Chapter IX
Religion and Politics

The New Hindu Movement aimed at being a movement of social regeneration by giving new vitality to the religion of the Hindus. In Vivekananda's formulation, its aim was to create a new India by educating its women and the poorer classes and raising them by preaching the Vedantic divinity inherent in all creation. But in Bankim's formulation a political programme was added to the social; in his words the aim of the movement was to effect a "moral and political regeneration" of the land and raise a "kingdom of righteousness" (Dharmarajya). Also both these thinkers envisaged a cultural regeneration by harnessing the religious impulse to the rejuvenation of the arts and literature. In the next Chapter we shall sum up the nature of the impact of the New Hindu Movement on arts, literature etc. In this Chapter we shall concentrate our attention on what Bankim called 'political regeneration'.

The Factors leading to the Swadeshi Movement

That the Swadeshi Movement of 1905-11 owed considerably to the New Hindu Movement becomes clear if we study its programmes and the pronouncements of three of its greatest leaders — Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950), Bepin Chandra Pal (1858-1932) and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). Before discussing those programmes and pronouncements we must note that they were
direct offshoots of the ideas of Bankim and, to a lesser extent, those of Vivekananda. It is relevant here to examine the claim of other factors and other personalities to count as the 'makers' of the movement in the sense that these thinkers were.

(1) The first factor is patriotism and its glorification. The patriotic impulse which found its ultimate fulfilment in 1905 was a direct consequence of the introduction of English education in India and had found its expression in poetry as early as the 1820's, when Derozio published what was probably the first patriotic poem in praise of India. Bankim's Bande Mataram, which served as the 'Mantra' of the Swadeshi Movement, actually came last in a series of moving poems. To put the argument more baldly, the outburst of patriotic sentiment we designate by the expression Swadeshi Movement, had its origin in the cult of patriotism that had come in vogue in the early years of the Hindu College (founded in 1817) and had gathered momentum during the period 1817-1905; the New Hindu contribution to that cult did not begin to make its impact felt before the publication of Bankim's Anandamath, which was published in 1882; thus, so runs the argument, the movement of 1905 could hardly be called a New Hindu achievement.

The argument, plausible as it seems, fails to bear closer scrutiny. The patriotism of 1905 had little resemblance to that in its pre-Bankim phase. This becomes clear from the analysis given of the nature of the two varieties of patriotism by Bipin Chandra Pal, one of the foremost leaders of the Swadeshi Movement.
Bipin Chandra's article was written in April 1905, just four months before the beginning of the Movement (August 1905) and is thus of the highest importance in throwing light on the matter. As regards patriotism of the pre-Bankim variety Bipin Chandra writes:

"There was patriotism of a kind among the educated classes thirty or forty years back. It was, however, in spite of its sincerity and exuberance, something positively more outlandish than indigenous, and decidedly more sentimental than real. English literature, European and American history, stories of the fights for freedom among western nations, these were the principal sources of our patriotic inspiration in those days... In the name of India we loved Europe, and therefore, we fed our fancy not upon Indian but European ideals. We loved the abstraction we called India, but, yes, we hated the thing it actually was. Our patriotism was not composed of our love for our own history, our own literature, our own arts and industries, our own customs and institutions, nor even was it allied to any affection for the masses of our people, even as they are... our love for our people was something like the pious love of the Christian missionaries for the heathens, for whose salvation they are so anxious." 1

This according to Bipin Chandra was patriotism in its pre-Bankim phase. What then was the nature of the "New Patriotism" which was in the air in 1905 and whence did it originate?

According to the same writer:

"The one great good that the social and religious reactions of the last twenty years have done is to cure us, to a very large extent, of this old, this unreal, this imaginary and abstract patriotism. Love of India now means a loving regard for the very configurations of this continent,... a love for the flora and fauna of India, an affectionate regard for its natural beauties,... a love for its sweating, swarthy populations, unshod and unclad;... a love for its languages, literature, its philosophies, its religions, a love for its culture and civilisation; - this is the characteristic of this

Jugajatri Prakashak Ltd., 1951.
new patriotism. And we owe it, it must be said, to a very large extent to the religious and social reactions of the last twenty years."1 (emphasis added).

The only comment we need to make upon this passage is that Bipin Chandra, who was a Brahmo, and could hardly be called a friend to the New Hindu Movement, characterised that Movement as the "social and religious reactions of the last twenty years." But the admission that the New Patriotism was largely a creation of those reactions, coming as it does from a Brahmo, carries added conviction and confutes the view that the political movement of 1905 owed its origin to the sort of patriotic sentiment that began to gain currency since the foundation of the Hindu College.

(2) The second factor is the long series of political agitations that started with Rammohan himself, were taken up with enthusiasm on almost a nation wide scale through the labours of Surendranath Banerjee, and culminated in the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Actually Surendranath was the fourth great leader of the Swadeshi Movement apart from the three we have already mentioned. But without the role of Surendranath and that of the Congress (in its pre-Gandhian phase), in the nationalist movement it may be asserted that the Swadeshi Movement derived little inspiration from their work. The Congress in those days was an upper middle class organisation protesting its loyalty to the Government during each of

1. Ibid. pp. 19-20
2. It should be mentioned that under this title he also included the Arya Samaj Movement, Theosophy and the preachings of Sasadhar and Krishnaprasanna Sen.
its session with a constancy that was as pathetic as it was wearisome. In the words of Aurobindo:

"The Congress in Bengal is dying of consumption: annually its proportions sink into greater insignificance; its leaders, the Bannerjis, Banerjis and Lalmohan Ghoshes, have climbed into rarefied atmosphere of the Legislative Council and lost all hold on the imagination of the young men. The desire for a nobler and more inspiring patriotism is growing more intense." ¹

These words occurred in Aurobindo's memorial essays on Bankim, written shortly after the latter's death in April 1894, in which Aurobindo asserted that the sort of "more inspiring patriotism" of which he was speaking was to be derived from Bankim's writings. We should only add that neither 'boycott' nor 'Swadeshi' - nor 'national education', nor 'militant nationalism' - in other words, not a single feature of the 'Swadeshi Movement was foreshadowed in the sort of political work the Congress in those days was engaged in. And, as for 'patriotism' the Congress brand of patriotism was, at its best, the 'outlandish patriotism' of which Bipin Chandra spoke, and at its worst, it was what the same writer described as 'loyal patriotism'.²

(3) The third factor is the Hindu Mela founded by Naba Gopal Mitra in 1867 and which held annual sessions at least up to 1880.³ Naba Gopal also founded a journal named "National Paper", in which he described the Hindus as a 'nation'. The Mela itself was designed to unite Hindus on a social plane by

¹ Quoted in Dr. R.C. Majumdar's History of the Freedom Movement in India. (p. 373, Vol. I) from Aurobindo's "Essay on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee."
² Bipin Chandra Pal : Swadeshi & Swaraj : See 'Loyal Patriotism' (pp. 24-29). This article was written in February 1905, i.e., six months before the Swadeshi Movement came into being.
³ Jogesh Chandra Bagal : Muktir Sandhane Bharat : p. 88.
preaching self-help and patriotism and patronising Vernacular literature and indigenous crafts and industries.

It cannot be denied that the Hindu Mela was the first institution to foster the Swadeshi idea and thus to foreshadow the Swadeshi Movement in so far as the encouragement to indigenous industries was an essential part of the latter. But recent writers have been led or rather misled by the terms 'nation' and 'Hindu nation' to exaggerate its importance. It is not able that the Mela was essentially a social gathering as the organisers themselves were quick to emphasize:

"The Indian association in political affairs and this Hindu Mela in matters of unity in a general sense has become like straw to us in a drowning state." 2 This separation of 'political affairs' from 'unity in a general sense' is significant. To view the Hindu Mela as a precursor of the Swadeshi Movement would be unhistorical. It is extremely doubtful whether the Mela ever attracted any more than a handful of spectators in or around Calcutta. Admittedly, both Rabindranath Tagore and Bipin Chandra Pal, two of the leaders of the Swadeshi Movement, have referred to the Mela in terms of affection as due to a sweetly cherished event of adolescence, but they have furnished no evidence that it is possible to trace in the Mela the first murmurings of the great political upsurge that convulsed Bengal in 1905. At least one contemporary observer, Nabin Chandra Sen, who was reckoned a great 'national' poet of the day refers to the Mela as the place where he made his acquaintance with Rabindranath Tagore, but is absolutely silent on its achievements.

1. Ibid. P. 91.
2. Ibid. P. 92.
The fourth factor is the influence of Tilak, the Chapekar brothers and Vasudeo Balwant Phadke (1845-83). This alone is the most substantial factor apart from the teachings of Bankim and Vivekananda that may be said to have moulded the Swadeshi Movement. Tilak's "No Rent Campaign" of 1896, was the first genuinely nationalist movement in India and foreshadowed the boycott as nothing else did. The Ganapati festival as organised by him in 1893, with overt nationalist overtones was an indication of similar festivals in Bengal during the Swadeshi days. The Shivaji festival organised annually since 1895 in Maharashtra was taken up in Bengal and was the occasion of Tagore's celebrated poem on the Maratha hero. In all these Tilak profoundly influenced the Swadeshi Movement.

The cult of political murder and political robbery which were the most obvious features of the 'militant nationalism' associated with the Swadeshi Movement was a legacy of the Chapekars, who committed the first political murder (1897) in modern India and of Phadke, who committed the first political robbery.

Bankim as "Prophet of Nationalism"

The ideas of Bankim which supplied the Swadeshi Movement with an ideology should be considered under four heads: (1) Criticism of political 'mendicancy', (ii) Historical consciousness regarding the Hindus' political prowess in the past and their possible resurgence in the future, (iii) A new conception of patriotism with its place in religion,
(iv) The notion of Dharmarajya. These four formed the ideology of the Swadeshi Movement, though some of them were misunderstood by the agitators who made a mockery of Bankim's lofty conception.

