A CRITIQUE OF COLONIAL INDIA

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Sumit Sarkar

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INTRODUCTION

The articles included in the present volume were written between 1972 and 1981. "Rammohun Roy and the Breach with the Past" was presented at a Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Seminar in 1972 and published in V. C. Joshi, ed., *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India* (New Delhi, 1975). "The Complexities of Young Bengal", presented to the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences (Calcutta) in 1973, came out in *Nineteenth Century Studies* (October, 1973). "The Radicalism of Intellectuals" is being reprinted from *Calcutta Historical Review* (II, July-Dec. 1977). "Primitive Rebellion and Modern Nationalism" was presented to the Bhubaneswar session of the Indian National Congress (1977), and published in K. N. Panikkar (ed.), *National and Left Movements in India* (Vikas, 1980). "Logic of Gandhian Nationalism" and "Popular Movements, National Leadership and the Coming of Freedom with Partition, 1945-47" were persented at seminars in Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in 1976 and 1980. They are being reprinted from *Indian Historical Review* (III, July, 1976) and *Economic and Political Weekly* (Annual Number, 1982). The two other articles are being published here for the first time. "Some Reflections on the Pattern and Structure of Early Nationalist Activity" was prepared for the International Congress of Historians held at San Fransisco in August 1975; it could not be presented because the Government of India in the wake of the Emergency excluded some of us from the official delegation, an honour which I am happy to share with Irfan Habib. "The Women's Question" was a brief intervention at a UGC-sponsored seminar at Indraprastha College for Women (Delhi) in 1981.

Going through what one has written in the past is a salutary experience for an author : so much seems jejune and inadequate, so many ideas have been modified. Thorough-going revision however would have meant a new series of papers, some of them on themes far from my present research interests. I have therefore agreed, after much hesitation, to reprint those articles without change, bowing, only half convinced, to the argument of my friends running *Papyrus* that the papers might still be of some interest or use to students and general readers. I would like, however, to clarify briefly the context in which the articles were first written, and the kind of rethinking which makes many of them seem incomplete to me today.

The essays on the 19th century Bengali 'middle class' or 'bhadralok' cultural history (Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5) form part of a critique of the dominant historiographical model of a 'Bengal Renaissance', inferior no doubt to its Italian prototype, but still allegedly constituting a transition from medieval to modern in India under British rule roughly parallel to the classic break-through in Western Europe. Within the same framework, efforts were often made to establish straight-line connections between particular aspects or movements of the past and present-day tendencies (e.g. the rationalism, international concerns and sympathy for the peasantry of Rammohun; the daring iconoclasm of Young Bengal; the reform attempts of Vidyasagar and the Brahmos; or, in an alternative version, the proto-nationalism of the Dharma Sabha or of later revivalist groups). Such historiographical traditions also generally assumed clear-cut divisions between reformers and revivalists, modernizers and defenders of tradition. Along with friends like Asok Sen, Barun De and Dipesh Chakrabarti, I had become deeply unhappy with such 'Whig' interpretations of the 19th century heritage, and tried to grope towards an alternative framework which would focus on complexities and contradictions, reject unilinear interpretations, and emphasize the decisive and specific logic of the colonial situation. This was seen as setting limits, distorting superficially 'modernist' aims and constituting an environment fundamentally different from the early modern European transition to bourgeois society and culture.

The context for the papers on the national movemnt (Nos. 3, 6, 7, 8) was set by the challenge posed by the Cambridge school focus on elite aspirations and/or factional squabbles to earlier ways of looking at the history of the freedom struggle. I felt, and still do feel, that the response to what was often considered to be a kind of neo-imperialist onslaught could not be a simple return to conventional nationalist (or at times even Marxist) approaches which were in their own way almost as 'elitist', looking at things from the top, in terms of mobilization by great leaders or patriotic ideologies. What was required, rather, was a move towards a 'history from below', which could reveal the relative autonomy of mass actions and the vital significance of the latter at crucial moments of historical development. In recent years, such modes of thinking and research have been carried much further, and made more self-aware, by the 'subaltern studies' trend.

But, as Ranajit Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* has brought home to us with all its provocative brilliance, the discovery of popular autonomy is only a first step towards the much more difficult but vital enterprise of seeking to explore popular consciousness. The intellectual history of the literati of the 19th century Bengal similarly requires for its real rejuvenation explorations of varied autonomous but inter-related labels of consciousness both 'elite' and 'popular' to use the convenient though question-begging labels. Above all, both areas of research demand major refinements of method, the development of fruitful dialogues between history and related disciplines like anthropology, the use (with discrimination and not just as a fashion) of new method of linguistic or semiological analysis of texts, as well as much more serious efforts to understand predominantly religious modes of thought and sensibility than have been common among historians of modern India to date. What is needed, in other words, is a break-through towards social history on the jenuine sense of that much abused word, in the context of the 19th century Bengali intelligentsia or of the national movement, without such a break there is an ever-present tendency to get sucked back into the whirlpools of ultimately sterile debates, in which efforts at reassessing Rammohun or Young Bengal, Vidyasagar or the Brahmos come to be grected or condemned as mere debunking exercises, and the history of nationalism degenerates into an endless spontaneity/leadership debate, Gandhi as great man versus Gandhi the great betrayer.

In my more recent work—an essay on the nature and conditions of subaltern militancy in Bengal between 1905-22 and published, last year, and a full-length analysis of the *Ramkrishna-kathamrita* as a historical text which is still in progress—I have been trying to move towards a break of this type. The essays included in this volume fall considerably short of such an ideal. Nor, do they amount to a 'Critique of Colonial India', a sub-title which has inadvertently crept in due to my unpardonable delay in suggesting an appropriate name for the volume. I can only hope that the articles will somehow endure the strain of republication wants and all.

I would like to thank Swapan Majumdar of Jadavpur University and Arijit Kumar of Papyrus for prodding me into publication and Subimal Lahiri for going through the proofs.

July 1985. Sumit Sarkar

CONTENTS

RAMMOHUN ROY AND THE BREAK WITH THE PAST

ON THE bi-centenary of his birth, the title of "Father of Modern India" bestowed on Rammohun by many might appear utterly sacrosanct; an exploration of the assumptions lying behind such a statement still seems not unrewarding. If this ascription of parentage is to mean anything more than a rather pompous and woolly way of showing respect, the implication surely is that something like a decisive breakthrough towards modernity took place in Rammohun's times and in large part through his thought and activities. In this paper it is proposed to investigate, in the first place, the precise extent and nature of this "break with the past". Secondly, the unanimity with which a very wide and varied spectrum of our intelligentsia—ranging from avowed admirers of British rule through liberal nationalists to convinced Marxists—has sought a kind of father-figure in Rammohun and a sense of identification with the "renaissance" inaugurated by him remains a historical fact of considerable importance. The second part of this paper will try to analyse some of the implications of this well-established historiographical tradition based on the concept of a break in a progressive direction in Bengal's development at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

For the sake of clarity it would be convenient to begin by stating in a very schematic and somewhat provocative manner the propositions the writer intends to try and establish in the course of this paper.

1. Rammohun's writings and activities do signify a kind of a break with the traditions inherited by his generation.

2. This break, however, was of a limited and deeply contradictory kind. It was achieved mainly on the intellectual plane and not at the level of basic social transformation; and the "renaissance" culture which Rammohun inaugurated inevitably remained confined within a Hindu-elitist and colonial (one might almost add comprador) framework.

3. What may be loosely described as the negative aspects of the break became increasingly prominent as the nineteenth century advanced.

The Bengal Renaissance from one point of view may be presented not as a "torch-race", as Nirad C. Chaudhuri once described it but as a story of retreat and decline. And perhaps a certain process of degeneration can be traced even in some of Rammohun's later writings.

4. The limitations and contradictions of Rammohun can be traced back ultimately to the basic nature of the British impact on Indian society. The conceptual framework required for the proper analysis of this impact is not the tradition—modernization dichotomy so much in vogue today in Western historical circles, but the study of colonialism as a distinct historical stage.[1]

5. With few exceptions, history-writing on Rammohun and on the entire Bengal Renaissance has remained prisoner to a kind of "false consciousness" bred by colonialism which needs to be analyzed and overcome, in the interests of both historical truth and contemporary progress.

I

It is generally agreed[2] that Rammohun's true originality and greatness lay in his attempt to synthesize Hindu, Islamic, and Western cultural traditions; the precise character of this "synthesis", however, has often been obscured by the flood of laudatory rhetoric. Synthesis with us has often meant either eclectic and indiscriminate combination, or a kind of mutual toleration of orthodoxies. H. H. Wilson in 1840 quoted the Brahman compilers of a code of Hindu laws under Warren Hastings as affirming "the equal merit of every form of religious worship;...God appointed to every tribe its own faith, and to every sect its own religion, that man might glorify him in diverse modes...."[3] Ramakrishna Paramhansa was saying very similar things a hundred years later, and both Mughal tolerance and early British non-interference were grounded upon a politic acceptance of the need for a coexistence of orthodoxies. Such attitudes seem very attractive when compared to early modern European religious wars, but they also have certain fairly obvious conservative implications.[4] It needs to be emphasized that "synthesis" with Rammohun—at least in the bulk of his writings—meant something very different; it implied discrimination and systematic choice, directed by the two standards of "reason" and "social comfort" which recur so often in his works. This is the true Baconian note, struck for instance in the famous letter to Lord Amherst in 1823. Here, as elsewhere, panegyrists and debunkers alike have tended to miss the real

point. The entire debate on the foundation of the Hindu College seems more than a little irrelevant, as the "conservatives" were also quite intensely interested in learning the language of the rulers on purely pragmatic grounds, and there is surely nothing "progressive" in English education per se. What remains remarkable is Rammohun's stress on "Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and other useful Sciences"[5] a bias totally and significantly lost in the ultimate Macaulay-style literary education introduced in 1835 mainly under the pressure of financial needs![6]

It would be quite unhistorical, however, to attribute Rammohun's rationalism entirely to a knowledge of progressive Western culture. His earliest extant work, *Tuhfat-ul Muwahhiddin* (c. 1803-1804), was written at a time when, on Digby's testimony, Rammohun's command over English was still imperfect;[7] yet this "Gift to Deists" was marked by a radicalism trenchant enough to embarrass many later admirers.[8] Here the criteria of reason and social comfort are used with devastating effect to establish the startling proposition that 'falsehood is common to all religions without distinction'.[9] Only three basic tenets—common to all faiths and hence "natural"—are retained: belief in a single Creator (proved by the argument from design), in the existence of the soul, and faith in an afterworld where rewards and punishments will be duly awarded—and even the two latter beliefs are found acceptable only on utilitarian grounds.[10] Everything else—belief in particular Divinities or "in a God qualified with human attributes as anger, mercy, hatred and love",[11] the faith in divinely-inspired prophets and miracles, salvation through "bathing in a river and worshipping a tree or being a monk and purchasing forgiveness of their crime from the high priests"[12] and the "hundreds of useless hardships and privations regarding eating and drinking, purity and impurity, auspiciousness and inauspiciousness"[13] is blown up with relentless logic, and shown to be invented by the self-interest of priests feeding on mass ignorance and slavishness to habit. Such beliefs and practices are condemned as both irrational and "detrimental to social life and sources of trouble and bewilderment to the people."[14] We have come perilously close, in fact, to the vanishing-point of religion, and the logic seems to have frightened even the later Rammohun himself. Prolific translator of his own works, he never brought out English or Bengali editions of the *Tuhfat*.

In Rammohun's later writings, too, the concepts of reason and social comfort or utility tend to crop up at crucial points in the argu-

ment. The illogicalities of the orthodox Christian doctrines of the Trinity and atonement through Christ are brilliantly exposed. The prefaces to the Upanishad translations and the *Brahma-Pauttalik Sambad*[15] ruthlessly analyze the irrationalities of contemporary Hindu image-worship, and religious reform is urged time and again for the sake of "political advantage and social comfort."[16] From 1815 onwards, Rammohun tried to anchor his monotheism on the Upanishads as interpreted by Sankara, yet there is never really any question of a simple return to the Vedanta tradition. Vedantic philosophy had been essentially elitist, preaching Mayabad and monism for the ascetic and intellectual while leaving religious practices and social customs utterly undisturbed at the level of everyday life. Rammohun's originality lay firstly in his deft avoidance of extreme monism. Mayabad in his hands gets reduced to the conventional idealist doctrines of dependence of matter on spirit and the creation of the world by God,[17] and the Vedantic revival is thus reconciled with a basically utilitarian and this-worldly approach to religion. Even more striking is Rammohun's scathing attack on the double-standard approach so very common in our religious and philosophical tradition—this is bluntly attributed to the self-interest of the Brahmans:

> Many learned Brahmans are perfectly aware of the absurdity of idolatry, and are well informed of the nature of the purer mode of divine worship. But as in the rites, ceremonies, and festivals of idolatry, they find the source of their comforts and fortune, they... advance and encourage it to the utmost of their power, by keeping the knowledge of their scriptures concealed from the rest of the people.[18]

The 'purer mode of divine worship' should be open to householder and ascetic alike.[19] The practical relevance of all this for social reform becomes clear through a reading of Rammohun's tracts on sati, where concremation with its shastric promises of heavenly bliss is proved inferior to ascetic widowhood which may lead to 'eternal beatitude' and 'absorption in Brahma'.[20] Mrityunjay Vidyalankar had anticipated this argument in 1817,[21] but the author of the *Vedanta Chandrika* obviously could not relate his humanitarian stand on a particularly gruesome abuse to a general philosophy. And surely only Rammohun in his generation could have written the deeply moving closing section of the *Second Conference* with its passionate repudia-

tion of the unequal treatment of women thus dependent and exposed to every misery, you feel for them no compassion, that might exempt them from being tied down and burnt to death !"[22]

In sheer intellectual power, Rammohun stands far above his contemporaries, and a comparison with Ramram Basu, for instance,[23] is utterly ludicrous. Yet certain limits and qualifications need to be emphasized.

In the first place, the uniqueness of Rammohun's rationalism cannot be taken as finally settled till much more is known than at present about the intellectual history of eighteenth-century India and particularly perhaps about its Islamic components. Brajendranath Seal found in the *Tuhfat* clear evidence of the influence of early Muslim rationalism (the Mutazalis of the 8th century and the Muwahhidin of the 12th);[24] what remains unexplored is the precise way in which this tradition was transmitted to the young Rammohun studying Persian and Arabic at Patna. A comparison of the *Tuhfat* with the *Dabistan-i Mazahib* of the mid-17th century—of which there does not exist as yet any adequate English translation—might prove quite illuminating. The "remarkably secular" character of much later Mughal historical writing[25] may be another significant pointer in this context. The Hindu intelligentsia of nineteenth-century Bengal (and may be Rammohun, too, to some extent, after he had mastered English) turned their backs entirely on such traces of secularism, rationalism, and non-conformity in pre-British Muslim-ruled India—and their historians have by and large faithfully echoed the assumption of a completely new beginning with the coming of English education. An uncritical use of the renaissance concept is seldom a helpful analytical tool.

As has been implied already, a certain retreat from the fairly consistent and militant rationalism of the *Tuhfat* is evident in Rammohun's later religious and social tracts.[26] The slide-back took place at both the levels of social practice and intellectual argument, and can be explained partly—though not perhaps entirely—by Rammohun's reform-from-within technique. In 1819, private meetings of the Atmiya Sabha had freely discussed and criticized "the absurdity of the prevailing rules respecting the intercourse of the several castes with each other...the restrictions on diet...(and) the necessity of an infant widow passing her life in a state of celibacy."[27] But Rammohun in his published writings and public life paraded his outward conformity to most caste rules (even to the extent of taking a Brahman cook with

him to England !), wore the sacred thread to the end of his days, limited his direct attack on caste to a single *Vajra-suchi* transla ion, and, concentrating all his social reform energies on the single sati-issue, possibly even added to a slight extent to Vidyasagar's difficulties by hunting up all the texts glorifying ascetic widowhood. Such deviousness was perhaps not even tactically very wise, since the contradiction between theory and practice soon became the commonest orthodox charge against Rammohun, and one to which the reformer could only make the not-entirely satisfactory rejoinder that his critics were equally inconsistent.[28] On the conceptual level, the claims of reason are now balanced and increasingly limited by Upanishadic authority as well as by a conservative use of the social comfort criterion. Even in the *Tuhfat,* belief in the soul and in an after-life were accepted as socially advantageous although doubtfully rational In the Introduction to *Kenopanishad* (1823), we get the following key passage:

> When we look to the traditions of ancient nations, we often find them at variance with each other; and when...we appeal to reason as a surer guide, we soon find how incompetent it is, alone, to conduct us to the object of our pursuit...instead of facilitating our endeavours or clearing up our perplexities, it only serves to generate a universal doubt, incompatible with principles on which our comfort and happiness mainly depend. The best method perhaps is, neither to give ourselves up exclusively to the guidance of the one or the other; but by a proper use of the lights furnished by both, endeavour to improve our intellectual and moral faculties, relying on the goodness of the Almighty Power....[29]

Collet's biography quotes Sandford Arnot as stating that

> As he (Rammohun) advanced in age, he became more strongly impressed with the importance of religion to the welfare of society, and the pernicious effects of scepticism.... He often deplored the existence of a party which had sprung up in Calcutta...partly composed of Eas' Indians, partly of the Hindu youth, who, from education had learnt to reject their own faith without substituting any other. These he thought more debased than the most bigoted Hindu....[30]

In sharp contrast to the sense of rational discrimination which had been the keynote of the *Tuhfat,* the later Rammohun also reveals a

certain eclecticism, a desire to be all things to all people, so much so that in England both Unitarian and Evangelical Christians tried to claim him as their own. James Sutherland in 1830 described him "on questions of religious faith" as "in general too pliant, perhaps from his excessive fear of giving offence or wounding the feelings of anybody"[31]—a contrast indeed with the young man who had written the *Tuhfat*.

While the *Tuhfat* was soon almost forgotten, the religious writings and activities of the later Rammohun did leave a permanent legacy in the shape of the Brahmo Samaj. Yet it can be questioned whether Brahmoism was ever anything more than a rather unsatisfactory half-way house. It leaves an impression of incompleteness even when considered in purely intellectual terms as a modernist critique of orthodox Hinduism. While fire was concentrated from the beginning on image-worship, caste was not attacked with anything like the same zeal till the 1860s, and the fundamental belief in Karma—perhaps an even more formidable barrier to radical social change—seems to have escaped serious criticism.[32] More important is the fact that Brahmoism—in spite of the retreat from unadulterated rationalism begun by the later Rammohun and continued on a greatly enhanced scale by Debendranath and Keshabchandra—still remained far too intellectual and dry a creed to be ever successful as a popular religion. It failed to make any attempt to link up with the popular lower-caste monotheistic cults which seem to have been fairly numerous in 18th century Bengal, particularly in the Nadia-Murshidabad region.[33] Rammohun did include a favourable reference to earlier monotheistic movements in his *Humble Suggestions* (1823),[34] but he or his followers never followed up the hint. Here as in so many other things English education placed an impenetrable barrier between the 19th century and the immediate pre-British past, which perhaps had contained certain healthy non-conformist elements along with much that was undoubtedly utterly ossified. In a conversation with Alexander Duff, Rammohun once made an interesting comparison between contemporary India and Reformation Europe;[35] we have only to pursue this optimistic analogy a little further to see how it breaks down at particularly every point. The Protestant Reformation had united the intellectual polemics of men like Erasmus with the less sophisticated but much more virile tradition of late medieval popular heresy. The Catholic hierarchy in 16th century Europe represented a highly organised and very often

partly foreign system of exploitation, a kind of nodal point around which all the tensions of contemporary society had accumulated. Brahman oppression of lower castes, while far less systematic, was and is a reality; but it was hardly the most crucial problem for an Indian then being rapidly exposed to the full blast of colonial exploitation. Above all, the Reformation had succeeded not because its theology was intrinsically superior, but due to its linkage with a host of other factors—incipient nationalism directed against the Papacy, the princely drive to establish territorial sovereignty, the greed for church lands, the bourgeois quest for hegemony over civil society—all conspicuously and inevitably absent in colonial Bengal. To expect a European-style Reformation in such a context reveals a rather pathetic kind of false consciousness.

The negative, alienating, aspects of the English education which Rammohun and his generation so ardently welcomed are of course fairly obvious today. In fairness to Rammohun, certain qualifications should be made here. The traditional Sanskrit or Persian-educated literati were also utterly alienated from the masses; the 1823 letter pleaded for Western scientific values, and not necessarily for English as the medium of instruction; and there were elements of a kind of mass approach in Rammohun's pioneer translations of the shastras into the vernacular, his promotion of Bengali journalism, and the efforts by Atmiya Sabha members and Hindu College students to bring out Bengali versions of English scientific and literary texts.[36] The seventh issue of the *Sambad Kaumudi* contained "An Address to the Hindoo Community, demonstrating the necessity of having their children instructed in the principles of the Grammar of their own language, previous to imposing upon the Study of Foreign Languages"[37] and in 1833 the students of Rammohun's Anglo-Hindu school started the Sarbatattva-deepika Sabha pledged to the use of Bengali alone.[38] Yet the general attitude of our intelligentsia towards Western culture and particularly the English language contrasts oddly with that displayed, for instance, by Sultan Mahmud II of the Ottoman Empire in an address to medical students in 1838: "You will study scientific medicine in French...my purpose in having you taught French is not to educate you in the French language; it is to teach you scientific medicine and little by little to take it into our language...."[39] In intellect and general culture Rammohun and other stalwarts of our renaissance were certainly far superior to this not-

particularly enlightened Sultan; but colonial subjection often puts blinkers on and distorts the greatest of minds.

If the culture of the Bengal Renaissance was highly elitist in character, it soon became also overwhelmingly and increasingly alienated from the Islamic heritage. Rammohun himself had been deeply rooted at first in the composite upper-class Persian culture of the eighteenth century, as both the *Tuhfat* and the *Mirat-ul-Ukhbar* bear witness. Explaining Rammohun's exclusion from the committee which founded the Hindu College, Hyde East stated that the Orthodox Hindus "particularly disliked (and this I believe is at the bottom of the resentment) his associating himself so much as he does with Mussulmans...being continually surrounded by them, and suspected to partake meals with them."[40] In 1826 Adam reports him as about to commence a life of Muhammad[41]—an interesting project which never materialized. A long 'historical' footnote to the *Ancient Rights of Females* (1822) blamed Rajput "tyranny and oppression" almost as much as Muslim misrule for the degeneration of India from a supposed golden age in which Brahmans and Kshatriyas had balanced each other.[42] Yet already in Rammohun there are also strong traces of that concept of Muslim tyranny—and of British rule as a deliverance from it and hence fundamentally acceptable—which soon became a central assumption of virtually every section of our intelligentsia, conservative, reformist, and radical alike. In the Appeal to the King in Council against the 1823 Press Regulation, it is stated that "under their former Muhammadan Rulers, the natives of this country enjoyed every political privilege in common with Mussulmans, being eligible to the highest offices in the state". But "their property was often plundered, their religion insulted, and their blood wantonly shed", till "Divine Providence at last, in its abundant mercy, stirred up the English nation to break the yoke of those tyrants and to receive the oppressed Natives of Bengal under its protection."[43] The basic theme, without Rammohun's qualifications, crop up throughout the nineteenth century at the most unexpected of places: in the Derozian Maheshchandra Deb condemning the seclusion of women in Hindu society before the Society for Acquisition of General Knowledge[44] and in the rationalist Akshaykumar Dutt adversely comparing Muslim with British rule,[45] just as much as in Bankimchandra. An analysis of the ramifications of this concept, which research today is incidentally rapidly demolishing as in any way a just appraisal of the late Mughal India, surely would

be the most interesting and most neglected of themes. British historiography[46] certainly played a crucial role here, and with the rapid disappearance of knowledge of Persian, our Westernized intelligentsia became entirely dependant on it for knowledge of their immediate past. This is perhaps one 'contribution of British Orientalism' to the Bengal Renaissance which merits more attention than it has received in the past.

Consideration of Rammohun's attitude to British rule leads naturally to a discussion of his political and economic ideas. Two rather tentative suggestions may be made in this connection. In the first place, it is just possible that the pattern of retreat fairly evident in Rammohun's religious and social thought has its counterpart also in his political ideas. The *Autobiographical Letter* contains a tantalizingly brief reference to Rammohun's early travels being animated by "a feeling of great aversion to the establishment of the British power in India",[47] and a Bangladesh historian has recently speculated on the possibility of some connections with anti-British zamindar and even peasant groups in Rangpur.[48] The evidence here is admittedly still very scanty; certainly the Rammohun who is so much more familiar to us all somehow managed to combine an impressive interest in and sympathy for liberal and nationalist movements in England, France, Naples, Spain, Ireland and even Latin America with a fundamental acceptance of foreign political and economic domination over his own country. Within this basic framework, Rammohun did blaze the trail, of course, for several generations of moderate constitutionalist agitation, focussing on demands like Indianization of services, trial by jury, separation of powers, freedom of the press, and consulutations with Indian landlords, merchants, and officials on legislative matters. His critique of the zamindari system and plea for an absolute ban on "any further increase of rent on any pretence whatsoever"[49] strikes a sympathetic chord in progressive hearts even today. Yet here too perhaps a tendency towards growing moderation and a kind of centrism may be traced. The *Bengal Herald*—of which Rammohun was a principal proprietor—on 9 May 1829 announced as its objective an opposition "*equally* to anarchy, as to despotism",[50] and by 1832 Rammohun was paying the price for this centrism in the shape of an attack from two fronts. His evidence before the Commons Select Committee was denounced as unduly harsh on zamindars by the Dharma Sabha organ *Samachar Chandrika*;[51] much more surprising—and little-known—is the

whole series of articles in the *Bengal Hurkaru*,[52] violently attacking the reformer for being too soft in his critique of Company maladministration and far too tactful on the question of zamindari oppression of the peasants. "How could Rammohun Roy in these replies", it asks, "*forget* the Seventh Regulation of 1799...the very plague-spot of our administration?" Rammohun

> went to England as a 'voice from India' to tell the wrongs, and the sufferings, and to assert the rights of her children, we find...in these papers a mere Zamindar.[53]

The *Bengal Hurkaru* also attacked Rammohun for not being unqualified enough in his support for English colonization in India, and the newspaper was edited by James Sutherland, an ex-associate of James Silk Buckingham of *Calcutta Journal* fame. This brings us to the second point: the need to analyse, in great depth than has been usual so far,[54] the close links between British free-traders—the carriers, very often, of Utilitarian ideas—and men like Rammohun or Dwarkanath who combined zamindari with money-lending and business enterprise.[55] With both groups, enthusiastic acceptance of the basic British connection was combined with a more or less sharp critique of many aspects of Company administration and economic policy. Rammohun and Dwarkanath took a very prominent part in the Town Hall meeting organized by free-traders in December 1829 which petitioned Parliament "to throw open the China and India trade, and to remove the restrictions against the settlement of Europeans in India"; they improved the occasion by a full-throated defence of indigo planters.[56] The *India Gazette* of 2 July 1829, incidentally, had published a letter from an indigo-planter attacking zamindari oppression of peasants and demanding rent-reductions—to which a zamindar had replied four days later with a catalogue of mis-deeds associated with indigo.[57] In a speech in 1836, Dwarkanath declared that twenty years ago the Company had treated all natives as servants, but things had changed vastly for the inhabitants of Calcutta thanks to the British free-traders; he proceeded to repay that debt by joining in the protest against a 'black act' which had sought to curtail the right of European settlers in the mufassil to appeal to the Supreme Court against decisions of district tribunals.[58]

In a very interesting article on the 'Prospect of Bengal' published by the *Bengal Herald* of 13 June 1829, an English writer tried to

teach his "Native friends" a few lessons in comparative social history. The growth of a "middling class" had brought about the English Revolution of the 17th century, while Spain and Poland still remained backward and miserable due to the absence of such a development. In Bengal after 1813, 'the lesser restrictions on commerce and greater introduction of Europeans' had vastly enhanced the value of land, and

> by means of this territorial value, a class of society has sprung into existence, that were (sic) before unknown; these are placed between the aristocracy and the poor, and are daily forming a most influential class.

The inflow of English manufacturers from "Liverpool, Glasgow, etc." was extremely welcome, since sooner or later "a reciprocity of trade must take place...if England expects that India will prove a large mart for her produce, she must remove the restrictive, almost prohibitory duties on Asiatic produce...."[59] The Rammohun-Dwarkanath section of our intelligentsia seems to have swallowed in toto this free-trader logic, and visualized a kind of dependent but still real bourgeois development in Bengal in close collaboration with British merchants and entrepreneurs. The utter absurdity of this illusion is very obvious today. A single Dwarkanath did not herald a bourgeois spring and the years from 1813 to 1833—coinciding almost exactly with the most active period of Rammohun's public life—saw the number of houses paying *chaukidari* tax in Dacca go down from 21,361 to 10,708.[60] The catastrophic decline in cotton handricrafts threw at least a million out of jobs in Bengal[61] in "a revolution...hardly to be paralleled in the history of commerce."[62] The founding-father of our Renaissance remained utterly silent about such developments.

Within the next generation, the Bengali 'middle class' was rapidly squeezed out of even comparador-type business activities, and left dependent on the professions, services, and land—almost entirely divorced, in other words, from productive functions, since thanks to the Permanent Settlement rent-receipts flowed in with a minimum of entrepreneurial effort. Bourgeois-liberal values remained bereft of material content. In Rabindranath's *Gora*—the best literary summation perhaps of the cultural world of 'renaissance' Bengal—none of the characters seem to have to work for a living; the contrast, say, with Dickens, where 'work plays an essential part in the characters' approach to life[63] is illuminating.

II

Rammohun's achievements as a modernizer were thus both limited and extremely ambivalent. What is involved in this estimate is not really his personal stature, which was certainly quite outstanding; the limitations were basically those of his times—which marked the beginning of a transition, indeed, from pre-capitalist society, but in the direction, not of full-blooded bourgeois modernity, but of a weak and distorted caricature of the same which was all that colonial subjection permitted.

This is emphatically not the conventionally accepted view of Rammohun or of the renaissance he inaugurated, and yet it will be obvious that this interpretation has been entirely based on published and fairly well-known material and has not involved any original research. That being so, a brief analysis of the assumptions underlying the established historiorgraphical tradition seems called for.

From the Dharma Sabha down to R. C. Majumdar and David Kopf Rammohun of course has had numerous critics and debunkers, but instead of exposing his real contradictions and limits, this criticism has in the main either picked on utterly irrelevant and trivial issues like the alleged Muslim mistress or the illegitimate Rajaram, or concentrated on trying to disprove Rammohun's claim to priority in such things as English education, campaign against sati, or monotheism—accepting by implication therefore their presumably revolutionary nature. The early attacks were clearly motivated solely by the desire to preserve the social and religious *status quo*. Attempts have been made occasionally to find proto-nationalists among the Dharma Sabha men,[64] but even at the height of the anti-sati agitation, the *Samachar Chandrika* declared:

> None of our countrymen feel a pleasure in hearing any thing to the disadvantage of the Honorable Company; they always pray for the welfare of the Government....We have been subject to no distress under the government of the Company; it is only the abolition of Suttees which has given us disquietude....[65]

If Rammohun was closely allied with British free-trader liberals, no less intimate were the links between *Samachar Chandrika* and *John Bull*, the Tory defender of Company interests founded by the Reverend James Bryce.[66]

Round about the turn of the century, Hindu revivalism did strike

a rather temporary alliance with extremist nationalism and this led sometimes to an interesting revaluation of Rammohun. While still clinging to the father-image, the highly revisionist Brahmo Bipin Chandra Pal argued that English education had little or nothing to do with Rammohun's achievements; he went on to present the latter as almost the first of the Hindu revivalists, who rightly rejected Western rationalism and instead tried to balance reason with shastric authority.[67]

That denigration or revaluation of Rammohun from the Hindu orthodox or revivalist angle has been motivated by a desire to validate a defence of the social *status quo* is fairly obvious; what requires closer analysis perhaps are the premises of the "progressive" hero-worship tradition particularly—though not exclusively—associated in the Bengal with Brahmoism. Several strands can be distinguished here. Full-throated admiration for Rammohun and the entire Bengal Renaissance had been connected occasionally with avowedly pro-British views. Jadunath Sarkar provided a classic instance of this, with his well-known purple passage at the end of the Dacca University *History of Bengal* (1948) on Plassey as

> the beginning...of a glorious dawn, the like of which the history of the world has not seen elsewhere...truly a Renaissance, wider, deeper, and more revolutionary than that of Europe after the fall of Constantinople....

J. K. Majumdar, who edited three invaluable volumes of documents on Rammohun, also published in 1937 a collection of *Speeches and Documents on British Rule, 1821-1918* marked by a quite remarkably sycophantic principle of selection—Gandhi figures in it for example only as the recruiting-sergeant of 1918. Such attitudes, of course, had become relatively rare after the development of nationalism, but liberal partriots remained warm admirers of Rammohun as the pioneer of social reform and constitutionalist agitation.

The Marxist approach has been somewhat more ambivalent. From Rabindra Gupta (Bhowani Sen) in the Ranadive period to recent Naxalite iconoclasm, it has certainly included occasional violent attacks on the renaissance of the intellectuals, coupled with glorification of instances of popular or peasant resistance to British rule. By and large, however, writings of this type have been mainly on the agitational or journalistic level, and have confined themselves to liberally distributing labels like "bourgeois" or "feudal" without going into the trouble of

detailed critical analysis. More serious Marxist history-writing, with some justice, has tended to dismiss such attempts as too immature and sectarian, but its own selective emphasis on certain "progressive" aspects (thus, in the case of Rammohun, instances of rationalism, internationalism, and sympathy for the peasantry are high-lighted while the pro-British stance is mentioned only in an under-tone) perhaps could do with a closer scrutiny. In certain periods in the history of the Left in India, this bid to link up with worthwhile elements of the nineteenth century cultural heritage surely had considerable immediate justification. The very influential *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance* (1946), for instance, was written at a time when the Communists were just breaking out of the isolation from the nationalist mainstream produced by the events of 1942, and when, in the words of its introduction, "disintegration threaten(ed) every aspect of our life"—the aftermath of famine and the shadow of the coming Partition of Bengal.[68] The *Notes* explicitly denied to itself the status of a full Marxist analysis; the same historian later offered a much more critical estimate of the Bengal Renaissance in a review of Nirad C. Chaudhuri's *Autobiography* (1952) and by implication in an article on the Mutiny (1957), as well as a more rigorous analytical scheme in an article on Rabindranath (1961) interpreting Bengal Renaissance culture in terms of a conflict between two trends, "Westernist" or "modernist", and "traditionalist".[69]

The Marxist historian's preference for the 'Westernist' trend[70] is understandable, but the sense of discrimination shown in the article just referred to, should, be carried one step further. An unqualified equation of the "westernizers"—among whom Rammohun must surely rank as the first and perhaps the greatest—with modernism or progress almost inevitably leads on to a more positive assessment of British rule, English education, and the nineteenth-century panegyrists of both then is either warranted by the facts or is in conformity with the general Marxist assessment of colonialism. Marx did refer in an 1853 article to the "regenerating" role of British rule in India, but he immediately went on to emphasize that "the Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British bourgeoisie" till the workers seize power in Britain or "till the Hindus themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether,"[71] and his few stray remarks on the benefits of the free press or Western education should be compared with

the tremendous enthusiasm and even excultation with which he followed the events of 1857.

The key concept needing more precise definition in this context, is "modernization". Western historians of under-developed countries have become terribly fond nowadays of the "tradition"-"modernization" polarity, under cover of which the grosser facts of imperialist political and economic exploitation are very often quietly tucked away in a corner. In the post-1917 world, modernization clearly involves a choice between the capitalist and the socialist paths of development; what is not so obvious is that even in the nineteenth century, when the bourgeois West seemingly offered the one model for progress, the precise pattern of "learning from the West" had varied considerably, and that a principal determinant here had been the degree of political independence an under-developed country had been able to retain. In countries which escaped political conquest either completely or for a fairly long period—Japan, of course, but also to a much more limited extent Ottoman Turkey and Egypt under Muhammad Ali—the pattern of modernist change was significantly different from that witnessed in British India. The interests of political survival in a Western-dominated world compelled the indigenous rulers to try to imitate Europe first of all in the fields of army and administration, then of economic life—the whole approach was far more pragmatic. The intellectuals learnt less of Shakespeare and Mill and very much more of modern technology and science—and from the very beginning attempts were made to assimilate the latter into the language of the country. Such a pattern, it is tempting to speculate, might have emerged in our country too, if, say, Tipu Sultan had somehow survived or the 1857 revolt been successful; there is no real reason to think that this would have been an unmitigated disaster.

A second kind of pattern can be traced in nineteenth century Russian history, where Westernizing reform from the top starting with Peter ultimately produced an intelligentsia of quite a remarkable kind. Attempts have been made to draw an analogy between the Westerner-Slavophil debate and the conflict of trends in nineteenth century Bengal;[72] the differences are really far more significant. What was absent in India was first, the intellectual's agonized sense of alienation from the masses, culminating in the "going to the people" movement; and second, the remarkable jump to one or other form of socialist ideology, by-passing conventional bourgeois liberalism. The "advan-

tages of backwardness" which Trotsky discerned in Russian history manifested themselves also in China, where, after the dismal failure of the Japanese style "self-strengthening" movement, national renovation came under the leadership of a man who seems to have made the leap straight from classical Confucian learning to Marxism. And perhaps the most telling object-lesson of all comes, in this as in so many other things today, from embattled Vietnam, which passed under full colonial control only in the 1880s, and where only thirty years —and no break at all in the tradition of resistance—separated the 1885 Scholars' Revolt from Ho Chi-Minh's embracing of Marxism in Paris.

In India, full-scale colonial rule lasted the longest, and there was ample time for the growth of dependent vested interests, the elaboration of hegemonic infra-structure producing "voluntary" consent side by side with more direct politico-military domination. The English-educated intelligentsia in its origins was very much a part of this system, nowhere more so than in Bengal; that it later turned to nationalist and even sometimes Marxian ways did not automatically imply that the old presuppositions had been entirely and consciously overcome. A critical re-examination of the Bengal Renaissance, of its limits and contradictions and hidden assumptions, has therefore an importance far transcending the purely academic.

THE COMPLEXITIES OF YOUNG BENGAL

NO GROUP in the history of our 'renaissance' aroused more controversy in its own time than Young Bengal, and opinions about the pupils of Derozio have remained polarized ever since the *Oriental Magazine* made snide remarks about their habit of "cutting their way through ham and beef, and wading to liberalism through tumblers of beer"[1] and Kishorichand Mitra compared his elder brother's generation to the summit of Kanchenjunga, the first to catch the dawn.[2] As often happens in such debates however, the discussion has crystallized into stereotypes which for all their opposition still share some features in common. We all tend to assume that the Derozians were a more-or-less unified group—of anarchical and alienated iconoclasts or heroic radicals, according to personal, social and political taste—sharply distinct from their contemporaries, and not changing very much over time. Though references are occasionally made to some of them becoming more moderate with the years, this has never been fully worked out, and the impression persists of a "generation without fathers and children",[3] worthy of remembrance only because of a single flash of youthful rebellion in the 1830s.

Unlike the Decembrists of Russia, however, the Derozians did not perish in Siberian exile, but lived, most of them, to an active and highly respectable old age; and in other respects, too, it is the contention of the present essay that the current assumptions are somewhat oversimplified. I think this can be shown, as I am trying to do here, even on the basis of existing published data, but it is good to remember the wide but not necessarily inevitable gaps that still exist in our knowledge of Young Bengal. Apart from the Society for Acquisition of General Knowledge (SAGK) *Proceedings* and the *Bengal Spectator* files made easily available recently by Gautam Chattopadhyay and Benoy Ghosh, the really first-hand materials about the Derozians (as distinct from later biographies) exist today only

in the stray extracts from the *Enquirer* and other notices in the *India Gazette, Bengal Hurkaru* and a few other journals, and the *Samachar Darpan* quotations from the *Jnananvesana* collected by Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay. Diligent research may yet unearth the files of these and other Derozian journals, and one hopes that the primary sources used, usually with tantalizing brevity, by Sibnath Sastri in his *Ramtanu Lahiri o tatkalin Bangasamaj*[4] are not lost for all time.

Considerations of incomplete data apart, both the 'conservative' and the 'progressive' interpretations of Young Bengal, and, perhaps of the entire Bengal 'renaissance' suffer from the habit of attempting over-facile straight-line connections and identifications between the past and the present. Inevitable to some extent and even worthwhile at times, such identifications become dangerous if they lead us to ignore the concrete context in which ideas superficially similar to our own or attractive to us today had to operate in the past. That the Derozians thrilled to the ideals of European radicalism is no doubt exciting and interesting news; the more important historical problem surely is the limited and inevitably distorted applicability of such ideas by an intelligentsia reared in a colonial environment and as yet largely identified with it. Perhaps we have all been somewhat guilty of a Whig interpretation of our 19th century heritage.

The present essay seeks to test the validity of the current assumptions about the Derozians in the context, first, of the intellectual and material environment of Young Bengal, and second, of the available data concerning Derozian thought.

II

The unity of Young Bengal as a distinct group has been derived usually from the unique influence of Derozio. Perhaps some oversimplification may be suspected even at this preliminary level, for the Derozians in course of their fairly long lives came under many other—and not always homogeneous—influences. David Hare with his free-thinker reputation has been occasionally bracketed with Derozio,[5] but it is important to remember that Hare's relations with Radhakanta Deb remained extremely friendly throughout and that this well-established patron of Young Bengal did little to prevent the dismissal of Derozio from the Hindu College and of Krishnamohan Banerji and Rasikkrishna Mullick from his own Pataldanga School.[6] The conversion to Christianity of Maheshchandra Ghosh and Krishnamohan through the

efforts of Alexander Duff indicates the working of another, and this time quite sharply opposed, kind of influence. Derozio, it seems, some later stories of a death-bed recantation notwithstanding, had "died as he had lived, searching for truth",[7] and Duff according to his own testimony had concentrated all his efforts on persuading Krishnamohan and his friends to accept the Reformation as their model in place of "the terrible issue of French illumination and reform in the last century"[8]—to abandon, in other words, at least part of the legacy of the man contemptuously described by Duff's biographer as "a Eurasian of some ability and much conceit."[9] Then again, while some Derozians are well-known to have been quite critical of Brahmoism in the 1830s and '40s,[10] Tarachand Chakrabarti, their acknowledged leader in the days of the 'Chuckervarty Faction', had been close to Rammohun in the 1820s and became the first secretary of the Brahmo Sabha, and of course Ramtanu Lahiri and Sibchandra Deb became prominent members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj in their declining years. The Brahmos had changed greatly over time, but so perhaps had the pupils of Derozio, to the point of becoming, in a few cases, ardent believers in spiritualism and theosophy.[11]

The evidence regarding the specific content of Derozio's own teachings is also not entirely free from ambiguity, and for this we have to thank the Derozians themselves. None of them, not even the prolific Pearychand Mitra who could find the time to write a fairly sympathetic life of Ramkamal Sen, ever attempted a full-scale biography of their dead teacher. Such reticence, along with the establishment of David Hare as a father-figure through the annual Hare Memorial Lectures, perhaps indicates a search for respectability on the part of the Derozians from the 1840s onwards.[12] The standard biography by Edwards (written, incidentally soon after the Ilbert Bill furore) concerns itself mainly with Derozio's role as a Eurasian (Anglo-Indian) leader, revealing a bias interesting in its own way but somewhat irrelevant for our present purpose. The oft-quoted passage in Pearychand's *Biographical Sketch of David Hare* remains on the whole at the level of somewhat vague generalities : "He used to impress upon his pupils the sacred duty of thinking for themselves...to live and die for truth —to cultivate and practice all the virtues....He often read examples from ancient history of the love of justice, patriotism, philanthropy and self-abnegation....Some were impressed with the excellence of justice, some with the paramount importance of truth, some with

patriotism, some with philanthropy."[13] Relatively little of Derozio's prose writings have survived, but the lost essay on Kant had been warmly praised by the Principal of Bishop's College,[14] and the posthumously published translation from Maupertuis[15] reveals a remarkable interest about a mid-18th century philosopher whose reputation, ruined by Voltaire in his own lifetime, has been rehabilitated only in our present century.[16] From the famous April 1831 letter to Wilson, we learn that Derozio had introduced his students to the Philo-Cleanthes dialogue of Hume blowing up the argument from design, but had balanced it by the allegedly more convincing refutations of scepticism by Reid and Dugald Stewart. One hopes that here Derozio was being a bit diplomatic, for otherwise this preference would leave us with a rather poor impression of his philosophical insight.[17] As regards political ideas and activities, Edwards tells us that Derozio at first opposed the Anglo-Indian agitation of 1829-30 because many "descendants of European foreigners" were being kept away from it;[18] here we have a hint of Derozio's own relatively unprivileged position within the Eurasian community due to his Portuguese origin. He later became very active in that movement, however, and his wider political interests were revealed by the inclusion in a speech at a Eurasian meeting of favourable references to the Reform Bill as "but a preliminary step to the introduction of more important reforms."[19] Finally, the last article by Derozio (*East Indian*, 17 December 1831) made a memorable plea for Hindu-East Indian unity eloquently buttressed by a quotation from Burns.[20]

Two points seem to emerge from this rather chaotic and incomplete data as central to Derozio's teachings: an impulse towards free-thinking which among his pupils inevitably became directed against Hindu religious and social orthodoxy, and an emphasis upon integrity in thought and conduct. Perhaps Haramohan Chatterji's testimony may be taken as the fairest summary: "...the 'College boy' was a synonym for truth....The principles and practices of the Hindu religion were openly ridiculed and condemned....the sentiments of Hume had been widely diffused and warmly patronised...the question at a very large meeting was carried unanimously that Hindu women should be taught...."[21]

The Hindu tradition had always combined a very considerable degree of abstract intellectual freedom with insistence upon rigid social conformity and Rammohun and the early Brahmos on the whole main-

tained this dichotomy.[22] The really alarming thing about the Derozians of the early 1830s was therefore their open rejection of rituals and defiance of caste and religious taboos in the name of a new conception of integrity. Krishnamohan's *The Persecuted* (November 1831), written soon after he had been forced to leave his home following the beef-eating incident on the night of 23 August 1831, brings out this point very well. Mohadeb would have been quite satisfied with a purely formal penance by his son caught eating forbidden food: "I care not for the most dissolute life you may lead. But do preserve our caste."[23] But Banylal after some inner conflict refused to sacrifice 'the Truth' even for his aged father, and has to leave his house because of the campaign organized by the orthodox editor Lallchand, who himself then promptly takes brandy in secret with the remark: "Now Banylal! do with perfect freedom what has cost you so dear."[24] Another very interesting figure is Debnath the rich Hindu patron of Lallchand who at the same time urges his son to go to an English school: "Why do you shrink at the idea of dressing fashionably and being like a gentleman?... How happy would these young men have been if they had not learnt their absurdities about truth, if they had just refrained from publicly declaring themselves hostile to our religion..."[25]

With all its immaturities and exaggerations, Banylal's revolt has an element of grandeur about it, but it is interesting—and tragic—to see how quickly this image changes virtually into its opposite even in the writings of fairly sympathetic observers. In Michael Madhusudan's *Ekei ki bole sabhyata?* (1860), written by a man himself a bit of a Derozian in outlok and temperament if not in strict chronology, Nabakumar follows up a speech on women's emancipation with the call: "Gentlemen, in the name of freedom, let us enjoy ourselves."[26] The young men of the Jnanatarangini Sabha meet in their 'Liberty Hall' of a brothel, while their wives and sisters have to spend their time playing cards at home. The old dichotomy has come back perhaps in some ways at a grosser level. Even more revealing is Dinabandhu Mitra's *Sadhabar ekadasi* (1866) with its magnificent portrait-gallery of youths for whom Westernization has come to mean a smattering of English plus a maximum of wine, hypocritical advocates of temperance, lawyer, Vikrampur rustic trying to enter Calcutta society, a Brahmo deputy-magistrate appropriately named Kenaram—and, most memorable of all, Nimchand Dutt, the one person in the farce who is not a hypocrite or a fool but highly intelligent and steeped in the

culture both of Europe and of our own country (no wonder many suspected a connection with Madhusudan), but whose erudition has led only to complete cynicism and dissipation.

The transition from Banylal to Nabakumar and Nimchand, one is tempted to suggest, epitomizes the tragedy of Young Bengal, and the crucial problem for the historian surely is to analyze and explain this process of degeneration and withering away of the original radical impulse. *The Persecuted* gives us certain clues in this direction, with its preface fulsomely acknowledging "the great encouragement [the author] has received from the English community" and an appendix of 'Notes and Illustrations' revealing that the play was largely aimed at a white audience. Another interesting scene is that between Banylal and his servant; the latter tries to give him some advice, but is promptly abused by the hero as a "fool...you would not have been a servile servant otherwise."[27] Dependence on the foreign rulers and alienation from the masses were to remain for long the two cardinal limitations of our entire 'renaissance' intelligentsia.

For the young men taught by Derozio to look upon Western education in terms other than narrowly utilitarian and as a gateway to new values, the inevitable conflict of generations must have produced initially a deep sense of isolation, a feeling, in Nabakumar's words, that the whole country was for them an immense prison-house.[28] Prior to the switch over from Persian in the lawcourts and the virtual confinement of service jobs to the English-educated which came about in the late-1830s, and 1840s, opportunities for advancement were not too frequent, particularly for youths with an atheistic or anarchical reputation. Both the *Samachar Chandrika* and the *Sambad Purnachandroday* commented gleefully on the woes of the 'atheists' trying to eke out a livelihood as school-teachers or clerks at Rs. 16 per month, in sharp contrast to the highly successful men of the previous generation like Radhakanta Deb or Ramkamal Sen who had not allowed knowledge of English to shake their religious faith.[29] With the exception of Dakshinaranjan Mukherji, none among the prominent Derozians came from particularly well-established or rich families,[30] and a connection between their initial difficulties and their early radicalism is probably not too far-fetched.

The colonial structure, however, soon began providing several ladders of social and economic ascent for the Hindu College products, as well as ways of ending their sense of isolation. The missionaries

constituted one such refuge and the testimony of Krishnamohan cited by Duff is illuminating in this context : "I considered upon my lonely condition—cut off from men to whom I was bound by natural ties and thought that nothing but a determination on the subject of religion could give me peace and comfort."[31] On a more materialistic plane too, the poor Kulin boy could live last days on a very comfortable missionary pension and marry three of his daughters to Englishmen.[32] The price for all this, however had been the embracing of a faith surely at least as irrational as that he had abandoned, and one that his teacher had refused to accept even on his death bed.

A second, and much more commonly used, ladder was government service. The *Bentinck Papers* show Rasikkrishna Mullick describing his economic distress and social persecution, and Hare and Ryan urging the Governor-General to give 'honourable or appropriate employment' to English-educated Hindu youths.[33] Harachandra Ghosh was made Sadar Amin in Bankura in 1832, Rasikkrishna Mullick and Gobindacharandra Basak became deputy-collectors around 1837-1838, Chandrasekhar Deb, Sibchandra Deb and Kishorichand Mitra were appointed deputy-magistrates between 1843-1846,[34] and Radhanath Sikdar was earning Rs. 600 per month at the Surveyor-General's office by 1856.[35] The *Friend of India* of 13 February 1845 made the point brutally clear with its comment that the "exaggerated statements and inflammatory addresses" of the Chuckervarty Faction had already "died into an echo" and "a few Deputy-Magistracies, judiciously bestowed will doubtless prevent their revival."[36]

Derozian journals like the *Jnananvesana* repeatedly urged their readers to take to the path of independent trade, as distinct from acting as mutsuddies to British businessmen, investing in Company papers or taking up service or clerical jobs.[37] Pearychand Mitra and Ramgopal Ghosh did become fairly successful businessmen, and Tarachand Chakrabarti was also connected with trade for a brief while but it is important to consider how 'independent' or conducive to integrity this third ladder of advancement really could be in mid-19th century Bengal. Kalachand Seth and Company of 1839 (with which Pearychand and Tarachand had been associated) and Pearychand Mitra and Sons of 1855 were both engaged essentially in the export-import business, and R.C. Ghosh and Company traded in Arakan rice ;[38] their activities obviously fell far short of the Dwarkanath Tagore

level, and Bengali entrepreneurship of even this compradore type was being rapidly eliminated after the 1847 crash.

Certain tentative hypotheses about Derozian ideology suggest themselves from this brief survey of its intellectual and material setting. One would expect to find within it, first a greater variety at any given moment of time than has been usually assumed to be present; second, a process of toning down of political and perhaps also of social radicalism under the twin constraints of age and ascent to social respectability; and third, a progressive blurring of distinctions between the Derozians and other sections of the intelligentsia. In the third section of this paper I intend to try and test these hypotheses in the light of what is known about the specific content of Derozian thought.

