* (New York; London: Routledge 1993 [1988]), 104.
30. Stuart Cary Welch and Diane M. Nelson, 'William G. Archer (1907–1979)', *Archives of Asian Art* 33 (1980): 109–11; William G. Archer and Mildred Archer, *India Served and Observed* (London: BACSA, 1994).
31. W. G. Archer, 'The Bihar Earthquake', [s.l.] February 1934, Mss Eur F236/1, Papers of William G. Archer and Mildred Archer.
32. Prasad, *Autobiography*, 355.
33. 'Behar's Hour of Need; Organise Relief; Babu Rajendra's Appeal', *ABP*, 19 January 1934. 'Babu Rajendra's Statement', *The Leader* (Allahabad) 19 January 1934.
34. The committee members were Rajendra Prasad (President), Baldeva Sahay and Syed Mohammed Hafeez (Secretaries), R. C. Pandit (Treasurer). BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 27.
35. 'Copy of letter dated the 22nd January 1934, from Babu Rajendra Prasad, Patna, to the Chief Sec. to the Govt of B&O', NAI HP 34/1/1934. The letter and reply by

- Chief Secretary P. C. Tallents enclosed in Appendix C in BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 63–64.
36. Prasad to Chief Sec., in letter dated 22 January 1934, see *ibid.*
 37. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 27.
 38. 'Copy of letter dated the 23rd January 1934 from the Chief Sec. to the Government of B&O, to Babu Rajendra Prasad, Patna', NAI HP 34/1/1934.
 39. Dang, 'The Congress and the Politics of Relief', 48.
 40. Dang, 'Colonial Ideology', 305–06; Dang, 'The Congress and the Politics of Relief', 3, 25–26.
 41. Dang, 'The Congress and the Politics of Relief: 1920–1940', 19–23, 30–31.
 42. *Ibid.*, 2–3.
 43. Confidential D.O. No. S.6624/33-Poll, M. G. Hallett, Home Dept., to W. B. Brett, Chief Sec. to the Govt of B&O, Shimla, 29 September 1933, BSA PS KW 178/1933.
 44. Confidential D.O. 3502, W. B. Brett to M. G. Hallett, Ranchi, 4 October 1933, BSA PS KW 178/1933.
 45. Dang, 'The Congress and the Politics of Relief', 98–100. Dang, 'Colonial Ideology', 313.
 46. Rajendra Prasad, quoted from Rajendra Prasad Papers, Roll no. 8 (NMML) and NAI Home Dept 34/4-(3)/1935, in Dang, 'Colonial Ideology', 287, 289.
 47. Dang, 'The Congress and the Politics of Relief', 109.
 48. M. [G.] Hallett, 6 June 1935, HP NAI 34/4-(4)/1935, cited in Dang, 'The Congress and the Politics of Relief', 106.
 49. As Prasad emphasised in his autobiography, 'we would be always willing to cooperate with the government. There was no question of competing with the government, I assured them. My friends approved of my stand.' There was 'no room for conflict' (353) and 'the atmosphere had completely changed after the earthquake' (Prasad, *Autobiography*, 363).
 50. Police report of the BCRC meeting in Sinha Hall, Patna, 18 March 1934. Enclosed with D.O. No. 1080-C, to M. G. Hallett, Patna, 22 March 1934. File: 'Proceedings of the Meeting of the Bihar Central Relief Committee on an All-India Basis', BSA PS 33 VII /1934.
 51. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 24.
 52. See foreword by Jawaharlal Nehru in Saksena, *Devastated Bihar: Through Jawaharlal's Lenses*.
 53. '1–6th March 1934', Bombay to Home Dept, File: 'Fortnightly Reports on the Political Situation in India for the Month of February 1934', NAI H. Pol. 18/2/1934. Nehru was sentenced based on three speeches held in Calcutta after the earthquake (Nehru, *An Autobiography*, 483).

54. Jawaharlal Nehru, 'The Humiliation of India', *The Nation* 138, no. 358 (April 1934): 410–11.
55. Memo. 'Confidential: Position in Bihar' by A. A. L. Parson, 8 February 1934. in 'Financial Assistance to the Govt of B&O in connection with the Earthquake', NAI Finance Dept, Budget Branch, File 3 (2), Budget, Serial nos. 1–52/1934.
56. 'Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of January', B&O Local Government's Reports, 1934, IOR/L/P.J/12/59.
57. 'Fortnightly Report for the First Half of February', B&O Local Government's Reports, 1934, IOR/L/P.J/12/59.
58. 'Appeal', *ABP*, 20 January 1934.
59. 'Letter to Agatha Harrison, 1 February 1934' (from a Photostat: G. N. 1477), *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (CWMG)* 57: 76–78.
60. 'Manual labour' had been adopted in 1934 by the Congress as a qualification for membership of Congress committees. Gyanendra Pandey, *The Ascendancy of Congress in Uttar Pradesh: Class Community and Nation in Northern India, 1920–1940* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 27, 56.
61. McDonald, 'Unity on Trial', 297. Dietmar Rothermund, *India in the Great Depression: 1929–1939* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1992).
62. The situation was perhaps also further aggravated by the increase in population; the 1931 Census noted a 10 per cent increase in population since the 1921 Census. With a largely rural population, it was the agrarian sector of the economy which most felt the impact of the transition and increased pressure on the land. McDonald, 'Unity on Trial', 297–98.
63. Sarkar, *Modern India*, 257–58.
64. 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 3 March 1934' (Muzaffarpur), and 'Week Ending 17 March 1934' (Darbhanga), by DIG to McDowell, Inspector General, CID, BSA PS 33 III/1934.
65. 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 3 March 1934' (Muzaffarpur), in *ibid.*
66. 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 23 February 1934' (Darbhanga), in *ibid.*
67. Confidential, J. E. Scott to all District Officers (Tirhut), Tirhut Division, Muzaffarpur, 13 February 1934, BSA PS 33 VI/1934.
68. 'Press Telegram', from Abidali Jafferbhai and G. Vishwanath, Behar [Bihar] Central Relief Committee [*sic*] Muzaffarpur, to *Bombay Chronicle*, Bombay, Muzaffarpur, 12 February 1934, BSA PS 33 VI/1934.
69. J. E. Scott to P. C. Tallents, Muzaffarpur, 14 February 1934, Patna, BSA PS 33 VI/1934.