Regarding political 'mendicancy' it must be remembered that it was on this ground that during the nineties the Congress (in those days run by loyalists like W.C. Banerjee, Surendranath Banerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta and the like) was judged to be utterly unfitted to give the country the proper guidance in political matters. The Extremist Party within the Congress was formed with the specific aim of replacing that policy; and the history of the Congress till 1907 was largely the history of a tussle between the Moderate and Extremist wing as to which policy— that of mendicancy or that of courageous political action— should prevail in the Congress. In Maharastra and Bengal, the initiative in every political move during this period was with the Extremists. The Moderates ultimately won in the sense that the Extremists were ousted from the Congress after the fiasco of Surat. But even as they won, the importance of the Congress dwindled, and initiative in politics remained with the partyless followers of the extremist line, till a reconciliation was patched up in 1916. It was an uneasy reconciliation and could hardly last. The rise of Mahatma Gandhi clinched the issue in favour of extremism though on considerably different lines. In the history of the Congress as well as in the history of the national struggle in India, the criticism of the policy of 'mendicancy' is therefore of the highest importance. This criticism started with Bankim.
Bankim's criticism was couched in two satirical pieces within the years 1880-1885. One of them referring to the Local self-Government Act of 1884, and the other being a scornful denunciation of the sort of politics pursued by the English-educated Indians of the time. The essays, it is true, preceded the Congress by a few years but as the Congress only pursued, on an all-India scale, the sort of agitation made popular by petitioning bodies such as the British India Association (founded in 1851), the Indian Association (1876) and other organisations of the same type, they applied to its policies as much as they did to those of the earlier bodies.

In the Lokarahasya piece Bankim satirizes an English-educated Baboo gloating over the charity of local self-Government made by the administration of Lord Ripon. The Baboo is clad in a dress which is the most monstrous Anglo-Bengali hybrid imaginable in sartorial fashion. He speaks English with a pertinacity that refuses to give way except under the strain of imminent strangulation. The mythical monkey-hero, Hanuman, with whom he converses on the merits of self-Government at first takes him for a fellow citizen, an inhabitant of Kishkinda, the monkey-land. But on being informed as to his Bengali descent, and his grotesque pride at his English masters belonging to a race of "free-born" citizens he is provoked to much merriment mingled with not a little scorn. The Baboo mouths the words "Independence" and "Liberty" with considerable unsavour.
but in the same breath glories in his British masters"bestowing in their bountifulness, some part of the country's administration" on the worthy hands of politically conscious Indians like him as a sort of recognition of their love for liberty and self-Government. Hanuman finds some difficulty in reconciling the two sentiments- the Baboo's proud assertion of self-Government and his no less proud enumeration of his master's bestowal of the same on his worthy hands. Much amused, he remarks, that the Baboo's notion of self-Government strikes him as being self-Government of the monkey-land. The Baboo pities Hanuman on his failure to comprehend his lofty political notions and actually says so with some disdain. Hanuman who understands perfectly well who of them is actually in need of pity offers the Baboo a large supply of bananas and asks him to a generous helping. The Baboo does so with alacrity, and is no less well pleased with the toothsome monkey-gift of bananas than he was earlier with Ripon's gift of local self-Government.

This is violent satire, but Bankim's comedic talent, which was of the highest order dished the satire under the garb of uproarious fun; and his own spokesman being a monkey he left it to the reader's intelligence to infer that the contemporary political agitations led by the anglicised Indians of his time, were, in his opinion, so many instances of monkey politics. In the Kamalakanta piece, however, he took care to make the satire more biting and to render his meaning perfectly obvious. In this piece he compares the political agitations of the day
to the manoeuvre's of a famished dog who, crouching before a ten-year old boy at his meal, gives him many piteous looks of supplication and prayer. As the boy is eating a rather hearty meal he is not averse to rewarding the servile dog with a well-sucked bony remnant of a fish. After this initial success of his "political agitation", the dog is induced to make a "bold move"; which takes the shape of a stealthy approach nearer to the boy's dish, followed by a renewal of the same piteous looks. Again the boy is moved to pity and to reward the dog—this time with a handful of rice. But at this juncture appears the boy's mother, who is so much incensed at the dog's audacity to sit so near her son and dine from almost the same plate with him, that she picks up a piece of brick and throws it at the insolent dog. The politician is however roused to the gravity of the situation in time and all but defeats her move by beating a hasty and political retreat.

It is unnecessary to add that this was perhaps the most violent satire ever directed at the sort of political agitations mounted by the Anglicised Baboos who, within a year or two, were going to form the Congress to pursue that servile political line from a national platform. Its lessons went home, and Aurobindo, as early as 1894, was to notice its implication—the need for a "surer and more inspiring patriotism" to "hold the imagination" of the younger generation—in the columns of the Bombay journal 'Induprakash.' And in 1907, he wrote:

"(Bankim) first of our great publicists, understood the hollowness and inutility of the method of political agitation which prevailed in his time and exposed it with merciless satire in his Lokarahasya and Kamalakanter Dantar ..."
He saw that force from above must be met by a mightier reacting force from below, - the strength of repression by an insurgent national strength. He bade us leave the canine method of agitation for the leonine. 1

(2) The second great contribution of Bankim to the Swadeshi Movement was the awakening of that historical consciousness which was on the look out for evidence to represent Hindu history or the history of a political or rather martial race. Strictly speaking, Bankim did not make any original historical discovery apart from his conception of India's pre-Buddhistic age as described in his 'Krishnacharitra'. As we saw in an earlier Chapter that work was devoted to the study of a lofty Kshatriya ideal expressing itself in a tale of conquest leading to the establishment of a "kingdom of righteousness." But, this, though Bankim's most original contribution to Hindu history, was not the only nor even the most important when viewed merely as an essay on the martial achievements of the Hindus. For such achievements, Bankim drew mainly upon British as well as Muslim sources, and with unerring instinct, extracted from what was, to all appearances, a hopelessly hostile array of facts narrated by hostile witnesses, a wealth of information regarding the martial glory of the Hindus.

In Chapter-II we discussed Bankim's essay entitled "The Infamy of India" published in the first number of Janga Darshan. We saw there how the negative evidence of the Muslim conquest

of India being spaced over five hundred years was used by him to prove the martial glory of the Hindus. In his view the length of the time span over which the conquest of India was achieved by the Muslims indicated the superiority of the Hindu arms over the 'invincible Arab legions'. But apart from the facts mentioned by Bankim, this essay mapped out a definite outlook which would rescue Hindu history from being misrepresented by British writers from whose writings in the first place Hindus had to know of such a thing as their past history. Elphinstone, for example, had noticed the length of the time span required for the Muslim conquest of India, but in his view this was due to the Hindus' deepseated attachment to their religion. Bankim pointed out that if this were the reason, the conquest would have remained an impossibility even when it did occur, because the attachment to religion was as strong in the 19th century (not to mention the 12th) as in earlier times.

This was a wholly new approach to the history of the Hindus, who, according to most European writers, were an 'effeminate' race, but Bankim did not stop here. He pointed out that the slur of effeminacy was uncalled for as the decline of the Hindus was quite explicable from other causes which did not include any deficiency in their martial fibre. The causes were in the first place the total absence, in the whole of Sanskrit literature, of any reference to love of Independence as distinct from martial prowess as an end in itself; in the second place, the non-existence amongst Hindus of any desire to found a national kingdom. Thus in India, it was only the
kings who sent soldiers into the battle-field; the people themselves never took arms either for love of Independence or to found a kingdom. There were three notable exceptions to this rule. The Rajputs of Mewar were fired by a spirit of Independence with the result that they remained invincible even to Mogul arms. The Marathas and the Sikhs sought to found a kingdom each, and they succeeded magnificently. In other words, when martial prowess, which amongst the Hindus was of the highest order was conjoined with love of independence and the desire to found a national kingdom, the Hindus performed feats which did not fall short of similar feats performed by other nations. Thus with a single stroke, - with a change in outlook as to how well-established facts of history should be viewed, Bankim gave Hindu history a significance that was totally new and that could be used as a mighty weapon of national self-consciousness.

It must be asserted that, apart from this new historical outlook - this way of viewing the chronicle of a whole millennium of defeats as in no way detracting from the Hindus' martial prowess - Bankim was not a pioneer in the field of writing or rewriting individual chapters of that chronicle to represent the heroic fibre of the Hindu race. Colonel Tod's "Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan" (1829) which was published many years before the publication of *Nanak Japam*, had already become a classic with English-educated Hindus. But it was Bankim who was primarily responsible for quickening the historical consciousness in Bengal, partly through essays like "The Infamy of India" but chiefly through the medium of his...
historical novels. His novels chronicled stories of Rajput chivalry and tales of heroic exploits performed by Hindu heroes. These were, of course, works of imagination, but so great a historian as Sir Jadunath has testified to the accuracy of their historical setting, if not to the accuracy of the facts described. These novels were immensely popular, so much so indeed that following in Bankim's footsteps, a whole line of novelists appeared in Bengal, amongst them Ramesh Chandra Dutt whose "Maharastra Jivan Prabhat" and "Rajput Jivan Sandhya" narrated respectively the story of Sivaji and of Rana Pratap.

It must be admitted that the device of awakening the historical consciousness of a people by means of historical romances was not without its pitfalls, and a palpable one in the Swadeshi days was the idealization of Siraj-ad-daulh a national hero, thanks to the labours of romance writers. But they gripped the imagination of the people. Thus, Bipin Chandra Pal, speaking of the impression made upon his mind by the reading of Durgeshnandini, Bankim's first-historical novel wrote:

"Durgeshnandini quickened my earliest patriotic sentiments. Our sympathies were all entirely with Birendra Singha and the court scene where the Muslim invader was stabbed through his heart by Vimala (widow of Birendra Singha) made a profound impression on my youthful imagination."