III

Information about early Derozian attitudes towards religion is extremely scanty and comes mainly from hostile sources, but we do get the impression of an interesting though short-lived, atheistic phase all but unique in our nineteenth century intellectual history. The *Samachar Chandrika* referred to atheists and admirers of Charvak among Hindu College boys,[39] and repeatedly called for governmental intervention: non-interference in religious and social matters by the foreign rulers was evidently desirable only so long as it helped in the defence of the status quo.[40] Duff recalled in 1839 the alarm he had felt on first meeting the Hindu College boys: "Many had become, or were rapidly becoming, sceptics; and others direct atheists."[41] A visitor to the Hindu College, who asked students to write an essay on the highly respectable Anglican theologian Paley's system of ethics got more than he had bargained for when "one went directly to refute Paley, and establish the mortality of the soul and the futility of any hopes as to futurity."[42] The popularity of Tom paine's *Age of Reason* in Calcutta in the early 1830s has often been noted,[43] though the publication of a partial translation of it in the then strongly conservative *Sambad Prabhakar* indicates that it was being used also by orthodox Hindus in their polemics with Christian missionaries.[44] Krishnamohan, we are told, "became a professional atheist" after seeing the austerities imposed on his mother following his father's death,[45] and he went through a brief anti-Christian phase also, during which he and his friends went about the streets of Calcutta parodying missionary Bengali.[46] The *Jnanasindhu Taranga*, a philosophical journal brought out during 1832

by Rasikkrishna Mullick, has unfortunately disappeared;[47] if its files are ever re-discovered, more authentic and detailed information about this first phase of Derozianism might become available at last.

Nowhere was the Derozian retreat from their own early radicalism more evident however, than on the level of religion and philosophy. Duff noted that 'avowed atheism' was on the decline already by 1832,[48] and Krishnamohan in an essay on Hindu caste published in 1851 mentioned 'Deism' and 'Vedantism' as the only rival, to Christianity in the anti-orthodox camp:[49] evidently Philo's arguments against natural religion had been forgotten fairly quickly. Who the 'deists' might have been is not very clear; perhaps Krishnamohan is referring here to Derozians like Rasikkrishna Mullick and possibly many others who remained monotheists without becoming either Christians or Brahmos.[50] Derozians of this type became rather coy about their religious ideas after they had got over their youthful exuberance of the early 1830s, as can be seen from the strict exclusion of 'religious discussions of all kinds' from the purview of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge (1838).[51] Dakshinaranjan Mukherji, once the wildest of the Derozians and as such virtually ignored in Sibnath Sastri's *Ramtanu Lahiri,* was reported by Rajnaraian Basu to have settled down in Oudh like a good Hindu by the 1860s, and to have got his son married to an Ajodhya Brahmin's daughter.[52] With Pearychand Mitra, the retreat turns into a rout, for in his biography of Ramkamal Sen (the man who along with Radhakanta was mainly responsible for securing the dismissal of Derozio) written in 1880 he even stated that Ramkamal's kind of religion was far preferable to the irreligion of Young Bengal and the theories imbibed from Huxley, Spencer, Mill or Bradlaugh.[53]

The Derozians thus left little distinctive or permanent impression on the plane of religion and philosophy (even Deism was preached much more boldly by that highly unorthodox Brahmo Akshaykumar Dutt); it is time to consider now their ideas and activities in the field of social reform. Apart from a few broadsides on the question of caste,[54] the central issue here was the emancipation of women in all its facets: the need for education, the evils of child-marriage and Kulin polygamy, parental arrangement of marriages, the seclusion of women, and the ban on widow-remarriage. As Maheshchandra Deb reminded his SAGK audience in January 1839, all these were things that passed "under their eyes every day and hour of their existence

within the precincts of their own respective domiciles. Most of the Derozians must have been married in their teens at parental command and their new-fangled notions and habits no doubt often caused acute adjustment problems. The *Jnananvesana* pleaded eloquently for women's education and emancipation,[56] drew up lists of Kulin polygamists quite in the style of Vidyasagar,[57] and in October 1837 spoke of an abortive plan 'some 3-4 years back' of organizing a society for widow-remarriage.[58] The very first number of the *Bengal Spectator* (April 1842) carried a letter again anticipating Vidyasagar in its justification of widow-remarriage as both rational and in accordance with a proper interpretation of the shastras.[59] Derozians like Radhanath Sikdar actively supported Vidyasagar's great campaign, and they even went a step further by supporting registration of such marriages—the need for which to prevent abuses Vidyasagar realized only later on.[60]

Young Bengal's contributions to social reform are thus undoubted, yet several qualifications need to be made even here. There is first the very obvious fact that the Derozians were never able to organize anything like a real campaign on any social reform issue; for that Bengal had to wait for Vidyasagar. Second, the Derozians were by no means alone in this field even in the 1830s. Women's education within limits was advocated even by Radhakanta Deb, the 1837 *Jnananvesana* letter on widow-remarriage expected support from several English and at least one other, Indian-edited journal (Prasannakumar Tagore's *Reformer*), and the missionary daily *Samachar Darpan* actively campaigned for the empancipation of women.[61] Unexpected support came even from a traditional Pundit like Gourishankar Vidyabagish, who was closely associated with the *Jnananvesana* and later edited the *Sambad Bhaskar*. Social radicalism was no monopoly of the Hindu College student, as Vidyasagar was to prove within a few years.

In the third place, closer analysis reveals the Derozian stance on social reform to be less uniform than appears at first sight, and not entirely free from occasional traces of backsliding. In a paper presented to the SAGK in January 1842, Pearychand Mitra sharply criticized Krishnamohan Banerji for the latter's tendency to blame the Hindu shastras for all the current social ills of the country, and argued that the position of women had not been all that atrocious in ancient India.[62] Pearychand's series of lectures on *The State of Hindoostan under the Hindoos* (September 1839—August 1841) struck at times a positively revivalist note in its evocation of the 'grandeur and magni-

ficence' of ancient India with its republics and benevolent rajas limited *by the influence of* Brahmins, its idyllic unchanging village communities, *its fairly prosperous agriculture and flourishing external commerce.*[63] *A certain toning down in the demand for social reform followed almost inevitably, and we see Pearychand embarking on a cautious* defence of early marriages as justified by the climate of our country.[64] In an 1853 pamphlet written for the British Indian Association, Pearychand excluded widow-remarriage, child-marriage and interdining from the scope of the legislature.[65] The *Bengal Spectator* of July 1842, while strongly advocating widow-remarriage, expressed its distaste of the idea of appealing to the government for a law on the subject.[66]

The revivalist theme can certainly find considerable justification in terms of an incipient sense of national pride; what is depressing is that its edge was for a very long time directed mainly against the Muslims, not the British, and the Derozians prove no exception here. Maheshchandra Deb's *Sketch of the Condition of Hindoo Women* (January 1839) balanced its criticism of the Hindu shastras with the argument that "the cause of that state of seclusion and imprisonment in which the females of this land are preserved may be traced to the tyranny of the Mehomedan Emperors."[67] Pearychand in 1840 expressed the hope that "the ancient Hindu spirit of enterprise, which the storm of Moselm oppression has entirely extinguished. will now be kindled and burnt in the bosoms of the rising generation, who will...open sources of employment in the extensive field of commerce...."[68] His optimism here was as ill-founded as his history, as occasional reports in contemporary newspapers about facts like the decline of Dacca[69] or the rising curve of British cotton twist and cloth exports should have warned him.[70]

The virtually ubiquitous presence of the concept of Muslim tyranny (and of British rule as a deliverance from the same) is surely one of the most striking features of nineteenth century 'renaissance' thought, and the Derozian acceptance of these assumptions is a reminder that in certain crucial respects our 'radicals' were not all that different from the 'moderates' or even the 'conservatives'. Adam's *Report* notwithstanding, the *Jnananvesana* of 17 November 1838 asserted that primary education had been virtually non-existent as long as "the wretched oppressive Yavanas" had ruled the country.[71] Even the language here is reminiscent of the *Samachar Chandrika*, denouncing the

"haughtiness of these Yavanas" and expressing the hope that "Moosoolmans will be driven out" of public jobs once Persian is deprived of its court language status.[72] Udaychandra Addhya's SAGK paper pleading for the vernacular as medium of instruction has rightly earned much modern praise. The essay begins, however, with the statement that Bengali had become greatly debased during the centuries of Yavana rule, and cites as proof the contemporary neglect of the works of Kabikankan, Kashiram Das, Krittibas, and Bharatchandra[73]—conveniently forgetting the fact that every one of these poets had lived and worked under 'Muslim tyranny'. But most interesting of all—because directly political—is the way this theme suddenly cropped up in the famous clash between Dakshinaranjan and Principal Richardson at the SAGK meeting of 8 February 1843. Richardson tried to prevent the conversion of the Sanskrit College Hall into what he feared would be 'a den of treason' by reminding "the meeting of the security the natives now enjoyed, in comparison with the condition of their ancestors, under the Mahomedan Government." That the young speaker stood his ground, ably supported by the president of the meeting (Tarachand Chakrabarti), has often been recalled by us with pride, what is not always remembered is that Dakshinaranjan in his resumed speech promptly "admitted the superiority, with all its faults, of the Company's over the Mahomedan rule."[74]

Recent admirers of Young Bengal like Gautam Chattopadhyay have with considerable justice rejected as slanderous the fairly common description of the Derozians as a group of denationalized Anglicists. They have cited in this context facts like Udaychandra's plea for the mother-tongue, Rasikkrishna, Dakshinaranjan and Pearychand's critiques of the 1833 Charter Act and of the Company's police, judicial and revenue administration, as well as a few more extreme manifestations of anti-British temper—of which the most striking perhaps is Kailashchandra Dutt's imaginary account of an armed rebellion against "Lord Fell Butcher" in 1945.[75] As has happened elsewhere however admirers and critics alike seem to have played down the variety within Derozian thought and exaggerated its uniqueness.

Many Derozians were certainly not indifferent to their mother-tongue, and of course Pearychand Mitra and Radhanath Sikdar made a major contribution to its development through the *Alaler gharer dulal* and the *Mashik Patrika*. But the more dubious honour of starting effective public oratory in English also belongs to the Derozians (Rasikkrishna

Mullick and Ramgopal Ghosh the 'Indian Demosthenes'). Only 6 out of the 24 papers of the SAGK that have been preserved were in Bengali and the *Bengal Hurkaru* reports show that while speeches in Bengali were the rule at Landholders Society meetings, the British India Society worked entirely in English.[76] Despite Udaychandra Adhya and may be a few others,[77] in the Orientalist-Anglicist debate of the mid-1830s the 'third force' advocating the vernacular medium was represented much more by the Serampore missionaries and William Adam than by the Derozians as a group.[78] In March 1833, the *Jnananvesana* asserted that "nothing can be more desirable than the formation of a society for publishing scientific books in Bengalee";[79] a similar plea, however, had been made two years before by the *Reformer*.[80]

With few exceptions, Derozian political radicalism remained within the bounds set by Rammohun. Fairly sharp criticism of the Company's monopoly rights and administrative practices was combined with a basic loyalty to the British connection and close links could thus be preserved for a long time with non-official Anglo-Indian public opinion increasingly dominated by the free-trader—Utilitarian nexus.[81] Rasikkrishna's 1833 critique of the judicial and revenue administration attributed the evils to the fact that "a body of merchants has been placed over us as our sovereigns;" he evidently wanted more British magistrates in the districts, and not less, and after mildly criticising the Permanent Settlement, asserted "that the only way now to improve the condition of ryuts, is to effect a reformation in the organisation of Mofussil Courts...."[82] The SAGK papers generally steered clear of concrete political subjects, while on a more abstract plane Krishnamohan criticized absolute monarchy but still felt that "the ignorance and irregularity of the vulgar would call for the establishment of a nobility with certain peculiar rights."[83]

Instances of a bolder anti-colonial stance are not entirely lacking, though (as on the vernacular issue) the examples cited by Gautam Chattopadhyay are not always of indisputably Derozian origin.[84] It was after all the *Reformer* that was suspected of sedition by the *Calcutta Courier* in 1834, not the *Jnananvesana*.[85] But the *Hindu Pioneer* of Kailshchandra Dutt did publish a striking article in 1835 entitled 'India under foreigners', for once praising Muslim rule for having "patronised merit wherever it was to be found" and boldly asserting that 'the violent means by which foreign supremacy has been established, and the entire alienation of the people of the soil from any

share in the government, nay, even from all offices of trust and power, are circumstances which no commercial, no political benefits can authorise or justify.[86] At the inaugural meeting of the short-lived Deshahitaishini Sabha (October 1841), the Derozian Saradaprasad Ghosh bluntly declared that "our deprivation of the enjoyment of political liberty is the cause of our misery and degradation." He urged journalists "to write continually on political subjects, pointing out the evils of the Government", talked in terms of petitioning Parliament and ended on the following interesting note: "You do not, like the brave and noble minded American, aspire as high as to free yourself from the yoke of British sway...you only desire to be freed from the tyranny and oppression of the local government of this country."[87]

Discretion was fast proving the better part of valour, however, by the time the Bengal British India Society was being formed in April 1843 in the wake of George Thompson's weekly lectures and the furfore aroused by the *Friend of India* and the *Englishman* over the Richardson incident. At the first meeting of the new Society, Ramgopal Ghosh moved a resolution emphasising 'pure loyalty' and stated that "he desired nothing more sincerely than the perpetuity of the British sway in this country.[88] Another resolution, moved by Pearychand and Ramgopal, excluded students from membership,[89] and in December 1844 a Society memorial to Hardinge urged Principals to maintain strict moral discipline in their institutions[90]—a far cry indeed, all this, from the atmosphere of the early 1830s! It seems not at all unlikely that George Thompson was at least partly responsible for this evident toning down Thompson had reminded his audience in his weekly lectures that "England is the fountain head from which your benefits must flow"[91] and his speeches sometimes read almost like refutations of Saradaprasad Ghosh : "For the work of agitation and petitioning as carried on in England, you are not yet prepared....Sit down and draw out a statement of...evils. Let them be intelligently exhibited and convincingly illustrated....We then, who have access to the people and Parliament of England, thus assisted by you will be able in your own language to make known your wishes and your wants."[92] Perhaps the role of nineteenth century 'Indophile' Britishers of the type of Thompson needs some revaluation as a restraining quite as much as an inspiring influence on our intelligentsia.

With its sober monthly meetings (usually chaired by Englishmen : Thompson, followed by Theobold) and occasional respectful petitions

the British India Society hardly marked any advance in political technique over the Landholders' Society. Both the *Bengal Spectator* and the British India Society repeatedly pleaded for more administrative jobs for Indians, and the latter prepared a pamphlet comparing the number of offices held by Hindus under Muslim and British rule[93] --but Indianization of services was an intelligentsia demand as old as Rammohun. Ramgopal's famous speeches defending the Black Acts do mark a kind of a break (Dwarkanath and Prasannakumar had supported the Anglo-Indian campaign in 1836 against an earlier attempt to restrict white judicial privileges),[94] but once again the Derozian cannot make much claim to uniqueness. The whole attitude of our intelligentsia was shifting to a certain extent, and the alliance with non-official whites was fast breaking down (perhaps as an aftermath to the 1847 commercial crisis, plus the unpopularity provoked by missionary zeal which has been emphasized by Mehrotra). The changed situation was symbolized by the British Indian Association of 1851 which united the orthodox and the Derozians, the big landlords with the relatively parvenu intelligentsia—but kept the Anglo-Indians out. The limits of this change were revealed soon enough by the outburst of Mutiny loyalism, in which the Derozians fully shared, with Dakshinaranjan obtaining the dubious distinction of a confiscated Oudh taluk (given by Canning at Duff's advice, interestingly enough) and spending his last days doing much "to remove the racial antipathies between the English and the Indians."[95]

Where the British India Society can claim a certain uniqueness as compared to its zamindar predecessor is in its definite pro-peasant stance. As exposure material, the letters describing the woes of Miyazan in the *Bengal Spectator*[96] were soon to be surpassed by Akshaykumar Dutt's series in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*,[97] and the suggestion of a permanent settlement in rent-rates made by Pearychand in his 1846 *Calcutta Review* article[98] did not go beyond the Rammohun tradition. But the secretary of the British India Society was writing on the basis of a very interesting and detailed questionnaire on land relations circulated by his organization in July 1843 the replies to which (preserved in the pages of the *Bengal Hurkaru*) surely form important source-materials for agrarian history. In the case of the *Calcutta Review* article, however, a gap is noticeable between premises and conclusion which illustrates the limits of Derozian reformism. The answers to the questionnaire, though provided usually by individual local landholders

or zamindari nails, had still repeatedly stated that the zamindars were doing absolutely nothing either to improve cultivation methods or to promote education.[99] Pearychand in sharp contrast placed his main bet on the zamindar made benevolent by English education.[100] His views on the class nature of education are indeed engagingly frank: "The education of the Ryot and of the Zemindar ought to go hand in hand. The Vernacular schools are intended for the former, and English ones and Colleges are for the latter."[101] Equally revealing is the reference to peasant resistance : the ryots near the city, he says, "appear to have acquired many vices—they forge Kobojes, break their agreements with Indigo planters, evade payment of Khajana, and make *Dharma Ghut* or combine *en masse* not to pay rent to the Zemindar."[102] Pearychand ends with an appeal to the zamindar—"When the ryots are well-protected, they find it easier to pay your claims...your happiness and the happiness of your ryots, are identified with each other."[103]

The uncritical acceptance of the liberal assumption of natural identity of interests proved even more of an inhibiting force in the understanding of the basic economic relationship between Britain and India. The Derozians swallowed, hook, line and sinker, the free trader logic. They eagerly modelled themselves on George Thompson's London British India Society, which at its inaugural meeting (6 July 1839) had referred to India as "a country of vast extent and great fertility; whose inhabitants are docile, intelligent and industrious...a country capable of supplying many of our demands for tropical produce, and the desire and capacity of whose population to receive the manufactures, and thus stimulate the commerce of Great Britain, would under a just and enlightened rule, be incalculably developed."[104] The decline of Indian handricrafts passed unnoticed by the Derozians, just as with Rammohun. The biography of Ramkamal Sen quoted copiously from Wilson's letters denouncing the industrial devastation being caused by his countrymen in India,[105] but there is no evidence that Pearychand (or Ramkamal, for that matter) allowed such things to cloud his optimism about the British connection. The article on raw cotton written by Pearychand for the Agri-Horticultural Society looked upon that commodity purely in terms of its export possibilities—at a time when Indian mills had already started springing up in Bombay.[106] No doubt the author's own compradore activities were partly responsible for such blindness.

A sympathetic account of Young Bengal published in the *Calcutta Monthly Journal* of May 1837 described the Derozians as ardent free traders and young men among whom "the very word Tory was a sort of ignominy."[107] The basic tragedy of the Derozians lay precisely here, in their pathetic eagerness to affiliate themselves with the latest in bourgeois liberalism. In the continent of its birth, bourgeois liberalism in the nineteenth century was, within limits, definitely a progressive and even revolutionary force, but its finest ideals and categories had a tendency to turn into their opposites whenever attempts to apply them in the colonial content were made by foreign administrators (even when subjectively honest or benevolent) or indigenous intellectuals.[108] This was a process of inversion which was ultimately rooted in the basic fact that the very same historical forces that were bringing breath taking development to the West were producing underdevelopment in the colonial and semi-colonial world, till by 1900, in the words of a brilliant recent work on economic history, "India, 'the brightest jewel in the British Crown' was one of the poorest nations in the world."[109] The trouble lay not so much in imitation of the West as in the kind of West that was being imitated—socialism, too, was after all just as much alien and 'western' in nineteenth century Russia.

It may be argued, of course, and with considerable justice, that the Derozians had little choice in the matter. As a colonial intelligentsia, the British liberal model was virtually imposed upon them. They had far less opportunity or freedom to choose between alternative ideologies than their counterparts in Russia, and the English medium automatically tended to seal them off from the masses. Yet it is worth remembering that the England of the 1830s and 40s was as yet far from mid-Victorian stability; it was still the country of intense class struggle, the land, not just of the Benthamites, free traders, Brougham and Thompson, but also of Owen and the Chartists and brilliant literary exposures like *Hard Times*. Echoes of something of this other England did occasionally reach Calcutta through the Anglo-Indian press. The *India Gazette* of 5 July 1831 (with Derozio then on its editorial staff, and his pupils presumably among its avid readers) published a very remarkable letter violently attacking a pamphlet issued by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge entitled *The Results of Machinery Exhibited: an address to the working-men of the United Kingdom*. "The odious plague-spot of Whig perfidy is broad on the book", stated the correspondent, since the author was obviously "an advocate

for the people's submission to misery." The letter quoted approvingly from More's *Utopia*, and incidentally also denounced the Reform Bill as yet another proof of Whig selfishness and treachery. The *Bengal Hurkaru* occasionally published Chartist news, distorted via the *Times*.[110]

If the Derozians ignored such warnings and went on with their pale imitation of the Society for Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (deferentially substituting 'acquisition' for 'diffusion' in the title of their SAGK) they remained indifferent also to the world of popular anti-British struggles, momentarily unveiled for example in the letters on a Chuar campaign published in the *India Gazette* of January 1833. A British army officer is here complaining that "the folks in Calcutta believe we have but child's play, but they are sadly mistaken;"..."the regular troops are quite unfit for this irregular warfare", and though so many villages have been burnt, Ganganarayan is still holding out.[111] The only reference to such things in the SAGK *Proceedings* was made by Harachandra Ghosh. His description of the district of Bankura of which he had been the Sadar Amin ended on the following note: "...unless most active exertions are made by Government to elevate their character by establishing educational institutions, these people will ever remain in ignorance and would commit great mischief by their seditious disturbances which are constantly occurring.[112]

The contrast with the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia, with its leap to socialism as early as the 1840s and passionate striving for peasant revolution, is painfully evident. The valid Russian parallel to Young Bengal is in fact not Decembrism and certainly not Narodnism, but perhaps at best the 'small deeds' liberalism of the Zematvo gentry after the 1860s.[113] In concrete terms, Young Bengal produced (if temperamental affinity is taken to be more important than strict chronology) one supreme literary genius in Madhusudan; a number of honest and conscientious officials, providing some public benefits for their places of birth or residence (Sibchandra Deb who did a lot for Konnagar, Harachandra Ghosh, Rasikkrishna Mullick), but excluded from the levers of real power by the racialist colonial structure; an able librarian and prolific writer (Pearychand Mitra); a fine surveyor who discovered the highest peak in the world, only to find his priority questioned and the honour appropriated by his white boss Sir George Everest; some sincere and devoted teachers, like Ramtanu Lahiri; a couple of fairly successful second-ranking com-

pradore businessmen; and the prototype of the later moderate politician in Ramgopal Ghosh. Its impact on Bengali society as a whole, as distinct from its intelligentsia crust, was very nearly nil. A sad falling-off, surely, from the excitement and generous visions of the days of the Academic Association and the *Enquirer*, when the world had seemed to lie at the feet of these young pupils of Derozio, who had then fondly believed that "the rays that have emanated from the Hindu College...must eventually dissipate the mists of ignorance and superstition."[114]

In the absence of private papers, it is impossible to reconstruct today what the Derozians themselves felt about all this, to know whether they were ever haunted by regrets and a sense of unfulfilled hopes. But perhaps it will not be too farfetched to look upon the epidemic of drinking which blighted so many of their lives as not just a bad habit picked up from the West, but an indication sometimes of an inner agony of spirit. May be the best symbol of the tragedy of a generation has been provided for us by Dinabandhu Mitra, whose Nimchand greets the policeman's lantern with Milton's 'Hail, Holy light.'[115]

THE PATTERN AND STRUCTURE OF EARLY NATIONALIST ACTIVITY IN BENGAL

I INTRODUCTION

CONSIDERED IN general terms, the history of the Indian national movement reveals an interesting crests followed by troughs. Very obvious in the Gandhian era (e.g., the heightened tempo of 1919-22, 1930-34, 1942 and 1943-46, as contrasted to the years in between), the same pattern can be seen, though at progressively lower planes, if we glance back at the pre-First World War decades. Terrorism with its romantic appeal has occasionally somewhat concealed the post-Swadeshi slump, yet Aurobindo at least had no doubts in June 1909 that there had been a major retreat.[1] Again, though Extremist enthusiasts during the Swadeshi upsurge no doubt often condemned the political activities of all their predecessors as unadulterated 'mendicancy', there is surely a difference, at least in Bengal, between the years c 1867-1885, and the undoubtedly dull two decades immediately preceding the Partition of 1905.

Explanations of this advance—retreat pattern have so far tended to be of two kinds. Repression has often been taken to be the decisive factor, and certainly its importance cannot be denied in the early 1930s and '40s, as well as for the terrorist and left-leaning movements virtually throughout. But despite much talk of Swadeshi "martyro", it is very difficult to explain the collapse of the Bengal movement in 1908-09 by police terror alone,[2] while in the 1870s and '80s repression amounted to little more than the short-lived Vernacular Press Act, Surendranath's two-month imprisonment in 1883, and sporadic official attempts to discourage participation in the Congress.[3]

In a recent paper, Dr. Bipan Chandra has argued that the Indian nationalist leadership, whether Moderate, Extremist, or Gandhian, throughout followed "the basic strategy of pressure—compromise—

pressure leading to political advance that would be brought about through the actions of the duly constituted authorities." The perspective was always one of step by step advance, and not direct seizure of power; concessions were wrested from the British through "negotitations backed by controlled mass action", the great advantage of this method being that "the political activity of the masses were rigidly controlled from the top" and bourgeois hegemony safely maintained.[4] The periodic ebb-tides thus appear by implication a matter of conscious choice by a nationalist leadership which is on the point of attaining some formal or tacit concessions and which is afraid of mass action getting out of hand. Some may see in this a sophisticated version of R. P. Dutt's well-known betrayal thesis grounded upon the Bardoli decision of 1922 and the argument seems not unconvincing as an interpretation of the Gandhian era. I am not so sure, however, about the application to earlier decades of the three assumptions involved in Bipan Chandra's theory—conscious and effective control over the tempo of the movement, the attainment of real, though partial, concessions at the end of each round, and fear of popular extremism. The Morley-Minto reforms in their final shape hardly satisfied even the most Moderate of the Bengal politicians, the scuttling of Hume's mass contact drive of 1887-88 was not connected with any substantial concessions, and, prior to the Rowlatt Satyagraha explosion of 1919, the recurrent problem for the nationalist leadership seems to have been not excess of mass enthusiasm, but its relative absence.

Above all, repression can succeed, and a leadership can throttle the energies of its mass following, only if the movement as a whole suffers from certain structural inadequacies. The aim of this paper is to investigate, through two case-studies of Bengal in 1867-85 and 1903-08 the possible casual connections between the zig-zag pattern of nationalist activity and what I am calling the 'structure', of nationalism. I use the term 'structure' in a very broad sense to cover, not just the interplay of interest-groups so absorbing to Namierite historians, but the entire complex of objectives, techniques, socio-cultural ideals and values, organizational forms, communication media, and social composition which together make up the texture of a movement. The Swadeshi period will be discussed first, partly because it is easier from the midstream to trace the course of the rivulets making up the torrent, but also because it happens to have been my field of special study, and a secondary purpose of this essay is to test the relevance

of some of my general conclusions for an earlier period of nationalist history.

II 1903—1908

It is generally agreed that the years from the announcement of the Partition plan in 1903 to the Alipore Bomb Case in 1908 saw a significant attempt by Bengal nationalism to break out of what has been variously described as its 'elitist', 'bhadralok', 'Western-educated' or 'upper middle-class' confines and to attain the stature of a mass movement. That this attempt did not succeed is also evident enough, since what remained after 1908 were the two opposite but related poles of old-style 'mendicancy' and a 'revolutionary' movement betraying its elitist character both by its style of activity (individual terror, or at best ambitious schemes for military coups, never guerilla bases in the countryside or urban insurrections) and by its upper-caste social composition.[5]

In trying to explain this sequence of significant effort and ultimate failure, I attempted a four-fold classification of trends within the Swadeshi movement in terms of political objectives and methods.[6] I distinguished between (i) the 'Moderate' tradition, with piecemeal reform culminating at best in colonial self-government as its aim, 'agitation' to win over British public opinion through logically faultless exposures of the 'un-British' ways of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy as its method, and demanding little in the way of sustained mass work; (ii) 'Constructive Swadeshi', urging the necessity of autonomous self-help efforts (swadeshi enterprise, national schools, village organization) to end the alienation of the English-educated elite, often somewhat indifferent to active politics but aiming at slow but real national self-regeneration—the classic epitome of all this being Rabindranath's 'Atmasakti' concept; (iii) 'Political Extremism', with complete Swaraj or political independence as its theoretical ideal (though in practice Extremist leaders would often be satisfied with "half a loaf" as Tilak once put it),[7] 'extended boycott' or 'passive resistance' anticipating much of Gandhism as its basic technique, necessarily demanding for its success a high level of mass participation; and (iv) 'Terrorism', seeking immediate independence through methods of individual violence and military conspiracy, ardently revolutionary in subjective intent, highly elitist and hence not very effective in practice. Cutting across these trends were certain ideological debates concerning socio-cultural

values, which I tried to subsume under what I now consider to be the somewhat oversimplified and inadequate categories of 'modernism', on the one hand, and 'traditionalism' or 'revivalism' on the other.[8]

From the point of view of the development of nationalism into a mass movement, the potentially most fruitful path was the combination of (ii) and (iii), of village-level constructive work with passive resistance. As the recent grass-roots studies of Hitesranjan Sanyal have revealed, this was more or less the way in which the Gandhian movement was able to mobilize the countryside in the 1920s and 1930s in pockets like Tamluk and Contai subdivisions in Midnapur (under Birendranath Sasmal), Arambagh in Hooghly and parts of Bankura and Purulia.[9] In the Swadeshi period, too, there was the very interesting development of the 'samiti' movement, with its cadres of full-time volunteers numbering some 8500 by mid-1907, particularly formidable in the districts of Backergunj, Faridpur, Dacca and Mymensingh, and engaging in a wide variety of mass activity (and not merely or even predominantly elitist conspiracy) down to the summer or autumn of 1908.[10] Among other positive aspects might be mentioned a notable revival of village handicrafts,[11] efforts to organize national schools in East Bengal villages which badly frightened the authorities,[12] a labour movement under nationalist inspiration and guidance which set up short-lived trade unions among printers, railwaymen, and jute workers,[13] the development of popular vernacular journalism, and the exploration of numerous imaginative techniques of mass contact ('rakhi-bandhan' and 'arandhan', Swadeshi songs, plays, jatras, and festivals, etc.).[14]

Yet the limits are equally obvious. Muslim participation in the samitis was non-existent, except to some extent in the Anti-Circular Society with its Brahmo and determinedly non-communal leadership. Despite the earnest efforts of a group of Swadeshi Muslim leaders, Muslim separatism gained ground steadily, and there were communal riots in several East Bengal districts during 1906-07, with Muslim peasants raged against Hindu landlords and money-lenders.[15] From the very beginning, zamindari officials and Muslim vendors faced each other as accused and plaintiff in an ominously big proportion of Swadesho cases.[16] Even in Aswinkumar Dutt's Barisal the Dumartala village samiti of which some detailed information has been preserved had a priest as president, and two tahsilders, four unlicensed medical practitioners, the son of a zamindari official, a Barisal Settlement

office clerk, and some non-resident Calcutta students as members—not a single peasant.[17] In Amritalal Bose's *Sabas Bangali* a contemporary play giving a vivid description of the Swadeshi days, no peasant appears on the stage, and the movement in Pashdanga village remains clearly a matter of schoolboys led by their patriotic headmaster.[18] The volunteers in Mukunda Das's jatra *Palli-Seva* do not have to worry overmuch over their "rice and dal", as all have some land, and by implication men to till it for them.[19]

If the Hindu peasantry remained passive and their Muslim counterparts turned occasionally hostile, the responsibility at least in part lay no doubt with the Swadeshi leadership, which seems to have made little or no effort to develop an agrarian programme which could have integrated nationalist demands with the concrete socio-economic grievances and aspirations of the rural masses. The Indian Association had championed the raiyats in the debates leading to the 1885 Act, but its only reaction to the tenancy amendment bill of 1907 was to deplore unnecessary government intervention in landlord-tenant relations.[20] Asutosh Chaudhuri, who had created a sensation in 1904 by calling for self-help as opposed to mendicancy at the Burdwan Provincial Conference, denounced on the floor of the Bengal Legislative Council the provision for executive intervention in cases of illegal rent enhancement, arguing that "the tenant can surely get relief from a munshiff's court."[21] Even Rabindranath, whose post-1907 essays reveal a deep and agonizing awareness of the alienation between the educated elite and the masses, could in practice attempt or recommend little more than a benevolent village reconstruction efforts by Zamindars.[22] Surendranath's *Bengalee* welcomed rent-remissions at Tagore's Shelaidaha estate,[23] but it also supported rejection by the Muktagacha zamindars of a Muslim raiyat petition against an alleged 50% abwab, and saw in the whole affair an instance as to how Lieutenant-Governor Fuller "has demoralized the Mussalman ryots of Mymensingh."[24]

As surrogates for a peasant programme, the Swadeshi intelligentsia descended upon patriotic rhetoric, a mingling of politics with Hindu religiosity and revivalism, and the use of Zamindari and upper caste pressure, enforcing the boycott via the closure of village marts to foreign goods and the social ostracisement of recalcitrants.[25] The counter-productive nature of most of these methods is fairly obvious. Apart from Muslim alienation, there is some evidence also indicating

the aloofness and even hostility of subordinate rural Hindu castes. A Namasudra conference in March 1908 demanded "freedom of trade"[26] and the Mahishyas of Midnapur entered the national movement on a large scale only with Sasmal's Union Board agitation of 1921.[27] An aspect of Gandhism which found no-Swadeshi anticipation, incidentally, is Harijan (untouchable) upliftment.

Both the lack of an agrarian programme and the nature of the substitutes developed in its place were evidently connected with the social composition of the Swadeshi movement. The groups attracted by Swadeshi comprised educated youths, lawyers, teachers, journalists, doctors, zamindari officials, some (though by no means all) big landlords, as well as sections of the clerical staff of government offices, firms and a few industries.[28] Though a fairly heterogenous lot in many ways, a connection with land in the form usually of intermediate tenures was an almost ubiquitous element within this so-called 'middle-class' or 'bhadralok' social stratum. In Sarupkhati (Backergunj district), to give only one example out of many, "nearly half the volunteers are said to be talukdars, that is to say persons with a tenure, holding interest in the land."[29] Rising prices and the overcrowding of the professions may have made such tenure-holders more conscious of the value of their (often quite small) rent-incomes, thus inhibiting an agrarian programme even more than in the 1870s and '80s. To this must be added the alienation from productive functions, the contempt or at best condescension for manual labour, the Hindu gentry's superiority complex vis-a-vis their Muslim tenants or share-croppers —the whole complex of 'bhadralok' attitudes, in fact, flowing in part from caste traditions, but tremendously encouraged throughout the nineteenth century by a colonial society grounded upon the Parmanent Settlement, the destruction of productive opportunities in industry and trade, and a highly elitist English education. The current obsession of many Western historians with the 'bhadralok' is not entirely misplaced; where they go seriously (and, one is sometimes tempted to add, deliberately) astray is in the attempt to interpret limitations as motive-forces, reducing the whole of nationalism to a mere product of narrow elite-grievances and injured vanity. The Namiarite cynicism applied to the nationalists is never extended to the British rulers,[30] far too direct and crude an economic motivation is assumed for political actions and ideals,[31] and the whole underlying structure of colonial exploitation is quietly conjured away.[32]

Even if the Swadeshi intelligentsia had managed to evolve a more 'populist' stance, however, the countryside might have remained unresponsive, as had happened with the Narodniks in Russia. As compared to the pre-1885 period, the peasant world of early 20th century Bengal seems significantly quiet, though details research on this so far rather neglected period in agrarian history might well modify this picture. The concessions obtained by the upper strata of the peasantry by the Tenancy Act of 1885 combined with the boom in jute cultivation, had possibly reduced tensions in the countryside to a certain extent. The price-rise must have hurt the poorer sections of the peasants, but as the Mymensingh riots of 1906-07 revealed, the discontent usually turned against the immediate local oppressor (Zamindar, mahajan, trader, even sometimes the Swadeshi agitator trying to oust cheaper foreign articles from the market) and the distant British overlord was not automatically affected.[33] The lack of integration between national and social discontent stands out in fact as the crucial structural limitation of the Swadeshi movement, and our second case-study will try to indicate that this has relevance also for an earlier phase of our nationalist history.

III 1867—1905

Viewed from the heights of the post-1903 national movement, nineteenth century Bengal politics at first seems a rather dull plateau-land of unmitigated elite-mendicancy without any very sharp discontinuities. Most of the issues raised by the early Congress resolutions had been anticipated by the provincial associations like the British Indian in the 1830s[34] and indeed by Rammohun, who had focussed on demands like Indianization of services, trial by jury, separation of powers, freedom of the press, and consultations with Indian landlords, merchants and officials on legislative matters. The basic technique of occasional public meetings and respectful petitions to the authorities in Calcutta or London had also been pioneered in the 1820s, by Rammohun as well as by his Dharma Sabha rivals, and the ubiquitous presence of a faith in the 'providential' British connection appears obvious throughout.

Yet closer observation reveals certain interesting and important breaks. By the turn of the century, even the most Moderate of our politicians had become acutely aware of the link between India's poverty and British economic exploitation through drain of wealth,

destruction of handicrafts, and excessive revenue burdens,[35] however much they might still rely on 'mendicant' means for remedying such evils. But the 'Father of Modern India' had remained utterly silent about deindustrialization, even though the period of his maximum public activity coincided almost exactly with a decline in the number of houses paying chaukidari tax in Dacca from 21,361 to 10,708 between 1813 and 1833.[36] Rammohun had even welcomed the import of cheap and finer English salt, on the ground that those unemployed could be easily diverted to agriculture and other occupation as gardeners, domestic servants and daily labourers."[37] Rammohun did show some concern about the "large sum of money" being "annually drawn from India by Europeans retiring from it with the fortunes realized there",[38] and even went to the trouble of trying to calculate its amount;[39] his solution, however, was a cautious support for colonization, "a system which would encourage Europeans of capital to become permanent settlers with their families."[40] For Rammohun as well as for the Derozians, the remedy for current evils in the administration and the economy of the country was on the whole greater collaboration and not less, with free-trader groups though not with the East India Company. Rasikkrishna Mullick in his 1833 critique of Company justice and revenue administration wanted more British magistrates in the districtes,[41] while Pearychand Mitra in 1840, with an optimum as unfounded as his history, expressed the hope that "the ancient Hindu spirit of enterprise, which the storm of Moslem oppression has entirely extinguished...will now be kindled and burnt in the bosoms of the rising generation, who will....open sources of employment in the extensive field of commerce."[42] Most striking of all perhaps is the assumption implicit in Kailashchandra Dutt's unusually militant patriotic outburst, "India under Foreigners", in the *Hindu Pioneer* of October 1835 : "The violent means by which Foreign Supremacy has been established and the entire alienation of the people of the soil from any share in the government....are circumstances which...*no commercial, no political benefits* can ever authorize or justify."[43]

Indo-British commercial collaboration in Bengal suffered a major blow in 1847 with the collapse of the Union Bank, and already by 1851 the British Indian Association was including in its list of grievances the lack of encouragement of the manufactures and commerce of the country, which had been depressed in consequence of throwing

open the trade with India."[44] The crucial turning-point in Bengal at the level of theory came twenty years later with Bholanath Chandra's "A Voice for the Commerce and Manufacturers of India", serialized in the *Mukherji's Magazine* between March 1873 and June 1876, though there had also been some Anglo-Indian anticipations : notably Robert Knight's *India : A Review of England's Relations Therewith* (1868) and the unusually sophisticated analysis of the drain by James Geddes' "Our Commercial Exploitation of the Indian Populations" (*Calcutta Review* 1872).[45] Bholanath who had once worked with the Union Bank, and had then started an independent trading concern only to see it go bankrupt in 1863[46] roundly asserted that "the English want to reduce us all to the condition of argiculturists."[47] He called for protective tariffs, or if these were not forthcoming, the use of "the only but most effectual weapon—moral hostility....resolving to non-consume the goods of England", so as to "dethrone King-Cotton of Manchester, and once more re-establish there the Indian sway in the cotton world."[48] There is a pointed reference also to the "abstraction of capital from India since 1757, under which she is now left but an empty shell."[49] That Bholanath in 1873 was arguing a relatively novel case is indicated by the fact that his whole essay was a polemic against Krishnamohan Mullick, who in a three-volume *Brief History of Bengal Commerce* (1872) and a rejoinder published in the *Mukherji's Magazine* of May 1873 had argued that the rise in export-import figures ipso facto indicated growing prosperity, the decline in handicrafts being both inevitable and beneficial for the poor (as Manchester cloth was so much cheaper).[50] Krishnamohan Mullick may have been an obscure and elderly Anglophile, but precisely similar arguments had been put forward in 1872 by no less a person than Bankimchandra, in a more or less forgotton passage of his otherwise deservedly famous "Bangadesher Krishak" (The Peasantry of Bengal).[51]

Analysis of the structure and social composition of nationalist associations reveals a second kind of discontinuity, and once again the critical years seem to be the 1860s and '70s. "The present territorial aristocracy of this province (Bengal)....in large measure our own creation....is a potent influence on our side", reported Curron to Hamilton on 12 February 1903.[52] While 39% of Congress delegates between 1892 and 1909 were lawyers,[53] and even bankers and merchants were fairly prominent in the N.-W. Provinces and Oudh if not in Bengal,[54] big landlords generally kept away. There were only 6

zamindars among the 48 executive committee members of the Indian Association between 1876 and 1888 whose occupations have been recorded, as compared to 26 lawyers and 8 journalists.[55] Things had been quite different, however, down to the 1860s. On the basis of evidence like Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyaya's *Kalikata Kamalalay* (Calcutta, 1823) and Dwijendranath Tagore's reminiscences recorded by Bipinbihari Gupta,[56] S. N. Mukherji has argued that much of early and mid-nineteenth century Calcutta politics, religious and social reform, and cultural life is best understood in terms of the interplay of competing factions headed by leading aristocratic families of the city—the 'daladali' of the 'abhijat bhadralok'.[57] Rammohun's *Atmiya* Sabha consisted of Calcutta and suburban zamindars,[58] the Brahmo movement for quite some time remained largely an extension of the Jorasanko Tagores as opposed to the Sobhabazar Deb-dominated Dharma Sabha, and the British Indian Association with its Rs. 50/- annual membership was an overwhelmingly landlord concern whose secretary, Krishtadas Pal, earned the following uncomplimentary reference from Bholanath Chandra : "A man of the people by birth, he disappointed his nation by spending his energies in Zamindari harness."[59] Even Vidyasagar found the patronage of the Paikpara Sinhas useful, if Krishnakamal Bhattacharyya's testimony is to be accepted.[60]

Krishnakamal has also asserted that Vidyasagar owed part of his great prestige to the contacts he had established with white society,[61] and indeed rebel groups like the Derozians in the 1830s and early-40s and Keshabchandra Sen's followers in the 1860s who lacked aristocratic backing seem to have tried to compensate for it by cultivating such connections.[62] But a more serious political challenge to zamindar predominance began developing from the 1860s, spearheaded successively by Girishchunder Ghosh (with his *Bengalee,* started in 1862 in conscious rivalry with the *Hindoo Patriot,* which by then had become entirely a zamindar organ),[63] the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the short-lived Indian League of Sisirkumar Ghosh, and the far more successful Indian Association of 1876. Support came mainly from the non-zamindar professional intelligentsia, rapidly growing in number as English education expanded and penetrated deeper into the countryside. Sisirkumar had tried to rally the mofussil bhadralok through district associations before floating the Indian League,[64] while Anandamohan Bose and Surendranath Banerji mobilized Calcutta students through the

Students' Association of June 1875 and public lectures on Garibaldi, Mazzini, Chaitanya and Sikh power.[65] Both the Indian League and the Indian Association fixed a low annual membership fee of Rs. 5/- with hopefully, a reduced rate of Re. 1/- for "Artisans, Munduls and other heads of villages and bonafide tillers of the soil."[66] The Indian Association Town Hall protest meeting against the Vernacular Press Act on 17 April 1878 was held in the teeth of opposition from the Zamindars of the British Indian Association and even many Bar leaders, and the *Brahmo Public Opinion* hailed it editorially on 25 April 1878 as marking "an epoch in the social and political history of Bengal."[67]

Contemporaries often interpreted this rift in terms of a conflict between the old aristocracy and an emergent 'middle class'. Thus Sibnath Shastri in his autobiography recalled how the Indian Association had been started to meet the need for a political organization of Bengal's "Madhyabitta sreni" ("middle class").[68] Like other European analogies drawn optimistically by our nineteenth century intelligentsia, the parallel is not entirely exact. The 'aristocracy' here was not particularly old, and consisted mainly of nouveaux riche who had made their pile in the late-18th century as hangers-on of early Company administrators and through compradore trade, and had turned to investments in Zamindari and Calcutta real estate after 1793. The 'middle class', on the other hand, far from being based on industry or commerce, was always only too eager to buy itself a niche in the Permanent Settlement hierarchy through intermediate tenures after having climbed the ladder of success via English education and the liberal professions. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in fact repeatedly equated the "Middle Class" with the tenure holding "gentry", and asserted that "amongst all civilized countries the gentry or middle class carries the greatest influence in all matters, and so it is in Bengal ....but unfortunately the existence of such a class is not even so much as acknowledged by the Government."[69]

The conflict therefore was hardly a fundamental or irreconcilable one, but while it, as a recent paper by Kalyankumar Sengupta has argued, "the salaried and the professional people who had little or no rentier income championed tenant rights", utilizing the struggle of the peasantry in the 1860s, '70s, and early '80s in defence of occupancy rights and against rent-enhancements "to win a political battle against the absentee landlords and their supporters, the conservative intelli-

gentsia."[70] Girishchunder Ghosh, states his biographer, started the *Bengalee* as a "weekly on behalf of the Ryot, who then had no special organ or advocate to voice his grievances", and the Prospectus of the new journal declared its intention to "faithfully and fearlessly represent the Ryot to the Ruler and the Ruler to the Ryot."[71] Dwarkanath Vidyabhushan's *Somprakash* called in 1862 for an alliance between the middle and the lower orders to fight Zamindari oppression,[72] and along with the early *Bengalee,* it repeatedly urged a permanent settlement of rents.[73] The Indian Association went a step further in the early 1880s, organizing peasant meetings and trying to start "Rent Unions" on the eve of the Tenancy Act of 1885.[74] What the British Indian Association zamindars felt about such developments was well expressed in the following angry analysis of the new brand of politicians made by J. M. Tagore in June 1833 : "They have neither status nor stake in society, and to attain the one or the other or both, they resort to various kind of agitations social, religious, reformatory, and so on....They are for the most part, East Bengal men, joined in by some England-returned natives, who also hail from that part of the country. Many of them have seen something and read still more of the doings of the Irish agitators....they would fair try their chance in the socialistic line....When they convene public meetings, they fill them with schoolboys, and then exclaim that they have the public with them. They go to the ryots, pretend to be their friends, sow seeds of dissension between them and the zamindars, and thus set class against class."[75]

The frightened conservative zamindar was no doubt exaggerating things a bit, but it seems clear enough that the Bengal politics of c 1867-85 was marked, not merely by an internal split somewhat asking to the 'shetia'-intelligentsia conflict traced by Christine Dobbin in Bombay city,[76] but also by development of a range of new political techniques which repeatedly seem to foreshadow the Swadeshi days. There were first the annual Hindu Melas for about ten years from 1867 onwards, the proto-type of Swadeshi festivals like the Shivaji Utsava, inspired by Rajnarayan Bose's proposals "for the Promotion of National Feeling among the Educated Natives of Bengal" (1866) and organized by Nabagopal Mitra with the patronage of the Tagores (particularly Ganendranath and Dwijendranath).[77] The Mela tried to promote the spirit of self-reliance[78] through exhibitions of indigenous crafts, patriotic songs, and physical culture; associated with it were

a 'National Society' which organized periodic lectures, a 'National School' founded in 1872 "for the cultivation of Arts, Music, and for Physical Training" and the weekly *National Paper*—all run by the indefatigably 'National' Nabagopal Mitra.[79] The 1871 exhibition included a new type of charka (spinning-wheel) invented by Sitanath Ghosh of Jessore,[80] the Sanjibani Sabha recalled by Rabindranath in his autobiography tried to set up a match-workshop and a weaving concern[81] while a more serious Swadeshi venture was Jyotirindranath Tagore's Inland River Steam Navigation Service of 1884 which won enthusiastic support from Barisal and Khulna passengers but was eventually ruined by British competition.[82] The 1860s and '70s also saw a spurt of patriotic poems and songs, as well as of plays like Dinabandhu Mitra's *Nil-darpan* (1860), Monomohan Basu's *Harischandra* (1875), Jyotirindranath Tagore's 'historical' dramas, and the violently anti-British *Sarat-Sarojini* (1874) and *Surendra-Binodini* (1875) of Upendranath Das which served as the immediate provocation for the Dramatic Performances Act in 1876. A major landmark here had been the foundation of the National Theatre in 1872 hailed by Sisirkumar Ghosh as a "democratic stage", no longer dependent like its predecessors on the whims of aristocratic patrons.[83]

If all this seems to foreshadow the temper of 'Constructive Swadeshi', the first rumblings of 'Political Extremism' can also be heard in this same period. The obvious name here is Bankimchandra,[84] though it is difficult and dangerous to generalize about such a great and complex figure. The Indian Association later became the most Moderate of political bodies, but its early activities had included, not just the all-India tours of Surendranath and Lalmohan Ghosh's visit to England on the highly elitist Civil Service issue, but the foundation of night schools in Calcutta[85] and fairly successful efforts to start district and even village branches in many parts of Bengal,[86] as well as the pro-ryot activities already mentioned. The Decennial Report of the Indian Association stated in 1883 : "It is too often brought forward as a matter of reproach that our political agitation is confined to a few educated Babus. The Association is resolved to wipe off this reproach."[87] Though nationalist attempts to promote trade unions still lay in the future, the Association attempted a major agitation on the Assam tea labour issue, with Dwarkanath Ganguli undertaking a dangerous trip to the plantation region to collect exposure material for his serial in *Bengalee*, "Slavery in the British Dominion" (25 Septem-

ber 1886—9 April 1887).[88] Dwarkanath had been preceded by a fellow-Brahmo, Ramkumar Vidyaratna, while another Brahmo stalwart, Sasipada Banerji, worked all his life among Baranagore Labourers starting night schools and a workingmen's club for them and bringing out from 1873 the first labour journal in India, the monthly *Bharat Sramajivi*.[89] Recalling Sasipada's activities in the 1870s on the eve of the Swadeshi upsurge, Sitanath Tattvabhushan pointed to them as an object lesson and a critique of "the current method of agitation, both social and political, the method that consists in writing, speaking, memorializing, and holding conferences...."[90] Again, though the full-blown theory of passive resistance was a Swadeshi creation, Bholanath Chandra's call for "non-consumption" of foreign goods was followed by a boycott pledge taken by some Dacca youths in 1876.[91] One might argue also that passive resistance of a very effective kind had been worked out already by the peasants of Bengal, in the great indigo struggle of 1859-60 as well as the Pabna rent strike of 1873; middle-class nationalism in fact lagged behind fifty years, being able to take up the cue effectively only under Gandhiji at Champaron and Kaira. Finally a passing mention has to be made of the (admittedly not very serious) secret society game apparently being played by many Calcutta students in the late '70s and early '80s, along with the young Tagores under Rajnarayan Bose.[92]

Yet the sum total of all this obviously remained well below the Swadeshi aggregate, and in any case the anticipations of a less elitist and more militant kind of politics were fading away rapidly after c. 1885. The Hindu Mela had died out by the late '70s and even at its height, the exhibitions of indigenous products organized it, had an overwhelmingly upper-class character, as indicated by the prizes awarded in 1869 and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*'s comment next year comparing it to the fancy fair of English country ladies.[93] The 1880s saw a significant change in dramatic fashions, patriotic themes being ousted by Girishchunder Ghosh's domestic and often strongly revivalist plays. By the mid-1880s, the Indian Association was fast toning down its early anti-zamindar slant. It expressed its "disappointment" over the final draft of the Bengal Tenancy Bill, but did nothing further about it in the way of petitions, let alone peasant meetings.[94] The 1886-87 Report of the Association argued that "the old enmity between Zamindars and Raiyats is fast disappearing", and emphasized the need for "that harmony between the two communities upon which

the welfare of the country so largely depends." Indian Association activities in the countryside were now confined to the socially and politically much less explosive temperance issue.[95] The concomitant of this was the fact that the British Indian Association, which had boycotted the National Conference of December 1883, fully participated in the second Conference of 1885, which had as its sessional presidents zamindars like Jaykrishna Mukherji and Narendrakrishna Deb. In the same year, Raja Rajendranarayan Deb replaced the old Derozian Krishnamohan Banerji as President of the Indian Association.[96] The 1882 Association Report was already complaining that work in the districts was much hampered by the "want of a band of self-less workers."[97] In the absence of a full-time political cadre of the type developed by the Swadeshi samitis the terrorist secret societies and later on by Gandhi, the district and village branches probably remained largely paper organizations. Even Surendranath in 1905 depended mainly on new student societies for mass contact, and not on his old Indian Association network,[98] and there is a significant lack of correlation between the 1895 list of branches and the later Swadeshi storm-centres.[99]

Repression and/or fear of mass extremism are hardly acceptable as explanations for this mid-'80s decline, much less so even then for the Swadeshi collapse. Once again, therefore, we have to turn to a study of internal limitations.

