RECENT INDIAN RESPONSE TO THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL

The recent Indian response to the Cambridge School of thought is on the lines of retaliation and refusal of the charges. The Indian scholars made a seething attack on this School by declaring that the Cambridge historiography is nothing but the re-incarnation of the Colonial historiography. The central feature of the Indian response is reflected in Ranade's viewpoint, that from the British point of view what was considered rational and advantageous was adopted in India inspite of differences in the objective conditions. This fact is quite true and it is amazing to know that the British intelligentsia in England accepted the Indian government's version of Indian happenings without acquiring into its validity. This one sided British view is proved when effective steps were taken in chalking out the details of 1784 Act, because of the fact that the loss of American colonies had increased the importance of India to England. Likewise, the Indian Council Act of 1892 had disappointed the Congress. It was pointed out in the presidential addresses of 1894 and 1895, that the statement made by Gladstone and Salisbury in the debates on the bill of 1892 had been bypassed and the manifest intention of the British parliament had been subjected to administrative mutilation. Thus the hard fact is proved beyond any doubt that no government relishes the fact which tarnish its image in general public. Equally important is the idea that a frank statement on Indian affairs by British intelligentsia would have provoked the wrath of the government. Owing to this fear in mind, the British scholars had to suppress the true image of the Indian Freedom Struggle

As it was the era of Colonialism and Imperialism throughout the world, so Indian economy and society too, were completely subordinated to British economy. The direct result of this was
that during the very years after 1760 when Britain was developing into a leading capitalist country of the world, India was becoming underdeveloped and turned into a classic backward colony. With the coming of the Indian-government in British hands, the Colonial pattern of bondage and exploitation was put into force and this led to the disintegration of the Indian social and economic system. Moreover, the findings of various local and regional studies when viewed in the context of an unequal exploitative metropolis-colony relationship, clearly suggests that the Indian industry definitely declined in the First century of the British rule in India. Another analysis in this regard is that though the Imperialist rule in India had a general crippling effect on traditional Indian industries, this impact varied from industry to industry.

In his precious work entitled, Modern India: 1885-1947, Sumit Sarkar attempted to crystallise the central point of British-Indian rule by analysing that the Raj had a deeply racist aspect and it ultimately existed to protect Colonial exploitation. This racism helped to consolidate what Bagchi had termed, the collective monopoly of the European businessmen which was such a striking feature of the industrial and commercial life of particularly the Eastern part of India343. Even in the country as a whole, the direct government efforts at agricultural improvement remained almost non-existent for a long period except for a few experimental forms and some partly Taccavi loans from the 1870’s344. On the other hand, it is quite interesting to know that Bayly’s study of Allahabad together with Washbrook’s of South India clearly emphasize the role of this mid-1880’s spurt in taxation in providing unusually wide support of peasantry for Congress Session in Madras in 1887 and


Allahabad in 1888. Likewise, as far as the Indian industry was concerned, the British officials and publicists tended to accept the decline of traditional Indian artisan production as a sad but inevitable fact.

Debating on drain theory, Sumit Sarkar states that India's export surplus had become absolutely vital for the whole complex mechanism of the United Kingdom's balance of payments by the end of the Nineteenth century. Earlier the father of the drain theory, Dada Bhai Naoroji had also similarly revealed that the amount being drained away represented a potential surplus which might have raised Indian income considerably, if invested properly inside the country. He wrote in 1906 that politically and economically, India was in a seething cauldron. Citing an example of economic drain, Naoroji states that a substantial portion of revenue of Bengal was used in the purchase of goods for export to England and it was termed by the British as investment.

Assuming Hindu revivalism, Sumit Sarkar frankly admits that this movement obviously contributed to the assertion of an aggressive Hindu identity. That this initial and natural form of expression of patriotism of intelligentsia was through literature in the regional languages. Gradually this aggressive Hindu identity played a significant role in the Congress too. Citing an example to justify his point, Sarkar states that what made the moderate Congress increasingly a target of criticism was not so much of its objectives as its methods and style of functioning. Even Lord Minto admitted this fact in 1908, that racial antipathies have been dangerously inflamed with the emergence of extremist faction in the Congress.


Ibid., p. 82.
The real confrontation between Curzon and the Nationalist intelligentsia, according to Sarkar, came through three successive measures: changes in Calcutta Corporation in 1899, the Universities Act of 1904 and lastly the partition of Bengal in 1905. The first measure reduced the elected Indian members and was a move directly connected with the interests of the Calcutta's European business community, which had often complained about the delays in the grant of licenses for other favours. On partition of Bengal, he states that what the British had clearly underestimated was first of all marked by a long period of regional independence and greatly fostered at least among literate, by the cultural development of the Nineteenth century. In addition to that Robin J. Moore has also accused Curzon by commenting that during the Viceroyalty, he adamantly refused to propose political reforms. His actions showed that he was allergic to the Congress. In one of his letters to Secretary of State, his disregard for the Congress is reflected, as he says, "The Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise."

