SHOOTS OF BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM

1. UNITY OF INDIA—THE MAIN CONDITION

We have already noticed that one of the important factors that enabled the British to suppress the Sepoy Mutiny and the people’s revolt of 1857-59 was the disunity among Indians. Whenever a section of the people rose against the foreign rule, the British suppressed the revolt with the help and assistance of various other sections. Ultimately, when the people of Delhi and the surrounding areas started a far more widespread revolt, it was suppressed with the help and assistance of not only the Punjabis, Marathis and Nepalis in the neighbouring areas, but also sections of people in the very same areas where the revolt was going on.

This disunity among the Indian people was the product of the inherent character of the Indian society which had been divided among mutually opposing classes in the form of
varnas and castes that emerged after the break up of the ancient tribal society.

Unlike the European societies, the Indian class society did not reach the stage of national unity, a special product of capitalism, after going through the historical stages of social development of slavery, feudalism, and capitalism following the break up of the primitive tribal society. What prevailed in India for centuries was a social system based first on chaturvarya and, later, on the caste system which hid behind it the class divisions characteristic of slavery and feudalism, and economic exploitation and political oppression arising out of them.

Consequently, when certain social forces of capitalism began to emerge in the caste-based society, the existing social background was not conducive for the development of these forces. The continued existence of a society for generations without appreciable change, divided not only among castes and religions, but also among tribes in some places, with growing contradictions and relations of hierarchy among them, and a system of self-sufficient village communities based on the social relations arising out of these institutions—this is the essence of India's past history. In the words of Marx:

However changing the political aspect of India’s past might appear, its social condition has remained unaltered since its remotest antiquity, until the first decennial of the 19th century. The handloom and the spinning wheel, producing their regular myriads of spinners and weavers, were the pivots of the structure of that society. From immemorial times, Europe received the admirable textures of Indian labour, sending in return for them her precious metals and furnishing thereby his material to the goldsmith, that indispensible member of Indian society, whose love of finery is so great that even the lowest class, those who go about nearly naked, have commonly a pair of golden ear-rings and a gold ornament of some kind hung round their necks.... It was the British intruder who broke
up the Indian handloom and destroyed the spinning wheel. England began with driving the Indian cotton from the European market; it then introduced twist into Hindustan and in the end inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons.¹

The disastrous changes this has brought to Indian society have been described in an earlier chapter. The people’s rebellions that ended with the 1857-59 revolt were the consequence of these changes. For the same reason, when the rebellions were suppressed, this disastrous process not only continued but got strengthened. Although the rebellions were suppressed, the political backgrounds that led to those revolts, i. e., the discontent of the pauperized masses, still continued with intensity.

Along with this, a new background began to develop capable of giving expression to the growing mass discontent in forms other than the form of the 1857-59 struggles. The institutions of caste and the more or less self-sufficient villages were undermined. Objective conditions began to develop for politically unifying Indian people who hitherto remained divided among the different castes, religions and tribes and for transforming them into a unified nation. As part of the process of the destruction of the rural society based on handloom and hand-spinning, the foundation of the caste system and of the society based on it began to crack.

A new consciousness began to spread among the Indian people that they, like the European nationalities which were being united more and more as an inevitable result of the development of capitalism, also constituted themselves a nationality. Also, material conditions began to emerge for the formation of a national independence movement as distinct from that of the 1857-59 period.

Marx observed that the British had “to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic society and the laying of the

¹ *The First Indian War of Independence*, pp 17-18.
material foundations of Western Society in Asia”, because it was the same British domination which caused disaster to Indian society that caused these material conditions to rise. The British rule established here was, in fact, fulfilling both these missions. It was by giving paramount importance to “political unity of India” in this “regeneration” that Marx presented his conclusions on the “future results of the British rule in India”. Marx wrote: “The political unity of India, more consolidated, and extending farther than it did under the Great Moguls, was the first condition of its regeneration.”

How did this “political unity” come about under the British rule? Marx says:

That unity, imposed by the British sword, will now be strengthened and perpetuated by the electric telegraph. The native army organised and trained by the British drill-sergeant, was the *sine qua non* of Indian self-emancipation and of India ceasing to be the prey of the first foreign intruder. The free press, introduced for the first time into Asiatic society, and managed principally by the common offspring of Hindus and Europeans, is a new and powerful agent of reconstruction. The zamindari and ryotwari themselves, abominable as they are, involve two distinct forms of private property in land—the great desideratum of Asiatic society. From the Indian natives, reluctantly and sparingly educated at Calcutta, under English superintendence, a fresh class is springing up, endowed with the requirements for government, and imbued with European science. Steam has brought India into regular and rapid communication with Europe, has connected its chief ports with those of the whole south-eastern ocean, and has indicated it from the isolated position which was the prime law of its stagnation. The day is not far distant when, by a combination of railways and steam vessels the distance between England and India, measured by time, will be shortened to eight days and when that once fabulous

2. *Ibid*, p. 34.
country will thus be actually annexed to the Western world.  

Marx gave a preeminent role to the construction of railways in fulfilling the mission of "regeneration" by the British in India. Marx saw in the introduction of railways a step that would help bring about a total change in the traditional image of India:

It is notorious that the productive powers of India are paralyzed by the utter want of means of conveying and exchanging its various produce. Nowhere, more than in India, do we meet with social destitution in the midst of natural plenty for want of means of exchange. ... The introduction of railroads may be easily made to subserve agricultural purposes by the formation of tanks where ground is required for embankment and by the conveyance of water along different lines. Thus irrigation, the sine qua non of farming in the East, might be greatly extended and the frequently recurring local famines, arising from the want of water, would be averted. 

The importance of railways does not end with this. It is the beginning of the process which Marx characterizes as the "laying of the material foundations of Western society". Marx continues:

I know that the English milocracy intend to endow India with railways with the exclusive view of extracting at diminished expenses cotton and other raw materials for their manufacturers. But when you have once introduced machinery into the locomotion of a country, which possesses iron and coals, you are unable to withhold it from its fabrication. You cannot maintain a net of railways over an immense country without introducing all those industrial processes necessary to meet the immediate and current wants of railway locomotion and out of which there must grow the application of machinery to those branches of industry not immediately connected with railways. The

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3 Ibid., pp. 34-35.
4 Ibid., pp 35-36.
railway system will therefore become, in India, truly the forerunner of modern industry. This is the more certain as the Hinds are allowed by British authorities themselves to possess particular aptitude for accommodating themselves to entirely new labour and acquiring the requisite knowledge of machinery.... Modern industry resulting from the railway system will dissolve the hereditary divisions of labour upon which rest the Indian castes, those decisive impediments to Indian progress and Indian power.\(^5\)

The British engaged themselves in these "regeneration" activities, not as propagated by the British rulers and their sycophants, for modernizing in India. In Marx's words: "The millocracy have discovered that the transformation of India into a reproductive country has become of vital importance to them, and that, to that end, it is necessary, above all, to gift her with means of irrigation and of internal communication. They intend now drawing a net of railroads over India. And they will do it."\(^6\)

But whatever might have been the real intentions of British rulers, this fostered the material conditions for the emergence of an organized people's struggle. The result was that it provided the capability to the Indian people to build a new movement that could not be suppressed by force as it was the people's revolts that culminated in the 1857-59 revolt. Unconsciously though, the British united the Indian people politically, by destroying the caste-based beliefs and practices and the decadent social life that had been preventing the people from launching and participating in such a people's struggle and also fostered in them the intense urge for independence. This was the other side of the mission of "destruction" of the British.

The British rule also began the process of the birth of a class—the bourgeoisie—as distinct from the feudal aristocracy, and its co-born antagonistic class force—the working

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5. Ibid. pp 37-38.
6. Ibid, p. 35.
class—to stand in forefront of the people surging towards a unified freedom struggle.

It would not have been possible for the British to consolidate their political administrative system or to perpetuate their economic exploitation of India without creating the material conditions for the creation of a state with jurisdiction all over the country but above the varna-caste system, and for the emergence and development of new classes and strata with bourgeois characteristics, under it.

Classes and strata of people capable of giving leadership to a new type of independence struggle had already begun to emerge in various parts of India even before 1857-59. The most significant manifestation of this was witnessed in Bengal where the British rule had first struck roots. In fact, it was this section of people who played a key role in organizing the masses against the 1857-59 revolt characterizing it “reactionary”. For the same reason, the assurances given by the British in 1859 in the form of Queen Victoria’s Proclamation, etc., to maintain and protect all the traditional beliefs, customs and practices based on caste, naturally disturbed this section of the people. Furthermore, the steps subsequently taken by the British rulers also created disillusionment among these people who had hoped that the rulers would take their stand in their favour to maintain and protect the moral values that they had cherished most, as also their economic and political ideologies.

Thus, the very same sections of people who had earlier stood alongside the British against the rebellion, began to give shape to a new anti-British movement, step by step.

Which were these sections and how did they come to be formed and developed; how did the organized bourgeois national movement come to be formed as a result of this development; how did the working class become an independent political force against the bourgeois leadership of the movement, though an integral part of it? —these are the main questions that relate to the next stage in the history of the freedom struggle.
II. LANDED ARISTOCRACY—OLD AND NEW

We had cited more than once in the earlier pages the opinion of Marx that the British had really brought a revolution in the landownership system in India. This played a significant role in building up political unity of India and in creating the forces that were to give leadership to a new stage of the struggle for independence.

In the Indian social system which gradually evolved after the break up of the ancient tribal society, the nature of possession and utilization of landed property occupies an important place. Marx pointed out that the characteristic feature of the social system of India and of Asia was that no individual had ownership rights on land. On this basis, while distinguishing between various social formations, he has used the terms "Asiatic Society" in some places.

Marx thought that during the ancient and medieval times, the land, jointly owned by the community, was given for cultivation to individuals or families in India. He believed that this system continued till the consolidation of the British domination. This is what he has written evaluating the situation in India.

It can be seen that if we take the observation of Marx literally, it does not correspond to reality. Recent investigations have revealed that private ownership in land had appeared in many parts of India even before the advent of the British rule. Several documents dealing with transactions in land (mortgages and sales, etc.) have been discovered. In other words, this accumulated body of evidence shows that in the Indian society which started initially in the form of Chaturvarnya and later in its extended form of castes and which absorbed at a still later stage the non-Hindus also, private ownership in land had already begun to appear, although slower in pace and smaller in extent as compared to the sectors of commerce and industry. Anyone who examines Marx's method of investigation would be convinced that had these documents and other materials come to his notice, he would
not have asserted that land in India was owned by the community in common.

Whatever be the inadequacies in the opinion Marx held on the details, the picture he has presented on Indian society in general and on the landownership in particular was correct.

Slavery in the sense that the labourer himself is the property of the owner and production based on that never existed in India on a wide scale. Neither did the kind of feudalism come to exist in India as in Europe, which replaced slavery through a revolutionary process, nor did a capitalist class capable of destroying feudalism and establishing domination in the society as it happened in Europe. It is this reality that Marx has indicated using the term “unchanging” in his works on India.

Basic to this ‘unchangingness’ was the village community that rose on the foundation of a social system anchored upon caste-based customs and conventions. In that society each individual or family had to perform an ascribed function in return of which the individual or family was entitled to a definite privilege and status in society. Avoiding or failing to fulfil this function did not go well with one’s self-respect. Depriving one of his privileges and status was never tolerated, either.

It was these same social relations based on customs and conventions adopted and strictly practised by the society as a whole that governed the pattern of ownership of landed property, as they did in other domains in the life. Each one of those who occupied the different layers of the society—the occupant of the land, the local chief, the provincial chief, the king, and so on—had partial rights on land, but none of them had absolute right on it. Consequently, each of them had a fixed share, and that alone, in the produce from the land.

Different methods such as wars, conquest and change in the administration, had been resorted to to gradually reduce the share of the tiller of the soil and to enhance the shares of those occupying positions above him in the hierarchy. In this
sense, class exploitation became intensified. However, even under the most intense class exploitation, the prescribed share of the occupant was as valuable and unassailable as those of sections above him. It can thus be seen that it is not irrelevant to say that in a system in which each one in the society had a right to a fixed share, private ownership in land, as it is seen under modern capitalism, did not exist.

When trade and the use of money began to develop in a society in which different kinds of right on land and different rates of share in the produce evolved through a historical process, it was natural that those who had a share in the ownership right on land made their share an object of transaction. But, under the land ownership relations which formed the basis of village communities in a society based on the caste system, such transactions would be extremely rare. The documents discovered by researchers after Marx were of transactions that took place rarely.

The fact that such transactions did take place in some parts of India does not negate fundamentally Marx's conclusions in regard to the "unchanging" character of Indian society and the non-existence of private ownership of land in that society. It only confirms Marx's view that a revolution in the land ownership relations was an urgent need to facilitate the reconstruction and political unity of India.

The British had regularized land ownership relations by introducing the Zamindari, Ryotwari, Mahalwari and various other systems in different parts of the country. Although all these systems differed from one another, there was one factor that linked them together, namely, the creation of private ownership on land in India where it did not exist before. As Marx pointed out, this was a revolutionary change.

According to the new system introduced by the British, every piece of land now had an owner. Whatever may be the name given to him, zamindar, mirazdar, landlord or what have you, he enjoyed full rights over his land. He had the right either to appropriate wholly for himself the produce of the land or to give a share of it to others who assisted
him in the production, as he wished. Similarly, he had also the right to obtain loans by mortgaging that property or to sell it for cash. Even those who were landless got the right to get land on mortgage or by purchase. In other words, land ownership rights could also be brought for transactions as in the case of any other form of private property.

While thus recognising land owners with full ownership rights, the functions that were formerly attached to landownership were taken away from it. Previously, all those who were connected with land, from the actual possessor to each one of those above him at various levels, had certain functions to discharge. From the village artisan to the officer in the army or in the civilian service, each had some obligation to the village community or to the administrative machinery above it. The rights over the land and the share in its produce were determined in relation to such obligations.