I would like to argue in the first place, that the cultural milieu of the 'intelligentsia of mid-nineteenth century, so-called 'renaissance'. Bengal inhibited the development of nationalist politics in several distinct ways. With the exception of Surendranath, most politically active men of the 1860s, '70s, and '80s, looked upon this side of their work as a definitely secondary occupation, far less important than educational, social, religious or literary endeavours. This is clearly brought out by the autobiographical literature of the age : thus Debendranath Tagore's *Atmajivani* (Calcutta 1898) contained no reference at all to the British Indian Association, of which he had been the first Secretary, while Sibnath Sastri is almost equally taciturn about his political activities in the late-1870s.[100] The current fashion of virtually ignoring ideologies as mere rationalizations of material interests and of reducing politics to the "political arithmetic" of competing pressure-groups seems particularly inadequate for periods like the one under discussion.

The simple 'traditionalist-modernist' model I used for the Swadeshi age is very difficult to apply to the rich and complex cultural world of the 1860s and '70s. Such a dichotomy operated only at moments of acute tension over concrete social reform issues (e.g., suttee, widow-remarriage, the Age of Consent debate); usually the situation was far more complicated. As a first and highly simplified approximation, we may perhaps identify four groups: secular reform of the Vidya-sagar brand, more or less indifferent towards religious enthusiasm whether of the old or new variety and concentrating on a kind of piecemeal social engineering;[101] Brahmoism, at the height of its influence in the 1860s and '70s, declining rapidly thereafter; the positivist circles somewhat neglected by historians, but studied in some detail recently by Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya;[102] and the rising tide of Hindu revival. One has only to draw up such a list to become aware of further complexities and sub-divisions: the bitter internecine quarrels among the Brahmos, for example, or the obvious differences between the revivalism of the Bankim-Akshay Sarkar as contrasted to the Sasadhar Tarkachudamani-Krishnaprasanna Sen groups.[103]

Sectarian quarrels occasionally did provide an indirect stimulus to nationalist activity. Thus the sudden enthusiasm for 'national' ways displayed by the Jorasanko Tagore—Rajnarayan Bose—Nabagopal Mitra group in the mid-1860s probably had something to do with its losing struggle with Keshabchandra Sen to retain the allegiance of the younger Brahmos.[104] A decade later, the revolt against Keshabchandra which led to the foundation of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj was accompanied for a few years by intense political activity on the part of men like Sibnath Sastri, Anandamohan Bose, Dwarkanath Ganguli or Krishnakumar Mitra, and this group of radical young Brahmos seem to have been the real backbone of the Indian Association in its early days. But on the whole the negative or inhibiting aspects were much more important in the long run. First and most obvious was the element of distraction, the swamping of early political ardour by enthusiasm for social reform or religion. A good example here would be Sibnath Shastri, who in 1876 inspired a group of like-minded young Brahmos (including the later Extremist leader Bipinchandra Pal) to take a vow to keep away from government service on the ground that "self-government is the only form of political government ordained by God",[105] but who from the 1880s became increasingly engrossed with the organizational and missionary routine of the

Sadharan Brahmo sect. Mention may be made also of Sisirkumar Ghosh, the founder of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the India League, who abandoned nationalist politics for Vaishnavism, and Akshaykumar Sarkar, editor of the radical political weekly *Sadharani* in the 1870s and of the purely revivalist organ *Navajivan* in the 1880s. What may be called the Aurobindo Ghosh model[106] has been perhaps a little too common in the history of our nationalism.

A second negative aspect was the strong Hindu note pervading the entire cultural atmosphere of our 'renaissance', which could not but have an alienating effect, not only immediately but perhaps even more in the twentieth century, as an educated Muslim counter-elite began developing in Bengal. 'National' Nabagopal Mitra with his 'Hindu' Mela and his 'National' Association is a striking instance, and the *National Paper* brushed aside criticism of this equation with the argument "....the Hindus. ..certainly form a nation by themselves and as such a society established by them can very properly be called a Natioal Society."[107] The Hindu Mela, it must be remembered, was organized, not by revivalist or orthodox Hindus, but mainly by Adi Samaj Brahmos. The Positivists present another curious case : they often boasted of their atheism,[108] yet their attitude towards Hindu social customs ranged from cautious reform to outright hostility to change,[109] and indeed one of their chief European mentors, Principal Lobb of Hooghly College, had urged the acceptance of Comte precisely because his was "a system which can be grafted upon Hinduism, which Hindus can make their own and which by espousing they will not be obliged to sacrifice....their national customs and traditions...."[110]

Respect or reverence for Hindu traditions was perhaps not unnatural; far more ominous was the virtually all-pervading assumption that British rule had been preceded by centuries of 'Muslim tyranny' and therefore had to be welcomed as a deliverance from an age of darkness. One comes up against this syndrome time after time throughout nineteenth century Bengal : in Rammohun and Derozians as much as among their Dharma Sabha critics, in the entire patriotic literature of the period (and not just in a few stray passages of Bankimchandra),[111] in the *National Paper*, in the speeches of Keshabchandra Sen, and (most surprising of all perhaps) even in Sibnath Shastri.[112] The conventional distinction between conservatives and progressives breaks down on this crucial issue as well as on the related question of the basic attitude towards foreign rule.

Apart from this link via the Muslim tyranny concept, a more direct connection between culture and loyalty was encouraged through the contacts with Englishmen assiduously cultivated by virtually all the groups and sub-groups of the mid-nineteenth century Bengali intelligentsia, as well as sometimes by the very logic of their activities. The Anglophilism of even Vidyasagar, a man of unimpeachable integrity and independence in his personal relations with whites, stemmed perhaps from a not unfounded conviction that the kind of piecemeal modernization upon which he had set his heart was impossible in the given context without co-operation with the rulers. Autonomous social forces for such changes simply did not exist in a colonial society. Among the Brahmos, Keshabchandra's loyalism was of a particularly gross kind, but his Adi Samaj critics were not fundamentally different : thus the *National Paper* categorically stated that it "would be an unfortunate day for the country when the English would pack up their belongings and embark for England."[113] Nabagopal Mitra, his patron Dwijendranath Tagore later recalled, was an adept in the art of running after British officials, and asked once to arrange some indigenous paintings for the Hindu Mela he had commissioned an artist to draw a picture of Indians kneeling before Britannia.[114] 'National' is evidently a term with connotations that vary with the times. The Sadharan Brahmos were on the whole much more independent, and several among them later played a leading part in the Swadeshi movement,[115] but they too developed connections with British Unitarians, the possible political implications of which have not been studied so far.

As in social matters, the Positivist stance on politics was somewhat ambiguous. Richard Congreve, with whom the Jogendrachandra Ghosh circle maintained a voluminous correspondence, was a consistent critic of imperialism even during the Mutiny uproar, and James Geddes was also a prominent Civilian Positivist. Yet Indian converts seldom advanced beyond[116] a fairly tapid and conventional kind of nationalism and that some of their European mentors were giving quite a different kind of advice is indicated by the following passage in Lobb's correspondence with Girishchunder Ghosh : "There is much danger in the present state of things that men here should be led away by visionary dreams of commercial activity and political aggrandisement. The problems of commerce and politics must I think be worked out by the West, but Bengal can accomplish a revolution most important

to the interests of humanity if she concentrates her attention upon man's spiritual future...."[117]

The concentration upon "man's spiritual future" soon abandoned Positivist for Hindu revivalist forms, but, as the above letter indicates by implication, there is no intrinsic connection between revivalism and radical nationalist politics—despite the temporary and not entirely fortunate alliance between the two in the Swadeshi period. Bipinchandra Pal in fact categorically stated in March 1903 that after the Ilbert Bill days "Politics have been neglected in the interest of abstract religion. And in consequence, religious songs have supplanted the old national songs."[118] It should also be remembered that orthodoxy or revivalism, too, had its white patrons, almost as much as reform, from *John Bull's* support for the *Samachar Chundrika* in the early 1830s down to Blavatsky and Olcott's Theosophy racket in the 1880s.

The net result of all this was a kind of political journalism and activity, which was frankly and nearly described by Akshaychandra Sarkar's *Sadharani* when it stated that "there was no politics except weeping:"[119] Rammohun and the Derozians had not felt the need for tears, as they had been pretty sure that collaboration would deliver the goods in the shape of a subordinate but still real modernization. Optimism was waning with the spread of the conviction that British rule was basically exploitative and racialist but the self-confidence and strength needed for launching anything like a really radical movement still lay in the Swadeshi future, when the Japanese victory over Russia would come as a major shot in the arm to Asian pride. Among the other factors usually cited as explanations for the Swadeshi outburst, educated unemployment and rising prices already figured fairly often in journalistic complaints of the 1860s and '70s,[120] but we do still get the impression of a kind of mid-Victorian middle class economic and social stability which was to break down in the next century. Racial discrimination as revealed above all in the Ilbert Bill uproar was probably a far more potent source of tension : the crux of the Civil Service agitation lay precisely here and not in the relatively insignificant member of extra jobs that a raised age-limit and simultaneous examinations could have been expected to provide.[121] The cumulative effect of these things, plus the growing sense of frustration as "weeping" or mendicancy failed to bring about even slight changes, led ultimately to the sharp turn towards radical nationalism in 1905 ; time was evidently needed for such factors to mature.

We have seen in the Swadeshi model that the crucial structural limitation of our nationalism probably lay in the field of elite-mass communications. Things appear more promising in this respect at first sight in the 1867-85 period. Far from rural tensions being dormant, as was to happen in the Swadeshi age, the peasant world of Bengal was, then extremely restive. The 'Blue Mutiny' was followed by the sustained struggle of Pabna raiyats in defence of occupancy rights and against rent-enhancements, and soon afterwards came the turmoil preceeding the Tenancy Act of 1885.[122] Intelligentsia reactions were equally significant : virtually unamimous support, plus some organizational help, for the indigo rebels; less unequivocal, but still considerable, literary sympathy for Pabna; peasant rallies organized by the Indian Association on the eve of the 1885 Act.

Yet certain crucial limitations of this apparent elite-peasant rapprochement need to be emphasized. Intelligentsia support for peasants was reformist, never revolutionary. Indigo after all was a single and glaring abuse, condemned by many Europeans and by the Lieutenant-Governor himself; the preface to the *Nil Darpan* of Dinabandhu Mitra ended with fulsome praise for Canning and Grant.[123] The Pabna upsurge frightened to a certain extent even a generally pro-peasant weekly like *Somprakash*, and the author of "Bangadesher Krishak" in the wake of the rising advised Mir Musharaf Husain to withdraw his *Zamidar Darpan* play : "We have been pained and disgusted by the Pabna ryots. It is unnecessary to add fuel to the fire."[124] The oft-repeated intelligentsia plea for a permanent fixity of rents would have benefited only the topmost layer of the peasantry, and there is no evidence of concern about non-occupancy ryots, let alone share-croppers or agricultural labourers. Above all, sympathy for the peasantry certainly did not always synchronize with a clear-cut nationalist stance; quite a reverse kind of relationship seems to have operated in many cases. The young Civilian Rameshchunder Dutt, author of *An Apology for the Pabna Rioters* (1873), found in such disturbances "some evidence that the moral of a civilized mode of administration has not been entirely lost on the millions of Bengal."[125] The later nationalist, R. C. Dutt of drain of wealth fame, ardently defended the system of permanent Zamindari. A similar comment has to be made about the early friends of labour in Bengal. District magistrates subscribed readily to the *Bharat Sramajivi*, and the limits of Sasipada Banerji's work among labour are vividly revealed by the comments

innocently made by his admirer Sitanath Tattvabhushan.[126]

It is tempting, particularly for left-inclined historians of today, to draw a sharp distinction between such manifold instances of bhadra-lok moderation, timidity, or 'compradore' behaviour and the supposedly pure stream of popular militant anti-imperialism as manifested in the peasant struggles.[127] Unfortunately, however, research is increasingly revealing that these movements had their own, and not entirly dissimilar limitations. Kalyankumar Sengupta and Benoybhushan Chaudhuri have their differences about the interpretation of the Pabna rising but they both agree that it was a movement of the relatively better-off or at most of the 'middle' peasant, not really of the lowest state in the countryside. Sengupta talks about the 'legalistic-passive" character of the whole struggle,[128] Chaudhuri emphasizes that loyalty to the British authority was never questioned : "It is surprising how the peasant's vision of a new order was associated with the Queen". Even at its most radical point the Pabna movement demanded that the peasants "are to be the ryots of Her Majesty the Queen, and of Her only."[129] Such a pathetic faith in a distant superior, as contrasted to the immediate oppressor, is not perhaps particularly surprising : an obvious parallel would be the Russian peasants' long-continued reverence and love for their 'Little Father', the Tsar.

The conclusion that emerges is that in nationalism, as in other movements, very little happens automatically, as a spontaneous reflection of material conditions. There is need for conscious effort, for an ideology, if a social group or class, to use Gramscian language is to rise from the "economic-corporative" to the "hegemonic" level of political action.[130] The great contribution of our nineteenth century intelligentsia was their gradual development of such an ideology, in the shape of the drain of wealth theory. That its formulative and acceptance may or may not have had something to do with narrow elite-grievances as present-day Western scholars like to argue, is about as relevant to the understanding of the historical significance of this development as would a Freudian analysis of possibly even less savoury unconscious motives of nationalist or other political leaders. The failure, to a very great extent conditioned by colonialism itself, lay in the long-continued and never entirely overcome absence of effective instruments of hegemony, of techniques and programmes for bridging the elite-mass gap.

THE RADICALISM OF INTELLECTUALS

A CASE STUDY OF NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

I

HISTORICAL EVALUATIONS of the intelligentsia bred through English education under colonial rule in nineteenth century Bengal have tended to incline towards one of two opposed stereotypes. The dominant interpretation remains heavily eulogistic, and centers around the concept of a 'reniassance'. Its proponents have included extremely diverse groups : Men affiliated to the actual movements of religious or social reform, British liberals eager to emphasize the benefits of English education and often finding in it a balm for their own feelings of guilt, Indian nationalists cherishing 'liberal' or 'modernistic' values, and a considerable number of Marxist intellectuals.[1]

Less apparent on the whole at the level of formal research, yet not uninfluential at times, has been the opposite tendency towards iconoclastic denigration of the 'renaissance heroes for their alienation of the masses and their illusions concerning foreign rule. Occassionally present in the writings of some twentieth century nationalists who had extended their hostility towards foreign rule to include education in a foreign medium[2], this trend has normally been pronouncedly left in its political colour and as such has replaced the intellectual hero by the peasant rebel. An uneasy oscillation between high praise for 'renaissance' intellectuals, and admiration for popular outbreaks like that of 1857 (roundly denounced by the former) has thus characterized much of Indian Marxist writing on nineteenth-century history. Such ambivalence has obvious links with the debates about the progressive potentialities or otherwise of the 'national bourgeoisie', endemic within our left movement from the Roy-Lenin controversy of 1920 right down to the present day.[3] The two attitudes are not unrelated also to more general assumptions concerning the nature of colonialism particularly in its earlier, free-trader 'liberal' phase. One might compare, for instance, R. P. Dutt's assertion regarding an "objectively progressive"

phase of British rule in India, grounded upon Marx's somewhat isolated comment on its "regenerative" role,[4] with the more recent Gunder Frank model of metropolitan domination leading to "development of underdevelopment" in the colonial world throughout the history of world capitalism.[5]

In the context of Bengal, however, the two approaches, for all their apparent mutual opposition, share a tendency to seek for affinities, father-figures, and sustenance in the past through an assumption of straight-line connections amounting almost to a kind of 'Whig' interpretation of history. The enthusiastic response of one school to Rammohun, Young Bengal, or Brahmoism is matched by the romantic glorification of all nineteenth century peasant outbreaks as revolutionary in the modern sense, headed by leaders assumed to have been "fish in water".[6] The models of heroic radical thinkers or peasant rebels have had a natural appeal for present-day intellectuals, living in a Bengal which in course of the last fifty years lost its preeminence on the national plane, went through famine followed by Partition, and witnessed the repeated failure of apparently quite promising and powerful left movements. Such models nevertheless tend to somewhat distort the past through eulogy and denigration alike.

In recent years here have been the beginnings of a third kind of interpretation, seeking to understand and evaluate the work of the 19th century intellectuals in terms of their own specific context without assuming over-simple connections or continuities between the past and the present. In so far as that context was moulded fundamentally by colonialism, this approach at times superficially resembles 'ultra left' denunciations of the 'renaissance' myth. What distinguishes if from the latter is the stress on objective constraints, permitting considerable sympathy and understanding for men like Rammohun or Vidyasagar even while probing their limitations, and the absence of excessive romanticism concerning all 'anti-British' or 'popular' outbreaks. The basic framework of this interpretation was outlined by Barun De at the Moscow session of the Indo-Soviet symposium two years ago.[7] It has been put forward also in a number of articles included in a recently-published volume on Rammohun,[8] and, in perhaps its most well-rounded form, in Asok Sen's paper on Vidyasagar at the present seminar.[9]

My intention in this paper is to explore the possibilities of this third kind of approach with reference to the nature and limits of individuals

or groups in 19th century Bengali intellectual life generally accepted in 'renaissance' historiography as radical or 'progressive'.

II

It seems useful to begin with a definition of 'radicalism'; or rather, of what can be and has been legitimately expected of 19th century 'radical' figures by their present-day admirers. On the model of the famous Russian Westerner-Slavophile dichotomy, S. C. Sarkar in an influential and important paper made a sharp distinction between two trends within our 'renaissance', 'westernism' (or 'liberalism') as contrasted to 'traditionalism' (or 'revivalism'). 'Westernism', explicitly proclaimed by him to be more progressive, was further defined by him to include the components of social refrom, rationalism, and secular humanism.[10]

Broadening this definition somewhat, we might list the logical implications of such a model of 19th century 'radicalism' to include: (i) propagation not so much of English education (which was no reformist monopoly),[11] as of its possible scientific aspects and values, and campaigns for specific reforms in society (e. g. ban on sati, education of women, widow-remarriage, polygamy, childmarriage, occasional attacks on caste, etc.); (ii) the development of a certain amount of freethinking and rationalism in religious matters; and (iii) a consequent secularism which could hopefully, transcend the barriers between Hindus and Muslims. In addition, their present-day admirers have often tried to discover in radical groups; (iv) a sympathetic concern for peasants, and (v) germs of something like protonationalism—though these admittedly were not peculiar to radical trends alone. The 19th century intellectuals were impelled by their situation to re-model their own social and ethical norms of behaviour, as well as to define their attitudes towards the peasant masses and the foreign rulers. The issues posed by this model are thus certainly not irrelevant or a mere creation of the present, and it is interesting that the first number of the Derozian journal *Bengal Spectator* (April 1842) defined its objectives in broadly similar terms.[12] What requires further investigation is, first, how distinct the 'radicals' really were in their ideas and actions from the 'conservatives' or 'traditionalists'; second, the internal consistency and efficacy of their programmes; and third and most important, the specific ways in which the colonial situation warped, hindered, or frustrated the most 'progressive' or 'modern' of aspirations.

At the most concrete level of all, advocacy of or opposition to specific changes in education and social life, there was certainly a significant distinction between reformers and conservatives, a contrast which occassionally touched explosion point over issues like sati or widow-remarriage. Rammohun's plea for "Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful Sciences" certainly struck a new, modernistic note[13] and a recent detailed study indicates that his Bengali prose style marks a significant advance over that of his conservative critics like Mrityunjoy Vidyalankar.[14] Vidyasagar in both respects was his logical, and perhaps greater, successor (though even the allegedly over-Anglicised Derozians showed considerable concern for developing the vernacular[15]) with his repudiation of anti-scientific philosophies, creation of recognizably modern Bengali, and drive for mass (including women's) education through vernacular text-books and as inspector of primary schools.[16] The campaigns against sati and for widow-remarriage remain memorable achievements, brought about through a combination of skilful shastric exegesis, passionate humanistic pleas on behalf of women which strike a chord even today, and, in the case of Vidyasagar, a lifetime of truly heroic and selfless endeavour.[17] The Derozians had anticipated Vidyasagar in advocating widow-remarriage and attacking Kulin polygamy in the 1830s and '40s,[18] and the young Brahmos of the 1860s and '70s went along with and sometimes beyond him in a militant campaign for equal rights for women and the throwing down of caste barriers conducted first under and then against the leadership of Keshabchandra Sen. Some of them, most notably Sasipada Banerji, started philanthropic work among industrial labourers, through night-schools, cheap journals and campaigns against drink.

Yet the shadows of colonial society repeatedly fell between desire and fulfilment. The Macaulay-style purely literary education introduced in 1835 was far removed from Rammohun's dreams, and Vidyasagar resigned in disgust from his post of Assistant Inspector of Schools within three years of his appointment. The financial needs of the colonial administration played a determining role in both cases.[19] The 'sadhu bhasha' or chaste prose style developed by the 19th century literati was a new and major achievement, but it was far removed from the language of the toilers, unlike Luther's German or the "language of artisans, countrymen and merchants" preferred by the Royal Society after the Puritan Revolution.[20] In social reform, the

pioneers often failed to live upto the ideals of their youth. One might cite in this context Rammohun's parading of outward conformity to caste rules and concentration on the single issue of sati (his Atmiya Sabha at private meetings had gone much further in 1819).[21] The Derozians upon entering middle age increasingly sought social respectability through conformism[22] and Keshabchandra Sen performed a remarkable volte-face in the Coochbehar marriage affair.[23] Reform in practice in any case affected only a very small minority. Widow-remarriage, for instance, in itself an upper-caste issue, is even now highly disapproved and fairly rare in respectable society, and the Brahmo struggles in the 1860s and 70s against caste and seclusion of women were fought out mainly within the confines of their own community.[24] Lower-caste movements of a 'Sanskritizing' type often worked at cross-purposes with the aims of social reformers.[25]

One might add that even at the theoretical level reform ideals often seem more than a little incomplete. Rammohun fought against sati by hunting up all the texts he could find hailing ascetic widowhood, thus possibly somewhat adding to Vidyasagar's difficulties. Vidyasagar's whole campaign left untouched the fate of the adult widow who, perchance, might not want or be able to marry again, but who on humanistic grounds surely had the right to a normal life free of barbarous austerities. The Brahmo drive against the seclusion of women was often accompanied by an insistence upon puritannical norms of behaviour so much so that the very term 'Brahmo' has become in colloquial Bengali almost a synonym for prudishness. One is reminded of the scathing comment of a modern Women's Liberation leader about "the Victorian feeling that the female must relinquish sexuality if she is to be in any sense autonomous, a variant on the bondage of 'virture' which demands sexual inhibition in a woman if she is to maintain her social and therefore her economic position."[26] As for Sasipada Banerji's work among Baranagore labour, a biographer admiringly notes that "the merchants themselves bore testimony to its tangible moral effects, declaring that those of their hands who attended Sasi Babu's school were the very people that were found to be most careful and painstaking in their work."[27] Further light on the nature of Sasipada's activities has been thrown by the recent discovery of some issues of his journal *Bharat Sramajivi*. The recurrent advice it gave to labourers and peasants was to work hard in their callings, and to try to rise above it on an individual basis through education, small savings,

plus a bit of usury.[28] The Baranagore jute mills were owned, incidentally, by whites. False consciousness here had gone so far that a 'progressive' reformer, occasionally hailed even as a pioneer labour leader, was busy inculcating virtues that obviously served capitalist interests out of sheer-altruism, all in the cause of foreign capital.

With women and labour alike, even the very limited Victorian models could not be attained in the conditions of Bengal. Women's rights remained an affair of male philanthropy not of any autonomous feminist movement unlike in the West, and there was no labour aristocracy to provide a social basis for Sasipada Banerji.[29]

The pattern of early radical outbursts, retreat with growing age, and general incompleteness in theory and ineffectiveness in practice recurs in the history of 19th century strivings for rationalistic changes in religion. Prolific translator of his own works, Rammohun never produced English or Bengali versions of his early and extremely remarkable *Tuhafat-ul-Muwahhiddin*, and his later and far more influential, writings balanced appeals to reason by a conservative use of his favourite 'social comfort' criterion along with an increasing dependence on Upanishadic authority.[30] The Derozian impulse towards scepticism and atheism which had frightened orthodox Hindus and Christian missionaries alike ebbed away within a few years.[31] Akshaykumar Dutt, who is said to have once horified Debendranath Tagore with his proof of the uselessness of prayer through simple arithmetic, remained a lone Deist in the Brahmo movement.[32] Vidyasagar probably had similar ideas, but wisely kept them to himself to prevent odium theologicum disrupting his efforts at piecemeal social engineering. Positivists like Krishnakamal Bhattacharya in sharp contrast, boasted of their atheism, but tended to be much more cautious and even conservative on isssues of practical reform.[33]

As distinct from such individuals or groups, Brahmoism did attain the level of a real and continuous, though much-divided, movement. Spreading out beyond its early confines of a handful of big Calcutta Zamindar families, it came to embrace or at least influence a considerable section of the educated community in the districts, often of fairly humble (though probably never peasant) social origin. It still leaves the impression, however, of being no more than a rather unsatisfactory half-way house. While fire was concentrated from the beginning on image-worship (perhaps largely because missionaries were attacking the whole of Hinduism for its 'idolatry'), more important things like

caste were not seriously attacked till the 1860s, nor was the fundamental Karma assumption really challenged. Few attempts were made to link up with traditions of popular lower-caste monotheism. Brahmoism in fact remained essentially concerned, as Asok Sen puts it, "to take care of the soul of newly settled gentlemen."[34] Above all, Brahmin oppression, while not exactly a non-issue, was surely not the most crucial problem for India under colonial rule. It was not, as the Catholic hierarchy had become in 16th century Europe, the nodal point around which a host of social contradictions had accumulated. The parallel with the Protestant Reformation, so much in vogue among Brahmos and their admirers from Rammohun onwards,[35] breaks down in fact at every point, and reveals itself to have been yet another example of the false consciousness of a colonial intelligentsia.

Colonial rule also gravely hindered formation of a genuinely secular or non-communal outlook (particularly relevant in a multi-religious society like Bengal) even among the critics of Hindu orthodoxy. Such people with very rare exceptions, tended to share with conservatives or outright revivalists the assumption that British rule had rescued Bengal from centuries of 'Muslim tyranny'.[36] Various reasons might be forwarded for this strange, not very wellknown, but virtually ubiquitous and ultimately disastrous phenomenon. The English-educated found very few Muslims among their peers, due to factors not yet fully explored but certainly not unconnected with the socio-economic patterns of post-Permanent Settlement Bengal. A break had taken place with pre-19th century Indo-Islamic culture through the displacement of Persian by English, and more generally, by the myth of the 'renaissance' itself, for awakening has to presuppose a dark age. Anglo-Indian historiography played a crucial part, through Tod on Elliot and Dowson, for example.[37] Above all, perhaps, the Muslim tyranny syndrome provided a convenient justification for the intelligentsia's fairly abject acceptance of foreign rule. And when patriotic sentiments did start developing as from the 1860s, the Muslims could still serve as useful whipping-boys.[38]

Left-leaning admirers of 19th century radicals have often emphasized the existence among them of considerable pro-peasant sympathies. Despite his Zamindar status, Rammohun advocated the extension of the permanent settlement principle to the raiyats' rents, and pro-peasant pleas were made by numerous later reformist journals like the Derozian *Bengal Spectator*[39], the Brahmo *Tattvabodhini Patrika*[40], the

Somprakash of Dwarkanath Vidyabhushan,[41] or the *Bengalee* of Girish Chunder Ghosh.[42] Intellectuals sympathized with, and in some cases gave organisational support to, the indigo rebellion of 1859-60. Twenty years later, the Indian Association was fighting for pro-raiyat changes in the Rent Bill through peasant meetings and Rent Unions, and its challenge to the Zamindar-dominated British Indian Association was often seen by contemporaries in Europeans terms, as a struggle between an old aristocracy and an emergent 'middle class'.[43]

Actually the conflict was never very fundamental and was patched up quickly enough after the passage of the 1885 Tenancy Act.[44] The 'middle class' in colonial Bengal was not based on properly bourgeois forms of industry, trade or even land management. Its members were only too eager to buy themselves positions in the vast and growing Permanent Settlement hierarchy, through intermediate tenures or superior 'raiyat' rights, once they had climbed the ladder of success via English education and the liberal professions. As a recent detailed study has shown, the Indian Association campaign on the Rent Bill revealed an interesting concern for making occupancy rights saleable, not necessarily residential and free of all restrictions on sub-letting—all of which "would obviously be of great help to 'ryots' settled in Calcutta or other urban centers and enjoying occupancy rights over agricultural lands."[45]

Attempts have been made also to discover elements of nationalism from the very beginnings of the 'renaissance'. Rammohun (and to a possibly greater extent some of the Derozians) did occasionally criticize Company administration, and they formulated demands which remanied basic to the later national movement right down to at least 1905 : Indianization of services, and a measure of representative government. They also pioneered the classic 'Moderate' techniques of press campaigns, public meetings, and petitions. Unlike the post-1870s generation of nationalist intellectuals,[46] however, what was conspicuously absent was any awareness of the basic fact of British economic exploitation through drain of wealth or decline of handicrafts. Rammohun remained utterly silent about the process of deindustrialization, though the population of towns like Dacca was declining catastrophically in his lifetime.[47] He did once refer to what a later generation would call the drain, but only to suggest European colonization as a solution, "a system which would encourage Europeans of capital to become permanent settlers with their families."[48] 'Progres-

sive' intellectuals down to the 1850s eagerly sought links with British 'liberal' free trader groups, the very force that was ruining Bengal's production economy. The Derozians, for example, modelled their 1843 political society on George Thompson's London British India Society of 1839, which at its inaugural meeting had referred to India as "a country capable of supplying many of our demands for tropical produce, and the desire and capacity of whose population to receive the manufactures, and thus stimulate the commerce of Great Britain, would under a just and enlightened rule, be incalculably developed".[49]

The breakthrough towards a recognizably nationalist ideology in the 1860s and '70s via patriotic literature, institutions like the Hindu Mela, and economic analysis often went hand in hand with the virtual swamping of socio-religious reform movements by Hindu revivalism. Reformers had indeed relied heavily on the support of the foreign government no doubt mainly because of an awareness of the lack of sufficiently strong internal social forces for modernistic charge.[50] The loyalism of some (though by no means all) Brahmos, most notably Keshabchandra Sen, was quite notorious. Yet the comfortable assumption often made that revivalism however harmful in its social or intellectual effects, did contribute directly and greatly to anti-colonial political radicalism does not seem particularly well-founded. To take first an example from the earlier period; if Rammohun or the Derozians were not proto-nationalists, neither were their conservative critics. The *Samachar Chandrika* even at the height of its campaign against the sati ban paraded its general loyalism.[51] A year later, it was urging governmental intervention against Hindu College boys allegedly turning atheist.[52] Non-interference in social matters by the foreign rulers was evidently desirable only so long as it helped to defend the status quo. The level of nationalistic politics seems to have actually declined in the Bengal of the late 1880s and '90s, the years particularly characterized by revivalism. Bepin Chandra Pal stated in March 1903 that after the Ilbert Bill days, "Politics have been neglected in the interest of abstract religion. And in consequence religious songs have supplanted the old national songs."[53]

Things changed radically for a few years with the Swadeshi upsurge of 1905-1908, though even here any complete identification of extremism with Hindu revivalism would be over simple.[54] What is more important, revivalism despite some short-term advantages proved politi-

cally extremely harmful. Not only did it contribute to Muslim alienation; the easy surrogate it seemed to provide for the far more difficult work of linking up the swaraj ideal with the concrete socio-economic demands of the masses probably hindered the conversion of Extremism into a genuinely broad-based movement. Despite the very striking anticipations of Gandhian satyagraha in the passive resistance creed of Aurobindo and Pal, and of much of Gandhian constructive village work in Rabindranath's pleas for self-help, the ultimate legacy of the Swadeshi movement was the heroic but basically sterile path of individual terror.[54]

III

The history of the 19th century Bengali intelligentsia thus emerges as fundamentally a story of repeated failure, and by way of conclusion, it is tempting to speculate on the possible causes of this tragedy.

The parallel occasionally attempted by admirers of the Bengal 'renaissance' with 19th century Russian intellectual history seems fruitful only in terms of the difference it reveals. Missing here is the intellectuals's agonized sense of alienation from the masses, so much deeper than occasional humanitarian sympathies and culminating in the "going to the people" movement. Nor is there any counterpart of that consistent opposition to autocracy, even at the cost of emigration or Siberian exile, or of that remarkable jump to one or other form of socialist ideology, by-passing conventional bourgeois liberalism. Narodnism, too, is missing, the distorted but not entirely irrelevant mirror of the peasants' objective strivings for the 'first road' of capitalist development through the emancipation of the small producer. Above all, the achievement under Lenin of an organic linkage between a significant section of the socialist intelligentsia and the working class, enabling the breakthrough from spontaneity to consciousness and realizing at least in part his what is To Be Done? program—all that is obviously absent in our past, and to a considerable extent in our present, too.

The 'advantages of backwardness' long stagnation followed by sudden leaps forward, are noticeable in Russian history, as well as in China or Vietnam, countries where colonial rule was either never fully established, or did not last very long. Not any advantage of backwardness, but a relentless process of inversion, seems characteristic of modern India. Institutions and ideals which did contribute to undoubted

progress in the metropolitan country, though often at great human cost e. g. free trader liberalism or full-scale private property in land turned into their opposites here, reflecting the basic fact that the very same forces that brought breath-taking progress in the West produced underdevelopment in the colonial world.

The full logic of colonialism worked itself out in British India, and particularly in Bengal where it lasted the longest. There was ample time for the growth of dependent vested interests and for the elaboration, in Gramscian language, of a hegemonic infra-structure producing voluntary consent side by side with direct politico-military domination. The latter in normal times could be kept relatively veiled, thus contributing, unlike in Tsarist Russia, to a plethora of deep-seated liberal illusions. Such illusions took three main forms: a long-continued faith in basic British good intentions, persisting well into the nationalist period; a belief in English education as the sovereign panecea;[56] and eager acceptance of liberal socio-political ideals. The Derozians, for example, a contemporary sympathetic account tells us, were ardent free-traders among whom "the very word Tory was a sort of ignominy."[57] The tragedy lay precisely here, in this pathetic eagerness to affiliate themselves with the latest in bourgeois liberalism.

Our 19th century intellectuals certainly had less freedom to choose between alternative ideologies than their Russian counterparts, while their English education automatically tended to seal them off far more from the peasantry. Yet absence of opportunities is not the whole explanation. Echoes of another England, still in the 1830s and '40s a land of bitter class struggle and working-class politics, did occasionally reach Calcutta through journals which the Derozians were almost certainly reading, without learning any impression on them.[58] Again, while Utilitarianism in general was greatly admired and imitated, Ricardian anti-landlord rent theory found no takers.

More fundamentally, therefore, the limitations of, our intellectuals, 'radical' and 'conservative' alike, were connected with the socio-economic structure moulded by colonialism. In Bengal, this meant firstly the progressive tightening of British control over industry and commerce, after a very shortlived 'bourgeois' spring in the age of Dwarkanath Tagore. Swadeshi industrial endeavours in the early 20th century soon petered away,[59] while the more successful Marwari challenge had little influence on Bengali social and cultural life due to the isolation and unpopularity of that immigrant community. Equally important was

the elaboration of the vast Permanent Settlement hierarchy of rentiers, big and small, sucking in virtually everyone with pretensions to respectability, and unproductive at every level since rent-receipts flowed in without much entrepreneurial effort or innovation. A Zamindar like Joykrishna Mukherji of Uttarpara gained the reputation of being an unusually enterprising landlord, on the strength of the improvements he tried to encourage among his peasants. After each of these he promptly tried to hike up the rents.[60] He did not go in for real capitalist farming, obviously because the traditional mode of exploitation, consolidated and systematized by British rule, brought in profits so much more easily.

The bourgeois values imbibed by the intelligentsia through their Western education and contacts thus remained bereft of material content or links with production. The intellectuals were attracted easily enough towards liberal social reform, nationalist politics, and (from the 1920s) even socialist ideology; the concrete impact of all this, however, on Bengali society as a whole was, and still remains, severely limited.

It is tempting to seek solace in the history of the peasantry, to bathe in the supposedly pure stream of popular Militant anti-imperialism as manifested in peasant uprisings. Unfortunately however, detailed research seems to indicate that these movements had their own and not entirely dissimilar, limitations. Directed against immediate local oppressors, such movements seldom questioned the ultimate, but distant British authority. In the Pabna rent strike of 1873, for instance, the most radical demand raised was that peasants were to "the ryots of Her Majesty the Queen, and of Her only". A modern historian comments : "It is surprising how the peasants' vision of a new order was associated with the Queen."[61] Not so very surprising or unique perhaps : one is reminded of the pathetic faith of generations of Russian peasants in their 'Little Father', the Tsar. During the Swadeshi movement, the discontent of Muslim peasants against predominantly Hindu Zamindars or mahajans could be given a communal and positively anti-patriotic twist with the greatest of ease.[62] What was lacking here was an ideology, either nationalist or social-revolutionary. That came, and even then only sporadically and in scattered areas, only in the 1920s and '30s, with Gandhian village work and Communist Kisan Sabha activities. In the labour movement, too, the grip of economism has never been really broken yet in our country.

The breakthrough in a sustained way from what Gramsci called the "economic-corporative" to the "hegemonic" level of political action[63] yet remains to be achieved in India. In such a situation, an over-enthusiastic search for father-figures or precursors seems neither historical nor particularly useful. One is reminded of Marx's warning given in the context of a country which had gone through a mighty revolution, that "the social revolution...can only create its poetry from the future, not from the past."[64]

THE 'WOMEN'S QUESTION' IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

THE CENTRALITY of what may be described for convenience, somewhat inelegantly, as the 'Women's question', to the entire gamut of educated middle class religious and social reform in nineteenth-century Bengal hardly requires spelling-out in detail. Rammohun and *sati,* Vidyasagar's campaigns for widow-remarriage and against Kulin polygamy, the daring radicalism of Young Bengal[1], the repeated splits within the Brahmo movement essentially on issues closely related to the women's question[2], the reassertion of traditionalist views in the movements for Hindu 'revival' towards the end of the century, the memorable literary expression of conflicting values and contemporary debates in Bankimchandra's *Bisha-Briksha* and Rabindranath's *Chokher Bali* and *Gora*—to go on adding to the list would be labouring the obvious. But it is the most obvious of facts which sometimes stand most in need of hostorical explanation, and on the whole the fairly voluminous literature on the so-called Bengal Renaissance seems to have made little attempt to explore just why it was that women's emancipation—of a sort—came to occupy an absolutely central position in the concerns of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia for a specific period of time[3]. My aim in this very brief and tentative paper is to search for possible explanations, as well as to pin-point some of the limits of what nineteenth century Bengali reformers liked to call *stri-swadhinata*!

The simplest explanation, in terms of the influence of Western, and particularly British models on an English-educated group, is not really satisfactory. It is true that English textbooks, literature, and, in some cases, visits abroad brought awareness of a different world without seclusion or child-marriage, where romantic love seemed to reign supreme in poems and novels (though much less so in reality) and widow were not burnt or forbidden to remarry. Sibnath Shastri's autobiography has an costatic chapter on the combination of freedom with moral discipline which he observed among middle-class English

women during a trip to that country in 1888[4], John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women found* many eager readers in Bengal, while another stimulus was no doubt provided by missionary strictures about degradation of women as one of the principal evils of Hindu society. Yet, here as in other things, what is important to note is the selection-process of work even among the most West-ward-looking of the colonial intelligentsia. Concern with the problems of women formed after all only a minor element in the thought-currents and activity of nineteenth-century Europe, with its essentially male-dominated movements for nationalism, liberal reform, democracy and socialism. Christian missionary propaganda in India concentrated its fire equally on 'polytheism' or 'idolatry' and caste, and work among the low-castes and tribals constituted on the whole its principal focus. Far from 'blindly' imitating the West as has been alleged so often, the intellectuals of early or mid-nineteenth century Bengal in some respects present an interesting contrast to both these 'models'. From Rammohun till at least the 1870s, sympathy for patriotic and liberal movements in the West was combined with a fundamental acceptance of foreign political and economic domination over India, tempered by occasional pleas for mildly 'liberal' administrative reforms which remained a minor concern as compared to the central thrust for social and religious change. Again, as Rabindranath Tagore reminded Rajnarayan Bose in a letter of January 1955, the Brahmo attack was fundamentally on 'idolatry', and not caste[5], and no serious attempt was made to emulate Christian missionary welfare-cum-conversion work among untouchables or tribals.

The nineteenth-century initiative for improving the lot of women came essentially from men, and so an alternative explanation in terms of any autonomous 'feminist' pressure is hardly acceptable either. It is true that there are a few scattered examples indicating that Bengali women were not necessarily always mere passive recipients of reformist boons from their menfolk, and much more research is urgently needed on this point.[6] The *Samachar Darpan* of 21 March 1835 published a letter, allegedly from some Chinsura women, demanding women's education, widow-remarriage, an end to polygamy and seclusion, and free choice in marriage.[7] Women of Santipur are said to have woven a sari with a border hailing Vidyasagar[8], and Gurucharan Mahalanobis' autobiography contains an interesting account of a widow who took the initiative in arranging her remarriage with a man of her own choice.[9] It needs to be emphasized also that great courage was often needed even

while giving apparently passive support and sustenance to reformist husbands. Sibnath Shastri has some very perceptive comments on the lot of Durgamohan Das' wife. Durgamohan, he reminds us, could go out, mix with friends, and have an active social and intellectual life, but "Brahmamoyee had to remain confined day and night within the house and listen to the rebukes and slanders of relatives and neighbours".[10] Yet occasional initiative and heroic but subordinate support obviously do not amount to anything remotely resembling a genuinely autonomous women's movement. ....

A passage in the paper Maheshchandra Deb presented to the Derozian Society for Acquisition of General Knowledge in 1839 may lead us nearer towards an explanation of the centrality of women's issues in the concerns of nineteenth-century male reformers. Deb's comprehensive critique of the woman's lot—seclusion, arranged marriage, child marriage, polygamy, the ban on widow remarriage—was accompanied by the comment that such problems were "under their eyes every day and hour of their existence within the precincts of their own respective domiciles."[11] Clumsily expressed through the newly acquired foreign tongue, Maheshchandra Deb's words still point to certain acute problems of inter-personal adjustment within the family. Rabindranath's hilarious poem about a husband spouting romantic verse before a wife still engrossed with her dolls reflected a very real and serious problem.[12] Most first-generation reformers in the nineteenth century would have been married off at parental command in their teens, while reform activities often led to the kind of social ostracism and isolation of the reformers' family from their kindred vividly portrayed in the Derozian Krishnamohan Banerjee's play *The Persecuted* (1831) and in much Brahmo biographical literature. Efforts at education and a limited and controlled emancipation of wives thus became a personal necessity for survival in a hostile social world. Reform attempts in fact were survival in a hostlie social world. Reform attempts in fact were very often concentrated on near-relatives: Brahmos busily educated their wives, Durgamohan Das married off his widowed stepmother, while—to pass to a lighter vein—Gurucharan Mahalanobis in his autobiography gave a remarkably 'economic-determinist' explanation of his motives for getting his wife out of the purdah.[13]

Concentration of reform attempts on the women's question thus had a strong personal dimension; it was also more within the reach of the kind of social group we are studying than alternative channels of

potential reformist energy. Thus translation of Western ideals of nationalism, political democracy, and social equality into real movements (as distinct from vicarious admiration for such movements abroad or expression through myths about ancient Hindus or Maratha and Rajput 'nationalism') was far more difficult for a colonial intelligentsia drawn overwhelmingly from upper castes, dependent for their jobs and often landed interests on the colonial structure, and extremely distant from the masses.

'Middle-class' interest in women's questions and social reform in general evidently declined from the late 19th century with the rise of nationalism. Not only did patriotism at times encourage social conservatism; participation in nationalist activity implied social prestige rather than social ostracism, reducing the need for conscious efforts at inter-personal adjustments within the family. Nationalism was increasingly translated into the language of religion, Gandhian austerity and calls for self-sacrifice and periodic fasts evoked the traditional Hindu mode of renunciation. The *sannyasi* is outside the domain of caste and may even represent a movement of individualist break-away or 'revolt' of a sort; and yet his presence does not challenge or seriously modify, and indeed strengthens, the social structure based on caste hierarchy and male domination.[14] And so women from extremely conservative families could fully participate in Gandhian politics, even go to jail, without fundamentally changing family relationships or their consciousness as women.[15]

Our search for possible explanations of the focus on Women's questions during a definite time-bound phase leads on to some consideration of the nature and limits of nineteenth-century reform. Certain limitations are very obvious: thus a reform initiative coming from upper caste educated bhadralok groups not unnaturally, focussed in the main on upper-caste social 'evil' like *sati*, the widow-remarriage taboo, or Kulin polygamy, less often noted are features like a greater conservatism and conformity with age,[16] a style of reform through appeal to the *shastras* which sometimes raised additional problems[17], and the tendency for reform to get confined to change, often of a rather symbolic sort, within an enclosed sect. Thus much Brahmo energy was spent on disputes as to whether *acharyas* in the *samaj* should discard the sacred thread or about where women should sit in Brahmo prayer-meetings; symbolic change within a sect, in practice

almost a new sub-caste, thus became a surrogate for broader social praxis.[18]

While evaluating the nature of the reformist initiative, it is important to remember that *Stri-swadhinata* in the nineteenth century was usually combined with a tremendous emphasis on puritannical norms and restraints—and as could have been expected, this often had a strong patriarchal aspect. The term 'Brahmo' in the end became in Bengal almost a synonym for prudishness. In part such puritanism was possibly no more than a defence-mechanism for a movement which could —and often did—incur charges of licentiousness. But certain other dimensions may have been present, too. As the first generation of reformers often had to break away from their kinship group, a certain shift away from joint families towards nuclear units was possibly taking place. It is not impossible that at times this could have encouraged patriarchal authority, and reformist husbands may have been occasionally imposing new norms of religion and social conduct on not-too enthusiastic wives. One might recall Lawrence stones model of the shift, in 16th-17th century England from 'open lineage' to 'restricted patriarchal nuclear' families.[19]

Such speculations apart, the characteristic nineteenth-century combination of women's emancipation with an insistence upon puritannical restraint and discipline is certainly very reminiscent of what a modern advocate of women's liberation has described as the "Victorian feeling that the female must relinquish sexuality if she is to be in any sense autonomous, a variant on the bondage of 'virtue' which demands sexual inhibition in a woman if she is to maintain her social and therefore her economic position."[20] Thus Debendranath Tagore's *Tattvabodhini Patrika* in 1872 contrasted "real freedom" of women with "license", and spoke of a "natural division of labour" by which men work outside the house while woman's place remains in her home.[21] The *Somprakash*, another generally pro-reform weekly, warned in the same year that women's freedom must be preceded by proper education, for otherwise freedom might mean loss of chastity.[22] Even Sibnath Shastri, leader of the most advanced group of Brahmos which had adopted as its central creed a condemnation of both sexual and caste inequality[23] repeatedly emphasized in his account of English women the combination of freedom with discipline.[24] Here indeed, we encounter a basic reformist 'style' for contemporary intelligentsia, attitudes towards peasants or labour were in fact very similar. Consi-

derable humanitarian sympathy was invariably tempered by an obsession with education as a restraining and disciplining force and a firm disapproval of autonomous action. To cite two examples out of many : Pyarichand Mitra's article in *Calcutta Review* in 1846 vividly described and condemned zamindari abuses but offered education of the landlord as the panacea and was very critical of ryot 'dharma-ghat' or rent-strikes,[25] and Sasipada Banerji's philanthropic educational and temperance work among Baranagar jute mill-hands obtained the enthusiastic support of theh white employers who felt that such efforts were made for a more efficient and manageable labour force.[26]

The literature of the nineteenth century does provide some evidence for occasional aspirations—day-dreams might be a better word—for a less blood-less and inhibited type of emancipated femininty : the Pramila of Madhusudan's *Meghnad-badh-Kavya*, some of Bankim-chandra's forthright heroines, or that novelist's interesting comparison of Sakuntala with Miranda and Desdemona.[27] Yet the return to earth is seldom delayed. Debi-Chaudhurani ends her days as a devout and submissive Hindu wife, and in Madhusudan's *Ekei Ki Bale Sabhyata* westernised young men have their 'liberty Hall' in a brothel while their wives and sisters stay at home playing cards.

Analysis of the limitations of the 'nineteenth-century renaissance' should not degenerate into carping criticism. So far as inter-personal relations and male attitudes towards women are concerned, inhabitants of Delhi in the 1980s have no right to sit in moral judgement over predecessors. It remains important to emphasize problems yet unsolved, for the undoubted 20th-century advance in terms of reduced seclusion, education employment, and legal rights, has come about through objective socio-economic pressures, some post-independence legislation, rather than clear-cut ideology or really autonomous struggle. Mental attitudes and values have consequently changed very much less. The experience not only of India, but even of countries which have undergone far more radical transformation surely emphasizes that genuine women's liberation cannot come as an automatic fall-out from other types of change but requires sustained, self-conscious, and independent struggle.

PRIMITIVE REBELLION AND MODERN NATIONALISM : A NOTE ON FOREST SATYAGRAHA IN THE NON-COOPERATION AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENTS

"FOREST SATYAGRAHA"—the reassertion by poor peasants and tribals of traditional customary rights over forests "reserved" by the colonial state—represents an almost forgotten but fascinating aspect of the Gandhian era. While conventional nationalist historiography has tended to concern itself mainly with the ideals and activities of great leaders, the much-advertised recent shift in the work of the "Cambridge school" from nation and province to "locality" retains a basically elitist stance with its incessant search for relatively privileged groups whose "ambitions" are assumed to have "created" political movements.[1] Forest movements, involving in the main the lowest strata of rural society, quite naturally seldom get more than a passing reference in such accounts.[2]

I have tried in this paper to make a preliminary study of forest conflicts connected with nationalism during the decade 1921-31 on the basis of fairly obvious and easily available sources.[3] I feel that apart from its intrinsic interest, the subject has some relevance to the current debate among students of Indian nationalism about the significance and the degree of autonomy peasant and lower-class movements in Gandhian upsurges.[4] At a more general level, a further theme suggests itself. A millenarian note was not uncommon in the reassertion of lost forest rights, and studies of forest satyagraha might hopefully contribute a little some day to the world-wide discussion among anthropologists and historians concerning the relations between "primitive rebels" and modern social movements.[5]

Conflicts over forest claims have been extremely common in feudal or early-capitalist rural societies in many parts of the world. If royal and aristocratic monopolies over hunting rights had been a major peasant grievance in the Europe of the ancient regime, the development of bourgeois conceptions of property soon posed an even greater threat to the precious customary rights of poorer village-folk to the timber,

grazing and other facilities of forest lands. It is interesting to recall that an article condemning legislation against theft of wood in the Rhinelands constituted one of the earliest publications of the young Marx.[6] Forest conflicts in Hanoverian England have been illuminated by E. P. Thompson's recent study.[7] Eric Hobsbawm has described the tragic impact of post-unification Italian forest laws on the marginal small proprietors and the peasant millenarianism it helped to produce in Tuscany[8] and Eugene Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen* contains abundant information about the gradual erosion of peasant communal rights over woodlands in nineteenth century France.