70. 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 3 March 1934' (Muzaffarpur), by DIG to McDowell, Inspector General, CID, BSA PS 33 III/1934.
71. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati (1889–1950), see introduction to *Sahajanand on Agricultural Labour and the Rural Poor*, ed. Walter Hauser, xxiii (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2005 [1994]).
72. 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 3 March 1934' (Muzaffarpur) and 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 10 March 1934' (Darbhanga), by DIG to McDowell, Inspector General, CID, BSA PS 33 III/1934. However, in Champaran the District Magistrate, reporting on the progress of earthquake relief, mentioned, 'there were no signs of a no rent campaign'. 'Progress Report for the Week Ending 1st March, 1934', enclosed in D.O. 2935/VIII-E-7, S. L. Marwood, Champaran District Office, to J. E. Scott (Muzaffarpur), Motihari, 2 March 1934, BSA RE 13/1934.
73. Copy of police report from the meeting of BCRC, 18 March 1934, 5, attached with D.O. 1018, 22 March 1934, BSA PS 33 VII/1934.
74. Walter Hauser, 'The Indian National Congress and Land Policy in the Twentieth Century', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 1, no. 1 (1964): 57–65, 61–63.
75. 'The Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha and the Congress' in Walter Hauser, *The Provincial Kisan Sabha 1929–1942: A Study of an Indian Peasant Movement*, ch. 4 ([PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1960] New York: Routledge, 2019), 142–65. Swami Shahajanand Saraswati, *Mera Jivan Sangharsh* (Hindi, Autobiography) (Patna: Sitaram Ashram, Bihta, 1985 [1950]).
76. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, 'Terrible Plight of the Kisans [peasants], Relentless Machine of Landlordism, Remission of Rent the Only Remedy', 18 March 1934; 'Relief to Agriculturalists' (editorial) *The Searchlight* 18 March 1934; Extract from the DIG's report, 21 March 1934, 'II – Agitation, C. Kisan Sabha and Agrarian Agitation', BSA PS 33 VI/1934.
77. In Tirumal Mundargi, 'Congress and Zamindars: Collaboration and Consultation in Bihar, 1915–36', *Economic and Political Weekly* 25, no. 22 (June 2, 1990): 1217–22, 1220.
78. J. E. Scott to P. C. Tallents, Muzaffarpur, 14 February 1934. File: 'Question of Remission of Land Revenue and Other Tariffs and Grant of Loans in Earthquake Areas. Letters of Earthquake Intercepted. Activities of Swami Sahajanand', BSA PS 33 VI/1934.
79. 'Ullekhanīya phand' (Hindi, 'Significant Fund') *Yugantara* (Hindi newspaper), 12 February 1934. Another name of the fund was 'The People's Fund'. C. F. Andrews in *The Friend*, 2 November 1934: 1019–20.
80. Massard-Guilbaud, 'Introduction: The Urban Catastrophe', 25.

81. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, 489.
82. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 62; The Ramakrishna Mission, *The Eighth General Report of the Ramakrishna Mission (1934–35)* (Kolkata, Belur Math: Ramakrishna Mission, s.d.).
83. Marwari Relief Society, *Report of the Behar Earthquake Relief Work*. A 'Marwari' is technically speaking a person hailing from the district Marwar in Rajasthan, more specifically it is used for the trader and merchant castes hailing from that area or neighbouring areas in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Thomas A. Timberg, *Marwaris: From Traders to Industrialists* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1978), 9–11. In eastern India, Marwaris had generally retained a separate identity while at the same time reaching a certain level of integration with local society. Claude Markovits, *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs: Indian Business in the Colonial Era* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2008), 204, 207.
84. D.O. G1221, District Officer R. E. Swanzy, Muzaffarpur, 2 March 1934; Enclosed 'Note by the Honorary Sec. of the Central Relief Committee', BSA RE 13/1934.
85. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 34.
86. 'Province Day by Day; News from the Mofussil; Earthquake Relief; Muzaffarpur', *Indian Nation*, 25 March 1934.
87. The Vivekananda Mission's relief organisation appeared to have been acting detached from the Ramakrishna Mission's relief party which was financed separately. 'Vivekananda Mission', *ABP*, 20 January 1934. Vivekananda, the disciple of Ramakrishna, set up organised famine relief in India in 1897. See ch. 4, "First of All Comes the Gift of Food": Swami Vivekananda's Response to the Problem of Famine', in Gwilym Beckerlegge, *The Ramakrishna Mission: The Making of a Modern Hindu Movement* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 79–95. On major institutional reforms within the association in 1926, see G. Beckerlegge, *Swami Vivekananda's Legacy of Service: A Study of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 28, 35.
88. 'Appeal' by Swami Satyananda, President, The Hindu Mission, Calcutta. *ABP*, 20 January 1934.
89. Bengal Hindu Sabha, Bhutnath Mukerjea, Secretary, Relief Committee, Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha, Calcutta. *ABP*, 21 January 1934; Raj Ballav Para Bayam Samity in Calcutta held a meeting to 'devise ways and means to contribute money etc.' *ABP*, 23 January 1934.
90. The Ramakrishna Mission Association first became involved in famine relief in Murshidabad in 1897 and flood relief in Bhagalpur and Midnapore in 1899, and after 1926 it shifted towards maintenance of permanent, institutional provisions of

- service such as outdoor dispensaries. Beckerlegge, *Swami Vivekananda's Legacy of Service*, 29–31, 35.
91. Lance Brennan, 'Government Famine Relief in Bengal, 1943', *Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (1988): 542–67. Anindya Sen, *Ramakrishna Mission and Community Service in Eastern India, 1922–1962: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis* (Kolkata: Readers Service, 2005), 205–07; Rakesh Batabyal, *Communalism in Bengal: From Famine to Noakhali, 1943–47* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005), 101–64. The Marwari Relief Society, Calcutta, conducted cyclone relief in Contai in 1942 and opened relief centres in 1943–44. Paul Robert Greenough, *Prosperity and Misery in Modern Bengal: The Famine of 1943–1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 131.
 92. Telegram from B. N. W. Railways to Patna, 27 January 1934; note by J. W. Sinha, 23 January 1934, BSA RE 33 I/1934.
 93. Govt of B&O to Colonel J. A. S. Philips, Director of Public Health, with note to the Chief Sec. added by Col. Philips, 27 January 1934, BSA RE 33 I/1934.
 94. Prasad, *Autobiography*, 356.
 95. Watt, *Serving the Nation*, 102. About the Seva Samiti movements, see Carey Watt, '“No Showy Muscles”: The Boy Scouts and the Global Dimensions of Physical Culture and Bodily Health in Britain and Colonial India', in *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement's First Century*, ed. Nelson R. Block and Tammy M. Proctor, 121–42 (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 135.
 96. 'Pt. Malaviya's Appeal', *ABP*, 19 January 1934.
 97. Watt, *Serving the Nation*, 109.
 98. Sankat Tran Samiti, 'Aid-to-the-Afflicted Committee', also referred to as *Bangiya Sankat Tran Samity* 'Bengal Calamity Relief Committee', or 'Bengal Relief Committee'. Prafulla Chandra Ray, *Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist* (Calcutta: Chuckervertty, Chatterjee & Co., Ltd, 1932), 249. P. C. Ray (1861–1944), renowned chemist and founder of Bengal Chemicals Factory, was elected as its president. *Ibid.*, 239. Bipan Chandra, Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Mukherjee, Sucheta Mahajan and K. N. Panikkar, *India's Struggle for Independence 1857–1947* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1988), 131.
 99. Subhas Chandra Bose (1897–1945), Congress leader from Bengal of a left radical stance. Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle against Empire* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2011).
 100. Bidyut Chakrabarti, *Subhas Chandra Bose and Middle Class Radicalism, 1928–40* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1990), 122–23; Ray, *Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist*, 238, 249.

101. 'Bangiya Sankat-Tran', *ABP*, 20 January 1934; 'Relief to Sufferers', *ABP*, 21 January 1934. The society collected about 20,000 rupees. 'Funds' [Hindi], *Yugantara*, 12 February 1934.
102. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 5, cf. 4–5.
103. Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 78–79.
104. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 27, 61–62.
105. 'Appendix D', a statement from BCRC meeting 3 February 1934 in BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 64. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 4. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 4.
106. C. F. Andrews, *The Indian Earthquake* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1935), 5, 57.
107. 'Country-wide Response to Babu Rajendra's Appeal', *ABP*, 27 January 1934.
108. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 29.
109. 'Reconstruction Work in Bihar. Governor Visits "Quake Area"', *Times of India* (1861–current), 24 February 1934.
110. 'Appendix D' in BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 64.
111. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 4.
112. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, 488.
113. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 32–34.
114. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 34.
115. Timberg, *Marwaris: From Traders to Industrialists*, 72–75. See also Birla, *Stages of Capital*, 213. According to Hardgrove's ethno-historic study of Marwaris in Calcutta, the Marwari Relief Society was born as the successor to the *Marwari Sahayak Samiti* in 1914, after the government had curbed its increasingly political work of trying to stop forced labour migration. See sub-chapter 'Indentured Emigration and Beginnings of Marwari Political Action', in Anne Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture: The Marwaris in Calcutta* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004).
116. About the longevity of 'earthquake-born' organisations after the 1995 Kobe earthquake, see Rajib Shaw and Katsuihiro Goda, 'From Disaster to Sustainable Civil Society: The Kobe Experience', *Disasters* 28, no. 1 (2004): 16–40, 17.
117. The mobilisation of a relief team from Calcutta to north Bihar started 40 hours after the earthquake, as soon as the news had reached. Marwari Relief Society, *Report of the Behar Earthquake Relief Work*, 4–5. It was the first relief society from outside the province to arrive in Muzaffarpur on 19 January. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 24.
118. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 20.