The British severed all these links and divided the entire system into two: the administrative machinery and other social organizational forms on one side and the land ownership rights on the other. The revolutionary transformation brought about by the British in the landownership relations consisted of payment of salaries from the exchequer to the men in the military and civilian services forming part of the administrative machinery, payment of remuneration to the village artisans and other employees by those who utilised their services as also fixing the wages of workers, rent payable by tenants and tax payable by the landowners to the government and interest to the moneylenders and so on.

As a result of these changes, a considerable section of the people who had possessed various rights and privileges were deprived of all such rights and privileges; millions of common people lost the land (means of subsistence) they possessed and became destitutes. Similarly, local and provincial chiefs and many other individuals and families associated with administration lost the rights and privileges they once enjoyed. The functions that they had been discharging for generations were transferred to officials of the new
administration along with their rights and privileges. And at the top of this administrative machinery stood the British officials.

All this formed the basis for people’s dissatisfaction leading to the 1857-59 rebellion. It was, in fact, an explosion caused by the discontent of wide sections of the people, from the landed aristocracy at the top to the cultivating peasants and other rural poor at the bottom, who were ruined by agrarian revolution brought in by the British.

But there is another side of the coin. Although a big section of the existing landowners lost the property right in land, a new section of landowners was emerging with full ownership right, in their place. They were free to collect rent from tenant cultivators at rates they were pleased to prescribe or evict tenants incurring their displeasure. They were free either to lease out the land for cultivation or to directly cultivate it employing labour. They were free also to enhance their income to any extent through various other means. It is true that they did not have the status in society as local chiefs or feudal lords. Their preoccupation now was to earn as much as they could by utilizing the ownership rights bestowed upon them by the British and to rise up in society.

The British not only created such a new class of landowners, but also adopted steps to transform agricultural technology. Imbibing the experience they had gained from the transformations in agricultural technology in Europe, particularly in England, as part of the economic changes there, some of them ventured to start tea, rubber and indigo plantations. Efforts were also made to increase the production of commercial and industrial crops and to modernize agricultural operations. These moves on the part of the British considerably influenced the new landlords who were concentrating all their attention on enhancing their income. Thus emerged a new section of landlords whose mode of production as well as ownership rights were distinctly different from the former landlords.
Needless to say, this was an indication of the emergence of a new set of (capitalist) landlords in place of the old pre-capitalist landlords. There was an important difference between the former and latter. The traditional landlords were basically against the agrarian revolution brought by the British. They were trying to protect the traditional system of landownership and relations as also the functions and privileges associated with it. The new section of landlords, on the other hand, did not desire the continuance of the old system as such. They desired to lead the new transformations that were being brought about to their logical conclusion. That was why while the former landlords stood with the mass upsurge which ended in 1859, the new landlords not only kept off themselves from the upsurge but also co-operated the British in suppressing it.

These capitalist landlords, like the capitalists in trade and industry, wanted the capitalist mode of reconstruction initiated by the British to reach its logical conclusion. They wanted to nurture the seeds of the capitalist development sown by the British and lead it to fruition. They were eager to acquire modern knowledge and to adopt new styles of work and organisational methods for that purpose. They wanted to see a bourgeois society develop in India, stage by stage though, and to share the leading position with the capitalists in commerce and industry. In the process of attaining these objectives they would in the long run come into conflict with the interests of the British as they would with those of the commercial and industrial capitalists. In other words, they also would participate activity in the next stage of the freedom struggle as other sections in the capitalist society.

III. VANGUARDS OF THE NEW EPOCH

As we have seen, the result of the agrarian policy of the British in India was the elimination of the domination of the
feudal lords and the development of a new section of capitalist landlords. Its impact was not, however, confined to the economic sector alone. It exerted immense influence on all spheres of the socio-cultural life. It was as a logical culmination of this process that a new political movement emerged subsequently under the leadership of the bourgeoisie.

The socio-cultural life of medieval India was associated with feudal landownership in the economic sector and with the traditions of the classical works written in Sanskrit, Pali, Persian, Arabic, etc., in the cultural sphere. Till the establishment of the British rule, the repository of knowledge that India possessed consisted of the knowledge commonly developed by the Hindu scholars well-versed in Indian languages like Sanskrit and Pali and by the Islamic scholars well-versed in the Persian and Arabic languages. Eminent scholars in various branches of knowledge like philosophy and mathematics had emerged from among Hindus and Muslims. The edifice of civilization that had come up in India that excelled even Europe, until the technological revolution in the wake of capitalist development there, was built on the foundation of the Varna-caste system that had been developed in India and the Islamic empires which left that system undisturbed.

It was this very foundation that was shattered when British rule took roots here. The hatchet wielded by the British rulers fell on the very roots of the medieval Indian civilization in the forms of the Brahmin dominated Hindu culture and civilization, and the non-Hindu culture and civilization developed by Islamic rulers. In place of the domination of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and other upper caste Hindus and of the Islamic rulers, the British formulated their administrative policies in such away as to consolidate the domination of the foreign rulers belonging to the Christian faith. Cutting off the links which the Hindu-Islamic religions had with the administrative set-up in the ancient and medieval India, the new regime installed Christianity in its place. This was a political transformation that had far reaching effects on the entire socio-cultural life.
In the earlier chapters we have already dealt with one aspect of the reaction of the masses of Hindus and Muslims and the elite classes which exercised influence on them, to this development. They were intensely enraged at their being deprived of their doctrines, caste-based customs and practices, educational system and cultural ethos which they valued as priceless possessions. As we have seen, it was this ire in part that ignited the 1857-59 revolt that spread extensively and was finally suppressed.

There was, however, another aspect of this development. A section of the masses and another section of the elite class had kept themselves aloof from this resistance. Further, within the elite class itself had emerged a section which had come to realize that the old social system and cultural life ought to be destroyed and replaced by the system which the British had built in their own country.

The lower middle class and poorer sections of the society were not conscious of the superiority of the new society; nor did they demonstrate the desire to establish that system in India. Every one, however, began to depend on the British to get employment under the new administration. For those sections of the people who were deprived of their means of life as a result of the destruction of the feudal system and the rural life, the only way open to eke out a living under the British was to obtain jobs under the rulers.

Since a considerable section of the people, both in the elite class and the common people had thus to depend on the British rulers, they welcomed the emergence of the new society. One of the main reasons for this situation was the modern system of education that was spreading rapidly in the country. Instead of imparting knowledge based on Hindu and Muslim philosophy and depending on the Oriental languages, a new system of education that was intended to impart modern knowledge to the pupils was adopted. To suit this purpose, English became the medium of instruction. Parallel to the Pathasalas and Madrassas which imparted Oriental culture in general and Indian culture in particular through
Sanskrit and Persian languages, modern English medium schools and colleges teaching modern science and humanities like history began to emerge.

This change in the educational system which was being brought about led to sharp differences of opinion even among the rulers. One section strongly advocated for facilities to provide Oriental education, while another section argued equally strongly against the utility of Oriental education and for modern Western education. As the culmination of this debate which lasted for nearly half a century, the Government adopted the policy of establishing modern educational institutions (schools and colleges) with English as the medium of instruction.

This difference of opinion appeared among the elites of India as well. Among the Indians also there was a section advocating the establishment of schools and colleges with English as the medium of instruction to impart modern knowledge. This section believed that those who were organizing revolts against the rulers with the intention of maintaining ancient and medieval Indian culture and civilization were, in fact, trying to arrest the progress of the country and taking the people backwards. They also believed that India could advance only if a radical transformation was brought about as in Europe, imbibing modern knowledge being disseminated by the British rulers. As representatives of Indians with social consciousness, they presented memoranda before the rulers in India and in England against Oriental education and in favour of Western education.

Among this section of people, special mention needs to be made of Raja Ram Mohan Roy who may rightly be called the founding leader of the bourgeois nationalist movement in India. Unlike the Jhansi RANIS and the Bahadur Shahs, he did not wish to save the socio-cultural life of India from British domination. Rather, his aim was to bring about the kind of socio-cultural transformation that the British had brought about in their own country.

The activities of Ram Mohan Roy and his colleagues
in this direction will be dealt with in the next chapter. Here we will refer to his activities in the field of education. In a letter to Governor General, Lord Armherst, he pointed out that “No improvement can be expected from inducing young men to consume a dozen of years of the most valuable period of their lives in acquiring the niceties of Baikaran (Vyakarana) or Sanskrit grammar”, or from the speculations of Vedanta or from Mimamsa or Nyaya and wanted the Government to “promote a more liberal and enlightened system of education, embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences....”.7

It was these views of Ram Mohan Roy among others that subsequently induced the British government, following the recommendations in the famous Macaulay minute to take a decision in favour of introducing Western education in India.

Comparing these views of Ram Mohan Roy with the feelings of the participants of the people’s uprisings, it might seem that he was a devotee of the British. And viewed from the stand-point of the anti-imperialist movement that developed later, he was a devotee of the British. But his loyalty was not to the British rule, but to the new (bourgeois) society and its cultural values which the British were trying to impart to the people of India. For instance, Ram Mohan Roy strongly advocated freedom of the press, another contribution of European bourgeois society, with the same vigour as he advocated the introduction of modern education with English as the medium of instruction. He not only welcomed the publication of newspapers, in the beginning under the auspices of the foreigners and later under Indians, openly criticizing the government and its officials, but also took initiative to start a newspaper. When the Government tried to implement acts to suppress the freedom of the press, as they could not tolerate a free press, he strongly opposed the move.

The notes Ram Mohan sent first to the authorities in

India and later to those in England, protesting against the 1823 Press Act muzzling the press are well known. Although he dealt with only the topic of freedom of the press in those notes, they contained the urge for independence of the country which was expressed later by his successors amongst the bourgeois nationalists. The agitations that Ram Mohan carried on for a new educational system based on modern sciences and for the freedom of the press, were events of historic significance. An examination of the documents he had prepared on these two issues would show that the agitation he had launched was the forerunner of the efforts of Indian bourgeoisie to take the Indian society along the path of capitalism. The scope of the agitation was limited and its language moderate, because the bourgeoisie at that time was in its infancy.

Although Ram Mohan Roy’s name has been specifically mentioned here, he was not an isolated individual. As we shall see in the next chapter, he was, in fact, the representative of an emerging section anxious to modernize the Indian society which has been dependant mainly on Hindu culture and civilization.

Although they formed only a small minority of the population, they were the vanguard of an all-pervading social revolution that was to take shape in the future. The waves of the slogan of “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity”, reverberated in the historic French Revolution, had swept through their hearts. The inspiring message of the socio-cultural renaissance and the politico-economic revolutions that had swept throughout Europe since the 17th century had stirred them. They viewed modern education and freedom of the press as the beginning of the efforts to modernize India along the same path.

It was in Bengal that this section emerged first and started functioning in a well organized manner. As we know, it was there that the British first established their domination. It was only after a few decades of obtaining the Diwani in 1765 from the Emperor of Delhi to administer the areas
covering Bengal and its surroundings, that the British estab-
lished themselves in South India and Bombay. The northern
part of India came under their sway only in the middle of
the 19th century. Therefore, modern education and indepen-
dent journalism which made the beginnings in Bengal
spread to South India and Bombay, and finally reached
North India only in the last stage of this development.

A similar time lag could be discerned even in the matter
of religions, castes and communities. The foreign trading
companies had also carried on Christian religious propaganda
in an organized manner along with their trading operations.
As such, the Christian communities which had existed in
many parts of India even earlier had a closer affinity than
the other communities with the foreign colonizers from the
very beginning. Indian Christians also participated in the
propagation of Christianity conducted by the foreigners by
starting printing presses and publishing journals and other
materials. As such, in all these sectors, Christians were far
ahead of Hindus and Muslims.

Next to the Christians it was the Hindus who forged
links of friendship with the foreign rulers. Hindus belonging
to the upper castes were engaged, even in the old society, in
various intellectual avocations. They, therefore, desired to
acquire modern education and to reconstruct their mode of
life in such a way as to enable them to preserve their old
positions even under the British domination. Thus, they began
acquiring modern education.

The Muslim elites, however, turned against modern
civilization, because of their nostalgia for the days of Mughal
Empire and the desire to revive the mode of life of those
days. This was, in fact, the main reason for the backward-
ness of the Muslims which adversely affected the Indian
national movement in the later days.

There was another reason for Bengal being an example
to other regions in renaissance, as it was in the social and
cultural spheres. The Zamindars who obtained property
rights under the Permanent Settlement—the new landlord
class which had no other relations with land than that of collecting rent from the tenants—had emerged first in Bengal. The provision that they could collect as much rent as they pleased rapidly enriched them. They used this newly acquired wealth in leading a luxurious life in Calcutta which was also the capital of British India to establish themselves in trade and industry and to seek their own ends by establishing friendly relations with the new rulers. A considerable section among them left the rural areas and settled permanently in Calcutta. It became customary for them to go once in a year to the villages to collect rent or just to send their agents for that purpose. There were many among them who had never seen even once the landed property which they owned or the farmers who cultivated those lands.

It was from this section that the leaders of the socio-cultural renaissance in Bengal rose. Whether it be in the social reforms movements like the Brahma Samaj, or in the spheres of arts and literature, or in the different revolutionary political movements, it was this class that provided leaders and active participants. And it was because no other region had such a class and a city like Calcutta that all other states lagged behind Bengal. But, these same social forces which had emerged first in Bengal were certainly developing in other parts of India also.

IV. FOR SOCIAL REFORMS

The Bengali Hindu’s urge for a thorough transformation of the caste-communal customs and the movement that started to achieve it were the Indian parallels of the European renaissance. Raja Ram Mohan Roy who was the best known among those who led this movement was not a mere social reformer; he was also a brilliant representative of the bourgeois nationalist ideologies.

We have referred earlier to the agitation he had launched to defend the freedom of the press. He unhesitatingly
expressed his views on various political issues, including the political future of India. He was optimistic about India achieving independence in the long run.