Forest rights have been particularly important in our country, with its peculiar coexistence of food-gathering, shifting cultivation ("podu" or "jhum") and settled agriculture.[9] In colonial India, pressures on forest lands took the form of usurious exploitation by traders and money-lenders from more developed areas rather than the growth of capitalist property relations, and led to occasional tribal explosions among which the great Santal rebellion of 1855 against Bengali "dinkus" and their white protectors is the best known. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century onwards, a further patent source of tension emerged as the colonial state tightened its control over forest zones for revenue purposes, banning or restricting shifting cultivation in "reserved" forests and trying to monopolize forest wealth. The correspondence of the Bombay Governor with Lord Lansdowne in February 1890 reveals a vivid picture of fires underground. "The Forest policy, the Abkari policy, the Salt duty, the screwing-up of land revenue by revision settlements, all make us odious."[10] "We know pretty well what the educated natives want, but what the feelings are of the uneducated, I admit I don't know. That in these parts the Forest Department is hated is a fact and I have always considered an abrupt cessation of privileges (which in many cases are *rights*) a most dangerous policy....." The Governor described peasants as complaining : "You make us pay more land revenue—and at the same time you prevent us from getting the branches we want for our ash-manure, and the grass we want for our cows...."[11] The continuity of popular grievances is striking, though seldom noted in conventional historiography : salt, land revenue, excise and forests were precisely the issues around which Gandhi was to forge a country-wide movement a whole generation later.

Data on such conflicts happen to be particularly abundant for the hill areas of present-day Andhra Pradesh. The Chenchus of the Nalla-

malai hills (Cuddapah and Nellore districts) were described in 1909 as "constantly in debt to the Komatis ... (and) practically their slaves as regards the supply of timber and other forest produce." From 1898 onwards the Forest Department was trying to reduce traditional Chenchu forest rights-restricting the amount of timber permitted for domestic purposes, reducing the area set apart for grazing, etc.—an effort inhibited, however, by the fact that a policy of pure repression might mean, "the total destruction by fire of the Nallamalai forests."[12] Administration was further tightened up after the 1913 Forest Committee Report, and this coincided with an extension of links with the coastal areas, cattle owned by prosperous Raddis being sent to graze in the upland forests under "Lambadi" graziers. A sharp rise in the number of forest offences was reported in 1920-21, and efforts were made to expel Chenchus aiding Lambadis in the Cuddapah forests. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Rayachoti taluk of Cuddapah became a storm-centre of forest satyagraha under Non-Cooperation auspices in 1921-22.[13]

Even more revealing perhaps were the developments in the hill regions lying to the north and north-east of the Godavari, constituting under the British the Godavari and Vizagapatam Agency Tracts and inhabited mainly by the Koyas, the Konda Doras and the Kondhs. Thurston in 1909 found the Koyas "terribly victimized by traders and money-lenders from the low country." Shifting or "podu" cultivation was common in this entire area, not really because the tribals were ignorant or lazy as hasty administrators sometimes believed, but because most of them had "no ploughs or agricultural cattle."[14] At the heart of this region lay Chodavaram, the "Rampa" country (so-called by the British after the family name of its traditional chief or "mansabdar")—the centre of almost endemic rebellion for more than a hundred years. After this mansabdar had made a raid into the plains in 1813, the British came to an arrangement with him, allowing him to go on collecting rent from his subordinate hill chiefs (called muttadars). Conflicts soon developed between the mansabdar and the tribal villages led by their muttadars, for the former had started "deriving a considerable revenue from taxes on fuel and grazing and other unauthorized cesses" while enjoying the protection of the British.[15] There were revolts in 1840, 1845, 1858, 1861 and 1862, culminating in a major rising in March 1879 to which police exactions, indebtedness of tribals to low country traders, and new Abkari regulations farming out toddy revenue to outsiders and restrict-

ing domestic drawing of toddy also contributed greatly. This became a really major affair, embracing 5,000 square miles by July 1879 and spreading to the Golkonda hills in Vizagapatam to the north-east and Rekapelle in Bhadrachalam district to the west (where restrictions on podu cultivation were being imposed).[16] It could be suppressed only in November 1880 with the use of six regiments of Madras infantry and two companies of sappers and miners, and the "harassing guerrilla warfare" was effective enough to compel the removal of the mansabdar and a direct settlement with the muttadar. Unrest continued, however. with the tightening of forest rulers providing an additional major source of discontent, now directly anti-British: the reserved forests of Bhadrachalam were extended from 68 square miles in 1874 to 942 square miles by 1901, forest revenues going up in the same period from Rs 21,000 to Rs 2 lakhs.[17] Risings were reported again in 1900 and 1916. That of 1900 in Vizagapatam Agency seems particularly interesting. It was led by a Konda Dora named Korra Mallaya who "pretended that he was inspired—gathered round him a camp of 4-5000 people from various parts of the agency—gave out that he was a reincarnation of one of the five Pandava brothers; that his infant son was the boy Krishna: that he would drive out the English and rule the country himself; and that to effect this, he would arm his followers with bamboos, which should be turned by magic into guns, and could change the weapons of the authorities into water."[18] All the classic elements of millenarian primitive rebellion are clearly evident in this brief but strangely moving account.

In this explosive atmosphere came the spark of Non-Cooperation, with its rumour (necessarily vague and distorted but all the more potent) of the coming of an apocalyptic "Gandhi Raj." When Gandhi came to Cuddapah in September 1921, he was greeted by "enormous crowds" of villagers who believed "that he would get their taxes reduced and the Forest Regulations abolished—many returned home greatly disappointed."[19] Forest satyagraha as it developed in Rayachoti and Palnad (a forest taluk of Guntur district where tightening of forest laws had coincided with a bad harvest in 1921) was marked by two district strands. Congress leaders like Konda Venkatappayya at the Palnad taluk Political Conference (August 1921) "were not very much in favour of the movement for the defiance of forest regulations" and wanted to confine the agitation to a social boycott of forest officials. But already from July onwards villagers had started sending their cattle

into reserved forests without paying grazing fees and the movement in Palnad culminated with some forest villages proclaiming swaraj and violently attacking police parties in early 1922 at Veludurthi, Jattipalem and Minchalapadu (where three were killed in police firing).[20] At Rayachoti from August 1921 "during a period of 3 or 4 months there was quite an epidemic of forest crime attended with violence." Village munsiffs put up notices "saying that all the people were free to go into the forests and remove what they wanted."[21] The Forest Administration Report of 1921-22 admitted a virtual loss of control for some time over Palnad taluk and the Nallamalai hills in Rayachoti in face of "large bands of men imbued with the idea that Gandhi Raj was either being or about to be established and that the forest was theirs to work their will upon."[22] What was involved was evidently far more than an interested agitation of prosperous coastal cattle breeders acting through Lambadis, as Baker would like to have it.

Nor was forest satyagraha merely an Andhra affair. On 10 July 1921, Reading reported to the Secretary of State that 250,000 out of 400,000 acres of forest in the Kumaon Division of U. P. had been burnt down.[23] Cavalry had to be sent to Muzaffarpur in North Bihar in December 1921 to tackle an agitation over grazing rights.[24] From Bengal, too, came reports of Santals reasserting their lost forest rights in the Jhargram region of Midnapur, and widespread looting of woodlands in Banskhali and Cox's Bazar areas of Chittagong.[25]

Forest movements died down quickly after the anti-climax of the Bardoli withdrawal, with one major exception—the old Rampa country north of the Godavari, scene of a veritable guerrilla war between August 1922 and September 1924.[26] It was led by a remarkable man, Alluri Sitarama Raju, still revered as a hero and martyr in his home districts but almost unknown outside Andhra.[27] From the vivid account left by the Special Commissioner of Agency Operations in August 1924, the roots of this rebellion seem fairly familiar: forest laws, made particularly irksome by a corrupt Tahsildar of Guden, coming on top of exploitation by sowcars. Peasants with some land and cattle were hit by the restrictions on grazing, "as Kuda Ramayya put it, 'we are fined Rs. 15 for cutting a stick and have to pay 4 as for a calf so high to graze.'" "Others who had no lands or cattle said they had been able to eke out living by podu before it was restricted. Podu does seem to have been the resource of such though the sowcar probably got most of the profit, and also to some extent of the men with lands because

they have not enough cattle to properly manure and cultivate the valley land—podu for 3 years at least gives good crops."[28] The recorded grievances of individual rebel prisoners make fascinating reading. Thus Yendu Padal (a rebel leader) had not been paid for readwork and constables had seized milk (and) fowls from him; four "landowning" rebels from Malamakaram had murdered a forest guard and joined Raju as desperate men (a classic beginning social bandits, as Hobsbawm reminds us);[29] "Edem Pantayya—had some of his old cultivated land included in the forest reserve and had been fined for illicit grazing"; "Boodu Chinnayya was fined Rs 40/- once for doing podu in a prohibited area."[30]

Yet certain new elements are at least equally striking. Sitarama Raju was not a local village muttadar unlike previous leaders, but "a man without family or interest,"[31] an outsider coming from a group which claimed Kshatriya status and often some proficiency in Telegu and Sanskrit scholarship.[32] He had been wandering among the tribals from 1915 as a sannyasi claiming astrological and medicinal powers, and coming under Non-Cooperation influence in 1921, had started preaching against drink and organizing village panchayats.[33] The Deputy Tahsildar of Malkanagiri who was summoned by the rebel leader in June 1923 described Raju as dressed in a "red coloured khaddar—he spoke highly of Mr Gandhi but considers that violence is necessary."[34] The Tahsildar of Chodavaram reported in October 1922 that Raju in a meeting with him expressed sorrow "that he was not able to shoot Europeans as they were always accompanied and surrounded by Indians whom he did not want to kill"[35] and in fact at the Damarapalli ambush of 24 September 1922 the rebels allowed the advance party of Indians to pass and then shot down two British officers.[36] But anti-imperialist ideology was still accompanied by primitive messianic elements. "Raju hints he is bullet-proof," reported the Malkanagiri Deputy Tahsildar,[37] while a rebel proclamation in April 1924 claimed that "God Sri Jagannadhaswami... would incarnate very shortly as Kalkiavatara and appear before us...."[38]

The rebellion began with a series of successful attacks on police stations to obtain arms, and developed into a remarkable guerrilla war. The rebel force numbered no more than a hundred, but had "supernumeraries all over the disturbed area who joined it whenever it was in their locality"[39]—fish in water, in other words, who enjoyed the sympathy "of the majority of the local hill population over an area of about 2500 square miles,"[40] who had cost the Madras Government

Rs 15 lakhs by March 1924,[41] and who were able to defy the Malabar special Police and Assam Rifles for nearly two years. The Madras Government repeatedly pleaded for special powers from New Delhi "to deal with what is virtually a rebel population."[42] Eventually, Raju was captured in an accidental encounter on 6 May 1924, and was promptly reported shot in an "attempt to run away"[43]—a formula that sounds unpleasantly familiar. Even then, resistance continued for another three or four months.

The next great wave of forest unrest coincided with the Civil Disobedience upsurge of 1930-31, though research on Forest Administration Reports and judicial records might reveal many more incidents and a greater continuity than is possible to establish so far.[44] An intriguing shift in the location of forest movements becomes evident in 1930-31. Apart from a single ambush of a police party by Kondhs in the Vizagapatam Agency in January 1931,[45] "a dangerous, though isolated and quickly suppressed outbreak of defiance of Forest grazing regulations" in Kangra (Punjab),[46] and extensive hunting of elephants and rhino in North Kamrup (Assam) by Kachari tribals allegedly inspired by the Congress leader Chandraprobha Saikiani,[47] the centres of forest agitation were all in the hill regions of Maharashtra, Karnatak and the Central Provinces. One is tempted to suggest an inverse relationships between the strength of Congress organization—most evident in 1930 in provinces like U. P., Bihar and Gujarat as well as parts of Andhra—and the development of more elemental and uninhibited forms of popular action like forest upheavals.[48] Despite (or may be because of) the sustained work of Congress volunteers in the Bardoli region of Gujarat among the Raniparaj on forest issues as well as prohibition,[49] forest satyagraha caught on much more in the politically more "backward" regions like the Central Provinces—where a badly frightened Governor in July 1930 described Civil Disobedience as "sweeping up from Bombay into Berar and Mahratta country. The popular attitude towards it is semi-religious. . . ."[50] "I shall have to hit hard and may have to shoot a bit," he informed Irwin a few days later, referring to forest "maenads."[51]

As in 1921, two forms he phases can be distinguished in Civil Disobedience forest satyagraha. The element of centralized initiative, direction and organization is considerably more evident in 1930. Already in February 1930, a circular of Motilal Nehru had suggested breach of Central Provinces forest laws (though only as "an exception"),[52] and the

Working Committee in May sanctioned forest satyagraha as a legitimate form of Civil Disobedience. Training camps were set up for volunteers (as at Sangamner in Ahmednagar district of Bombay),[53] satyagraha centres were carefully selected (106 in Berar, for instance, between July and September 1930)[54] and efforts were made to restrict the movement to boycott of Forest Department auctions and peaceful mass violations of grazing and timber rules[55] -with the forest produce being brought to towns and publicly sold there as with illegally manufactured salt. The Karnatak Satyagraha Mandal even tried specify the kind of trees that were to be cut down.[56] The movement developed into a really formidable one over vast areas, so much so that the Bombay Governor later recommended the head of the Forest Department for the Honours List on the ground that he had "had a particularly difficult time" during the Civil Disobedience days.[57]

As repression intensified and removed the leaders, however, the movement soon acquired much less inhibited forms, most notably among the Gonds of the Central Provinces and the Kolis of the Western Ghats Space does not permit detailed analysis of the very numerous attempted rescues of arrested leaders and violent attacks on police and forest guards, but the official catalogues of "Congress violence" list ten such instance in the Central Provinces between July and October 1930,[58] and 20 in Bombay Presidency between May and October of the same year.[59] The Gonds of Banjaridhal (Betul district, C.P.), for instance, bitterly resisted police attempts to arrest their leader Ganjam Korku on 22-23 August.[60] The Kolis of Kanashi and Chankapur (Nasik district, Bombay), "filled with stories that the British Raj had been replaced by Gandhi Raj," after a ceremonial banquet "started to shout Congress slogan—refused to disperse (and) hurled down stones" in face of police firing.[61] In Baglan taluk of the same district on 13 October, after some arrests had been made for refusal of grazing fees, "about 100 women from Tembhe—suddenly came up and formed a cordon round the arrested men to prevent their being taken away. The party subsequently decided to give up the arrested men...."[62] Such men and women deserve a better fate than the total oblivion that has been their lot so far.

A Congress leaflet on one such incident (Bilashi in Satara district) rigidly demarcating peaceful forest satyagraha from violent tribal outbursts,[63] serves as a point to a conclusion which must already appear quite obvious. Though Gandhian nationalism directly or indirectly made

a great and perhaps indispensable contribution to the forging of a movement out of longfelt but inchoate grievances, it made little effort to integrate poor peasant and tribal militancy into its mainstream. Where more permanent links were established with tribal movements, it was usually with the relatively moderate sects striving for internal reform (often on "Sanskritizing" lines) which tended to appear after the flash-point of millenarian hope had passed away.[64] The later stages of the Tana Bhagat sect among the Oraons on the Sapha Hor revival under Bangam Manjhi among Gumia Santals in 1930, might serve as examples.[65] For the rest, as with the not entirely dissimilar cases of communal riots springing out of agrarian discontent, tribal movements in isolation developed along "separatist" channels—the Nagas, for instance, or the Jharkhand agitation in Chota Nagpur. That the situation has had much greater potentialities in a revolutionary direction has been revealed, however, in the occasional, sporadic, perhaps sometimes adventurist, but truly heroic instances of movements under Left guidance: the Hajongs of the Garo Hills organized by Moni Singh in the late 1930s, the Rajbansis who flocked to the Tebhaga banner in 1946-47, the Warlis of Maharashtra under Godavari Parulekar, the Koyas of the Godavari forest under Communist leadership in the great Telengana struggle of 1946-51,[66] Naxalbari and Srikakulam in more recent times.

As I conclude this paper, news comes of forcible occupation of forest lands and uprooting of trees in West Midnapur, allegedly led by the CPI (M) and the CPI.[67] The issues raised by forest satyagraha, like so many other hopes that our national movement aroused but could not fulfil, remain with us today thirty years after independence.

THE LOGIC OF GANDHIAN NATIONALISM CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND THE GANDHI-IRWIN PACT (1930-31)

"This is the way the world ends,
Not with a bang but a whimper,"

THUS JAWAHARLAL NEHRU recalled in 1936 his immediate reactions to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, in a mood characteristically intellectual, wry and resigned.[1] Right from his South African days, Gandhi had had the habit of disconcerting his followers by abrupt unilateral retreats.[2] But March 1931 was perhaps the greatest anti-climax of them all, since it called off a movement which had been launched for the first time under the banner of Purna Swaraj, and which was proclaimed by its official chronicler later on to have been a "fight to the finish".[3] It is true that the Viceroy had been forced to treat the national leader on a quite novel basis of courtesy and equality, and the average Congress worker released from jail seems to have gone back to his village or town in a mood vastly different from the near-total disenchantment and frustration of 1922.[4] Yet even the official preface to the *Collected Works* of the Mahatma admits that the Delhi agreement "yielded no tangible gains to the nationalist cause; the Viceroy drove a hard bargain and secured all the immediate advantage".[5] Participation in the Round Table Conference at Irwin's terms was quickly revealed to have been a big mistake; a premium was put on all kinds of communal and sectional intrigues, and Civil Disobedience had to be resumed soon enough on a much less favourable and essentially defensive terrain. It is easy to share Nehru's sense of a "great emptiness as of something precious gone, almost beyond recall".[6] Perhaps he was remembering his bold words of March 1930: "One special feature of the struggle initiated by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress is that there is no room for any compromise".[7]

The aim of the present paper, however, is not any debunking or "exposure" of the Gandhian leadership, for which purpose the choice of an admittedly weak moment would be polemically expedient but

historically quite one-sided and unsound. The whole history of our nationalism is marked by a pattern of ups and downs, advances followed by retreats, and I feel that a study of some of the crucial turning-points, the onset or the end of a particular wave of struggle, might help us towards a deeper understanding of the inner logic of the entire movement. Determined in the immediate sense by the decisions of leaders and by the personal influences working upon them, this logic in the ultimate analysis must have been conditioned by deeper socio-political forces, and it is the business of the historian to try to remain aware of both these levels of analysis.

The Gandhi-Irwin Pact has on the whole received less scholarly attention than the withdrawal of Non-Cooperation after Chauri Chaura in February 1922. Reticence is natural enough for orthodox Gandhians. The two possible arguments in defence of Bardoli—the obvious and flagrant breach of non-violence, and Nehru's later plea that the movement was really "going to pieces"[8]—not entirely convincing in the context of 1922, seem largely irrelevant here. It is true that two weeks before the Delhi Pact, Gandhi had sent a telegram to Bombay criticizing the use of violence in picketing and that he harped on this theme several times in the next few days.[9] But all this was after talks with Irwin had begun, and the Viceroy had requested him "to get Bombay to go slow in picketing etc."[10] Gandhi had not been worried overmuch by earlier, and more serious, local outbursts of violence (for example, at Sholapur in May 1930); indeed, he seems to have given assurances to Jawaharlal and to the Communist prisoners at Meerut "that Civil Disobedience ..need not be stopped because of a sporadic act of violence".[11] As for the movement going to pieces, Nehru does not use this argument at all in the context of 1931, while Gandhi himself had declared on 31 January 1931: "I have no doubt that we can carry on this fight for any length of time".[12] Above all, the British would certainly not have bothered to negotiate with a defeated Congress.[13]

Left critics of Gandhi have also concentrated fire mainly on 1922, no doubt largely because of the ready ammunition provided by the unusually frank and explicitly prozamindar nature of the Bardoli resolution.[14] Abuse tends to replace analysis in R. P. Dutt's account of Gandhi's role in the Civil Disobedience movement: "This Jonah of revolution, the general of unbroken disasters...the mascot of the bourgeoisie", seeking "to find the means in the midst of a formidable

revolutionary wave to maintain leadership of the mass movement..."[15] Such a tirade ignores the undoubted role of Gandhi and of Gandhian ideology and methods in the making of this "formidable revolutionary wave." The assumption that all this could have happened without Gandhi is unproved and probably unprovable. And if we do grant that assumption, the success of Gandhi in arbitrarily calling off the movement becomes utterly inexplicable. Surely a revolutionary wave of totally independent origin should have proceeded better and along more radical courses once the bourgeois mascot had abdicated his role as leader.

A more balanced and helpful theoretical framework is that worked out by Bipan Chandra in his analysis of the national movement in terms of a basically continuous "pressure—compromise—pressure" strategy pursued by the leadership—a strategy which conformed, he argues, to the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie. This avoids the simplistic equation of compromise with total sell-out or compradorism, emphasizes the longterm contradictions between even moderate bourgeois elements and imperialism, while at the same time pinpointing the deliberate avoidance of all-out mass confrontations (the alternative logic of "pressure-victory") in which bourgeois leadership might have been difficult to maintain.[16] I feel, however, that there is an unnecessary emphasis here on the existence of a consciously worked-out strategy, the proof of which requires a much more detailed study of the interests and aspirations of recognizably bourgeois elements functioning amidst the specifics of a colonial situation. We have to analyse at greater depth also the precise movements of time when pressure was unleashed or replaced by compromise, and the fourteen months between the Lahore Congress (December 1929) and the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (March 1931) seem particularly suitable from this point of view.

In a recent work, R. J. Moore has argued that the early enthusiasm of the Indian business community (and particularly of Bombay) for Gandhi's 1930 programme was soon replaced by pressures for compromise, as "civil disobedience was bad for business".[17] Here is a valuable hint which, however, requires much broader elaboration, particularly because the specific data cited by Moore (a few letters taken from the Purshottamdas Thakurdas and M. R. Jayakar Papers) date from the June-August 1930 period, when Gandhi was still rejecting any compromise.

A brief resume of the basic thesis of this paper may be helpful at this stage. I have tried to focus, first, upon the social forces at work

in the Civil Disobedience movement and their changing interrelationships, and, secondly, the shifts in Gandhi's attitudes during 1930-31 and the influences upon him. The central theme that emerges from these two levels of analysis is the vastly enhanced role of distinctively bourgeois groups, both in contributing heavily to the initial striking power of Civil Disobedience and ultimately in its calling off. The extension to considerable sections of the peasantry was a second crucial feature; quantitatively of the highest significance, it remained, however, politically subordinate, as the bourgeoisie proved skilful enough to cash in on popular discontent and yet retain ultimate control over it. Towards the end of 1930, a contradiction was emerging at the heart of Civil Disobedience: certain forms of struggle more definitely in the control of the bourgeoisie or its dependent allies (for example, urban boycott, or the no-tax movement of patidars in Gujarat) were definitely weakening, while there was a possibility that other, less manageable forms (like no-rent, or tribal outbursts) might gather strength. It was at this point that bourgeois pressures for a compromise became insistent, and, given the nature of the Gandhian leadership (no mere bourgeois tool in any simplistic or mechanical sense, but still manifesting a certain coincidence of aims with Indian business interests at specific points) and the absence of a coherent left alternative, the bang ended in a whimper.

II

The best recent work on Civil Disobedience and on Gandhian nationalism in general has taken the form of grassroot studies at the district or even village level, and has proceeded on the basis of fieldwork, interviewing participants, and collecting local data in the regional languages.[18] In the absence of a sufficient number of such detailed studies, however, generalizations about Civil Disobedience at the level required by our present theme still have to be grounded mainly on data of a more conventional type: Home Political records, AICC files, and the papers of a few prominent figures, British or Indian. A cross-section of the Civil Disobedience movement at its height (in the summer of 1930) on the basis of a partial study of such admittedly limited sources leads to three tentative conclusions: participation, on a probably quite unprecedented scale, by large sections of a recognizably bourgeois class; the spread of the movement deep into rural, and sometimes even tribal areas through a variety of forms occasionally

rather unexpected; and the relative passivity, in sharp contrast to the preceding two or three years, of industrial labour.

The modern Indian nationalist movement had had a "bourgeois" colour in a certain sense right from the beginning, for its intelligentsia leaders already in the so-called "Moderate" phase had formulated the ideal of independent development of the country along broadly capitalist lines.[19] Actual participation by distinctively bourgeois groups, however, was quite a different matter and a much later phenomenon. In the Swadeshi upsurge of 1905-08 which saw the first extensive use of the boycott weapon, the Marwari piecegoods importers of Calcutta deserted the nationalists once their own trade dispute with Manchester had been settled. Picketing by student volunteers was far more common than collective pledges by merchants, and local traders like the Sahas of East Bengal even became the principal targets of social boycott for unpatriotic behaviour. Bombay millowners utilized the new mood merely for some profiteering, and political leaders of Bombay with business connections like Pherozeshah Mehta or Dinsahw Wacha spearheaded the drive against Extremists.[20] Even bourgeois financial contributions to the Congress became significant only after 1920, when Bombay city supplied more than one-third of the total collections to the Tilak Swaraj Fund.[21] The Non-Cooperation era did mark a major advance from the point of view of bourgeois—and, more specifically, merchant and petty trader—participation, as has been pointed out in a recent paper. But we must still remember the Anti-Non-Cooperation Society headed by Purshottamdas Thakurdas, or Lalji Naranji's presidential casting vote against the Prince of Wales boycott resolution at the Bombay Indian Merchants' Chamber meeting of November 1920.[22]

The middle and late 1920s saw a definite sharpening of the contradictions between most sections of the Indian bourgeoisie and British imperialism. The Tatas, heavily dependent on government protection, constituted perhaps the one major exception.[23] There were virtually unanimous protests against the 1s 6d rupee-sterling exchange ratio fixed by the Hilton-Young Commission of 1926. Thakurdas spearheaded the protests with his minute of dissent, and the Indian bourgeois spokesmen argued with considerable justice that the over-valued rupee encouraged foreign imports at the cost of Indian textiles, hindered raw material exports with inelastic demand schedules (Thakurdas's major business interests, it might be recalled, were in raw cotton exports), and led to deflationary measures which reduced investment possibili-

ties.[24] A second major grievance was the refusal till 1930 to implement the 1927 Textile Tariff Board recommendation of a higher import duty. The Cotton Industries Protection Bill moved on 28 February 1930 did raise tariffs on British textiles from 11 to 15 per cent, but placed a 20 per cent duty on non-British goods—a note of Imperial Preference which aroused a lot of opposition.[25] In eastern India, the Birla group was trying to make headway against entrenched British jute interests, and this conflict helps to explain its generally pronationalist stance from the early 1920s.[26] Another point of tension was Walchand Hirachand and Lalji Naranji's Scindia Steam Navigation engaged in an uphill fight with British shipping interests headed by Lord Inchcape.[27] A Mercantile Marine Conference failed to settle the dispute in January 1930,[28] while Irwin stated the government's "most uncompromising opposition" to a Bengal National Chamber of Commerce demand of September 1929 for extension to eastern India of legislation similar to Haji's March 1928 Bill for the reservation of coastal traffic to Indian vessels.[29]

The repeated raising of demands like these at meetings of local business bodies (the Bombay Millowners Association, the Bombay Indian Merchants Chamber, the Calcutta Indian Chamber of Commerce dominated by the Birla group, etc.) as well as of course the very formation of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 1927 by G. D. Birla and Thakurdas indicate the extent to which the bourgeoisie was fast developing all-India connections. Analysis in terms of caste or purely local interest groups, currently so very fashionable, seems not particularly relevant any longer, at least in periods of major developments. It can be argued that by the 1920s and 1930s the Indian bourgeoisie had started operating as a class, with an overall perspective of its relations with imperialism. And a comparison of the concrete issues raised by bourgeois spokesmen: exchange ratio, protection, shipping—with Gandhi's Eleven Points of January 1930 does make illuminating reading.

Yet all this represents only one aspect of a very complex reality. If some sections of the bourgeoisie had developed an all-India outlook (most notably perhaps certain Marwari businessmen with countrywide connections, and Gujarati merchants and millowners with a strong emotional loyalty towards Gandhi), local, regional, and religious pulls remained extremely powerful.[30] Above all, there were a series of specific constraints inhibiting the Indian capitalist groups from any all-out strug-

gle against imperialism and its "feudal" allies (princes and landlords) along classic "bourgeois-revolutionary" lines.

If conflicts with imperialism had sharpened, these remained interwoven with relations of dependence and collaboration. This was most obvious in the case of that substantial section of the Indian trading community which was engaged in the Manchester piecegoods and other import business. As late as July 1928, the Marwari Association of Calcutta, speaking on behalf of a community "very greatly interested in the piecegoods and yarn trade", wanted to organize a conference "with a view to taking definite steps for the rehabilitation of this important branch of trade". The more far-sighted Indian Chamber of Commerce which it approached for this purpose, however, cold-shouldered the proposal.[31] Nor was it merely a question of "comprador" merchants as distinct from a purer "national" industrial capital; such a neat division is quite untenable in the Indian situation, given the complex interlocking of finance, trade and industry in the managing agency system.[32] Indigenous cotton mills depended heavily on imports of machinery from the UK, so much so that machinery and millworks import figures have been used as the best available index of industrial investment in the standard work on that subject.[33] Tendencies towards collaboration were particularly evident in the Bombay textile industry; British machinery import firms had played an important role in its development, and many mill-agents also had foreign piecegoods import interests.[34] The ambiguous role of Bombay millowners, headed by Homi Mody, in the 1930s is, therefore not particularly surprising.

A second set of constraints are related to the "feudal" connections of the Indian capitalist groups, which have effectively inhibited consistent bourgeois support for radical agrarian programmes right down to the present day. The *Indian Year Book* of 1939-40 describes G. D. Birla as "millowner merchant and zamindar".[35] The traditional bania elite of Ahmedabad which pioneered the textile industry there also had connections with trading and moneylending in the countryside,[36] while twelve out of the twenty-four major Allahabad commercial families listed by Bayly owned zamindaries.[37] A lesser known but possibly important kind of connection is suggested by a note by the loyalist Muslim politician, A. H. Ghuznavi, which advised the government to persuade native princes to pressurize nationalist-minded businessmen with homes in the native states: "For example, Mr Birla is a subject of the Jaipur State. His father, Raja Baldeodas Birla, is against

the civil disobedience movement, and the Jaipur State authorities could bring pressure to bear on G. D. Birla through his father to stop financing the movement".[38]

Till late 1929 or early 1930 bourgeois political initiatives against the government must have been inhibited to a considerable extent also by the wave of labour unrest culminating in the great Girni Kamgar-led Bombay textile strikes of 1928 and 1929. The *Annual Report of the Bombay Millowners' Association* (1928) presented by Homi Mody in March 1929 did complain about the non-implementation of the Tariff Board proposals, but was concerned far more with the "unprecedented general strike" of 1928.[39] The Millowners' Association and the Indian Merchants' Chamber repeatedly pressed the Bombay Governor for "drastic action" against the labour movement.[40] and Mody in his 1929 report "naturally" supported the Trades Disputes Bill. He wanted to tighten it up further through anti-picketing clauses, and argued that "peaceful picketing does not really exist"—a point with very interesting implications for nationalist politics.[41]

The March 1930 annual report of the Bombay Millowners' Association, however, jubilantly described the defeat of the 1929 strike, and then went on "to deal with the subject which has almost become a matter of life and death to the industry": the refusal of protection against British and Japanese competition.[42] After the Meerut arrests, the smash-up of Girni Kamgar, and the defeat (in early 1930) of the GIP railway strike led by the other major Communist-influenced union,[43] the decks evidently seemed clear for a round of pressure tactics on the government. G. D. Birla in his presidential address of 14 February 1930 to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry described British Indian fiscal policies as "discriminating free trade" rather than discriminating protection, and bitterly attacked the stranglehold of British capital on the Indian economy.[44] He was followed by Thakurdas, who moved a resolution (which was carried unanimously) denouncing the 1s 6d exchange ratio.[45] Birla was even more outspoken in his concluding speech on 16 February, where he openly called on "capitalists, the employers and the industrialists" in their own interests "to strengthen the hands of those who are fighting for Swaraj.[46] His close adjutant D. P. Khaitan made the same point two weeks later at a special meeting of the Calcutta Indian Chamber of Commerce :

... at long last there is dawning upon our minds the realization of

> the stubborn fact that unless India attains Self-Government it is difficult for her to improve her economic position.[47]

In the first months of Civil Disobedience, there is ample evidence regarding this new, relatively far more militant stance of the leading representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie. The FICCI published a *Monograph on Common Salt* which Jawaharlal recommended to Congressmen.[48] In May 1930, the Federation decided to stay away from the Round Table Conference till the Viceroy made a definite promise regarding Dominion Status and Gandhi agreed to attend it also.[49] Business associations like the Indian Chamber of Commerce repeatedly protested in strong language against police repression.[50]

Most active of all was Ghanashyamdas Birla donating large amounts to Gandhi according to Intelligence Bureau sources (from one to five lakhs was Sir David Petrie's estimate),[51] and actively trying to persuade the Marwari foreign piecegoods importers of Calcutta to establish contacts instead with Bombay and Ahmedabad cotton mills.[52] Birla of course is a very exceptional figure, with his remarkable political foresight and close personal contacts with Gandhi. The attitudes of two loyalists of 1921—Lalji Naranji and Thakurdas—are perhaps even more significant.

At the February 1930 annual meeting of the Bombay Millowners Association, Lalji Naranji bitterly attacked the 1s 6d ratio, and praised Birla's "admirable analysis of the growing burden of foreign liabilities". The Indian depression, he argued, was essentially a product of British financial policies, and had become acute long before the American collapse.[53] Two years later, Naranji in a remarkably frank letter to M. R. Jayakar sharply criticized the Liberals and explained his support for Gandhi:

> I in my commercial way of thinking, believe more in Gandhiji's policy ...Gandhiji's 11 points or demands are more of economic nature than of mere political nature. It is therefore that commercial community have put more explicit faith in Gandhiji or his organizations.

Naranji went on to mention British efforts to corner Indian markets, foreign control over banking, shipping, insurance and railways, and unfair currency, exchange and fiscal policies as reasons why "Government indifference has driven...we capitalists to work with Socialistic organizations like Congress" (sic). He also drew up a kind of minimum charter of bourgeois demands,[54] and stated that if these were granted,

"I am sure no commercial member will ever think of congress and we further believe that if we get what we want...Congress will be the foremost in withdrawing their civil disobedience. They are not fond of that civil disobedience movement, particularly Mahatmaji is sure to withdraw if we are given what we want."[55]

Thakurdas's standpoint was more equivocal, and his papers show him as maintaining very close connections with officialdom throughout. Yet he too for some months had to go with the tide to a considerable extent. "It is impossible in Bombay to think of having a public meeting to point out the dangers of the movement", Thakurdas regretfully informed the Viceroy on 28 April 1930. A few weeks later he wrote: "I am truly grieved that public opinion should leave the Committee of the (Indian Merchants') Chamber no option but to send any resignation to your Excellency"[56] (from the Central Legislative Assembly), since "my electorate are not merely the Indian Merchants' Chamber but the vast Indian commercial community outside."[57] He also kept away from the first session of the Round Table Conference, though after much hesitation and a long exchange of letters with Birla.[58] And even he in the first flush of Civil Disobedience wanted from Irwin full Indian control over "finance, currency, fiscal policy and Railways" so as to end the "economic exploitation of the country as it is called": defence and foreign and political relations he was prepared to leave with the British.[59]

It was not therefore a question of the attitudes of a few prominent businessmen, however influential, but a kind of groundswell of opinion in a class. "Sykes (the Governor of Bombay) tells me that in Bombay the mercantile community has already given to Gandhi a measure of support which it refused to him until the later stages of the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1921-22", Irwin reported to Wedgewood Benn on 24 April 1930.[60] Bombay city became in fact a real nightmare for the British for several months in the summer of 1930, while its image inspired even the otherwise rather unenthusiastic Rabindranath Tagore.[61] Despite the Chittagong armoury raid, the notorious Calcutta Police Commissioner, Tegart, was far more anxious about Bombay than his own province in July 1930,[62] and in a Governors' Conference held in the same month the reports from Bombay and the neighbouring Central Provinces struck a note markedly different from the general tone of moderate optimism.[63] In Bombay, reported Home Member H. G. Haig, the methods of non-violence were doing far "more harm

to Government".[64] "Gandhi caps fill the streets, volunteers in uniform are posted for picketing with the same regularity and orderliness as police constables",[65] while massive processions (one of them, on 23 May, organized by twenty-eight Indian commercial modies)[66] were "brushing aside... the ordinary functions of police control of traffic".[67] Above all, though the crowds and volunteers, as almost always in such nationalist upsurges since 1905, consisted mainly of "clerks and shopkeepers and young men, the educated lower middle class", "the movement has undoubtedly been receiving a backing from the Indian commercial classes as a whole... Bombay businessmen have for a long time been dissatisfied with the economic and financial policy pursued by the Government of India.... They feel that it is worthwhile making appreciable sacrifices now, if this is going to secure for them the economic and financial autonomy which they strongly desire".[68]

As these reports indicate, the 1921 pattern was being repeated : merchants and petty traders were more enthusiastic about Civil Disobedience than industrialists.[69] Congress relations with millowners were bedevilled by the old problems of excessive prices, the passing off of mill-cloth as khadi, the use of foreign yarn, and sometimes also the foreign piecegoods import business of some mill-agents. Twenty-four Bombay mills had been blacklisted as non-Swadeshi by the local Boycott Committee by August 1930, and fifty-six throughout India.[70] Motilal Nehru before his arrest was trying to settle such disputes through discussions with Ambalal Sarabhai, Kasturbhai Lalbhai and others, and a FICCI sub-committee drew up plans for a Swadeshi Sabha with mills accepting certain Swadeshi conditions as members.[71] But it remained a very uneasy alliance, presaging sometimes the conflicts of 1932-33, when the Bombay millowners signed the Lees-Mody Pact, while a "Nationalist" group of merchants fought to oust the collaborating Thakurdas from the Indian Merchants' Chamber.[72]

Merchants normally dealing in piecegoods imports in contrast, made considerable sacrifices, through corporate undertakings not to indent foreign goods for specific periods. Marwari importers of Calcutta, for instance, were persuaded by Madan Mohan Malaviya to take such a pledge on 30 April,[73] and such undertakings were particularly common in Bombay and north Indian trade centres like Amritsar and Delhi.[74] This was really a more effective form of boycott than the spectacular picketing by (often largely women) volunteers. There were problems concerning the sale of existing stocks, often through agreements with

local Congress committees which were frequently denounced by the leaders,[75] and the fall of prices due to the depression might have provided an economic incentive to what otherwise seems to be altruistic patriotism.[76] A recent study of Madras Presidency relates widespread merchant support for the Congress in Andhra coastal towns to the distress caused by falling prices.[77] Yet even official reports and correspondence sometimes hint at dimensions left unexplored by the current Namierite fashion in historiography. The Bombay Governor explicitly rejected "the theory that we are dealing with a limited political clique supported by only a section of the public. In Bombay City and most of Gujarat we have practically a mass movement...".[78] And even Petrie bore testimony to the strength of the ideological element inspiring Bombay merchants:

> ... a highly impressive feature is that many of the ordinary, sober and sensible businessmen seem quite prepared to continue the movement, even though ruin is staring them in the face. This is, perhaps, more particularly true of the Gujarati element with whom Gandhi's influence is paramount. Anyhow, all this serves as a forcible illustration of the ascendancy established by the Congress over people who seem to stand to lose everything by supporting it....[79]

The net impact was a remarkable fall in British cloth imports. Their value declined from £26 millions in 1929 to £13.7 millions in 1930[80] Homi Mody triumphantly declared in March 1931: "Imports have considerably dropped, and from 1379 million yards in the 9 months ending 31 December 1929 they have dropped to 713 million yards in 1930". No doubt the depression contributed to this fall, but, as Mody pointed out, the decline was far more marked in the case of Lancashire imports, while "the Swadeshi movement..undoubtedly helped the (Indian) industry during a period of grave difficulty", so much so that now "the future may be regarded as full of hope".[81] The series of panicky reports which flooded the office of the British Trade Commissioner from May to August 1930 provide even more eloquent testimony.[82]

Boycott via associations of merchants as much or even more than through picketing had thus become the predominant form of the urban movement. The older, more purely intelligentsia, forms of protest like lawyers giving up professions and students their schools or colleges had fallen somewhat into the background. Jawaharlal's Lahore presi-

dential address gave them little prominence.[83] and a Bihar Congress report of July 1930 did not seem particularly worried by the fact that there had been "practically no response from lawyers and students". Foreign cloth dealers of Bankipore, Patna City and Dinapur, in contrast, "were and have been sympathetic towards the Congress movement".[84] Nationalism had at last achieved firm anchorage with a basic social class, for worse as well as for better as March 1931 was to reveal.

The same Bihar report stated that "the movement is practically entirely in the villages and in the hands of village people", and the second major achievement of Gandhian nationalism was of course this mobilization of the peasantry. Detailed, district or village-level studies are available so far only for parts of Bengal,[85] United Provinces,[86] and —with considerably greater qualifications—Madras,[87] and the obvious existence of regional and local variations makes generalizations particularly hazardous here. We might still attempt a tentative distinction between two broad forms or waves of struggle in the countryside: one spreading out from top downwards; mobilizing peasants through accepted Gandhian forms and restraints; the other a relatively autonomous "peasant nationalism", welling out from the depths of rural society, using Gandhi's name but interpreting his message in vastly varied and socially much less inhibited ways.[88]

The first, "official" type of Gandhian civil disobedience had its natural starting-points and strongest bases in areas which had already witnessed some amount of Gandhian rural "constructive work"—khadi and prohibition, village improvements, occasional campaigns around local grievances. Bardoli is the best-known example, with its successful no-revenue campaign of 1928 and its numerous "Swaraj Ashrams and Chawries",[89] but recent research is bringing out the importance of pockets like Contai, Tamluk or Arambagh even in Bengal,[90] a province where most top Congress leaders were urbanbased "bhadralok" generally busy with in-fighting after the death of C. R. Das, on the strength of which the whole Congress movement has been supposed to be "in decline".[91]

Salt provided the initial catalyst in 1930, in sharp contrast to the expectations of British officials and possibly many intellectual Congressmen. "At present the prospect of a salt campaign does not keep me awake at night", Irwin blithely wrote to Wedgewood Benn on 20 February 1930.[92] A year later, the Viceroy is said to have admitted to Gandhi: "You planned a fine strategy round the issue of salt".[93] Salt linked up

in a flash the ideal of Swaraj with a most concrete and universal rural grievance—and one which (unlike rent, for instance) had no socially divisive possibilities. Like that other intellectually dubious Gandhian fetish, khaddar, it gave its peasant adherents the possibility of an extra income, paltry in itself but psychologically very important. And there was of course also the tremendous emotional impact of the Dandi March and the heroic non-violence of Dharasana. The government, too, made a big contribution by senseless brutality, with "unresisting men being methodically bashed into a bloody pulp", of which some of the AICC files provide a vivid account.[94] Even a man like Thakurdas bitterly complained about "the beating of women and little children of ten and twelve years of age by the police", and said that such things made participation in the Round Table Conference impossible.[95]

Salt, however, could obviously provide the stable basis for a sustained campaign only in those limited areas where its large-scale (as distinct from merely token) production was possible, as in the coastal areas of Bombay Presidency, Balasore in Orissa, or Midnapur in Bengal, Elsewhere other forms were soon needed, and in fact the British had expected and feared this from the beginning. Irwin informed Wedgewood Benn on 19 March 1930 of a significant remark of the U.P. Governor, Malcolm Hailey:

> He said that in the UP—and I should guess this is likely to be true of other Provinces—this (the salt campaign) was only as it were a curtain-raiser to the real business that would be a 'no-rent and no-revenue' campaign. On that he thought we should have to jump immediately and heavily. I agree.[96]

Gujarat—or more precisely Anand, Borsad and Nadiad talukas of Kaira district and Bardoli in Surat district—soon became once again the centre of a formidable no-revenue campaign based upon the relatively prosperous Patidars, and by May had become the Viceroy's most serious headache.[97] A later official report admitted that only Rs 20,000 out of Bardoli taluka's revenue demand of Rs 397,000 could be collected up to the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.[98] In the zamindari areas, however, as in 1921-22, the close connection between no-revenue and no-rent inhibited the Congress leadership, even though landlord associations from the beginning had adopted a definitely antinational stand.[99] The Working Committee in May 1930 restricted non-payment of land tax to ryotwari areas,[100] and the constraints working lower down in the Con-

gress hierarchy are indicated in a letter from the Bihar PCC which, after emphasizing the predominantly peasant character of the movement, went on to recommend for the Working Committee the new provincial "dictator" Deep Narain Singh as a "big zamindar and an old nationalist".[101]

Less socially divisive forms of struggle were therefore sought for in most areas. Picketing of liquor shops and of excise licence auctions were particularly widespread, and had brought about a Rs 20 lakh fall in excise revenue in Bihar by September 1930.[102] A second major issue was the chowkidari tax, around which by August 1930 Congress activities were "gradually centering... in the districts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur, Saran and Monghyr" in Bihar.[103] Midnapur with its anti-Union Board no-tax experience became another major centre of this campaign and, as at Bardoli, the government response combined physical coercion with possibly more effective large-scale confiscation of property. In two Champaran police stations, property worth Rs 2,023 As 12 was confiscated for a total tax arrear of Rs 174 As 4,[104] while a Midnapur villager whose annual chowkidari tax burden was only Re 1 As 8 is said to have lost Rs 350 through his homestead and granaries being burnt by the police.[105] The quiet heroism of such obscure village folk, in the face of an amount of repression which seems quite fantastic if we remember that the British were dealing with a predominantly non-violent movement, deserves to be far better remembered in the annals of our freedom struggle.[106] Such things also make interpretations of nationalism merely in terms of the interplay of relatively privileged interest groups seem curiously partial and unreal.

In Gujarat, the main Congress base was among the relatively privileged Patidars, and the British seem to have had some success in utilizing the lower ranks of rural society against this recalcitrant group.[107] Another example of Gandhian nationalism catching on among a locally dominant group[108] would be the Jats in Bulandshahr and Meerut districts of western UP. But the generalization sometimes made that the Congress everywhere attracted only dominant caste rich peasant support still seems extremely hazardous. Hitesranjan Sanyal's field study of Arambagh (a very backward pocket in West Bengal, which yet became a storm-centre) has revealed that out of 371 activists jailed for more than six months between 1930 and 1942, only 9 per cent can be classified as rich peasants holding more than 15 bighas (5 acres), while out of another

sample of 561 participants, a mere 11 per cent were Brahmans or Kayasthas.[109]

Even more significant is the development of pressures and movements from below. The catastrophic fall in agricultural prices played a vital part here, and from September or October onwards the *Fortnightly Reports* repeatedly mention the deepening depression as a possibly crucial factor in politics.[110] Despite the hesitations of most Congress leaders, pressures were mounting up, as we shall see, for a no-rent campaign particularly in the United Provinces by the autumn of 1930. Another form with explosive possibilities was the forest satyagraha, encouraging the rural poor to satisfy their need for timber, fuel and grazing facilities and thus particularly attractive to the lower ranks of peasants and, even more, tribal society. Violation of forest laws had been an important part of non-cooperation in parts of Andhra in 1921-22,[111] and it caught on like wildfire again for some months after the Working Committee had sanctioned it along with the anti-chowkidari tax campaign in May 1930. Tribal response to it seems to have taken violent and often millenarian forms quite distinct in tone from orthodox Gandhism. Between July and September 1930, there was forest satyagraha at 106 centres in Berar alone,[112] and official sources report large-scale movements among the Gonds of the Central Provinces, the Kolis of the Ghat regions of Maharashtra, the Santals of Bihar, the tribals of North Kamrup in Assam, and the hill people of Kangra in Panjab.[113] There is rich material for the social historian here, but Indian historiography still awaits its E. P. Thompson.[114] The image of Gandhi and the Congress certainly took on strange colours as it filtered down into the depths of rural India, as when Santals of Chota Nagpur took to illegal distillation on a large scale under the banner of Gandhi.[115] Some day a fascinating study might be made of the various, and sometimes conflicting, images of Gandhi as adapted by vastly different strata of Indian society.[116]

From business magnates through the urban lower middle class down to peasants and even tribals—the rich spectrum of Civil Disobedience seems to lack just one colour: the red of the industrial proletariat. Otherwise alarmist official reports from Bombay drew some comfort from this fact:

> The most satisfactory feature of the situation in Bombay City is that at present the mill population appears to be quite unaffected...the operatives have not forgotten the effects of the strikes of last year.[117]

The once mighty Girni Kamgar had split into pro and anti-Congress factions, and was now "without influence and almost entirely without funds".[118] "Organized labour as a whole has not identified itself with the Civil Disobedience Movement", and "labour in Calcutta seems to have behaved very well", Irwin reported to Benn on 24 April 1930.[119] There was one massive but short-lived outburst at Sholapur in May following Gandhi's arrest,[120] and some Congress efforts to woo Bombay industrial labour in August and September,[121] but the overall contrast with the immediately preceeding period of labour upsurge is glaring.

The passivity of industrial labour rendered infructuous Jawaharlal Nehru's Lahore Congress hopes of combining general strikes with no-tax campaigns at the climax of Civil Disobedience,[122] but it was not unwelcome—to put it mildly—to the bourgeois supporters of Congress and we might guess, to the bulk of the nationalist leadership. And to Jawaharlal, too, in Naini jail, things seemed on the whole to be going wonderfully well. As he put it:

> Events of the last four months in India have gladdened my heart and have made me prouder of Indian men, women and even children (!) than I had ever been... May I congratulate you on the new India you have created by your magic touch!...[123]

A terrible anti-climax, however, was waiting on the wings.

III

Released from jail for eight days in mid-October 1930, the ever-sensitive Jawaharlal felt:

> Civil disobedience activities, though still flourishing everywhere, were getting a bit stale.... The cities and the middle classes were a bit tired of the hartals and processions. Obviously something was needed to liven things up. a fresh infusion of blood was necessary. Where could this come from except from the peasantry?—and the reserve stocks there were enormous.[124]

Numerous official reports from September 1930 onwards amply confirm Nehru's estimate. They regularly counterpose urban decline to rural dangers, and relate the former time and again to shifts in the attitudes of commercial groups which a few months back had given such formidable support to Civil Disobedience.

In early September, the Inspector-General of Police of the United

Provinces found "enthusiasm for the Congress in cities... subsiding considerably" everywhere except in Kanpur. Dealers had broken Congress-imposed seals on foreign cloth at Banaras, for example,[125] and similar reports flowed in during the succeeding months.[126] In Panjab, though the great Amritsar market remained generally closed till the end of the year, large amounts of foreign cloth were being secretly despatched for sale to smaller towns like Fazilka.[127] In Bengal, urban picketing was causing increasingly less concern to officials from September onwards—as contrasted to terrorism and numerous instances of rural militancy—though there was some revival in December after the Congress patched up its factional quarrels.[128] "Some of the cloth dealers are likely to revolt against the Congress", the PCC reported from Berar in November 1930.[129] There were rumblings even inside the Civil Disobedience fort of Bombay. "Congress Solicitude for Bombay's Premier Industry/Sardar Allays Fears of Local Cotton Magnates", ran the headlines of the *Bombay Chronicle* on 26 July 1930. Thakurdas had protested against repeated hartals, and Patel had hastened to allay business fears.[130] Two months later, as the new trading season (mid-October) approached, an official report stated that "merchants with large stocks of last year's goods on their hands have begun to show signs of rebelling against the Congress mandate".[131] And if merchants were having second thoughts, the millowners, never very enthusiastic, were busy balancing the gains from Swadeshi demand against the losses caused by "frequent *hartals* which dislocated trade and industry, and created a feeling of considerable uncertainty".[132]

In the countryside, too, there were some signs that the more purely Gandhian forms of struggle based on relatively propertied peasant groups were losing their earlier potency in the face of ruthless British policies of distraint. In October 1930, the Divisional Commissioner on tour met groups of Kaira Patidars living in misery across the Baroda border, driven from their villages by police terror. Most were still "quite decided that they would not go back till their 'Sardar' (Vallabhbhai Patel) ordered them", but "there is no sign of insolence, much less of violence, in their attitudes. They seem disheartened."[133]

The very same *Fortnightly Reports* speak of the antigrazing fee movement of the Kolis in the ghat areas of Nasik, Ahmadnagar and Poona districts in a startlingly different tone. "Filled with stories that the British Raj had been replaced by Gandhi Raj", the Kolis at Chankapur (Nasik district) on 20 October, "armed with spears, swords and

other weapons... started to shout Congress slogans... refused to disperse (and) hurled down stones" in the face of police firing.[134]

There had been instances of local outbursts of popular militancy, going well beyond Gandhian orthodoxy, right from the beginning : most notably at Peshawar in late April-early May, where Garhwali Hindu soldiers refused to fire on Muslim crowds, and sent the Chief Commissioner into "a state of mental prostration".[135] But there are some indications that such things were getting more common towards the end of 1930. British repression, plus the counting-house mentality of the bourgeoisie, was weakening the movement at certain levels, but at the same time new possibilities were opening up, as Civil Disobedience percolated down to ever-lower levels of Indian Society, and as mass arrests repeatedly removed the established Gandhian leaders giving more scope perhaps for less inhibited elements.