Bipin Chandra's testimony may be read in the context of Sir Jadunath's summing up of the influence of Bankim's historical novels in 19th century Bengal. Sir Jadunath, quoting from a review published in the Times Literary Supplement (June 30, 1945) which was discussing Prof. Gooch's views.

regarding historical novels used the following assertion of the latter to indicate Bankim's influence:

"Historical fiction (according to Dr. Gooch) has played an active part in reviving and sustaining the sentiment of nationality, which for good or evil has changed the face of Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries."

In Sir Jadunath's view, Bankim's historical novels went to show that this opinion of the scholars of English was "rigourously and absolutely true".

3) The third contribution of Bankim was a new conception of patriotism arrived at by defining its place in religion and rendering it a most powerful sentiment expressible in great poetry as well as evocative of the highest idealism. Bankim was in fact the maker of what Bipin Chandra called the "New Patriotism" of the Swadeshi days, and Aurobindo proclaimed him as such. But since Aurobindo coined the phrase "religion of patriotism" to denote Bankim's great service to his country, historians for over fifty years have been parrotting that phrase with endless repetition indicating that Bankim preached the 'religion of nationalism'. In actual fact, Bankim not only never used the word 'nationalism', but was very careful to distinguish his brand of 'patriotism' from the western variety and would have his patriotism governed by religion, rather than make his religion synonymous with his patriotism. It is time one should let Bankim speak for himself, rather than make others - even if those others include so worthy a disciple as Aurobindo - do so.

If patriotism was Bankim's religion, then the humanistic exposition of Hinduism, of which we gave an account in the earlier Chapters could hardly have been that, for no man, within his senses, preaches two different religions simultaneously. The expounders of Bankim's thought have been led astray by the fact that he made his patriotism a part of his religion; they, on the other hand, have confounded the part with the whole. To understand the true import of Bankim's teachings we must view the part in relation to the whole, and for that, we must turn to his systematic exposition of religion as given in Dharmatattwa, rather than begin with Anandamath, as most writers have hitherto done.

As noted earlier Bankim's conception of religion required the highest development of all the human faculties - physical, intellectual, active and aesthetic - in a state of balance which was to be attained by governing the other faculties by Bhakti (i.e., devotion to that God who pervaded all creation). Now, of the active faculties, love came only second to Bhakti and 'its highest' development was the love that embraced all humanity, nay all creation. But humanity included one's own country besides including one's own self, one's family and one's kindred, and the development of the faculty of love would require love for all these smaller portions of humanity to the extent that those smaller loves did not militate against love of humanity. Also, of these smaller loves, love of one's country ranked as the highest, and was one's best
means to serve humanity by making that love God-directed — in other words, making it self-less (Nishkam) and pure. This love of one's country would extend up to laying down one's life for it, but never in bringing evil to other countries, except possibly in its defence from the attack of those other countries. It was in this sense alone that Bankim's patriotism was religious. Bankim was not preaching the gospel of the 'religion of nationalism'; he was only defining the place of nationalism (his own word was 'Swadesh Priti' 'love of one's country') in religion, which was a very different thing from preaching nationalism as a sort of religion.

To render his meaning perfectly obvious Bankim contrasted his notion of patriotism with the 'religion of patriotism' as understood in the West. In the words of the Guru, the mouthpiece of his systematic exposition:

"The conception of patriotism I have expounded to you is not the patriotism of Europe. European patriotism is a monstrous sin. The teaching of European patriotism consists in enjoining on its adherents the duty of exploiting other societies for the benefit of their own; of glorifying one's own land at the expense of others. It was this terrible patriotism of Europe that led to the destruction of the primitive races of America. Would to God that such patriotism may never be taught to the inhabitants of India."

From the above exposition it should be clear that Bankim's patriotism was a most austere conception satisfying the strictest canons of morality and forestalling modern criticism by imposing on it limitations so as to make it perfectly consistent with the claims of humanity. It was

1. Bankim Chandra : Dharmatattwa : Chapter-XXI and XXIV.
2. Ibid. Chapter- XXIVa.
3. Ibid. Chapter- XXIV.
religious in the sense that religion was to guide it and include it as a part — and a most important part at that but never in the sense that patriotism was to be a substitute for religion. Bankim's Anandamath, which came to be held as a sort of holy scripture in the Swadeshi days, has to be read in the light of this conception of patriotism, and a close reading of that book will convince anyone that, in that work, Bankim was not formulating a conception of patriotism that violated the limitations discussed in Dharmatattwa, but merely restating the earlier results in the language of poetry and eloquence, and invoking the muse of tragedy for the vindication of a sentiment that had deeply touched his soul.

The story of Anandamath is simple. It is the story of Satyananda, the leader of a band of monks who have dedicated their lives to the service of the mother-land in the anarchical days following the battle of Plassey and preceding the Governor-Generalship of Warren Hastings. The Nawab is yet the nominal ruler of Bengal, but his rule consists in allowing Reza Khan, an official deputed by the English to bleed his people white by extorting a land which was exorbitant by any standard but, at this moment, when a terrible famine has gripped the land, was nothing less than monstrous. Satyananda and his monastic band, who have vowed life-long celibacy and dedicated themselves to the deliverance of their motherland from Mohammedan misrule have raised the banner of rebellion
to fight the Moslems and have actually freed the northern part of Bengal by achieving two remarkable victories against soldiers sent by Warren Hastings. Satyananda is under the impression that the English soldiers are mere auxiliaries to the Nawab's battalions. But even as he has completed the deliverance of a part of Bengal, his mysterious teacher brings him enlightenment as to the real political situation in his country. He tells him of the invincibility of the English; of their supremacy over the Nawab; of their intention to take over the administration from the hand of the worthless Muslim ruler; of the impossibility of Hindu restoration before Hindu society, bogged in ignorance and superstition, has acquired sufficient knowledge of matter and the physical world from the English to enable itself to make its own spiritual knowledge shine forth in purity and splendour.

This is heart-breaking news to Satyananda. His rebellious spirit refuses to take up the life of meditation his teacher proposes for his remaining years. He refuses to lay down arms before his work is finished. But he is now alone. His most valiant commanders have disappeared—Bhabananda, by sacrificing himself in the battle-field to atone for his hopeless and sinful passion for another man's wife, and Jivananda, by retiring to a life of meditation and chastity guided by his heroic wife. A terrible gloom comes upon Satyananda. Slowly, he is led by the teacher to a Himalayan retreat leaving his life's work unfinished. The curtain of Renunciation shuts off the glorious image of Restoration.
It has been suggested that in Anandamath, Bankim proposed a new cult— the cult of worshipping the Motherland as the Goddess Kali, and propitiating that terrible deity by sacrificing Englishmen (and Moslems) at her altar. This is certainly the most monstrous perversion of the teaching of an author, who even in his novel has taken pains to insert a discourse on the relation between religion and patriotism. The deity of Satyananda and his disciples is not Kali, but Vishnu— not indeed in His aspect of God of Love but without any suggestion of blood-thirstiness. Satyananda worships Vishnu as God of war—the war against evil and against demons who symbolise evil; but Satyananda is careful to emphasize that his brand of Vaishnavism is only half the religion, for religion in its completeness must comprehend both aspects of Divinity— that of love as well as that of fight against evil.

As for worship of the motherland as Kali, Bankim has given clear indication that, in his view, that worship must not outstrip the worshipper's pre-eminent duty to his God. The Mother is not God, She is a Child-goddess in the lap of Vishnu— eclipsing, indeed, in her radiance, the other gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, but meriting her sons' worship only as the nursling of Vishnu and in no other capacity. She is not Kali, not at least till the deprivations

1. "Chaitanyadeva's Vishnu is only Love in-carnate. Santan's Vishnu is only Might. Both of us are Vaisnavas, but half-vaishnavas." Anandamath, Part II, Section IV.
of foreigners and the failure of her unworthy sons to protect her from molestation, have led her reveal in her person that terrible Epiphany. Originally she was the mother of the Universe, incomparable in her beauty, complete in the fullness of her limbs and perfectly happy in the abundance of her wealth. She will again assume that shape, but with this difference that, with her sons rising to the duty of protecting her motherly form from molestation by invaders, her splendour will grow, and, whereas, in her original form she only radiated peace and wealth, in her transformation she will inspire victory and knowledge, and beauty and assume a shape that will be glorious, triumphant, radiant.

What then is the teaching of Anandamath? Is it an apology for blood thirsty nationalism in the garb of religion? Is it a tract of jingo patriotism impressing on its readers the necessity of slaughtering Moslems and Englishmen in order to found a Hindu kingdom? Anandamath is a work which is primarily a product of the literary art and only secondarily concerned with questions of religion and politics. Anandamath is a product of the tragic muse, dealing

1. Brahmachari said, "See, what Mother has become. Mahendra said trembling: "Kali" Brahmachari: Kali - Veiled in darkness. She has become a destitute, so she is nude. To-day our country has been reduced to a cremation ground. So Mother is wearing a garland of skulls. So her Shiva is lying under her feet - Anandamath, Part I, Section XI.
indeed with the theme of Hindu restoration, but demonstrating
the futility of sheer patriotism, however lofty, to attain
that end; it sings the glory of patriotism but only when
patriotism subserves the cause of religion and is not made
a substitute for it; it glorifies Bhakti even above laying
down one's life; it finds fault with even so austere a
character as Satyananda for securing money by plundering the
agents of tyranny; it deals death, even if that death be of
his own seeking, to Bhabananda for his surrender to his
hopeless passion; it sends Jivananda to life-long exile and
asceticism; even if that exile and that asceticism be made
bearable by the companionship of his heroic wife; it
conjures up the vision of the Mother - the Mother that is
triumphant, radiant, glorious - but conjures up, withal, the
'purification by fire' her sons will have to undergo, before
they are made worthy of that vision.