119. Cornelia Sorabji, 'Earthquake in Bihar', *Nineteenth Century and After* 115 (May, 1934): 535–47, 542.
120. Marwari Relief Society, *Report of the Behar Earthquake Relief Work*, 7.
121. 'Sahāyatā mil bhī rahī hai' (Assistance Is Also Being Provided), *Yugantara*, 12 February 1934.
122. Markovits, *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs*, 203. Claude Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931–1939: The Indigenous Capitalist Class and the Rise of the Congress Party* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985). See sub-chapter 'Gandhi's Shadows: Marwari Reformists and the Nationalist Movement', Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*.
123. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 61; BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 82, 88. For Jammalal Bajaj and the INC, see Birla, *Stages of Capital*, 214.
124. Sriram Bajpai, alternatively spelt 'Shri Ram' or 'Sri Ram' Bajpai, started the Balchar-Mandal (Boy Scouts Association) in Shahjahanpur in 1913. Watt, *Serving the Nation*, 114–16, n127. Contributions were collected by H. N. Kunzru, Vice-President, Servants of India Society, Allahabad. 'Servindia ['Servants of India'] Earthquake Relief', Editor, P. Kodanda Rao, Poona, *Servants of India* 27, no. 9 (1 March 1934), 97; Marwari Relief Society, *Report of the Behar Earthquake Relief Work*, 12, 52–53, 56. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 86.
125. 'Appendix: The Congress's Relationship with Other Organizations' in Dang, 'The Congress and the Politics of Relief', 119–25.
126. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, founder of the Servants of India Society, in a speech 1910, cited in Watt, *Serving the Nation*, 171, 107–08.
127. Birla, *Stages of Capital*, 73–75. See also Claude Markovits' dense ch. 8, 'Merchant Circulation in South Asia (Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries)' about Marwaris and their role as traders across northern and east India. Markovits, *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs*.
128. Agrawal Jatiya Kosh in Bombay, and private persons such as Ramnath Goenka in Madras, contributed and collaborated. Marwari Relief Society, *Report of the Behar Earthquake Relief Work*, 14, 16, 64. Another Marwari association did not, however, feature as a cooperation partner—Marwari Seva Samiti, Kushtia, or Kushtia Marwari Seva Samiti, Calcutta. D.O. G1221, Swanzy, Muzaffarpur, 2 March 1934, BSA RE 13/1934.
129. 'Appeal by the Marwari Relief Society', Jwalaprasad Kanoria, Marwari Relief Society, *ABP*, 20 January 1934.
130. Marwari Relief Society, *Report of the Behar Earthquake Relief Work*, image with text, 32–33. Announcement by the Secretary of the Marwari Relief Society of 7-1, Jugomohan Mullick Lane, Calcutta, in *ABP*, 23 January 1934.