In Bengal, the *Fortnightly Reports* of December 1930 described terrorism as a growing danger, "in grim contrast to the waning activities of the Civil Disobedience movement".[136] Less well-known, but perhaps more significant was a change in the character of the movement in Midnapur, where the early picture of police beating up strictly non-violent satyagrahis and villagers is considerably modified by June. An official report speaks of a crowd of 6,000 villagers encircling a police party at Chechuahat, with "conch shells and whistles blowing in all the surrounding villages and fields and men running towards us...with lathis" ; the police fired, it seems, in sheer panic, yet "they did not retreat...rather they began shouting and jeering".[137] The Midnapur District Magistrate saw "little hope of any measure of peace until we have had a few more shootings".[138] "Large bodies of low-class people, including Santals" in Dinajpur district (north Bengal), "are indulging in lawless demonstrations and no chowkidari tax can be collected", says another report, of October 1930.[139]

Similar instances can be found in a number of other provinces. Tribal unrest became quite formidable in the Central Provinces, where the Gonds repeatedly attacked police parties.[140] We hear of some tribal leaders, too: Ganjan Korku of the Gonds, Bonga Manjhi and Somra Manjhi of the Chota Nagpur Santals.[141] In December 1930, an anti-chowkidari tax demonstration at Bihore (Saran district in north Bihar) defied 27 rounds of buckshot, and next month an Independence Day crowd at Begusarai (Monghyr district) swelled by large numbers of

villagers, chased the sub-divisional officer into a ditch before being dispersed by 146 rounds of firing.[142]

The province that was causing the greatest anxiety to the government, however, was UP, where a section of the Congress had been pressing for a no-rent campaign almost from the beginning. A Rae Bareli activist is said to have written to Jawaharlal Nehru in the early days of Civil Disobedience "that breaches in the Salt Act would lead to nothing in themselves and must be regarded merely as a preparation for a no-rent campaign".[143] In a powerful speech to peasants in the same district in February 1930, Jawaharlal had described the zamindar community as "quite superfluous", and he had pressed the UPCC for an economic programme including removal of landed intermediaries and annulment of rural debt.[144] During his brief spell of liberty in October, he was able to persuade the Provincial Executive to sanction a no-tax campaign. It was to "apply to zamindars as well as tenants, to avoid the class issue if possible... The average zamindar would probably pay up the revenue demanded from him by the Government, but that would be his fault"; the no-rent movement could still go ahead.[145] Nehru's activities in connection with a kisan conference at Allahabad led to his prompt rearrest.[146] Official reports repeatedly expressed alarm about the possibilities of a no-rent campaign in UP, with its memories of peasant upheaval in the early 1920s[147] and the current slump in agricultural prices.[148] Trends towards no-rent were being reported also from Midnapur, while in December 1930 attempts were being made in parts of Maharashtra "to influence the Khots not to pay their revenue by inducing their tenants to withhold their rent....".[149]

Such signs of militancy in the countryside could not have appeared particularly attractive to businessmen often not unconnected with land. Nor was potential radicalism entirely a rural phenomenon. Nehru has testified to the amazing popularity of Bhagat Singh in north Indian towns,[150] and here was a movement of petty bourgeois urban youth which combined militant nationalism with a groping towards socialist ideology, and which included in its ranks a future general secretary of the Communist Party of India.[151] While industrial labour was still generally quiet, officials expressed alarm over the possible consequences of unemployment in Bombay caused by the general depression aggravated by political disturbances.[152] There were indications also that lower-level Congress cadres thrust into prominence by the arrests of their leaders were at times developing attitudes significantly different from their chiefs.

Ambalal Sarabhai as early as June 1930 was complaining bitterly to Birla about the "rotten mentality of many of Gandhiji's followers" who object to the "payment of a few pies more to millowners". "I am sure Gandhiji would have done differently if he were out of jail."[153] Thakurdas retained in his papers a cyclostyled bulletin of the Bombay City Congress dated 4 November 1930. Movingly entitled "Freedom Be Thou My Soul, Sedition Be My Song", this included a violent attack on him for giving a farewell dinner to the Police Commissioner :

> We have always known Sir Purshottamdas as a consistent supporter of the Government who also has the cleverness to create an impression among the public that he is on their side.[154]

Similar cyclostyled sheets two years later were to attack Birla, too.[155]

It was in this situation that the leaders of the Indian bourgeoisie began sending out alarm signals to the Congress High Command, and pressures mounted for a compromise.

IV

As early as June 1930 Thakurdas had expressed his nervousness "about a crop of insolvencies and consequent disaster",[156] and had conveyed his alarm to Motilal Nehru.[157] Homi Mody, predictably, went a step further two months later, and prepared a draft calling for "a revision of the present policy, such as would enable trade and industry to recover"—otherwise there was a danger of "a disaster from which Bombay may not recover for a decade".[158] Thakurdas, however, at this point refused to go along with him, "as I fear that the Government have again started their repressive policy and whatever you or I may say is bound to unnecessarily irritate the people".[159] Birla, it is interesting to note, supported Gandhi's stand at Yeravda.[160] The pressures for compromise in August 1930 thus still did not include the decisive section of the bourgeoisie. That supreme tactician also made the accurate prediction that the government would not accept even minimum Congress demands till the Round Table Conference had been held.[161]

During the succeeding months, however, bourgeois pressures for a settlement steadily intensified. The crucial factors here were business difficulties, combined with a growing pessimism about Civil Disobedience —justified from a bourgeois point of view, since the ways in which the movement could still have gone ahead would not have been very com-

fortable for it. Thakurdas approached Motilal again (via Lalji Naranji) on 22 September, and warned him that "the capacity of the commercial community for endurance" was reaching its limits. "We are anxious to prevent the Congress from having a setback...".[162] Even more significant was a letter of Thakurdas to Deviprasad Khaitan of Calcutta dated 8 October, marked "absolutely confidential" but "of course" to be shown to "Ghanashyamdasji" :

> My impression gathered on the journey is that at Delhi, Amritsar and Cawnpore etc the piecegoods importer and dealer is getting tired of picketing and of the loss involved on the dealer of imported cloth... But for Bombay the rest of India is well under control and will on the whole die out before long.... I fear that the Congress will have a setback and with it the country will suffer heavily.[163]

The tone is very significant: what is involved evidently is not a sell-out but a compromise, not compradorism but the dual policy of a highly intelligent bourgeoisie. A few days after the Delhi Pact, a business delegation under Walchand Hirachand met Gandhi to ask for clarification regarding the boycott restriction clause in the agreement, and urged him to demand "protection for Indian industries at the next Conference".[164] The bourgeoisie was calling for a retreat, but it was also careful that this should not go too far.

By January or early February 1931, developments in London were providing the occasion for a further stepping up of pressures for a settlement. More important perhaps than the fairly minimal political concessions (a half-promise of responsible government at the centre, balanced by "reservations and safeguards" and a federal structure weighted in favour of princes)[165] was the understanding which the business delegates at the Round Table Conference headed by Mody seem to have reached with their British counterparts through private discussions.[166] A surcharge of 5 per cent was imposed on cotton piecegoods imports in February 1931, despite protests from depression-affected Lancashire and much Cabinet opposition.[167] By 28 January, an official estimate of the political situation was mentioning as a major factor in favour of a settlement (the prospects of which were stated to be "by no means hopeless") the "increasing unwillingness on the part of the commercial community to contribute towards the movement".[168] Ten days later, the Bombay Governor's telegram to the Viceroy stated that "there are clear indications that a number of Gandhi's followers, parti-

cularly among mercantile community, are contemplating a breach with him unless he adopts reasonable attitude".[169]

The relevance of all this becomes clear if we consider now the evolution of Gandhi's views regarding a possible settlement. The *Collected Works* permit an almost day-to-day study of Gandhi's recorded opinions, and the impression they convey is that of a really starting change, sometime in the middle of February 1931.

In the round of discussions set off by the mediation bid of Sapru and Jayakar (July-August 1930), Gandhi had declared:

> Jawaharlal's must be the final voice.... I should have no hesitation in supporting any stronger position up to the letter of the Lahore resolution.[170]

He did wobble a bit in his initial note to the Nehrus via Sapru (23 July), which admitted a possible discussion of transitional "safeguards" at the Round Table Conference,[171] but the 15 August joint letter from Yeravda was extremely firm in its unequivocal demands for the right of sessions, a "complete national government" with control over defence and finance, and an "independent tribunal" to settle British financial claims.[172]

Gandhi's initial stand after his release on 26 January was also quite uncompromising. Though he had agreed not to take a final decision before talks with Sapru and other Indian delegates returning from the Round Table Conference,[173] he still declared to the Working Committee on 31 January that there was no question of giving up "even one of the demands put forward in the negotiations carried on from Yeravda".[174] In interviews with the *Times of India* and Reuter, Gandhi denounced the idea of any agreement behind the backs of the masses.[175] Right up to 11 February, in numerous private letters (and not just in public statements possibly made with a bargaining intention) he repeatedly expressed deep pessimism concerning the prospect of any agreement,[176] and pointed to the constantly growing tally of police atrocities even while the leaders were being released.[177]

Yet from 14 February (the letter to Irwin seeking an interview) began a retreat which at times became very nearly a rout. In the talks with the Viceroy, surprisingly little disagreement seems to have occurred over the scope of the next Round Table Conference with Congress participation. Irwin at the first meeting insisted on three "lynchpins...Federation; Indian responsibility; reservations and safeguards".[178] By 27 February Gandhi had accepted all this, and, if the Viceroy is to be believed,

had even admitted that the raising of the "academic" issue of session at the Conference would serve little purpose.[179] Clause 2 of the Delhi Pact of 5 March, which gave Nehru such "a tremendous shock", firmly pegged down the scope of future discussions to the scheme outlined at the first RTC session, and defined "reservations and safeguards" to cover "such matters as, for instance, defence; external affairs; the position of minorities; the financial credit of India, and the discharge of obligations".[180] The rider that such safeguards were to be "in the interests of India" meant precious little, and might even be termed hypocritical, as the Secretary of State pointed out in a telegram to Irwin.[181] The contrast to the Yeravda conditions could not have been more blatant.

Gandhi did put up a tougher fight over the immediate *quid pro quos* for a withdrawal of Civil Disobedience, and there were strenuous negotiations concerning picketing, salt, the demand for an enquiry into police excesses, and the return of confiscated lands in Gujarat. Yet here too in the end the nationalist gains were minimal. The concession regarding salt was a token one, while the Viceroy was frankly exultant about Clause 7 concerning peaceful and non-political Swadeshi propaganda and picketing.[182] As for Clause 8 with its reference to Gandhi's demand for enquiry into police atrocities, Irwin explained to Wedgewood Benn that the "substantial point appears to be that demand is definitely dropped".[183] Gandhi fought longest over the issue of confiscated lands,[184] but even here eventually properties already sold to third parties were not restored. It is interesting, by the way, that the Secretary of State at first objected to every one of these admittedly very minor concessions; so much for Labour Indophilism.[185]

. . What had happened after 11 February, and particularly perhaps on the two days between 11 and 14 February (since to argue that Gandhi was simply converted by Irwin's alleged charm and courtesy would be to insult the stature and wisdom of an undoubtedly great political leader)? No record apparently survives of the Working Committee proceedings of 13 February. It had been preceded, as is well-known, by a meeting of Gandhi with the Liberal leaders back from London, Sapru, Jayakar and Srinivasa Sastri, and no doubt Gandhi was referring primarily to them when in his letter to Irwin of 14 February he mentioned "suggestions from friends whose advice I value that I should seek an interview with you. . . . I can no longer resist this advice"[186] But these "professional mediators"[187] had been pleading for a settlement almost from the beginning—why did their appeals, firmly rejected at Yeravda,

command so much greater weight now? No doubt they presented to Gandhi a rosy picture of the Round Table Conference, but the latter had been extremely sceptical just a few days back[188] Jayakar, Sastri and particularly Sapru were respected as individuals, but a British visitor in November 1930 had estimated the total political support of these Liberals as no more than "a few hundred".[189]

Indications are not wanting, however, of the presence of a much stronger force. There is, for instance, Gandhi's cryptic telegram to Purshottamdas Thakurdas, dated 9 February : "Your letter. Thanks. Earlier you come better".[190] On the very same day, Irwin was writing a really fascinating letter to Wedgewood Benn, which deserves quotation in extenso :

> Purshottamdas came to see me yesterday on return from his visit to Bombay. The original idea had been that Gandhi should have been in Bombay to meet Sapru and the men of commerce. The intention of the latter had been to put all the pressure on him that they could, and thus assist the efforts of Sapru and Co.... (Gandhi had to cancel the Bombay trip due to Motilal Nehru's fatal illness).... Purshottamdas told me however that he was pleased with the trend of opinion in commercial circles and thinks that they now definitely want to find ways of peace. This view is also supported by Sykes. Purshottamdas will probably go to see Gandhi at Allahabad in order to try to put commercial pressure on him....[191]

Thakurdas incidentally was in Delhi during at least part of the Gandhi-Irwin talks, and contributed to the resolving of the final hitch over the Gujarat confiscations issue on 4 March.[192] And while Birla himself seems to have remained in the background during these crucial days, his adjutant D. P. Khaitan in his presidential speech to the Indian Chamber of Commerce declared:

> ...it may not be amiss to suggest to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress that the time has come when they should explore the possibilities of an honourable settlement. The Indian Mercantile Community would invite them to share its belief that the Premier's statement does not preclude the possibility of the suggested modifications...We all want peace.[193]

The date is significant: 11 February.

In the face of all this evidence, it is surely not going beyond the bounds of historical inference to suggest that business pressures played

a crucial role in bringing about a change in Gandhi's political stance in mid-February 1931.

V

Two questions remain to be answered: why Gandhi bowed to this pressure, and how he could carry his ranks with him.

To argue, on the basis of a single decision, that Gandhi was no more than a bourgeois mascot or agent, would be quite unhistorical. For that one would have to prove, at the very least, the existence of a large number of similar coincidences of views. Gandhi obviously was a much more complex figure with very diverse appeals, and his ideology was far less directly or obviously bourgeois than that of Moderates like Pherozeshah Mehta or Dinshaw Wacha or of Liberals like M. R. Jayakar. A man who could persuade capitalists to donate to a khadi programme, or who in the end was to sacrifice his life fighting against a Hindu communalism particularly strong among traders, was hardly a puppet. What we do have, however, is an occasional significant coincidence of subjective attitudes and inhibitions with bourgeois interests.

What Gandhi had felt about developments in the movement outside his prison walls is difficult to assess, since apart from the Yeravda negotiations, his jail correspondence is singularly silent on political matters. This seems to have been a point of principle with him,[194] and he kept himself busy with spinning, reading the Gita and Tulsidas, and writing innumerable letters to his disciples on subjects often extremely intimate but always far removed from Civil Disobedience.[195]

But Gandhi's general views on no-rent movements or labour strikes outside the Ahmedabad pattern—the two forms through which, as we have seen, Civil Disobedience could have gone ahead—are of course no secret. Way back in May 1921, Gandhi had repudiated no-rent moves,[196] and ten years later, on the day after the Delhi Pact, he gave an assurance to the UP Zamindars' Association:

> We do not want that the tenants should stand against the zamindars .... We assure the zamindars that their rights would be given due consideration in a swaraj constitution. I appeal to them to be generous to the Congress.[197]

And again, in his 24 May 1931 "manifesto" to the UP kisans he wrote:

> We aim not at destruction of the zamindars and taluqdars, nor of their property. We only aim at its lawful use.[198]

During the Bombay strike of 1925, Gandhi is said to have told Ahmedabad workers that "faithful servants serve their masters even without pay".[199] He reiterated his opposition to "class war" in another speech at Ahmedabad on 11 March 1931, arguing further that the legitimate labour demand for "the necessaries of life...does not mean that you should have palaces like theirs".[200] One is tempted to suggest, as Subhas Bose did in his *Indian Struggle* later on, that Gandhi had refused to sanction any all-out movement in 1928-29 at least partly because of the labour militancy of those years.[201] Perhaps he also waited for the collapse of the GIP strike before launching the salt satyagraha. Thus, Gandhi in 1930 was prepared to lead only certain kinds of movements, and not others. In the cross-pressures to which he must have been subjected immediately after his release. therefore, Jawaharlal's suggestions for overcoming "the staleness in the towns by stirring up the rural areas"[202] never had any real chance of being accepted. Such things were all too likely to go against the logic of non-violence and trusteeship as Gandhi conceived them. But how can we explain the fact that "the huge organisation (Congress) accepted in practice the new role, though many criticized it."[203] The Karachi Congress submitted to Gandhi as usual despite the additional provocation of the execution of Bhagat Singh. The answer seems to lie in the lack of any alternative leadership which could have tried to convert the scattered potentially radical manifestations into a coherent movement. In its absence, rural militancy remained either entirely spontaneous and uncoordinated, or under the leadership of village Gandhians with a basically limited outlook.

During the late 1920s, the Left had been rapidly gaining ground among urban workers and youth, with Communist nuclei functioning through the Peasants' and Workers' Parties. A unity-cum-struggle policy had been followed *vis*-a-*vis* the Congress, with the strategic objective remaining an anti-imperialist united front. As the Executive Committee of the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party had put it in its report for 1927-28, care should be taken not to oppose the Congress except on well-defined issues, "or we shall enable our opponents to claim that we are anti-Congress or even anti-national and that we stand merely for the sectional claims of labour".[204] The sharp "Left" turn brought about at the Sixth Comintern Congress (1928) in the wake of the Chinese debacle and in the context of Stalin's campaign against Bukharin's "Right Opposition" changed all that with disastrous consequences for Germany[205] and the loss of a great opportunity in India. The Communists, already greatly

weakened by the Meerut arrests, kept aloof from Civil Disobedience, spent most of their energies quarrelling among themselves,[206] and even concentrated their fire on Left-Leaning nationalists like Nehru who was expelled from the League Against Imperialism in April 1930.[207] And even in the earlier period, a basic weakness had been the relative neglect of the countryside—the Bengal unit, for instance, could claim some activity only in the Tangail region.[208]

Among top Congress leaders with some Left leanings or reputations, Subhas Bose was already consistently critical of Gandhi (who even described him as his "opponent" in a conversation with Irwin[209]) but unfortunately showed much less consistency in less personal matters. Though he later attacked Gandhi's attitudes towards labour, his own standpoint had not been all that different till 1929.[210] A request for financial support to jute workers on strike at Bauria, sixteen miles from Howrah, had to be relayed to him via Jawaharlal Nehru.[211] The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, controlled by his faction in 1930, concentrated mainly on the urban boycott, and Midnapur rural leaders frequently complained of being neglected.[212] Bose's Lahore Congress speech had been a fiery one, calling for "non-payment of taxes campaign and general strikes wherever and whenever possible" and even for "establishing a parallel Government in India".[213] In practice Bose remained deeply involved in Calcutta Corporation politics throughout 1930, and, elected Mayor in September 1930, pleasantly surprised Wedgewood Benn by a "very civil" address.[214]

Jawaharlal Nehru was far more consistent at the intellectual level—unfortunately, all too often at that level alone. In jail again from October, he worked out a fairly radical "agrarian programme for the Congress", anticipated much of the Left-nationalist strategy of the mid-1930s by suggesting a Constituent Assembly as the central political slogan[215]—and then surrendered to Gandhi again. The breach with the Communist Left must have contributed to this vacillation. After a Congress-Communist clash in Bombay on 26 January 1930, Nehru had declared:

> I honour and respect the red flag, because it represents the blood and suffering of the workers.... There is, and should be, no rivalry between our national tri-colour flag and the workers' red flag.[216]

But evidently this was not a hope which could be realized in 1930-01. Nehru, in addition, was extremely diffident about his organizational

abilities: "I have not the politicians' flair for forming groups and parties", he had told Gandhi in July 1929.[217] Above all, he was acutely aware, that despite all his popularity, he lacked Gandhi's empathy with the peasantry and felt himself to be too much of an Anglicized intellectual to understand the peasant outlook. It is hardly accidental that in the *Autobiography* a discussion of the Delhi Pact is immediately followed by a long appreciation of Gandhi as representing "the peasant masses of India".[218]

A similar sense of helplessness is evident in the speeches of the delegates who did oppose the Gandhi-Irwin Pact at the Karachi Congress (March 1931) : Jamnadas Mehta, Swami Govindanand, and, most notable of all, Yusuf Meherali. The future Socialist leader bitterly attacked the Pact as a "great triumph of British diplomacy" and "a great national mistake", denounced unequivocally "the politics of compromise" and of "change of heart" and made a bitter reference "to the Birlas, Purshottamdas Thakurdass, Walchand Hirachands, Huseinbhai Laljis, who are now out and busy in making efforts to obtain the fruits of the suffering and sacrifices of others". Yet his concluding note is strangely passive: as the Round Table negotiations were bound to fail, Gandhi would again have to give the call to struggle, and then the radicals would get their chance. "We patiently await the call to fight. Inquilab Zindabad."[219]

Jawaharlal, as is well-known, did not even go that far. Made acutely unhappy by the Delhi Pact, he yet agreed, after a bit of "wobbling"[220] and some sleepless nights to move the resolution endorsing it at the Karachi Congress. Personal factors no doubt played some part here—the death of Motilal perhaps enhancing the psychological need for a substitute father-figure in Gandhi. Yet the implications of this surrender, destined to have so many counterparts in the years to come, far transcend the purely personal.

The significance of Civil Disobedience as compared to Non-Co-operation, it has been argued recently in a study of the United Provinces, lay both in the extension of mass participation in the countryside and the tighter organizational hold over it of the Congress High Command.[221] We have seen that at crucial points this fitted in perfectly with the interests of a bourgeoisie, which needed to utilize mass discontent, and yet wanted to keep it within bounds. The bourgeoisie had established a working understanding with the highly complex phenomenon of Gandhism, and would be able to use it till the need for that disappeared on the eve of the transfer of power. Helped on by the mistakes and

weaknesses of the Left, it was asserting its leading role through a process of "transformismo" akin to that analyzed by Gramsci for post-1848 Italy, bringing about "the gradual but continuous absorption... of the active elements produced by allied groups—and even of those which came from antagonistic groups and seemed irreconcilably hostile."[222] As in nineteenth-century Italy, again, this was only a relatively leading position, not a classic "hegemony" conducive to a total transformation of society.

Such a transformation—the working out of the full logic of a consistent anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution, something like an Indian counterpart of 1789, in other words—remained beyond the capacity of our colonial bourgeoisie, with its continued relative dependence on foreign capital, its links with pre-capitalist production relations in agriculture, and its fear of organized labour. A Gramscian analysis would also emphasize the lack of cultural hegemony, the absence of any permeation of modern bourgeois values throughout society. Far from that happening, as is well-known, modernism in our country was and is largely confined to a colonial middle class with little roots in production, while the mental world of the bulk of Indian traders and indusrialists remained bound to pre-modern caste and religious loyalties. Men like Birla or Thakurdas were at best capable of the "modest egoism" of the pre-1848 German burgher estate described by Marx in one of his early writings,[223] not of the world-transforming revolutionary zeal of the French bourgeoisie of 1789.

At the same time, unlike China or Vietnam, there was no development in course of the national movement of an alternative, more radical leadership capable of mobilizing the peasant masses and also, perhaps, of utilizing the populist elements in Gandhism, as Mao used the heritage of Sun Yat-sen. The resultant was a curious stalemate: an independence which was also a deferment of so many of the more generous hopes aroused by the struggle for freedom.

POPULAR MOVEMENTS AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP 1945-47

I

THE LAST two years of British rule have been both well-served and ill-served by historians. Thanks to the *Transfer of Power* series edited by Mansergh, certain types of official documents are more easily available for the 1940s now than for any other period of Indian history, and a mass of historical literature exists on the tortuous negotiations between British, Congress and League politicians which culminated in a freedom which was also a tragic Partition.[1] In very sharp contrast, there is hardly any systematic historical research so far except for a few useful accounts by participants on the sporadic, localised, but often extremely militant and united mass actions which constitute the second major strand of these years: the INA release movement and the RIN Mutiny of 1945-46, the massive post-war strike wave which was at its height in 1946, and, in 1946-47, the *Tebhaga* upsurge in Bengal Punnapra-Vayalar in Travancore, and the Telengana peasant armed revolt in Hyderabad.[2] The tendency has been to consider the first theme in isolation from the second, and indeed it is fatally easy, given the abundance of materials, to get engrossed in the world of the Simla Conference, Cabinet Mission, Interim Government, and Mountbatten Award and tacitly assume it to have been more or less self-contained. Gopal's *Jawaharlal Nehru* (Volume I) contains many details about agrarian movements in the United Province in the 1920s and early 1930s, but very little about the popular upsurges of 1945-47—a shift of interest which may appear not unjustifiable, for Nehru and other top Congress leaders had now little direct connection with grossroots movements.

It is the central argument of this paper, however, that in this as well as in other periods of modern Indian history, the decisions and actions of leaders, British or Indian, cannot really be understood without the counterpoint provided by pressures from below. Certain obvious world developments apart, it was popular action, above all, which made continuance of British rule impossible. Fear of popular 'excesses' made

Congress leaders cling to the path of negotiation and compromise, and eventually even accept Partition as a necessary price—while the limits of popular anti-imperialist movements made the truncated settlement of August 1947 unavoidable. Detailed studies of the popular movements demand much more research, yet it is my contention that even the easily available sources (like the Mansergh volumes, or Wavell's Journal) really contain abundant evidence to substantiate my thesis, and can be used to throw some new light on vital decision-making processes.

To radical-minded contemporaries in the late 1940s, this argument—together with its concomitant, a somewhat unflattering picture in the national leadership—would have appeared acceptable and even rather obvious. Today, due to a variety of reasons, it is in contrast a bit unfashionable in many quarters. What had been the standard left critique of 'bourgeois betrayal' has become discredited—and in part rightly so—by its own crudities,[3] as well as by the disasters brought about by bouts of ultra-Left 'sectarianism'.[4] The reaction against the debunking of the Indian political leadership by the 'Cambridge school' has also encouraged some of our top Left historians to take up a position at times rather difficult to distinguish from a conventionally nationalist standpoint. Yet even an initially healthy reaction can go too far, and perhaps a closer look at the events of 1945-47 can provide something like a corrective.

II

The framework for post-War developments was set by the aftermath of the 1942 revolt, together with the socio-economic impact of the last three years of the War.

The total confrontation of August 1942, paradoxically enough, ultimately strengthened forces preferring a compromise on both sides. The British had required no less than 57 army battalions to suppress what Linlithgow privately described as "by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857, the gravity and extent of which we have so far concealed from the world for reasons of military security".[5] British policy during the early years of the Ward had often been deliberately provocative. From 1940 onwards, the bureaucracy had been planning a wholesale crackdown on the Congress on the pattern of 1942, compromise efforts had been repeatedly spurned, and Linlithgow, Wavell, and Churchill had successfully torpedoed the Cripps initiative at the last moment.[6] After Quit India, the British would never again risk such a confrontation, and that the decision in 1945-46 to try for a negotiated settlement

was not just a gift of the new Labour Government is indicated by the attitude of Wavell, the by no means ultra-liberal army commander who succeeded Linlithgow in October 1943. In a letter to Churchill dated October 24, 1944 Wavell pointed out that it would be impossible to hold India by force after the War, given the likely state of world opinion and British popular or even army attitudes (as well as the economic exhaustion of Britain, he might have added). "We have had to negotiate with similar rebels before, e.g. De Valera and Zaghlul", and it would be wise to start negotiations before the end of the war brought prisoners' release, demobilisation, and unemployment, creating "a fertile field for agitation, unless we have previously diverted their [Congress] energies into some more profitable channel, i. e., into dealing with the administrative problems of India and into trying to solve the constitutional problem".[7] Churchill's pig-headedness (Amery once commented in an aside during a Cabinet meeting that the Prime Minister knew "as much of the Indian problem as George III did of the American colonies")[8] delayed the process somewhat, but this was precisely what the British were able to persuade the Congress leadership to do after 1945.

From the point of view of the Congress leaders, as D.D. Kosambi noted in a brilliant piece of contemporary history-writing in 1946, "the glamour of jail and concentration camp served to wipe out the so-so record of the Congress ministries in office, thereby restoring the full popularity of the organisation among the masses".[9] Rightist Congress leaders, who throughout the late 1930s had urged more and more co-operation with the British and pursued increasingly conservative policies as ministers and for whom 1942 had been something like an aberration (probably dictated in part by a belief that Japan and Germany were winning),[10] could now bask in the halo of patriotic self-sacrifice even while concentrating all their energies on a compromise settlement. 1942 became their electoral trumpcard as well as a very convenient stick for beating the Communists—though in private Patel would comment on May 30, 1946: "The Bombay atmosphere has been terribly spoiled by the underground and the Satara crowd".[11] Though the Socialists—who had done most of the actual fighting in 1942—emerged with greatly enhanced prestige, the Left alternative as a whole had been weakened in two ways. The Left was now divided as never before, for the searing memory of charges and counter-charges of 'treachery' and 'fifth-columnist' activity erected a wall between the Socialists and followers of Bose on the one side, and the Communists on the other. Brutal repression

must also have exhausted many peasant bases, built up through years of Gandhian constructive work or radical kisan sabha activity. It is significant that the principal centres of rural rebellion in 1942—Bihar and eastern UP, Midnapur, Orissa, and the Maharashtra-Karnataka countryside—played relatively little part in the anti-imperialist upsurge of 1945-47.

The economic impact of the last three years of the War on the whole aggravated this exhaustion of popular forces, even though it also led to acute discontent and occasional and sporadic near-revolutionary outbursts in 1945-47. Though India was spared actual military devastation (apart from the Kohima-Imphal border, and some air-raids), mass suffering was none the less acute, for war meant rampant inflation (notes in circulation shot up from Rs 2,300 million in 1939 to Rs 12,100 million in 1945), corruption and blackmarkets, and above all the terrible famine of 1943 in Bengal. As Amartya Sen has emphasised in a recent article, mortality figures remained higher than normal in Bengal for five or six years after 1943 for malnutrition left its population particularly susceptible to epidemics. It may not be irrelevant to note, also, that excess mortality (taking 1941-42 as 'normal' in 1943 was the highest among all West Bengal districts in Midnapur (+ 137.6 per cent), the politically most militant region during Quit India.[12] The consequent breakdown of social mores must have greatly strengthened the 'lumpen' elements in big cities who would provide ample combustible material for communal riots on a totally unprecedented scale from August 1946 onwards. Certainly in contemporary Bengali literature famine, riots, and Partition often merge into a continuum, all producing acute social dislocation and breakdown of norms.

Yet War and famine also meant super-profits for some, and, as in 1914-18, a major step forward for the Indian bourgeoisie. War demand and enforced import-substitution led to advances in textiles, iron and steel, cement and paper, and some Indian entry into engineering and chemicals—though the British still obstructed the development of indigenous shipping, automobile and aircraft production. Industrial growth, however, remained fairly slow, gross production rising only to 120 in 1945 if 1937 is taken as base-year (though steel rose to 142.9, chemicals to 134.1, and cecent to 196.5).[13] The really fantastic increase was not in production, but in profits, particularly speculative gains through profiteering in food, sharemarket operations, war contracts, and the black market in general. The bourgeoisie was coming of age in India, Kosambi

pointed out in 1946, but it was a specific kind of bourgeoisie, characterised by "ravening greed" and mania for speculation rather than initiative or efficiency in developing production.[14] Technological backwardness made it look for foreign collaboration, now that the changed economic and political situation promised to give it additional leverage in conducting negotiations. Birla and Tata led an Indian business delegation to the West in the summer of 1945 and concluded agreements with Nuffield and Imperial Chemicals. The same bourgeois leaders were quite willing to accept or even urge state investments in sectors like heavy industries, power, or irrigation where initial profits were bound to be low, even while haggling over specific types of state intervention and complaining about too many controls. Even the 'Bombay Plan' drawn up by India's leading capitalists was prepared to accept a "temporary eclipse" in "freedom of enterprise" in the interests of development, and included a number of surprisingly warm references to the "Russian experiment".[15] A clear-cut split between a collaborationist or 'compradore' and a 'national' bourgeoisie is not too easy to establish even in China; it is certainly untenable for India.[16] To quote Kosambi's contemporary analysis again, the bourgeoisie "needs Nehru's leadership", just as in previous periods of mass struggle it had been intelligent enough "to exploit for its own purposes whatever is profitable in the Mahatma's teachings and to reduce all dangerous enunciations to negative philosophical points".[17]

As a class which had never had it so good amidst unprecedented mass misery, the bourgeoisie was naturally averse to any further round of popular struggle which could have unmanageably radical consequences and its formidable influence was cast firmly on the side of a negotiated compromise settlement after 1945. Fear of popular 'excesses' has been of course a recurrent element in bourgeois behaviour in many other countries and times, and can be readily explained in terms of a rational calculation of class interest. Indian business groups, however, fell short of the 'national bourgeois' ideal-type also in their frequent preference of sectional over country-wide class interests. This became very important indeed during the last years of British rule, for, as the events of 1945-47 tragically proved, the price of a negotiated 'transfer of power' was an encouragement of divisive forces culminating in Partition.

The rapid advance of the Muslim League, which took full advantage of the suppression of the Congress, in the closing years of the War certainly owed something to British encouragement. League ministries

in Assam (August 1942) and NWFP (May 1943) became possible only because most Congress MLAs were in jail. The pro-Congress Muslim premier of Sind was dismissed by the Governor (October 1942) and European MLAs in Bengal propped up the Nazimuddin Ministry from March 1943. But much more was involved in the League advance than assembly intrigues and official patronage. Pakistan was being presented to the Muslim peasants of Bengal and Punjab as the end of Hindu zamindar and bania exploitation; Abul Hashem, for instance, the dynamic secretary of the Bengal Muslim League from November 1943, did his best to cultivate a radical image for his party. Pakistan at the same time promised "the hedging off of a part of India from competition by the established Hindu business groups or professional classes so that the small Muslim business class could thrive and the nascent Muslim intelligentsia could find employment".[18] The economic muscle behind Muslim separatism thus no longer came only from old-fashioned talukdars and zamindars as in the days of the Aligarh Movement or of Nawab Salimullah of Dacca. The Ispahanis, a Calcutta-based Muslim business family with all-India connections, helped Jinnah in asserting his control over Bengal Muslim politics by ousting Fazlul Huq. Ispahani and Adamjee financed League papers (like the Calcutta *Star of India* and the Delhi *Dawn*), a Federation of Muslim Chambers of Commerce and Industry was started in April 1945 with Jinnah's blessings, and Muslim banks and an airways company were planned soon after the War.[19] Hindu business groups, on their part, had been often extremely orthodox, with strong revivalist, cow-protectionist, and Mahasabha links, and the two forms of communalism as usual fed each other. Hindu communalist opinion after 1946 came increasingly to accept Pakistan, provided Bengal and Punjab were also partitioned; this was felt to be a lesser evil, as compared to the inevitable 'subordination' of Hindus to Muslim majorities in these two provinces in any democratic and regionally autonomous set-up. It is interesting, and little-known, however, that G. D. Birla, the business magnate closest of all to the Congress, seems to have visualised something similar as early as July 1942; "You know my views about Pakistan. I am in favour of separation, and I do not think it is impracticable or against the interest of Hindus or of India."[20]

III

The complex interactions between British policies, Congress attitudes, and popular outbursts during 1945-47 can best be grasped through a

firm chronological framework. Four phases can be distinguished here: (i) from the surrender of Germany and Japan (in May and August 1945) to February 1946 (the RIN revolt, coinciding with the announcement of the Cabinet Mission); (ii) February-August 1946 (from Cabinet mission to the Calcutta riots); (iii) August 1946 - February 1947 (when Wavell was replaced by Mountbatten and Attlee fixed a deadline for British withdrawal); and (iv) February-August 1947, the working-out of the Mountbatten Plan.

Till the autumn and winter of 1945-46, British policy on the whole was marked by continuity rather than change. Though in June 1945 (with Germany defeated and British elections just a month ahead) Churchill at last permitted Wavell to release Congress leaders and start negotiations, the Simla Conference (June 25 - July 14) was allowed to be wrecked on the rock of Jinnah's insistence that only the League had the right to choose the Muslim members of the proposed new Executive Council (which would be entirely Indian but for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief), but would still be within the 1935 structure of a central executive not responsible to the Assembly. This, it needs to be emphasised, was a fantastic demand in mid-1945, for the League then ruled (and that largely on Congress sufferance) only in Sind and Assam. The Punjab Unionist ministry under Khizar Hyat Khan had openly broken with Jinnah in mid-1944, NWFP once again had a Congress government once its MLAs had been released, and even the Nazimuddin ministry in Bengal had fallen in March 1945. So far (till August 1946, in fact) there was little evidence that the League would be able to organise real mass sanctions behind its Pakistan demand. Yet by dissolving the Conference, Wavell in effect gave Jinnah the veto he was asking for —in sharp contrast to British attitudes a year later, when the Congress would be invited, however reluctantly, to form an Interim government on its own.[21]

The massive Labour victory of July 1945 initially did not bring about any major change, even though the new Prime Minister (along with Cripps) had been party to the informal Filkins agreement with Nehru in June 1938 by which Labour leaders had promised a complete transfer of power to a constituent assembly based on universal suffrage when they came into power.[22] Wavell's private fears that with "too big" a majority, Labour might try to hand over "India to their Congress friends as soon as possible" were soon revealed as exaggerated. By December 1946, he would realise that most Labour leaders—like Foreign

Secretary Bevin, for instance—were "in reality imperialists" who "like everyone else hate(s) the idea of our leaving India but like everyone else... (have)...no alternative to suggest".[23] The announcement of new central and provincial elections (last held in 1934 and 1937) made on August 21, 1945 was inevitable now that war had ended, It was welcomed by bureaucrats like the UP Governor Hallet as the "first step" towards providing "constitutional activities for the agitators."[24] After consultations with the new Labour government, Wavell on September 19 merely reiterated the promise of "early realisation of full self-government" (the term 'independence' was still being avoided). Post-election talks were promised with MLAs and Indian states for setting-up a "constitution-making body" (a step back, this, from the Filkins acceptance of a constituent assembly based on universal franchise), and efforts would be made again to set up an Executive Council "which will have the support of the main Indian parties".[25] How little British policies had changed as yet was indicated by the initial decision to put on trial no less than 600 of the 20,000 INA prisoners, while another 7,000 would be dismissed from service and detained without trial.[26] Indian troops were sent out to help restore French and Dutch colonial rule in Vietnam and Indonesia, though about this Wavell did express some nervousness.[27]

The decisive shift in British policies during the ensuing months obviously had an international dimension in the world-wide weakening of imperialist forces. Fascism had been routed, socially, radical regimes with Communist leadership or participation were emerging throughout Eastern Europe and seemed on the point of doing so even in France and Italy, the Chinese Revolution was forging ahead, and a tremendous anti-imperialist wave was sweeping through South-East Asia, with Vietnam and Indonesia in the vanguard. A war-weary, economically-ravaged, Britain no longer had the resources to hold on to an entire subcontinent by force. That the British came to realise this, however, at this specific moment was above all due to mass pressure—and not due to anything done by the top national leadership, Congress or League.

The autumn and winter months of 1945-46 have been perceptively described by Penderel Moon as 'The Edge of a Volcano'. The very foolish decision to put the INA men on trial, and that in the Red Fort and with a Hindu, a Muslim and a Sikh (P K Sehgal, Shah Nawaz, Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon) together in the first batch, unleashed a countrywide wave of protest. Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai and Tejbahadur Sapru

appeared for the defence, the Muslim League also condemned the trials, and on November 20 an Intelligence Bureau note admitted that "there has seldom been a matter which has attracted so much Indian public interest and, it is safe to say, sympathy—this particular brand of sympathy cuts across communal barriers". A journalist (B. Shiva Rao) visiting the Red Fort prisoners on the same day reported that "There is not the slightest feeling among them of Hindu and Muslim...A majority of the men now awaiting trial in the Red Fort is Muslim. Some of these men are bitter that Mr Jinnah is keeping alive a controversy about Pakistan".[28] The British were extremely nervous about the INA spirit spreading to the Indian army, and in January the Punjab Governor reported that a Lahore reception for released INA prisoners had been attended by Indian soldiers in uniform.[29] A second issue was provided by the use of the Indian army in Vietnam and Indonesia; the impact this had on popular (at least urban) sentiments as well as on sections of the army bore vivid testimony to the tremendous advance in anti-imperialist consciousness brought about by the War. Meanwhile the usual post-war problems of high prices and retrenchment were being sharply aggravated by a major food crisis, with Wavell in January 1946 estimating a deficit of three million tons. A drastic cut in rations in February reduced the calory value to 1,200 per head, while even wartime London in 1943 had got over 2,800 calories.[30]

What the officials feared in the autumn of 1945 was another Congress revolt, a revival of 1942 made much more dangerous this time by the likely combination of attacks on communications with widespread agrarian revolt, labour trouble, army disaffection, and the presence of INA men with military expertise.[31] Violent speeches by Congress leaders (Nehru above all, but also at first Patel and regional leaders in Bihar, CP, UP and elsewhere) initially aroused acute alarm, with their glorification of the heroes and martyrs of 1942, demands for stern punishment for official atrocities, and calls for immediate release of INA prisoners. The British began to realise fairly quickly, however, that this sabre-rattling was essentially election propaganda combined with the need to accommodate the popular mood. 1942 after all was the electoral trump-card of the Congress, and as for the INA, Asaf Ali in a private conversation in October was reported to have explained that his party "would lose much ground in the country" unless it took up their cause, but if the Congress came to power it would certainly remove the INA men from the army and might even put "some of them on trial".[32]

Another indication was the bitter campaign against the Communists, in which for the first time Nehru played a very active role, culminating in the expulsion of Communist AICC members in December. That much more was involved here than legitimate anger about the CPI's wartime role is indicated by the fact that there was no such concerted campaign against the Hindu Mahasabha, some of whose leaders had actually been in ministries in August 1942[33] while Rajagopalachari, whose attitude on the Quit India and Pakistan issues had been very similar to that of the Communists, remained a top Congress leader. In UP election meetings, reported an official source in November 1945, Congress speakers, "while condemning the invocation of religious issues by their Muslim rivals, concentrate upon the alleged atheist tenets of the Communists in their appeals to their audiences not to support them".[34]

The crucial shifts, alike in British policies and Congress attitudes, came in the wave of three major popular explosions—in Calcutta on November 21-23, 1945 and again on February 11-13, 1946, and in Bombay with the RIN revolt of February 18-23, 1946. In Calcutta on November 21, 1945 a Forward Bloc student procession on Dharmtala Street demanding release of INA prisoners was joined by Communist Students Federation cadres (so long considered their bitterest enemies) as well as by Islamia College students carrying the green flag of the League, and spontaneously the Congress, League and Red Flags were tied together, as symbol of all-in anti-imperialist unity. Police firing which killed a Hindu and a Muslim student was followed on November 22 and 23 by trouble all over the city: strikes by Communist-led tram workers, Sikh taxi-drivers, and in many factories, burning of police and army vehicles (150 were destroyed), crowds blocking trains, and veritable street fighting and barricades—"the crowds when fired on largely stood their ground or at most only receded a little, to return again to the attack".[35] Order could be restored only after 14 cases of firing, which killed 33 and injured about 200. Calcutta erupted again between February 11 and 13, 1946 in protest against the 7 year rigorous imprisonment sentence passed on Abdul Rashid of the INA. This time the League student wing had given the initial strike call, and at least the appearance of total political unity was achieved by a mamoth Wellington Square rally on February 12 addressed by League leader Suhrawardy, Gandhian Congressman Satish Dasgupta, and the Communist Somnath Lahiri. But the real initiative in the strikes and street fighting, as in November, came

from below, and to some extent from the Communists, described in an official account as "without doubt the most disruptive organisation concerned in the disturbances".[36] The situation was "worse than that in November 1945", with a Communist-led general strike paralysing industrial Calcutta, all jute mills in the city and suburbs closed for two days, train services disrupted upto Chinsura and Naihati, and bitter street clashes with the police and the army (two British and a Gurkha battalion had been deployed) which left 84 dead and 300 injured.[37] As in November, the striking features were the total unity on the streets of Hindus and Muslims, students and workers, and violent anti-white feelings, with numerous attacks on *sahibs*, and attempts "to boycott everything European, to disaffect servants of Europeans and to prevent the sale of food to Europeans.[38]

The greatest explosion of all was the naval mutiny in Bombay and the accompanying mass upsurge from February 18 to 23, 1946—one of the most truly heroic, if also largely forgotten, episodes in our freedom struggle. The RIN ratings' strike began on February 18 in the signals training establishment *Talwar* as a protest against bad food and racist insults from white officers. It spread rapidly to Castle and Fort Barracks on shore and 22 ships in Bombay harbour, and, as in Calcutta in November, the tricolour, crescent, and hammer-and-sickle were raised jointly on the mastheads of the rebel fleet. The demands, as formulated by the elected Naval Central Strike Committee, combined service grievances with national political slogans: release of INA and other political prisoners, withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia, acceptance of Indian officers alone as superiors. Desperately seeking advice and help from national leaders but getting little or nothing,[39] the ratings hesitated fatally on the borderline of peaceful strike and determined mutiny, and obeyed orders on the afternoon of February 20 to return to their respective ships and barracks only to find themselves surrounded by army guards. Fighting broke out next morning at Castle Barracks when the ratings tried to break out of their encirclement, and there were remarkable scenes of fraternisation that afternoon as crowds thronged the Gateway of India with food for the sailors and shopkeepers invited them to take whatever they needed. The pattern of events in fact unconsciously echoed the course of the mutiny on the Black Sea Fleet during the first Russian Revolution of 1905: that, too, had begun over inedible food, and fraternising crowds had been shot down in a scene immortalised later on in the 'Odessa steps' sequence of

Eisenstein's film classic *Battleship Potemkin*. On February 22, the Bombay working-class, already restive over a recent ration-cut (three mills in Parel had gone on strike on this issue on February 21), responded massively to a Communist call for a general strike, closing down all textile mills, railway workshops and city transport. There was bitter street fighting throughout the 22nd and 23rd, with crowds "erecting road blocks and covering them from nearly buildings", particularly in the proletarian districts of Parel and Delisle Road. Armoured cars and four military columns were needed to restore order, and official casualty figures were 228 civilians killed and 1,046 injured (plus 3 police deaths and 91 wounded); 10 police outposts, 9 banks, 10 post offices and 64 government grain shops had been attacked.[40] The strike spread to naval bases all over the country, there were serious clashes also in Karachi, and throughout February there was considerable unrest in the air force and army too. The Bombay ratings, however, surrendered on February 23, not so much in face of British threats (though Admiral Godfrey had flown in bombers and warned that he was prepared to destroy the navy), but because Patel and Jinnah in a rare display of unanimity advised them to do so, giving an assurance that the national parties would prevent any victimisation—a promise soon quietly forgotten.

The RIN ratings, in sharp contrast to the men of the Azad Hind Fauj, have never been given the status of national heroes—though their action involved much greater risk in some ways than joining the INA as alternative to an arduous life in Japanese POW camps. As in the Calcutta explosions, a striking feature was total submergence of communal divisions—the Naval Central Strike Committee, incidentally, was headed by a Muslim, M. S. Khan. The last message of the Committee deserves to be remembered far better than it is: "Our strike has been a historic event in the life of our nation. For the first time the blood of men in the services and in the streets flowed together in a common cause. We in the Services will never forget this. We know also that you, our brothers and sisters, will not forget. Long live our great people! Jai Hind!"[41]

Even apart from the massive political strikes in Calcutta and Bombay, the winter of 1945-46 marked the beginning of an unprecedented wave of countrywide labour unrest as prices shot up and rations were cut. A glance through Wavell's Journal and the Mansergh documents immediately reveals how worried British officials had become, particularly in the context of repeated strike threats by all-India organisa-

tions of railway workers, postal employees, and government clerical associations. The development of effective countrywide labour organisations in strategic sectors gave a new muscle-power to the Indian trade union movement; strikes in the 1920s and 1930s had been mainly confined to single industrial centres, primarily Bombay or Calcutta textiles.

In the context of the present paper, the main significance of the Calcutta and Bombay explosions and labour militancy lies in their impact on British and Congress attitudes. On November 30, 1945, a week after the Calcutta outburst, New Delhi informed London that while the original INA trials policy would have involved at least 200-300 accused and possibly 40 to 50 death sentences, it had to be recognised now that "abstract justice must to some extent give way to expediency." Future trials, it was announced on December 1, would be "limited to cases of brutality and murder", instead of the sweeping charge of "waging war against the King" used in the first case,[42] and imprisonment sentences passed against the first batch were remitted in January. By February 1946, Indian soldiers were being withdrawn from Vietnam and Indonesia. On November 28 the British Cabinet sub-committee on India decided on a Parliamentary delegation; on January 22 the much more significant decision was taken to send a Cabinet mission in March to negotiate with Indian leaders. Wavell meanwhile had started preparing a 'breakdown plan'. As presented to the Cabinet Mission on May 30, 1946, this visualised a withdrawal of the British army and officials to the Muslim provinces of NW and NE India, handing over the rest of the country to the Congress.[43] While evidently reflecting a desire in some high official circles to make of Pakistan an Indian Northern Ireland, the 'plan' is still interesting evidence of the British recognition that it would be impossible to suppress any future Congress-led rebellion.

On the Congress side, there were indications from November 1945 onwards that the forces which had restrained militancy in the past were at work again, while Wavell on December 31, would recognise the Calcutta disturbances of November 21-23 as the "turning-point", which "caused at least a temporary detente".[44] The point requires much further research, but it does seem that, as on some earlier occasions, business pressures played an important role here.[45] The Governor of Sind on November 3, Finance Minister Rowlands on November 17, and Secretary of State Pethick-Lawrence on November 30 independently referred to G. D. Birla as getting "alarmed at the virulence of Congress speech-

es."[46] "...the strong capitalist element behind Congress... is becoming nervous about the security of its property", Wavell informed Pethick-Lawrence on December 5. "There have recently been indications that the Congress leaders want to reduce the political tension by making it clear that there must be no mass movement until after the elections."[47] And Birla himself next day conveyed an interesting assurance and explanation to a London official: "There is no political leader including Jawaharlal who wants to see any crisis or violence... Popular impatience and the prevalent atmosphere are responsible for these strong speeches. Even leaders are often led. But I think unrestrained language will be heard less and less in the future."[48]

In Calcutta on November 21, Sarat Bose, so long adored as the brother of Subhas, refused to come to address the students squatting on Dharamtala Street and later blamed the Communists for instigating violence.[49] Patel at a Bombay election rally on Novevmber 24 condemned the "frittering away" of energies in "trifling quarrels" with the police.[50] Gandhi began a fairly friendly dialogue with the Bengal Governor, and the Calcutta AICC Working Committee session of December 7-11 strongly reaffirmed its faith in non-violence[51]—in significant contrast to the September AICC session where many members had glorified every aspect of the by-no-means non-violent 1942 struggle. During the February days in Calcutta, "the Indian National Congress, whatever individual members may have done, took no part...in the disturbance", while Suhrawardy's appearance at the Wellington Square meeting and the subsequent procession on February 12 was explained by the Police Commissioner in terms of his "intention of not committing the error of Sarat Bose who lost much popularity by not showing himself at Dhurrumtolla on the 21st November."[52] An official Situation Report on February 13 noted that there were "reassuring signs that the more well-to-do Indians are definitely annoyed by the riots and will bring pressure to bear to stop them. Congressmen are patrolling with loudspeakers telling the people to get off the streets...."[53]

In Bombay during the RIN upsurge, the Governor reported to Wavell that "the Congress leaders had decried any share in the mutiny, and had advised people to preserve order. I received a message from Vallabhbhai Patel to this effect on Thursday" (February 21). Next day messages came from Chundrigar and S K Patil, heads of the provincial League and Congress units, "offering the help of volunteers to assist the police."[54] An official telephone message from Bombay

on February 22 reported that "Congress were against today's hartal, and Vallabhbhai Patel was emphatic about this, but the 'Communists' call for sympathy with the RIN ratings has won the day and the Congress Labour Union has been totally ineffective."[55] Patel explained his attitude clearly in a letter to Andhra Congress leader Viswanathan on March 1, 1946: "... discipline in the army cannot be tampered with.... We will want Army even in free India."[56] Against Patel's advice, Nehru accepted Aruna Asaf Ali's invitation to come to Bombay, but quickly allowed himself to be "restrained from inflaming the situation, as on arriving here he had been impressed by the necessity for curbing the wild outburst of violence"[57]—though he did later on hail the RIN strike for breaking down the "iron wall" between army and people.[58] Gandhi, it has to be noted, was a unequivocally hostile as Patel. On February 22 he condemned the ratings for setting "a bad and unbecoming example for India", advised them to peacefully resign their jobs if they had any grievances, and made the very interesting statement that "a combination between Hindus and Muslims and others for the purpose of violent action is unholy...." Aruna Asaf Ali made the pertinent comment in reply that "It simply does not lie in the mouth of Congressmen who were themselves going to the legislatures to ask the ratings to give up their jobs." She also made a tragically accurate prophecy that it would be far easier to "unite the Hindus and Muslims at the barricade than on the constitutional front."[59] It is tempting to set beside Gandhi's statement of February 22 Wavell's private comment of May 30. 1946 : "We must at all costs avoid becoming embroiled with both Hindu and Muslim at once."[60]

The Congress rationale behind fimly rejecting mass confrontations was the need to concentrate energies on fighting the elections. The Congress did win a massive victory, polling 91.3 per cent of votes in the Central Assembly general constituencies, and winning majorities in every province except Bengal, Punjab and Sind. The Hindu Mahasabha and other rightwing groups were routed, while Communists could capture only eight provincial assembly seats, all but one of them in constituencies reserved for labour (here they did put up a fairly tough fight, winning 112, 736 votes against 321, 607 of the Congress).[61] The most significant feature of the elections, however, was the prevalence of communal voting, in sharp contrast to the sporadic but quite remarkable anti-British unity forged so often in these very same months in the streets of Calcutta, Bombay, or even Karachi. The League swept all the 30

Muslim seats in the Centre, and won 442 out of 509 provincial Muslim constituencies—a very major advance as compared to 1937, though it still narrowly missed a majority in the Punjab, and was defeated in the NWFP.