Ram Mohan had also paid attention to international issues. For instance, in 1830, when a revolution was going on in France, a French naval vessel visited India and he felt particularly anxious to go inside the ship to personally express his sympathy to the French Revolution. Again, when the British Parliament was debating on a bill for administrative reforms in India which he regarded progressive, Ram Mohan declared that he would sever all his relations with England if the bill fell through the Parliament. In short, he viewed the political issues of India as an integral part of the bourgeois democratic movements embracing the whole of Europe, including England, of that time.

Ram Mohan Roy, however, maintained the firm view that the problems relating to the Hindu caste-based customs and the resultant misery of the people were of more immediate importance than the political transformations of India and the world. Not that India’s independence was less important, but he rather considered that in order to tackle that issue, it was essential to liberate the Indian society from the chains of caste-based customs. He also anticipated the assistance and co-operation of the British in the national efforts to achieve this objective.

Before going into the details of the content of the social reforms that Ram Mohan had envisaged, it is necessary to make one thing clear. Many of the educated sections among the people of India who were within the sphere of influence of the British rulers were sympathetic to Christianity and the missionaries who were propagating that religion. Ram Mohan was not one among them. On the contrary, he even opposed the religious preachings of the Christian missionaries and their attempts at proselytization. He did not conceal his faith in the Vedas and Upanishads which were considered to be the foundation of the doctrines of Hinduism, either. He
advised the Hindus to wholly imbibe the doctrines contained in the *Vedic* literature, and put them into practice.

At the same time, he paid particular attention to distinguish the doctrines contained in the *Vedas* which he considered to be the essence of the Hindu religious faith, from the superstitious beliefs and practices that had crept into the social life of the Hindus. He also ensured that this distinction was brought to the attention of others. He believed that the caste rules and the caste-based customs and practices were fundamentally opposed to the Hindu religious faith and that they prevented the Indian people, including Hindus, from reaching the level of other civilized peoples. In other words, Ram Mohan Roy realized that it was necessary to sweep the Hindu social life of the rubbish it had accumulated for the emergence of a new Indian people, as independent and civilized as the Europeans.

Ram Mohan wielded his sword mainly against the ill-treatments towards woman and low caste people in the Hindu society. He strongly opposed the denial of property rights to women in the family, prohibition of widow re-marriage, the system of *Sati*, polygamy, restrictions imposed on schooling of girls, the *Purdah* system confining women within the home, and so on. He demanded that polygamy and *Sati* be banned and that widows be given the right to re-marry.

He also advocated similar social reforms in the caste system. He attributed the stagnation of the Indian society to the system of division of the people into castes and sub-castes. He was of the view that it was essential to destroy the caste system in order to unite the Indian people into a nationality.

It was during the first three decades of the 19th century that Ram Mohan started propagating these ideas. Initially it was confined to Bengal, because it was there, as we have seen earlier, that conditions developed for such a movement following the emergence of a new landlord class. Gradually it spread to other parts of the country, in which even those
who belonged to the lower castes also participated. Particular mention should be made, in this connection, of Jotiba Phule, the founding leader of the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra.

Unlike Ram Mohan, Phule was born in a low caste family. And for this reason, he could not complete his education till he received the aid and assistance of Christian priests. He had also to suffer a lot of indignities from the Brahmins and members of other high castes. As a consequence of all these, Phule began his public life as one who was enraged with the caste system in general and the domination of Brahmins in particular.

These differences between Ram Mohan and Phule could be seen also in the character of the movements they had started. The Brahma Samaj founded by Ram Mohan functioned mainly amongst the caste Hindus. As such, it was a movement directed generally against the caste system and for equality between men and women. On the other hand, the movement started by Phule was firmly rooted among the low castes, especially the untouchables. Consequently, anti-Brahminism was the core of its ideology. An official report of the organization notes: “For thousands of years, with the help of their books, the Brahmans have declared the masses low born and are exploiting them. To liberate them from the thralldom of the sacredotal authority and make them conscious of their rights by educating them the ‘Satyashodhak Samaj’ was founded on 24th September 1873.”

In order to demonstrate the nature of the living conditions of the common people whom he represented, Phule presented himself in a loin-cloth as the true representative of the poverty-stricken Indian peasant, to the Duke of York, a member of the British Royal family. This is a sufficient example of the social perspective he was holding.

It was not only the Brahma Samaj of Bengal and the Satyashodhak Samaj of Maharashtra that had worked for

social reforms. Similar movements in various forms appeared in the different provinces during the close of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. While some of them had similarities with the Brahma Samaj of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, others could be compared with the Satyashodhak Samaj of Phule.

The social and class contents of both the movements were in the final analysis the same. Whether they were organized by the caste Hindus and landlords, or by the poor section among the low castes, both of them were movements that were capable of cutting at the very roots of the out-dated Hindu society. What had given the inspiration and impetus to these movements was the urge of the bourgeoisie for independence and progress that had begun to grow under the British rule.

Similar movements had come up in Kerala, too, during the last decades of the 19th century and in the 20th century, although weak as compared with the movements of Bengal and Maharashtra. A brief description of the movement in Kerala has been given in a book written by the present author sometime back.² Here it must be pointed out that the Travancore part of the present Kerala was ahead of the Malabar part insofar as social reforms. If we examine the reasons behind this difference we would get a clear picture of the social forces that were at work behind such social reforms movements.

Following the fierce fights that took place between the prince and the feudal lords in Travancore before the British rule became established, the landed properties of the feudal lords in Travancore were confiscated by the government and made them state properties (Pandaram vaka). Under this system a landownership system comparable with the Ryotwari system established by the British had came into being. Due to the influence of the Christian community which had close affinity to the Western (capitalist) civilization, and the special

characteristics of individual officials of the administration, Travancore provided a fertile soil for bourgeois social reforms. English education, printing press and newspapers, etc., had spread in Travancore more extensively than in other regions.

In Malabar, however, the strength of the old feudal lords had subsisted without any change. All those landlords who had fled during the military expedition of Tippu Sultan of Mysore had been brought back. Their properties were restored and the rights of their tenants were denied by the British. Since the Muslims were predominant among the non-Hindus in Malabar as against the Christians in Travancore, and since they hated bourgeois culture, bourgeois advancement did not take place in Malabar as it did in Travancore. Thus, while Kerala was lagging behind Bengal and Maharashtra, within Kerala the Malabar region lagged behind Travancore. But the issue relevant here is not which region was advanced and which was backward. The fact is that none of them was against the tendencies of bourgeois development.

The movement started in Bengal during the early decades of the 19th century under the leadership of Raja Ram Mohan Roy had spread all over India by the first decades of the 20th century. Depending on the historical background of each province, the interrelationship among the different castes and sub-castes, the speed of the emergence of the new capitalist economy and culture, and the differences in the personal characteristics of the people occupying key positions in the administration, this movement developed with specific local characteristics in the various regions.

Whatever might have been the differences, there was one characteristic common to all regions, a common aim that coordinated all of them. Everywhere it was a movement aimed at the elimination of the Hindu social system which had remained relatively static for centuries beginning from the Vedic times and the development of a bourgeois culture. As to the methods to be adopted for the realization of this aim, three shades of opinion emerged—one which adopted a
relatively reformist attitude, another, an intense urge for a revolutionary transformation and the third in between these two. There were also various sub-sections within these sections of opinion. Even the Brahma Samaj was split into two or three camps.

For this reason, and also because of the diversities in the situations prevailing in the different provinces, a movement embracing all parts the country or even all regions within a single province did not emerge. But the slogans and demands raised by Ram Mohan Roy became the forerunner of the common perspective of the educated sections among the Hindus all over the country. This, combined with other movements to be described in the next few chapters, gave rise to a new movement for national freedom as distinct from that of the 1857-59 period or, in a sense, negating it.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF THE VERNACULARS

For centuries since the Vedic period, several languages and dialects were in use in India. The common people used a variety of dialects and the rulers and the intelligentsia used a standard literary language. In the North, for instance, several Prakrit dialects were used by the common people for everyday communication, while Sanskrit was used for administration and for transactions in the different areas of knowledge. In ancient Sanskrit dramas, kings and other noble characters spoke in Sanskrit, while the commoners and women spoke in a Prakrit dialect.

Similarly in South India, a variety of dialect (Kodum) Tamils were used by the common people and over them was emerging a standard (Sen) Tamil, as Sanskrit in the North, which was used by rulers as well as scholars in art and literature and in the different branches of knowledge.

The distance between the dialects of the common people and the standard language used by the elites continued to exist through the ancient and medieval periods. Pali, a
Prakrit language developed as a standard written language parallel to Sanskrit, following the emergence and growth of the Buddhist religion. While the medium of the Vedic civilization was Sanskrit, that of Buddhism was Pali.

Following the advent of Mohammedans from West Asia, and the establishment of their empire, Persian acquired the position of the language of administration and the medium for imparting knowledge, while Arabic became the medium of religious education among the commoners and priests.

As the early Christians in India were those who had migrated from the Syriac speaking regions, that language came to be used for their religious education.

All these written languages were associated with the social and cultural life of the elite class. So with the development of the class society in which administration became more complex and with the development of cultural life in various spheres, each one of these written languages developed to a greater or lesser extent in accordance with the specific peculiarities of each. Innumerable works were written in each of these languages, some of them rising to the position of "classics".

However, at the lower level, the various dialects remained as they were. Like the non-elite "dramatis personae" in the Sanskrit dramas, the commoners used these dialects in their daily life. When a few fortunate individuals rose in position to join the elite class and began to participate in administration and culture, they too began to use a standard language like Sanskrit. During the ancient and medieval periods, the relations between the dialects and the standard written languages remained an index of the gap that existed between the common people and the elites.

A change in this situation occurred by about the 12th century. Several of such dialects began to be written down and standardized. For example, the Braj Bhakha (Braj language) which had hitherto been regarded as a Prakrit language began to be cultivated, which later developed as Hindi. Similarly developed the written languages like Marathi, Gujarathi and
Bengali, etc., in the North, and Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam in the South. These written languages were evolved through a long process of merger of many old Prakrit dialects in the North and Kodum Tamils in the South.

The literary works produced in these newly evolved languages were religious in their content. The writers of these works tried through them to inculcate among the common people in the language understood by them the religious beliefs and faiths that had been incorporated in the works written earlier in Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic and Syriac. As such, compared to the works written in the languages of the elite class, these new literary works were simpler, and natural in their content. Many of these writers had themselves risen from the ranks of the peasantry, agricultural workers, artisans and such other sections of the people. It is well known, for example, that the development of Malayalam as an independent literary language began with the writings of Thunchattu Ezhuthachan, born in a low-caste family. The content of his works and those of other poets following him belonging to Bhakti (devotion) school of literature was the same as those in the epics written in Sanskrit. But in their form and style and in versification, the works of Ezhuthachan and other litterateurs of the early period like Kunchan Nambiar and Cherussery Nambuthiri were closer to the spoken dialects and folk literature that were extant in Kerala than to Sanskrit.

All other present-day literary languages of India also underwent similar processes. It is, therefore, customary to characterize the period in which these works were written and the movement that emerged at that time as the period of Bhakti movement (the period of the movement of devotional literature). These works were the result of the efforts made by the Vaishnavite poets to reach the common people with their religious doctrines.

The impact of this movement, rather than confining itself to the domain of religion, was the emergence of a new movement affecting the social life of the people as a whole. Specifically, while the social distance and difference between
the elites and the common people persisted, it led to the development of a common language—a new link binding these two sections together.

There were indications of a similar development even earlier when the Pali language began to develop in parallel with Sanskrit. It is now generally admitted that the emergence of Buddhism was symbolic of the people's movement against the domination of the upper strata of the caste system over society. For the same reason Pali, one of the Prakrit languages, rose to the position of a medium of religious instruction in place of Sanskrit and developed into a medium for spreading knowledge, as important as Sanskrit.

Nevertheless, in the background of the class society existing at that time, Pali, which in a sense emerged as a challenge to Sanskrit, itself got transformed subsequently into "another Sanskrit". As distinct from this, the new vernaculars that emerged through the Bhakti Movement, were based on firmer foundations. Unlike the philosophical works written in Pali, the works produced in the vernaculars became an integral part of the everyday life of the masses of people. Poets like Tulsidas, Kabir, Tukaram and Ezuz na zdahans came to be regarded as the common property of the families in their respective regions. Unlike in the case of Sanskrit and Pali literature, wide groups of readers of these works also emerged from among the common people. This change was the result of the changes that had come about in the socio-cultural life of the people.

As we have seen earlier, the society in the ancient and medieval times was based on almost self-sufficient village communities and families. A major portion of the wealth produced by the members of each family through their own labour was consumed by themselves. Only a small portion was exchanged as surplus with other families in the village. And out of the commodities thus exchanged, only a still smaller portion was exchanged as surplus with the neighbouring villages. In other words, out of the products made
in the country as a whole, only a very small share was brought into exchange as commodities.

However, as a consequence of the developments that took place in the medieval period, the extent of the exchange of commodities gradually enlarged. Under the Mughal Empire in North India, and also in South India during the same period, commodity exchange and the amount of money involved in such exchanges and new sectors of activities such as moneylending, etc., began to develop. As the number of traders and industrialists engaged in these activities as well as that of the producers who had to deal with them also increased, the need for exchange of ideas among these various sections also increased correspondingly. The role of self-sufficiency in the relationship among villages diminished, while the extent of mutual dependence increased. Thus arose the need for the emergence of new standard written languages out of the existing spoken dialects, in addition to the languages being used exclusively for communication among the elites. Corresponding to the growth of exchanges among the people, the need for a medium for exchange of ideas grew. Even at this stage, in the spheres of activities in which the elites were involved, such as administration, development of talents in literature and culture, acquisition of skills in the various areas of knowledge, etc., the old standard language had to be depended on. The new languages which were being developed were not of much help in these matters. At the same time, side by side with the educational and cultural activities through the medium of the standard languages, it became absolutely necessary to have a language more popular and democratic in nature in order to conduct religious education and propagation of ideas.