It must be admitted that this interpretation of
Anandamath and its conception of patriotism as a lofty
emotion inspiring one to dedicate one's best in the service
of the country, was not its only legacy to the Swadeshi
Movement: by a strange misreading of its meaning it was
harnessed to aims which were far less admirable. It is true
that the best patriotic poetry of the Swadeshi days - that
of Rabindranath, Dwijendralal, Rajani Kanta and Atul Prasad -
derived its tone from Anandamath, which, in the words of
Aurobindo, for the first time revealed the Motherland.

2. Vide last Chapter.
"as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, - as a great Divine and Maternal power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart."

To show this, it is only necessary to compare the patriotic poems of Hem Chandra Banerjea, with their stilted rhetoric juxtaposing the glories of India against those of Greece and Rome, with the poems of these later authors to understand the transmutation caused in the Bengali heart by such a song as 'Bande Mataram'. Hem Chandra set out to sound the bugle of eloquence but ended with the mock-heroic 'shinga'; whilst, these later poets, - shunning eloquence and tuning their modest bamboo-flute with the cadence of paddy-fields, rivers, and the trees of Bengal produced a crop of ageless songs. Years ago Rangalal had sung a truly martial song but had failed to enlist a single soldier in the war of independence. But when these later authors, in whose hands even martial themes were denuded of militarism, put forth songs of prayer and worship, their words took wings, and, all on a sudden, a nation was born. This prayer and this poetry-these were Anandamath's best legacy to the Swadeshi Movement.

But side by side with this, the Swadeshi fighters sought in Anandamath a meaning that was quite different and a counsel of political action that was little short of the cult of head-hunting. Secret societies were formed in the model of the Abbey of Bliss; political robberies were committed in the manner of the one committed by Bhabananda
and his followers; political murders were organised by those secret societies though the novel itself never mentioned such murders even by way of condemnation. As for political robbery, the mysterious teacher of Satyananda had expressly stated this as a point against Satyananda's notion of patriotism. All this was a perversion of Anandamath's teaching.

(4) Bankim's fourth contribution to the Swadeshi Movement was the notion of Dharmarajya (kingdom of righteousness) of which we gave an account in an earlier Chapter while discussing the contents of *Krishnacharitra*. As we saw in that Chapter, Krishna's according to Bankim, was the guiding hand that used Yudhistira as an instrument for the founding of a 'Commonwealth of righteousness' by winning the Kurukshetra war. That this commonwealth was not a fact of remote history but that Bankim very much wanted it to be realised in contemporary India, is clear from his reference to Krishna's work of national regeneration as a sort of rebuttal of contemporary Indian reformers' argument that social reform was the most pressing need of 19th century India. To quote Bankim's exact words:

"The mission of Krishna is the Moral and Political regeneration, preaching of Religion and the establishment of a Righteous Kingdom. If this can be done, social reform will be automatic, if it does not so happen, social reform will never be possible. So, the ideal man did not try to be a Malabari."

Thus Dharmarajya was Bankim's utopia, the goal of Hindu restoration conceived in Satyananda's mysterious teacher's concluding peroration. In the above extract it is explicitly stated as an ideal of the future and not merely as a sort of romantic glorification of a remote past.
What was the shape of this Commonwealth? Actually, Bankim never gave a full-length blueprint of his Dharmarajya. It was not a state, such, for example, as the one portrayed in Bhudeb’s “Swapnalabda Bharatbarser Itihas”. In fact, Bankim’s Dharmarajya was not a Utopia in the sense Bhudev’s Hindu Kingdom was one. Bankim’s picture carefully left out details and confined itself to the discussion of the righteousness of a war of restoration (such as Kurukshetra war) and the righteousness of a scheme of legislation (such as the legislation prescribed according to Krishna’s advice by Bhisma for Yudhistira’s benefit). Bhudev gave a full-length picture of Hindu monarchy, but Bankim spoke of a war of restoration and of a scheme of legislation. If Bhudev’s picture was that of a Utopia, Bankim’s was that of the landmarks that separated the Utopia from the reality of India under British rule.

In the event, this deficiency in detail was a virtue rather than a defect. In the Swadeshi Movement, the idea of a Dharmarajya served the same purpose as Mahatma’s Ramrajya did in later years. Both these conceptions had the merit of vagueness so necessary in a political struggle that sought to unify men and groups of the most diverse persuasions. Dharmarajya was a symbol of restoration - not an outline of the restored kingdom as that of Bhudev, which by the very definiteness of its structure was apt to repel the majority of English-educated Indians by its suggestion of going back to the middle ages. Dharmarajya was an idea with a ring of
universality in it; the war that was to precede it invested it with all the romance surrounding a war of Independence; and the universality of the idea served to give it a meaning that rendered the war something more than a mere fight with the British.

Vivekananda and the Swadeshi Movement

Vivekananda's contribution to the Swadeshi Movement was in the direction of (i) emphasizing the idea of restoration first conceived in Bankim's *Anandamath* and *Krishnacharitra* and (ii) restating the idea of Dharmarajya - though Vivekananda never used that word - by preaching India's special mission in the world as that of a religious teacher. Both these ideas were directly connected to Bankim's notion of 'Dharmarajya', but Vivekananda's preaching gave added significance to the notion by his concept of 'aggressive Hinduism', of which a foretaste was given in his success in carrying the message of Vedanta in the West. It is easy to see now, with the historical hindsight of over seventy and odd years that have elapsed since Vivekananda's death, that his work in the West was an achievement of very modest proportions. Actually the Swami himself had no illusion regarding the solidity of his work in America. He himself never claimed to have done anything more than 'sowing a seed or two.' But his reception in India in 1897, as some sort of a world conqueror was indicative of the way in which his countrymen were viewing his work. They were viewing it
as the first step in the imagination of India's Dharmarajya that would one day embrace the whole world in its sweep. It is easy to ridicule this notion with the advantage of historical hindsight but the Swadeshi doctrine of Swaraj, which was an ideological doctrine rather than a mere formula for India's independence from British rule, was formulated in the shadow of Vivekananda's triumphal procession in India. We need not wait to consider Vivekananda's specific utterances which contributed to giving the doctrine the characteristic shape it assumed in the hands of the Swadeshi leaders; but a discussion of the doctrine itself will bring out the measure of that contribution. "Swaraj" was in fact the Swadeshi variant of Bankim's Dharmarajya and the ideas of Vivekananda combined together.

The Significance of the Swadeshi Movement.

But before discussing this doctrine it would be in order to recall the events that led to the Swadeshi Movement and the forms—political and social—through which the movement took shape. Curzon's scheme of partitioning Bengal into two provinces was broached in 1903. This led to public demonstrations against the scheme on a scale unprecedented in the history of India. The scheme was shelved for a time but was announced as a settled fact on July 20, 1905. The Swadeshi movement was formally launched in Calcutta on August 7, 1905.

1. It was to take effect from October 16, 1905.
in the historic Town Hall meeting with the programme of boycotting British manufactures so long as the partition Resolution was not withdrawn. Boycott led to Swadeshi—the setting up of indigenous industries with indigenous capital. Actually modern Indian Industry was born during the Swadeshi days. The National Council of Education was started in 1906. In 1906, again, the Congress so long following the policy of mendicancy, began to be dominated by extremist ideas and took up the restorations of Swaraj, Boycott, Swadeshi and National Education. This was the signal for making the movement India-wide as also making it wider in implication. What started as an anti-partition movement now became a movement for India's independence. Actually it purported to become more: it proposed a total reorganisation of national life on the lines suggested by the three ideas—Swaraj, Swadeshi and National Education, boycott being the form in which the war of restoration was to be waged. The narrower aim with which the Movement had begun—that of annulling the partition was achieved in 1911.

The Doctrine of Swaraj

It is usually supposed that the term 'Swaraj' was a formula for independence if not for the sort of colonial self-government which was the goal of politicians of the Moderate Camp. In fact, the great Tilak himself, who was the first to use the term, is not known to have employed it

before the Swadeshi Movement, except in the rather restricted sense imparted to it by the Moderates. The Congress, which, under Swadeshi pressure was forced in 1906 to accept it as its goal, used it in a sense so vague that, immediately after the session of that year, the Extramists and the Moderates divided to put their own interpretations on it. Independence was the sense accepted by the former, and it was Aurobindo who was the first to enunciate this sense in the columns of his journal 'Bande Mataram'. As he put it

"There are at present not two parties in India, but three - the Loyalists, the Moderates and the Nationalists (i.e., the Extramists). The Loyalists would be satisfied with good government by British rulers and a limited share in the administration; the Moderates desire self-government within the British Empire, but are willing to wait for it indefinitely; the Nationalists would be satisfied with nothing less than independence whether within the Empire if that he possible, or outside it." 2

Again:

"Our ideal is that of Swaraj or absolute autonomy free from foreign control. We claim the right of every nation to live its own life by its own energies according to its own nature and ideals." 3

Similar statements about the meaning of Swaraj occur in Bipin Chandra Pal's speeches.

It is thus clear that Swaraj in the sense of independence or absolute autonomy was an idea that has to be traced to the Swadeshi leaders. But the Swadeshi employment of the word signified much more. It meant nothing less than a theory of state.