Analysing the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements, Sumit Sarkar states that all-India nature of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat upsurge is best indicated by its penetration of the South. Of the four linguistic regions of the South India, only Karnataka remained largely unaffected-its political awakening would come in the 1930's. Second effect of Non-cooperation Movement was the quite unprecedented growth of Hindu and Muslim communalism, which in fact by far the most serious and permanent negative development of post-Non-
cooperation years. Consequently, the communal bodies proliferated and political alignments were made increasingly on a communal basis. Gradually, a link between the elites and popular communalism was provided by the rapid growth of communal associations and ideologies\textsuperscript{351}. In the post Non-cooperation era, Sarkar says that despite their theoretical secularism; No-Changers and the Swarajists alike failed to adequately counter the Hindu communalism; or even clearly disassociate themselves from its organisation and ideology.

While the First World War meant misery and a fall in the living standards for the majority of the Indian people, the 1920's witnessed no improvement in living conditions and possibly brought some deterioration. Moreover while the Indian population took a sharp upward turn after the 1921 census, agricultural productivity stagnated everywhere except in Punjab and marginally in Madras\textsuperscript{352}. In addition to that, disillusionment by the repeated Congress failure to unequivocally take up their demands, some peasant activists by the mid-1930's had started grouping towards new ideologies. This post -1922 mood of disillusionment with established Congress leaders led to a renewed attraction for the method of revolutionary terrorism among sections of educated youth in Bengal, U. P. and Punjab\textsuperscript{353}. The mass upsurge of 1930's, was too closely related to decisive economic changes. Analysing the situation of Bengal Congress at this time, Tanika Sarkar states that Congress organisation in Bengal on the eve of Civil-Disobedience was practically a shambles, aggravated by the continuous squabbles between the rival factions of Subhas Chander Bose and J. M. Sengupta. Even at the height of Civil-Disobedience Movement, the factions were passionately fighting out of Corporation election disputes much to the relief of the

\textsuperscript{351} Sarkar, Sumit; op. cit., p.235.

\textsuperscript{352} Ibid., p.239.

\textsuperscript{353} Ibid., p.251.
government. Along with this Movement, the worldwide Depression which set in from late 1929, affected India in two main ways, firstly through a very sharp fall in prices and secondly by bringing about a major crisis in entire export- oriented Indian economy. However the point of consolation during the Depression was that the signs of firmer understanding between Indian capitalists and the decisive sections of the Congress leadership became evident from the Swadeshi oriented stores' purchase policy of the Congress ministries.

Analysing the Harizan welfare works of Mahatma Gandhi and his followers, Sarkar hoped that these measures must have indirectly helped to spread the message of Nationalism down to the lowest and most oppressed sections of rural society and Harizans in most part of the country did come to develop a traditional loyalty towards the Congress, which would greatly help the party after independence. As there was pathetic conditions of the oppressed sections of the society in the princely states before 1937, the most significance advance made by the National Movement between 1937 and 1939, was in the princely states: the bulwarks of autocracy and rampant feudal exploitation which British federation plans have increasingly exposed as key supports for Imperialism in its efforts to keep India divided and subjugated.

Last debating point of Sarkar's valuable work is that the encouragement of Muslim-League claims, formed an increasingly significant part of War time Imperialist strategy. For example, the August

354 Indian Historical Review Vol.4 No.1-2 (NewDelhi) p.76.
355 Sarkar, Sumit; op. cit., p.257.
356 Ibid., p.359.
357 Ibid., p.329.
358 Ibid., p.365.
Offer, made it clear that the British would not transfer responsibilities to any system of government, whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. This tactic, in fact concealed one of Jinnah's central demand since the outbreak of the War\(^{359}\). According to Sarkar, the rapid advance of the Muslim-League, which took full advantage of the suppression of the Congress was in fact the most striking development of the closing years of the War. The flashpoint of all such unhealthy developments came when communal riots, combined with the evident unworkability of Congress-League coalition at the centre, compelled many by early 1947 to think in terms of accepting what had been unthinkable so far—a Partition and these soon included Nehru as well as Patel\(^{360}\).

Thus to conclude, the weakness of the Congress as far as the Partition of India is concerned rests on two factors. Firstly, it failed to draw the Muslim masses into the Nationalist Movement and secondly, it was not able to evolve a strategy to successfully fight communalism.

As the title of the book suggests, S.R. Mehrotra in his work entitled, *A History of the Indian National Congress, vol 1, 1885-1918*, primarily concentrates on the activities of the Congress from 1885-1918. He is of the view that the Indian National Congress was the continuation of the past, i.e. pre-1885 era\(^{361}\). This fact is proved by the statement that in the Nineteenth century India, started a process in which new legal and administrative institutions came into being, grew and took a definite shape. This process was a product of certain British ideas on the Indian problems from the early Nineteenth century onwards, as well as

\(^{359}\) Sarkar, Sumit ; op. cit., p.377.
\(^{360}\) Ibid., p.436.
certain changes in British interests pressing for administrative reforms. The result was a network of laws applicable throughout the country and vast administrative structure to implement the law. In addition to that, by the late 1870's, sufficient modernization appeared to have taken place in India, especially as regards to the spread of education, growth of mass communication, increased urbanization and the rise of the new professional classes, to provide conditions for the communication of a national organization. This is due to the fact that various persons and organizations had claimed or been credited with the parentage of the Indian National Congress.