The development of the vernaculars during the British rule was the result of the continuance of this process. For, the administrative system established by the British reduced regularly the elements of self-sufficiency in the interrelationship among villages and among families in the same village and accelerated and intensified the process of increasing
mutual dependence at an unprecedented rate. Exchange of commodities, the use of money and the emergence of a new society based on these factors, influenced the social life more extensively and rapidly than never before. With the advent of the Portuguese traders began the process of tying each producer and each consumer in every part of the country to a common market or even to the world market. As the British rule got established and consolidated, this process not only continued but also became intense.

It was at this stage that new standard written languages developed further by merging of many of the old spoken dialects. Instead of confining literary works to the sphere of religious education and propaganda as it was during the Bhakti Movement, literature in these new languages came to be used in the areas of secular knowledge also. They began to develop as part of a new literary movement, purveying to the common people modern scientific knowledge which developed in Europe in the wake of the industrial revolution. Side by side, literary prose in general and the branches of short stories, novels, literary criticism, etc., in particular, which had evolved as part of modern (capitalist) literature, also grew in each of these new languages.

It may appear to be a paradox that this process of bringing about basic transformations in the cultural life of India was led by foreign traders, from the Portuguese to the British.

These foreign merchants, in fact, made efforts to impose on the Indian people the European culture and civilization showing no compassion towards the cultural traditions, languages and literature of India. It was as part of these efforts that they conducted their educational and cultural activities in India.

It must be noted that it was the missionaries engaged in proselytizing the Hindus and Muslims of India to Christianity who presented for the first time to the various Indian languages with modern scientific grammar, dictionaries, etc. The printing press they started and the books they
published marked the beginning of a prose style in the modern languages. And with the consolidation of British domination in India, works with contents relating to science and other disciplines of modern knowledge also began to be published in the form of textbooks when the British decided to start schools and other educational institutions with a view to creating a generation of educated people for the stability of their regime.

It is evident that the intention of the British was not in any way connected with any desire on their part to modernize India. On the other hand, they knew that they would be able to exploit the Indian people to the maximum extent only if they kept India as much backward as possible in the scientific and technological fields. At the same time, in order to carry on cleverly their exploitation, they were forced to destroy the foundation of ancient Indian civilization and culture. They had also to bring up new generations of Indians imbued with modern (capitalist) civilization and culture, and spread among the masses of people at least some elements of that culture and civilization. For this purpose, it was essential to develop modern literary prose, and as part of it, short stories, novels, literary criticism as also scientific and technological books and theses in the modern Indian languages which had begun to evolve during the Bhakti Movement, but as distinct from those that appeared during that Movement.

In other words, the British who were striving to establish the domination of English language and literature over India had to take the initiative and leadership to develop the vernaculars of India in order to achieve that objective. They made efforts to develop the vernaculars as languages subservient to and dependent on the English language. But the development of these vernaculars itself turned into an important aspect of the freedom movement which was developing against the British domination.
VI. INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM: DEVELOPMENT AND LIMITATIONS

As a logical culmination of the kind of socio-cultural transformation we have discussed in the preceding sections, an "industrial revolution" should have taken place in India. And following such a revolution two mutually antagonistic classes—capitalists and the working class—should have emerged and developed rapidly. This was what happened in Europe when it passed from feudalism to capitalism. In Asia, too, during the last few decades of the 19th century, a similar change had come about in Japan. Consequently, Japan pushed back India and China with long traditions lasting for several centuries, and rose to the position of a mighty imperialist power as a potential threat to not only the Asian countries but the European powers.

In India, too, objective conditions for such a transformation had begun to emerge during the Mughal period and in the centuries following its fall. The early form of industrial capitalism, namely, mercantile capitalism and finance capitalism had become generally widespread. The merchant class purchased surplus commodities from the rural population and carried them to towns and villages situated hundreds of miles away. The traders who took up this work had formulated and practised all methods required for the purpose, such as money transactions, terms and conditions governing such transactions and measures to protect goods and money from robbers on the way.

The section of the people, who with the requisite skill in all these operations, had made profits out of them had exercised considerable influence in the feudal society of those times. They had even the capacity to give loans to the princes and feudal lords when they needed funds to conduct wars or to carry on their administration.
These mercantile and finance capitalists who emerged and developed as part of the feudal society had contributed considerably to the development of trade conducted by the foreigners from the Portuguese to the British. Had these foreign traders not obtained the help and assistance of this section, they would have faced serious difficulties during the earlier period when they had to operate merely as traders without administrative authority.

Conversely, the enterprises of these foreign trading companies and their officials had helped these mercantile and finance capitalists. The development of trade and the consequent expansion of transport of commodities and monetary transactions helped the intermediaries such as Indian traders and moneylenders to raise their position in social life and enhance the rate of their profits. The section of the people who grew both in number and financial capacity in this manner became loyal and subservient to the foreign trading companies.

In Europe and also in Japan in Asia, when the growth of this section reached a particular stage, they themselves and the society as a whole became thoroughly transformed. These capitalists who till then confined their activities to trade and moneylending began to enter the area of industrial production. The owner of the capital which he used hitherto for exchanging commodities between the producers and consumers and for transporting the commodities began to expand his areas of activities by investing capital to buy raw materials and the machinery to process them and also to hire labour to work on the machine, thereby transforming himself into the industrial capitalist engaged in production. From the position of an intermediary functioning in between the producer and consumer, he transformed himself to the position of an organizer actively participating in the process of production.

The foundation for this transformation in the owner of capital was laid through the revolutionary transformations that had been taking place in the technology of the process
of production. The industrial revolution, as is well known, was the natural culmination of the gradual technological transformations brought about in the traditional industries which were evolved on the basis of the personal capacity of those who had acquired skills in handicrafts, and the consequent invention of machines. With this development, it became necessary that a new section of intermediaries who could systematically organize the process of production and invest capital required for the purpose, should come to participate in the process, in addition to the customary intermediary between the consumer and the producer. When the machineries, which were relatively simple in the initial stages, and the production based on them became more and more complex, more and more capital became necessary to install new machines, to engage more workers to operate these machines and to acquire raw materials. Thus, the change that came about in the production relations (the economic system) following such radical transformations in the production process, called "technological revolution", laid the foundation for industrial capitalism.

This process did not take place in India. Although the function of trading and usurer capital expanded on an unprecedented scale, it did not enter the sphere of production. Capital continued to be invested, as before, in the distribution of products and other related activities without investing it to set up factories with machines and other means of productions, and to acquire raw materials and to engage labour. There were two reasons for this.

The first and foremost reason was that the foundation for the development of capitalism in India was laid by foreign traders. They knew that if the same kind of economic transformation and "industrial revolution" as in Europe were brought about in India and consequently capitalism developed here, it would pose a threat to their own self-interest. Their intention was to use India to exploit at low prices her raw materials required for the production in the industries in their own countries and for creating a market for their products
at prices most favourable to them. For that purpose, they wanted to ensure the development and modernization of transport and such other facilities for reaching the raw materials from the nooks and corners of India to the ports and their shipment to England as also to reach their industrial products to the Indian market. The development of the transport system, the development in the areas of commerce and banking, the growth of organized markets and the necessary laws for this purpose were essential to serve their interests. Similarly, the development of the production of industrial and commercial crops by starting estates where modern farming operations would be utilized was also essential. They introduced in India modernization in the economic sphere keeping these objectives in mind.

At the same time, they feared that their own growth would be hampered if industries for processing the raw materials available here were developed in India. Consequently they took all measures to ensure that no such moves for the development of industries in India were made by Indian capitalists. In the early days of development of capitalism in England, Indian handloom cloth and other consumer goods were able to effectively compete with the English industries. They brought in legislative measures to prevent such a competition. Later on, when possibilities arose of marketing English products in India, they opposed taking steps to save the handicrafts of India from the English competition. In other words, the very same rulers who had in the earlier stages imposed tariffs in their own country in order to protect the development of English industries, prevented, using their political power, the imposition of tariffs in India, which was essential for the survival of the Indian handicrafts.

The second factor that stood in the way of an independent development of industrial capitalism in India was the social system prevailing in India. There were no objective conditions in the Indian society, divided into various castes and sub-castes, for facilitating or encouraging the modernization of the production process. The system that existed in
India was one in which each caste or sub-caste was ascribed a specific occupation and each member born of a particular caste or sub-caste carried out production activities in his ascribed occupation with the skill traditionally handed down to him from his predecessors with social customs and beliefs that prevented him from breaking this tradition. This social system discouraged them from bringing about even the slightest change in the technology of production, whereas the core of industrial revolution was the introduction of constant changes in the technology of production process.

Thus, in India, both the internal social system and the foreign rulers simultaneously placed obstacles on the path of bringing about an industrial revolution in the sense of a transition from the system of handicrafts to the modern mechanized industry. A modern bourgeois society could come up in India only by removing both these obstacles. Even if a people's movement had grown up against any one of these obstacles, there was no possibility, in the circumstances then prevailing, of bringing about a real industrial revolution. Instead of such a development, what would have actually taken place was a polarization between those who opposed foreign domination and those who opposed the maintenance of the traditional social system, the two sections ranging themselves in opposite camps. It was impossible, in the objective conditions present in that period, for people to become conscious of the fact that it was essential to cut at the very roots of the traditional social system to throw the foreigners out of the land and conversely that for destroying the old social system and for bringing about a social revolution, it was essential to end foreign domination.

But, as pointed out by Marx, the foreign powers who had taken up the mission of destroying the old traditional society also discharged the mission of laying the material foundations for a social revolution. By establishing a centralized administration in India, by introducing rail roads and other modern systems of communication and by linking the village social system with the world market, the British
had sown the seeds of modernization of the society in India. This promoted the investment in industrial production of a small portion of the capital which was being utilized for trading and moneylending operations. Some Indian capitalists started establishing industrial undertakings on the model of the industries started by the British. This process which began during the earlier years of the 19th century, gradually began to advance. They started jute mills in Bengal and cotton textile mills in Bombay under Indian ownership.

The first cotton mill started functioning in Bombay in 1854. By 1866, the number of mills increased to 13 and to 32 by 1876. Thereafter it registered a steady increase with 47 in 1881, 49 in 1885, 67 in 1891 and 69 in 1905. By the closing years of the 19th century, the textile mill industry in Bombay employed over a hundred thousand workers.

Those who had initiated this process were the Banias and the Parsis who had been functioning since a number of years before the commencement of British domination in the trading and moneylending sectors. If we go into the family history of each of them, we can find that they belonged to that section which had earlier served the feudal lords and later the British. They, therefore, can be rightly designated as the commission agents of foreign capitalists or compradors. They realized that their growth was linked with the maintenance and growth of foreign domination. Thus, they functioned as devout loyalists of the British during the period 1857-59 and thereafter. (It may be noted that a textile mill established by one of them, Jamshedji Tata, was named the Empress Mill, to commemorate the ascension of Queen Victoria as the "Empress of India".)

But once they stepped into the sphere of industry and started making progress, they found that there were some contradictions between their own interests and the foreign vested interests. Consequently, they began to turn themselves into a section which, on one side, was "devout loyalists" of the British and, on the other, opposed to the policies of the British rulers. The most prominent representative of this
section was the Tata family. The founder of this industrial house was Jamshedji Tata, who started as an agent purchasing from producers materials needed for wars being conducted by the British and transporting them to the required centres. This work which he started in 1857 brought him considerable profits during the days of the war. Utilizing this money, he started trade with China and also entered the sphere of speculative transactions in cotton. Subsequently he ventured into many industries and founded the first steel mill in India. Now, the Tatas are one of the top monopoly industrial houses of India.

This process of industrialization was repeated in Ahmedabad. But, in Calcutta such a development did not take place among the Indian capitalists. Most of the industries in that region were established by the British. Later, when Indians started the enterprises there, it was not the Bengalis but the Marwaris who came from outside Bengal, who occupied positions. This is attributed to the differences in the landownership relations established by the British. The reforms introduced in Bengal were suited to the creation of a new landowning class. Specifically, the conditions created there were suited to the emergence of lawyers, journalists, intellectuals and leaders in the cultural life. The Zemindari system introduced through Permanent Settlement was not helpful for the emergence of an industrial bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, the Ryotwari system introduced in Bombay paved the way for the development of capitalism in the industrial sector also, as in the socio-cultural sphere. The Banias, the Parsis and the Marwaris of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan were engaged even earlier in trades and money-lending. As a consequence, they did not find it difficult to establish industrial enterprises in Bengal, even before the Bengalis entered the field, in addition to starting industries in Bombay and Gujarat.

The development of modern national independence movement in India was a combined result of the industrial capitalism that began to emerge in Bombay and the
socio-cultural renaissance in Bengal led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others.

VII. EMERGENCE OF INDIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

One of the results of the rise of industrial capitalists as a class was the emergence of a new scientific discipline which may be called "Indian political economy".

The early actions of the British in India resulted in the creation of two new sections among the people: the new (capitalist) landowners and a section of educated men who had acquired knowledge of European culture and in other scientific disciplines through modern educational institutions. It may be said that a majority of the latter section came from among the new landowning families.

With the increase in the number of people belonging to those two sections and with the growth of their organized strength, movements for social reforms and cultural renaissance emerged. But, the modernization of social life envisaged by these sections remained confined mostly to the spheres of family relations and cultural movements. The social reformers and leaders of cultural renaissance among them did not have the perspective of bringing about an industrial revolution as in Europe, which laid the foundations for modernization there. The section with such a perspective appeared only during the last decades of the 19th century.

The most eminent among that section was Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917). The most respected among the earlier leaders and founders of the nationalist movement, he was known as the "Grand Old Man" of India.

