CHAPTER-9

SUMMING UP

The Cambridge School historians understand the Indian Nationalism as fragmented one and the Indian historians, unfortunately, while opposing them had followed the same pattern, that is an emphasis on divisive forces. In a stirrical approach, the Cambridge scholars state that the Indian Historiography is nothing but the monopoly of the Congress heritage and that the Indian contemporary history is just the continuation of the past history of pre-1947 era. It is a hard fact that the Cambridge Historiography gets its strength from the socio-economic and religio-political conditions of India after 1947. This School attacks simultaneously, the dual policies and programmes of the Congress in pre-independence and the post-independence phases.

Cambridge scholars like John Andrew Gallagher, Anil Seal, Judith Brown, C. J. Baker, Gordon Johnson and above all Percival Spear firmly believe in the theory of client-patron relationship between the Nationalists and the British-Indian government on the one hand and between the national, regional or local leaders on the other hand. The trustworthiness of the client-patron relationship has a little relevance because this is a universally accepted fact that the good and evil forces always go side by side and even today this inherited element of British legacy had not disappeared completely. These writers further points out that the successive doses of constitutional reforms had revitalised the otherwise languishing Indian politics in each phase. In contrary to this belief, the Indian scholars claim that until 1917, the British policy lacked a sense of direction and purpose. Because, according to them, the reforms of 1892 and 1909, did not attempt to shift the foundations of British rule in India but merely adjusted the British machinery to the changed
circumstances of the country. That the Indian Act of 1935 satisfied a very few, due to the fact that the British government had not really parted with the political and economic powers they wielded over the people of India. But instead, only the structure of the government was slightly changed. Thus it could be said without any hesitation that the conditions which had made the British rule possible in India were fast changing mainly as a result of that rule itself—but there was little conscious effort to direct these changes to a pre-conceived definite goal.

A careful analysis of the writings of the Cambridge scholars regarding the origin and development of Indian Nationalism reveal that they pursued a pre-existing ideology either for or against the Indian national spirit in order to explain the rising tide of the Indian Nationalism. Interestingly enough, one underlining fact of all the Cambridge school historians' writings is their inclination towards the British cause. They seemed to be biased and prejudiced against the Indian Freedom Movement. On the other hand, certain Indian scholars are equally responsible for blindly following the version of the British government because of their belief in the superiority of British culture and their inability to see the exploitative nature of the same.

Bipin Chandra has rightly accused some of the Nationalist leaders of using religious symbols and idioms in their speeches and writings, thus imparting communal overtones to the National Movement itself, instead of developing a revolutionary and secular ideology. Nevertheless the contribution of the Great Sons of the Mother India in the Freedom Struggle remained unparalleled, though some of them unconsciously, in their speeches employed language, imagery and symbolism derived exclusively from Hindu resources. Likewise the Aligarh Movement, right from its inception was a separatist movement. Syed Ahmad transformed the Muslims into a nation on the basis of religious solidarity and provided them with a separate ideology.
As far as the foreign policy of the British-India was concerned, it followed a policy, safeguarding the Imperial interests. On the other hand, the government of free-India adopted an independent foreign policy- a policy which was aimed at safeguarding the interests of India, based on the principle of peaceful co-existence.

It is true that the Freedom Movement was a constant interplay of contradictory forces- holds true about the making of modern India. But in making a synthesis of all such forces, one observes that it is not in a sense that one person or group is secular, progressive and Nationalists, while another person or group is reactionary and communal. Because, the simple reason is that the society and people living in it are too complex to permit such neat classifications. This is the lesson that most of the literature written during Freedom Struggle teaches us.