Mehrotra, while focusing on the first Session of the Indian National Congress says that those who attended it at Bombay were conscious of two things: first they were making history, and second, that the Congress was a symbol and a vindication of their growing unity as a nation. That the first Session marked the beginning of a new era in Indian politics; but it meant a continuation of, not a break with the past, as was evident from the subjects it discussed. It is also noteworthy to say that to the British government, it provided the channels for control over the Indian purse and also on the Indians as a whole. To the Indians, it provided the ground on which a protest could be launched and the authority of the British could be challenged. For example, while the British politicians were too pre-occupied with the Irish question to care about India in 1886 and the attitude of most Anglo-Indians-whether official or non-official-to the Congress was frankly hostile, it was no small consolidation to the leaders of the Congress to learn that the Viceroy of India, Dufferin, was not unfriendly to their aspirations. Thus it was the

363 Ibid., p. 21.
364 Ibid., p. 41.
opposition that stimulated the Congress leaders to greater activity. Already in 1887, despairing of appealing to the rulers, they had decided to appeal to the Indian people. Mehrotra rightly observes that it was neutral for the English-educated Indians in the Nineteenth century, who studied History and watched the progress of the Movements for the National Freedom and unity in various parts of the world, including the British empire to desire that their country, too should become self-governing.

According to Mehrotra, the failure of the older Moderate leaders of the Congress to secure any substantial concessions from the British, encouraged younger men-first called radicals but later known as Extremists-to become increasingly critical of them, their ideals and their methods of agitation and organization. In this context, one fact which can not be overlooked is that the development in Ireland directly contributed to the Indian National Movement from time to time. It was early in the Twentieth century that the demand for Home Rule League was raised in Ireland by the Moderates, constitutional Nationalists, led by John Redmond. Thus, it is on the Irish pattern that the Home Rule League demand in India was made.

Interpretations of the Cambridge scholars on the Act of 1919, concentrates on twin imperial requirements of financial devolution and need for a wider circle of Indian collaborators. The basic objective contradictions between British political and economic domination and most sections of Indian people made it impossible for the pull towards compromise and collaboration to go too far. However, Mehrotra states that Montague-Chelmsford reforms laid down clearly and

366 Ibid., p. 314.
367 Ibid., p. 122.
368 Ibid., p. 121.
definitely the ultimate aim of British rule in India. It recognised India to be potentially a dominion. It committed the British government to the policy of introducing parliamentary self-government in India on the English model\(^{369}\). Mehrotra admires the early Nationalists for their role in the Montague-Chelmsford reforms. The writer says that it was a remarkable achievement on the parts of the Moderates in India in 1917, to have converted their British rulers to their own point of view and to have secured from them in War-time such an epoch-making announcement\(^{370}\). Thus to conclude, the increasing alienation of the younger generation from the Moderate dominated Congress had been a frequent subject of comment even in early years. Citing an example, Mehrotra states that the rise of radical Nationalism in the first decade of the Twentieth century was no sudden or unexpected development and this is due to the fact that the climate of political opinion in this country had begun to change since the 1890's\(^{371}\). But from 1914 onwards, it seems to have become more marked\(^{372}\). This is also true that while official opinion lamented that the Moderates lacked the backbone and had failed the very first test, i.e. Montague-Chelmsford reforms. On the other hand, the Moderates felt that the ground was being cut from the underneath their feat by the unwisdom of the government and than in April 1919, came the Amritsar massacre which put the reforms and the moderates into the dark shade from which they never emerged\(^{373}\).

\(^{369}\) Mehrotra, S. R.; op. cit., p. 130.

\(^{370}\) Ibid., p. 138.

\(^{371}\) Ibid., p. 147.

\(^{372}\) Ibid., p. 283.

\(^{373}\) Ibid., p. 292.
Analysing the political situation of India from 1917 to 1929, S. R. Mehrotra in his another work entitled, *India, Britain and the Commonwealth, 1917-1929*, states that until 1917, the British government policy lacked a sense of direction and purpose. Although the British policy in regard to Indian political aspirations was on the whole liberal and progressive, yet the accidents of time and circumstances added the rapid growth of these Indian political aspirations. According to Alan Trevithick, it is true that the great Durbars, royal assemblages were staged in Delhi by the government of British-India as examples of explicitly political rituals, their purpose being to legitimate and popularise the British rule in India. But the early Nationalists however, desired that British rule should transform itself completely with the interests of the Indian people. They glorified in their membership of the empire, but demanded that the rights and the privileges of British citizenship be gradually extended to them and such modifications be made in the character of the British administration that in the fullness of time, India might become self-governing like the dominions. Consequently, by the first decade of the Twentieth century, the ideal of the self-government on the dominion model came to be definitely adopted.

Giving his opinion on First World War, Mehrotra describes that it brought about a change in the angle of vision. Because the concept of dominion status came to be applied to India by the declaration of August 1917. That, by the Montague-Chelmsford reforms of 1919, a certain measure of responsible government was introduced in the provinces and it was hoped that if the experiment succeeded, it would be extended till India attained self-government like the dominions. However,

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the author points out that the Non-Cooperation Movement ruined the fair hopes of 1919. Because he claims that however justified the Non-Cooperation Movement might have been as a moral protest and whatever its contribution towards building up of a strong National Movement in India, there can be little doubt that but for it the pace of economical advance in India would have been faster. Dr. Sumit Sarkar also echoes the same feelings, when he says that the Non-Cooperation Movement marked the quite unprecedented growth of Hindu and Muslim communalism. It was generally assumed that the introduction of responsible government in India would be a slow and long drawn-out affair. Once this plan of slow motion advance had been rudely disturbed by the march of events in India, there developed a tendency on the part of the British statesmen to wait on events instead of thinking out and working out a boulder plan of campaign.

