CHAPTER VIII

NATIONALISM OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, AUBOINDO
AND GANDHI
CHAPTER VIII

NATIONALISM OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, AURGBINDO AND GANDHI

I. Modern Indian history is replete with the struggle of many great champions of nationalism of the soil. But all those who championed the cause of nationalism and spear-headed the national movement did not have an identical objective, nor subscribed to identical technique. The moderate nationalists who espoused the cause of nationalism in India through the Indian National Congress had a moderate objective and they sought to lead the National Movement to a destination, opposed to that of the extremists or militant nationalists. The moderate nationalists made it their destination to please and placate, to petition, pray the British so as to get their blessing in form of some reformation in the system of British rule in India. While pining for India’s progress and prosperity they did not look beyond the reformed and expanded Governor General’s and Governors’ Council and introduction of popular representation. Besides, their vision was limited by paltry concessions in the form of simultaneous conduct of civil service examination in London and India, reduction of salt-duty, curtailment of military and civil expenditure, and separation of executive from judiciary etc. W.C.Banarjee

(1) B.P.Sittaramayya, History of Indian National Congress, Vol-I, PP.23-58
the first President of the Indian National Congress expressing his objective in his Presidential address said, "All we ask is that the basis of the government should be widened and the people should have proper and legitimate share in it." This pining for paltry reforms is further evident from the observation of Sir S.N. Banarjee, who said, "It is not Home Rule or parliamentary institutions we want, our humble prayer is that we should be associated with our rulers and only with a limited measure with the government of the country."

As against the moderates the extremists of the militant nationalists pitched their ambition on Swaraj or complete self-government. As political realists they realised that a colonial and imperial power, accustomed to the privileges of governing colonies and exploiting their economy, can not be expected to renounce its privileges. Such expectation on the part of the colonies will seal their own doom. Hence they put forth their goal of Swaraj or Purna Swaraj. B.G. Tilak one of the extremist nationalists gave the slogan, "Swaraj is my birth-right and I shall have it." Aurobindo another

(2) Indian National Congress, Presidential Address, 1885-86.
(3) Bengalee, 8 January 1889, (A Weekly, Ed. by S.N. Banarjee)
(4) B.G. Tilak's speech at Akola on 2nd May, 1908
A stalwart of extremism also voiced, "Our ideal is Swaraj or absolute autonomy, freedom from foreign control.... We reject the claim of aliens to force upon us...."

Thus the ambition for Swaraj became the burning passion of all extremist nationalists who championed the cause of "Home Rule." They considered Swaraj or self-rule as a moral necessity and the Dharma of all self-respecting man. Without Swaraj, they felt, right ordering of society could never be attained. Without Swaraj life was not worth while and the enrichment of the community was next to impossible. As they said, "We demand Swaraj as it is the foundation....... of our future prosperity."

Thus the moderate and the extremist nationalists of India had no identical objective. Their aim and objective differed and differed their plan of action.

(A) IDENTICAL OBJECTIVE

Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi - the three stalwarts of Indian national movement had identical aim and objective. Though they belonged to three different periods and phases of the growth of Indian nationalism - Swami Vivekananda of pre-moderate

(5) Aurobindo Ghose, Speeches, PP.73-74
(6) B.G. Tilak, His Writings and Speeches, P.164
period, Aurobindo of extremist phase and Gandhi of Gandhian age, all of them had an identical objective. They cherished in the core of their heart the goal of complete Swaraj or full-freedom for India - their mother land and worked for the same mission. According to them freedom or Swaraj is the birth-right of every nation. It is needed for the proliferation of national energy and fulfilment of national ideal. It is too as they held, the social, political and spiritual necessity for man to have a wholesome and balanced life.

Swami Vivekananda the earliest of these nationalists, in order to arouse passions for freedom among his people said that freedom is the sole craving of the universe. Whole universe in its constant motion represents the dominant quest for freedom. Freedom is the life-force, the essence of the universe. 'It is the motive of the universe, it is the goal of the universe'. Various sounds and sights of the universe are the manifestations of its craze to reach its goal of freedom.

Every thing and every being according to Swami Vivekananda are the manifestation of freedom and they feel unremitting urge to be free. Freedom is the destination towards which everything moves. As he said,

(7) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, P. 125
(8) Ibid, Vol-V, P. 434
"Every thing that we perceive around us is struggling towards freedom, from the atom to the man, from the insentient lifeless particle of matter to the highest existence on earth, the human soul. The universe is in fact the result of this struggle for freedom. Hence freedom is the ultimate goal of nature and consciously or unconsciously everything sentient or insentient is struggling for the attainment of this goal.

What is true of all sentient and insentient beings is more true of man. Man, according to him is the final manifestation of passion for freedom. As he said, "The universal struggle for freedom attains its highest expression in man, in the conscious desire to be free." Not only man is the highest expression of freedom and is fired by consumate desire to be free; he aspires for complete freedom. Complete freedom is essential for the attainment of perfection of man. Accordingly Swami Vivekananda said, "To be more free is the goal of all our efforts, for only in perfect freedom can there be perfection." (11)

Highlighting this individual freedom Swami Vivekananda said that it is indispensable for the realisation of one's personality in social, political

(10) Ibid, Vol-I, P. 108
(11) Ibid, Vol-I, P. 333
and economic spheres. He therefore wanted to make freedom as the natural possession of all individuals. He desired that every individual must cultivate a free body, mind and spirit. As he said, "Liberty does not certainly mean the absence of obstacles in the path of misappropriation of wealth etc. by you and me, but it is our natural right to be allowed to use our own body, intelligence or wealth according to our will without doing any harm to others and all the members of the society ought to have same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education or knowledge."

Swami Vivekananda regarded liberty or freedom as the only condition of growth. He said, "To advance towards freedom - physical, mental and spiritual and help others to do so is the supreme prize of man. Those social rules which stand in the way of the unfoldment of this freedom are injurious and steps should be taken to destroy them speedily. Those institutions should be encouraged by which men advance in the path of freedom."

This freedom, according to Swami Vivekananda in all spheres - physical mental and spiritual is the watch-ward of the Upanishads. He wanted to inspire his country-men with this message of the Upanishads and

(13) Quoted in Mornmohan Ganguly, Swami Vivekananda - A Study, P. 60
(14) Life of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, P. 753
said, "Freedom is the watch-word. Be free! a free body, a free mind and a free soul! That is what I have felt all my life."

Swami Vivekananda thus not only aroused passion for freedom among his countrymen; he also made them realise the fact that freedom of the individual in social, political and economic spheres is not possible without political freedom of the country. Political freedom of the country is the root of all liberty and right of the individual. So Swami Vivekananda in his plan of nationalism visualised political freedom of the country as his sole aim and objective. It was not only his avowed goal; he fervently sought to make it also the goal of his countrymen and inspired them to reach the goal. As he said, "Arise and awake and stop not till the goal is reached. Arise and awake! Awake from the hypnotism of weakness...... Too much of inactivity, too much of weakness, too much of hypnotism has been and is upon our race. O ye modern Hindus, dehypnotise yourself ...... power will come, glory will come and every thing that is excellent will come......." Again he said, "Arise, awake, sleep no more; within each of you there is the power to remove all wants and

(16) Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P. 96
miseries .........If you think that infinite power.....

indomitable energy lie within you, you can reach the
(17)
goal."

To Swami Vivekananda, freedom is the

life-force of every race or nation. In freedom lies

its longevity. Without freedom no race, no nation can

survive on earth. As he said, "Liberty in thought and

action is the only condition of life, growth and wellbeing:

where it does not exist the man, the race, the nation

must go down." As an impassioned humanist he earnestly

hoped that the freedom which dawned in America on 4th

July 1776 would become universal in the world.