He was not merely a political leader; he was also the founder of research in Indian economics, who examined the problems of Indian economy in the light of modern bourgeois political economy and adopted Indian national interests as the basis for such examinations.
The conclusion of his studies, which he formulated as what was known as the "theory of drain", pointed to the fundamental difference that existed between the free countries like England and the dependent countries like India in the production of wealth, its distribution and utilization. The essence of the theory was that, while the wealth produced in England through the labour of the workers of that country was utilized to meet the various needs of the people of England, a considerable portion of the wealth produced by the Indian labour in India was being drained out to England.

Dadabhoy's studies were based on statistical data published officially by the government and on the theories of modern political economy. The administrators in England were all Englishmen. The salaries and allowances earned by them were being spent within that country. Consequently, the expenditure incurred by the government of that country turned into the income of one or the other section of the people of England.

In India, on the other hand, the administrators were mostly Englishmen. Only a part of their salaries and other income was spent in this country; a considerable portion was drained out to England. Moreover, the salary of an English official was far higher than that of an Indian official doing the same job. Besides, India had to bear the expenditure for the wars being fought by the British and for the armed forces maintained for the sole purpose of her imperialist expansion which India never wanted.

Similarly, he examined carefully the developments in the various spheres of the economic life of the country, such as exports and imports, commerce, public debt, the declining handicraft of India, etc. Dadabhoy showed that an amount not less than 20 million pound sterling was being drained out to England annually out of 50 million pound sterling collected as tax from the people of India every year. He further showed that as a result of this decades old "drain" India was getting more and more pauperized.

With his studies also began the technical process of
estimating the national income in India similar to that in
vogue in other countries where bourgeois economics had
developed. As V.K.R.V. Rao, a noted economist, has stated,
the national income he had calculated at a time when the
technique was in its infancy, was by and large error-free even
according to the methods of calculation of the later days.

The politically dependent status of India was crucially
relevant to all these calculations. Dadabhoy had no doubt
that India's political slavery was responsible for her economic
decline and poverty. His studies thus gave rise to a new
method of investigation for the first time in the history
of India, combining economic analysis with laying of the
foundation for political agitations. Several articles and
booklets containing Dadabhoy's economic analysis were pub-
lished, and among those was a book entitled *Poverty and
un-British rule*. The title of this book itself is meaningful.
On one side, there was a sharp criticism of the economic
policies of the British (a plain speaking of the fact that it
was these policies that were pauperizing India more and more).
On the other side was the trust expressed in the statement
that this cruel exploitation was "un-British". This was the
basic approach of the Congress leadership and of Dadabhoy
Naoroji, one of the founder leaders of the Congress,
till the end of the First World War.

Dadabhoy was not an isolated individual. Many of his
contemporaries too had made analyses of this type. Modern
Indian (bourgeois) political economy was a new branch of
knowledge initiated by these personalities and developed
hand in hand with the advance of the national movement in
India.

As we know, modern bourgeois political economy
originated at the hands of Adam Smith, David Ricardo and
other English economists, on the basis of the situation obtained
in Europe in general, and in England in particular. Marx
enriched it in accordance with the interests of the working
class. In India, too, a bourgeois political economy was emerg-
ing. It was bourgeois in character in the sense that it was
trying to study the Indian situation from the point of view of bourgeois political economy. On the other hand, it was Indian in the sense that it was trying to establish that the British rule was endangering India’s national interests.

The names of two eminent personalities among those who, besides Dadabhoy, gave rise to this discipline need special mention. Ramesh Chandra Dutt (1841-1909) made a significant contribution towards the study of agrarian problem, while Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842 to 1901) enriched the conclusions arrived at by Dadabhoy and Dutt and gave directions to the Indian people as to what they should do in the light of the circumstances that resulted from the British rule as explained by them. The theory that they together formulated, in a moderate tone though, was a firm challenge to the British.

None of them, nor any other bourgeois economist who followed them, was a revolutionary in the sense in which we understand the term today. They were at pains to make it clear that they were loyal to the Crown, but demonstrated with irrefutable data that India was getting pauperized under the rule of the British, the repository of their loyalty.

The social background of these three Indian economists, Naoroji, Dutt and Ranade, is both fascinating and educative.

Dadabhoy Naoroji went to England as a representative and partner of a Bombay trading family (belonging to the Parsi community), which had ventured into industrial capitalism. While working for the commercial establishment which sent him there, he studied various problems directly and indirectly relating to trade and actively participated in the political life of England. He also established contact with the Liberal Party to which he felt closeness and appealed to his colleagues in the party to bring about changes in the government’s policies towards India in conformity with its ideologies. The economic analysis and political agitation he conducted were the results of this work.

Dadabhoy was the direct representative of the industrial
capitalism that was emerging in India in the middle of the 19th century.

Like Dadabhoy, Ranade also belonged to Bombay. He had, however, no direct links with industrial capitalism. He started his career as a teacher in economics. Later, he held high positions under the government, including that of a judge. While holding those positions he had occasions to study the conditions in rural life, both as part of his official work and otherwise. As a result of these studies, Ranade came to the conclusion that it was essential to have an extensive industrialization programme for the prosperity of the people of India. He critically examined various theories of European economists and wrote several works. He also took initiative to form many organisations working for industrialization and economic progress on the basis of the ideas he formulated through his studies.

One of the important economic theories advanced by Ranade relates to the role of the government in economic development. Ranade pointed out that if the doctrine of laissez-faire followed by the British was pursued, a country like India would not be able to attain progress and that it had ceased to operate even in England. (It may be mentioned that Ranade too had argued for active governmental intervention to protect the interest of India in the competition between the weak India and the mighty Great Britian).

It is clear that it was this policy which was advocated by M. Visweswarayya half a century later in his book on Indian planning and subsequently by the authors of the Tata-Birla Plan and that the programme of setting up a public sector adopted by the Congress after independence was its natural culmination.

Ramesh Chandra Dutt was a Bengali. Born in a new landowning family, Dutt acquired modern education, obtained employment under the government and rose to a position which no Indian could aspire to achieve in those days. Based on the problems of the people which he had occasions to deal with as part of his official work, he examined and
studied through the viewpoint of an Indian, the decline that befell the Indian economy in general and agriculture in particular, under the British rule. Dutt irrefutably established on the basis of statistical data that the recurrent famines all over India were the inevitable result of the policies pursued by the British which had pauperized both the peasants and the artisans.

Besides these three, several others had analyzed the Indian situation prevailing at that time and sharply criticized the British rule. Some among them like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, were the leaders of the national movement in its early days. Their theories have not been specifically mentioned here, not because those were unimportant, but the theories advanced by these three themselves provided sufficient indication to the nature of India’s (bourgeois) political economy that had begun to emerge following the rise of industrial capitalism in India.

Even in the earlier periods, works on political economy had appeared in India, for example, the Arthasastra of Kautilya in the Mauryan period. All such works represented the situation that prevailed in their respective periods. However, with the establishment of the British rule in India, new situations came to prevail, which differed fundamentally from those that prevailed in the earlier periods. The old ruling class had perished. A regime in which no Indian had any part to play had now come to exist. All attempts to end the foreign rule and to re-establish the old met with defeats they deserved. In place of the former ruling classes which made these attempts, new classes had begun to emerge, which were to conduct the freedom struggle in other forms and methods.

It was the industrial bourgeoisie that was in forefront of these new classes. The early time activities of Dadabhoy Naoroji who directly represented the bourgeoisie and those of Ranade and Dutt, though not directly representing that class, but imbibing its interests, constituted the declaration that the Indian bourgeoisie had attained maturity.
VIII. POLITICAL AGITATIONS
AND ORGANIZATIONS

Much before the works of Naoroji, Ranade and Dutt exposing the disastrous effects of the British rule on India began to appear, agitations in their primary forms had started first in Bengal and later in other centres against some of these ill-effects of the British rule and in defence of certain demands of the people. And certain organisations also began to emerge to carry on these struggles in an organized way.

As far as we know, the premier organization thus formed was the Academic Association started by Ram Mohan Roy in 1828. Although this organization was concerned primarily with religious and moral questions, it also organized debates on social and political issues.

It was led by members of the educated middle class who had been imbued with the ideas of bourgeois democracy that was gaining strength in Europe. Therefore, it functioned with a dual purpose of opposing the outmoded religious and caste doctrines, on the one side, and promoting such values as freedom and democracy, on the other. In 1838, the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge was also formed, which "discussed issues like trial by jury, freedom of the press, forced labour in government departments".10

Needless to say, these were not only indications to suggest that at least the educated middle class had started taking interests in general political issues but also a means to foster such interests among them.

In 1842, at the initiative of Dwarkanath Tagore, George Thompson, an English liberal politician, was invited to India. On his arrival in Calcutta, Thompson who had actively participated in organizing the anti-slavery agitation in England, began his political activities and propaganda among the groups on which Tagore had influence. As a result of these activities, a new organization, the Bengal British India

10. Tara Chand, *op cit*, p. 525
Society, was formed in 1843. The objects of the Society were "to collect and disseminate information relating to the condition of the people and the laws, institutions and resources of the country; and to employ such other means of a peaceful and lawful character...necessary to secure the welfare, extend the just rights and advance the interest of all classes of the Indian subjects".11

Meanwhile, another type of organization was formed in Calcutta in 1838, the Land Holders' Society, to protect the interests of the landowners. The object of this organisation was to defeat by legal means the attempt of the government to evict landholders from rent-free lands.

Following the formation of organizations of progressive, educated middle class and of the landlords, the idea of coordinating their activities through a single organization arose. Thus, the British Indian Association was formed in 1851. It began functioning with the objective of improving local administration and the system of government and to "acquaint the British public with the state of feeling in India with regard to its past and future administration". The association deputed a delegation to England in 1853 when a Bill was introduced in the British Parliament to bring out changes in the administration of the East India Company, to convey to the members of Parliament the views and demands of the people of India on that issue. One of the main demands raised by them was that Indians must have the right to elect members to the legislatures.

Similar kinds of activities were taking place in Bombay also. Deshmukh, who had been writing under the penname "Lokahitawadi" on common issues relating to the people, strongly advocated the formation of a 'Parliament' with representation of people from each town and district of India. In 1852 an organization, the Bombay Association, was formed in Bombay raising certain more moderate demands.

This organisation, founded by a group of eminent

11. Tara Chand, ibid, p. 526.
public men including Dadabhoy Naoroji, also deputed a
delegation to England in 1853 to exert influence on the British
Parliament. The purpose of sending this delegation was to
present certain charges of corruption in the administration
and to make certain practical suggestions for administrative
reforms. The suggestions included reorganization of the
legislative councils, appointing Indians in higher official
posts and establishment of universities.

In Madras, the Madras Native Association was founded
in 1853. Like the organizations in Calcutta and Bombay,
this organization also presented petition before the British
Parliament on the Bill that was under the consideration of
the Parliament. Explaining the “grievances and wants of the
Presidency”, the petition pointed out the unjust and oppressive
nature of the Zemindari and Ryotwari systems under which
the peasant masses were reduced “to the deepest poverty and
destitution”. The petition also pointed out the inefficiency,
delay and expenses of the courts of law, inadequacies in
roads, bridges and irrigation facilities and in the provision
for education. It also suggested a reduction in public expend-
diture and to make the administration beneficial to the
people.

It must be noted that all these developments were prior
to the Sepoy Mutiny and revolt of 1857-59. They provide a
general picture of how the educated middle class, including
those who had come from the new landowning class, viewed
the situations prevailing in the country in those days and the
future progress of the people. It is not hard to discern
that the views of these sections differed fundamentally from
the views of those who later participated in the 1857-59
revolts, in two respects.

First, the insurrectionists tried to uproot the British
regime which was extending its domination to wider areas and
replace it with the old feudal regime. The educated sections,
including those who had emerged from the new landlord
class, on the other hand, wanted to establish in India the new
(bourgeois) democracy that had emerged in Europe in general,
and in England in particular, as also the socio-economic system basic to the bourgeois democratic system.

Second, the insurrectionists tried to go along the path of armed struggle to defeat the British in order to achieve their aims. On the other hand, the educated middle class tried to achieve their aim by earning sympathy and support of the British public and the British government, through legal means.

Naturally, therefore, the educated middle class had no sympathy at all with the insurrectionists. In fact, the support extended by the successors of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and personalities like Dadabhboy Naoroji was an important factor in the success of the British in suppressing the revolt. If the country had to progress in accordance with their objective of gradually transforming India into an independent (bourgeois) democratic country with the sympathy and co-operation of the people and the government of Great Britain, the efforts of the insurrectionists must surely be defeated.

But, the expectations of these bourgeois democrats began to wane gradually. They began to realise that rather than modernizing India and leading it along the path of bourgeois democracy as they expected, the British were rejecting even the most moderate and just demands of the people to consolidate their domination over the Indian people. Shortly after the suppression of the Sepoy Mutiny and the revolt of 1857-59 and the consolidation of the British rule, conflicts started between the rulers and the members of the educated middle class. The experience they gained from these frequent conflicts taught them that the rulers would not budge a bit from their position unless political agitations were organized in a more extensive and determined way than what was built up in connection with the petition submitted to the Parliament on the 1853 India Bill.

The burning issues about which the democrats felt anxious was the government policy of denying opportunities to Indians for appointment in higher official posts. As we have noted earlier, this was one of the important issues included in the
petitions to the Parliament by members of the delegation from Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The Government, however, made the rules and regulations more rigorous to exclude Indians, disregarding these petitions. This attitude of the Government came under very severe criticism in the Indian press.

An event which gave an all-India importance to this issue took place in the meantime. A Bengali youth, Surendranath Banerji (1848-1925), secured a high rank in the selection for Indian Civil Service. To exclude Indians from the Service, he was harmed in various ways and was thrown out of service on flimsy grounds.

This evoked intense dissatisfaction and protest among the educated middle class, not only of Calcuta but throughout India. A strong opinion arose that an organized effort should be made to arouse the self-respect which was wounded by this act of the authorities and to launch an agitation for securing the rights of Indians. Utilizing this opportunity effectively, Banerji himself made a country-wide tour to mobilize public opinion behind this issue. He visited several places in the present Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Sind, Gujarat and Maharashtra and cities of Delhi and Madras.