The British, according to Mehrotra, attempted to deal with the Indian problem as political engineers rather than as psychologists. That the imperial citizenship lost its halo to those who felt that they were being denied freedom with their own country and humiliated in other parts of the empire because they were Indians. Moreover, the policies of racial discrimination pursued in South Africa and Kenya acted as a constant irritant to the Indian Nationalists. There is no denial of the fact that the older and the Moderate Congressmen would have been satisfied with dominion status if granted in time. They interpreted, that the dominion status meant perfect equality with Great Britain and freedom to recede at will. Like liberals they demanded dominion status with reservations for the transitional period, to be granted to India immediately. They desired to see

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the British empire quietly transform itself into a real Commonwealth of nations. Thus freedom within the empire to them was preferable to freedom outside the empire. They cherished the ideals of the Commonwealth for the higher purposes, it could then serve the promotion of international freedom, peace and brotherhood\textsuperscript{378}.

As far as the British Commonwealth is concerned, Mehrotra delivers his views that younger and more radical elements within the Congress considered this to be a mere Euphemism for the British empire. They believed that India could never attain complete economical and political freedom, unless she severed the British connection. To them, the banner was as important as the forward march. Dominion status was in their eyes, a status of servitude. That it was a wrong ideology and an inspiring deal. The Liberals valued the Commonwealth as an association of the freest and most progressive nations in the world and as an institution likely to serve the higher purpose of reconciling the East and the West. On the other hand Mehrotra states that the Muslims had in Pan-Islamism a competing and far more compelling ideal. Many of their leaders cherished lively dreams of Commonwealth of Islam\textsuperscript{379}.

Thus to conclude, it can be said that, to the Indians who valued British Commonwealth, it means the advancement of higher ideals of justice, freedom, equality, peace and concord in the whole world.

In his monumental work entitled, India's Struggle for Independence, Bipin Chandra mentions that the Indian National Movement is the only Movement where state power was not seized in a single historical movement of revolution, but through a prolonged popular struggle on a moral, political and ideological level\textsuperscript{380}. The National

\textsuperscript{378} Mehrotra, S.R.; op. cit., p. 256.

\textsuperscript{379} Ibid., p. 257.

Movement as the imperialist scholars assert was not people’s movement but a product of the needs and the interests of the elite groups who used to serve either their own narrow interests or the interests of their perspective groups. For example, Anil Seal developed a parallel view that the National Movement represented the struggle of Indian elite, of one group against the other for British favours. Third is the subaltern approach, which asserts that the Indian people were never united in a common anti-imperialist struggle. That there was no such entity as the Indian National Movement. On the other hand the Marxist historians, see the bourgeoisie as playing the dominant role in the Movement. They also interpreted the class character of the Movement in terms of its forms of struggle.

According to Bipin Chandra, India’s Freedom Struggle was basically the result of a fundamental contradictions between the interests of the Indian people and that of the British Colonialism. It was primarily based on an immense faith in the capacity of the Indian people to make sacrifices, at the same time it recognised the limits on their capacity and did not make demands based on unrealistic and romantic notions.\(^{381}\)

Bipin Chandra remarkably observes that if the importance of a historical event is not limited to its immediate achievements, than the revolt of 1857 was not purely a historical tragedy. Even in failure, it served a grand purpose: a source of inspiration for the National Liberation Movement which later achieved what the revolt could not. Infact the revolt of 1857 was the culmination of a century long tradition of fierce popular resistance to British domination.\(^{382}\) Almost all the civil rebellions bore same character not because they represented national or common efforts but because they represented common

\(^{381}\) Bipin Chandra : op.cit., p. 29.

\(^{382}\) Ibid., p. 40
conditions though separated in time and space. Citing an example, Bipin Chandra states that the peasants’ struggle in the Nineteenth century, occurred within the framework of old societal order and lacked a positive conception of an alternative society - a conception which would unite the people in common struggle on a wide regional and all-India plane and help to develop long term political movement. Most of these weaknesses were overcome in the Twentieth century when peasants’ discontent and their political activities became a part of the wider anti-Imperialist movement.

The Nineteenth century according to Bipin Chandra, witnessed a cultural and ideological struggle against the backward element on the one hand and the fast hezemonizing colonial culture and ideology on the other. This cultural ideological struggle represented by the socio-religious movements was an integral part of evolving the national consciousness. To arouse political consciousness, to inculcate Nationalism, to expose Colonial rule, to preach disloyalty, Indian journalists adopted clever strategems and distinctive style of writing to remain outside the reach of the law.

The foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1985, was a culmination of the process of political awakening that had its beginning in 1860's and 1870's and took a major leap forward in the late 1870's and early 1880's. At the outset, the early Nationalist leaders did not organise the mass movement against the British but they did carry out an ideological struggle against them. This is clear from the view expressed by R. C. Dutt in his presidential address that they do not wish for the absolute control of the administration of the country but they do demand an adequate means of placing their views before the government, before it

383 Bipin Chandra; op. cit., p. 44.
384 Ibid., p. 59.
385 Ibid., P. 87.
decides on questions affecting their welfare. It is also interesting to know that if Hume and other English liberals hoped to use the Congress as safety-valve, the Congress leaders hoped to use Hume as a lightening conductor and as later developments show, it was the Congress leaders whose hopes were fulfilled. On the whole Bipin Chandra says that the Indian intellectuals of the first half of the Nineteenth century had adopted a positive attitude towards British rule in the hope that Britain, the most advanced nation of its time would help modernize India. However, the process of disillusionment set in gradually after 1860's as the reality of social development in India failed to conform to their hopes. They clearly understood the fact that the essence of British Imperialism lay in the subordination of Indian economy to the British economy. Thus, despite all their achievements the Moderate Nationalists lacked faith in the common people, did not work among them and consequently failed to acquire any roots among them. Ultimately they failed to meet the demands of the new stage of the National Movement.

According to Bipin Chandra, from constructive moderation to political extremism, from terrorism to incipient socialism, from petitioning and public speeches to passive resistance and boycott, all had their origin in anti-partition of Bengal. Among the several forms of the struggle thrown up by the movement, it was the boycott of the foreign goods which met with the greatest visible success at the practical and popular level. This movement also involved with considerable success different forms of mass mobilization. On British side, the real purpose of the Morley- Minto reforms, was to divide the Nationalists' ranks and to

386 Bipin Chandra; op. cit., p. 71-81.
387 Ibid., p. 91.
388 Ibid., p. 135.
389 Ibid., p. 124-129.
check the growing unity among the Indians by encouraging the growth of Muslim communalism. Strongly connected with Minto's pro-Muslim policy was his plan to enlist the support of conservative forces represented by the princes and the landholders. Later on, Morley vetoed his project of drawing the provinces directly to the centre of imperial politics and administration. Several prominent Hindus and Zamindars of Bengal, East Bengal, Assam and the United Provinces made public announcements on their loyalties and disapprobation of sedition but in view of their isolation from the dominant political trend in the country, their profession of support contributed little to the strengthening of the cause of the government. The institution of separate electorate was one of the poisonous trees which was to yield a bitter harvest in later years. Giving a thought to the Extremists' movements out of India, Bipin Chandra underlines that if success and failure are to be measured in terms of the deepening of the national consciousness, the evolution and testing of the new strategies and methods of struggle, the creation of traditions of resistance, of secularism, of democracy and egalitarianism, than the Ghadarists certainly contributed their share to the Struggle for India's Freedom. Within India, the tremendous achievement of the Home-Rule Movement and its legacy was that it created a generation of ardent Nationalists who formed the backbone of the Nationalist Movement in the coming years when under the leadership of Mahatma, it entered its truly mass phase.

390 Bipin Chandra; op. cit., P. 142.

391 Ibid., p. 142.

392 Ibid., p. 155.

393 Ibid., p. 169.
With the entry of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian Freedom Struggle, it was Champaran, Ahmedabad and Khera that served as demonstrations of his style and methods of politics to the country at large. Gandhi came to possess as a result of these struggles, a surer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the masses as well as the viability of his own political style. At the same time, Gandhi earned the respect and commitment of many political workers who were impressed by his identification with the problems of ordinary Indians and his willingness to take up their cause. In addition to that, Bipin Chandra, while analysing the Non-Cooperation Movement, states that one obvious reason to Gandhi's decision to withdraw the Movement was that if violence occurred anywhere in India, it could easily be made out an excuse by the government to launch a massive attack on the Movement as a whole. Because thinking cautiously, it is necessary to remember that an all-India mass struggle against the British, and a serious reverse at this elementary stage could have led to a prolong period of demoralization and passivity. In reality the Non-Cooperation Movement demonstrated that it commanded the support and sympathy of vast sections of the Indian people.

The early Nationalists in the beginning paid relatively little attention to the question of workers despite the truly wretched conditions under which they existed at that time. The strong wave of working class actively came towards the end of the 1920's, this time spurned by the emergence of a powerful and clearly defined Left bloc in

394 Bipin Chandra; op. cit., p. 181.

395 Ibid., p. 193.

396 Ibid., P. 211.
the National Movement. This Left Wing in the late 1920's and 1930's contributed to the radicalization of the National Movement. The stream of National Struggle for Independence and the stream of struggle for social and economic emancipation of the suppressed and the exploited, began to come together. For example, the relationship of the peasant movements with the National Movement continued to be one of the vital and integral nature. In principle, Kisan-movement accepted and based itself on the ideology of Nationalism with the exception of some regions like Bihar\textsuperscript{397}. Bipin Chandra further states that Nationalism became the accepted creed of the Indian youth whose urges came to be symbolized by Jawahar Lal Nehru and Subhash Chander Bose\textsuperscript{398}. Thus politically and ideologically, the Congress as a whole was given a strong Left orientation. Nearly all the major political Indian leaders of the time, for example, Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal, had reacted favourably to the Russian Revolution during 1917-18, seeing in it the success of an oppressed people\textsuperscript{399}. One emerging trend from the growth of the Left Wing parties and ideas was the growing militancy within the National ranks.