According to Swami Vivekananda

India is the fountain head of spiritualism for the

whole world. In all ages of history India has played

her spiritual role as a spiritual guide of the whole

humanity. But since India suffers from her political
degeneration under British imperialism she has forgot-
en her traditional role. In order to resume her role

of the glorious past said Swami Vivekananda, she must

be awakened and led to reach the goal of her national

freedom. Without her political freedom she can not play

her role for the world.

(17) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-VI, P.454
(18) Quoted in Manmohan Ganguly, Swami Vivekananda

- A Study, P.60
Whole world according to Swami Vivekananda, is under the severe stress of materialism of the West, and eagerly awaits India for solace. So it is high time for India to study the world phenomena and be ready to pick up again her age-old customery duty of supplying spiritual solace to the world. He said, "The eyes of the whole world are now turned towards this land of India for spiritual food; and India has to provide it for all the races. Here alone is the best ideal for mankind; and the Western scholars are now striving to grasp the ideal, enshrined in our Sanskrit literature and philosophy and which has been the characteristic of India all through the ages." Hence Swami Vivekananda cherished the goal of national freedom of India as much for herself as for the world as a whole.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the way to reach the goal of national freedom is full of hazards and hurdles. It involves the problems of life and death. Yet we must be up and doing on our way to reach the goal. On the way we must not succumb to despair. As he said, "Be not in despair, the way is very difficult like walking on the edge of a razor; yet despair not, arise, awake and find the goal." (20)

(19) Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P. 38
(20) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, P. 124
Aurobindo, though younger to Swami Vivekananda by almost a decade outlived him by almost a half century. He developed his flair for patriotism and nationalism from his Cambridge days. But he was deeply committed to the cause of Swaraj right since the partition of Bengal in 1905. The central theme of his nationalism was the extinction of the British rule from the soil of India. Hence his political goal was Swaraj or Self-rule i.e. absolute freedom of the country.

Aurobindo like Swami Vivekananda believed that Swaraj or national independence is the social political and religious necessity of the people of India. The realisation of this Swaraj will infuse new life into the nation, changing her whole fabric. All ills that crippled her will be soon eradicated and India, as a nation, will recover her soul, arise once again to her pristine glory and greatness, occupying the most esteemed place in the hierarchy of nations of the world. As he said, "Swaraj is the life-belt, Swaraj the pilot, Swaraj the star of guidance .... She must change the rags of the past so that her beauty may be readorned. She must alter her bodily appearance so that her soul may be newly expressed." (21)

(21) Bande Mataram, 5 March, 1908
As Swami Vivekananda so also Aurobindo believed that India had an appointed mission to lead the world. But she can not fulfill this mission "over-shadowed by the foreign power and foreign civilization."

He believed that India had not only a glorious past and a rich and dazzling heritage; an equally glorious future awaits her. This glorious future consisted in providning spiritual leadership to the world. But this spiritual leadership she can not provide to the world, herself in bondage, in the grip of political subjugation. Therefore in the interest of the humanity she must be free. As he said, "God has set apart India as the fountain-head of holy spirituality and he will never suffer that fountain to run dry. Therefore Swaraj has been revealed to us. By our political freedom, we shall once more recover our spiritual freedom. Once more in the land of the saints and sages will burn up the fire of ancient Yogo and the hearts of her people will be lifted up into the neighbour-hood of the eternal." He further said, "If India does not become free, men will not be free. People of other countries think only of their own interests: people of India even when they think about India, think of the whole world."

(22) Bande Mataram, 23 February, 1908
(23) A.B.Purani, The Life of Sri Aurobindo, P.126
Besides, Aurobindo like Swami Vivekananda pitched his ambition on Swaraj as stated previously, on the ground that individual, social and national development are inconceivable without Swaraj. Swaraj held the key to all types and forms of development and progress. India can be rescued from the state of decline and decadence, poverty and under-development, misery and exploitation and ushered into a better world and better life with a brighter future only through Swaraj. Hence he pined for "Swaraj as the object of political endeavour - Swaraj as the only remedy for all our ills - Swaraj as the one demand nothing - sort of which will satisfy the people."

Aurobindo was much concerned with Swaraj, the national freedom, the ultimate end of which as he explained to his people, was "entire and radical change of the system of government, "acquisition of political power, attainment of self-government, "substitution for the autocratic bureaucracy," "perfect national liberty," "..... full, vigorous and noble realisation of its national existence" and "a free national government unhindered even in the least degree by foreign control.""
Aurobindo felt concerned about Swaraj because like Swami Vivekananda he believed that national liberty is the precondition of individual liberty. Aurobindo also, in this light went a step further and said that national liberty is not only the precondition of individual liberty; it is also the precondition of the liberty of the whole world. Neither individual nor liberty on the global scale can be conceived without national liberty or Swaraj. National liberty or Swaraj promotes on the one hand individual liberty and on the other, liberty at the international level. National liberty or Swaraj makes possible life of the individual, his unrestrained development and the development of an international community. As he said, "We advocate the struggle for Swaraj first because liberty is in itself a necessity of national life; secondly because liberty is the first indispensable condition of national development; thirdly because in the next great stage in human progress, it is not a material but a spiritual, moral and physical advance that has to be made and for this a free Asia and in Asia a free India must take the lead and liberty is therefore worth-striving for, for the world's sake. India must have Swaraj in order to live; she must have Swaraj in order to live well and happily; she must have Swaraj in order to live for the
world; not as a slave for the material and political
benefit of a single purse-proud and selfish nation but
as a free people for the spiritual and intellectual
benefit of the human race."

Like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo, highlighting liberty as the vital force of national life held
that "Liberty is the life-breath of a nation." Again
he held that "liberty is the first requisite for the
sound health and vigorous life of nation." But a foreign
despotism said Aurobindo is an unnatural condition
that brings about unhealthy and unnatural condition among
the subject people that lead to fatal decay and dis-
organisation of the nation.

Like Swami Vivekananda Aurobindo also exhorted his people that the way leading to Swaraj is not
strewn with flowers but with deadly thorns causing
bloodshed and death. So, to pluck the flower of Swaraj
involves sacrifice and fortitude at the altar of the
motherland. As he said, "The work of national eman-
cipation is a great holy Yajna - liberty is the fruit
we seek from the sacrifice and the motherland, the
great goddess to whom we offer it."
Thus Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda held identical objective on Swaraj or national freedom. Their whole theory of nationalism centres round this objective, that inspired the people of pre-independent India to the very core of their heart, paving the path for National Freedom in the long run.

Gandhi is considered as the father of the nation - Indian nation. He was more than half a decade younger to Swami Vivekananda but a few years older to Aurobindo, like both passionately yearned for the termination of British rule over India and India's attainment of nationhood. Gandhi of course remained a loyalist till 1919. He assisted the British government in times of war and got Kaisar-i-Hind Gold Medal and other war decorations. He acted as the recruiting sergeant during the First World War. On his return to India in 1915, he met Lord Wellingdon the then Governor of Bombay, at latter's invitation and was said, "I ask nothing of you. I would like you to come and see me whenever you propose to take any step concerning the government." Mr. Edwin S. Montague after his interview with Gandhi in November 1917 entered in his diary about Gandhi, "All he wants is that

(31) G.D. Tendulkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Vol-I, P. 158
we should get India on our side. He wants the millions of India to leap to the assistance of the British throne." He believed in British sense of justice and fair play and aspired to win British favour for India as a part of British empire. Declaring his loyalty to British Raj he said, "It gives me the greatest pleasure to re declare my loyalty to this British empire and my loyalty is based on very selfish grounds. I discovered that the British empire had certain ideals with which I have fallen in love and one of these ideals is that every subject of the British empire has fresh scope possible for his energies and honour and whatever he thinks due to his conscience.... and I have more than once said, the government is best which governs least. And I have found that it is possible for me to be governed least under the British Empire." In 1918 Gandhi extending his helping hand to the Empire said, "To help the Empire was to help India on the road to independence." He rebelled against the British Empire only in 1919, after the Amritsar massacre and the British policy on Khilafat issue.