131. 'Marwari Relief Society: Acknowledgement of Contributors', *ABP*, 27 January 1934.
132. Yang, *Bazaar India*, 254–56; Markovits, *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs*, 203.
133. Marwaris and the jute trade in Bengal, see Timberg, *Marwaris: From Traders to Industrialists*, 57–58, 190–93.
134. Data in round numbers. The Oswal Earthquake Relief Fund donated 2,000 rupees and collected 5,668 rupees. The jute dealer the Calcutta Hessian Exchange contributed 1,000 rupees. Marwari Relief Society, *Report of the Behar Earthquake Relief Work*, 14, 16, 64.
135. In Muzaffarpur, it cooperated with the 'Muzaffarpur Navyuvak Samity' and the Seva Samiti society. Marwari Relief Society, *Report of the Behar Earthquake Relief Work*, 12. 'Relief Work at Muzaffarpur; Marwari Relief Society's Splendid Activities', *The Behar Herald*, 31 January 1934.
136. For instance, to the district office in Muzaffarpur the society reported distribution of relief to 498 families and clearing 1,386 houses of debris. D.O. G1221, R. E. Swanzy, Muzaffarpur, 2 March 1934, with enclosed 'Note by the Honorary Sec. of the Central Relief Committee', BSA RE 13/1934,
137. Bihar, Marwari Relief Society, *Report of the Behar Earthquake Relief Work*, 49.
138. Brett, *A Report on the Bihar Earthquake*, 8.
139. Out of the 55,000 rupees collected, the Marwari Relief Society spent 20,000 rupees and the Marwari Panchayat Seva Samiti spent 35,000 rupees. Marwari Relief Society, *Report of the Behar Earthquake Relief Work*, 5, 7, 61.
140. An 'authentic account', a hagiographic biography commissioned by the 'Trustees of the Adamjee Foundation', focuses on the foundation of the Memon Relief Society and Sir Adamji Haji Dawood's (30 June 1880–27 January 1948) philanthropic work. Daleara Jamasji-Hirjikaka and Yasmin Quereshi, *The Merchant-Knight, Adamjee Haji Dawood* (Karachi: Adamjee Foundation, 2008 [2004]), 42–53.
141. Markovits, *Merchant, Traders, Entrepreneurs*.
142. *Pucca* (lit. 'solid', anglicised from Hindi *pakkā*): houses generally referred to buildings made of bricks or stone with mortar, or constructed of concrete. Village houses made of mud and grass are referred to as *kuccha* houses (lit. 'raw' as in unfired brick unslaked lime, anglicised from Hindi *kaccā*).
143. Jamasji-Hirjikaka and Quereshi, *The Merchant-Knight*, 43–46.
144. Officer-in-charge (unreadable sign.) Calcutta Memon Relief Society, to Relief Commissioner (Patna), Muzaffarpur, 31 March 1934; 920 R.D., W. B. Brett, to the Sec. of Calcutta Memon Relief Society (Muzaffarpur). Patna, 1 April 1934, File: 'Request from the Memon Relief Society for Allotment of Funds from the Viceroy's Earthquake Fund', BSA RE 132/1934.

145. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, vi.
146. E. L. Quarantelli, 'Emergent Behaviors and Groups in the Crisis Time Period of Disasters', Preliminary Paper No. 206 (Newark, DE: Disaster Research Center, University of Delaware, 1994), 5–6.
147. Jamasji-Hirjikaka and Quereshi, *The Merchant-Knight*, 48–50; see also Markovits, *Merchant, Traders, Entrepreneurs*, 115, 148.
148. In Monghyr, Vivekananda Mission lauded the work of the 'Monghyr Muslim camp', see 'Monghyr. Muslim Relief Committee', *The Nation*, 15 April 1934.
149. Jamasji-Hirjikaka and Quereshi, *The Merchant-Knight*, 45.
150. By 10 March 1934, six orphans had been sent from north Bihar to the Calcutta Muslim Orphanage, Syed Salley Lane, and three orphans were in the society's care in Muzaffarpur. 'The Calcutta Memon Relief Society's Report of Relief until 15th of March, 1934', 5, Muzaffarpur, 18 March 1934, BSA RE 132/1934.
151. W. B. Brett, 'Weekly Bulletin' (for the week ending 9 March 1934), Reconstruction Office, Patna, to M. G. Hallett, Sec. to the GOI, Home Dept., NAI 34/1B/1934.
152. From data provided until October 1934, in 'Allotment from the Bihar and Orissa V.E.R.F.', File: 'Grants Sanctioned from the V.E.R.F. (Muzaffarpur District)', BSA RE 43 IV/1934.
153. 'Note by the Honorary Sec. of the Central Relief Committee', enclosed with D.O. G1221, Swanzy Muzaffarpur, 2 March 1934, BSA RE 13/1934.
154. 'The Calcutta Memon Relief Society's Report of Relief until 15th of March, 1934', Muzaffarpur, 18 March 1934, BSA RE 132/1934.
155. Only 23 rupees had been given earmarked for 'Hindu Relief' until 31 March. From April to the end of June, the BCRC received 37 rupees earmarked for 'Hindu Widows and Children' etc. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 119, 129.
156. 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 17 March 1934' (Muzaffarpur), DIG to McDowell, Inspector General, CID, BSA PS 33 III/1934; 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 10 March 1934' (Muzaffarpur), DIG to McDowell, Inspector General, CID.
157. 'Bihar Relief Work: A Warning' (editorial), *ABP*, 1 February 1934.
158. 'Note by the Honorary Sec. of the Central Relief Committee', with D.O. G1221, Swanzy Muzaffarpur, 2 March 1934, BSA RE 13/1934.
159. 'Amounts of Gratuity and Loan Given to Musalmans and Non-Musalmans in the District of Muzaffarpur out of the Funds at the Disposal of the Local Government in Connection with the Earthquake', 13 February 1935, *BOLCP* 32, no. 4, 259.
160. Moore (ed.), *Record of the Great Indian Earthquake*.
161. *Bhūkamp piḍitom kī karuna-kahāniyām: Bihār ke bhūkamp-piḍitom kī param āścaryajanak aur karunāpūrṇ saccī ātma-kathāem* (Hindi).