The rising tide of Nationalism and democracy inevitably began to overflow from the political to the religious and social fields effecting the downtrodden castes and classes. This aspect of the National Movement is well illustrated by the Akali Movement in Punjab and the Temple Entry Movement in Kerala\textsuperscript{400}. The main weakness of the Temple Entry Movement and the Gandhian or Nationalist approach in fighting caste oppression was that even while arousing the people against untouchability they lacked a strategy for ending the caste system itself. The

\textsuperscript{397} Bipin Chandra ; \textit{op. cit.}, p. 342.

\textsuperscript{398} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 296.

\textsuperscript{399} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 395.

\textsuperscript{400} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 224.
strength of the Nationalist Movement in this respect was to find expression in the constitution of independent India which abolished caste inequality, outlawed untouchability and guaranteed social equality to all citizens irrespective of their castes\textsuperscript{401}. Ronald Inden however challenges two common held ideas— that caste organisation was there all along and that it was primarily responsible for the weakness of Indian politics\textsuperscript{402}. On the other hand it was the British policy of ‘Divide and rule’ which found expression in the announcement of Communal Award in 1932, despite the fact that Gandhi repeatedly stressed in Harizan campaign that this Movement was not a political movement to purify Hinduism and Hindu society\textsuperscript{403}.

Giving his observation on Communalism, Bipin Chandra frankly admits that it was deeply rooted in and was an expression of interests and aspirations of the middle-classes in a social situation in which opportunities for them were grossly inadequate. That it was the British policy of ‘Divide and rule’ by which every existing division of Indian society was encouraged to prevent the emerging unity of the Indian people\textsuperscript{404}. The Nationalist leadership too, failed to some extent in raising the religious, political consciousness. It is true that the Nationalist leadership made strenuous efforts to oppose communal political forces but was not able to evolve an effective line of action\textsuperscript{405}. Taking strength from the weakness of the Nationalist leaders, the communal leaders got a chance to come into the limelight during the Round Table Conferences, the communalists joined hands with the most reactionary sections of

\textsuperscript{401} Bipin Chandra; \textit{op. cit.}, p. 234.


\textsuperscript{403} Bipin Chandra; \textit{op. cit.}, P. 295.

\textsuperscript{404} Ibidi., p. 408.

\textsuperscript{405} Ibidi., p. 423.
British ruling classes and after 1937, Communalism started assuming a virulent, extremist form. The Congress on its part, relied too heavily on negotiations with the communal leaders and failed to evolve a viable and effective long term strategy to combat Communalism at the political, ideological and cultural levels. The Congress and its leadership have to be faulted on this account.

According to Bipin Chandra, the years of 1920-27, were a period of contradictory developments. With the beginning of the Non-Cooperation Movement, both Pro-Changers and No-Changers agreed that the Civil-Disobedience Movement was not possible immediately and that no mass movement could be carried on indefinitely or for a prolonged period. During the post Non-Cooperation period while the Swarajists and the Gandhian constructive workers were quite active in their own separate ways, there simultaneously prevailed a virulent factionalism and indiscipline in both the camps. It is remarkable to note that Gandhi's political style was such that even when opposing the Swarajist leaders he had full trust in their bonafides. The rapid spread of Civil-Disobedience Movement left the government with little choice but to demonstrate the force that lay behind its benevolent facade.

Giving his remarks on revolutionary terrorism, Bipin Chandra declares that the movement made an abiding contribution to the National Freedom Movement, their deep patriotism, courage, determination and a sense of sacrifice stirred the Indian people. That the Simon Boycott Movement provided the first taste of political action to the

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407 Ibid., p. 442.
408 Ibid., p. 236.
409 Ibid., p. 239.
410 Ibid., p. 259.
new generation of youth. This upsurge among the youth proved a fruitful ground for the germination and spread of the new radical ideas of Socialism that had began to reach on the Indian shores\textsuperscript{411}. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact, its timings, the motives of Gandhi in signing the Pact, his refusal to make the Pact conditional on the commutation of the death sentences of Bhagat Singh and his comrades, had generated considerable controversy and debate among the contemporaries and historians alike\textsuperscript{412}. This is despite the fact that Bhagat Singh had already abandoned his belief in terrorism and individual heroic actions before his arrest in 1929. He had turned to Marxism and come to believe that popular broad base mass movement alone could lead to a successful revolution\textsuperscript{413}. To sum up on this issue of terrorism, The best explanation has come from Tanika Sarkar, who says that though terrorism came nowhere in achieving its goal of countrywide armed revolution, it did contribute greatly to destabilise the general situation and inspiring a holy fear in the minds of the rulers\textsuperscript{414}.

In the period following the withdrawal of the Civil-Disobedience Movement, a major debate concerning the strategy to follow, commenced among the Nationalists. Nehru believed that the Indian National Movement had now reached a stage where there should be a permanent confrontation and conflict with the Imperialism till it was overthrown\textsuperscript{415}. On the other hand Gandhi felt that a large section of

\textsuperscript{411} Bipin Chandra \textit{op. cit.}, P. 262.

\textsuperscript{412} Ibid, p. 280.

\textsuperscript{413} Ibid., p. 255.

\textsuperscript{414} \textit{Indian Historical Review Vol. 4, No. 1-2} (New Delhi) P. 88.