(32) Edwin S. Mantague, An Indian Diary, Ed. by Venetia Montague, P.58
(33) M.K. Gandhi, Speeches and Writings, P.310
(34) Simon Panter Brick, Gandhi against Machiavellism, P.67
However, Gandhi gave a serious thought to the question of Swaraj in 1908 in his book "Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule". But the Swaraj as the goal of his nationalism during those days differed from Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo. Where as Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo thought of Swaraj in the sense of complete freedom from foreign domination and political power in the hands of the Indian people, Gandhi in his Hind Swaraj observed, "It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves ..... It is not necessary for us to have as our goal and expulsion of the English. If the English become Indianised we can accommodate them." He of course said, "Real Home-Rule is self rule or self-control," but he qualified it by the rider "What we want to do should be done not because we object to English or because we want to retaliate but because it is our duty to do so..... I bear no enmity towards the English."

Even when Gandhi started his Non-cooperation Movement against the British imperialistic rule, he did not think in terms of completely snapping all relationship with the British authorities: his ambition during those days were "self government within British Empire, if possible, and without it, if necessary."

(35) M.K.Gandhi, Hind Swaraj and Indian Home Rule, P.65
(36) Ibid, P.104
Even at the Calcutta Session of the Congress in 1928 Gandhi was not prepared to make complete independence or severance of all British connection, the goal of the party. Dominion status or self-government within the British empire still had its appeal for him. It was only at Amritsar in the year 1929 that Gandhi moved the resolution on complete independence or Purna Swaraj. However once this decision was taken by the Congress, Gandhi became very serious and sincere for winning independence or Swaraj. During his conversation with Louis Fischer he said emphatically, "I am not interested in independence after the war, I want independence now." Since then the issue of independence or Swaraj as the goal of his nationalism became almost an obsession with him that changed his plan of action to a considerable extent. He accepted the truth of the famous Mantra given by Tilak that Swaraj is the birth right of the Indians. He declared that "Spreading disaffection against the British government in India was the Dharma of Indians" and with a great psychological insight he also warned the imperialist countries that domination over others would jeopardise the moral fibre of great powers.

(38) Quoted in V.P. Varma, Modern Indian Political Thought, P. 355
Gandhi felt that nationhood could not be achieved with the efforts of a few nationalist leaders and the rich, educated elites. Unless the poor masses - the teeming millions of India awake, India can not reach the goal of freedom. So to arouse the passion for nationhood among the poor masses, he insisted on "Poorman's Swaraj" that recognises no discrimination nor any differentiation between man and man, but establishes popular sovereignty, i.e. power to the people at large. He also believed that true nationhood could not be achieved unless the mass is awakened to a state of dignity and democratic consciousness of their right and privileges. Keeping these facts in view he wrote in 1930, "The Swaraj of my dream recognises no race or religious distinction. Nor it is to be the monopoly of the lettered persons nor yet of moneyed men. Swaraj is to be for all including the farmer, emphatically including the maimed, the starving toiling millions." He also wrote in 1931 "The Swaraj of my dream is the poor man's Swaraj. The necessaries of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by the princes and the moneyed man...... You ought to get all the ordinary amenities of life that a richman enjoys. I have not the slightest doubt

(39) Nirmal Ku. Bose, Selections from Gandhi, P. 111
that Swaraj is not Purna Swaraj until these amenities are guaranteed to you under it.

Drawing the attention of the people to the prevailing British injustice and for strengthening the forces of Swaraj in India, he also said, "A government that does not ensure this much of privilege, is not government. It is anarchy. Such government must be resisted." Thus Swaraj as the goal of Gandhi's nationalism seeks welfare of the downtrodden - the starving masses in order that the mass will take interest in it and rise against British imperialism. Regarding the welfare scheme of Gandhi's Swaraj, V.P. Varma has observed, "Swaraj of Gandhi's nationalism is to champion the interest of the downtrodden and starving millions."

While thinking of nationhood of India, Gandhi laid much stress on economic freedom rather than mere political freedom of the country. He felt that political freedom has no meaning for the people, if they go about naked and starving. This political freedom is bound to remain mere philosophical abstraction unless the vast masses have some gainful employment. So there should be adequate work for the workless.

(40) Nirmal Kumar Bose, Selections from Gandhi, P.111
(41) Harijan, June 9, 1946
(42) V.P. Varma, Modern Indian Political Thought, P.355
(43) Harijan, 9 May 1946
He stressed on the basic economic fact that man must have to eat. Freedom from want was the first article of his economic theory and he worked throughout his life to free Indians from the degeneration of poverty. Gandhi also felt that acquisition of nationhood does not only mean abolition of foreign domination from India, but throwing off, all shackles by every section of people and in every sphere of society. As he said, "I am not interested in freeing India merely from the British yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke what so ever. I have no desire to exchange King Log for King Stork."

Gandhi like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo also advocated individual freedom as a stimulus for national freedom. He declared, "Individual freedom alone can make society progressive. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automaton and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man." Again he declared, "The person or a citizen must be held inviolate. It can only be touched to arrest or to prevent violence." He also highlighted freedom of speech as a part of individual liberty that

(44) F.R. Morae's, Gandhi, the Humanist, 75th birthday Volume, 1944, PP. 19-20
(45) M.K. Gandhi, Hind Swaraj and Indian Home Rule, P. 60
(46) Harijan, Feb. 3, 1942
(47) Young India, April 24, 1930
instigated the people for national freedom. In 1940 when India had been made a party to the European war against her will, Gandhi strongly pleaded for freedom, freedom of speech during war time, because he felt that, "Freedom of speech of the individual is the foundation of Swaraj."

Gandhi, like both Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo exhorted his countrymen that without suffering and sacrifice attainment of nationhood is a day-dream. Intense suffering and prolonged struggle is the only way to national emancipation. It would be chimerical to believe that nationhood can be acquired as a gift. As he said, "Nations are born out of travail and suffering." He also frequently said, "Freedom is the fruit of suffering." Glorifying death and incarceration for the cause of national liberation he also said, "Death in the fight is a deliverance and prison gateway to liberty."

Thus national freedom that Gandhi accepted as "the part of Truth which is God" was also the goal of nationalism of Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo. These outstanding trio of Indian National Movement accepted attainment of nationhood by India as a great gospel and did their best for the fulfilment of this goal.

(48) Young India, August 24, 1945
(49) Ibid, November 19, 1920
(50) Ibid, October 13, 1921
(51) Ibid, April 7, 1927
(52) Ibid, April 3, 1924
SPIRITUAL BASIS OF NATIONALISM

Nationalism as Prof. Laski has pointed out, 'implies the sense of a special unity, which marks off those who share in it from the rest of mankind.' This special unity must be of universal importance. It must be conducive to high moral social life to attain such universality. But unless nationalism has a sound moral basis, which is consistent with the very ideals of human existence, it can not achieve universality nor can the nation thrive long. History abounds with the phenomena of meteoric fall of many great nations, that moved R.N. Tagore to write, "As I look back on the stretch of past years, I find the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization lying heaped as garbage out of history! ......." But Indian nationalism on the other hand, based on spiritualism - the very essential vitality of human existence - becomes universal despite time and space. During different ages of history devastating storms of terrible dimension have swept over the nation, but it has not hurt the very soul or spirit of India. Inspite of barbaric foreign invasions that brought in its train unprecedented oppression and massacre, India has retained her spirit ever clear and ever clean. However what India has sustained

(53) H.J. Laski, A Grammar of Politics, P. 219
(54) R.N. Tagore, Towards Universal Man, P. 350
is external injury to her national life, which she has recouped in no time. Therefore Jawaharlal Nehru writes, "India has been throughout the ages distinctively Indian, with the same national heritage and the same set of moral and mental qualities." He further writes, "Overwhelmed again and again, her spirit was never conquered even today when she appears to be a play thing of a proud conqueror, she remains unsubdued and unconquered."