It can be said that this was the first attempt to mobilize public opinion and to conduct an agitation. Quite naturally, this agitation had the full co-operation of the Indian press. Thus, the entire Indian language press became the voice of public opinion strongly criticizing the government policies. This annoyed the rulers who enforced a legislation to muzzle the language press.

But despite these measures the agitation did not cool down. On the other hand, this measure led to another agitation. This agitation turned out to be effective in that in 1882 the Government was force to rescind the Act which was brought into force in 1878.

The Arms Act passed in 1878, the famines that broke out in various parts of the country at the time, the pompous celebrations of the jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria
even in the midst of the famine, the war preparations made in the North-West Frontier region and such other incidents created dissatisfaction among the people. And the educated middle class tried to organize agitations on each of these issues. Lord Lytton, the then Governor-general, became the target of the ire of the Indian people. Never before had the Government taken such reprehensible measures as it did during Lytton's time. The number of agitations organized by popular leaders also was unprecedented. On the occasion of his return to England after relinquishing the post, the English newspaper, Bengalee, wrote: To Lord Lytton must belong the credit of having done much by his repressive measures towards stimulating the public life of this country, and for this service certainly his Lordship will be entitled to the gratitude of our country.

While these agitations in defence of the rights and demands of the Indian people were going on, Englishmen in India were also carrying on an agitation in their own way. Ilbert, the then Law Member, had presented a bill in the Legislative Council for removing the existing discrimination between Englishmen and Indians in the Civil Service and to make same provisions applicable to both the sections. Englishmen who had been enjoying the privileges of racial domination, organized a country-wide agitation against this legislative measure. The newspapers run by them and the Indian language newspapers run by Indians came into clash with each other on the Ilbert Bill. In this conflict, the Englishmen came out victorious—the bill was passed with the amendments demanded by them.

This cruelly wounded the self-respect of the Indian people. It was a challenge to their patriotism and organizational consciousness. The fact that the government which was in power was one that not only disregarded their legitimate agitations and the just demands raised through these agitations, but also conceded the unjust demands raised by the Englishmen was an eye-opener to them. Moreover, when Surendranath Banerji, who was the principal character in the
incident which was considered to be the touchstone of the goodwill of the rulers, was prosecuted, they came to realize that there was no way left open before them other than that of powerful agitations.

These developments led to the convening of a national conference in December 1883 (28th to 30th) in Calcutta. Even earlier, organizations like the British Indian Association of Calcutta, the Sarvajanik Sabha of Poona, and the Mahajana Sabha of Madras had been functioning in an organized manner in their respective regions and had created the consciousness of the need for unifying their activities. It was as a result of several rounds of discussion held following this realization that the first national conference was held in Calcutta in 1883. This conference adopted resolutions raising the demands of establishing representative assemblies of the people, development of facilities for general and technical education, separation of judiciary from the executive, entry of Indians in government services and such other matters. It is needless to say that this constituted a counter-move to the agitation by the Englishmen against the Ilbert Bill.

Following this, Surendranath Banerji undertook another tour of North India. The need for the unification of various political groups in different regions and for the establishment of a centralized organization was emphasized by him and other leaders. The formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was the result of these efforts.
INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS: 
THE EARLY YEARS

I. THE ENGLISH FRIENDS

The political agitations initiated in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and other towns by the educated middle class had the support of a section of Englishmen, too. Many of them had, in fact, played an active role in developing this political agitation and in giving it an organized form.

Among these Englishmen, Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912) is worthy of special mention. Hume, born in England as the son of one of the leaders of the Radical Party of England, joined the Indian Civil Service and came over to India. He had occupied many high official positions. Hume had, even while in service, many friends among the educated middle class. He understood the nationalistic sentiments that had developed among them and supported the movement that was developing as a consequence. On retirement from service,
he began openly expressing his sympathies with the political movement. Hume also played an important role in the preliminary work connected with the formation of the Indian National Congress, in 1885. Historians have even conferred on him the epithet of “founder of the Congress”.

Hume was, however, not an isolated individual. Lord Dufferin, who was the Governor-General and Viceroy during the days of the formation of the Congress, had also not concealed from his friends his sympathies with the movement that was developing among the educated. When Hume formulated his plan for the formation of the Indian National Congress, he had the blessings and good wishes of Dufferin.

The latter had specified only one condition to Hume that the role he had played should not be revealed till he relinquished office and left India.

This stand was not one which was taken casually by two individuals, Dufferin and Hume. In fact, it was the historical development of a relatively long period that led them to take this stand.

Ever since India, as vast a country as it was, came under the direct rule of the British, there existed two main trends of opinion amongst the rulers as to how they should exercise their domination over the several millions of people of this country. One approach was to adopt a policy of using the brutal forces of law and arms. The other approach was one of building a social foundation for the British rule in India, by creating a generation of people “imbued with English culture”, giving encouragement and assistance to the people to foster the ideology of bourgeois liberalism among them and encouraging the sections and organizations imbued with this ideology.

Broadly speaking, the Conservative and the Liberal parties that constituted the active force in British politics were the symbols of these two approaches—the Conservative Party symbolized the policy of “iron fist” and the Liberal Party symbolized the policy of “conciliation”. When the working class became a force to be reckoned with in British politics
by the middle of the 19th century, the Chartist movement that represented the working class expressed its warm sympathies towards the nationalist movement in India.

Ernest Jones (1819-69) was a revolutionary, who actively participated in the Chartist movement and had consequent ly to undergo imprisonment. When the Sepoy Mutiny and the people's revolt broke out in India in 1857, he had through the columns of his newspaper wholeheartedly welcomed these movements. Jones wrote: One cannot be in doubt as to which side one should align himself. On which side were they, when the Polish people waged their liberation struggle against Russia? When the Hungarian people fought for their rights against Austria, on which side were they? When the Italians fought against the authoritarianism of Germany, France and of the Pope, on which side were they? In case there was justice on the side of Italy, or of Poland, then there is justice on the side of India, too. Can one justify Hungary's struggle? Then we can justify India's too. Does Italy deserve our support? Then India, too, deserves our support. Because India is also trying to secure what Poland, Hungary or Italy had tried to secure.

Not only Ernest Jones, who stood firm on the side of the working class, but even a section of the bourgeois politicians of England adopted this approach. And its echoes were heard in the ruling circles.

It has been stated earlier that several high government officials and members of Parliament had expressed the opinion that the struggle of 1857-59 was not just a Sepoy Mutiny but a people's revolt. It is true that the government acted in a manner diametrically opposed to this opinion. Still, this opinion persisted strongly. That was what was reflected in the policies of the Conservative and Liberal parties towards India. The bourgeois democrats in India were striving to solve the country's problems by maintaining cordial relations with the leaders of the Liberal Party as well as with the officials who were pursuing their line of approach and
soliciting their assistance. That was why the Indian political leaders decided to depute a delegation to England to seek the support of the members of Parliament when the India Bill of 1853 came up for their consideration. It was also for the same reason that the political agitators in India made attempts again to mobilize public opinion in England, in favour of India when several lively issues like the Press Act and the debarring of Indians from appointments in services arose.

This attitude on the part of Indians had its impact on the rulers too. The policies of the British Government towards India changed in accordance with the character of the party in power. When power changed alternately between the Conservative and Liberal parties, there were changes in the attitudes of the Governor-General and other officials sent by the respective parties to India, as well.

Among the Governor-Generals, Lord Lytton who was appointed during the Conservative regime and Lord Ripon, who came to India during the Liberal Party’s regime, deserve special mention. Legislative measures like the Act for the suppression of freedom of the press, which met with protests from the Indian people, were enacted during the regime of Lytton, while that Act was withdrawn after the assumption of office by Lord Ripon.

Further, it was during the regime of Lord Ripon that local self-governing bodies like municipalities and taluk boards were constituted, thereby giving rise to the impression that the national demand for involvement of the people of India in the areas of legislative work and day-to-day administration was being granted in its primary form. Therefore, Indian political leaders had a special regard and affection for Ripon. In 1884, when he left India on relinquishing office, farewell demonstrations were held in various parts of the country. This was something new to the English bureaucrats. One of the officials among them, the then Finance Member Sir Auckland was astonished at this gesture and even wrote a book on it. These incidents are mentioned here to point out that in the relation among the British administrators themselves
and between them and the Indian people, there were two distinct elements, one of hatred and the other of cordiality. It was one of these elements that was reflected in the attitude of the former British official, Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress, and the then Governor-General, Lord Dufferin.

The picture will not be complete unless we state the objective circumstances that induced them to take up this stand. The political reality directly witnessed by Hume and Lord Dufferin was as much significant in this context as were the ideas of liberalism that had influenced a section of the bourgeois rulers of England. This compelled them to think hard.

The rapidly growing discontent among the educated people on issues like adequate share for Indians in government services, the constitutional structure, rights and powers of the legislative councils, etc., and parallel to this, the discontent of the people on the burning problems of life which sometimes converged—this was the reality of the situation that people like Hume perceived.

The discontent both among the common people and the educated middle class had spread all over the country. The riots that burst out in 1859 in the indigo plantations in Bengal were the result of the convergence of these two streams. The British owners of these plantations used to behave brutally towards the workers and the farmers. This led to growing dissatisfaction in many areas creating waves of protest among the educated middle class, too. Deena Bandhu Mitra, one of the leaders of the cultural renaissance movement in Bengal, wrote a drama, "Neel Darpan", exposing the cruel exploitation by the plantation owners. Another leader of the renaissance movement, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, translated this drama into English. This led to court proceedings and to the conviction of the accused. The case created a wide-spread wave of agitation on an unprecedented scale which compelled the Government to effect some changes in the relations between the plantation owners and indigo farmers.
The famine which spread all over the country in the 1870s created an explosive situation in the rural areas, although it did not lead to a combined agitation by the educated and the common people as in the case of the movement of the indigo farmers. The reports that the government received from various districts one after another were alarming. Hume, who was holding a very high official position at that time, feared that a wide-spread revolt in one form or another would break out. He also realized that if the new landlords and the educated sections were to take up the leadership of this revolt, it would lead to a dangerous situation to the British rulers.

It was quite natural that in such a situation, many other British officials, and even the Governor-General Dufferin for that matter, shared the opinion with Hume. Not only his loyalty to the bourgeois liberal ideology but also the eagerness to protect the British rule from the danger it was facing brought them close to the educated politicians in India. They came to realize that the formation of an organization under the leadership of this section of politicians of India was essential to channelize in the "right way" the discontent that was rapidly spreading all over the country.

Following this, while efforts were being made by Hume to form the Indian National Congress, Surendranath Banerji was moving on a parallel line towards a national conference which was held in Calcutta in December 1883. A second conference was also held subsequently.

It was when the second conference was in session that the first conference to form the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay in 1885. By that time Surendranath Banerji had come to be regarded as an acclaimed leader throughout the country. Yet, he had not participated in the Bombay conference. On the other hand, W.C Banerji, who had kept away from the Calcutta conference, not only attended the Bombay conference but also presided over it.

The circumstance which led to the formation of two parallel organizations was an issue of controversy. One
argument was that Hume and Dufferin considered that a leadership role for Surendranath Banerji, who had been dismissed from Government service and had become well known as the leader of agitation, would not help the formation of an organization of the type envisaged by them. It was on that ground the National Congress was formed in place of the national conference led by Banerji. Another argument was that because of the lack of proper communication facilities among the various organisations working in different parts of the country, the two conferences were held unwittingly at the same time.

As far as we are concerned, it is not a relevant question which of the two views was correct. For, whatever might have been the circumstance under which the Indian National Congress was formed, Surendranath Banerji and his friends did join that organization before long and played a leading role in it as much as he did in the Calcutta conference earlier. He himself has stated that he and his other moderates friends had participated in almost all the conferences of the Indian National Congress, after its inaugural session held in Bombay in 1885, till they left the organization in 1917.

In 1885, all those who had become well known through their public activities had participated either in the second Calcutta conference led by Surendranath Banerji or in the first conference of the Indian National Congress. An all India organization which can be said to be of the bourgeois nationalist movement in India thus emerged in 1885-86. The bourgeois modernization movement which started through the different branches such as the social reform movement in the forms of Brahma Samaj and other organisations and the cultural renaissance movements that emerged simultaneously with it, the political ideologies and agitations that emerged as part of these cultural and social movements, and the Indian political economy initiated by Naoroji and others, attained a clear all-India political form. And in the emergence of this movement, the British officials like Hume and Dufferin, who were under the influence of the Liberal Party of England and
the liberal political approach that controlled it, played an active role.

II. TOWARDS CONFRONTATION

As we have seen, the Congress which was started under the initiative of Hume and with the knowledge of the Governor-General had received the assistance and cooperation from the British officials in India in its initial days. The Governor-General had invited the delegates to the second conference of the Congress in Calcutta in 1886, to his official residence for a treat. Similarly, when the next conference was held in Madras, the Governor of that province entertained the delegates to the conference at his official residence.

But a radical change came about in the official attitude towards the organization when the activities of the Congress became intensified and the leaders decided to raise the demand for administrative reforms more vigorously. Perhaps not quite in line with the expectation of the official circle, the Congress did not remain content with holding a meeting once in a year and dispersing after passing certain resolutions. Instead, the Congress got itself engaged in mobilizing public opinion by publishing pamphlets and other materials sharply criticizing the policies pursued by the government and conducting campaigns by holding public meetings. And the top echelons of the officialdom veered round to the view that no Englishman employed in government service should associate with the activities of the Congress or express sympathy for it. Earlier, officials used to attend the meetings of the Congress, which had now been banned.

The very same Lord Dufferin who had encouraged Hume in his efforts to form the Indian National Congress, later wrote: "There is a mischievous busybody of the name Hume whom Lord Ripon rather feted and who seems to be one of the chief stimulators of the Indian Home Rule movement."
He is cleverish, a little cracked, vain, unscrupulous man... very careless of truth."