\textsuperscript{415} Bipin Chandra \textit{op. cit.}, P. 313.
intelligentsia favoured parliamentary politics with which he was in fundamental disagreement. After such a conflicting situation, the Congress decided at Lucknow in early 1936, to fight the elections and with the formation of the ministries by the Congress, changed the entire psychological atmosphere in the country began to change. People felt that as if they were breathing the very air of victory and people’s power. True to the people’s expectations, the Congress ministry adopted in general a pro-labour stance. Moreover the right of the Indians exercising power, shattered another myth by which the British had held Indians in subjection; the Indians were not fit to rule.

As the National Movement grew in strength, Bipin Chandra states that princes were frequently called upon to play the role of ‘Bulwark of reaction’. This was due to the fact that the differences between the political conditions in the princely states and British India also go a long way in explaining the hesitation of the Congress to merge the Movement in the states with those in British India. Another strong point of the Nationalist Movement was that the individual capitalists like Jamna Lal Bajaj, who fully identified themselves with the Movement, went to jails and accepted the hardships, which were the lot of the Congressmen in the Colonial period. It is equally interesting to note that the Indian

416 Bipin Chandra; op. cit., p. 315.
417 Ibid., p. 324.
418 Ibid., p. 342.
419 Ibid., P. 374.
420 Ibid., p. 375.
Nationalists never saw the Congress as their class party or even as a party susceptible only to their influence. Thus the maturity of the Indian capitalist class in understanding the nature of the Congress and its refusal to abandon the side of Indian Nationalism even when threatened by the Left or by Imperialism, are some of the reasons which explain why on the whole, the Indian National Movement remained till independence under bourgeois ideological hegemony, despite strong contending trends within it.421

According to Bipin Chandra, the turning point in the Indian National Movement came when after the failure of the Cripps Mission, the Congress leaders realised that the time had come for a final assault on Imperialism. On the other hand, the government was also in no mood to negotiate with the Congress or wait for the Quit India Movement to be formally launched. The result was that a brutal and all out repression succeeded within a period of six or seven weeks in bringing about a cessation of the mass phase of the Struggle422. Although this Movement was suppressed but the great significance of this historic Movement was that it placed the demand for independence on the immediate agenda of the National Movement.

Analysing the situation during the World War Second, Bipin Chandra states that a few benefits of the War such as windfall gains and super profits for the capitalists and employment opportunities for the middle-classes were far outweighed by the ravages and the miseries wrought by it: for example, famine, inflation, scarcity, hoarding and black marketing plagued India423. Throughout the War years

421 Bipin Chandra; op. cit., p. 385.
422 Ibid., p. 463.
423 Ibid., p. 473.
and after, the Congress had a two fold task: structuring diverse classes, communities, groups and regions into a nation and securing independence from the British rulers for the emerging nation. While the Congress succeeded in building up a Nationalist consciousness sufficient to exert pressure on the British to quit India, it could not complete the task of welding the nation and particularly failed to integrate the Muslims into this nation. The turning point came when in the post-War scenario, once it was recognised that the British rule could not survive on the old basis for long, a general withdrawal of India, to be affected after a settlement had been reached on the modalities of transfer for power and the nature of the post-imperial relationship between British and India, became the overarching aim of the British policy makers. On the other hand, the acceptance of Partition by the Congress was based on the hope that once the British left, differences between the Hindus and Muslims would be patched up.

Thus to conclude, the National Movement based itself on a clear cut anti-Colonial ideology and the vision of a civil liberation, democratic, secular and socially radical society. The Indian economy was to be developed along independent and reliant lines. It was this vision combined with anti-Colonial ideology and a pro poor radical and socio-economic orientation that enabled the National Movement to base itself on the politically awakened and politically active people and to acquire the character of a popular peoples' movement. Thus, the above

424 Bipin Chandra; op. cit., p. 487.

425 Ibid., P. 491.

426 Ibid., p. 502.

427 Ibid., p. 528.
account verifies the fact that a so-called mother country stood for its own wicked designs is unlikely to serve the interests and welfare of any undertaken country and its people.

In this precious work entitled, Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India, Economic Policies of the Indian National Leadership, 1880-1905, Bipin Chandra highlights the fact that the entire national leadership was of the view that the real economic strength of the country lays in the individual development based upon Indian efforts and Indian capital428. However, in the contrary to their hopes, the Indian leadership was gradually convinced that the Indian industry had been so readily, so easily destroyed because the British had used their control over India to impose unfair competition in trade between the two countries. While the English market for the Indian manufacturers was progressively narrowed through prohibitions and extremely high tariffs, the Indian market was thrown wide open to the British manufacturers by imposing free trade on India429. In consequence to this biased policy, the Swadeshi Movement and the Boycott of foreign clothes were regarded by the Nationalists as weapons of effective protest and retaliation against the self-seeking manufacturers of Lancashire, who, it was alleged, used their political influence in England to thwart and cripple the growing cotton textile industry of India430. This is despite the fact that the opposition to the abolition of cotton duties was one of the few public issues taken up for agitation by the early Nationalist leaders, that was pursued consistently,


429 Ibid., p. 61.

430 Ibid., p. 135.
intelligently and unitedly for years. However, the final outcome of this struggle for them was completely frustrating. Step by step their point of view was ignored and rejected, and in the end the cotton duties were completely repealed. Taking this tariff policy of the government from the Indian point of view, it can be said beyond doubt that not only did the tariff policy of the government awaken Nationalism among the Indian leaders and enable them to see more clearly the political realities but it was in turn utilised by them to arouse and educate the people politically, to consolidate the growing Nationalist feelings among them, to bring the people all over the country close together and even train them in the arts of political agitation and struggle.