The great trio - Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi believed in the spiritual heritage of India. They advocated spiritualism that forms the very core of Indian national life, as the basis of Indian nationalism. Swami Vivekananda said that "Each nation has its own peculiarity and individuality, with which it is born. In it lies the back-bone, the foundation or the bed-rock of its national life. Religion and spirituality form that foundation and national backbone of India." He further said that politics, military power, commercial supremacy, mechanical genius etc. are the fields of specialisation for different nations. But spirituality has always been the way of life in India.

(55) Pandit Nehru, Discovery of India, P.45
(56) Ibid, PP.536-37
(58) Ibid, Vol-III, P.137
Explaining the above facts Swami Vivekananda said that the Indians understand religion more than anything else. They can understand even politics only if it is given through religion. Religious sentiment of the people of India is very soft and sensitive. It reacts at very slightest stroke. Religion is a matter of special interest for them. From time immemorial the religious ideal has been dominating India in every sphere of life. "This is the line of life; this is the line of growth and this is the line of wellbeing in India." So uplift of India is to be attempted through vitalising her religion that forms the very soul of the nation. If attempt is made to throw off religion from India and assume politics as the centre of national life, the consequence will be the total extinction of nation. So Swami Vivekananda, emphasised on the influence of spirit over politics. He said, "Great indeed are the manifestations of muscular power and marvellous the manifestations of intellect expressing themselves through machines by the appliances of science; yet none of these is more potent than the influence which the spirit exerts upon the world." So politics is to be made subordinate to spiritualism.

(60) Ibid, Vol-III, P.137
in India. He asked all the nationalist leaders to deluge India with spiritual ideas before flooding India with politics. He said, "We may be degraded and degenerated now, but however degraded and degenerated we may be we can become great if only we begin to work in right earnest on behalf of our religion." Hence according to him spirituality but not politics, is our national ideal; in it lies the vitality of our nation. As long as we keep faith in this spirituality as the life-force of our nation, no force on earth can subdue us or kill. As he said, "This, therefore, the vitality of the race and so long as that remains, there is no power under the sun that can kill the race."

According to Swami Vivekananda our motherland is the land of religion and spirituality. India is still the first and foremost of all the nations of the world in this respect. Down the ages India has become faithful to her national ideal and that is why the Hindus have still survived as a nation inspite of numerous calamities and foreign invasions in the past. As he said, "Wave after wave of barbarian conquest has rolled over this devoted land of ours. "Allah Ho Akbar!" has rent the skies for hundreds of years and no Hindu

(61) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.139
(63) Ibid, Vol-III, P.147
knew what moment would be his last. This is the most suffering and the most subjugated of all the historic lands of the world. Yet we still stand practically the same race....

He further said that our ancestors, finding that the quest for nature through external investigation is useless, turned their attention inward. They focussed their attention on this inward quest, which is grander, infinitely higher, infinitely more blissful till it has become our sacred nature. Thus the name of religion and Hindu have become one. This is our national characteristic, the source of all vitality of the race.

Swami Vivekananda realised that spirituality is the only unifying force in India - a land of diverse faith, belief, sect and creed. If all religious forces stand united on the point of spirituality, national unity will be strengthened. That is why he said, "National Union in India must be gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same tune."

In his plan of nationalism Swami Vivekananda sought to deluge the world with spiritualism to bring new life and new vitality to the West and other nations.

(64) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P. 370
(65) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, PP. 85-86
of the world, groaning under the materialistic civilization of the West. As he said, "In this land are, still, religion and spirituality, the foundations which will have to overflow and flood the world to bring new life and new vitality to the Western and other nations, which are now almost borne down, half killed, and degraded by political ambitions and social scheming." 

If we analyse the life of Aurobindo, we find that during the first phase of his life as a nationalist, he thought of unifying India through politics and made politics to be the basis of his nationalism. That's why, he took active part in struggle against the British Empire. He believed it to be a means to the end. But towards 1909 his view of life changed. As M.N.Roy writes, "A year and half in jail (1908-1909) brought the philosopher and ascetic in Aurobindo Ghose......but he practically retired from politics." R.R.Diwakar has also observed, "Aurobindo emerged from Alipore a changed man,.........Jail had not only given him a vision of God but had also transformed him from a flaming agitator into a mature and serene political philosopher." He realised that political unification of India is impossible without spiritual unification. Like Swami

(68) M.N.Roy, Selected Works, Vol-I, P. 338
(69) R.R.Diwakar, Mohayogi Sri Aurobindo, P. 63
Vivekananda he believed that religion and spirituality is the very back-bone of Indian national life. So if India is to awake, she is to awake through her vital force of religion and spirituality. Since then he quietly retired from the arena of Indian politics to Pandicheri for spiritual practices and sadhana.

On the issue of spiritualism as the basis of Indian nationalism Aurobindo reached the acme of glory. As M.N.Roy writes, "What child birth was to North cliff 'Spiritualism is to our political anchorite Aurobindo Ghose ....... of course the cult of spiritualism is no monopoly of Aurobindo. In India apostle of this cult are as plentiful as its devotees. But Aurobindo represents the acme of the cult so much so that he is not content with the quixotic programme of spiritualising politics, but would make socio-political progress of the Indian people conditional upon attaining 'Supra mental State'."

Aurobindo like Swami Vivekananda, identified Hinduism with Indian nationalism. Ramsay Mac Donald observed, "Aurobindo Ghose has made the connection between his devout Hinduism and his strenuous nationalism clear. Man has to fulfil God, he has written, and that is only possible fulfilling himself, this again being

(70) Selected Works of M.N.Roy, Vol-II, P.165
possible only through nationality. On this religious conception rests his belief in Swadeshi and his desire to see the English predominance in India ended."

Swami Vivekananda subordinated politics to religion. As he said "If you succeed to throw off religion from India and take up politics then extinction of the nation will be the consequence. To prevent this you have to vitalise your religion first and subordinate everything else to it." He further said, "Before flooding India with political ideas first deluge the land with spiritual ideas." Aurobindo like him gave precedence to religion and spiritualism over politics and said, "It is the spirit alone that saves and only by becoming great and free in heart that we can become politically great and free." That is why he remained faithful to the high ideals of spirituality and universal love as a leader of the revolutionary movement in India.

Aurobindo raised politics to the plane of spirituality. He interpreted political freedom in terms of spiritual perfection. So nationalism to him was not merely a patriotic sentiment or an intellectual conception, but a deep religious sadhana. He identified

(71) J. Ramsay Mac Donald, The Awakening of India, P. 182
(72) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P. 44
(73) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P. 221
(74) Essay in Karmayogin, Sri Aurobindo
Hindu nationalism with religion and said that nationalism is not mere a political programme. It is a religion that has come from God.

Aurobindo differentiated nationalism from patriotism. He said that no man dare call himself a nationalist if he does so merely with a sort of intellectual pride, thinking that he is patriotic, thinking that he is something higher than those who do not call themselves by that name. If one is going to be a nationalist, if one is going to assent to the religion of nationalism, one must do it in a religious spirit.

He also said, "Nationalism is a religion that has come from God, .......... It has not been crushed. It is not going to be crushed. Nationalism survives in the strength of God and it is not possible to crush it, whatever weapon are brought against it. Nationalism is immortal, nationalism can not die because it is not a human thing, it is God...... God can not be killed, God can not be sent to Jail..... This great nation will rise again and become once more what it was in the days of spiritual greatness."

Aurobindo identified nationalism with Sanatana Dharma. He said, "The Hindu nation was born with Sanatana Dharma, with it, it moves and with it, (75) Speeches, Sri Aurobindo, PP.7-9
it grows. When Sanatana Dharma declines then the nation declines and if Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing with the nation, it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma, that is nationalism."