1. Bande Mataram, April 26, 1907.
2. "Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics:" Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee. p. 117.
This is how Bipin Chandra Pal explained the theory in his Madras speeches:

"The ideal of Swaraj that has revealed itself to us is the ideal of Divine Democracy. It is the ideal of democracy higher than the fighting, the pushing, the materialistic, I was going to say, the cruel democracies of Europe and America. There is a higher message still. Men are gods; and the equality of the Indian democracy is the equality of the divine nature, the divine possibilities and the divine destiny of every human being, be he Hindu, or Mahomedan, Buddhist or Christian."

This extract is extremely revealing. Bipin Chandra's coinage of the term Divine Democracy clearly harks back to Bankim's Dharmarajya. But the sentence "men are gods, and the equality of the Indian democracy is the equality of the divine nature" clearly bears the impress of Vivekananda. Actually Bipin Pal is trying to combine Bankim's political concept of state with Vivekananda's Vedantic conception of human nature in a fuller political ideal. Incidentally, the concept of democracy is his own addition but Bankim's and Vivekananda's writings are full of references to western liberalism and its political form. Liberal Democracy of the western type was, in fact, the ultimate goal of the moderates, but Bipin Chandra's doctrine of Swaraj was an attempt to translate it in Indian terms and thereby render it the vehicle of a 'higher message.'

Compare this with Aurobindo's essay in 'Bande Mataram' (November 25, 1907), entitled 'Srikrishna and Autocracy'.

1. Bipin Chandra Pal: "Swadeshi and Swaraj": p.207. The reference to Mohammedans, Buddhists and Christians is important, because it contradicts the popular belief that the 'nationalism' of the Swadeshi Movement was Hindu Nationalism. It was in fact Religious Nationalism or rather Nationalism guided by Religion.
Krishna, the greatest hero of his time, was the counsellor of kings but, himself neither assumed kingship nor ceased to remain a man of the people till the end of his days. Aurobindo who closely followed the arguments given in Bankim's *Krishnacharitra* wrote:

"Look at that one great divine figure in the history of India - the God in man whose life and teachings influence Hindu thoughts even to the present day. The scourge of all tyrants, counsellor of kings, was brought up amongst cowherds. They were his playmates, his early associates. The great deliverer of mankind from despotism of all types and degrees imbibed and strengthened his democratic tendencies by living and moving amongst people working in the humblest spheres of life." 1

Aurobindo objected to British rule as an autocracy. But even in this he did not fail to bring in the name of Krishna:

"The nation that looks up to Sri Krishna as their ideal hero and man of action can never submit to autocracy in any form. They will never insult the divinity in themselves by bending their knees to an autocrat, however powerful." 2

Thus in Aurobindo's hands too, 'democracy' was being interpreted in Indian terms and Sri Krishna was being held up as an ideal democrat. Needless to say, the phrase 'divinity in themselves' came straight from the pages of Vivekananda.

Far more important than this essay however, is the essay entitled "Asiatic Democracy". This is how Aurobindo criticises the European concept of democracy in this essay. He begins with a history of the concept:

2. Ibid. p. 238.
"Democracy has travelled from the East to the West in the shape of Christianity, and after a long struggle with the feudal instincts of the Germanic races has returned to Asia transformed and in a new body."

According to Aurobindo, this new body though tricked up with the (Christian) ideals liberty, equality, and fraternity of the French revolution, those ideals -

"were associated with a fierce revolt against the relics of feudalism and against the travesty of the christian religion which had become an integral part of that feudalism."

In Aurobindo's eyes:

"This was the weakness of European Democracy and the source of its failure. It took as its motive the rights of man and not the Dharma of humanity; it appealed to the selfishness of the lower classes against the pride of the upper; it made hatred and internecine war the permanent allies of Christian ideals and wrought an inextricable confusion which is the modern malady of Europe."

What then is the remedy? It is in a higher synthesis of the western political ideals in the ideals of India's religion:

"(India's) mission is to point back humanity to the true source of human liberty, human equality, human brotherhood. When man is free in spirit, all other freedom is at his command; for the Free is the Lord who cannot be bound. When he (man) is liberated from delusion, he perceives the divine equality which fulfils itself through love and justice, and this perception transposes itself into the law of government and society .... This is the Asiatic reading of Democracy which India must re-discover for herself before she can give it to the world."

True Democracy is thus the democracy of the liberated soul. But can this (mystical) perception be translated in political terms?
Aurobindo believes it can:

"It has been said that Democracy is based on the rights of man; it has been replied that it should rather take its stand on the duties of man; but both rights and duties are European ideals. Dharma is the Indian conception in which rights and duties lose the artificial antagonism created by a view of the world which makes selfishness the root of action, and regain their deep and eternal unity. Dharma is the basis of democracy which Asia must recognise, for in this lies the distinction between the soul of Asia and the soul of Europe."

It is clear that Aurobindo was not only combining Bankim's and Vivekananda's ideas but adding something more to reach a fuller conception of Dharmarajya.

Swadeshi

Next to Swaraj comes Swadeshi. Here again the popular notion falls far short of the conception actually arrived at by the Swadeshi leaders. Just as Swaraj, with those leaders, did not mean mere political independence, so did Swadeshi mean not merely a programme for setting up power looms for India-made cloths. As everybody knows, the Swadeshi Movement started with the boycott of Manchester cloths. To render the boycott effective, the setting up of Indian-owned power looms as well as a vigorous campaign for using hand-made clothings, was started in the early days of the Movement. However, as Dr. R. C. Majumdar has pointed out:
(Very soon) Swadeshi completely outgrew the original conception of promoting Indian industry. It assumed a new form based upon the literal connotation of the word Swadeshi, namely attachment to everything Indian. This development was undoubtedly the result of the newly awakened patriotism which had been slowly gathering force during the 19th century.  

In confirmation of Dr. Majumdar's words we need only consider Rabindranath Tagore's theory of what he called 'Swadeshi Samaj' - ('national society'). Tagore's conception of Swadeshi had the hallmark of the true philosophic thinking on the point, because it was he alone who looked beyond the temporary expedient of defeating Manchester by setting up Indian industries and gave to Swadeshi a meaning that in its sweep included all the temporary measures and at the same time added something that was of permanent value. On the practical plane, the importance of Tagore's conception becomes appreciable if we remember that he anticipated Mahatma Gandhi's schemes of village development by a great many years.

Tagore started from the New Hindu position propounded by Vivekananda regarding the dissimilarity of canons by which civilisations of different nations are to be judged. In Tagore's opinion, no true conception of Swadeshi was possible so long as we did not take into account the basic differences subsisting between civilisation in India and that in the West. In Europe the operative instrument of civilisation was the State, but in India the instrument was religion in its social forms.

in Tagore's words:

"The vitality of different civilisations runs along different channels. Where a nation's common weal is as it were, concentrated, there lies its nerve centre. If you strike at that centre, the nation as a whole is wounded fatally. In Europe while nations are endangered as soon as the political system gets disorganised; - this is why politics are so vitally important in Europe. But in our country the whole race is faced with catastrophe if the society gets somehow maimed or paralysed. ... This is why the survival of the British people is tied up with survival of the British state, whereas in our case, the survival of the race is ensured by maintaining the religious order (which in our case, is tantamount to the social order."

Readers of Vivekananda's "East and West" will at once recognise the Swami's influence in this extract. The reference to "concentration of common weal in different nerve centres" as being the basic features of different civilisations is too Vivekanandian - to be missed by anyone. But Tagore is not merely echoing the Swami, whose concern was with the ends of different civilisations than with the institutional forms through which those ends were expressed. Tagore's emphasis was on these very institutions, and, in order to arrive at a true conception of Swadeshi he laid his finger on the true seat of India's collective identity, namely her social order which again was the institutional expression of her religion. In India's case the seat of collective identity was not her 'state', which, from time immemorial was in a continuous condition of disarray.

With these premises, Tagore's conception of Swadeshi could be nothing less than the restoration of her social autonomy which in Tagore's opinion, was a matter of far greater moment than the restoration of political autonomy preached by Aurobindo.

1. Rabindra Rachanvali : (centenary)volume published by Govt. of West Bengal, Vol.- XII.
Swadesh O Samaj : p. 685.
and others.

What did this social autonomy consist in? According to Tagore:

"In Europe all public works starting with the giving of alms to the poor to the imparting of religious education to the public, were part of the State's duty; in India they formed part of the religion as practised by the masses." 1

Also social and personal laws such as the laws of marriage and inheritance fell outside the purview of parliament or the king's legislative assembly. It was these duties and these rights that were being bartered away during British rule. Matters had come to such a pass that even Hindu social customs were being legislated for or against by the British. Tagore's suggestion was to redeem these rights and duties - this was his programme for regaining social autonomy. In effect, Tagore was proposing the construction, of a state within the state, a 'civil society'. His 'Swadeshi Samaj' was not indeed a political entity, but it sought to include within its scope the whole complex of social phenomena indicated by such headings 'social behaviour', 'education', 'sanitation', 'commerce and industries', 'arts and literature', and 'justice!' It is questionable whether the construction of such a 'Samaj' was at all possible without destroying the political edifice erected by the British. Some of the items of his programme clearly presupposed political autonomy and were plainly unrealisable without seriously disturbing the existing political order; but when

1. Ibid. p. 685.
2. Ibid. p. 686.
3. Ibid. p. 775.
instead of considering the question of 'autonomy' in relation to society as a whole, we came down to its smallest units, the villages of India. Tagore's conception not only revealed a social programme of the deepest significance, but laid bare a matter of life and death for the fate of India as she was developing under British rule.