Apart from the logic of separate electorates, it is possible that the extremely limited franchise (about 10 per cent of the population in the provinces, less than one per cent for the Central Assembly) may have had something to do with this stark contrast between united mass action and communal voting. The NWFP Governor reported to Wavell in February 1946 that Muslim officials and the 'bigger Khans" or landlords were all for the League, but the Congress was still getting the support of the "less well-to-do" Muslims due to its promises of economic reforms[62]—promises, however, which Congress ministries did little to implement either after 1937 or in 1946-47. In this context, the tacit (and little-noticed) surrender by the Congress of its central slogan of the late-1930s—a Constituent Assembly elected on universal franchise—acquires crucial significance in understanding the course of events. Of all Indian political groups, only the Communists pressed this demand seriously in 1945-46, in their election manifesto, *For the Final Bid For Power*, (1945), for instance, or in P C Joshi's meeting with the Cabinet Mission on April 17, 1946.[63] Congress leaders, in contrast, quietly accepted the Cabinet Mission decision to have the Constituent Assembly elected by existing provincial legislatures based on limited voting rights. Much more was involved here than a mere question of abstract democratic principle. The League next year would win its claims to represent the majority of Muslims being really tested, either in fully democratic elections or (as Congress claims had been) in sustained mass movements in the face of official repression (as distinct from occasional communal riots not unaccompanied often by official complicity). It may not be irrelevant to recall here that the Congress after 1947 would go on winning all-India elections for 30 years, while the League was routed in East Pakistan in the very first vote held on the basis of universal franchise (1954), and would fail to provide political stability even in West Pakistan.

In the long and tortuous negotiations which went on from March 24 to June 29, 1946, the Cabinet Mission at times seemed to lean marginally towards the Congress, arousing grave suspicions in the mind of the Viceroy, who once even accused its members—and particularly Nehru's old friend Cripps—of "living in the pocket of Congress."[64] Yet

this was due basically not to Labour pro-nationalist sympathies, but because, as Wavell himself pointed out in a note to the Mission on March 29, the British had "an extremely difficult hand to play, owing to the necessity to avoid the mass movement or revolution which it is in the power of the Congress to start, and which we are certain that we can control."[65] It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Congress leadership once again spiked its own guns in its eagerness for quick and easy power and desire at all costs to preserve social order. The spring and summer of 1946 marked the height of the greatest strike wave in the history of colonial India, and there is ample evidence that apart from disaffection in the armed forces, it was urban labour unrest which alarmed British officials most. Strikes in 1946 totalled 1,629, involving 1,941,948 workers and a loss of 12,717,762 mandays; in no previous year had stoppages exceeded 1,000, or the workers involved eight lakhs. [66] There were widespread police strikes in April (in Malabar, Andamans, Dacca, Bihar and Delhi), threats of an all-India railway stoppage thoughout the summer, a postal strike in July, and on July 29, less than three weeks before the Great Calcutta Killing of August 16, a total, absolutely peaceful, and remarkably united *bundh* in Calcutta under Communist leadership in sympathy with postal employees. The Home Member pointed out in a note dated April 5 that in the case of a break with the League, "even if they fight, they would be beaten", but "On the whole, I doubt whether a Congress rebellion could be suppressed". In such a situation, "by no means all units [of the army] could be relied on", "police over a large area would be likely to crack", and "a call to a general strike would be widely obeyed ... labour in amenable mostly to Communist and Congress leadership."[67]

The Congress High Command, however, had already opted for a different policy. Congress President Azad on March 3 publicly welcomed the ration-cut (a major labour grievance) as "far-sighted", and declared that strikes were "out of place today", as the British were "now acting as caretakers."[68] Patel's correspondence reveals desperate efforts by local Congress labour leaders in May 1946 to prevent a strike ballot in the railways "since if a ballot is taken it will be in favour of the strike."[69] In August, the Working Committee meeting in Wardha condemned "hasty or ill-conceived stoppages" and the "growing lack of discipline and disregard of obligations on the part of the workers."[70]

There is some interesting evidence that fear of labour militancy, combined with a growing awareness of essential Congress moderation played a crucial part in bringing about the next major shift in official policy : the decision to allow Nehru to form a purely Congress Interim Government on September 2, 1946. The brief agreement, always more apparent than real, between the Congress and the League in accepting the Cabinet Mission's long-term three-tier plan had broken down by the end of July, and Wavell had also failed in his efforts to set up a short-term coalition government in the centre. On July 31, with the postal strike still on and two days after the Calcutta *bundh*, the Viceroy wrote to Pethick-Lawrence : "I dislike intensely the idea of having an Interim Government dominated by one party but I feel that I must try to get the Congress in as soon as possible.... If Congress will take responsibility they will realise that firm control of unruly elements is necessary and they may put down the Communists and try to curb their own Left wing. Also I should hope to keep them so busy with administration that they had much less time for politics."[71] The Director of the Intelligence Bureau made the same point on August 9, "... the labour situation is becoming increasingly dangerous.... Until a responsible Indian government is introduced at the Centre, there is little that can be done. The Communists are only part of a larger nettle which must be grasped. I am satisfied that a responsible government, if one can be achieved, will deal more decisively with Labour than is at present possible."[72] By an interesting coincidence, the DIB note enclosed a militant leaflet by the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Employees Union, combined economic grievances with statements like "We are soldiers of the RED FLAG... a part of the revolutionary army of the workers" : on September 20 Wavell would be "cynically amused" to note that the new Congress minister Sarat Bose's "first reaction to a threatened strike of the Delhi electricity workers had been to make a plan for troops to be flown to Delhi to take over essential services and to summon certain British technicians."[73] By August 5, Wavell had also received information that Patel was "convinced that the Congress must enter the government to prevent chaos spreading in the country, and was even prepared to threaten resignation from the Working Committee if his views were nat accepted."[74]

From August 16, 1946 onwards, the whole Indian scene was rapidly transformed by communal riots on an unprecedented scale : starting with Calcutta on August 16-19, touching Bombay from September 1.

spreading to Noakhali in East Bengal (October 10), Bihar (October 25) ; Garmukteswar in UP (November), and engulfing the Punjab from March 1947 onwards. The British, who as late as June 1946 had been making plans to bring five army divisions to India in the context of a possible Congress movement,[75] made no such move while presiding over this awesome human tragedy. In Calcutta in August, in sharp contrast to November 1945 or February 1946, the army was called out only after 24 hours, though the Governor was reminded of his First World War experiences in course of his early morning tour of the city on the 17th.[76] Two other examples, both taken from British sources, may suffice to indicate the extent of official passivity—if not deliberate connivance. Wavell commented on November 9, 1946 in the context of Bihar Muslim requests to use aerial bombardment to stop the riots : "Machinegunning from the air is not a weapon one would willingly use, though the Muslims point out, rather embarrassingly, that we did not hesitate to use it in 1942."[77] In March 1947, the two main bazars of Amritsar were destroyed, while "not a shot was fired by the police"—and this, Penderel Moon pertinently recalls, was the city of the Jalianwalabag massacre.[78]

The Interim Government of Nehru found itself presiding helplessly over this growing communal inferno. Collective functioning became all but impossible after Wavell had persuaded Jinnah to join the government on October 26 without the League giving up its Direct Action programme, its projection of the Cabinet Mission long term plan, or its boycott of the Constituent Assembly. League obstructionism, in Congress eyes at least, included refusal to attend Nehru's 'tea-party Cabinets' (informal sessions to co-ordinate policies before meeting the Viceroy), and a rather damagogic budget moved in February 1947 by Liaquat Ali Khan imposing heavy taxes on (predominantly Hindu) big business—a "clever move", commented Wavell, since it "drives a wedge between Congress and their rich merchant supporters like Birla, while Congress cannot object to its provisions."[79]

Confronted by Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar and the Punjab, the secular ideals of many within the Congress ranks and leadership tended to evaporate. If Nehru consistently denounced Hindu communalism in Bihar and elsewhere, and Azad blamed Wavell for not calling out troops promptly in Calcutta to suppress "the hooligans of Calcutta's underworld" unleashed by Suhrawardy,[80] Patel sympathised with hostile Hindu reactions to Nehru's condemnation of Bihar.[81] Communal riots

combined with the evident unworkability of the Congress-League coalition at the Centre, compelled many by early 1947 to think in terms of accepting what had been unthinkable so far—Partition—and these came to include Nehru as well as Patel. The most insistent demands for this surgical solution had now started coming from Hindu and Sikh communalist groups in Bengal and the Punjab, alarmed by the prospect of compulsory grouping into Muslim-dominated sections (the League interpretation of the Cabinet Mission plan) which might very well later form themselves into Pakistan. But Nehru, too, was telling Wavell in private by March 10, 1947 : "... the Cabinet Mission plan was the best solution if it could be carried through... the only real alternative was the partition of the Punjab and Bengal."[82] A month later, Congress President Kripalani informed Mountbatten : "Rather than have a battle we shall let them have their Pakistan, provided you will allow the Punjab and Bengal to be partitioned in a fair manner."[83]

To one man, however, the idea of a high-level bargain by which the Congress would attain quick power in the major part of the country at the cost of a partition on religious lines still seemed unimaginably shocking and unacceptable. Gandhi had taken little part in the tortuous negotiations since 1945, while he had also condemned the united anti-imperialist outbursts in 1945-46 as tainted with violence. Increasingly isolated from the Congress leadership, as well as from business leaders like Birla who had now developed closer ties with Patel,[84] the old man of 77 with undiminished courage now shaped his all in a bid to vindicate his life-long principles of change of heart and non-violence in the village of Noakhali, followed by Bihar and then the riot-torn slums of Calcutta and Delhi. Gandhi's unique personal qualities and true greatness were never more evident than in the last months of his life : courage to stand against the tide, total disdain for all conventional forms of political power which could have been his for the asking now that India was becoming free, and a passionate anti-communalism which made him declare to a League leader a month after Partition, while riots were ravaging the Punjab : "I want to fight it out with my life. I would not allow the Muslims to crawl on the streets in India. They must walk with self-respect."[85] At times the presence of Gandhi really seemed to work miracles, as when peace returned to Calcutta after a whole year on the eve of August 15, renewed riots were abruptly halted by his fast-unto-death in early September, or, even in Delhi, when on January 27, 1948 he was invited by Muslims to speak from the platform

of the Quwaat-ul-Islam mosque—just three days before his death at the hands of a Hindu fanatic.

Intensely moving and heroic, the Gandhian way in 1946-47 could be no more than an isolated personal effort with a local and often rather short-lived impact. It is futile and dangerous to speculate on what might have been, but one might still argue that the only real alternative lay along the path of united militant mass struggles against imperialism and its Indian allies—the one thing which, as we have seen, the British really dreaded. Despite the obvious and major disruption caused by the riots, this possibility was by no means entirely blocked even in the winter of 1946-47.

Three months after the Calcutta riots, villages in many parts of Bengal (particularly Thakurgaon sub-division in Dinajpur and adjoining areas of Jalpaiguri, Rangpur and Malda in North Bengal, as well as pockets in Mymensingh, Midnapur and 24 Parganas) resounded to the slogans of *tebhaga chai* and *nijkhamara dhan tolo*, as sharecroppers responded to the call of the Communist-led Kisan Sabha to fight against the *jotedars* for the two-thirds share of the harvest promised by the Floud Commission (1940) but never implemented. Though Muslim-majority South-East Bengal was largely untouched by *tebhaga*, and its strongest base was among low-caste semi-tribal groups like the Rajbansis, many Muslims did participate in the strongholds of the movement, producing leaders like Haji Muhammad Danesh, Niamat Ali, and even some *maulvis* who quoted the Koran to condemn jotedar oppression.[86]

A second major outburst was in the Shertalai-Alleppey-Ambalapuzha area of Travancore state where the close proximity of small-town industries with agricultural occupations made the formula of worker-peasant alliance more of a reality than in most areas, and where communist-led coir-factory, fishermen, toddy-tapper and agricultural labour unions had become powerful enough to control recruitment, establish arbitration courts, and even win the right to run their own ration shops. Economic grievances, sharpened by acute food scarcity, coincided in the autumn of 1946 with national opposition, spearheaded by the Communists, to Dewan C P Ramaswami Iyer's plans for an independent Travancore under an 'American-model' constitution which would have perpetuated his own power. Intense repression led to violent clashes and attacks on police camps in Punnapra and Vayalar on October 24-27, 1946, which left about 800 killed and ultimately vastly enhanced the prestige of the Communists in Kerala. The massacre prevented the

alliance with the totally discredited Dewan towards which some right-wing Congress leaders had been moving and Ramaswami Iyer next year accepted integration with India fairly easily, no doubt because he had realised that the alternative might well be a violent revolution. In this sense it was Punnapra-Vayalar which really brought about the integration of Travancore with India, blocking the road towards Balkanisation.[87]

Where *tebhaga* and Punnapra-Vayalor had gone to the brink of armed struggle, but failed to cross it, Telengana in Hyderabad State between July 1946 and October 1951 saw the biggest peasant guerilla war so far of modern Indian history, affecting at its height about 3,000 villages spread over 16,000 square miles and with a population of 3 millions. The beginning of the uprising is traditionally dated from July 4, 1946, when thugs employed by the *deshmukh* of Visunur (one of the biggest and most oppressive of Telengana's landlords, with 40,000 acres) murdered a village militant, Doddi Komarayya, who had been defending a poor washer-woman's mite of land. Unlike *tebhaga* and to a much greater extent than in Travancore, the Communist-led agrarian revolt in Telengana against particularly gross forms of feudal oppression retained, till the entry of the Indian army in September 1948, the broader dimensions of a national-liberation struggle to overthrow the Nizam and his Razakar bands and unite Hyderabad with India. Another decisive advantage was the very slack enforcement of the Arms Act in Hyderabad, where, as Sundarayya recalls, "large numbers of country-guns... were available and... in common use", while till September 1948 arms could be collected more or less openly in the neighbouring Andhra districts of Madras, since everyone—including the Congress—wanted to block the Nizam's bid to set up an independent and autocratic Muslim-dominated state. Incidentally, though the urban Muslim population, including many workers, remained generally outside the Telengana struggle, the Communist-led peasant revolt also succeeded in defusing what might have been quite an explosive communal situation in Hyderabad State, where the first political movements in the 1930s had been under Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha inspiration.[88]

As Travancore and Hyderabad revealed, the situation in the princely states was full of radical possibilities, and 1946-47 in fact saw a major upsurge in States Peoples' movements almost everywhere. The Congress High Command, and particularly Sardar Patel, tackled the situation in what had become the standard practice of the party: using popular

movements as a lever to extort concessions from princes, while simultaneously restraining radical elements (or even using force to suppress them once the prince had been brought to heel, as after 'police action' in Hyderabad). Thus in Kashmir in June 1946, after Nehru had chivalrously rushed off to get arrested on hearing the news of the detention of Sheikh Abdulla by the very unpopular and despotic Hindu Maharaja of a Muslim-majority state, Patel assured Wavell that Nehru had gone against his advice,[89] and soon began negotiations with Kashmir prime minister Kak to bring about a peaceful accession to India. "This alters the whole outlook for the states", the Nawab of Bhopal declared on hearing of the appointments of Patel and his civil servant friend V P Menon to head the new States Department. On July 5, 1947, Patel assured the princes : "The Congress are no enemies of the Princely Order, but on the other hand, wish them and the people under their aegis all prosperity, contentment and happiness."[90] Between July 1947 and September 1948, Patel and Menon brought off first the "accession" and then the "integration" of the states through a skilful combination of threats of mass pressure and baits—'surrender' only of powers of defence, external affairs, and communications in the first phase, which the princes in any case had never enjoyed under British paramountcy, and generous offers subsequently of privy purses and offices of Rajpramukhs. The rapid unification of India is certainly Sardar Patel's greatest and very real achievement, but we must not forget the considerable role played here, too, by the existence or at least the potential presence of mass pressures, as well as the way socially radical possibilities were blocked by this speedy 'revolution' from the top.

Popular movements in urban areas were seriously disrupted by the riots, which began precisely in Calcutta and Bombay, the two main centres of the 1945-46 upsurge. Yet five months after the August riots the students of Calcutta were again on the streets on January 21, 1947 in 'Hands off Vietnam' demonstrations against the use of Dum Dum airport by French planes, and all communal divisions seemed forgotten in the absolutely united and ultimately victorious 85-day tram strike under Communist leadership which began the same day, followed soon afterwards by port employees and Howrah engineering workers. January and February 1947, in fact, saw a new strike wave, with 100,000 out in Kanpur textiles, a threat of a coal stoppage, and strike in Coimbatore, Karachi and elsewhere due "largely to Communist agitation."[91] "There are strikes everywhere—everybody wants higher wages and less

work", Birla complained to Gandhi's secretary Pyarelal on January 18.[92]

The socially radical movements of which Telengana was the climax never coalesced into an organised and effective countrywide political alternative. The fear they undoubtedly inspired, however, helped to bring about the final compromise by which a 'peaceful' transfer of power was purchased at the cost of Partition and a communal holocaust. V P Menon reported to Wavell in the wake of the early 1947 strike wave "that Congress leaders were losing popularity... there were serious internal troubles in Congress and great fear of the Left Wing: and that the danger of labour difficulties was acute."[93] A week later, Wavell's Journal recorded a conversation with Patel "about the danger of the Communists. I got the impression he would like to declare the Party illegal"[94]—a desire which the Home Minister would fulfill with a few months of independence, in March 1948. The British Government was also quick to come forward with a dramatic gesture when in February 1947 League refusal to join the Constituent Assembly and cooperate in Cabinet functioning led to a major political crisis, with the Congress demanding resignation of the League ministers and threatening to withdraw its own nominees from the Interim Government if its demands were not met. This was the immediate context of Attlee's famous speech in Commons on February 20, 1947, fixing June 1948 as deadline for transfer of power and announcing the replacement of Wavell by Mountbattan. The hint of possible Partition or even Balkanisation into numerous states was very clear in this policy statement, but the bait of complete transfer of power by a definite and fairly early data proved too tempting to be refused—particularly as the only real alternative for the Congress was to plunge into another mass confrontation, difficult in the context of communal riots and very dangerous socially in view of what appeared to be a growing Left menace.

Something like a cult has developed around Mountbatten, depicting him as superstatesman cum Prince Charming who solved the sub-continent's problems in record time through a combination of military forthrightness, personality and tact.[95] There is enormous exaggeration here. The formula of freedom-with-partition was coming to be widely accepted well before Mountbatten took over charge, and the final draft of Wavell's 'breakdown plan' in September 1946 had already envisaged complete British withdrawal by March 31, 1948.[96] The working-out of the Mountbatten plan in fact revealed once again the potential strength

of the Congress position, as well as the repeated failure of its leaders to use this fully due to their eagerness for quick and peaceful accession to power. Mountbatten's original 'Plan Balkan' had envisaged transfer of power to separate provinces, which—along with princely states rendered independent by the lapse of paramountcy—would then have the choice of joining India, Pakistan, or remaining separate. A single outburst by Nehru in Simla on May 10 was sufficient for Mountbatten to give this up completely. Mountbatten himself, as well as his admirers, have been full of praise for the decision, on an "absolute hunch", of showing this plan privately to Nehru on the eve of seeking Cabinet sanction for it. The historically much more significant point surely is that Nehru's opposition was sufficient to make Mountbatten abandon a plan on which British officials had been working for several weeks. The alternative then adopted owed its inception, not to Mountbatten, but to V P Menon, who had suggested in January 1947 a transfer to two central governments, India and Pakistan, on the basis of grant of Dominion Status with a right of session. Vallabhbhai Patel, significantly enough, had privately agreed with this idea, even though formally it meant a retreat from the Lahore Resolution of 1929 (since Dominion Status on the basis of existing political structures would obviate the need to wait for agreement in the Constituent Assembly, ensure a peaceful and very quick transfer of power, win for India influential friends in Britain by pandering to British sentiments about Crown and Commonwealth, and allow for continuity in the bureaucracy and army.[97] Unlike Plan Balkan, the revised scheme did guard against fragmentation of the country, but at the cost, it must be added, of blocking some interesting non-communal regional possibilities—moves towards an united, autonomous Bengal by Suhrawardy and Abdul Hasham, which a few Congress leaders like Sarat Bose seemed prepared to consider, and the demand of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan for an independent Pathan state in the NWFP. The Frontier Congress leaders felt that only such a slogan could counter the League bid to capture the province for Pakistan, now that anti-Muslim riots in Hindu majority provinces had weakened the traditional Pathan identification with Indian nationalism. The Congress High Command in 1947 let the Pathans down very badly indeed, signally failing to use its position of strength to block the decision to have a plebiscite on the India-Pakitsan issue alone, and that on the basis of the old limited electorate. NWFP went to Pakistan, with the local Congress boycotting the plebiscite in protest, by the deci-

sion of just 9.52 per cent of its total population [98] The Frontier Gandhi would later declare with justice that he and his movement had been "thrown to the wolves" by the Congress leadership.

IV

In conclusion, a few general comments may be attempted on two broad problems which emerge from the study of 1945-47 developments—the reasons behind the failure of the Left alternative, and the nature of the great but incomplete transition which was consummated on August 15.

Within the Communist movement, a strong tendency had developed by late-1947 to attribute the Left failure to the allegedly 'reformist' policies of the leadership, and particularly of P C Joshi; and at the Calcutta Party Congress in February 1948 Joshi was unceremoniously ousted as General Secretary and replaced by B T Ranadive with his much more militant line. Judging from official comments and reactions, Communist actions at least at local levels were hardly lacking in militancy in the 1945-47 period. A glance through the Home Political (Internal) files immediately reveals how completely the CPI had displaced the Congress as the Enemy No 1 already by the end of 1945. It may also be argued that Communist militancy was often more effective during these years than in the 'Ranadive period', which saw such complete fiascos as the call for country-wide railway strike and rebellion on March 9, 1949, as well as the gradual decline even of the Telengana armed struggle. Party cadres and the leadership in fact showed unusual flexibility at times, as when the Students Federation joined the Forward Block demonstration in Calcutta on November 21, 1945, and their action was endorsed next day by P C Joshi's telegram: "Get all war-time understanding out of your heals.... New tactical line needed. Be with the people." [99] A considerable lag is noticeable, however, at the level of theoretical formulation and general slogans. Here the persistent calls for Congress-League-Communist unity made little sense and even sounded rather pathetic at a time when the Congress and the League obviously had no intention at all of coming together, and in fact seemed to agree only in a common detestation of the Communists. Another example would be the curious passage in the CPI Election Manifesto which gave an assurance that the Party "shall not touch the small zamindar or the rich peasant but shall open before them the prospect of becoming the best of the farmers and cattle-breeders, reputed members in their own village." [100] Less than a year after this programmatic

statement, the Party would be leading the Bengal share-croppers in a struggle against the jotedars, who were not zamindars but big farmers.

As in other periods of 'united front', the central problem was to combine broad multi-class objectives with retention of initiative and independence. The Chinese Communists under Mao, as everyone knows, did this brilliantly during the anti-Japanese War; a lesser known example would be the Bolsheviks, who upto the very eve of October 1917 had a very modest 'bourgeois-democratic' minimum programme (an eight hour day, a democratic republic, and return to peasants of Otrezki lands seized by the general), but certainly never expected bourgeois parties like the Kadets to carry out this programme for them. In colonial India too, substantial advances were made in regions like Kerala and Telengana by Communists taking over the initiative and leadership in the national struggle, as when P Krishna Pillai, E M S Namboodripad and A K Gopalan during the 1930s simultaneously built up the Congress, the CSP as legal cover, and the illegal Communist Party in Travancore and Malabar. But all too often united front came to mean a policy of waiting on bourgeois leaders and putting undeserved trust in their 'progressive' intentions—an attitude which in its turn repeatedly bred an equally disastrous relapse into ultra-Left sectarianism.

But failures in Communist leadership probably provide only a small part of the explanation for the Left defeat in the post-War years. The Communists, we must remember, were no more than a small, though in these years rapidly growing, force at the national plane, with only scattered pockets of real influence.[101] In addition, they still had to live down their 1942 regulation. The break within the Left over Quit India had pushed the Socialists much closer to the Congress High Command, and a *Fortnightly Report* from UP noted with relief in November 1945 that "Congress Socialists as such have not come much to notice", since there was now "little difference in either the avowed objective or the outward means of attaining that objective between the Congress and the Congress Socialists."[102] The British, as we have seen, were alarmed above all by the militancy of urban labour; but with a few short-lived exceptions (Calcutta in November 1945 and February 1946, Bombay in February 1946, Punnapra-Vayalar in October 1946), all the strikes of the period were on economic demands alone. This may have been partly the responsibility of a trade union leadership sunk in 'economism', but it remains more than a little dubious whether labour would have responded on a country-wide scale to a call for political action coming

from the Communists alone. (A joint Congress-Communist call would have been quite a different thing, as the British were well aware, but the Congress High Command had no intention of going in the direction.) As for peasant movements, a crucial limitation here came from the marked, and growing, regional variations. All-in peasant unity against landlords was possible only in regions like Telengana, with its crude and blatant forms of feudalism. Regions like Punjab or Gujarat, where considerable rich peasant development coincided with the absence of zamindari, had in sharp contrast kept largely aloof even from the 1942 rebellion, while Communists naturally found entry difficult for a time into the quiet India strongholds of Bihar or east UP. Poor peasants, sharecroppers, and agricultural labourers, labourers, often of low caste or tribal origin, still provided combustible material. But, as the experience of the later stages of *tebhaga*, 1948-49, and Naxalbari has repeatedly indicated, movements of such sections alone, however militant and heroic, tend to end in a self-defeating isolation in which guerilla war degenerates into sporadic individual terrorism. The Telengana 'spark' thus failed to kindle a 'prairie fire'.

Controversies about Communist policies naturally lead on to the broader question of evaluating the real significance of August 1947. The problem lies in combining recognition of the very real and fundamental changes associated with the coming of freedom with an awareness of the equally real limits and contradictions. Perhaps some guidance can be sought from Antonio Gramsci's very interesting concept, developed in the context of his study of Risorgimento Italy, of 'passive revolution' : 'passive' not in the sense of popular forces being inactive (as they were not, in 19th century Italy and even less so during the Indian freedom movement), but because the privileged groups in town and country were able to successfully detach attainment of political independence and unity from radical social change. Gramsci explained this in terms of the success of the leading bourgeois group, the moderates headed by Cavour, in asserting its 'transformismo', bringing about "the gradual but continuous absorption of the active elements produced by allied groups—and even of those which came from antagonistic groups and seemed irreconcilably hostile." In Italy "the Action Party [of Mazzini and Garibaldi] was in fact 'indirectly' led by Cavour", the Indian counterpart would be the subordination of left elements within the Congress, best typified by Nehru and the CSP in the 1930s, to the basically Right-oriented High Command. Such 'hegemony' was however sharply

distinct, according to Gramsci, from what he considered to have been the classic 'Jacobin' model of successful and thorough-going bourgeois revolution based on mobilisation of peasantry and total destruction of feudalism in the countryside. In Italy, despite unification and political independence, full-scale capitalist transformation proved very difficult to achieve, since the new ruling groups was a bloc between Northern industralists and Southern landlords established at the cost of peasant aspirations, and fundamental agrarian change remained a 'rivoluzione mancata' (a 'missing' or 'absent' revolution). One major consequence was the perpetuation and sharpening of regional disparities, the North flourishing at the cost of the South—modern Italy's persistent 'Southern Question'. Historical parallels can never be exact, and a number of differences are evident in the Indian context (e.g. the absence of a Piadmont, or of direct foreign help in overthrowing alien rule, and the related much greater role of popular forces, which ensured establishment of democratic forms far more quickly then in Italy); it would be labouring the obvious, however, to list the similarities. It is interesting that Gramsci in 1922 made a passing reference to Gandhian as a "native theorisation of the 'passive revolution' with religious overtones."[103]

The millions who rejoiced throughout the sub-continent, thrilled to Nehru's midnight speech on India's 'tryst with dstiny', and made of August 15 an unforgettable experience, had certainly not been entirely deluded, as subsequent developments abundantly proved. The Communist slogan in 1948-49 of 'Yeh Azadi Jhuta Hai' cut very little ice, for the new Indian government certainly did not act as an imperialist puppet; 'a passive revolution' also implies fundamental, though slow and contradictory change. Yet it is possible to sympathise with the many to whom independence seemed a sorry thing if compared to the generous dreams of the freedom-fighters, and it is well-known that Gandhi in great part shared this sense of disillusionment. The agony of many committed Leftists was well expressed in the last two poems Samar Sen has written: "The battleships [of the R I N] lie silent in harbour, immobilised by treachery"; in Noakhali, Bihar, or Garmukteswar, Hindus and Muslims find unity only after death; and "the passions of youth have become the lust of aging men."[104] A savage, but not entirely unjust, comment on the transformation of patriots into power-hungry politicians.

ENDNOTES

RAMMOHAN ROY AND THE BREAK WITH THE PAST

1. For a brilliant analysis of this important theoretical problem, see Bipan Chandra, *Colonialism and Modernization* (Presidential Address, Modern India Section of the Indian History Congress, Jabalpur Session, 1970).
2. Thus Brajendranath Seal and Susobhan Chandra Sarkar are in perfect agreement on this point, despite their otherwise quite different attitudes —*Rammohun the Universal Man* (Calcutta, n. d.), pp. 2-3 and *On the Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta, 1979), p. 14-15.
3. Cited in K. K. Datta, *Survey of India's Social Life and Economic condition in the 18th Century* (Calcutta, 1961), p. 2.
4. Barun De has dealt with this ossifying role of both Mughal and early-British "toleration" in two very stimulating articles—"A Preliminary Note on the Writing of the History of Modern India" in *Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, vol. III, No. 1, 2, (Calcutta, 1963-64) and "Some Implications of Political Tendencies and Social Factors in (Early) Eighteenth Century India" in *Studies in the Social History of India (Modern)* ed. by O. P. Bhatnagar (Allahabad, 1964).
5. "Letter to Lord Amherst, 11 December 1823", *English Works of Rammohun Roy* (referred to henceforward as *EW*), vol. IV, (Calcutta, 1947), pp. 105-08.
6. "I am sure you will do all you can to educate the natives for office and to encourage them by the possession of it .... We cannot govern India financially without this change of system." (Ellenborough, President of the Board of Control, to Bentinck, 23 September 1830, quoted in A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal*, 1818-1835 (Leiden, 1965), pp. 151-52. Financial economy demanded more employment of Indians on small salaries, but Orientalist educational policy could not produce this kind of cadre.
7. In an introduction to an 1817 London reprint of two tracts of Rammohun, Digby stated that the "Brahmin ... when I became acquainted with him, could merely speak it (English) well enough to be understood upon the most common topics of discourse, but could not write it with any degree of correctness." Rammohun seems to have perfected his knowledge of English only after entering the service of Digby. They met each other first in 1801, but Rammohun became his munshi only in 1805. S. D. Collet, *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, edited by Biswas and Ganguli (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 23-24, 37-38.
8. Collect dismissed it as "immature," (*op. cit.*, p. 19). Rajnarain Bose in his preface to the 1884 English translation of the *Tuhfat* rather con-

descendingly referred to it as an "index to a certain stage in the history of his (Rammohun's) mind. It marks the period when he had just emerged from the idolatry of his age but had not yet risen to...sublime Theism and Theistic Worship...." Reprinted in *Tuhfat-ul Muwahhidin*, (Calcutta, 1949).

9. *Tuhfat-ul Muwahhidin* (Calcutta, 1949), Introduction.
10. "... they (mankind) are to be excused in admitting and teaching the doctrine of existence of soul and the next world although the real existence of soul and the next world is hidden and mysterious for the sake of the welfare of the people (society) as they comply, for the fear of punishment in the next world... refrain from commission of illegal deeds." *Ibid.*, p. 5.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 8. This is an assumption fairly common, incidentally, in later Brahmo upasana.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
14. *Loc. cit.*
15. Almost certainly by Rammohun, according to Stephen Hay.
16. Rammohun to Digby, 18 January 1828, *EW* IV, p. 96.
17. "The term Maya implies, primarily, the power of creation, and secondarily its effect, which is the Universe. The Vedanta, by comparing the world with the misconceived notion of a snake, when a rope really exists, means that the world, like the supposed snake, has no independent existence, that it receives its existence from the Supreme Being. In like manner the Vedanta compares the world with a dream : as all the objects seen in a dream depend upon the motion of the mind, so the existence of the world is dependent upon the being of God...." *The Brahmanical Magazine*, No. 1, Calcutta 1821 ; *EW* II, p. 146.
18. Preface to the *Translation of the Ishopanishad*, Calcutta, 1816—*EW* II, p. 44.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
20. *First and Second Conferences between An Advocate For, and An Opponent Of, The Practice of Burning Widows Alive* (Calcutta, 1818, 1820). *EW* III, pp. 91, 111.
21. The *Friend of India* of October 1819 summarized Mrityunjay's arguments, quoted in Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, *Mrityunjay Vidyalankar*, pp. 29-34 (*Sahitya-Sadhak-Charitmala*, vol. I).
22. *EW* III, p. 127.
23. Such a comparison has been made by Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay (*Sahitya-Sadhak-Charitmala*, vol. I) and more recently by David Kopf in *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (Berkeley, 1969), Chapter XII, apparently on the strength of an invocation to Brahma at the beginning of Ramram Basu's *Lipi-mala* (1802).
24. Brajendranath Seal, *Rammohun the Universal Man* (Calcutta, n. d.), p. 4. The detailed discussion of the same question in Nagendranath Chattopadhyay, *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jivan-Charita* (3rd

edition, Calcutta, 1897), chapter 17, is acknowledged by the author to have been entirely based on Brajendranath's ideas.

25. Barun De, "A Preliminary Note on the Writing of the History of Modern India," *op. cit.*
26. For an analysis of the difference between the *Tuhfat* and the post-1815 religious writings, see Susobhan Sarkar, "Religious Thought of Rammohun Roy" in *On the Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta, 1979).
27. *India Gazette*, quoted by *Asiatic Journal*, 18 May 1819, J. K. Majumdar ed., *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* (Calcutta, 1941), p. 18.
28. See for example, *Chari Prasna* (1822) and *Pashanda-Peeran* (1823) and Rammohun's replies, *Chari Prasner Uttar* (May 1822) and *Pathya-Pradan* (1823), published together in *Rammohun-Granthabali* (Calcutta, n. d.), vol. VI. The *Brahma-Pouttalik Sangbad* (1820) defends the observance of caste, diet and other social rules by the believer in Brahma as a matter of expediency even while emphasizing their relative unimportance. pp. 138, 158, 164.
29. *EW* II, p. 15.
30. Collet, *op. cit.*, p. 371.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 370.
32. In the *Kavitakarer Sahit Vichar* of 1820 (summarized in Nagendranath Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-27) and the *Brahmanical Magazine*, No. II of 1821 (*EW* II), Rammohun came very near to an acceptance of the Karma doctrine—"The Supreme Ruler bestows the consequences of...sins and holiness...by giving them other bodies either animate or inanimate" (*EW* II, p. 156). To the true Vedantist, of course, Karma-phal belongs to the subsidiary world of illusion, but then Rammohun never accepted the full monist logic.
33. Kalikinkar Dutta mentions in particular the Karta Bhaja, the Spashta-dayaka, and the Balarami sects. (*op. cit.*, p. 8).
34. *EW* II, p. 200.
35. "As a youth," he (Rammohun) said to Mr. Duff, I acquired some knowledge of the English language. Having read about the rise and progress of Christianity in apostolic times, and its corruption in succeeding ages, and then of the Christian Reformation which shook off these corruptions and restored it to its primitive purity, I began to think that something similar might have taken place in India, and similar results might follow here from a reformation of the popular idolatry." Collet, *op. cit.*, p. 280.
36. Rammohun is said to have written a geography textbook (Nagendranath Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-26). The Atmiya Sabha member Brajamohan Majumdar was working on a translation of Fergusson's Astronomy on the eve of his death. S. Hay ed., *A Tract Against Idolarty* (Calcutta, 1963), Introduction. Salahuddin Ahmed (*op. cit.*, chapter I) cites a 1832 reference in the Bentinck Papers to translations by Hindu College students.

37. Summary in *Calcutta Journal*, 31 January 1882. J. K. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 288.
38. *Sambad Kaumudi*, quoted by *Samachar Darpan*, 19 January 1833. *Ibid.*, pp. 273-75.
39. Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford, 1968), p. 85.
40. Letter of Hyde East to the Earl of Buckinghamshire (Fulham Papers), cited in Salahuddin Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
41. Collet, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
42. *EW* I, p. 1.
43. Collet, *op. cit.*, Appendix I B, pp. 431, 449.
44. Mahesh Chundra Deb, "A Sketch of the Condition of the Hindoo Women (1839)," Gautam Chattopadhyay ed., *Awakening in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1965), pp. 94-95.
45. *Sangbad Prabhakar* 21 8. 1247/1840/—Benoy Ghosh ed., *Samayik Patre Banglar Samajchitra* (Calcutta, 1962), vol. I, pp. 160-61.
46. For this, see J. S. Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India—The Assessments of British Historians* (New Delhi, 1970).
47. The authenticity of this letter, published by Sandford Arnot after Rammohun's death, has been often challenged ; but it is difficult to imagine what motive Arnot could have had in completely inventing the passage I am using. (Collet, *op. cit.*, Appendix VIII, p. 497.) See also Victor Jacquemont's testimony (1829) : "Formerly when he (Rammohun) was young, he told me this in Europe, the ruler of his country, was odious to him. The blind patriotism of youth made him detest the English and all who came with them." J. K. Majumdar ed., *Indian Speeches and Documents on British Rule* (Calcutta, 1937), p. 41.
48. Mufakharul Islam, 'Rammohun Royer Ajnatabas', *Itihas* (Dacca), Bhadra-Agrahayan, 1376.
49. "Questions and Answers on the Revenue System of India" (1832), *EW* III, p. 45.
50. Cited in J. K. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 328.
51. *Samachar Chandrika*, quoted by *Samachar Darpan*, 7 July 1832. *Ibid.*, pp. 490-93.
52. *Bengal Hurkaru*, 20 and 22 June, 22 November 1832. *Ibid.*, pp. 483-88, 496-501.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 484, 488.
54. See, however, Salahuddin Ahmed, *op. cit.*, chapters I and V for some discussion on this point.
55. Dwarkanath's multifarious business activities need no elaboration ; Rammohun built up his fortune initially through money-lending and dealings in Company papers, from the proceeds of which he started purchasing land from 1799. (Collet, *op. cit.*, p. 14.) He later developed close connections with agency houses and in a letter to the Court of Directors (23 July 1833) asking for a loan after the collapse of Mackintosh and Co., stated that the latter had been "My Agents as well in general pecuniary transactions as in receiving my rents and managing my landed property". (*EW* IV, p. 129.)

56. Collet, *op. cit.*, p. 270 ; J. K. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 438-39.
57. Quoted in Salahuddin Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
58. Kishorichand Mitra, *Dwarkanath Tagore*, Bengali translation, ed. Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 60-61.
59. J. K. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 434-37.
60. N. K. Sinha, *Economic History of Bengal*, vol. III (Calcutta, 1970), p. 4.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
62. Proceedings of the Board of Trade, July 1828, cited in *ibid.*, p. 8.
63. Humphry House, *The Dickens World* (London, 1961), p. 55.
64. By David Kopf, for example, *op cit.*, pp. 266-72.
65. *Samachar Chandrika* quoted by *John Bull*, 9 March 1830 in J. K. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 330.
66. The strange but very significant alliance between the Hindu orthodoxy and the *John Bull* is vividly reflected in a large number of extracts published by J. K. Majumdar : cf. for example, Numbers 34, 36, 39, 184 and 185.
67. Bipin Chandra Pal, "Yuga-Prabartak Rammohun" in *Nabayuger Bangla* (Calcutta, 1955) ; a reprint of Pal's article in *Banga-bani* 1328-31 (1921-24).
68. S. C. Sarkar, *On the Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta, 1979), p. 3.
69. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Articles 5, 7, 8.
70. "In today's battle over the shape of India's future, it is surely westernism rather than traditionalism which beckons us towards a better, happier life. Sarkar, "Rabindranath Tagore and the Renaissance in Bengal", *op. cit.*, p. 159.
71. Karl Marx, *The Future Results of the British Rule in India* (1853), reprinted in *On Colonialism* (Moscow, n. d.), pp. 84, 88.
72. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

THE COMPLEXITIES OF YOUNG BENGAL

1. *Oriental Magazine*, vol. I, no. 10, October 1843. *Reprinted in* : *E. W.* Madge, *Henry Derozio : the Eurasian poet and reformer* ; ed. by Subir Raychoudhuri (Calcutta, 1967), p. 42.
2. Kishorichand Mitra. *Hare memorial lecture on Hindu College* (June 1861). *In* : Pearychand Mitra, *Biographical sketch of David Hare ;* tr. into Bengali by Sushil Kumar Gupta (Calcutta, 1964), Appendix II.
3. This implicit comparison with the Decembrists has been made by Amit Sen [*pseud.* S. C. Sarkar] in *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance.* Reprinted in : S. C. Sarkar, *On the Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta, 1979), p. 27.
4. These include the diaries of Ramgopal Ghosh and Radhanath Sikdar and an unpublished autobiography of Sibchandra Deb. One might add

also Haramohan Chatterji's manuscript history of the Hindu College used by Kishorichand Mitra and Thomas Edwards, and Kishorichand's diary used in Manmathanath Ghosh's biography.

5. S. C. Sarkar, 'Derozio and Young Bengal'. *In* : Atul Gupta, *ed., Studies in the Bengal Renaissance* (Jadavpur, 1958).
6. J. C. Bagal, *Unabingsa satabdir bangla* (2nd ed. Calcutta, 1963), p. 87. For an illuminating and extremely provocative revalution of David Hare, *see* : Barun De, 'The Role of David Hare in colonial 'acculturation' during the Bengal 'renaissance' ; unpublished paper presented to the Asiatic Society on 29 September 1972.
7. Thomas Edwards, *Henry Derozio : the Eurasian poet teacher and journalist* (Calcutta, 1884), p. 126.
   Edwards cites the testimony of Maheschandra Ghosn, who was present when the Rev. Mr. Hill visited Derozio in a last effort to reclaim the lost sheep. Maheschandra, he argues, had every incentive to present Derozio as a Christian after his own conversion, but he always denied the story of a death-bed recantation spread by Hill (and repeated later on by E. W. Madge, *op. cit.*, p. 16, 49).
8. Alexander Duff, *India and India missions* (Edinburgh, 1839), p. 629.
9. George Smith. *Quoted in* : Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
   A considerable part of Edwards' biography is in fact taken up by a refutation of Duff and Smith.
10. *Cf.*, Ramtanu Lahiri's famous comment discontinuing, his subscription to the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* on 24th July 1846 : "The followers of Vedanta temporize". *See* : Sibnath Sastri. *Ramtanu Lahiri o tatkalin Bangasamaj* (Calcutta, 1903, 1909), pp. 164-65.
11. Pearychand Mitra and Sibchandra Deb became interested in spiritualism from the 1860s, and Pearychand was prominent also in the Bengal branch of the Theosophical Society established by Blavatsky and Olcott in 1882. *See* : Sibnath Sastri, *op. cit.*, pp. 125, 132 ; Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, 'Pearychand Mitra'. *Sahitya-sadhak charitmala*, no. 21 (Calcutta, 1955), p. 189.
12. This has been suggested by Barun De, *op. cit.*
13. Pearychand Mitra, *Biographical sketch of David Hare* (Calcutta, 1877), p. 27.
14. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 186
    The translation was published in the *Calcutta Quarterly Magazine*, 1833.
16. Norman Hampson, *The Enlightenment.* (London, 1968), pp. 225, 228-31.
17. The letters to Wilson are reproduced in Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 77-89.
    For a summary of Hume's *Dialogues concerning natural religion*, as well as of Reids' rather inept refutation of it, *see* : Leslie Stephen, *History of English thought in the eighteenth century* ; vol. I (London, 1876), Chapters 1, 6.
18. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
19. *India Gazette*, 3 August 1831.

20. "The East Indians complain of suffering from proscription—is it for them to proscribe ? ...It is their best interest to unite and cooperate with the other native inhabitants of India...'Man to man the world over/shall brothers be for a' that'." Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-63. Here we find an echo of that same identification with India, almost unique for an Anglo-Indian, which found such eloquent manifestation in some of Derozio's poetry.
21. *Cited in* : Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 68
22. Rammohun paraded his outward conformity to most caste rules, and his son Radhaprasad observed the orthodox Hindu funeral ceremonies for his father—as the *Samachar Chandrika* noted with glee. Quoted in : *Samachar Darpan*, 12 April 1834. *See* Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, *ed., Sambadpatre sekaler katha* : vol. II [Henceforth : *SSK* II] (Calcutta, 1941), p. 492.
    Close associates of Rammohun like Prasannakumar Tagore never abandoned Pujas.
23. Krishnamohan Banerji, *The Prosecuted*, Act II, scene 2. pp. 10 12.
24. *Ibid.*, Act III, scene 1, p. 21.
25. *Ibid.*, Act IV, scene 2, p. 28.
26. Madhusudan Dutta, *Ekei ki bale sabhyata*. Act II, scene 1. *Madhusudan rachanabali* (Calcutta, 1965). pp. 250-51.
27. *The Persecuted* Act I, scene 1. p. 4.
28. *Ekei ki bale sobhyata*, Act II, scene 1, p. 250.
29. *Samachar Chandrika*. 2 May 1831 ; *Sambad Purnachandroday*, 7 September 1835. *In* : *SSK* II, pp. 676-77, 694-95.
30. Thus Tarachand Chakrabarti, Krishnamohan Banerji, Ramgopal Ghosh, and Ramtanu Lahiri could study in Hindu College thanks only to the free studentships provided through Hare. The College fee of Rs. 5 per month was quite high for its times, and Kisorichand draws an interesting contrast between the gilded youth who could pay fees and the for more serious group sent up every year from Hare's school and coming mainly from relatively poor families. Sibnath Sastri, *op. cit.*, chapters 4, 6 ; Kisorichand Mitra, *Hare memorial lecture*, pp. 205-06.
31. Alexander Duff, *op. cit.*, p. 627
32. H. Das, 'The Rev. Krishnamohan Banerji—Brahmin-Christian, Scholar and Patriot (1813-1885)', *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. 38, June-December 1929.
33. *Cited in* : A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Social ideas and social change in Bengal* 1818-1835. (Leiden, 1965), p. 45.
34. Bimanbehari Majumdar, *History of Indian social and political ideas from Rammohun to Dayananda* (Calcutta, 1967), Chapter 3.
    Jogeschandra Bagal, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-89.
    S. R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Delhi, 1971), p. 31.
35. Benoy Ghosh, *Banglar samajik itihaser dhara* (Calcutta, 1968), pp. 178-87.
    The author cited the *New Calcutta Directory* of 1856. The bulk of

the Bengali Hindu salaries listed in the *Directory* range from Rs. 25/- to Rs. 60/- per month.

36. Mehrotra, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
37. *Jnananvesana* extracts in *Samachar Darpan*, 21 April 1838, 26 January 1839. *In* : *SSK* II, pp. 331-32, 467-68.
38. Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, *Pearychand Mitra*, pp. 179-80.
Arabinda Poddar, *Renaissance in Bengal : quests and confrontations. 1800-1860* (Simla, 1970), pp. 128-31.
39. The *Samachar Darpan* of 6 November 1830 reprinted from the *Chandrika* a letter from an irate parent of a Hindu College boy making this interesting reference to the ancient Indian materialist philosopher. *In* : *SSK* II, pp. 231-32.
40. *Samachar Chandrika*, 5 May and 9 May 1831. *In* : *SSK* II, pp. 235-37. One notices in this context how farfetched is David Kopf's discovery of 'proto-nationalism' in the Dharma Sabha campaign against the ban on sati. *See* : *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (California, 1969), pp. 266-72.
41. Duff, *op. cit.*, p. 608.
42. George Smith, *The Life of Alexander Duff*, vol. I (London, 1879), pp. 169-70.
43. Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.
Bengal Hurkaru, 23 January 1832. *Quoted in* Bhabatosh Dutta, *ed.*, *Bankimchandrer Iswarchandra Gupter jibancharit o kabitva* (Calcutta, 1968), p. 206.
44. Bhabatosh Dutta, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-08.
45. H. Das, *op. cit.*, *In* : *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. 37, January-June 1929, p. 138.
46. *India Review*, October 1842. *Quoted in* Jogeschandra Bagal, 'Kishnamohan Bandyopadhyay', *Sahitya-sadhak-charitmala*, no 72 (Calcutta 1955), pp. 36-37.
47. Jogeschandra Bagal, *Unabingsa satabdir Bangla*, p. 180.
48. Duff, *op. cit.*, p. 667.
49. *Hindu Caste*, p. 40. Bound with a number of missionary tracts, and available in the National Library.
50. Jogeschandra Bagal, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-183, 191.
Only a handful of the Derozians became formally Christians or Brahmos.
51. *Prospectus and rule of the SAGK. Reprinted in* : Gautam Chattopadhyay, *ed.*, *Awakening in Bengal in early nineteenth century* (Calcutta, 1965), p. lix.
52. Manmathanath Ghosh, *Raja Dakshinaranjan Mukkopadhyay* (Calcutta, 1917), pp. 205-08.
53. Pearychand Mitra, *Ramkamal Sen*. Bengali translation ed. by Jogeschandra Bagal (Calcutta, 1964), p. 60.
54. Mostly by Krishnamohan Banerji ; *cf.*, his *SAGK* paper : Reform civil and social. Gautam Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, p. 192. *See* : the 1851 essay on caste already cited.