Swami Vivekananda called upon his compatriots to work for national emancipation, which would facilitate the work of diffusing spiritual knowledge in the world for the welfare of humanity at large. As he said, "This nationalship of ours, ye children of the immortals, my country-men, has been playing for ages, carrying civilization and enriching the whole world with its inestimable treasures. For scores of shining centuries, this nationalship of ours has been ferrying across the ocean of life and has taken millions of souls to the other shore, beyond all misery. But today it may have sprung a leak and got damaged, through your own fault or whatever cause it matters not ...... Would you not all unite together and put your best efforts to stop the holes? Let us all give our heart’s blood to do it........"

Like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo wanted Indian freedom from British imperialism and like him also in the freedom of India Aurobindo saw the hopes

(76) Uttar Para Speech, Sri Aurobindo, P.20
(77) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.461
of freedom of the entire world. As he said, "India awakes not for herself but for the humanity." He further said, "function of India is to supply the world with a perennial source of light and renovation...... She sends forth a light from her bosom which floods the earth and the heavens, and mankind bathes in it ....... The world needs India and needs her free."

Thus like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo gave a spiritual direction to Indian politics and nationalism. His interpretation of Indian spiritual nationalism excelled that of other spiritual nationalist of the age. In fact Aurobindo went much ahead of them in this respect and he is rightly acclaimed as the prophet of Neo-Nationalism in India. In the words of Dr. Karan Singh, "His concept of spiritual Nationalism and the divinity of motherland which imparted an esoteric significance to the movement for India's liberation," is a great contribution to Modern Indian Political Thought.

Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi, "the last link in the chain of great nationalists of the past and the first in that of the great nationalists of the future" felt properly the pulse of freedom of the entire world. As he said, "India awakes not for herself but for the humanity." He further said, "function of India is to supply the world with a perennial source of light and renovation...... She sends forth a light from her bosom which floods the earth and the heavens, and mankind bathes in it ....... The world needs India and needs her free."

Thus like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo gave a spiritual direction to Indian politics and nationalism. His interpretation of Indian spiritual nationalism excelled that of other spiritual nationalist of the age. In fact Aurobindo went much ahead of them in this respect and he is rightly acclaimed as the prophet of Neo-Nationalism in India. In the words of Dr. Karan Singh, "His concept of spiritual Nationalism and the divinity of motherland which imparted an esoteric significance to the movement for India's liberation," is a great contribution to Modern Indian Political Thought.

Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi, "the last link in the chain of great nationalists of the past and the first in that of the great nationalists of the future" felt properly the pulse of freedom of the entire world. As he said, "India awakes not for herself but for the humanity." He further said, "function of India is to supply the world with a perennial source of light and renovation...... She sends forth a light from her bosom which floods the earth and the heavens, and mankind bathes in it ....... The world needs India and needs her free."

Thus like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo gave a spiritual direction to Indian politics and nationalism. His interpretation of Indian spiritual nationalism excelled that of other spiritual nationalist of the age. In fact Aurobindo went much ahead of them in this respect and he is rightly acclaimed as the prophet of Neo-Nationalism in India. In the words of Dr. Karan Singh, "His concept of spiritual Nationalism and the divinity of motherland which imparted an esoteric significance to the movement for India's liberation," is a great contribution to Modern Indian Political Thought.

Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi, "the last link in the chain of great nationalists of the past and the first in that of the great nationalists of the future" felt properly the pulse of freedom of the entire world. As he said, "India awakes not for herself but for the humanity." He further said, "function of India is to supply the world with a perennial source of light and renovation...... She sends forth a light from her bosom which floods the earth and the heavens, and mankind bathes in it ....... The world needs India and needs her free."
Indian national life and sought to give a spiritual basis to Indian nationalism. He was a highly spiritual person and for him religion meant emphasis on moral and ethical values. His religion was identified with morality and ethics. He always spoke in terms of ethical idealism. To quote him, "For me morals, ethics and religion are convertible terms. A moral life without reference to religion is like a house built upon sand. A religion divorced from morality is like a sounding brass gong only for making noise and breaking heads." In this context he has also said, "I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality." He felt that as soon as the moral basis of religion is lost it ceases to be religion. Thus, he was a great believer in the dynamic force of religion in human history in bringing about social solidarity and national coherence. He felt that French nationalism, established by the French Revolution soon degenerated into despotic imperialism of Napoleon I and III and that the Russian slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat got perverted into dictatorship of a manipulating group - 'the vanguard' because they lacked religious foundation. It so happened, because the nationalism of the two countries were not ethically and

(81) Young India, October 7, 1924
(82) Nirmal Kumar Bose, Selection from Gandhi, P.225
morally inspired and had no rock-like spiritual foundation. He felt that ethics and morality as preached by all the religions are indispensable for the development of genuine nationalism. Hence he condemned the Godlessness and violence of Bolshevism.

Gandhi also condemned the Western materialistic nationalism very bitterly since it pays no regard for religion and spiritualism. Regardless of morality and ethics, it believes in limitless expansion of capitalism that has resulted in exploitation of the weaker peoples. In most cases it has resorted to Fascist technique. He said, "Western nationalism as it functions today is undiluted Nazism and Fascism. At best it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and Fascist tendencies of imperialism." He frankly stated that it was through immoral and unethical method that the British conquered India for their selfish end. He warned the Western nations that for such crime against humanity they have to answer one day.

Hence, for Gandhi, a spiritual nationalist, nationalism was not merely a political fact, but a spiritual necessity. As a humanist he never tolerated

(83) M.K. Gandhi, Non-Violence in Peace and War, Vol-I, P. 138
(84) Harijan, May 18, 1940
(85) M.K. Gandhi, Speeches, P. 753
or compromised with injustice, wrong, tyranny and authoritarianism. So unlike the Western materialistic nationalists his nationalism was founded on the bedrock of spiritualism - source of all morality and ethics - so that it will never get perverted nor degenerated come what may. He had firm conviction that India not only lives for herself but lives for the whole world. Welfare of humanity at large was the goal of her nationalism. Secular nationalism can not inspire its people to reach such an avowed goal. So he wanted to organise Indian spiritual nationalism for the benefit and service of whole humanity. He wrote, "Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive nor destructive. It is health-giving, religious, spiritual and therefore humanitarian. India must learn to live before she can aspire to die for humanity."

To Gandhi, in India's freedom lies the welfare of mankind. So as a great humanist, he took up the cause of Swaraj for India with great zeal and enthusiasm for the furtherance of service to mankind. To arouse passion for Swaraj among his countrymen and quicken the forces of Swaraj in India he wanted to spiritualise politics. When he found that the Indian masses preferred religion to politics, remained

(86) Nirmal Kumar Bose, Selection from Gandhi, P. 113

aloof from politics and Indian freedom movement, he felt that it hindered the achievement of the goal of Swaraj. As Vinoba Bhave has written, "Gandhi transformed the work for Swaraj into work for the service of mankind. He gave politics a religious and spiritual hue so that the movement for Swaraj would become more than a political movement with millions taking part in it who had no interest in politics. Babu himself was not interested in politics. Even though he had to grapple with political issues right up to the moment of his death, the whole struggle was for him part of a wider spiritual Sadhana: the quest for truth."

Gandhi did not give much importance to politics as distinct from ethics, spiritualism and religion. Hence like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo he based his politics on religion. In this respect he also went a step ahead of them to recognise Truth and Non-violence as his only religion saying that "politics should be governed by truth and non-violence." In his opinion politics can not be separated from religion since both stand for the same ideal i.e. service of mankind. He said, "Those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics, do not know

(88) Vinoba on Gandhi, P.26
(89) Ibid, P.30
what religion means ........He does not know what patriotism or feelings for one's own country is, who does not know true duty or religion." He also said, "If I take part in politics, it is only because politics today encircles us like the coil of the snake ........ I am trying to introduce religion in to politics." It is clear from the above statements that Gandhi like the Western nationalists did not divorce religion from politics. Moreover, he fervently sought to unite them for the furtherance of spiritual nationalism of the country.