From time immemorial, self-governing villages were the smallest units of India's society. With the beginning of British rule had started a process in which villages were being looked upon as mere sources of food supply for the consumption of the urban population, and the identity of the village as the smallest unit of society was being lost. It was a tragedy of the greatest magnitude, because India's civilisation was essentially rural just as western civilisation was essentially urban. The difference was no mere matter of organisation but had deeper roots. According to Tagore, the real significance of the village as the smallest unit of society consisted in the "formation of ties of kinship between man and man" rather than ties of work or organisation, - and this was where Indian civilisation differed fundamentally from that of the West. The village was essentially the medium for the formation of such ties. In Tagore's words:

"India's effort was ever in the direction of formation of ties of kinship between man and man. This kinship had to be maintained with the most distant of relations (young and old); it could not be allowed to grow thin even when the child grew to manhood; the guru and the disciple, the guest and the beggar, the Zemindar and the tenant, - kinship was prescribed for all. Also these were no mere moral ties. "
prescribed by the scriptures - these were ties of the heart ... Thus it is that in India, in virtue of the closest ties of the heart that have always been recognised within and outside the family, between the lowly and the highly placed, between the householder and the stranger - society was never in want of means for the establishment and maintenance of 'tols', 'pathsalas', 'aqueducts', 'guest houses', temples, and houses for the upkeep of the maimed and the disabled." 1

It was this feature, this essence, so to say, that was being lost with the gradual decline of the village. It was this tragedy that was to be averted, and Tagore's 'social autonomy' was aimed at averting it.

But Tagore was too much a man of his age to be satisfied, with suggesting a village reconstruction programme along ancient lines. As he saw it, society in India was the institutional form of her religion and the village was the means to realise the aim of that religion, - the aim itself being noting less than love for all creation - by allowing ties of kinship to grow amongst the inhabitants of each self-governing unit and to assume diverse social forms in education, in economic relationships and in works of charity. But the call in the modern age was in the direction of making larger units, in other words, merging small units in the larger entity of the nation. How was this merger to be brought about?

By raising a leader for the whole society (Samajpati) through the elective principle, answered Tagore; by organising large fairs and rendering them great vehicles of mass education by means of newly constructed programmes of 'Jatra' (itinerant theatrical performances), 'Kirtan'(musical performances dealing in religious themes), 'Kathakata'

1. Ibid. pp. 690, 692.
(educational lectures treating Puranic fables); by enlarging the conception of religious duty to man, to one's ancestors, to the sages, to the gods and to animals - so long practised by Brahmos as five daily sacrifices - and instituting the practice of daily sacrifice to the motherland (Swadeshbali) in the shape of the tiniest fragment of one's money or food.

**National Education**

The Debate on National Education is another instance of New Hindu impulse working behind the Swadeshi Movement. This is all the more remarkable because, unlike Swaraj and Swadeshi, which were not matters immediately conditional on the partition of Bengal but had roots in the historical situation prevailing in pre-partition days, the question of National Education had no such background. For generations past English Education had been supposed to be the only instrument for revitalising a decadent India, and even our newly - awakened national consciousness owed much to that education. It was only in 1892-93 (B.S. 1299) that Tagore, following upon the lead given by Bankim's introductory Ganga-jarsan essay (1872), raised the issue of medium of instruction, and shewed how Bengali, rather than English, was best suited to serve as that medium. But in pre-Swadeshi days even Tagore had no criticism to offer regarding the content of the education imparted by English schools.

1. In which Bankim had pleaded for the Vernacular as the best mass communication medium, and pointed out how English was driving a wedge between the masses and the educated community.

2. Tagore's second great essay on education was written as late as May 1905 (Baisakh 1312) during the hightide of the Swadeshi impulse. (The reader should remember that though the Swadeshi Movement was formally launched on Aug. 7, 1905 the Swadeshi impulse dates back to 1903, the year in which the proposal for partitioning Bengal was broached.)
Bankim and Vivekananda alone had pointed out the shortcomings of that content years before the debate on National Education started. Bankim's criticism (included in Dharmatattwa) centred around a comprehensive conception of knowledge which, in his opinion, was not satisfied by English education, while Vivekananda criticised that education as being 'denationalising.' Bankim accepted the conception of knowledge given in the Gita, according to which knowledge aims at the perception of the Unity of the whole creation with the knower as well as God. To Bankim, such a conception of knowledge required a combination of three things: (1) knowledge of the whole creation which is obtained from physical sciences like Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics and Chemistry; (2) knowledge of one's self which is obtained from sciences like Biology and Sociology; and (3) knowledge of God which is best derived from Hindu scriptures: the Upanishads, the Purans, the systems of Philosophy and most notably the Gita. In a word, Bankim, the New Hindu, accepted English education in its totality but wanted to supplement by a complete course of religious education. Bankim did not exactly find fault with English education. Vivekananda followed Bankim in his scheme of supplementing the secular English education by a study of the "true external principles of religion", by which expression he of course meant a study of the Upanishads and the Gita. But Vivekananda also pointed out the defect of the prevalent system of secular education. According to him:

1. Dharmatattwa: Chapter XV.
In other words, Vivekananda objected to the excessive literary bias of the prevalent system (which rendered it a "machine for turning out clerks") and also to its un-Indianess.

It is unnecessary to elaborate further on Vivekananda's thoughts on education at this point. It is only proper to say that neither Bankim nor Vivekananda used the phrase 'national education', because both of them started from the position that 'man-making' — a phrase often employed by Vivekananda — rather than nation making was the proper business of education. As a matter of fact, the Swadeshi leaders, in their turn, accepted this Universal approach to the question of education, but circumstances supervening immediately after the start of the Swadeshi Movement made the emphasis on the 'national' aspect of their programme compelling.

The circumstances leading to the scheme of national education were briefly these: shortly after the start of the Swadeshi Movement (August, 1905), the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal issued a circular — the so-called Carlyle Circular (October, 1905) — prohibiting students of all schools and colleges from participating in any Swadeshi activity. As students constituted one of the chief sources of strength of
the movement, the need was felt for immediately starting schools' and colleges absolutely free from Government control. The National Council of Education was registered in June, 1906. It set up the Bengal National College on August, 1906, and also many primary and secondary schools with similar ideals. We need not stop to follow the career of these institutions - it was in fact a very short-lived one - but need only study the ideals inspiring the National Council of Education: they followed directly from the New Hindu educational thoughts of Bankim and Vivekananda.

According to the sponsor of the National Council:

"Education on National Lines should imply among other things:

(1) (a) Imparting of education, ordinarily through the medium of the vernaculars, English being a compulsory subject.

(b) The preparation of suitable text books, especially in the vernaculars.

(2) Promoting of Physical and Moral education and providing for denominational Religious Education out of funds specially contributed for that purpose and inspiring students with a genuine love for, and a real desire to serve, their country.

Such religious education is not to include the enforcements of religious rites and practices.

(3) Attaching a special importance to a knowledge of the country, its Literature, History, Philosophy and incorporating with the best oriental ideals of life and thought the best assimilable ideals of the West."
(4) Imparting of Scientific, Professional and Technical Education chiefly in those branches of Sciences, Arts and Industries which are best calculated to develop the material resources of the country and to satisfy its pressing wants.

(5) Inclusion in the scientific education generally of a knowledge of the scientific truths embodied in oriental learning and in the medical education especially of such scientific truths as are to be found in the Ayurvedic and Hakimi systems.  

Such were the educational programmes preached by the National Council of Education. It is unnecessary to point out the similarity of these programmes with the ideals preached by Bankim and Vivekananda. It is clear that they follow directly from those ideals.

It is however necessary to say a word about the educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore as embodied in his Brahmacharya Ashram at Santiniketan later reconstituted as the Visvabharati. It should be remembered that Tagore founded his institution in 1901, a year before Vivekananda's death. Vivekananda had emphasized one aspect of education - that of the strictest celibacy to be observed by students during the period of their studentship. The idea of studentship itself had, in India, during the whole course of her past history, had involved a notion of spiritual culture under the direction of Gurus. The Gurus were no mere communicators of thoughts, but some sort of spiritual guides directing the pupil's studies by means of a relationship which was a

personal one. It was Vivekananda's contention that these personal elements with its spiritual overtones were lost in the system of education popularised by the British. Tagore accepted both these ideas and to these he added a third. This was the Ideal of the Forest that we have in an earlier Chapter. Tagore wanted education in India to embody all these elements, and this was made the basis of his own educational experiments.

Boycott

Boycott, as the very title implies, was not a New Hindu idea. The term itself was borrowed from the history of the Irish freedom movement. Ireland's own freedom efforts were on everybody's lips. Its sponsors harked back to the history of American Independence. Dr. R.C. Majumdar has traced the origin of the boycott idea in the proposal in India, mooted during the 1870s, to renounce Manchester goods in favour of the incipient cotton industry of Bombay. Neither Bankim nor Vivekananda has ever been credited with the proposal in any form, and it does not appear that though Bankim was the first, and probably the harshest, critic of the policy of 'mendicancy' as pursued by contemporary Indian politicians, he, in any of his writings, proposed boycott of British manufactures as the answer to that policy. "The Kshatriya ideal of the Hindus", and "a war of restoration" - these were the ideas preached by

1. R. C. Majumdar: History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol II.
him. The case of Tagore, who, after Bankim, was the most consistent critic of 'mendicancy' is interesting. He not only did not accept 'boycott' as the answer to the policy of mendicancy but opposed it with great vehemence, and actually cut off his connection, with the Swadeshi Movement on this very score. As for Surendranath Banerjee, the moderate leader, he was naive enough to consult his English friends before launching the boycott agitation, feeling no doubt, that boycott, whatever it was, was not war, and so could be reconciled with his moderate conscience. Moderate leaders like Dadabhai, who allowed the boycott resolution to form the operative part of the deliberations of the famous Calcutta Congress of 1906, were no doubt moved by similar considerations. The question is therefore relevant: was boycott a prelude to the war of restoration spoken of by New Hindu thinkers like Bankim?