55. Maheschandra Deb, 'A Sketch of the condition of Hindoo woman', *in* : Gautam Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
56. Quoted in : *Samachar Darpan*, 5 January 1833, 29 April 1837. *See* : *SSK* II, pp. 95-97, 98-99.
57. *Samachar Darpan*, 23 April 1836. Ramchandra Chattopadhyay of Moyapara headed the list with 62 wives. *See* : *SSK* II, pp. 252-53.
58. *Samachar Darpan*, 21 October 1837. *See* : *SSK* II, pp. 263-64.
59. Benoy Ghosh, *Samayikpatre Banglar samajchitra*, vol. III (Calcutta, 1964), pp. 44-49. [Henceforth : *SBS* III.]
60. Jogeschandra Bagal, *Unabingsa satabdir Bangla*, pp. 216-17. Benoy Ghosh, *Banglar samajik itihaser dhara*, pp. 288-89.
61. The most interesting example is the letter, allegedly written by some Chinsura women, demanding not only education, widow remarriage, and a ban on polygamy but also the rights of choosing husbands voluntarily and moving freely in society. *Samachar Darpan*, 21 March 1835. *In* : *SSK* II, pp. 257-58.
62 Pearychand Mitra, "A few desultory remarks on the 'cursory review of the institutions of Hindooism affecting the interest of the female sex', contained in the Rev. K. M. Banerjia's Prize Essay on Native Female Education." *See* : Gautam Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-97.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 166-81, 261-62, 335-51.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 280-81.
65. *Notes on the evidence on Indian affairs* (1853), quoted in : Bimanbehari Majumdar, *op. cit.*, chapter IV.
66. *SBS* III, pp. 91-92.
67. Gautam Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 350.
69. *Samachar Darpan*, 7 May and 20 August 1831 (the second one is an extract from the *Samachar Chandrika*). *See* : *SSK* II, pp. 336-37.
70. *India Gazette*, 5 July 1831.
71. *SSK* II, p. 76.
72. Quoted in : *India Gazette*, 26 December 1831, and cited by A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
73. Gautam Chattopadhyay. *op. cit.*, Appendix I, p. i-ii.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 392, 394, 398, giving the *Bengal Hurkaru* report of the meeting (13 February 1843).
75. *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. xvii-xviii.
76. *cf.*, for example : *Bengal Hurkaru*, 3 March and 21 March 1838 ; 29 June and 11 September 1844.
77. The Sarbatattvadipika Sabha of 1833 pledged to the use of Bengali alone included some Derozians like Nabinmadhab De, but none of the more well-known figures of that group. Gautam Chattopadhyay has quoted from a very powerful plea for the vernacular medium made by an unnamed Bengali and reprinted in the *Alexander's East India and Colonial Magazine* of January-June 1837 (Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, introduction, p. xix-xx) ; but where is the evidence that the author was a Derozian ?

78. David Kopf. *op. cit.*, Chapters 10, 14.
Samachar, Darpan, 5 February 1834. *See* : *SSK* II. pp. 215-17.
William Adam. *Third report on the state of education in Bengal* (1838) ; edited by Anathnath Basu. Calcutta, 1941. Section XII, p. 308.
79. Quoted in : *India Gazette*, 29 March 1833.
80. *Ibid.*, 10 August 1831.
81. For the role of the non-official Britons in moulding the Bengali intelligentsia from the 1820s down to the early 1840s, *see* : A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed. *op. cit.*, p. 6-10 ; *and* S. R. Mehrotra. *op. cit.*, p. 2-4.
82. *Jnananvesana* articles : 'Government of the Company and Revenue system of India', reprinted in : *India Gazette*, 8 April and 10 May 1833.
83. Krishnamohan Banerji, On the nature and importance of historical studies (May 1838). *See* : Gautam Chattopadhyay. *op. cit.*, p. 21-22.
84. *cf.*, the letter by 'A Freind to Improvement' published in the *Reformer* and reprinted in the *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, April 1831, which cited the American example to prove the capabilities of an independent India. *Ibid.*, Introduction. p. xiii-xiv.
85. *Samachar Darpan*, 5 November 1834. *In* : *SSK* II, p. 191-93.
86. Quoted by Bimanbehari Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 53-54, from the *Asiatic Journal of* May-August 1838.
87. *Bengal Hurkaru*, 6 October 1841. *Quoted in* : Mehrotra, *op. cit.*, p. 27-28.
88. *SBS* III, p. 605.
89. *Bengal Spectator*, 25 April 1843. *In* : *SBS* III. p. 149.
90. *Bengal Hurkaru*, 9 December 1844.
91. *Ibid.*, 8 February 1843.
92. *Quoted in* : Mehrotra, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
93. *Evidences relative to the efficiency of native agency in the administration of this country* (1844), *see* : Mehrotra. *op cit.*, p. 30-31.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.
95. Sir Roper Lethbridge's testimonial, *quoted in* : Manmathanath Ghosh, *Raja Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay*. Calcutta, 1917, p. 155.
96. *Bengal Spectator*, 1 November and 15 December 1842. *In* : *SBS* III.
97. *Tattvabodhini Patrika, Nos.* 81, 84, 88, Baisakh-Agrahayan 1772 S. E. (1850). *In* : *SBS* II, Calcutta, 1963. p. 108-32.
There is here a sharp criticism also of indigo planters—something absent in Rammohun and not very prominent in Derozian writings.
98. Pearychand Mitra, 'The Zamindar and the Ryot'. *Calcutta Review*, vol. VI, July-December 1846.
99. Replies of Ramloll Dutt (a landed proprietor of Rajpore, 24 Parganas) and Gopee Kissen Mitter (from Birbhum, on the basis of information supplied by a local naib). *See* : *Bengal Hurkaru*, 12 October and 12 November 1844, reporting monthly meetings of the British India Society.
100. *Calcutta Review*, vol. VI, p. 350.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*, p. 344.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 351-52.

104. Mehrotra. *op. cit.*, p. 17.
105. Pearychand Mitra, *Ramkamal Sen;* Bengali translation, ed. by Jogeschandra Bagal. Calcutta, 1964. pp. 21-22.
106. Pearychand Mitra, *Krishi-path.* Calcutta, 1861, *Reprinted in* : *Pearychand rachanabali;* ed. by Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay. Calcutta, 1971. pp. 288-90.
107. *Quoted in* : Bhabatosh Dutta, *op. cit.*, p. 88-89.
108. For a brilliant analysis of this process of inversion, *see* : Asok Sen, 'The Bengal economy and Rammohun Roy'; paper presented at a seminar on Rammohun at the Nehru Museum, New Delhi, October 1972, and being published by the Museum.
109. Amiya Bagchi, *Private investment in India*, 1900-1939. (Cambridge, 1972), p. 3.
110. *Bengal Hurkaru,* 18 February 1843.
111. *India Gazette,* 21 and 25 January 1833.
112. 'A Topographical and statistical sketch of Bankoorah'. July 1838. *See* : Gautam Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
113. George Fischer, *Russian liberalism — from gentry to intelligentsia* (Harvard, 1958), Chapter I.
114. *Enquirer,* quoted *in* : *India Gazette,* 6 September 1831.
115. *Sadhabar ekadasi,* Act II, scene 3. *In* : *Dinabandhu rachanabali,* Calcutta (1967), p. 146.

THE PATTERN AND STRUCTURE OF EARLY NATIONALIST ACTIVITY IN BENGAL

1. "When I went to jail the whole country was alive with the cry of Bande Mataram, alive with the hope of a nation...When I came out of jail I listened for that cry, but there was instead a silence. A hush had fallen on the country, and men seemed bewildered....." Aurobindo Ghosh, *Uttarpara Speech* (4th Edition, Calcutta, 1943), p. 2.
2. Prosecutions were actually instituted against Swadeshi agitators in only 10 cases in Bengal and 105 cases in Eastern Bengal and Assam during 1905-1909; only about half of these were successful, with the accused getting terms ranging from two weeks to a year. The only two cases of firing recorded for the entire 1903-1908 period involved Jamalpur railwaymen on strike and Sherpur Muslim rioters, not Swadeshi crowds. For a more detailed discussion, *see* my *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal* 1903-1908 (New Delhi, 1973), pp. 76-78, 502.
3. Most notably by Sir Auckland Colvin on the eve of the 1888 Allahabad Congress. *See* Bipinchandra Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times,* Volume II (Calcutta 1952; 2nd Edition, 1973), Chapter VI, and Briton Martin, *New India, 1885* (California, 1969), Epilogue.

4. Bipan Chandra, *Elements of Continuity and Change in the Early Nationalist Activity*, pp. 8-9. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Muzafferpur Session*, 1972.
5. 165 out of the 186 persons convicted of revolutionary crimes or killed in committing them in the period 1907 1917 came from the three upper castes of Brahmin, Kayastha and Baidya. Sedition Committee (Rowlat) Report (Calcutta, 1918), Annexure II.
6. This and the succeeding paragraph represents a highly condensed version of the thesis developed in my *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal* 1903-1908, Chapter II.
7. *Tenets of the New Party* (Calcutta, 2 January 1907) in Tilak, *Writings and Speeches* (n. d), p. XXIV.
8. The virtual equation which I then made between 'Westernism', 'modernism', and a progressive stance in general ignored the specifics and the inevitable distortions of a 'modernization' proceeding under colonial hegemony. I have tried to develop this point in *Rammohun Roy and the Break with Past*, see article no. 1 of this book.
9. Cf. the articles of Hitesranjan Sanyal.
10. For details see *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, 1903-1908, Chapter VII.
11. *Ibid.*, Chapter III.
12. *Ibid.*, Chapter IV.
13. *Ibid.*, Chapter V.
14. *Ibid.*, Chapter VI.
15. *Ibid.*, Chapter VIII.
16. As for instance in the Narsingdi Salt Case (December 1905), The Rajbari Salt Case (January 1906), the Uluberia Salt Case (January 1906), and the Narayangunj Case (June 1907). Reports on the first three cases are to be found in the contemporary pamphlet *swadeshi Cases* (Calcutta 1906) ; for the fourth, see *Bande Mataram*, 21 June 1907.
17. Samitis in the Backergunj District, pp. 63-64 in Government of India, Home Political Progs Deposit, April 1909, n. 2 (National Archives of India, New Delhi).
18. Amritalal Bose, *Sabash Bangali* (Calcutta, December 1905).
19. Mukunda Das, *Palli-Seva* (n. d.), Scene II, p. 7. included in *Mukunda Daser Granthabali* (Calcutta, 1951).
20. *Bengalee*, 15 February 1907.
21. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1906.
22. For the evolution of Rabindranath's attitudes, see *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, 1903-1908, pp. 52-55, 62-63, 82-85, 90-91.
23. *Bangalee*, 13 May 1906.
24. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1906.
25. *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal* 1903-1908, Chapter VI 4.
26. *Bengalee*, 20 March 1908.
27. Hitesranjan Sanyal, *op. cit.*
28. For more details see *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal* 1903-1908, pp. 355-59, 503-07.

29. Government of India Home Political Pregs Deposit, October 1907 n. 19, para 7.
30. Thus J. H. Broomfield, the foremost and most consistent advocate of the 'bhadralok' interpretation of Bengal nationalism, describes Lord Carmichael as "a man with a mission", hails Lord Lytton as "another man with a mission", and in his conclusion asserts that "the basic objective of British policies in Bengal throughout this half-century was to combat Hindu bhadralok exclusiveness"—not the preservation of their own vested interests. *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society* (California, 1968), pp. 42, 187, 331.
31. For a discussion of the extent of the linkages between educated unemployment, price-rise, and mationalism, see *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, 1903-1908, pp. 510-12.
32. *Cf.* for instance Anil Seal's engagingly coy statement : "the patterns of Indian trade were fitting conveniently into the international needs of the British economy." (*The Emergence of Indian Nationalism—Competition and collaboration in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1968, p. 1.) More recently, Judith Brown, has argued that even the drain of wealth theorics were entirely oriented to the interests of the educated elite, since "they recommended a drastic reduction in the number of foreigners in the administration—a remedy which devetailed neatly with their own wish for more jobs in government service" (*Gandhi's Rise to Power : Indian Politics* 1915-1922, Cambridge, 1972, p. 21). That men like Naoroji or R. C. Dutt "recommended" many other things is conveniently omitted.
33. *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, 1903-1908, Chapter VIII 3.
34. As for instance in the 1852 petitions of the British Indian, Bombay and Madras Associations on the eve of the renewal of the East India Company Charter. B. B. Majumdar, *Indian Political Associations and Report of Legislature*, 1818-1917 (Calcutta, 1965) Appendix ; S. R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, (Delhi, 1971), Chapter II.
35. R. C. Dutt's three perennial themes : see Preface to *Economic History of India under Early British Rule* (London, 1901).
36. N. K. Sinha, *Economic History of Bengal*, Volume III (Calcutta, 1970), p. 4.
37. S. C. Sarkar, ed, *Rammohun Roy on India Economy* (Calcutta, 1965), p. 82—quoted in Asok Sen, *The Bengal Economy and Rammohun Roy* (Paper presented at a seminar organized by the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, October, 1972, and being published by the Museum), p. 38.
38. *Questions and Answers on the Revenue System of India*, Answer to Question 52 (London, 1831)—Nag & Burman, eds., *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, Part III, (Calcutta, 1947), p. 52.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-77.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
41. *Jnananvesana* articles, *Government of the Company* and *Revenue System of India*, reprinted in *India Gazette*, 8 April, 10 May 1833.

42. Reprinted from the Society for Acquisition of General Knowledge Proceedings in Gautam Chattopadhyay, *Awakening in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1965), p. 351.
43. Reprinted in *Nineteenth Century Studies*, Volume I, No. 4, October 1973.
44. Mehrotra, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
45. The writings and motivations of men like Knight or Geddes deserve much more detailed study than they have received so far. Judging from an open letter criticizing the railway guarantee system and demanding more public works written in 1866 to Secretary of State Cranborne, Knight looked upon himself as a spokesman of British capitalists settled in India as opposed to London financial groups : "We shall never find English capitalists on the London Stock Exchange very ready to embark (on public works investment)...without a state guarantee. On the other hand, the English capitalists on the spot—I mean the mercantile community in India itself...are the very men to project such works, *as the leaders of the Native wealthy community*". *National Paper* (9 January 1867).
46. Manmathanath Ghosh, *Manishi Bholanath Chandra* (Calcutta, 1924, 1939), pp. 82, 160.
47. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 154.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 165, 155.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 137, 153.
51. Bankimchandra denounced protection as grievously wrong in theory, rejected the conception of drain (though later admitting in an 1892 footnote that this had been major mistake), and argued that the unemployed weaver could easily take to other occupations. *Bankim Rachanabali*, Volume II, Sahitya Sansad Edition, Calcutta, 1954), pp. 309-13.
52. Quoted in Anil Seal, *op. cit.*, p. 226.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
54. Between 1885 and 1901, Congress delegates from the North-West Provinces and *Oudh* included 551 Brahmins, 294 Kayasths and 404 Khattris, Agarwals and other mercantile castes. Well over half of the latter group were classed as bankers or traders. C. A. Bayly, *Patrons and Politics in Northern India*, Gallagher, Johnson and Seal ed., *Locality, Province ...Easays on Indian Politics* 1870-1940 (Cambridge, 1973), p. 30.
55. Anil Seal, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
56. Bipinbihari Gupta, *Puratan Prasanga* (Calcutta, 1913, 1923 ; combined edition, 1966).
57. S. N. Mukherjee, *Class, Caste and Politics in Calcutta*, 1815-1838, in Leach and Mukherjee, ed., *Elites in South Asia* (Cambridge, 1970).
58. Benoy Ghosh, *Banglar Samajik Itihaser Dhara* (Calcutta, 1968), p. 236.
59. Manmathanath Ghosh, *op. cit.*, p. 190. quoting from Bholanath's biography of Digambar Mitra (Calcutta, 1893).
60. Bipinbihari Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.
62. A glance through the *Bengal Hurkaru* files would indicate that Europeans were on the whole more prominent at the meetings of the British India Society than they had been in the Landholders' Association ; the proceedings of the latter were conducted mainly in Bengali, while the former worked entirely in English (*Bengal Hurkaru*, 3 March, 21 March, 1838 ; 29 June, 11 September, 1844). The Anglophilism and Christian contacts of Keshabchandra were notorious.
63. Krishnakamal Bhattacharyya, as recorded in Bipinbihari Gupta, p. 329. See also Manmathanath Ghosh's statement : "The politics of the *Bengalee* often clashed with those of the *Hindoo Patriot* the avowed organ of the landed aristocracy," *Life of Grish Chandra Ghosh* (Calcutta, 1911), p. 5.
64. Such Associations were set up (mainly through district tours by Sisirkumar and his brother Hemanta Kumar) at Dacca in March 1872 and at Burdwan, Murshidabad, Santipur and Ranaghat soon afterwards, B. B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
65. J. C. Bagal, *History of the Indian Association* 1876-1951 (Calcutta, 1953), pp. 5-7 ; Bipinchandra Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times*, Volume I (Calcutta, 1932, 1973), Chapter XI.
66. B. B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 140 ; J. C. Bagal, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
67. Bagal, *op. cit*, pp. 34-37.
68. Sibnath Shastri, *Atmacharit* (1952 Edition, Calcutta), p. 133.
69. The same Article attached the Zamindars as "sunk in sensuality and sloth...and indifferent to the interest of those dependent on them", while "the masses compose the Ryotary class, but (are) plunged in deep ignorance...." *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11 September 1873, quoted in B. B. Majumdar, *History of Indian Social and Political Ideas from Rammohun to Dayananda* (Calcutta, 1967), pp. 133-34. See also a similar passage in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika of* 9 December 1869, quoted in Benoy Ghosh, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-73.
70. Kalyankumar Sengupta, *The Politics of Bengal Rent : Ideology and Interests of the Intelligentsia*, 1875-1885 (Paper Presented at the 29th International Congress of Orientalists, Paris, July 1973), pp. 4, 6.
71. Manmathanath Ghosh ed., *Life of Grish Chunder Ghosh*, p. 109.
72. *Somprakash*, 20 Sravana 1269/1862—Benoy Ghosh ed., *Samayikpatre Banglar Samajchitra*, Volume IV (Calcutta 1966), pp. 66-67.
73. *Cf*, for instance, *Somprakash*, 1 Asar 1271/1864, to Sravana 1272/1865, 9 Magh 1278/1872, Benoy Ghosh, *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 100, 109. For the similar views of Grish Chunder Ghosh, see Manmathanath Ghosh, pp. 5, 160, and Grish Chunder's article, *The Permanent Settlement* (*Bengalee*, 25 July 1866 ; reprinted in *Nineteenth Century Studies*, Vol. 13, July 1973).
74. The Indian Association Memorandum to the Government of Bengal on the proposed Rent Bill (27 June 1881) claimed that "public meetings of the ryots...have been held in different parts of the country—at Kissengunge, Foradaha, Gooshpara, and Gopalpur, in the Nuddea district, at Lagusai in Bearbhoom, at Rahita in the Twenty-Four Par-

ganas, at Boidyabatti in Hooghly, at Burdwan, and in the town of Calcutta itself...." J. C. Bagal, *op. cit.*, Appendix A, Para 2.

75. J. M. Tagore to S. C. Bayley, Member of Viceroy's Council, 1 June, 1883—quoted from the Ripon Papers by Mehrotra, p. 363.
76. Christine Dobbin, *Competing Elites in Bombay City Politics in the mid-19th Century* (1852-1883), in Leach and Mukherjee, *op. cit.*
77. J. C. Bagal *Hindu Melar Itibritta* (1945, 1968), pp. 91-101 gives the full text of Rajnarayan's prospectus, with its call for a "Nationality Promotion Society, to encourage physical culture, "Hindu music". "Hindu Medicine", the strict use of the vernacular in conversation, correspondence and public gatherings, etc.
78. A point emphasized, for instance, in the playwright Monomohan Bose's speech at the second session of the Mela in 1868—J. C. Bagal. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
79. *Ibid.*, passim, specially pp. 61-68, 83-85.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
81. Rabindranath Tagore, *Jibansmriti*, pp. 110-16.
82. The *Somprakash* of 28 Magh 1291/1885 reported how passengers at Bagerhat waited in the rain for hours for Jyotirindranath's *Lord Ripon*, and refused to board the British Flotilla Company's steamer, Benoy Ghosh, *Samayikpat·e Banglar Samajchitra*, Volume IV, pp. 179-80.
83. Amritalal Bose's memories—Bipinbihari Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 226.
84. One might mention here the brilliant satires of mendicant elite-politics in *Babu* and *Hanuman-babu-sangbad*, published in *Loka Rahashya* (1874, 1888), *Amar Durgotsava* in *Kamalakanter Daptar* (1875), as well as of course the *Bande Mataram* hymn written in 1875 and *Anandamath* (1881-82).
85. 10 such night schools were reported to be functioning by the *Brahmo Public Opinion* of 7 August 1879—quoted in J. C. Bagal, *History of the Indian Association*, p. 46.
86. In 1895, the Association claimed 121 branches, all but 4 of them within Bengal Presidency. Among Bengal districts, Midnapur and Pabna headed the list with 29 branches each, followed by Nadia and Faridpur (8) ; Hooghly (7), 24 Parganas (6) ; Howrah, Jessore and Khulna (4 each) ; Burdwan and Mymensingh (3 each) ; Bogra and Sylhet (2 each) ; and Darbhanga Bankura, Birbhum, Murshidabad, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Backergunj and Nowgong (1 each). Of these, 17 in Pabna, 14 in Midnapur, and 1 each in 24 Parganas and Nowgong are described as "Village Unions" or "Ryots' Associations". Bagal, *op. cit.*, Appendix F.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 90. Dwarkanath Ganguli.
88. Recently reprinted as *Slavery in British Dominion*, compiled by K. L. Chattopadhyay (Calcutta, 1972).
89. For Sasipada Banerji, see Sitanath Tattvabhushan. *Social Reform in Bengal—A Side-Sketch* (Calcutta, 1904).
90. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
91. *Sadharani*, 7 Chaitra 1282/1876, quoted in Soumendra Gangopadhyay, *Swadeshi Andolan o Bangla Sahitya* (Calcutta, 1367/1960), p. 11.

92. Bipinchandra Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times*, Volume I, (Calcutta, 1932, 1973). pp. 199-200.
93. J. C. Bagal, *Hindu Melar Itibritta*, pp. 13-14, 21.
94. J. C. Bagal, *History of the Indian Association*, p. 72. quoting from the 1884 Annual Report of the Association.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 101-02.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66, 83-86. The Executive Committee elected in 1876, in sharp contrast, had excluded all titled names, while the sessional presidents at the 1883 National Conference had been the Derozian school-teacher Ramtanu Lahiri, the vakil Kalimohan Das (uncle of C. R. Das), and Annada Chandra Khastagir (maternal grandfather of J. M. Sengupta), *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 65-65.
97 *Ibid.*, p. 57.
98. See *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal* 1903-1908. p. 338 for the relative unimportance of the Indian Association in the Swadeshi days.
99. Thus Backergunj had only branch in 1895, *ibid.*, Appendix F.
100. There is less than a page about the Indian Association in Sibnath Shastri's otherwise detailed and fescinating *Atmacharit* (1952 Edition, Calcutta), pp. 133-34.
101. Vidyasagar was centainly an agnostic and possibly an atheist ; some of his off-the-cuff remarks about religion have been recorded in Bipinbihari Gupta, pp. 131-32, 179-80, 293. He was not attracted either by the then—fashionable surrogate of positivism ; indeed, his refusal to generalize or to accept in toto any ideological system is perhaps the best index to his unique greatness (I owe this point to Professor Asok Sen of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta) Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan's *Somprakash* developed a somewhat similar attitude ; see for example its very interesting critiques of the Keshab Sen group for excessive religiousity—10 Jyaistha 1277/1870, 9 Falgun 1277/1871, in Benoy Ghosh, *Samayikpatre Banglar Samajchitra*, Volume IV (Calcutta, 1966), pp. 218, 222.
102. Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya, 'Positivism in 19th Century Bengal : Diffusion of European Intellectual. Influences in India'—in R. S. Sharma ed., *Indian Society : Historical Probings. In Memory of D. D. Kosambi* (New Delhi, 1974).
103. For a good discussion by a contemporary, see Bipinchandra Pal, *op. cit.*, Chapter XXII.
104. Thus the *National Paper* of 2 January 1867 violently attached the "Spurious Brahmism" of Keshabchandra's "young band" for its denationalized semi-Christian ways. The most detailed account of this split is in Ajitkumar Chakrabarti, *Maharshi Debendranath Tagore* (Allahabad, 1916 ; Calcutta, 1971) pp. 269-345.
105. Bipinchandra Pal, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-61.
106. The Extremist and revolutionary leader who became the seer of Pondicherry.
107 *National Paper*, 4 December 1872—quoted in J. C. Bagal, *Hindu Melar Itibritta*, p. 64. Jogendranath Vidyabhushan, who later became Assistant Secretary of the Indian Associatton, did suggest changing the name to

'Bharat Mela', but his plea was ignored. Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, *Sahitya-Sadhak-Charitmala,* Volume III, No. 31 (Calcutta, 1943) p. 24.

108. Thus Krishnakamal Bhattacharya in later life recalled with evident pride a comment made about himself by Dwijendranath Tagore : "He knows how to write and how to fight and how to slight all things divine". Bipinbihari Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

109. Krishnakamal supported widow remarriage, but his sympathies were with Comte in the Comte-Mill controversy over representative government and votes for women, and he expressed his horror at the idea of divorce among Hindus. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7, 17-18, 72. Another convert, Girish Chunder Ghosh argued in an article on the conditions of Indian women that the "evils are considerably exaggerated". and talked about the "lofty sense of female honour" maintained by the celibacy of widows. *Hindoo Patriot,* 10 August 1854—reprinted in Manmathanath Ghosh ed., *Selections from the writings of Girish Chunder Ghosh* (Calcutta, 1912) pp. 182-84. The basically conservative stance of Positivism has been emphasized both by Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya and by Pradip Sinha, *Nineteenth Century Bengal : Aspects of Social History* Calcutta, 1965), Chapter 6.

110. Letter to Girish Chunder Ghosh, 24 September 1867—reprinted in Manmathanath Ghosh ed., *Life of Girish Chunder Ghosh* (Calcutta, 1911), p. 230.

111. For a slightly biassed but valuable study, see Md. Maniruzzaman, *Adhunik Bangla Kavye Hindu-Musalman Samparka* 1857-1920, (Dacca, 1970).

112. For a general discussion of this theme, along with illustrative quotations from Rammohun, the Derozians, Keshabchandra, and Bankimchandra, see Tanika Sarkar, *The Concept of Muslim Tyranny : An Unbroken Tradition* (Presidency College Magazine, 1972 ; Derozian views are discussed in my *The Complexities of Young Bengal (Nineteenth Century Studies.* Volume I No ; 4. Calcutta October 1973), included in the present book. The *National Paper* of 6 February 1867 eloquently described India as "suffering for centuries under the yoke of Mahomedan despotism, when nothing could be done without the permission of the Ruling Power, when private affairs, such as marriage ceremonies, etc., required the sanction of the authorities (sic.)...(and) the very idea of freedom...was driven out..." Sibnath Shastri in his *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkalin Bangasamaj* (Calcutta, 1903, 1955) referred to the Krishnanagar Rajas as "bearing upon their shoulders the storms of Yavana (Muslim) rule" ; he added in the very next sentence that "in the Yavana Period native rajas were quite independent in many matters", and seemed utterly unaware of the contradiction.

113. 20 March 1867.

114. Bipinbihari Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

115. Thus Krishnakumar Mitra and Monoranjan Guha Thakurta were among the deportees of 1908 ; Premotosh Bose and Prabhatkusum Roychaudhuri were pioneer labour organizers, Extremist leaders included Sundarimohan Das as well as of course Bipinchandra Pal (Though his

Brahmoism was by then highly revisionistic) ; and there were quite a number of Brahmos also among the early terrorists. The Nababidhan Samaj in sharp contrast retained its reputation for Anglicism and loyalty. Bipinchandra Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times*, Volume II (Calcutta, 1951, 1973), p. 444.

116. Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya's article is mainly based on the Congreve papers, and includes a brief discussion of Positivist political activity. Strangely enough, however there is no member of Grischandra Ghosh.
117. Lobb to Girish Chunder Ghosh, 19 February 1868 in *Life of Girish Chunder Ghosh*, p. 236.
118. *New India*, 19 March 1903 ; reprinted in Bipinchandra Pal, Swadeshi *and Swaraj* (Calcutta, 1954), p. 94.
119. Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, *Sahitya-Sadhak-Charitmala* Volume III. No. 39 (Calcutta, 1956), p. 10.
120. Thus the *Somprakash* of 21 Baisakh 1288/1881, complained that 10,000 were applying for jobs with salaries of Rs. 10/- Rs. 15/- (Benoy Ghosh, *Samayikpatre Banglar Samajchitra*, Volume IV, Calcutta 1966, p. 143). The *Tattvabodhini Patrika* was referring to rising prices already by Sravana 1778/1856 (*Ibid.*, Volume II, Calcutta 1963, p. 184).
121. Yet this racial factor is deliberately played down in much recent British writing on Indian nationalism. "The argument that the rule of strangers in India goaded their subjects into organizing against it is not our concern"—Anil Seal, *Imperialism and Nationalism in India*, in *locality, Province and Nation*, pp. 5-6.
122. For a detailed recent analysis, see Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri, 'Peasant Movements in Bengal, 1850-1900', *Nineteenth Century Studies*, Volume I, No 3, July 1973.
123. Dinabandhu Rachanabali (Sahitya-Sansad Edition, Calcutta, 1968), p. 1.
124. *Somprakash*, 7 June 1873 ; *Bangadarshan*, Bhadra 1280/1873 cited in Kalyankumar Sengupta, *op. cit.*
125. *Bengal Magazine*, September 1873, reprinted in *Nineteenth Century Studies*, Volume I, No 3, July 1973, p. 312.
126. Sitanath Tattvabhushan, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.
127. A good example of such an interpretation is Suprakash Roy, *Bharater Krishak-Bidroha O Ganatantrik Sangram*, Volume I (Calcutta, 1966).
128. Kalyankumar Sengupta, 'Peasant Struggle in Pabna, 1873, its Legalistic Character', *Nineteenth Century Studies, op. cit.*, p. 328.
129. Benoy Bhushan Chaudhuri, 'The Story of a Peasant Revolt in a Bengal District', *Bengal Past and Present*, Volume XCII Part II, No : 174, July-December 1973, pp. 253-54.
130. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From Prison Note Books* (New York, 1971), passim, specially pp. 3-4, 52-55.

THE RADICALISM OF INTELLECTUALS IN A COLONIAL SITUATION

1. For a discussion of the ideological and social roots of the 'renaissance' model, *see* Barun De, 'A Critique, of the Historiography, of the Trend Entitled 'Renaissance' in 19th Century India' (Paper presented to the Indo-Soviet Symposium on Economic and Social Development of India and Russia from the 17th to the 19th century, Moscow, May 1973).
2. One might recall Gandhi's description of Rammohun as a "pigmy", which provoked an angry rejoinder from Tagore.
3. Thus the ultra-left 'Ranadive period' (1948-50) in the history of the Communist movevment saw attacks on 'renaissance' heroes by Rabindra Gupta (Bhowani Sen), and more recently, the CPI (ML) has tended to be even more iconoclastic. Intellectuals affiliated to the present CPI have on the whole been much more attracted by the 'renaissance' model, *Cf*, for example, S. C. Sarkar, *On the Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta, 1979), or Gautam Chattopadhyay, *Awakening in Bengal in the Early 19th Century* (Calcutta, 1965) Introduction.
4. R. P. Dutt, *India Today* (2nd Edition, Bombay, 1947), p. 82, referred to an "objectively progressive or regenerating role, corresponding to the period of free trade capitalism", of British rule in India.
5. A Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Under-development in Latin America* (Pelican, 1971).
6. Ranajit Guha, '*The Image of A Peasant Revolt in a Liberal* Mirror' *Journal of Peasant Studies,* October 1974, p. 42.
7. Barun De, *op. cit.*
8. V. C. Joshi ed., *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India* (Delhi, 1975), articles by Asok Sen, Barun De, Pradyumna Bhattacharya, and Sumit Sarkar.
9. Asok Sen, *Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and His Elusive Milestones* (Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, Occasional Paper No 1, August 1975).
10. S. C. Sarkar, 'Rabindranath Tagore and the Renaissance in Bengal (1961) in *op. cit.*, pp. 152-59.
11. Conservatives like Radhakanta Deb were equally enthusiastic, and had far more to do with the foundation and early management of the Hindu College.
12. The aims of the journal were defined editorially as "improvevment in customs and manners," "encouragement of education, agriculture and commerce," and "reform of rules of government" (Translation mine). Benoy Ghosh, *Samayikpatre Banglar Samajchitra,* Volume III (Calcutta, 1964), p. 75.
13. Letter to Lord Amherst, 11 December 1823, in Nag and Burman ed., *English Works of Rammohun Roy,* Part IV (Calcutta, 1947), p. 108.
14. Pradyumna Bhattacharya, 'Rammohun Roy and Bengali Prose,' in V. C. Joshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-212.

15. Udaychandra Addhya pleaded for the vernacular medium at a session of the Derozian Society for Acquisition of General Knowledge (Gautam Chattopadhyay, Appendix I, p. i-ii) Pearychand Mitra made a notable contribution towards the development of a colloquial Bengali, prose style.
16. By far the best account is in Asok Sen, *op. cit.*
17. One might cite, for instance, Rammohun's comment : "What ! lament is that, seeing the women thus dependent and exposed to every misery, you feel for them no compassion, that might exempt them from being tied down and burnt to death." (*A Second Conference between An Advocate for, and An Opponent of the Practice of Burning Widows Alive*, Calcutta 1820, *E W* III, p. 127). Vidyasagar ended his second tract in favour of widow remarriage with the question : "For what sins of theirs are women born in India ?" (Translation mine. *Vidyasagar Rachana Samgraha*, Volume II, Calcutta 1972, p. 165).
18. For some details, see Sumit Sarkar, 'The Complexities of Young Bengal, *Nineteenth Century Studies*, Calcutta, October 1973, pp. 514-15.
19. "We cannot govern India financially without this change of system", wrote Ellenborough to Bentinck on 23 September 1830, advising him "to educate the natives for office and to encourage them by the possession of it" (A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal*, 1818-1835, Leiden 1965, pp. 151-52). For the constraints on education in Vidyasagar's period, see Asok Sen, pp. 18-28.
20. Pradyumna Bhattacharja, *op. cit.*
21. *India Gazette*, quoted in *Asiatic Journal*, 18 May 1819 (J K Majumdar ed., *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India*, Calcutta 1941, p. 18). The report referred to Atmiya Sabha meetings criticizing caste restrictions on marriage and diet and the ban on widow remarriage.
22. Sumit Sarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 515-16.
23. After being largely instrumental in persuading the government to pass a modernistic marriage act for those willing to abjure loyalty to the principal religions, Keshabchandra married his own under-age daughter into the Coochbehar royal family breaking its provisions.
24. Keshabchandra's group broke away in the mid-1860s from Debendranath mainly on the demand for exclusion of those still wearing the sacred Brahminnical thread from Brahmo pulpits. In the 1870s, women's liberation took the form of ladies being permitted to sit tage her wi h their menfolk at prayer-meetings of the Samaj. Sinbnath Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri o Tatkalin Bangasamaj* (Calcutta, 1903, 1955), Chapters 10-13 ; Ajitkumar Chakrabarti, *Maharshi Debendranath Tagore* (Allahabad, 1916 ; Calcutta, 1971), Volume II, Chapters 1, 3-4; 8.
25. "For one convert that Mr Malabari may make, at the cost of much social obloquy, among the highly educated classes. Hinduism sweeps whole tribes into its net." H H Risley's Note of 22 March 1886, quoted in C. Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform* (Princeton, 1964), p. 156.

26. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (London, 1971), pp. 77-78.
27. Sitanath Tattvabhushan, *Social Reform in Bengal A Side-Sketch* (Calcutta, 1904), pp. 8-9.
28. Extracts from 12 issues of the *Bharat Sramajeebi* (Baisakh-Chaitra 1286/1879-80) discovered and edited by Kanailal Chattopadhyay, in *Ekshan* (Calcutta). XI 5-6, Puja 1975. If particularly Numbers 8-9 of the journal.
29. Acknowledgements are due here to Dipesh Chakrabarti's paper on Sasipada Banerji which he has kindly permitted me to use. *See* : *Indian Historical Review, January,* 1976.
30. For studies of the evolution of Rammohun's religious thought, *see* S. C. Sarkar, 'Religious thought of Rammohun Roy', in *On the* Bengal *Renaissance* and Sumit Sarkar, 'Rammohun Roy and the Break with the Past', in V C. Joshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-54. *See* the first article of this book.
31. Complexities of Young Bengal, article included in this book.
32. Work plus prayer equals harvest, Akshoykumar is said to have argued : but work=harvest, therefore prayer=O. Ajit Chakrabarti, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
33. Krishnakamal supported widow-remarriage, but sympathized with Comte in the Comte-Mill debate on representative government and votes for women, and was horrified by the idea of divorce. Bepinbehari Gupta, *Puratan Prasanga* (Calcutta, 1966), pp. 6-7, 17-18, 72. Another Positivist, Grish Chandra Ghosh, felt that as regards the conditions of Indian women, "the evils are considerably exaggerated". *Hindoo Patriot*, 10 August 1854.
34. Asok Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
35. *Cf* Rammohun's conversation with Alexander Duff, recorded in S. D. Collet, *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy* (Calcutta, 1962), p. 280.
36. Tanika Sarkar, 'The Concept of 'Muslim Tyranny'—An Unbroken Tradition' (*Presidency College Magazine,* Calcutta, 1973).
37. In Muhammad Habib's brilliant critique of Elliot in Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period (New Delhi, 1974), pp. 3-32.
38. Bankimchandra would be the obvious example.
39. *Bengal Spectator*, 1 November, 15 November, 15 December 1942. Benoy Ghosh, *Samayik Patre Banglar Samajchitra*, vol. III.
40. *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, Baisakh, Sravana and Agrahayana 1772 S. E. 1850. Benoy Ghosh, *ibid.*, II.
41. *Somprakash*, 20 Sravana 1269/1862, 1 Asar, 1271/1864, 14 Bhadra and 4 Aswin 1271/1864, 9 Magh 1278/1872, 6 Aswin 1271/1874, Benoy Ghosh, *Ibid.*, IV.
42. Grish Chandra Ghosh, 'The Permanent Settlement' (*Bengalee*, 25 July 1866), reprinted in *Nineteenth Century Studies,* July 1973.
43. The *Somprakash* of 20 Sravana 1269/1862 called for an alliance between the middle and lower orders to fight zamindari oppression—Benoy Ghosh, *ibid.*, IV, pp. 66-67. Sibnath Shastri related the Indian

Association to the political needs of a "madhyabitta sreni" (middle class), *Atmacharit* (Calcutta, 1952), p. 133.

44. The 1886-87 Report of the Indian Association argued that "the old enmity between zamindars and raiyats is fast disappearing," and emphasized the need for "that harmony between the two communities upon which the welfare of the country so largely depends." I. C. Bagal, *History of the Indian Association*, (Calcutta, 1953). pp. 101-102, 109.
45. Asok Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
46. The turning point probably came with Bholanath Chandra's 'A Voice for the Commerce and Manufactures of India' (*Mukherjis Magazine*, Calcutta, March 1873-June 1876).
47. The number of houses paying chaukidari tax in Dacca was 21. 361 in 1813 and 10,708 in 1833. N. K. Sinha, *Economic History of Bengal*, Volume III (Calcutta, 1970), p. 4.
48. *Questions and Answers on the Revenue System of India* (August 1831), answer to Question No. 52. *E W* III, p. 52.
49. Quoted in S. R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Delhi, 1971), p. 17.
50. Such surely is the explanation for the Anglo-philism of even a man like Vidyasagar.
51. "We have been subject to no distress under the government of the Company ; it is only the abolition of Suttees which has given disquietude"—*Samachar Chandrika*, quoted in *John Bull*, 9 March 1830. J. K. Majumdar. p. 330.
52. *Samachar Chandrika*, 5 and 9 May 1831—Bropendranath Bandyopadhyay, *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, Vol. II (Calcutta, 1941) pp. 235-37.
53. *New India*, 19 March 1903.
54. One might cite the example of the Anti Circular Society, Extremist in politics but bitterly opposed to revivalism. A dissident, secular, even antireligious trend was present even among the early terrorists. Sumit Sarkar, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal* 1903-1908 (New Delhi, 1973), pp. 58-61, 365-66, 486-87.
55. *Ibid.*, Chapters II, IX and XI
56. After mentioning many instances of zamindari exploitation of peasants, Pearychand Mitra suggested that education—Western for the landlord, vernacular for the ryot — would solve everything, 'The Zamindar and the Ryot', *Calcutta Review*, December 1846. *Cf* also, Ranajit Guha, *op. cit.*, for the intellectual response to the indigo movement, and the *Bharat Sramajeebi's* faith in education for solving labour problems.
57. *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, May 1837, quoted in Bhabatosh Dutta ed., *Bankimchandrer Iswarchandra Gupter Jibancharit o Kabitva* (Calcutta, 1968). pp. 88-89.
58. The *India Gazette* of 5 July 1831 (Derozio was then on its staff) published a remarkable letter attacking the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in English for its 'Whig perfidy" in praising the results of machinery, and even quoted from More's Utopia. The *Bengal*

Hurkaru occasionally published news about the Chartists (e. g. issue of 18 February 1843).

59. Sumit Sarkar, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, Ch III, p. 12.
60. Such facts become obvious from Nilmoni Mukherji's somewhat eulogistic but extremely detailed and valuable *A Bengal Zamindar : The Life and Times of Joy Krishna Mukherji* (Calcutta, 1975).
61. B. B. Chaudhuri, 'The Story of a Peasant Revolt in a Bengal District' (*Bengal Past and Present*, July-December 1973, pp. 253-54).
62. *Sumit Sarkar, Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, Chapter VIII/3.
63. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks* (New York, 1971), passim, specially pp. 3-4, 52-55.
64. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte—Surveys from Exile* (Penguin, 1973), p. 149.

THE WOMEN'S QUESTION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

1. Reflected for instance in Maheshchandra Deb's paper, *A sketch of the Condition of the Hindoo Women*, presented to the society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge in January, 1939 and the *Bengal Spectator* letters and articles of April and July 1842 and January 1843 which anticipated most of Vidyasagar's arguments for widow-remarriage. Gautam Chattopadhyay, *Awakening in Bengal in early 19th century* (Calcutta, 1965), pp. 90-97 ; Benoy Ghosh, ed., *Samayik-Patre Banglar Samajchitra*, Volume III (Calcutta, 1964), pp. 77-80, 90-91, 130-31.
2. The split between Debendranath Tagore and Kashabchandra Sen began developing from the mid 1860s over women's education and right of women to attend Brahmo religious services,....and became complete over the issue of Act III of 1872 which provided civil marriage and marriage across caste barriers for those willing to declare themselves as non-Hindus. The 'Young Brahmo' attacks on Kashab started with the pressures mounted by the group around the journals *Samadarshi* and *Abalabandhav* from 1872 on the issues of women sitting without *parda* in services, and culminated in the split over the Cooch-Bihar marriage. The best near-contemporary account is in Sibnath Shastri. *Ramtanu Lahiri o Tatkalin Bangasamaj* (Calcutta, 1903) Chapters 10-13 ; *see* also Ajit Chakrabarti. *Maharshi Debendranath Tagore* (Allahabad 1916, Calcutta 1971), pp. 217-345.
3. Such concerns seem to have been absent prior to the nineteenth century, while they certainly decline in relative importance with the rise of the organised national movement.
4. Sibnath Shastri, *Atmacharit* (Calcutta, 1952), Chapter 19.
5. "The abolition of caste is not our principal aim...it is the existence of idolatry within the caste system which is causing all the harm", (my translation). Ajitkumar Chakrabarti, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

6. The impact of womens' liberation movements in the West is currently leading to radical reinterpretation of much traditionally-accepted history. For two examples, *see* R. Samuel, ed., *Peoples' History and Socialist Theory* (London, 1981), Chapters and R. Bridenthal and C. Koonz, ed., *Becoming Visible : Women in European History* (Boston, etc. 1977).
7. Brojendranath Bandyopadhyay, *Sambadpatra Sekalar Katha* Volume II (Calcutta, 1941) pp. 257-58.
8. Sibnath Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri o Tatkalin Bangasamaj*, p. 192
9. Gurucharan Mahalanobis, *Atma katha* (Calcutta, 1974), pp. 46-50.
10. Sibnath Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri o Tatkalin Bangasamaj* p. 298 (my tradnslation).
11 Gautam Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
12. Rabindranath Tagore, 'Nabadampatir Premalap' (1888)—in *Mansai*, Rabindra-Rachanabali, Volume III (Visva-Bharati, 1975), pp. 242-45.
13. Gurucharan Mahalanobis, *Atma-katha*, p. 100, relates with engaging naivete how the expenses of sending his wife by carriage led him to understand the benefit of allowing women to appear publicly on streets.
14. Louis Dumont has described the sannyasi as "the safety valve for the Brahmanic order". 'World Renunciation in Indian Religions', in L. Dumont, *Religion/Politics and History in India* (Paris/Hague 1970), p. 51.
15. Tanika Sarkar.
16. As examples may be cited : The Derozian Pearychand Mitra's defence of early marriage in 1842, Keshabchandra's about-turn in 1878, and possibly some of the later attitudes of even Rammohan Roy. *See* Sumit Sarkar, 'The Radicalism of Intellectuals in a Colonial situation--- A case study of Nineteenth Century Bengal' (*Calcutta Historical Journal*, Volume II oo. 1, 1978) p. 66 ; included in this book.
17. Thus Rammohan attacked *sati* by hunting up texts hailing ascetic widowhood, thus possibly adding to Vidyasagar's problems. Vidyasagar left untouched the problem of the inhuman austerities imposed on the widow who did not remarry.
18. For details, *see* Sibnath Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri o Tatkalin Banga samaj*, and Ajit Chakrabarti, *op. cit.*
19. L. Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage in England* 1500-1800 (London, 1977).
20. Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (London, 1971), pp. 77-78.
21. Benoy Ghosh, *Samayikpatre Banglar Samajchitra*, Volume II (Calcutta, 1963), pp. 251-52.
22. Benoy Ghosh, *op. cit.*, Volume IV (Calcutta, 1966), p. 255.
23. The Sadharan Brahmo creed asserted that men and women had equal rights ; everyone with faith (hakti) would be saved irrespective of caste.
24. *Atmacharit*, Chapters 18-19.
25. For details, *see* Sumit Sarkar, 'The Complexities of Young Bengal' (*Nineteenth Century Studies*, October 1973) ; included in this book.
26. Sitanath Tattvabhushan, *Social Reform in Bengal—A Side Sketch*

(Calcutta 1904), pp. 8-9 ; Dipesh Chakrabarti, 'Sasipada Banerjee : A study in the Nature of the First Contact of the Bengali Bhadralok with Working Clenes of Bengal', (*Indian Historical Review,* January 1976).

27. *Bankim Rachanabali,* Volume II (Calcutta, 1969) pp. 204-09.

PRIMITIVE REBELLION AND MODERN NATIONALISM : A NOTE ON FOREST SATYAGRAHA IN THE NON-COOPERATION AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENTS

1. D. A. Washbrook clearly states this basic assumption : "The leaders of the movement, that is to say the people who created it, require a careful analysis, for in their ambitions must lie its causes." *The Emergence of Provincial Politics : Madras Presidency* 1870-1920, Cambridge, 1976, p. 279.
2. A partial exception is C J. Baker's account of violation of forest laws in Rayachoti talk of Cuddapah and Palnod taluk of Guntur in 1921-22 (*Non-Cooperation in South India,* in C. J. Baker and D. A. Washbrook, *South India : Political Institutions and Political Change* 1880-1940, Macmillan, 1975, pp. 99-103). Baker however does his best to relate this movement to the vested interests of prosperous Reddi cattle breeders, and leaves it out altogether in his later detailed study *The Politics of South India,* 1920-1937 (Cambridge, 1976). Even more striking in his total silence about the "Rampa" rebellion of 1922-24, far more militant and obviously lower-class.
3. The Home Political records of the Government of India, M. Venkatrangaiya's invaluable selection of Madras Government Records (*Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh,* Vol. III, Hyderabad, 1965), the AICC files district gazetteers, and some anthropological literature.
4. Dr Gyan Pandey has recently emphasized the autonomous role of "peasant nationalism" in his study of Civil Disobedience in the United Provinces (in press). I am grateful to Dr Pandey for permitting me to read his book in manuscript. I have also benefited greatly from my discussions on this point with Shri Ranajit Guha (Sussex University).
5. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester, 1959, 1974) and *Bandits* London, 1969). *See* also Norman Cohn's *The Pursuit of the Millenium* (New York, 1961) and P. Worsley's fascinating study of Melanesian Cargo Cults : *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (Paladin, 1970). Virtually the only Indian contribution so far to the literature on millenarianism is Stephen Fuch's *Rebellious Prophets : A Study of Messianic Movements in Indian Religions,* Asia, 1965.
6. "Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood," *Rheinische Zeitung,* October-November 1842.

7. E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters*, London, 1975.
8. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, p. 67.
9. D. D. Kosambi was probably the first to draw attention to this peculiar feature. "People could and did survive in the food-gathering stage when their immediate neighbours had become food-producers centuries earlier." He attributed this to the "ease and survival of food-gathering in monsoon forests." See *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, London, 1965, p. 34.
10. Bombay Governor Reay to Lansdoune, 15 February 1890. Quoted from the Lansdoune Papers in B. L. Grover, *A Documentary Study of British Policy Towards Indian Nationalism*, Delhi, 1967, pp. 140-41.
11. Reay to Lansdoune, 20 February 1890, *ibid.*, p. 142.
12. E. Thurston and K. Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Madras, 1909, Vol. II, pp. 29-35.
13. The above account is based on Baker, *Non-Co-operation in South India*, in Baker and Washbrook, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-03.
14. Thurston and Rangachari, Vol IV, p. 47 ; Vol III. p. 363.
15. F. R. Hemingway, *Godavari District Gazetter*, Vol. I, Madras, 1907 p. 272.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 264-74.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-101. The "Rampa" area was not "reserved" for some time "for political reasons" (*ibid.*, p. 93), but restrictions on podu were being enforced there, too, by the second decade of the 20th century (T. G. Rutherford's report, 22 August 1924, in Venkatarangaiya, Document No 101).
18. Thurston and Rangachari, Vol. III, p. 353. The Koyas and Konda Doras, it may be added, have a legend that they are offspring of Bhima and a forest woman. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 56.
19. Cuddapah District Magistrate to Madras Government Judicial Department, 10 January 1922, Venkatarangaiya, p. 281.
20. Venkatarangaiya, pp. 37-38.
21. Cuddapah District Magistrate's note, *op. cit.*, p. 283.
22. *Madras Forest Administration Report* (1921-22), p. 30, quoted in Baker ond Washbrook, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
23. Telegraphic Correspondence of Viceroy with Secretary of State, April-December 1921—MSS Eur E. 238/10, Reading Collection, India Office Library.
24. Viceroy to Secretary of State, p/1196 (Weekly Telegram), 6 December 1921, *ibid.*
25. Rajat Roy, *Social Conflict ond Political Unrest in Bengal*, 1875-1927 (unpublished manuscript), pp. 209-11, 327-28. I am grateful to Dr Roy for permitting me to consult his manuscript.
26. Shri Gautam Bhadra (Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta) first drew my attention to the Rampa revolt. Baker preserves a remarkable silence about this movement, though elsewhere he makes considerable use of Venkatarangaiyas Volume (which contains forty pages of documents on the rebellion of 1922-24).

27. The Andhra Government has published a Telegu edition of the life of Sitarama Raju which I have not been able to use. A collection of Bengali poems by Soumyendranath Tagore (*Biplab-Baisakhi*, August 1930), then a Communist, included one about "Shri Ramraju Alluri" (Government of India, *Home Poll F. N.* 29/*X*/1930). I owe this reference to Sm Tanika Sarkar. I am told by Andhra Communists that Raju is still a folk hero. See also the picture of Raju in the frontispiece of V. Raghaviah's *Tribes of India*, Vol I, New Delhi, 1969.
28. T. G. Rutherford (Special Commissioner, Agency Operations) to Madras Chief Secretary, 22 August 1924. Venkatarangaiya, pp. 366-69.
29. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, pp. 15-16 and *Bandits*, Chapter II.
30. Rutherford, *op. cit.*
31. A. P. Muddiman's note, 18 June 1924, *Home Poll F. N.* 104/1924.
32. Thurston and Rangachari, Vol VI, pp. 247-50.
33. Venkatarangaiya, Introduction, p. 79 ; also Rutherford, *op. cit.*, p. 366.
34. Report of Malkanagiri Deputy Tahsildar to Agency Commissioner, 13 June 1923, Venkatarangaiya, p. 388.
35. Godavari Collector's Report, 23 October 1922, cited in *ibid.*, p. 83.
36. D. O. from F. W. Stewart, Agency Commissioner, Narasapatam to Madras Chief Secretary, 26 September 1922, *ibid.*, p. 373.
37. Venkatarangaiya. Document No 110.
38. Madras Government Press Communique, 12 April 1924, *ibid.*, p. 390.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
40. Madras Chief Secretary to Government of India (Home) No. 616-A-2, 18 April 1924, *Home Political F. N.* 104/1924.
41. Note by C. W Guyenec in the Home Department, 20 March 1924, *ibid.*
42. Report of Major A. J. Hamilton on the Military Operations in the Agency Tracts of Madras, 21 March 1924, *Home Poll B*107/1924. In October 1922, Madras pleaded for a blanket indemnity in advance for policemen fighting the rebellion ; it asked for a special Ordinance to "ensure rapid and effective punishment" for rebel sympathizers in April 1924 and again in June 1924. New Delhi, however, turned down these requests, at least partly in view of possible enbarrassments vis-a-vis the legislative Council, *Home Poll F. N.* 898/1922 *F. N.* 104/1924.
43. Telegram from Madras Government to Government of India (Home), 13 May 1924, *Home Poll F. N.* 104/1924.
44. The history of crime has been almost entirely neglected in our country, though social historians elsewhere have long become aware of its possibilities as a guide to primitive and inchoate forms of social protest. Cf. E. Hobsbawm and G. Rude, *Captain Swing*, London, 1969, 1973, pp. 54-57.
45. Instances of Congress violence in connection with the conduct of the civil disobedience campaign, Statement I, *Home Poll F. N.* 14/19/1931.
46. Fortnightly Report from Punjab, first half of September 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*X*/1930.
47. Fortnightly Report from Assam, second half of December 1930, *Home Poll F. N. XIII* 181/1930.