To Gandhi, public life, which is obviously related to national life was always concerned with religion and morality. So, from public life, religion - the source of all morality - can not be seperated. If there is seperation, the consequence will be very terrible. Therefore he insisted to introduce religion in to public life and said, "At the back of every word that I have uttered since I have known that public life in India is and every act that I have done, there had been a religious consciousness and down right religious motive." Thus by stressing on religion and morality in Indian public life that has obvious relation with national life, he intended to strengthen the cause of spiritual nationalism in India.

(90) Conversation of Gandhi, Ed. C. S. Sukla, P. 14
(91) Young India, May 8, 1920
(92) Harijan, 7 November, 1921
Religion and Politics, therefore, to Gandhi are inseparable. Both of them are useful for the society. They are meant for identical purpose i.e., the purpose of human welfare. So he declared, "For me politics, bereft of religion is absolute dirt ever to be shunned." Again he said, "......there are no politics devoid of religion......Politics bereft of religion are a death-trap, because they kill the soul."

Gandhi not only spiritualised politics; he apprehended worst to follow if politics dominates over religion. So in order to forestall domination of politics over religion he sought subordination of politics to religion. In this respect he probably followed the foot-prints of Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo. However his primary intention was to build up the edifice of Indian nationalism on the basis of religion and spirituality. As Romain Rolland has observed, "To understand Gandhi's activities it should be realised that his doctrine is like a huge edifice, composed of two different floors or grades. Below is the solid ground work, the basic foundation of religion. On this vast and unashakable foundation is based the political and national campaign."

(93) Young India, November 27, 1924
(94) N.B. Sen, Glorious Thoughts of Gandhi, p. 230
(95) Romain Rolland, Mohatma Gandhi, P. 144
Thus spiritual basis of nationalism is one of the common traits of three great nationalists of India - Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi.

(C) NATIONAL EDUCATION

British system of education, in course of time, gave rise to severe discontentment in India. Many political associations sprouted up to ventilate people's wounded feelings, of whom the Indian National Congress was at the forefront. Year after year it passed resolutions hammering people's demand, but British authority paid no heed to it. Hence a cloud of disillusionment hovered over the Indian scene. At such a juncture a nationalistic public opinion was taking shape and Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi, three great nationalists advocated scrapping of English system of education in India and introduction of a nationalistic system. They realised that education is the strongest force to regenerate the country by awakening self-consciousness among the masses. So they strongly resented the prevailing system of British education in India that sought to destroy the seeds of national self-consciousness in its very embryo and demanded vigorously a national system of education.

(96) A.R. Desai, Social Background of Indian Nationalism, p. 158
for the Indian masses, based on national language and culture. This novel type of education will arouse a sense of nationalism among the people which will strengthen national unity. This stress on national education is another point of semblance in the nationalism of the Swarajist trio like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi.

Swami Vivekananda as a nationalist, realised the enormous importance of education in the building up of a nation. He felt that education is a positive means by which human nature can be shaped in the right direction of national consciousness to produce a unified harmonious state. It too, makes man realise his own importance and worth and causes him to react against the prevailing injustice and oppression that always tend to pull him downwards. So stressing the need of mass education he declared that 'the only service to be done for our poor masses is to give them education, to develop their lost individuality. That is the only help they require and then the rest must follow as the effect.' He also declared, "We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is

(97) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-IV, P. 362
Swami Vivekananda was completely disgusted with the prevailing system of education in India. He said, "The present system of education is all wrong. The mind is crammed with facts before it knows how to think." He criticised the prevailing system of education as useless that rarely produced an original man in the country during the last fifty years. The system of education was meant to make us fit only for a thirty-rupees clerkship or at best a lawyer, but did not help us to reach the height of our ambition in life. It was because of this that the system of education was negative in character, and had no bearing on the culture and habit of the people. As he said, "The education that you are now getting is not man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education is worse than death. The child is taken to school and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool, the second thing that his grand father is a lunatic, the third thing that all his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth that all the sacred books are lies! By the time he is sixteen, he is a mass of

(99) Ibid, Vol-VIII, P.280
(100) Ibid, Vol-III, P.103
(101) Ibid, Vol-V, P.10
According to Swami Vivekananda the system of education in which Indian culture and customs did not find any place, had proved abortive for the people of India. It was altogether a meaningless education to be rejected forth with. Pouring out his heart-felt anger and deep-seated resentment against it, he said, "Is there not water enough in the sea to drown you, books, gowns, university diplomas and all?"

Again he said, "Customs of the country, customs of the people must be adhered to. No compromise, no white washing, nothing else. Throw away such texts, the customs of the people have to be followed."

Hence according to Swami Vivekananda, education in India must be based on the culture of the country. Education in order to be life-building, man-making, and character-making should conform to its national tradition or culture. As he said, "Knowledge without culture is only skin-deep." "For raising the masses," he said, "interpretation of scriptures in the regional languages and at the same time popularisation of sanskrit are necessary."

(102) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.301
(103) Ibid, Vol-V, P.10
(104) Ibid, Vol-V, P.264
(105) Ibid, Vol-III, P.302
(106) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Vivekananda, P.62
(107) Ibid, P.62
Swami Vivekananda not only condemned the British system of education on the ground that it was based on foreign culture; he also condemned it on the ground that it was also imparted through a foreign language. To him education, in order to be very effective must be imparted in one's own language. As he said, "The language in which we naturally express ourselves, in which we communicate: our anger, grief or love etc - there can not be fitter language than that. We must stick to that idea, that manner of expression, that diction and all. No foreign language can ever have that force, that expression or admit of being given any turn you please as that country language."

When education is given in the language of the nation, the language flourishes and side by side it brings about a sort of lingual unity among the country-men that serves as a stimulus to national unity. As he said, ".....language is the chief means and index of a nation's progress and unity." He further said, "......the more strength is infused in to the national life, the more will language..... become spontaneously instinct with ideas and life."

(109) Ibid, Vol-VI, P. 188
(110) Ibid, Vol-VI, P. 189
Defying the argument of some Westernised teachers, who held that modern science and technology could not be imparted through the country's language except English, Swami Vivekananda said, "Every man is capable of receiving education if it is imparted in his own language. A teacher who can not convince others should weep on account of his own inability to teach the pupil in their own language, instead of cursing them and dooming them to live in ignorance and superstition, setting up the plea that the higher knowledge is not for them." Again he said, 'The greatness of a teacher consists in the simplicity of his language. If he expresses himself in the common language of the people he is the only worthy teacher.'

Thus Swami Vivekananda highlighting the defects of the British system of education in India demanded a national system of education, based on indigenous culture and language and asked the contemporary social reformers to spread such education among the poor masses in order to quicken the process of national regeneration. Drawing the attention of the social workers and reformers to it, he said that ever since education began to flow in among the poor masses,

(112) Ibid, Vol-V, P. 106
Europe began to advance. So the poor and lower class people in India must be educated to make the nation worth-living. But if the poor people, depending on daily wages for their subsistence, do not turn up to education, the only alternative before them is that education should reach them. He said, "If the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor cannot come to education, education must reach them at the plough, in the factory, everywhere."

Thus Swami Vivekananda, emphasised on national education for the poor masses of India.

Aurobindo, a brilliant product of Western system of education also emerged as a bitter critic of that system and like Swami Vivekananda became an impassioned advocate of national education right since his Borada days. His Borada days developed in him tremendous weakness for cultural heritage of India. It is rightly said, "In fact Borada became for him the starting point for new studies regarding everything Indian and Western." He branded the British education in India as anti-national and took

(114) Ibid, Vol-VIII, P. 308
(115) R.R. Diwakar, Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo, P. 30
(116) Bande Mataram, 17 April, 1907
A plunge in National Education Movement.