Focusing on the misery of the farming community, Bipin Chandra states that of all the problems of agriculture, the national leadership attached the greatest importance to the system of assessment of land revenues. It declared the land revenue policy of the government of India to be a major cause of the poverty and destitution of the peasants and of the backwardness of the agriculture. The study of B. R. Tomlinson also focuses on inappropriate state policies and actions, chiefly those of the Nineteenth century British imperial system in search of power and profits in its most important dependency. The beneficiaries of some of the land measures were the forerunners of the national bourgeoisie of dominant agrarians. By giving a logical argument, Bipin Chandra tries to

431 Bipin Chandra; op. cit., p. 226.

432 Ibid., p. 270.

433 Ibid., p. 397.

convince that the burden of land assessment should be reduced to a level at which the Ryot was left with a reasonable surplus for subsistence, for providing against bad seasons\(^{435}\). Ira Clein too charged the British government with mismanagement at the time of epidemic. She says that the dark and fatal passage of plague across the Indian sub-continent in the early Twentieth century and the inability of Western medicine to quickly hold its incursions symptomized disharmonies in the relationship between modernization, Indian society and ecology\(^{436}\). Giving his own views on the condition of agriculture, G. V. Joshi blames the overcrowding of agriculture for the unhealthy and excessive competition for land which in turn forced up the rents to the ruinous heights, led to sub-division of land.

Explaining the role of the landed Bengali gentry from 1800-1950, Ratnalekha Ray states that this community experienced over five or six generations dramatic changes in fortune. There emerged in first generation, families from widely varied background who owed their fortunes to the Permanent Settlement. In the next two generations they successfully integrated themselves into the rural world as an influential class of gentry with a well marked out life-style. The fixity of a revenue demand, the extension of cultivation and the perfected machinery of legal coercion contributed towards the development of high landlordism by mid-Nineteenth century. The end of the century, however brought with it a general crumbling on the basis of landed society which gathered momentum with the Great Depression and the Second World War forcing an increasing number among the last two generations to seek supplementary or alternative means of livelihood\(^{437}\).

\(^{435}\) Bipin Chandra; op. cit., P. 409.


Assessing the financial policy of the government of India, the Indian leadership was inexorably and inevitably led to demand popular Indian control over the public purse. If taxation in India was excessively high and expenditure was extravagant, than according to Bipin Chandra, obviously one of the factors responsible for the situation was the existing constitutional machinery of financial control which failed to perform its duties satisfactorily. N. K. Sinha who surveyed the realities of British revenue system in Bengal also concluded that what happened was not so much a social revolution as a displacement in the where estate changed hands. The old elite remained but in a subordinate position.

Taking the other aspect as to why the Indian agriculture suffered, Enn Ewing holds British-Indian responsible for paying the I. C. S. Officers very meagerly. She says that it is difficult to see whether it was pay, prospect or prejudice that was the chief reason for the poor state of I. C. S. morale but few could deny that service fallen in real terms and that many officers were gloomy not only about the working of a new constitution but also about the mounting campaign of political agitation.

Almost all the Nationalist leaders agree that the drain of wealth to England was the foundation head of all the economic evils in India. The high priest of this theory, Dada Bhai Naoroji wrote in 1880, that the most important question of the day is, how to stop the bleeding drain from India. The merit or good of every remedy will depend upon and

438 Bipin Chandra; op. cit., P. 628.


be rested by its efficacy in stopping this deplorable drain\textsuperscript{441}. Citing an example, Naoroji points out that the price of Indian exports declared at the port of export was the cost price and not the sale price including the exporters profits. Thus this drain theory had a deep impact on Dada Bhai Naoroji's understanding on nature and character of the British rule in India. It is interesting to note that Naoroji's remarks at the end of his paper on the 'poverty of India' that owing to this drain, 'the whole rule moves in a wrong, unnatural and suicidal groove\textsuperscript{442}'.

Thus to conclude, the early Nationalist Movement was a movement led by the Nationalist intellectuals, who adopted a capitalist outlook not because of any narrow class interests but because of their belief that capitalist development was the only path along which India could grow and prosperous economically\textsuperscript{443}. Moreover, the attitude that the Indian national leadership of the period under study adopted towards the British rule was ultimately determined by their understanding of its nature and purpose. The Nationalist intellectuals' economic agitation pressed all the other national leaders to put forward political demands as they came to realise that economic policies could best be influenced from the seats of economic power. Their demands for the reforms in administration and for a share in political power was their desire to make the administration a better instrument of economic development and welfare\textsuperscript{444}. Thus Bipin Chandra states that the success of the early Nationalists could be judged from the fact that they made the people of

\textsuperscript{441} Naoroji, Dada Bhai: Poverty and Un-British Rule in India, (London, 1901) p.216

\textsuperscript{442}Naoroji, Dada Bhai: Speeches and Writings, (Madras, No Date), p.671.

\textsuperscript{443} Bipin Chandra; op. cit., p. 753.

\textsuperscript{444}Ibid., p. 755.
India conscious of the bond of common economic interests and of the existence of a common enemy and thus help to weld them in a common Nationalism.\footnote{Ibid., p. 758.}