162. Sriram Sharma, 'Bhūkamp-Piḍit Bihār' (Hindi, 'Earthquake-Plagued Bihar'), *Vishāl Bhārat*, bhāg 13, ank 2 (February, 1934): 129–40. Established in 1928, the magazine was a miscellany known for publishing images and contemporary Hindi literature, but also as an organ of nationalism and progressivism. Bhatnagar, *The Rise and Growth of Hindi Journalism (1826–1945)*, 360, 368.
163. Saksena, *Devastated Bihar*.
164. Brelvi and Horniman, *Earthquake Number*, 3.
165. See preface in BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*.
166. According to an advertisement in *ABP*, 22 March 1934.
167. By co-editor B. G. Horniman, 'The Living Grave of Bihar' in Brelvi and Horniman, *Earthquake Number: Which Hand Is Yours*, 4. In the same issue, see also Nagindas T. Master, 'The Rich and the High Have Not Responded Adequately' (no page number) and M. C. Joshi 'Bombay Must Make Still Greater Effort: Mayor Suggests New Ways of Raising Funds for Relief', 6; N. S. Hardikar, 'Thousands Are Hungry and Homeless: Bombay Must Continue Good Work of Relieving Bihar's Suffering' (no page number).
168. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 62. Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890–1920* (Historical Urban Studies. Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 198–99.
169. Jonathan Benthall, *Disasters, Relief and the Media* (Wantage, UK: Sean Kingston Publishing, 2010 [1993]), 176–77.
170. See sub-chapter 'The Gendering of National Space-Time: Envisioning Bharat Mata', in Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 199–206.
171. Sumathi Ramaswamy notes the hymn 'Bande Mātaram, (Homage to [the] Mother)', first published in 1875, soon became 'the rallying cry for an emergent patriotic cult of Bharat Mata' from the beginning of the twentieth century in the context of the Swadeshi movement. Sumathi Ramaswamy, 'The Goddess and the Nation: Subterfuges of Antiquity, the Cunning of Modernity', in *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, ed. Gavin Flood, 551–68 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 551, 558.
172. *Ibid.*, 556–57.
173. Goswami, *Producing India*, 200–03, cf. ch. 6.
174. For a discussion on feminisation of natural environments, see Liz Bondi and Joyce Davidson, 'Troubling the Place of Gender', in *Handbook of Cultural Geography*, ed. Kay Anderson, Mona Domosh, Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift, 325–44 (London: SAGE, 2003), 329–30.
175. Sarojini Naidu, 'Our Supreme Duty', in Brelvi and Horniman, *Earthquake Number*, 3.
176. *Ibid.*

177. Willingdon to Hoare, 13 March 1934, 484, in Papers of Sir Samuel Hoare, Sec. of State for India 1931–35. Mss Eur E240/7.
178. 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 3 March 1934' (Muzaffarpur), by DIG to A. E. J. C. McDowell, Inspector General of Police, CID, March 1934. File: 'Weekly Reports on Earthquake by D.I.G., C.I.D.' BSA PS 33 III/1934.
179. Archer, 'The Bihar Earthquake', Mss Eur F236/1.
180. Immediate relief was removing debris, rescuing of buried persons, disposing of dead bodies, providing food and clothing, cattle relief, providing shelter to sufferers, and organising water supplies that had suffered considerably due to the choking of wells by sand and the dislocation of the waterworks in towns. Proceedings of the Second General Meeting of the Bihar Central Relief Committee, ii, in BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 3. 'Report of the Distressed Cattle Relief Committee. Summary of Cattle Relief in Bihar', in *ibid.*, 104–06.
181. 'Central Relief Committee's Activity', *Behar Herald*, 11 April 1934. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 3.
182. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 18. '300 money orders a day' and 'hundreds of parcels', according to Prasad, *Autobiography*, 354.
183. Accounts for 1 April–30 June were not audited by August 1934, hence the sums mentioned in the report are preliminary. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 92, 136.
184. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 27–30. Abdul Aziz, Jayaprakash Narayan and Anugrah Narain Sinha also held central roles. Prasad, *Autobiography*, 355.
185. Rupees 2.8 million, donations worth 300,000 rupees. Solomon, *Bihar and Orissa in 1934–35*, 11.
186. *RPER*, 1.
187. 'Appeal for Help', *The Times*, 22 February 1934, IOR/20/165 (L/1/2/57); BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 5. Andrews, *The Indian Earthquake*; 'Copy of cable to C. F. Andrews from Babu Rajendra Prasad', Patna, 6 February 1934. Mss Eur D1113/5, folio 8–9.
188. 'The Indian Earthquakes', appeal by V. K. Krishna Menon (Chairman), Indian Earthquake Relief Fund, 165 Strand, W.C.2. *New Statesman* and *Nation*, 3 March 1934.
189. International donations increased in the period April to June, probably a delayed increase due to being remitted from abroad. Foreign donations were: 42,615 rupees, 20 January–31 March 1934, and 76,889 rupees, 1 April–30 June 1934. See Table 3.1.