Aurobindo joined the Bengal National College with his primary purpose to convert the whole educational system into a vehicle of patriotism and nationalism, to be wielded as a weapon to win Swaraj. Education, as he felt, shall act as a catalytic agent against colonialism and imperialism. The aim of his plan of education was to inculcate a sense of nationalism among the educated people, in a very short period who will inspire the masses immediately. As he said, "Nationalism having once taken possession of the educated class, must immediately proceed to invade the masses." That apart, the syllabus of such study also should not be very complicated. The syllabus should cover such topics as would inspire the people to work and suffer for the motherland rather than opening careers for earning a livelihood. S.C. Sengupta has rightly remarked, "His syllabus of national education was very simple, straightforward and not very difficult to teach." It is also said, "It (The Syllabus) attempted to achieve a healthy intellectual and moral development of the student according to the highest national ideas."

(117) Quoted in S.C. Sengupta, Swami Vivekananda and Indian Nationalism, P.101
(118) Sri Aurobindo's speeches, P.3
(119) S.C. Sengupta, Swami Vivekananda and Indian Nationalism, P.101
(120) Haridas and Uma Mukherjee, Origin of the National Education Movement, P.50
While advocating boycott as a part of his Doctrine of Passive Resistance, Aurobindo condemned the British system of education in India and said, "We are dissatisfied... with the condition under which education is imparted in this country, its calculated poverty and insufficiency, its anti-national character, its subordination to the government and the use made of that subordination for the discouragement of patriotism, and the inculcation of loyalty." The objective behind Educational Boycott, according to Aurobindo, was to make "the control of its youthful minds pass out of the hands of the foreigners" so that the government shall not get any scope to throttle the growth of nationalistic and patriotic sentiment of the young mind and instil in them a sense of loyalty for the imperial power so that the mind shall be free from the poverty or insufficiency of intellectual commitment to nobler ideals like love of the nation and loyalty for the land and the people.

Aurobindo like Swami Vivekananda said that education in India must be based upon its culture, its literature, history, and philosophy. To him national education cannot take itself adrift from its

(121) Bande Mataram, 17 April, 1907
(122) Ibid, 17 April, 1907
(123) R.C.Majumdar, History of Freedom Movement in India, Vol-II, P.78
roots, its heritage. Since spiritualism constitutes the back-bone of Indian culture and heritage, such education can not afford to neglect spiritual basis. As he wrote in Karmayogin, "What was the secret of the great gigantic intellectuality, spirituality and super human moral force which we see pulsating in the Ramayana and Mahabharat, in the ancient philosophy, in the supreme poetry, art, sculpture and architecture of India? What was at the basis of the incomparable public works and engineering achievements, the opulent and exquisite industries, the great triumph of science, scholarship, jurisprudence, logic, metaphysics, the unique social structure? What supported the heroism and self-abandonment of the Kshatriya, the Sikh and the Rajput, the unconquerable national vitality and endurance? What was it that stood behind that civilization second to none in the massiveness of its outlines or the perfection of its details? Without a great and unique discipline involving perfect education of soul and mind a result so immense and persistent would have been impossible." 

Aurobindo believed that a nation is an integrated whole deeply steeped in its past and growing out of it and obtaining sustenance from it. If India

(124) Sri Aurobindo, The Brain of India,PP.9-10
has to win its nationhood, revivified into the glory and greatness that is its legacy and fulfill its national destiny, it must bank upon its inheritance. Any dream of building up India into a robust and enviable nation, by cutting itself adrift from its ancient heritage, is foredoomed to failure. Hence he said, "Whoever wishes to cut off the nation from its past is no friend of our national growth." Thus it is evident that Aurobindo in his scheme of national education followed the foot-prints of Swami Vivekananda who put emphasis primarily on Indian culture as the basis of national education for India.

Aurobindo also believed that the system of national education shall be so designed that it shall instil in the young a sense of self-confidence and self-reliance. He realised that the English system of education, prevailing in India made the educated people too much reliant on the imperial power. Besides it also stunted their courage, their manliness and their individuality and failed them in cultivating a sense of commitment to higher values of life. That also dwarfed their capacity to take risk, patriotism and the spirit of nationalism. As he said, "He, trained by present system of education even when it is somewhat..."

(125) Bande Mataram, 24 February, 1908
above the average, is almost invariably deficient in practicality and the robustness to shake off cherished superstitions and face and recognise facts. Hence national education apart from making the youth self-reliant and robust in spirit shall endow them with manly courage, nationalistic and patriotic fervour, spirit of adventure and the strength and stamina to take risks for nobler causes. As he wrote, "National education shall be a system which will be impregnated with the spirit of self-reliance so as to build up man, national man, able men, men fit to carve out a career for themselves by their own brain power, fit to meet the shocks of life and breast the waves of adventure. So shall the Indian people cease to sleep and become once more a people of heroes, patriots, so shall it became a nation and no longer a disorganised mass of men."

Swami Vivekananda stressed that national education must be imparted through national language, the common language of the masses. But Aurobindo went much further and said that the entire system of national education must be manned and managed by the Indians, rather than the British people in India.

(126) Bande Mataram, 13 July, 1907
(127) Ibid, 24 February, 1908
To him national education must be a completely autonomous system, controlled absolutely by the Indians. As he writes, "It means an education .... absolutely by the Indians." Putting stress on autonomy of the system of national education again he said, "Independence is the first condition and any scheme which disregards it is doomed to failure." (129)

Thus Aurobindo also like Swami Vivekananda emphasised on national education to inspire and prepare the people of India for nationalism and national unity.

Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi as a nationalist also emphasised on national education. He also condemned the prevailing English system of education in India, which according to him did not help the people in their being and becoming. For him, "a nation's culture resides in the heart and the soul of the people." So education for a nation, in order to be effective, must be based on its culture. Since the existing system of education was not founded on its culture it was of no use for Indians. Condemning

(128) Bande Mataram, 26th June, 1907
(129) Ibid, 13 July, 1907
(130) Harijan, January 28, 1909
it he said, "The existing system of education is defective...... it is based upon foreign culture to the almost entire exclusion of indigenous culture."

Explaining the glaring defects of the system of education he said that the text books, dealt not with indigenous culture, but exclusively with that of the West, making Indian boys and girls foreigners in their homeland. All Western phenomena that embody themselves in the text books produce little effect upon the minds of the Indian people in unfolding their mental faculty and making themselves discern the light and life in their home-land. The more they were educated the more they became strangers in their home country. They failed to take pride in their own surrounding and the culture of their own land. All charms and pleasures of their indigenous culture remained sealed to them for ever. Describing this woeful scene he wrote, "His own civilization is presented to him as imbecile, barbarous, superstitious and useless for all practical purpose. His education is calculated to wean him from his traditional culture and if the mass of educated youths are not entirely

denationalised, it is because the ancient culture is too deeply imbeded in them to be altogether uprooted even by an education, adverse to its growth."

Gandhi was very much struck with owe by the evils of such education. He expressed his extreme resentment and severe discontentment saying that "if I had my way, I would certainly destroy the majority of the present text books and cause to be written text books which have a bearing on the correspondence with home-life, so that a boy as he learns may react upon his immediate surrounding."

Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi was also dead against the English medium of education. As he said, "Real education is impossible through a foreign medium." Highlighting the defect of English medium he said, "The foreign medium has caused brain fag, put an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfitted them for original work and thought and disabled them for filtrating their learning to the family or the masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own land. It is the greatest tragedy of existing system."
Some Indians felt inclined towards English medium of education and sought to groom their children in English fashion. But Gandhi asked such Indians to give up such inclination towards a foreign language saying that such undesirable habit of fascination would keep our own languages ever backward under the supremacy of foreign language. As he said, "If we seek the pleasure of English language, our language will remain poor, which means that we shall remain a poor people. The habit of deriving enjoyment only from a foreign language is, I must say, if you will pardon me the simile, like the thief's habit of deriving pleasure from stolen goods."