As we have seen, the main demands of the Congress were active role for the Indians in the administration and, as part of it, ending the monopoly of Englishman in government employment. The British authorities in India and England took a totally negative attitude towards this demand. They made out that those who raised these demands constituted a small minority among the Indian people and that a large majority of the people were not interested in such political agitations. They argued that since the "agitating minority" were Hindu Bengalis, Muslims throughout India and all other communities outside Bengal were against these demands. They even went to the extent of propagating that those who shed blood in the wars for the protection of the interests of both England and India were the "martial races" outside Bengal and that they were against the demands being raised by the "cowardly Bengali Hindus". Thus they did all what they could to turn the "martial races" and Muslims against the Congress.

Not only did they conduct propaganda of these sorts they also tried to obstruct in various ways the organized functioning of the Congress such as imposing ban on holding meetings in certain places, putting obstacles before travels and lodging facilities of the delegates attending conferences, and harassing those who were in the forefront of agitational and organizational activities. The congress had to face all these difficulties to function effectively.

However, none of these reduced the trust the congress leaders had in the British rule or the sympathy of those leaders who were taking active part in the British political life towards the congress. Besides Hume, there were many non-official Englishman who had taken part in the organizational activities of the Congress. Some of them had been even elected as president of the Congress. Charles Bradlaugh, a British M. P., had visited India and directly assisted the

political agitations of the Congress. Later he moved a bill in the House of Commons incorporating the demands raised by the Congress. The Congress, on its part, sent a delegation to England, which included, among Firozeshah Mehta, W. C. Banerji, Surendranath Banerji, R. N. Mudholkar and others, two Englishman, Hume and Elderly Norton.

The Government could not just ignore these agitations jointly conducted by the Congressmen in India and their English friends in England. When Bradlaugh introduced his bill in the House of Commons, the Government moved another bill in the House of Lords. Although the objects of the latter bill were stated to be the expanston of the representative character of the Central legislature and its rights and privileges, it was inadequate to serve the purpose, since the bill was really meant for “increasing the opportunities of the Government for acquainting itself with the wishes and feelings of a select section of upper class Indians”. Moreover, Lord Curzon, introducing the bill on behalf of the Government, categorically stated that “for the illiterate and voiceless millions who constituted the people of India, no system of representative government could be devised”.2

The demand of the Congress was the right of the people to elect the members of the legislature which was strongly supported by a section among the members in the Parliament. However, the 1892 Act rejected even the conception of election and introduced, instead, the system of nominating the members by the Governor-General, subject to the approval of the British Government.

The provision was to nominate six additional official members and 10 non-official members to the Central Legislative Council. This proportion of the newly nominated members was fixed in such a way as to ensure that the non-official members in the council did not constitute a majority in the Council.

The provision was to nominate four out of 10 non-official members on the recommendation of the provincial legislatures,

2. Tara Chand, Ibid p 564.
one on the recommendation of the Chembers of Commerce of Calcutta and the remaining five members at the Governor General’s discretion. In nominating members in the last category, representation to the Muslim and other communities was to be considered, thus adopting the principle of communal representation for the first time.

Not only the structure of the Central Legislative Council, but also the rights and privileges of the members, both accepted and denied, did not satisfy the Congress. Although members had the right to interpellate and to discuss the budget after its presentation in the House, they did not have the right to vote on the budget. It is needless to say that even if the right to vote to members was allowed, there was no question of defeating the Government in the House in which nominated members constituted a majority. As such, the denial of voting right to the members, as also the denial of the right to the people to elect non-official members revealed the real purpose of the Government. This revealed that the Government would not give the people’s representatives a place in the legislature, nor would it concede even the official members enjoying the confidence of the Government the right to vote in the House.

It was within a period of seven years of the formation of the Congress that a bill with such unsatisfactory provisions was passed in the British Parliament. And even for this, the Congress in India and its English friends, including members of Parliament, in England had to do hard work. And all of them were, without exception, people with unflinching loyalty to the British rule. In every conference or meeting, speeches were delivered and resolutions passed declaring loyalty to the British royal family and government. Despite all these, the British government rejected even the moderate demands raised through legitimate means by an organization led by these “out and out loyalists”.

Naturally, a thought arose among some congressmen as to whether it was not advisable in the prevailing circumstances to give up the path so far pursued and to adopt other means
of struggle. This thinking, in fact, led to the emergence of a new (radical) leadership against the (moderate) leadership in the Congress of the earlier days. We shall return to the emergence and growth of this new leadership later. Presently we shall only examine the nature of the change that came about in the relationship between the new landlord-bourgeois classes which gave birth to the Congress, and the British rulers.

As pointed out earlier, a section of the trading bourgeoisie in India had gradually transformed themselves into industrial capitalists, after the British capitalists who first came as traders consolidated their power and entered the sphere of industrial production in a limited way in India.

It was the clash between these forces that was basic to the critiques of Indian political economy by Naoroji, Ranade and Dutt and the agitations based on these critiques. Basic to the demand raised by the Congress for elected people’s representatives and for an administration under their control was the desire to have a government to realize the hopes and aspirations of the Indian bourgeoisie which was developing gradually.

This contradiction between the British and Indian bourgeoisie was, however, getting intensified day by day. For, under the firmly rooted British rule, capitalism was developing and the major share of this development was that of the British and a small portion, of the Indain capitalists. This situation led, on the one side, to the intensification of the dissatisfaction among the Indian capitalists and, on the other, to the growth of self-confidence that they would be in a position to exert pressure on the rulers through organized agitation. Thus, the Congress was waging a battle for the needs of a class which had emerged with growing dissatisfaction, on the one side, and with developing self-confidence, on the other.

Monopoly capitalism emerged on a global basis during the closing years of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. As an inevitable consequence of this, the contradictions between the dominant monopoly capitalists and other sections of capitalists intensified, resulting in fierce
conflicts between them. As a matter of fact, it was as a part of this development that contradictions arose between the ruling British bourgeoisie and the Indian bourgeoisie which was aspiring for power.

By the closing years of the 19th century, Indian capitalists had attained a considerably strong position in the cotton textile industry. They had even gone ahead of the British in this industry by the year 1898. (Out of the capital invested in this industry, two thirds belonged to India, and the remaining one-third to the British.) But, in the jute, woollen, paper, sugar, tea, coffee and indigo sectors, three-fourths of the capital was British owned. Indians lagged behind not only in the matter of ownership of the capital and in the management, but also in the number of highly skilled technical hands like engineers. The Indian capitalists naturally desired to develop overcoming these weaknesses.

The contradictions between the British and Indian capitalists were getting intensified in the background of the situation in which the people of India as a whole were being subjected to exploitation and misery under the British rule.

In all other countries, one of the natural consequences of the development of capitalism was a reduction in the number of workers engaged in agriculture and other related spheres and an increase in the number of workers employed in industry and mining. What happened in India was the opposite. The percentage of those employed in industries and other related establishments decreased from 16 in 1881 to 15 in 1901. On the other hand, the percentage of those engaged in the agricultural and other related sectors increased to 74 from 75 during the same period. In other words, without economic progress and modernization which should have resulted from development of capitalism, India became a victim of increasing misery arising out of it.

William Digby, a British economist, was one who had fully sympathized with the national aspirations of the people of India. In the estimation of the national income of India. William Digby ranks next only to Dadabhoy Naoroji.
According to his estimate, India’s national income during the early years of the 20th century was 392.4 million pound sterling. Of this, 50 million pounds were appropriated by the princes, Zamindars and other feudal lords. Bankers and mofussil moneylenders and rich traders, numbering only 75,000, appropriated 75 million pounds. An equal amount went into the hands of 750,000 small and medium size traders.

Thus, while an amount as high as 200 million pound sterling passed into the hands of a minority consisting of feudal lords and traders, a large majority of the common people received only 190 million pounds.

Digby’s estimate revealed that while the contradiction between the Indian and British bourgeoisie were intensifying, the contradiction between the feudal-bourgeois classes and the masses of people had also become a factor which could not be ignored. This latter contradiction was, in a sense, a part of the former. This was because, as pointed out earlier, following the suppression of the revolt of 1857-59, the British rulers had deliberately pursued a policy of appeasing the feudal lords. As a result of this policy, not only the princes and the big landlords, but even the moneylenders and wholesale traders intensified their exploitation of the people and it was as an inevitable result of this that recurrent famines broke out in various regions of the country during the closing years of the 19th century.

Out of the 49 years from 1860 to 1908, 20 were famine years. Many of these famines resulted in large-scale starvation deaths. The toll of famine deaths was five million in 1876-77, 4.5 million in 1896-97 and 1.25 million in the year 1899-1900. The famines tell the story of the cruel feudal exploitation.

The famines and other forms of miseries of the people were issues highlighted by the Congress in the anti-British agitation. In the annual conferences of the Congress as well as in the local conferences, attention was focussed on these issues in the speeches delivered and resolutions passed. Relief operations were organized in the famine stricken areas by social workers. As part of the activities connected with such
issues, Congressmen also carried on propaganda severely criticizing the policies of the government. That was why the Congress was able to turn itself as an organization rallying the common people—first the poor middle class and gradually the workers and peasants—behind the Indian bourgeoisie which was fighting against the British bourgeoisie to protect its own class interest.

III. HINDU REVIVALISM: THE UGLY FACE OF NATIONALISM

In the previous sections we have referred to the various movements in India developed with the objects of liberating the country from the British rule and leading the society on modern bourgeois lines. We have seen that the common factor underlying all these movements was the modern bourgeois political development and that the Indian National Congress was the logical extension of this development.

Another movement, distinct from them though it may appear, but playing an active role in the development of bourgeois nationalism, also emerged in the same period. This was the movement for the revival of ancient Indian culture and religious beliefs, the traces of which could be found in the movement of social reforms and cultural renaissance led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. It may be recalled that Ram Mohan Roy who took the initiative in modernizing Hindu society, its customs and practices, strongly opposed the propagation of Christianity and the evangelical mission of the priests. In the process of modernization visualized by him, he incorporated elements of the ancient Hindu culture. Thus the movements for social reform and cultural renaissance like the Brahma Samaj of Bengal and the Prarthana Samaj of Maharashtra emerged as movements of Hindu revivalism, although they put emphasis on modernization.

Some of the other movements like the one led by Jyotiba Phule of Maharashtra were, as we have already noticed,
based on the slogan of upliftment of the backward castes, including the untouchables. The aim of these movements was to raise socially and culturally the communities oppressed under the caste system which was an integral part of the Hindu social system, by purveying them the wealth of the ancient Indian culture. For them, cultural renaissance and Hindu revivalism were merged together. (The most manifest form of this movement in Kerala was the movement started by Sri Narayana by establishing temples and monasteries exclusively for the non-caste Hindus.)

Simultaneously, attempts were also being made to revive the ancient Hindu culture independently of the movements for modernizing the Hindu society. Typical examples of such movements were those started by Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in Bengal, the Arya Samaj movement of Dayanand Saraswati in Punjab, and the Theosophical Society of South India (this movement was formed in other regions of India also, but it was not as popular there as it was in the South). These movements, however, contributed indirectly to the growth of bourgeois nationalist movement.

Following the suppression of the revolt of 1857-59, a general feeling had developed among Indians that the administrative and socio-cultural systems of the British were superior to the Indian social system and culture. The attempts made by the bourgeois social reformers and political leaders, from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to the founders of the Indian National Congress, were to end this condition and to modernize Indian society and establish a political-administrative system which could be on a par with the British system.

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society, on the other hand, tried to create a feeling among the people that there was no basis at all for their inferiority complex. The basic approach of Swami Vivekananda, Dayanand Saraswati, Madame Blavatsky and other leaders who initiated the Hindu revivalist movements, was based on their claim that an advanced civilization existed in India when the ancestors of the present
British rulers were living like savages. They also claimed that although some distortions and deviations affected the culture for some time subsequently, the people of India could revive and re-enliven that ancient Hindu culture by overcoming the ill-effects of the distortions and deviations. They asserted further that if the people of India strove to carry out this process of revival, they could challenge and end the Western domination. Of all these movements, the one started by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was the most prominent. Brought up in an orthodox atmosphere, he reached the Dakshineswar temple wherefrom he conducted his early activities as the priest of the temple. Soon his name spread as a man of peace who would solve the problems of his devotees through sacrifice. In short, he was a devout person and an idealist untouched by even a tinge of bourgeois social reform, cultural renaissance or urge for national independence.

Nevertheless, even under this idealism and spiritualism Sri Ramakrishna’s preachings and deeds did provide a fertile soil for the growth of modern bourgeois nationalism. For, although born and brought up in an atmosphere of absolute orthodoxy, his teachings and practices contained elements which were distasteful to orthodox Hindu culture. His spiritual teachings and practices surmounted religious and caste distinctions. He tried to convert people into devotees of Kali and Shiva, whether they be Brahmins or non-Brahmins, Muslims or Christians. In fact, he became the priest of the temple of Kali, challenging the then existing communal practices and customs. Later, he also tried to adjust himself with Muslims and Christians by studying their scriptures and practices.

Thus, he built a new spiritual movement which, although devoid of modernism, stood above the caste distinction, religious superstitions and prejudices which were considered as black spots in the fabric of the Hindu society.

Even the new generation of the bourgeois intellectuals working with the aim of modernizing the society and holding
modern outlook which was distinctly different from that of Ramakrishna, were attracted towards him. Lawyers, doctors, professors, high officials in government service and such others became the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Many scholars engaged in a comparative study of the philosophy of Hinduism and of ancient Greece and modern Europe designed to establish the superiority of Indian culture and civilisation found Ramakrishna’s spiritual teachings and practice of meditation attractive. The eminent leader of social reform and cultural renaissance in Bengal, Keshab Chandra Sen, was one among such scholars.