190. 'First Half of February 1934' (U.P.), 'First Half of February 1934' (North Western Provinces), '16–21 February 1934' (Bombay) to Home Dept., NAI H. Pol. 18/1/1934.
191. All-India Congress Committee: Papers on the Desh Sevika Sangh and the Gandhi Seva Sena: AICC file G-8/1929, parts 1 and 2. 'Appendix 10, Funds Collected by the Desh Sevika Sangh and the Gandhi Seva Sena on Behalf of the Congress and Other National Relief Committees'. Undated, last date mentioned is December 1934. Mss Eur F 341/167.
192. 'Table 3: Major International Trading Networks Operating from India', in Markovits, *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs*, 5–6, 237. On Gandhi's 'hold' over the business community in Ahmedabad, see Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915–1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 120.
193. Claude Markovits, 'What about the Merchants? A Mercantile Perspective on the Middle Class of Colonial India', in *The Middle Class in Colonial India*, Oxford in India Readings: Themes in Indian History, ed. Sanjay Joshi, 118–31 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 128.
194. '314. Speech at Bihar Central Relief Committee Meeting, Patna, 3 August 1934', *The Searchlight*, 5 August 1934, CWMG 64, 267–69.
195. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, 489.
196. Meeting on Friday 3 August 1934, Wheeler Senate Hall, Patna, in 'Proceedings of the Second General Meeting of the Bihar Central Relief Committee', in BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, ii.
197. The recorded number of wells and tanks damaged or destroyed in Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Champaran, Saran and Monghyr were 65,938; data for north Bhagalpur and Purnea missing. 'Approximate figures of damage done by earthquake on 15th January, 1934, in the Districts of North Bihar and Monghyr', *ibid.*, iii, 93.
198. Prasad, *Autobiography*, 358.
199. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, 84.
200. 'Appendix: Proceedings of the Second General Meeting of the Committee' in BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, vi. BCRC, *Devastated Bihar*, 54.
201. 'Appendix: Proceedings of the Second General Meeting of the Committee' in BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, vi–vii.
202. BCRC began to work 'formally' in Muzaffarpur on 21 January 1934. BCRC, *Report up to 30 June 1934*, 24.
203. D.O. G1221, District Officer R. E. Swanzy, Muzaffarpur, 2 March 1934; Enclosed 'Note by the Honorary Sec. of the Central Relief Committee', BSA RE 13/1934. The inception of the BCRC at Muzaffarpur was mentioned in 'Relief in Muzaffarpur: Central Committee Formed', *ABP*, 28 January 1934.

204. 'Ways and Means of Relief', *ABP*, 23 January 1934.
205. 'Province Day by Day; News from the Mofussil; Earthquake Relief; Muzaffarpur', *Indian Nation*, 25 March 1934.
206. 'Notes' by PS, 15, BSA PS 1/1935.
207. *Ibid.*, 4, 15.
208. Telegrams sent from Muzaffarpur by two 'leading Congress-men' from Bombay, Moulvi Abi Ali Zaffery and Babu G. Vishwanath, and the local Babu Ramdayalu Singh to the *Bombay Chronicle* had been intercepted. J. E. Scott to P. C. Tallents, Muzaffarpur, 14 February 1934, BSA PS 33 VI/1934.
209. S. N. A. Jafri, deputed to the Govt of B&O for about two months, was normally Deputy Director, Information Dept D.O. 2090, personal letter with a copy of a 'rough note' prepared for Jafri. I. M. Stephens, DPI, to M. G. Hallett, New Delhi, 31 March 1934; 'Personal', S. N. A. Jafri to I. M. Stephens, Director of Public Information (DPI), Home Dept (New Delhi), Patna, 3 April 1934, enclosed with D.O. 2235, I. M. Stephens to M. G. Hallett, 6 April 1934; D.O. 1799 R.D., W. B. Brett to M. G. Hallett, Patna, 24 May 1934. HP NAI 34/1/1934.
210. D.O. 132, P. C. Tallents to Commissioners of Patna, Tirhut, Bhagalpur; District officers of Patna, Muzaffarpur, Champaran and Saran, Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Purnea, Patna, 28 March 1934, File: 'Deputation of the Deputy Director of Information (GOI), Mr Jafri, to Work as Press or Publicity Officer in Connection with the Earthquake', BSA PS 33 VIII/1934.
211. D.O. 2090, I. M. Stephens to M. G. Hallett, New Delhi, 31 March 1934, NAI HP 34/1/1934.
212. Collector's House, Bankipore, Patna to P. C. Tallents, 11 August 1934, D.O. No. C.1248, BSA PS 33(B)/1934.
213. Accounts until end of September, audited and published in end of December 1934, in a note by publicity officer Samuel Solomon, enclosed with Brett, NAI H. Pol. 22/21/1936.
214. Memo, M. G. Hallett, New Delhi, 3 February 1934. NAI HP 34/1/1934.
215. 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 3 March 1934' (Muzaffarpur) DIG to McDowell, Inspector General, CID, BSA PS 33 III/1934.
216. 'Fortnightly Report for the First Half of February', B&O Local Govt Reports, 1934, IOR/L/PJ/12/59.
217. 'Extract from Movements of Political Suspects from the Superintendent of Police, Muzaffarpur', Muzaffarpur, 20 June 1934, File: 'Report of Arrival and Departure of Important Congress Relief Workers of Other Provinces', BSA PS 33 IV/1934.