The answer to this question is that it was undoubtedly so intended - at least by leaders like Tilak and Aurobindo. Tilak's formula, "Militancy - not mendicancy", sums up the attitude of the Extremist faction led by himself and Aurobindo. Also the despatch with which the moderate leaders, who had espoused boycott in 1906, tried to relieve themselves of that dangerous responsibility within a year and thereby brought into the open the inevitable rift within the Congress on a question of fundamental principles, namely, whether the Congress would be a fighting machine or a merely
constitutional body, leaves no room for doubt as to what shape the notion of boycott was taking in the hands of the Nationalist Party, otherwise called the party of the Extremists. Boycott, as understood by Tilak and Aurobindo was the preparation for revolution - the war of restoration to realise the New Hindu idea of Swaraj. Two extracts from Aurobindo's writings will make this clear. Thus Aurobindo, on the eve of the second anniversary of the Swadeshi Movement, wrote in the Bande Mataram:

"When we declared the Boycott on the Seventh of August, it was no mere economical revolt we were instituting, but the practice of national independence; for the attempt to be separate and self-sufficient economically must bring with it the attempt to be free in every other function of a nation's life; for these functions are all mutually interdependent." 1

Again,

"We have repeatedly said that Boycott is not a gospel of hatred. It is simply an assertion of our independence, our national separateness. But neither do we pretend that we can ask the rulers to overflow with feelings of benevolence for the Boycott ... Boycott has come among us not to bring peace but a sword." 2

It is only necessary to add that 'national separateness' with Aurobindo was nothing less than the New Hindu notion of polity, to wit, the foundation of a 'kingdom of righteousness', a conception which he himself was trying to elaborate during the Swadeshi days and which we have clearly explained in Aurobindo's own language.

2. Ibid. p. 135.
3. The section entitled, "The Doctrine of Swaraj."
Aurobindo's conception of boycott was therefore that of a 'sword' and not of a weapon of peace. The juxtaposition of the words 'peace' and 'sword' leaves no room for doubt that Aurobindo looked forward to nothing less than an armed struggle with the British. Or was he merely using a figurative expression in the manner of people who in Mahatma Gandhi's days called Satyagraha - a sort of non-violent war?

The so-called theory of Passive Resistance which Aurobindo explained in the pages of Bande Mataram in April, 1907, is apt to lend credence to this view. Briefly the theory was one of obstructionism in order to bring the machinery of the government to a standstill by 'non-co-operation' (Aurobindo actually used this expression, thereby anticipating Mahatma by a whole decade). As Aurobindo explained the theory again in 1909:

"Our methods are those of self-help and Passive Resistance. The essence of the policy (of Passive Resistance) is the refusal of Co-operation so long as we are not admitted to a substantial share and an effective control in legislation, finance and administration. Just as 'No representation no taxation', was the watch-word of American constitutional agitation in the 18th century, so 'No Control, no Co-operation', should be the watch-word of our lawful agitation." ¹

These words make it clear that Aurobindo anticipated Mahatma Gandhi's agitation, even though he did not actually start such a movement. But it would be far from true to say that he meant Passive Resistance as anything more than a

¹. "An open Letter to my Countrymen" Published in the Karmayogin of July 31, 1909.
prelude to an armed insurrection. The above words, it must be remembered, were written when the Swadeshi Movement was already a thing of the past. Tilak was in jail. Bipin Chandra Pal had exiled himself in England. Tagore had retired from politics. The movement had failed all along the line. Aurobindo himself had received a call, from the standpoint of which all mundane activities were useless without a communion with the "Life Divine". But, his lucubrations on the doctrine of Passive Resistance notwithstanding, he had already written an obituary of the 'Politics of Peace' and had announced his vision of the 'politics of the sword', which, in his opinion, was going to shape the future history of India. In 1908, he had written:

"The grim forces that have been moving under the surface will now find the field open to them by the shattering of the keystone of the old political edifice. The disappearance of the old Congress announces the end of the preparatory stage of (our) movement (and) the beginning of a clash of forces whose first full shock will produce chaos. The fair hopes of an orderly and peaceful evolution of self-government are gone for ever. Revolution, bare and grim, is preparing her battle-field, mowing down the centres of order — and building up the materials of a gigantic downfall and a mighty new creation. We could have wished it otherwise, but God's will be done." 1

These words, obviously written by a visionary, rather than one who had any knowledge and mastery of the forces that make a revolution indicate clearly why Aurobindo's revolution even if "let loose to mow down the centres of order" and 'build up a mighty new creation' was foredoomed.

to inevitable failure. But no less clearly do they indicate the climax to which the boycott agitation was inevitably heading. It was heading towards revolution, a revolution that was to be a 'war of restoration' to found a 'kingdom of righteousness' on the Indian soil. The nature of this revolution – the so-called 'terroristic' agitation of the Swadeshi days – we intend to examine now, in order to show how it was related to New Hindu ideas and how in its failure, the whole New Hindu movement, slowly and unobtrusively drained of its religious life-blood by conspiratorial politics, was set on its course of decline, and how the New Hindu dream of a 'kingdom of righteousness' ended in a tragedy of gloom and inanity, only partially relieved by the martyrdom of a few bold and fearless spirits who, even in the futility of their death blazed a trail of dauntless courage and matchless self-sacrifice.
'Terrorism' or 'War of Restoration'?  

It is no part of our intention to give here even an outline of that tragedy. The task is indeed impossible in the present state of our knowledge of the so-called 'terroristic movement' of Bengal that started with the founding of the 'Anusilan Samity' of Calcutta in 1902.

The Anusilan Samiti was founded as an association for training young men according to New Hindu ideas. The name of the association was taken from Bankim's Dharmatattwa, according to which religion consisted in the fullest development of (Anusilan in Bengali) of one's powers in a state of balance, - the balance being attained by harnessing all these powers to the service of God who pervaded all creation. The association was intended to provide training on these lines, but it is clear that, from its very start, it emphasized the narrower conception of service to God, namely, the service to one's motherland. The association was thus a political organisation and its motto was again the New Hindu motto of founding a 'kingdom of righteousness'. The doctrine of self-less service for the country was re-emphasized, and Nivedita, who was associated with the Samiti from its start, preached the Swami's cult of manliness as the essence of religion. Whether the Gita was prescribed for compulsory reading or not, it is clear that this work with the New Hindu emphasis on its teaching of self-less
work and 'righteous war' formed the doctrinal basis of the conception of practical religion of its members. Such was what may be called the 'ideological background of the activities of the Samiti'.

From the very beginning Aurobindo was associated with the Samiti. He was, in fact, one of its Vice-presidents, the President being Barrister P. Mitra of Calcutta. But Aurobindo was also associated with secret societies, and his own group including his younger brother Barin and some of his friends inclined more towards 'conspiratorial' politics, than Mitra and some other leaders of the Samiti would allow. The Samiti's work in the three years of its existence previous to the start of the Swadeshi Movement seems to have been confined to the training of young men in humanitarian service and physical and mental culture. It is true that some members had committed one or two robberies by way of securing money for patriotic work, but these did not find favour with the majority of the members. With the start of the Swadeshi Movement, however, 'terrorism' began to be regarded as the first step towards gaining India's independence. Aurobindo's pamphlet 'Bhawani Mandir' published in 1905, did not preach violence and crime, but it was his group that was chiefly instrumental in propagating the cult of the bomb and the manufactures of explosives to murder obnoxious officials. Thus the cult of manliness and the cult of unprincipled violence were
inextricably linked together, and, for this admixture, responsibility to a great extent must be laid at Aurobindo's door.

The tract 'Bhawani Mandir' preached manliness as a pre-requisite to India's freedom and proposed a scheme for training a band of volunteers in the manner of the disciples of Satyananda in Anandamath. The volunteers were to undergo the discipline proper to Sannyasins — they were to renounce worldly pleasures and devote themselves heart and soul to the inculcation of physical strength by worshipping Kali, the goddess of strength. Aurobindo was of course almost echoing Satyananda's scheme, but his alterations, were not without significance. Satyananda and his band, it must be remembered, were devotees of Vishnu who was the God both of love and strength; even if Satyananda emphasized the latter aspect he was conscious of the incompleteness of his Vaishnavism. Aurobindo by opting for Kali instead of Vishnu set a seal of approval to the cult of force-worship. This aspect of Aurobindo's tract has to be emphasized; because this worship of violence as an end in itself gradually came to be an article of faith with all 'terrorists'. Just as the conception of the patriot as one who must renounce worldly pleasures and conduct himself as one under the strictest monastic discipline found its way into the compulsory regulations of the Anusilan Samiti, so this cult of violence came to be a regular feature of all secret Societies.
But this cult of unprincipled violence was not the only rock on which Aurobindo's ship of 'revolution' foundered, and, to tell the truth, it was not even the hardest. The tricks of conspiratorial politics were imported wholesale from the supremely irreligious underworld of European insurrectionism and the revolutionists of Italy, the terrorists of Ireland and the Nihilists of Russia—all lent a hand in transforming the original religious programme of founding a kingdom of righteousness on the Indian soil and in rendering the Bengal terrorists immune to all considerations of forbearance and scruple in murdering officials and informers. "The juxtaposition of names, (of) Hindu deities, and (of) Cromwell and Washington, and (of) celebrated (European) anarchists", which Valentine Chirol found so strange an element in the literature of Bengal terrorism, is explicable in the light of this change. A 'kingdom of righteousness' could scarcely rise from such a medley.