One of the young disciples of Ramakrishna who rose to eminence and fame was Narendranath Dutt. He was attracted towards Sri Ramakrishna at a time when he (Narendra Dutt) was seeking some means to overcome certain family problems after the completion of higher education. He soon became a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and after the demise of his master, became the foremost amongst the founders of an order of Sanyasins pledged to propagate the message of teachings of Sri Ramakrishna throughout the world. As the leader of the order of Sanyasins, he adopted the name of Swami Vivekananda and it was in this name that he, later on, became famous.

The tours Vivekananda conducted to propagate the message of Sri Ramakrishna throughout India and abroad were ostensibly a movement for the propagation of Hindu religion. But in effect, it turned out to be a movement for the resurgence of India’s soul which was being trampled upon by foreign rulers and for challenging their culture. The address he delivered at the world religious convention held in Chicago and the appreciation it received from the intellectuals of the Western world helped Indians to overcome their sense of inferiority. It also helped to bring into conscience the feeling that the Indian people were inheritors of a cultural legacy capable of challenging the foreign overlords dominating them.

Like those of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda’s discourses
were also concerned ostensibly with spiritual matters. He tried to interpret and propagate the ideology of Vedanta. But, unlike Ramakrishna, Vivekananda in his discourses and correspondence made observations, even overtly to some extent, that were helpful to the development of modern bourgeois nationalist movement. He even made statements which were apparently against the religious establishment and priests. For instance, as disclosed by one of his disciples, Vivekananda once stated that when poverty and misery were rampant in the country, it was not the time to give religious speeches. “After these were abolished he would give religious discourses.” He also expressed at times the views that the poor, the destitute and the weak were the real gods, and that priests should be kicked out. The urge for national independence could be discerned throughout his discourses.

The Arya samaj which emerged in Punjab under the leadership of Dayanand Saraswati was in many respects different from the movement that developed under the leadership of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. The Arya samaj was formed as a movement which directly came into clash with Islam and Christianity. Lectures and other literature published under the auspices of the Arya Samaj openly criticized and condemned Islam and Christianity. It was the Arya Samaj that raised the issue of banning cow slaughter which later on led to Hindu-Muslim riots. Books like the Satyarthta Prakash written by Dayanand Saraswati, which created religious prejudices leading to communal clashes were of the same nature as the anti-Hindu books published by foreign missionaries. Nevertheless, there was much in common between the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement and the Arya Samaj. Both the movements were proud of the heritage of the ancient Hindu civilization. In that sense, both the movements showed the tendency to keep away from the non-Hindus in India, instead of building unity with them. This approach helped only to isolate the non-Hindus from the struggle against foreign domination, to the same proportion as it helped to attract Hindu masses to anti-British
struggle by creating the feeling that national independence meant the revival of ancient Hindu culture.

The Theosophical Society was a movement which did not manifest such a defect. The reason for this was that it did not develop into a long-standing all-India movement as did the other two movements. This relatively short-lived movement remained confined to South India. This movement attained popularity and eminence only at the close of the First World War when one of the eminent leaders of the movement, Dr (Mrs) Annie Besant, organized the Home Rule Movement against the British rule. And at that time it was a movement striving to organize all sections of the Indian people on the basis of a single political slogan above religious considerations.

The move for Hindu revivalism in India was, however, not confined to these three movements. In fact, the Hindu revivalist movement acquired, in the beginning, the position of a movement integral to the left-wing nationalism that emerged following the formation of Indian National Congress. The ‘extremist’ section of the Congress led by leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the secret revolutionary organizations which were formed in various parts of the country were all linked with the Hindu revivalist movement. The Ganesha festival organized by Tilak, the Durga Pooja and Kali Pooja organized by the revolutionaries of Bengal, and the Ayyappa Seva Sangh of Kerala and various other organizations formed in line with them were the products of the Hindu revivalism developed under the bourgeois nationalist movement. And the ideology behind these organizations was the intellectual creations of Hindu intelligentsia, like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee who raised the slogan of Bande Mataram in accordance with the concept of Bharat Mata (Mother India). In this ideology can be seen the eagerness to attain independence with the blessings of the goddess Devi, the “annihilator of the enemy”.

It may be stated that the urge for Hindu revivalism represented the inherent weakness of bourgeois nationalism
that had attained maturity with the emergence of the Indian National Congress. For, the movement had to take into account the religious sentiments of the Hindus who formed a majority of the population, if it wanted to become popular among the masses beyond the limited circle of educated elites. It had to conduct campaign in a style and language corresponding to these sentiments and, for that purpose, had to create symbols and epics. So they had to devise such agitational programmes as would rouse the people against the foreign rulers, on the one hand, as was the case with the Ganeshotsav and Sivaji Utsav organized by Tilak, and against other sections of the people like the Muslims and others, on the other.

There was another side of the coin. When a Hindu revivalist movement is organized as part of nationalism, it is but natural that a counter-movement of Islamic revivalism should emerge. When these two revivalist movements came into a clash with each other, the contradictions between the higher and lower castes within the Hindu society would come out, with the latter along with other religious minorities like the Sikhs and Christians, building their own characteristic revivalist movements. The British rulers naturally tried to intensify and utilize these contradictions among the various sections of the people to cause the disintegration of the national movement.

This was what really happened. Needless to say that 15th August 1947 represented the final act of the tragic drama which resulted from it.

IV. THE BEGINNINGS OF ISLAMIC POLITICS

We have already noticed that the Muslims as a community played a more active role than the Hindus as a rule, in the 1857-59 uprisings and which led ultimately to the emergence of the Indian National Congress. They had generally kept themselves aloof from the ‘extremist’ and mass movements
that had taken place in the course of the growth of the Congress. Except for a few individual Muslims, it was the Hindus who provided the leadership and the ranks to these movements.

Besides, it was the Muslim elites who lent their support to the British rulers when the latter unleashed repression against the extremist and mass movements, on the plea that the development of these forces posed a "danger". And the Muslim masses, on the other hand, could not participate in the anti-imperialist movement because of this stance of the elites.

When the British established their domination over India, it was the Muslim Emperor of Delhi and the Nawabs under him that lost the ruling power. As such, a feeling grew up among the Muslims, irrespective of their social position, that the British usurped power in India, dethroning the Muslim rulers who were in power for a few centuries. The anti-British feelings that developed as a consequence led to several local revolts culminating in the revolt of 1857-59.

There is also another factor which deserves special mention in this context. In a number of countries to the west of India the rulers were Muslims. The majority of the population of those countries was also Muslim. Of these, Turkey was ruled by the Khalif who was the revered leader of the entire Islamic world. The British and the other imperialist powers of the Western world were waging aggressive wars against these Islamic countries, including Turkey, and were forcibly occupying them.

Britain was growing as an imperialist power, having her sway over a vast area embracing Turkey, Egypt, the Arab countries, Iran and northern Africa. France, Russia and other capitalist powers were also growing in a similar way. Consequently, indignation of the Muslims was rising against the Western imperialist powers in general and against Britain in particular. This was what motivated the Muslims to actively participate in the various anti-British revolts, including the revolt of 1857-59. This also made the Muslims
desist from sending their children to modern educational institutions established by the British. Thus, while the richer sections of other communities were striving to modernize their social life through modern education, adopting the mode of life of the educated and entering the field of bourgeois financial enterprises, the richer sections of the Muslim community kept themselves aloof from such efforts. Their children continued to carry on their education in the traditional Madrassas. The life style and outlook of the richer sections were also those of the old feudal society. And the community did not provide social reformers and leaders like Ram Mohan Roy, Ranade and Naoroji.

In short, no social reform and cultural renaissance movements were built up by the Muslim community. Nor did they develop modern politico-economic thoughts as products of such social and cultural movements. The Muslim community in general, with the exception of a handful of individuals, had kept itself aloof from the organizations formed in various regions before the formation of the Indian National Congress and even from the Congress after it was formed.

There were, of course, a few individuals among Muslims who came to realize that such an attitude was dangerous. These individuals were aware of the strength of Britain and other imperialist powers, as also of the circumstance that led to their acquiring this strength. They also realized that it would be disastrous to repeat the revolts of the type that took place in 1857-59. They were convinced that they could advance as a community only if their children were provided with opportunities for acquiring modern education and adopted other means for bringing about modernization. Clashes occurred frequently between them and those who wanted to live the life as before.

Syed Ahmed Khan was one of the eminent leaders who took position in the progressive camp and fought against the orthodox sections. Like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others, Syed Ahmed Khan also stood for social reforms and cultural
renaissance. He was well-known for introducing modernization in the Muslim community and the resultant renaissance. His contributions in the field of education in particular are significant.

The Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental School, started in 1874, was upgraded to a college in 1878. This institution was later developed into the present Aligarh Muslim University which played a very important role in the modernization of the Muslim community. The teachers as well as the young generation Muslims who got education in that University were capable of shining not only in the field of education but also in different aspects of the social and political life. These efforts, which later came to be known as the "Aligarh Movement" helped to bring about a transformation in the Muslim community, in the same way the diverse movements ranging from Brahma Samaj to the Indian National Congress brought about transformation in India as a whole. Thus this educational institution came to be the centre of social reform and cultural renaissance movements of the Muslim community.

Ahmed Khan’s view and outlook were distinctly different from those of his contemporary Muslim scholars and the other leaders of the Muslim community. Even in matters relating to religion, his views and those of the Ulema came to clash with each other. His interpretation of Islamic religious ideas and theories was not relished by the Ulema and other orthodox sections among the community. He gave vent to his opinion, as opposed to the view held by other leaders of his own community, that the Sultan of Turkey had no rights as the Khalif.

Though Syed Ahmed Khan started his activities holding modern religious views, experience taught him that if he held fast to these views he might alienate the common people of his community. Consequently, he confined himself to activities in the field of education. He knew quite well that the transformations in the field of education would inevitably exert an influence in all the other fields and that the Aligarh
Movement would develop into a manifold movement for social reform.

Ahmed Khan also tried to bring about a fundamental change in the political outlook of the Muslim elites. The revolt of 1857-59 had made him think deeply about it, as it did the leaders of other communities. But unlike many other leaders, the revolt and the vindictive measures taken by the government did not disappoint him. He, in fact, concentrated his attention on the lessons one had to draw from the revolt and the subsequent events.

Syed Ahmed Khan considered it essential to bring about a fundamental change in their relationship with the British rulers by ending the confrontation and establishing a relation based on cooperation. He was convinced that only by cooperating with the British authorities could the community make progress. He tried to make the community accept this view and in this he was successful to some extent.

Ahmed Khan developed his political approach with the perspective of establishing a relationship of cooperation with the non-Muslim communities too. In a book he wrote analyzing the causes of the 1857-59 revolts, he criticized the policy of the British authorities of keeping Indians—both Muslim and non-Muslim—from higher official positions. Thus he made it clear that the political slogan raised by the leaders of the non-Muslim communities before the formation of the Indian National Congress was the slogan of the Muslim community as well.

Similarly, he laid emphasis on the importance of Hindu-Muslim unity in many of his famous speeches. For instance, in a speech delivered at Patna on 27th January, 1883 he told his audience that the terms Hindu and Muslim only indicated religion. All residents of India, whether they be Hindus, Muslims or Christians, constituted a single nation. The days were gone when the inhabitants of a country were regarded as different nations on the basis of religion. Similar themes could be found expressed in his other speeches and writings.
But a change came over in the political attitude of Syed Ahmed Khan with the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. He thought that a minority community like the Muslims would be adversely affected if the administrative power was passed on to the elected representatives of the people of India as demanded by the Congress. Syed Ahmed Khan came to the conclusion that in order to avoid such an eventuality, it was necessary for the Muslims to organize independently and demand special status for them in the democratic set up demanded by the Congress. This showed that Syed Ahmed Khan began to go back from the position he had taken earlier as expressed in his speech cited above.

It was quite natural for the British rulers to adopt an attitude giving all encouragement to this idea of Muslim separatism. It was essential for them to curb at all costs the movement for independence and democracy that was emerging rapidly against their rule. And they cleverly utilized the contradictions and mutual suspicion between the Hindus and Muslims as an effective means to curb such a movement. For instance, Lord Dufferin, the then Governor-General of India, told a Muslim delegation: "Descended as you are from those who formerly occupied such a commanding position in India, you are exceptionally able to understand the responsibility attaching to those who rule."

The British took particular care to rouse the feelings of pride in the minds of the Muslim elites who considered themselves to be the descendants of the Emperor of Delhi and of the Nawabs, by making similar references both officially and unofficially. Britons of the Aligarh College which was the main centre of activities of Syed Ahmed Khan, too, consistently tried to rouse these feelings among the Muslims.

All these gradually conjured up in the minds of the educated sections of the Muslim community a feeling that a democratic administrative set up as demanded by the Congress posed a danger to them as a minority community and

that they must stand with the British to avoid such a situation. Needless to say, it was this feeling that subsequently led to the formation of the Muslim League and to the frequent clashes between the Congress and Muslim League which culminated in the division of the country into India and Pakistan.

It must be stated specifically that the bourgeois politicians belonging to the non-Muslim communities were equally responsible, as were the bourgeois politicians of the Muslim community and British rulers, for the development of such a situation. For, as indicated earlier, bourgeois politics of the Indian National Congress emerged and developed in close cooperation with Hindu revivalism. All the foremost bourgeois political leaders, including Tilak and Gandhi who were regarded as above religion and caste, used Hindu concepts and symbols for political propaganda. Though this was done with the good intention of attracting the attention of the common people, they tended to create the impression that what they meant by independence was the revival of ancient India with Hindu domination.

This naturally created misgivings in the minds of non-Hindus, as also among the non-caste sections of the Hindu community. Consequently, in order to secure their future position, the Muslims started organizing themselves independently, followed by Christians, Sikhs and the depressed and backward classes among the Hindus. And the British rulers cleverly utilized the differences and contradictions amongst these various sections to secure their own position. These were the factors that lay behind what later on developed into the ‘communal question’.

The bourgeois nationalists in general shut their eyes to this reality and tried to make it appear that the communal problem, which culminated in the division of the country into India and Pakistan, was the creation solely of the Muslim elites and the British rulers.