218. 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 17 March 1934' (Muzaffarpur), DIG to McDowell, Inspector General, CID, in *ibid*.
219. 'First Half of December 1934', B&O Local Government's Reports, IOR/L/PJ/12/59.
220. 'Weekly Earthquake Report for the Week Ending 3 March 1934' (Muzaffarpur), DIG to McDowell, Inspector General, CID, BSA PS 33 III/1934. Also in 'Fortnightly Report for the First Half of September 1934', B&O Local Government's Reports, 1934, IOR/L/PJ/12/59.
221. Confidential D.O. 2047 R. D., Brett to Hallett, Patna, 13 June 1934. NAI HP 34/1/1934.
222. 'Fortnightly Report for the First Half of September 1934', B&O Local Government's Reports, 1934, IOR/L/PJ/12/59.
223. 'Second-Half of November 1934', B&O Local Government's Reports, IOR/L/PJ/12/59. The polling ended 14 November 1934, 'First Half of November 1934', in *ibid*.
224. 'Second-Half of November 1934', B&O Local Government's Reports, IOR/L/PJ/12/59.
225. *Ibid*. 'Second Half of September, 1934', B&O Local Government's Reports, IOR/L/PJ/12/59.
226. Bureau of Public Information, GoI, *India in 1933–34* (New Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1935). The *Bombay Sentinel* labelled the report 'stale and malicious', 'a scurrilous pamphlet' in its accusations of corruption against INC, Jawaharlal Nehru and M. K. Gandhi. 'Stale and malicious', *Bombay Sentinel*, 22 January 1936 (newspaper clipping enclosed with file). Confidential D.O. 4430-C, Brett to Hallett, Patna 23 December 1935; 'Confidential', D.O. Brett to Hallett, Patna, 1 February 1936, NAI H. Pol. 22/21/1936.
227. D.O. from DPI to Home Dept, 1 February 1936, NAI H. Pol. 22/21/1936. GOI (ed.) *India in 1934–35* (Simla/Delhi: The Manager of Publications, GOI Press, 1937). The information came from Solomon's *Bihar and Orissa in 1934–35*, publicity officer of the Government of B&O.
228. 'Confidential', Brett to Hallett, Patna, 1 February 1936; notes with BCRC accounts until 30 September 1934, NAI H. Pol. 22/21/1936.
229. Confidential Letter, W. B. Brett to Hallett, Patna, 1 February 1936. BSA, Foreign-Pol., 22/21 1936 and H. Pol. 3/EQ 1935.
230. '76. Letter to J. C. Kumarrappa', (8 June 1934) from Photostat: G. N. 10105. CWMG, vol. 64, p. 53.
231. *Ibid*.

232. Intercepted letter from J. C. Kumarappa to A. N. Singh (Sadaqat Ashram, Patna) 28 June 1935, cited in Dang, 'Colonial Ideology', 283.
233. Contrary to a resolution passed by the Managing Committee, that all articles for relief should have been purchased from 'local traders as far as practicable', Rangoon rice had been purchased from Calcutta, partly through dealers and agents from outside the province. Bihar Central Relief Committee: [Internal] Auditor's Report. B. Gupta & Co., Incorporated Accountants, Registered Accountants, Bankipore, 31 August 1934. Appendix in BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*.
234. 'Confidential', Brett to Hallett, Patna, 1 February 1936, File: 'Bihar Earthquake', NAI H. Pol. 22/21/1936.
235. Patna Collector's House, Bankipore, to P. C. Tallents, 11 August 1934. D.O. No. C.1248, BSA PS 33(B)/1934.
236. BCRC, *Report for the Period Ending 30th June 1934*, vii, 48.
237. 'Fortnightly Report for the First Half of September 1934', B&O Local Government's Reports, 1934, IOR/L/P/J/12/59.
238. Letter 12668, Rajendra Prasad to W. B. Brett, 7 September 1934; D.O. 3656 R. D., Brett to Prasad, Ranchi 17 September 1934; letter 12956, 18 September 1934, NAI H. Pol. 22/21/1936.
239. See previous note, 'Brett to Prasad, 17 September 1934'.
240. 'Confidential', Brett to Hallett, Patna, 1 February 1936, NAI H. Pol. 22/21/1936.
241. In understanding state building 'from below', social conflicts, popular protests and resistance provide one perspective for understanding the process of state building that cannot be regarded as without consequences, even if they were often suppressed. See André Holenstein, 'Introduction: Empowering Interactions: Looking at Statebuilding from Below', in *Empowering Interactions: Political Cultures and the Emergence of the State in Europe 1300–1900*, ed. Wim Blockmans, André Holenstein and Jon Mathieu, 1–31 (Farnham (UK): Ashgate, 2009), 12–14.
242. For a discussion on the role of communities and social capital in building resilience, see 328–29 in Greg Bankoff, 'Dangers to Going It Alone: Social Capital in the Origins of Community Resilience in the Philippines', *Continuity and Change* 22, no. 2 (2007): 327–35.
243. Bankoff finds community resilience built upon social capital to be an asset benefiting 'the most vulnerable', the poor and marginal. *Ibid.*, 328.
244. Dynes, 'Interorganizational Relations', 51.