This was not all. The doctrine of 'self-less work' or 'work for its own sake', preached in the Gita, was perverted to the doctrine of slaughter for its own sake, and Krishna's insistence on the warrior's duty of not shrinking from righteous was on sentimental considerations was explained as a glorification of murder when murder was not committed in self-interest. This was, of course, the most flagrant violation of Bankim's teaching who had tried his utmost
to shew that Krishna was the supreme pacifist in an era of reckless Kshatriya blood—thirstiness and that his exhortation in the Gita was to be viewed in that background. The perversion of the doctrine of the Gita actually started with Tilak who had sought justification for Shivaji's murder of Afzal Khan in the teaching of the Gita. It is quite possible that the Bengal terrorists imbibed their interpretation of the Gita doctrine from Tilak; for, the Chapekar brothers who had committed the first political murder and had thereby earned the distinction of being the first terrorists in modern India, were supposed to have been inspired by Tilak's speech on Shivaji. It is possible that even Aurobindo, in those days, subscribed to this interpretation of Krishna's doctrine. But, whatever the source, this perversion, this glorification of murder for its own sake, came to be accepted by the terrorists as the true teaching of the Gita.

The career of Kanailal Dutta can be taken as an illustration of the consequences of such a perversion.

1. Tilak had said, "Did Shivaji commit a sin in killing Afzal Khan? The answer to this question can be found in the Mahabharat itself. Shrimat Krishna's teaching in the Gita condones even the killing of one's teachers and kinsmen. No blame attaches to any person if he is doing deeds without being actuated by a desire to reap the fruits thereof."—Lokamanya Tilak: Ram Gopal: p. 147.

Kanai was a young man who seems to have been within his teens. He was in jail custody, being one of the accused in the Alipore Bomb case of 1908, amongst many others of whom Aurobindo was the most famous. It is not known whether Kanai had manufactured a single bomb nor whether he was capable of manufacturing any. He was probably arrested on mere suspicion because of his association with Barin's group. He was a generous lad, full of animal spirits and thinking nothing of laying down his life for his country which he loved with that youthful steadfastness which was the characteristic of all youngsters who had met Aurobindo or been influenced by his ideas. Kanai enlivened the dull routine of prison - life by endless expressions of his bubbling vitality. He was full of boyish pranks, and when most of his associates in the jail fell asleep he along with four or five youths of his age started ransacking the prison house in search of biscuits, fruits and sweets. When that operation failed, Kanai would tie the feet of one of the sleeping members with the ears of another by means of a rope and entertain his friends by many other pranks of similar nature. Upendranath Banerjee, one of the senior members of the group has narrated an incident in which Kanai was found dancing with glee on a certain night at about 1 a.m. in celebration of his securing a packet of biscuits from under the pillow of one of the sleeping gentlemen. Kanai's dancing roused Aurobindo who was promptly
offered a handful of biscuits to prevent his talking to others about the midnight larceny. According to Upendranath, Aurobindo was so pleased with the bribe that he shammed instantaneous slumber and Kanai was happily out of danger.

It is not in reason to suppose that such a youngman could commit murder in cold-blood, but, in fact, this is exactly what happened within a few days. Kanai, together with his friend Satyen, planned, arranged and accomplished the murder of Naren Goswami in broad daylight inside the jail compound and before the eyes of a host of dumbfounded spectators. Naren was a member of the group but had turned a police informer: in the terrorist code this was an offence punishable with death. In extenuation of Kanai's murder, it can only be pleaded that Naren's death probably spared the lives of some of the members of the group including that of Aurobindo. But even this argument is of doubtful validity. According to Upendranath the police had unearthed most of the facts regarding Barin's (and Aurobindo's) group, and many of the youngsters in their inexperience had divulged a great many secrets regarding themselves in the belief that such confessions would exculpate the rest. So, Naren's death probably achieved nothing; and in the eyes both of law and morality Kanai was a murderer and a cold-blooded murder at that.

This, however, is not the end of the story. Kanai was promptly condemned to death by hanging. But the interesting
thing is that he not only did not make any fuss about the sentence, but, in the interval between the passing of the sentence and the execution of the same, he actually began to gain in weight; so that on the day of his hanging he weighed full sixteen pounds heavier than on the day on which the sentence was served. A great serenity had dawned on him, and whoever looked at him marvelled at the change. The jail authorities who hanged him were so much impressed by the change in his countenance that they began to whisper in Barin's ears enquiring if there were many other boys of the same stamp amongst Barin's associates. In the words of Upendranath, to whom we owe this description:

"It was a countenance in which there was not a line that betrayed anxiety, not a shadow that betrayed sorrow, not a quiver that betrayed restlessness: it was like a lotus in full bloom, irradiating joy and loveliness."

It is only necessary to add that Upen calls Kanai a "Yogi", and a supremely exceptional Yogi at that, since, according to Upen, not even Patanjali could explain the source of such serenity in a condemned criminal's face.

The moral of this story is that the scheme of a kingdom of righteousness which Bankim envisaged as issuing out of a war of restoration and the 'mighty new creation' which Aurobindo visualised as being the result of a 'revolution, bare and grim'— both these versions of a vision, which
were in fact identical in essence, failed tragically. They failed because the 'revolution' conceived by Aurobindo degenerated into a species of conspiratorial politics - in other words a form of death-dealing terrorism.

Movement Killed By Its Own Political Progeny

Meanwhile the New Hindu Movement was subsiding all along the line. Both the Swadeshi Movement and its terroristic offshoot were of course great events inspite of their failure to achieve any momentous result. The annulment of the partition of Bengal, which occurred in 1911, can be regarded as the immediate consequence of these events, but greater significance attaches to the 'political regeneration' of the whole country which was galvanised out of its torpor within a few years; so that Mahatma Gandhi could declare as early as 1908 that the partition of Bengal was the prelude to the 'partition of the British Empire'. To the extent that this was due to the Swadeshi Movement and its terroristic offshoot, the New Hindu Movement must be given its due in achieving the 'political regeneration' of India. But this 'political regeneration' was the signal of nothing less than the defeat of the parent movement. The New Hindu impulse was exhausting itself in the process of bringing about the political awakening which was only one of

1. 'Hind Swaraj' : M. K. Gandhi.
its aims. Its other aims - that of raising the lower classes and women through education and that of rejuvenating Hindu society by the new canons of civilisation as well as by spreading everywhere the light of our ancient civilisation, were imperceptibly relegated to the background. Here we must briefly analyse the causes that led to their decline -

Foremost among these causes was of course the overmastering passion for political independence, which, from the start of the Swadeshi Movement, gripped the youth of Bengal, and, within a few years, that of the whole country. The forty-two years from 1905 to 1947 were wholly devoted to the cause of political independence, and all other expressions of our national life were made absolutely subservient to it and other aspects of the 'Renaissance', which was considerably influenced by the New Hindu Movement itself, tended to be ignored. The later writings of Tagore, are full of lamentations, on this point. Tagore, who was essentially a product of our 'renaissance' saw more clearly than any other contemporary the shadow that was gradually lengthening over the finer expressions of our national life in the shape of an exclusively political movement. This also was the basic reason behind his own retreat from the political struggle which had drawn so much inspiration from his writings.

A second cause of this decline was the failure of the National Education Movement to replace the denationalising
elements of the officially sponsored English education. The
New Hindu Movement if it were to hold its own against the all
powerful westernising process of the British regime, needed
an intellectual backing from the educated classes, amongst
whom the light of our ancient civilisation as well as that
furnished by the new canons of civilisation discovered by
Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore, began to grow dim as
soon as the discussion of these topics which had started in
the periodical press began to be replaced by the all-absorbing
question of political independence. The only remedy for this
state of affairs was to include those topics as an essential
ingredient of our liberal education. The failure of the
National Education Movement rendered this impossible.

A third cause of the decline was the failure of the
Ramkrishna Mission to take up Vivekananda's programme of
'raising the lower classes' by the spread of the mass
education scheme envisaged by the Swami. It must be remembered
that the Mission was the only major non-political organisation
thrown up by the New Hindu ferment. But while it tried to work
the humanitarian programme of Vivekananda in right earnest
it never gave much thought to his scheme of raising a band
of Sannyasins who would take education to the villages. The
educational work undertaken by the Mission not only
remained confined to the towns and the cities, but what was
worse, this organisation never tried to mould the education.
imparted by it according to Vivekananda's New Hindu ideas. This failure on the part of Vivekananda's organisation contributed not a little to the precipitate decline of the New Hindu Movement.

As mentioned in the Introduction, if we are to assign a definite date to this decline, the year 1911 may be taken as the point from which the process started. This was the year which saw the annulment of the Bengal partition that had taken place in 1905, and thus, in a sense, it was also the year in which the Swadeshi Movement - may be said to have run its course. But in a sense much deeper and more significant, Aurobindo's departure to Pondicherry which took place in 1910, may be taken as a more symbolic event when viewed in the New Hindu context. Aurobindo was the leading spirit behind activating the half-hearted political agitations of contemporary India along New Hindu lines. It was Aurobindo again who developed the notion of Dharmarajya to a certain extent to render it an ideology of India's political reconstruction. Also, the disastrous cult of terrorist violence in its heroic as well as its murderous aspect was due not a little to his inspirations. He converted Bankim's doctrine of 'patriotism governed by religion' into the 'religion of patriotism' of the Nationalist Party. Thus, Aurobindo was the greatest New Hindu 'activist' since Vivekananda. His departure from politics
and retreat into 'mysticism', therefore, was a matter of the highest significance. It was a tale of 'dichotomy of the soul' - one part of it longing for participation in the 'war of humanity's liberation' and the other part hankering after that state of mystical communion with God. It was a dichotomy that manifested itself in the career of Vivekananda, with the highest tragic intensity leading to a premature death. The Swami, however, died in harness, whereas Aurobindo retired from the arena in the middle of the fray. This statement is not intended as criticism of the latter, whose retirement was actuated by high and noble motives.