48. This point has been first suggested by Dr Gyan Pandey on the basis of his U. P. research.
49. Extract from Bombay Police Abstract No. 5, 2 February 1929, *Home Poll F. N. 5/17/1931.*
50. Secret report of Simla Governor's Conference, 23 July 1930, included in the private papers of *F. H. Sykes* (Governor or Bombay)—Correspondence with Viceroy, etc., 1 July-31 December 1930 (*Mss Eur F.* 150 264, I. O. L.)
51. Montagu Butler to Irwin, 30 July 1930, *Halifex Collection,* Correspondence with Persons in India, July-December 1930 (*MSS, Eus. C.* 152. *I. O. L.*).
52. Text of circular in *Home Poll F. N.* 14/18/1931.
53. P. V. Mahajan (Secretary, Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee) to Vallabhbhai Patel, 28 July 1930, *Maharashtra Satyagraha File,* 1930-31, *AICC F. N. G*-1 48/1930.
54. Report of the Congress Activities of the Berar Province, 9 November 1930, *Berar Satyagraha File, AICC F. N. G*-84/1930.
55. In Bagalan taluk of Nasik district, for instance, on 5 August 1930 "more than 70 thousand persons took part in it (forest satyagraha). Grass was cut in prohibited jungle, brought into the town and taken in grand procession...." Weekly report from Poona, 14 August 1930, *AICC F. N. G*-148/1930.
56. Minutes of Karnatak Satyagraha Mandal, Hubli. 10 August 1930, *AICC F. N.* 2/1930.
57. Brabourne to Willingdon, 19 February 1934, *Brabourne Collection MSS Eur. F. 97/9-I.O.L.*).
58. *Home Poll F. N.* 14/14/1981, Statements I and II.
59. Forest incidents represented two out of the 47 clashes listed for the Northern Division of Bombay Presidency (i. e. Sind and Gujarat), nine out of 21 for Central, and nine out of 13 for South—a significant distribution. *Home Pall* 14/19/1931.
60. Central Provinces Chief Secretary to Government of India (Home, 1434/II, 25 August 1930), *Civil Disobedience in Central Provinces, Home Poll F. N.* 253/1930.
61. The Chanakapur incident took place on 20 October. Fortnightly Report from Bombay, second half of October 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xi*/ 1930.
62. *Home Poll* 14/19/1931.
63. *The Bilashi Case,* printed leaflet included in *AICC F. N. G.*-148/1930. Congress newspapers in Andhra, it may be added, had showed little sympathy for Raju in 1922-24—Venkatarangaiya, p. 92.
64. Peter Worsley's *The Trumpet Shall Sound* gives numerous instances of similar "reformist" sects developing in the later stages of Cargo cults in Melanesia.
65. Stephen Fuchs, *Rebellious Prophets,* pp. 42, 57-58.
66. P. Sundarayya, *Telengana People's Struggle and its Lessons,* Calcutta. 1942, pp. 246-51.
67. *Statesman* (Delhi), 22 October 1977.

THE LOGIC OF GANDHIAN NATIONALISM

*This is the revised version of a paper presented to the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, in April 1976. I am grateful to Professor Asok Sen and Professor Barun De of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, for criticism of the earlier draft.

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London, 1936), p. 259.
2. Thus in January 1908 Gandhi withdrew his first satyagraha against the Transvaal registration ordinance on the basis of a verbal promise from Smuts, and an angry Pathan follower tried to beat him up as a traitor, Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, i, 2nd edn (Delhi, 1960), p. 90-02.
3. P. Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, i (Bombay, 1936), p. 429-67.
4. One might cite, for example, the official concern over the increased militancy of lower-level Congress cadres in Rae Bareli, Bara Banki, and Allahabad districts of the United Provinces after March 1931, Government of India, *Home Political File Number* 33/24/1931, National Archives of India (henceforward *Home Poll F. N.*).
5. Gandhi, *Collected Works* (henceforward *CW*), xlv (New Delhi, 1971), preface, vi.
6. Nehru, *op. cit.*
7. Nehru, speech at Allahabad, 14 March 1930, *Selected Works*, ed, S. Gopal (henceforaward *SW*), iv (Delhi, 1973), p. 281.
8. *An Autobiography*, p. 85.
9. Telegram to Perin Captain, 17 February 1931. Also speech at Delhi (20 February), interview to *News Chronicle* (21 February), letters to K. M. Munshi and Shivabhai Patel (24 25 February), *Picketing* (*Young India*, 26 February), *What Should One Not Do?* (*Navajivan*, 1 March), *CW*, pp. xlv 192, 210-11, 213, 225-26, 229-30, 236.
10. Interview with Viceroy, February 1931 (Irwin's version), *Ibid* p. 188.
11. *An Autobiography*, p. 210. S. A. Dange's testimony, cited in G. Adhikari, ed, *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, ii (New Delhi, 1974), p 55.
12. Speech to Congress leaders at Allahabad, *CW*, xlv. p. 134.
13. Subjective benevolence or change of heart played little or no part in the making of the Delhi Pact, as its aftermath was to reveal soon enough. Gandhi declared himself impressed by Irwin's "inexhaustible patience and. . unfailing coutesy" (*Ibid* pp. 176, 250). In his private correspondence with Secretary of State, Wedgewood Benn, during the Dandi March, however, Irwin had expressed his chagrin that Gandhi "continues regrettably hale and hearty" (Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 26-27 March 1930, *Halifax Papers*, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, microfilm copy, Reel No. 3). As for the Labour Secretary of State, Malcolm Hailey once congratulated Irwin on having such a congenial partner, so pleasantly different from Lord Morley or Mr Montagu (Hailey to Irwin, 13 May 1930, *Halifax Papers*).
14. Cf. the well-known analysis of R. P. Dutt, *India Today* (Bombay, 1947), pp. 289-91.

15. *Ibid.* pp. 295, 301.
16. Bipan Chandra, "The Indian Capitalist Class and British Imperialism", in R. S. Sharma and V. Jha, ed, *Indian Society : Historical Probings (In Memory of D. D. Kosambi)*, (New Delhi, 1974), pp. 390-413 ; "Elements of Change and Continuity in the Early Nationalist Activity" (Indian History Congress, Muzaffarpur, 1972) ; (Jawaharlal Nehru and the Capitalist Class, 1936" (Indian History Congress, Jadavpur, 1974).
17. *The Crisis of Indian Unity,* 1917-1940 (Oxford, 1974), pp. 168-80.
18. Cf. particularly the work now in progress at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, under Hitesranjan Sanyal, Partha Chatterji, and Barun De, as well as Gyanendra Pandey's research on the United Provinces.
19. Bipan Chandra, *Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* (New Delhi, 1966), Chapter V.
20. Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal* 1903-1908 (New Delhi, 1973), pp. 142-43, 321-22 ; A. P. Kannangara. "Indian Millowners and Indian Nationalism", *Past and Present,* no. 40 (July 1968)
21. Judith Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power : Indian Politics* 1915-1922 (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 320-21.
22. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, "Cotton Mills and Spinning Wheels : Swadeshi in the Non-Cooperation Era" (Paper presented to the Indo-Soviet Symposium of Historians, New Delhi, January 1976).
23. Amiya Bagchi, *Private Investment in India* 1900-1939 (Cambridge, 1972), p. 198.
24. *Ibid.* pp. 64-65 ; F. Moraes, *Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas* (Bombay, 1957), pp. 74-107.
25. Bagchi, *op. cit.,* pp. 240-41 ; *Annual Report of Bombay Millowners Association* (1930), pp. 32-36, 182-205 ; G. D. Birla's Legislative Assembly speech opposing the Cotton Textile Industry (Protection) Bill, 25 March 1930, in his *The Path to Prosperity—A Collection of Speeches and Writings* (Allahabad, 1950), pp. 174-93.
26. Bagchi, *op. cit.,* p. 199.
27. Moraes, *op. cit.,* pp. 44-46.
28. Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 9 January 1930, *Halifax Papers.*
29. Memorandum enclosed with Irwin's letter to Wedgewood Benn of 19 March 1930, *Ibid.*
30. The most obvious example would be the support given to the Pakistan movement by Muslim business groups, see Bagchi, *op. cit.,* pp 428-37. The links between late nineteenth century Hindu revivalism and United Provinces commercial groups have been emphasized by C. A. Bayly (*Local Roots of Indian Politics : Allahabad* 1880-1920, Oxford, 1975) and F. Robinson (*Separatism Among Indian Muslims : The Politics of the U. P. Muslims,* 1860-1923, Cambridge, 1974).
31. Letter from the Calcutta Marwari Association to the Indian Chamber of Commerce, 19 July 1928, *Annual Report of the Indian Chamber of Commerce,* 1928 (Calcutta, 1929), pp. 570-71.
32. See for example, Bagchi, *op. cit.,* pp. 206-08, 214-15 ; Michael Kidron, *Foreign Investment in India* (Oxford, 1965), p. 7 ; D. R. Gadgil, *Indian*

Economic Organization, in Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, ed., *Economic Growth : Brazil, India, Japan* (Duke University, 1958). pp. 461-62 ; and Kenneth L. Gillion, *Ahmedabad : A Study in India's Urban History* (California, 1968), pp. 78, 85.

33. Gagchi, *op. cit.,* pp. 71-80.
34. P. S. Lokanathan, *Industrial Organization in India* (London, 1935), pp. 21, 30. See also letter of F. Stones of E. D. Sasson and Company to Rainy, Bombay, 14 August 1930, complaining about Congress pressures on millowners for undertakings not to use foreign yarn or import foreign piecegoods, *Home Poll F. N.* 201/40/1930.
35. Cited in Bagchi, *op. cit.,* p. 209 fn.
36. Kenneth L. Gillion, *op. cit.,* pp. 85-88.
37. Bayly, *op. cit.,* pp. 186-89.
38. Confidential Note by A. H. Ghuznavi, MLA. giving his views on the Civil Disobedience movement, 15 September 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 190/1930 (I owe this reference to Tanika Sarkar).
39. *Report of Bombay Millowners' Association,* 1928 (Bombay, 1929), pp ii-iv.
40. F. H. Sykes (Bombay Governor, 1928-33) to Irwin, 27 December 1928, 26 January 1929, *F. H. Sykes Collection,* India Office Library *MSS Eur F* 150 (1).
41. *Report of Bombay Millowners' Association,* 1928 (Bombay, 1929), p. iii.
42. *Ibid.* 1929 (Bombay, 1930), pp. ii-iv.
43. *Home Poll F. N.* 95/1930.
44. G. D. Birla, *The Path to Prosperity,* pp. 133-34, 141.
45. N. N. Mitra, ed., *Indian Annual Register* (1930), pp 404-07.
46. Quoted in Bipan Chandra, "The Indian Capitalist Class and British Imperialismf', in R. S. Sharma and V. Jha, ed., *Indian Society : Historical Probings (In Memory of D. D. Kosambi),* p. 398.
47. D. P. Khaitan's speech at special meeting of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, 5 March 1930, *Annual Report for* 1930 (Calcutta, 1931), p. 189.
48. Circular to PCCs, 22 February 1930, *SW,* iv, 272-37.
49. FICCI Memorandum to Viceroy, 14 May 1930, signed by Lala Sri Ram, P. Thakurdas, G. D. Birla, Chunilal Mehta, Lalji Naranji, D. P. Khaitan, Ambalai Sarabhai, N. R. Sarkar and others, *Indian Annual Register* (1930), pp. 408-11.
50. *Indian Chamber of Commerce (Calcutta), Annual Report for* 1930, pp. 433-45.
51. Note by Sir David Petrie showing what funds are at the disposal of Congress, 26 May 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 5/40/1931.
52. "You know Marwaris are mainly responsible for the establishment of the Manchester market in Calcutta. If they once decide to wash their hands clean of foreign piecegoods business and devote themselves to the Swadeshi cloth business, they can perform miracles. There are people in this town who could purchase the whole production of your mills for 12 months ahead... I wish you and Bombay millowners

could take advantage of the situation.. . I am writing this letter at the suggestion of some of the big importers who are ready to help the mills.... I ask you to discuss this problem with your Ahmedabad and Bombay friends", G. D. Birla to Ambalal Sarabhai (with copies to Thakurdas and Kasturbhai Lalbhai), 30 April 1930, *Purshottamdas Thakurdas Papers, F. N.* 100/1930 (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library).

53. *Annual Report of Bombay Millowners' Association,* 1929 (Bombay, 1930), pp. x-xi.
54. Reduction of government expenditure, end of gold exports and unbacked paper currency, concessions regarding banking, insurance and shipping, a ban on cloth imports, while "other demands (were) to be discussed with commercial bodies".
55. Lalji Naranji to M. R. Jayakar, 27 January 1932, *M. R. Jayakar Papers, F. N.* 456 (National Archives of India). The letter has been already quoted in part in Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
56. Thakurdas to Irwin, 31 May 1930, *Thakurdas Papers, F. N.* 99/1930.
57. Thakurdas to J. W. Bhore, 14 May 1930, *Ibid.*
58. Thakurdas to Birla, 16 September 1930 ; Birla to Thakurdas, 20 September 1930. Birla by this time was evidently trying to widen his options, and described himself as "A man.... who would not himself accept the invitation but would not mind your accepting same.... I do not represent the Congress nor have I got the Congress mentality. But I wish to be loyal to my party", *Thakurdas Papers, F. N.* 104/1930.
59. Thakurdas to Irwin, 12 May 1930, *Ibid. F. N.* 99/1930.
60. *Halifax Papers.*
61. Tagore to P. C. Mahalanobis, 26 January 1930, written from Totnes, on his way to Russia, *Desh* (Calcutta), 23 August 1975. (I owe this reference to Tanika Sarkar).
62. Tegart claimed that his policy of hitting "hard and keep on hitting" was paying off in Bengal, but he "was becoming extremely anxious with regard to the situation in Bombay", T. M. Ainscough, H. M. Senior Trade Commissioner, to J. A. Woodhead, Commerce Secretary, Government of India, 7 July 1930, reporting a conversation with Tegart in Calcutta, *Home Poll F. N.* 201/40/1930.
63. Secret report of Governors' Conference, Simla, 21-25 July 1930, *F. H. Sykes Collection, MSS Eur F* 150/2(6).
64. H. G. Haig to J. E. B. Hotson, D. O. No. S-687 Poll, Simla, 25 May 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 257/*V* and *K. W.*/1930.
65. Note by H. G. Haig. 13 June 1930, *Ibid.*
66. *Bombay Chronicle,* 25 May 1930 ; *Indian Annual Register* (1930), Chronicle of Events, entry for 23 May.
67. Note by Haig, 13 June 1930, *op. cit.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*
70. *Home Poll F. N.* 201/40/1930.
71. Exchange of telegrams regarding proposed meeting of millowners with

Motilal Nehru, June 1930 ; FICCI pamphlet, entitled *Rules of Swadeshi Sabha* (1930), *Thakurdas Papers, F. N.* 100/1930.

72. Stanley A. Kochanek, *Business and Politics in India* (California, 1974), pp. 145-49.
73. D. P. Khaitan's speech at Quarterly General Meeting of Indian Chamber of Commerce, 2 May 1930, *Indian Chamber of Commerce. Annual Report for* 1930 (Calcutta, 1931), p. 533.
74. Cf., for example, the resolution of Bombay Piecegoods Native Merchants Association, 21 May 1930, and the letter of the Northern Indian Chamber of Commerce, Lahore, to the Chief Secretary of the Punjab Government, 16 August 1930, reporting the "very grave situation facing shippers and importers as a result of the general repudiation of contracts by dealers in India in consequence of the boycott movement, and the resultant total stoppage of trade", *Home Poll F. N.* 201/40/1930.
75. J. Nehru, speech at Allahabad, 12 October 1930, *SW*, iv, 395 ; Working Committee resolution, Allahabad, I February 1931, *CW*, xlv, 135.
76. "The wholesale dealers realize that owing to the greatly reduced purchasing power of the masses, they could not now or in the near future dispose of the enormous stocks they normally hold, and so they are content to wait before ordering from abroad", *Fortnightly Report* (henceforth *FR*) *from Punjab*, second half of October 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xi*/1930. Skyes made the same point in his letter to Irwin, 25 September 1930, *F. H. Sykes Collection, MSS Eur F* 150/2 (*b*).
77. C. J. Baker, *The Politics of South India* 1920-1937 (Cambridge, 1976), p. 216.
78. Sykes to Irwin, 20 June 1930, *F. H. Sykes Collection, MSS Eur F* 150/2(*a*).
79. Petrie to Emerson, Home Secretary, Government of India, 20 August 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 504/1930.
80. Moore, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-13.
81. *Annual Report of Bombay Millowners' Association*, 1930 (Bombay, 1931), pp. ii-iii.
82. "Let Sir George Schuster, Sir George Rainy and other Ministers and Heads of Departments know that we are feeling it very badly", H. Abbot of Imperial Tobacco, Calcutta, to Ainscough, 11 June 1930. "It cannot be denied that the campaign against British piecegoods, cigarettes and other commodities in lesser degrees has met with considerable success", Bengal Chamber of Commerce President R. S. Laird's letter No. 1850-1930, 3 July 1930.
"These gentry have now succeeded in bringing our business in Bombay Presidency practically to a close", Dunlop Manager E. L. Jones to Rainy, 11 August 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 201/40/1930.
83. *SW*, iv, 196.
84. "A Short General Report of the Working of the Civil Disobedience Movement in the Province of Bihar, 21 July 1930", *AICC Files*, G/80/1930 (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library).

85. Hitesranjan Sanyal, *Arambagh-e Jatiyatabadi Andolan* (The Nationolist Movement in Arambagh), *Anya Artha*, nos. 6-7 (Calcutta, 1974-75).
86. Gyanendra Pandey, "The Ascendancy of the Congress in the United Provinces : 1926-1934" (To appear from Oxford). I am grateful to Dr Pandey for allowing me to consult his forthcoming publication in manuscript.
87. C. J. Baker, *op. cit.*, As in other works of the "Cambridge school", the emphasis here is on administrative pressures and factional manoeuvres.
88. Dr Pandey's thesis on Civil Disobedience in UP has emphasized this dual aspect of rural nationalism.
89. Bombay Police Abstract, no 5, 2 February 1929, quoted in *Home Poll F. N.* 5/17/1931.
90. Here from the early 1920s Gandhian Congressmen like Birendranath Sasmal or Prafullachandra Sen had combined constructive village work with anti-Union Board and occasionally even anti-zamindar campaigns, Hitesranjan Sanyal, *op. cit.*
91. J. Gallagher, "The Congress in Decline", in Gallagher, Johnson and Seal, *Locality, Province and Nation* (Cambridge, 1973).
92. *Halifax Papers*.
93. Gandhi's version of interview with Irwin, 18 February 1931, *CW*, xlv, 200.
94. Webb Miller's classic description of Dharasana, quoted in R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, iii (Calcutta, 1963), 362 ; *Bengal Satyagraha Reports, AICC Files G*/86/1930. (Here, as with the bulk of the Bengal material, I have borrowed heavily from the current research of Tanika Sarkar on Bengal Politics and Society, 1927-1937).
95. Thakurdas to Graham Pole, 9 July 1930, *Thakurdas Papers, F. N.* 99/1930.
96. *Halifax Papers*.
97. Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 14 May 1930, *Ibid.*
98. Bell to Emerson, Poona, 6 August 1931, *Home Poll F. N.* 33/24/1931.
99. A conference of Bengal and Assam landholders in Calcutta in January 1930 hailed the Round Table Conference announcement, and on 6 February the UP Zamindars' Conference denounced the Independence Resolution, *Indian Annual Register* (1930), Chronicle of Events, entry for 3 January ; *Ibid.* p. 379.
100. *Ibid.* Chronicle of Evevts, for 12-15 May.
101. Brajkishore Prasad to Vallabhbhai Patel, enclosing a report on the Civil Disobedience movement in Bihar, 21 July 1930, *AICC Files, G*/80/1930.
102. *FR, Bihar and Orissa*, second half of October 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xi*/1930.
103. Weekly Progress Reports of Satyagraha Movement from Bihar PCC. 8, August 1930, *AICC Files, G*/80/1930.
104. *Ibid.*
105. Satya Manna of Gokulnagar village, P. S. Moyna, Midnapur, Birendranath Guha, Secretary, Bengal Council of Civil Disobedience, to AICC

Presendent, 6 November 1930, *AICC Files, G/1930.* (I owe this reference to Tanika Sarkar).

106. One further illustration, taken from a slightly later period : in February 1932 peasants in Kaira district were being stripped and made to stand on all fours for the crime of non-payment of revenue, Typewritten Weekly Civil Disobedience Review, 31 January-6 February 1932, preserved in the papers of *M. R. Jayakar, F. N.* 482.

107. "In one district they (the British) are formenting a class war between the labourers, who belong to a criminal tribe, and the farmers who are refusing land tax", H. N. Brailsford to Wedgewood Benn, 2 November 1930, enclosed in Benn to Irwin, 17 November 1930, *Halifax Papers.* Transfer of Patidar lands to Dharalas was the issue which almost blocked the Delhi Pact at the last moment, Gandhi to Irwin, 4 March 1931 *CW,* xlv 245.

108. Note of UP Police I. G. Dodd, D. O. 580/CO-30 of 3 September 1930. *Home Poll F. N.* 249/1930.

109. Hitesranjan Sanyal, *op. cit.*

110. Cf, for example, *FR, UP,* second half of September 1930 (*Home Poll F. N.* 18/*x*/1930) ; *FR, UP* and *Punjab,* second half of October 1930 (*Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xi*/1930) ; *FR, UP,* first and second half of November, and *FR, Bihar and Orissa* and *Punjab,* second half of *November* 1930 (*Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xii*/1930) ; *FR, CP and Berar,* first half of December 1930 (*Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xiii*/1930).

111. C. Baker, "Non-Cooperation in South India", in Baker and Washbrook, *South India : Political Institutions and Political Change,* 1880-1940 (Macmillan, 1975), pp. 99-103.

112. Report of Congress activities in Berar Province, 9 November 1930, *AICC Files, G/84/1930.*

113. Civil Disobedience in Central Provinces, *Home Poll F. N.* 253/1930 ; *FR, Bombay, CP and Berar,* first and second half of September, *Punjab,* first half of September 1930 (*Home Poll F. N.* 18/*x*/1930) ; *FR, Bombay,* first and second half of October, *CP and Berar,* first half of October 1930 (*Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xi*/1930) ; *FR, Assam,* second half of December 1930 (*Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xiii*/1930).

114. *Whigs and Hunters* (London,, 1975), a brilliant study of conflicts over forest laws in eighteenth-century England.

115. *Indian Annual Register* (1930), Chronicle of Events, 10 November 1930, *FR, Bihar and Orissa,* September-October 1930 (*Home Poll F. N.* 18/*x*-18/*xi*/1930).

116. A Bengali novel, Satinath Bhaduri's *Dhorai-Charit Manas,* gives a fascinating picture of the way in which a lowly north Bihar village group responded to Gandhi.

117. H. G. Haig's, 13 June 1930, *op. cit.*

118. Petrie to Emerson, 20 August 1930, *op. cit.*

119. *Halifax Papers.*

120. Eighteen thousand mill-workers had gone on strike from 7 May, burnt police stations and court buildings, and sacked liquor shops ; they

remained sufficiently disciplined, however, to avoid drunkenness, *Home Poll F. N.* 512/1930.

121. Petrie to Emerson, *op. cit; FR, Bombay*, first half of September 1930 (*Home Poll F. N.* 18/*x*/1930).
122. *SW*, iv, 197.
123. Jawaharlal Nehru to Gandhi, 28 July 1930, *Ibid.*, p. 370.
124 *An Autobiography*, p. 232.
125. Note of 3 September 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 249/1930.
126. *FR, UP*, September-December 1930 (*Home Poll F. N.* 18/*x*-/18/*xiii*/1930).
127. *FR, Punjab*, second half of November and December 1930, *Home Poli F. N.* 18/*xii*-18/*xiii*/1930.
128. *FR, Bengal*, September-December 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*x*-18/*xiii*/1930.
129. *AICC Files, G*/84/1930.
130. Thakurdas to Patel, 25 July 1930, *Thakurdas Papers, F. N.* 100/1930.
131. *FR, Bombay*, second half of September 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*x*/1930.
132. Homi Mody, 19 March 1931 *Report of Bombay Millowners' Association*, 1930. p. iii.
133. *FR, Bombay*, second half of October and first half of November 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xi*-18/*xiii*/1930.
134. *Ibid.* second half of October 1930.
135. Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 1 May 1930, *Halifax Papers.*
136. Writers Building itself had been raided by three armed young men on 8 Decmber, while several Armoury Raid leaders were still working underground in Chittagong villages, where it was almost impossible to get any information about them from the people, *FR, Bengal*, December 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xiii*/1930
137. Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal, to Government of India (Home). Poll No. PSD, 4030 of 18 June 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 248/1930.
138. Memorandum No. 537C of 13 June 1930 from Midnapur District Magistrate, J. Peddie, enclosed in Government of Bengal Poll No. 430 PSD 4302 of 25 June 1930, *Ibid.* It is not entirely unpleasant to recall that Peddie was called by revolutionaries not long afterwards. (I owe these Midnapur references to Tanika Sarkar.)
139. *FR, Bengal*, second half of October 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xi*/1930.
140. Chief Secretary, Central Provinces, to Government of India (Home), 1434/II of 25 August, 544/I of 2 September, CS 218 of 29 September D7665/30 of 12 October 1930; CP Government Press Communique of 30 August 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 253/1930.
141. *Ibid; FR, Bihar and Orissa*, second half of September 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*x*/1930.
142. *FR, Bihar and Orissa*, second half of December 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*xiii*/1930. Communique of Bihar and Orissa Government, 6 February 1931, *Home Poll F. N.* 252/*i*/1931.
143. Intercepted letter, mentioned in D. O. No. 90P, 21 April 1930, from

UP Civil Secretariat to the Commissioner, Northern Indian Salt Revenue, *Home Poll F. N.* 249/1930.

144. Speech at Tangan, 5 February 1930 ; resolution moved by Nehru, 26 February 1930, *SW*, iv, 250, 255-56.
145. *An Autobiography*, p. 232.
146. *Ibid.*, pp. 232-36.
147. S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru—A Biography, Volume I*, 1889-1947 (OUP, 1976), chapter IV, based mainly on the researches of Majid Siddiqi.
148. *FR, UP*, second half of September, October, November and December 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*x*-18/*xiii*/1930.
149. *FR, Bengal*, first half of September 1930 ; *FR, Bombay*, first half of December 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 18/*x*-18/*xiii*/1930.
150. "...each town and village of the Punjab and to a lesser extent in the rest of northern India resounded with his name. Innumerable songs grew up about him, and the popularity that the man achieved was something amazing", *An Autobiography*, pp. 176-77.
151. Ajoy Ghosh. For the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, see Bipan Chandra, "The Ideological Development of the Revolutionary Terrorists in Northern India in the 1920s", in B. R. Nanda, ed., *Socialism in India* (Delhi, 1972).
152. Petrie to Emerson, 20 August 1930, *Home Poll F. N.* 504/1930.
153. Ambalal Sarabhai to G. D. Birla, 4 June 1930, *Thakurdas Papers, F. N.* 100/1930.
154. Bombay Congress Bulletin No. 167, 4 November 1930, *Ibid. F. N.* 101.
155. Bombay Congress Bulletin No. II, 247, 17 October 1932, *Ibid.*
156. Thakurdas to Rangaswami Iyengar (Editor, *The Hindu*), 4 June 1930, *Ibid. F. N.* 91.
157. Thakurdas to Motilal Nehru, 4 June 1930, *Ibid.*
158. Typed draft, undated, but probably sometime in August, as Thakurdas commented on it in a letter to Mody on 22 August 1930, *Ibid. F. N.* 100/1930.
159. *Ibid.*
160. "I do not think that I can altogether blame Gandhiji. At first sight people may think Gandhiji to be very unreasonable, but stripped of all verbiage, his demand amounts to nothing else but Dominion Status. The Government by giving assurances to him could have easily won him over", Birla to Thakurdas, 6 September 1930, *Ibid. F. N.* 104/1930.
161. Birla to Thakurdas, 20 September 1930, *Ibid.*
162. Thakurdas to Motilal Nehru, via Lalji Naranji, 22 September 1930, *ibid.*
163. Thakurdas to Deviprasad Khaitan, 8 October 1930, *Ibid. F. N.* 99/1930
164. Gandhi's interview with Indian Merchants' Chamber deputation, Bombay, 17 March 1931, *CW*, xlv, 303.
165. Ramsay Macdonald's statement at the Round Table Conference, 19 January 1931, *CW*, xlv, Appendix I.
166. Wedgewood Benn informed Irwin on 19 January 1931 that Reading had "got a form of words agreed between Mody and Sir Hubert Carr safeguarding the European trade interests. Mody told me that, on the whole, he was satisfied with this and thought he could persuade the

Indian merchants to the same effect....Hubert Carr rather warmly repudiated a suggestion that he had anything to do with Inchcape or his interests". *Halifax Papers.*

167. Wedgewood Benn to Irwin, 11 February 1931, *Halifax Papers;* Moore, *op. cit.,* pp. 211-213.
168. Government of India, Home Department, Express Letter to all Local Governments, No. D 797-31-Poll of 28 January 1931, *Home Poll F. N. 5/45/1931.*
169. Sykes to Irwin, telegram, 7 February 1931, *F. H. Sykes Collection, MSS Eur F. 150/3(a).*
170. Gandhi to Motilal Nehru, 23 July 1930, *CW,* xliv, 44.
171. *Ibid.,* p. 42, Jawaharlal found "Bapu's note disappointing.... I wish we had definitely stopped all talk of peace", Prison Diary, 27-28 July 1930, *SW,* iv, 373.
172. *CW,* xliv, 83.
173. 26 January 1931 *CW,* xiv, 125.
174. *Ibid.,* p. 133.
175. 28 January and 1 February 1931, *Ibid.,* pp. 128, 138.
176. "Whatever settlement is reached—I have little hope that any will be reached...", Gandhi to Chhaganlal Joshi, 11 February 1931. A similar mood is expressed in his letters to Narandas Gandhi (2 and 10 February), V. S. Srinivassa Sastri (7 February), T. Rangachari (8 February), and Gangadharrao Deshpande (10 February), *Ibid.,* pp. 147, 160, 163, 169-70, 173.
177. In particular the lathi-charge on women ot Borsad in Gujarat (21 January) and the Begusarai firing in Bihar (26 January), Gandhi to Irwin, 1 February 1931, *Ibid.,* pp. 136-38.
178. Interview with Viceroy, 17 February 1931 (Irwin's version), *Ibid.,* p. 185.
179. Inteview with Viceroy, 27 February 1931 (Irwin's version), *Ibid.,* p. 234.
180. *An Autobiography,* p. 257.
181. "It cannot be contended that proposed safeguards are solely in interests of India", Wedgewood Benn to Irwin, No. 801, 4 March 1931, *Home Poll F. N. 5/45/1931.*
182. "Emerson had got Mr Gandhi hitched to the abandonment of the boycott as a political weapon and an assurance of complete freedom for cloth merchants to do what they liked. These seem pretty substantial gains... I have very little doubt that, if you can get rid of the political-weapon drive of it, and have it purely as an economic and social thing, it will be dead in three weeks", Irwin memorandum after interview of 1 March 1931, *CW,* xlv, 241.
183. Irwin's telegram to Wedgewood Benn, No. 662S, 5 March 1931, *Home Poll F. N. 5/45/1931.*
184. Gandhi to Irwin, 5 March 1931, *CW,* xlv, 245.
185. Telegram No. 801, *op. cit.* For an opposite view arguing that the Labour Goverrment of 1929-31 "tried hard, within the limits of its minority position, to undo some of the damage done to Indo-British relations", see P. S. Gupta, *Imperialism and the British Labour Movement* 1914-1964 (London, 1975), p. 101.

186. Gandhi to Irwin, 14 February 1931, *CW*, xlv, 175-6.
187. S. Gopal's very apt phrase, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
188. 'I do not believe that Macdonald's statement grants us anything", 31 January 1931, *CW*, xlv, 134.
189. H. N. Brailsford to Wedgewood Benn, Delhi, 2 November 1930, enclosed in Wedgewood Benn to Irwin, 17 November 1930, *Halifax Papers.*
190. *CW*, xlv, 165.
191. Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 9 February 1931, *Halifax Papers.*
192. Irwin's memorandum, *CW*, xlv, 247.
193. D. P. Khaitan's presidential address to the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, 11 February 1931, *Indian Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report for* 1930 (Calcutta, 1931), p. xliii.
194. "Being temperamentally so built, I cannot give a decisive opinion on matters happening outside the prison walls", Gandhi to Motilal Nehru, 23 July 1930, *CW*, xliv, 44.
195. A not entirely unfair sample : "I cannot think of one simple remedy which will heip Madhu and all others who suffer from constipation", Gandhi to Gangabehn Vaidya, 22 December 1930, *CW*, xlv, 16.
196. *Young India*, 18 May 1921, quoted in S. Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.
197. Interview with S. Hasan Ali Khan of UP Zamindars' Association, 6 March 1931, *CW*, xlv, 262.
198. Quoted in Jagdish Prasad, UP Chief Secretary, to Emerson, 16 July 1931, *Home Poll F. N.* 33/24/1931.
199. *Masses of India*, November 1925, G. Adhikari, *op. cit.*, p. 540.
200. *CW*, xlv, 280.
201. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle* (London, 1934 ; Calcutta, 1964), p. 148.
202. S. Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
203. *An Autobiography*, p. 263.
204. *Meerut Conspiracy Files*, Sl 459, p 52. (I owe this reference to Tanika Sarkar).
205. For the best contemporary analysis of the responsibility of the Comintern for the victory of Hitler, see Trotsky's articles, recently reprinted as *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (Pelican, 1975).
206. See, for example, Ranen Sen, "Communist Movement in Bengal in the Early Thirties", *Marxist Miscellany*, no. 6 (New Delhi, January 1975).
207. Nehru wrote to V. Chattopadhyay and Willi Munzenberg, more in sorrow than in anger, on 30 January 1930 : "It is curious that you should have chosen a moment to attack us when the Congress is more advanced in its views, both political and social, than it has ever been before", *SW*, IV, 237.
208. *Meerut Conspiracy Files, op. cit.*
209. Interview with Irwin, Gandhi's version (Mahadev Desai's manuscript diary), 18 February 1931, *CW*, xlv, 200.
210. I owe this point to Tanika Sarkar.
211. Nehru to Subhas Bose, 24 January 1929, *SW*, iv, 29.
212. Civil Disobedience at Tamluk, *AICC Files, G*/86/1930.

213. *Report of the Indian National Congress, 44th Session, Lahore,* 1929, p. 93.
214. He was also praised by the Governor of Bengal. "Jackson told me that Bose had always been personally well-disposed towards him". Wedgewood Benn to Irwin, 26 September 1930, *Halifax Papers.*
215. Notes made in Naini prison, December 1930, *SW,* iv, 437-51.
216. Statement of 28 January, 1930, *Ibid.,* p. 232.
217. He mentioned in the connection the "hopeless failure" of the Independence for India League, Nehru to Gandhi, 13 July 1929, *Ibid.,* p. 156.
218. *An Autobiography,* pp. 253-56.
219. *Report of the Indian National Congress, 45th Session, Karachi,* 1931, pp. 67-80.
220. *An Autobiography,* p. 261.
221. Gyanendra Pandey's forthcoming work on Civil Disobedience in the United Provinces.
222. Antonio Grasmsci, *Notes on Italian History : Selections from Prison Notebooks,* ed , Hoare and Smith (New York, 1971), p. 59.
223. Karl Marx, Introduction to *Towards A Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1844), in David Mc-Lellan, ed., *Karl Marx : Early Texts* (Oxford, 1971), p. 126.

POPULAR MOVEMENTS AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, 1945-47.

[Paper presented at a seminar on Aspects of the Economy, Society and Politics in Modern India, 1900-1950, at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, December 1980.]

1. The published first-hand sources include N. Mansergh ed., *Transfer of Power,* Volumes VI-VIII, London, various dates. Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal,* Moon ed., Oxford 1973 ; Durga Das edition of "Sardar Patel's Correspondence" Ahmedabad, 1971 ; and the contemporary writings of Gandhi and Nehru. Among the well-known secondary works may be mentioned V. P. Menon, *Transfer of Power in India,* London 1957, and *Story of Integration of Indian States.* Bombay 1956 : A. Campbell Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten,* London, 1951 ; Penderal Moon, *Divide and Quit,* London, 1961 ; H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide,* London, 1969 ; Maulana Azad, *India Wins Freedom,* Bombay, 1959 : Pyarelal, *The Mahatma : The Last Phase ;* Two Volumes, Ahmedabad, 1956, 1958 ; C Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan,* Lahore, 1961 ; S Ghosh, *Gandhi's Emissary,* London. 1967 as well as Collins and Lapierre's journalistic bestseller, *Freedom at Midnight,* Delhi, 1976.
2. Sunil Sen, *Agrarian Struggle in Bengal* 1946-47, New Delhi 1972 ; P Sundarayya, *Telengana People's Struggle and Its Lessons,* Calcutta, 1972. *The RIN Strike* by a group of victimised ratings, New Delhi,

1954, and K C George, *Immortal Punnapra-Vayalar,* (New Delhi, 1975) represent valuable accounts by leaders or participants; none of the authors, however, had the opportunity of consulting official archival sources. See also Gautam Chattopadhyay, "The Almost Revolution" in *Essays in Honour of S C Sarkar*, New Delhi, 1976, Ravi Narayan Reddi, "Heroic *Telengana-Reminiscences and Experiences,* New Delhi, 1973 and D H Dhanagare, "Social Origins of Peasant Insurrection in Telengana", Contributions to Indian Sociology, 1974.

3. Thus R P Dutt's assumption (*India Today*, Bombay, 1947, p. 474) that the Cabinet Mission decision was a direct result of the RIN strike of February 18, 1946 is clearly false, for the Mansergh documents show that the former has been taken on January 2. Changes of betrayal by leaders usually tend to ignore also deeper internal weaknesses of movements.
4. As the Communists were to learn to their cost in 1949-51 the slogan of Yeh Azadi Jhuta Hai, which seemed to follow logically from a 'betrayal' thesis cut remarkably little ice.
5. Linlithgow's telegram to Churchill, August 31, 1942; Government of India (Home) to Secretary of state, September 12, 1942, Mansergh, II, pp. 843, 952-53.
6. R. J. Moore, *Churchill, Crips and India* 1939-45, Oxford, 1979, and Mansergh, I.
7. Wavell, *The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 97-98.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 12 (entry for July 27, 1943).
9. D. D. Kosambi, 'The Bourgeoise Comes of Age in India', *Science and Society*, 1946 — reprinted in *Exasperating Essays*, Poona, n. d. p. 17.
10. Nehru commented during the Working Committee session at Allahabad (April 27-May 1, 1942) that "It is Gandhiji's feeling that Japan and Germany will win. This feeling unconsciously governs his decision." *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, February* 1943, Appendix I.
11. Letter to Shankar Rao Deo in Manibehn Patel and G. N. Nandurkar. "Surdar's Letters — Mostly Unknown" *Birth Centenary Volume* IV, Ahmedabad, 1977, p. 286.
12. A. K. Sen, 'Famine Mortality : A Study of the Bengal Famine of 1943' in Hosbawm and other (*ed.*), *Peasants in History*, OUP, 1980, pp. 198. 203, 207.
13. Wadia and Merchant, *Our Economic Problem*, 6th Edition, Bombay, 1959, pp. 359-60.
14. Kosambi, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
15. P Thakurdas, J. R. D. Tata, G. D. Birla, A. Dalal, Shri Ram, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, A D Shroff, John Malthai, *A Brief Memorandum Outlining A Plan of Economic Development for India,* Bombay, January 1944, pp. 23, 25, 26, 38-39, 51-52.
16. Marie-Caire Bergere, 'The Role of the Bourgeoisie' in Mary C Wright (ed), *China in Revolution : The First Phase* 1900-1913, pp. 249-50.
17. Kosambi, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
18. Amiya Bagchi, *Private Investment in India*, 1900-1939, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 432-33.

19. M. A. H. Ispahani, *Qaid-E-Azam Jinnah As I knew Him*, Karachi, 1966, Chapters VII-IX.
20. G. D. Birla to Mahadev Desai, July 14, 1942, G. D. Birla, *Bapu A Unique Association Correspondence* 1940-47, Bombay, 1977, p. 316.
21. For details of the Simla Conference see Mansergh, *V* and Wavell, *Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 111-58.
22. Subject only to an Indo-British treaty safeguarding British interests in India for a transitional period. See P S Gupta, *Imperialism and British Labour*, Macmillan, 1975, pp. 257-59.
23. *Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 159, 169-71, 399, (entries for July 26 and September 4, 1945 and December 24, 1946).
24. Hallet to Wavell, August 14, 1945 *Mansergh, VI*, p. 68.
25. *Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 170-71.
26. GOI (War Department) to Secretary of State, August 11, 1945 *Mansergh, VI* pp. 49-51.
27. Wavell to Secretary of State, October 1, October 17, *ibid.*, pp. 305-06, 360.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 514, 564.
29. Glancy (Governor of Punjab) to Wavell, January 16, 1946, *Ibid.*, p. 807.
30. Wavell to Secretary of State, January 29, February 18, 1946, *Ibid.*, pp. 868-69, 1006.
31. C P Governor Twynham to Wavell, November 10, 1945. On November 24, 1945. Commander-in-Chief Auchinleck in an appreciation of the internal situation expressed fears about a "well-organised revolution next Spring — if and when trouble comes it may be on a greater scale than in August 1942...". *Ibid.*, pp. 468, 577-83.
32. Jenkins to Turnbull, reporting a talk of a returned POW. Captain Badhwar (whose name was "*not* to be disclosssed") with Asaf Ali, October 23, 1945, *Ibid.*, p. 387.
33. Golwalkar's RSS had kept strictly aloof from the August Rebellion ; Savarkar on September 4, 1942 had urged Mahasabha members of local bodies, legislatures and services to "stick to their posts and continue to perform their regular duties", (*Indian Annual Register, Chronicle of Events*, 1942) while Shyamaprasad Mukherji was actually a minister in Bengal while Midnapur was being ruthlessly suppressed.
34. Fortnightly Report, UP 2nd half of November, 1945 ; Government of India. *Home Political* (*Internal*), 11/11/45. (Henceforward *Home Poll* (*I*).
35. Bengal Governor Casey to Wavell, January 2, 1946, summarising the enquiry report of the Calcutta Police Commissioner, *Mansergh, VI*, pp. 724-27.
36. Calcutta Police Commissioner's Report on Political Aspects of Calcutta disturbances of February 1946, April 3, 1946 ; *Home Poll* (*I*) 5/22/46.
37. Situation Report, February 12, 1946, *ibid.*, See also Gautam Chattopadhyay, "The Almost Revolution', in *Essays in Honour of S. C. Sarkar*, New Delhi, 1976.

38. Situation Report, February 13, 1946, (3.30 PM), *Home Poll (I) 5/22/46.*
39. The ratings contacted Aruna Asaf Ali at her house in Dadar, who expressed sympathy and issued an appeal for "moral support" on February 20. "She consulted Vallabhbhai Patel who snubbed her saying — that it was no business of his or hers to interfere when the ratings did not abide by discipline. Mrs Aruna Asaf Ali left Bombay for Poona on the morning of February 20, 1946". Bombay Police Commissioner's Office (Special Branch) to Government of Bombay Home (Special), February, 20 1946, *Home Poll (I)5/21/46.*
40. Bombay Governor Colville to Wavell, February 27, 1946, *Mansergh, VI,* pp. 1081-84.
41. *The RIN Strike* (by a group of victimised ratings), New Delhi, 1954 p. 75.
42. Governor-General (War Department) to Secretary of State, November 30, 1945, *Mansergh, VI,* p. 572.
43. *Viceroy's Journal,* Appendix IV, pp. 485-86.
44. Wavell to George VI, December 31, 1945, *Mansergh, VI,* p. 713.
45. For the role of business groups in the making of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931 and in the 'taming' of Nehru in 1936, see Sumit Sarkar, 'Logis of Gandhian Nationalism : Civil Disobedience and the Gandhi-Irwin Pact 1930-31', *Indian Historical Review,* July 1976, and Bipan Chandra, 'Jawaharlal Nehru and the Capitalist Class', (reprinted in *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India,* Delhi, 1979).
46. Rowlands, as reported in *Viceroy's Journal,* p. 185. H Dow (Governor of Sind) wrote to Wavell on November 3 that "Birla . . . is getting a little frightened of the Frankenstein's monster he has helped so much to create", (*Mansergh,* VI, p. 438). The Secretary of State commented on November 30 : "I am glad to hear that Birla has told *Hindustan Times* to lower its tone. It rather looks as if the richer supporters of Congress may be beginning to wonder where the caravan is going." *Ibid.,* p. 572.
47. *Ibid.,* pp. 602-03.
48. G D. Birla to Henderson, December 6, 1945, *Ibid.,* p. 615.
49. Fortnightly Report from Bengal, 2nd half of November 1945, *Home Poll (I)18/11/45.* Wavell to Secretary of State, December 5, 1945, *Mansergh, VI,* p. 602.
50. *Indian Annual Register,* July-December 1945.
51. *Ibid.*
52. The Commissioner added that Suhrawardy's foreknowledge (as a member of the League ministry) that the February 12 procession would not be stopped by the police "enabled him to pose with aafety as a hero of liberty. . .", Calcutta Police Commissioner's Report, April 3, 1946, *Home Poll (I)5/22/46.*
53. Situation Repoit No. 7, February 13, 1946, *Ibid.*
54. Colville to Wavell, February 27, 1946, *Mansergh, VI,* pp. 1081-82.
55. *Home Poll* (1) *5/21/46.*
56. *Sardar's Letter,* Volume IV, Ahmedabad, 1977, p. 165.

57. Colville to Wavell, *op. Cit., Mansergh, VI,* p. 1084.
58. Wavell to Secretary of State, March 5, 1946, quoting from *The Statesman,* March 4, *Ibid.,* p. 1118.
59. *Sardar's Letters, op. cit.,* pp. 162-63.
60. *Viceroys Journal,* p. 485.
61. Statistics in *AICC FN G26/1946.*
62. Cunningham to Wavell, February 27, 1946, *Mansergh, VI,* p. 1985.
63. *Mansergh, VII,* pp. 291-93.
64. *Viceroy's Journal,* pp. 324-25.
65. *Ibid.,* p. 232.
66. J. B. Kripalani's analysis of postwar labour unrest, *AICC FN G26/1946* ; V B Singh, 'Trade Union Movement', in Singh(d) *Economic History of India* 1857-1956, Bombay, 1965 p. 660.
67. Note by J A Thorne, April 5, 1946, *Mansergh, VII,* pp. 150-51.
68. Wavell to Secretary of State, March 5, 1946 enclosing extract from *Hindustan Times,* March 3, *Mansergh, VI,* p. 1116.
69. Shantilal Shah to Potel, May 7, 1946, Durga Das (ed), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence,* Ahmedabad, 1971 — Volume III, pp. 64-65.
70. J. B. Kripalani's note, *AICC FN G26/1946.*
71. *Mansergh, VII,* pp. 154-55.
72. Note by N P A Smith, Director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, August 9, 1946, *Home Poll* (I) 12/7/46.
73. *Viceroy's Journal,* p. 352.
74. *Ibid,* p. 329.
75. *Mansergh, VIII,* pp. 13-15.
76 "...parts of the city on Saturday morning were as bad as anything I saw when I was with the Guards on the Somme." Governor Burrows to Wavell, August 22. 1946, *Ibid.,* p. 298.
77. *Viceroy's Journal,* p. 374.
78. Pendenel Moon, *Divide and Quit,* London, 1961 pp. 76-81.
79. *Viceroy's Journal,* February 28, 1947, p. 424.
80. Interview with Wavell, August 19, 1946, *Mansergh, VIII,* p. 261.
81. "We would be committing a grave mistake if we expose the people of Bihar and their ministry to the violent and vulgar attacks of the League leaders". Patel to Rajendra Prasad, November 11, 1946, Durga Das, *op. cit.,* III, p. 171.
82. *Viceroy's Journal,* pp. 426-37.
83. H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide,* London, 1969, p. 236.
84. Patel "had now taken the place of Bapu in my correspondence". G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma,* Longmans. 1953, p. 328 Gandhi's letter to Birla on December 6, 1946 complained that Birla's letter to him of December 2 (unfortunately not included) revealed "a lack of genuine feeling of resentment of improper conduct" about the Bihar riots. G. D. Birla, *Bapu* — Correspondence 1940-47, Bombay, 1977, p. 421.
85. C Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan,* Lahore 1961, p. 404.
86. Sunil Sen, *Agrarian Struggle in Bengal* 1946-47, New Delhi, 1972.
87. K C George, *Immortal Punnapra-Vayalar,* New Delhi, 1976 ; Robin

Jeffrey, 'A Sanctified Label-Congress in Travancore Politics, 1938-48', in D. A. Low (ed), *Congress and the Raj*, New Delhi, 1977.

88. P Sundarayya, *Telengana Peoples' Struggle and Its Lessons*, Calcutta, 1972, pp. 2, 7-9, 40.
89. Patel's interview with Wavell, June 27, 1946, *Mansergh, VIII*, 1068-69.
90. V. P. Menon, *Story of the Integration of Indian States, Bombay*, 1956. p. 96.
91. Wavell, quoting Labour Minister Jagjivan Ram, January 14, 1947, *Viceroy's Journal*, p. 416.
92. G. D. Birla, *Bapu* — Correspondence 1940-47, p. 434.
93. *Viceroy's Journal*, entry for January 9, 1947, p. 408.
94. *Ibid.*, entry for January 15, 1947, p. 411.
95. This is most blatant in Collins and Lapierre, *Freedom At Midnight*, Delhi, 1976.
96. *Viceroy's Journal*, p. 344.
97. V. P. Menon, *Transfer of Power*, pp. 363-64.
98. For details, see A K Gupta "*North-West Frontier Province Legislature and Freedom Struggle* 1932-47, New Delhi, 1976.
99. Gautam Chattopadhyay, 'The Almost Revolution', *op. cit.*, p. 445.
100. P C Joshi, *For the Final Bid for Power*, Bombay, 1945, p. 118. The document is thus very far from being an anticipation of Ranadive sectarianism as has been curiously misconstrued recently by Bhagwan Singh Josh in his *Communist Movement in the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1979.
101. 15,000 members at the First Party Congress in May 1943, more than 100,000 at the Second in February 1948.
102. "Fortnightly Report from UP first half of November 1945", *Home Poll (I)* 18/11/54.
103. Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Note-books*, Hoare and Smith, ed., New York, 1971, pp. 59, 107, and passim. For a recent discussion by historians of the concept of passive revolution, see John A Davis ed., *Gramsci and Italy's Passive Revolution*, London, 1979.
104. *Samar Sener Kabita*, Calcutta, 1954, pp. 134-36.

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ERRATA

Page	:	*Line*	*To be read*
5		1	women : "thus...
		3	death" ![22]
10		5	Orientalism
		6	Renaissance'
16		1	exultation
22		31	back, per-
25		28	Paine's
27		1	domiciles."
		25	emancipation
28		22	Moslem
33		1	naibs
34		14	breath-taking
41		34	relied upon
42		35	Namierite
55		16	vity
56		10	unanimous
60		11	reform
		31	objec-
66		37	ex-
76		9	the
		13	femininity
103		38	Chanak-
113		37	1930-31
130		27	firmly
133		36	not
136		16	nijkhamare
137		8	Vayalar