Preference for a foreign medium will also result in the extinction of our own literature. He was so much overwhelmed by the evils of English medium, that sought to threaten the very existence of our vernaculars, that he ventilated his wounded feeling by saying, "The foreign medium has prevented the growth of our vernaculars. If I have the powers of a despot, I should today stop the tuition of our boys and girls through foreign medium and require all the teachers and professors on pain of dismissal to introduce the change forth with.......It is an evil that

(136) Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol-XIV, P.208
Gandhi was, in fact, against English education, including the English medium in Indian system of education. As he said, "I have come to the conclusion that in the ordinary course of our life neither our men nor our women need necessarily have any knowledge of English." Of course he had no hostility to English language and literature. His uncompromising opposition to English education does not mean that he was completely averse to foreign literature and culture. As he said, "English is the language of international commerce and diplomacy and therefore I consider its knowledge on the part of some of us as essential. As it contains some of the richest treasures of thought and literature, I should certainly encourage its careful study among those who have linguistic talent and expect them to translate these treasures for the nation in its vernaculars."

Gandhi was opposed to Western system of education as it has no contribution for the building up of the character of the individual. His view was that education must promote a sound moral character

(137) Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol-XXVIII, P.329
(138) Ibid, Vol-XIV, P.207
(139) Ibid, Vol-XXVIII, P.330
among the people. So like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, who believed in man-making and character building education, Gandhi also said, "Literary education is of no value if it is not able to build up a sound moral character."

Gandhi in his scheme of national education not only put emphasis on the literary education based on Indian culture and tradition; he also put emphasis on the training in manual labour. He held a very strong view that since India is mainly an agricultural country and for 80% people, cultivation is the mainstay of their subsistence, Indian students should be made to acquaint themselves with physical labour. As he said, "Whatever may be true of other nations, in India at any rate where more than eighty percent of the population is agricultural,... it is a crime to make education merely literary and to unfit boys and Girls for manual work in after-life. Indeed I hold that as the larger part of our time is devoted to labour for earning our bread, our children must from their infancy be taught the dignity of such labour. Our children should not be so taught as to despise labour." Again he said, "The introduction of manual

(140) Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, p.224
(141) Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol-XXVIII, P.329
training... will teach them an occupation on which they can fall back in after life, if they choose, for earning a living. Such a system shall make our children self-reliant. Nothing will demoralise the nation so much as that we should learn to despise labour."

Gandhi's scheme of national education has a special reference to education of women. Emphasising the need of female education he said, "It is no exaggeration to say that a human being without education is not far removed from an animal. Education therefore, is as necessary for woman as it is for man." But as the prevailing system of education was unsuitable for Indian women, he asked them to give up such education. As he said, "Our present system of education is full of error and productive of harm in many respects. It should be eschewed by men and women alike. Even if it were free from its present blemishes, I would not regard it as proper for women for all points of view."

Gandhi was much pleased to see the excellent activities of some women in Champaran district of the Tirhut division in Bihar, in waking up their backward sisters

(142) Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol-XXVIII, P. 329
(143) Ibid, Vol-XIV, P. 207
(144) Ibid, Vol-XIV, P. 207
to freedom, both individual and national. Appreciating their role he said, "Women ...... are doing excellent work in Champaran. They are waking up their extremely backward sisters to freedom."

Thus like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi also condemned the British system of education in India and stressed the need of national education based on indigenous culture and language for the promotion of national consciousness and unity in India.

(D) HUMANISTIC BASIS OF NATIONALISM

Humanism is the finest flower of Indian culture. The Veda and Upanishads that constitute the very core of Indian Culture, look upon the whole universe as one family and prays for divine blessing for it as, 'Let all be happy, let all be immune from disease, let all be gentle, and let not they be ever afflicted with sorrow.' Love for all men, for all creatures and for the creation as a whole is the main theme of Indian culture.' Let the Earth, the Sky, the Water and the Trees and the Medicines etc.

(146) Bruhadaranyak Upanishad, Shantipatha, Sloka-1
be tranquil and tranquiliser.* This has been prayed in our Veda Mantra. Thus love for all creatures and entire creation, is the core of Indian spiritualism.

Down the ages different prophets and visionaries of India like Buddha, Chitanaya, Sankarcharya, Ramanuja etc have upheld the cause of humanism and have laid down their lives upholding this ideal. In the light of this philosophy the great humanist poet R.N. Tagore writes, "Civilization must be judged and prized not by the amount of power it has developed, but by how much it has evolved and given expression to, by its laws and institutions, the love of humanity."

But under the impact of the materialistic civilization of the West that gave rise to colonialism and imperialism and brought India under the sway of British imperialism, the lofty humanistic philosophy was strangled. The humanistic value like dignity of human life and right and liberty of the individual were trampled under the heels of the imperialist power. Man was subordinated to money and degraded to servitude. The humanistic culture reached

(147) Yajurveda, Chapter-36, Mantra-10
(148) R.N. Tagore, Sadhana, P.108
the saddest point in human history. M.N.Roy, has accordingly written "The eclipse of the humanist tradition is the curse of this degeneration and decay. Modern civilization stood at the head of the declining plane of decay the moment it broke away from the tradition of humanism - subordinated man to the institutions." However the 19th century witnessed the emergence of a galaxy of great souls in India who initiated revival of interest in humanistic values. Of them Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi were the three spiritual figures, who apart from being patriots and nationalists, were deeply inspired by humanistic values.

Swami Vivekananda's humanism as discussed earlier in Chapter-IV of this dissertation, is based upon the philosophy of Upanishads and the teachings of Sri Ramkrishan. He had renounced the world not for the purpose of seeking his own salvation but for finding a way out for the world, dominated by all kinds of miseries - both material and spiritual. He followed the foot-prints of Lord Buddha, who renounced his royal estate, not for his personal salvation but for mitigating the sorrows and sufferings of the world.

(149) M.N.Roy, Reason, Romanticism and Revolution, P.105
As he said, "Gautama Buddha ..... did not believe in personal God, nor a personal soul, never asked about them, but was a perfect agnostic and yet was ready to lay down his life for any one and worked all his life for the good of all and thought only of the good of all." 

Swami Vivekananda was a true lover of man. The more he came closer to man, the more he enjoyed the nearness to God. Like Tagore, who said, "In the vessel of man's affection I taste his divine nectar," Swami Vivekananda enjoyed his God in his affection for man. His love for man was so great that he identified man with God. As Annie Beasant declared, "To know man is to know God," Swami Vivekananda also said, "every body is divine, is God."

Jesus Christ asked to love all men as brothers, but Swami Vivekananda went a step ahead and said, "Love every man as your ownself and not as your brother as in Christianity. Brother-hood should be superseded by universal self-hood. Not universal brother-hood but universal self-hood is our motto."

(150) Swami Vivekananda, Practical Vedanta, P. 105
(151) R.N. Tagore, Arogya, P. 29
(152) Annie Beasant, The Self and its Sheaths, P. 1
(154) Ibid, Vol-IV, P. 122
He believed in the worship of Man-God and criticised (155) the worship of God in the temples. To him it is perfect lunacy to place edibles before images of God leaving the true God, the Man-God behind.

Swami Vivekananda's conception of universal religion was based on the belief that God manifests Himself through living beings. He gave a call to the people of India to work for the welfare of humanity. He always exhorted people to seek God in fellow human beings. He often gave a call to serve man (156) in order to find God. He expressed his desire to be born again and suffer thousands of miseries so that he could worship the only God, the sum total of all souls.

Swami Vivekananda's love for man was so great that his heart bled to see the suffering of the poor man. He called them "Daridra Narayan" and called upon his followers to serve the poor the downtrodden with great care and love. His love for mankind reached the climax when he visited England. Although as an Indian patriot, he deeply resented the rule of the foreigners, as a lover of mankind, he entertained no ill-will towards the people of Great Britain. As he said, "There is no more among you, who loves the English

(155) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-VI, P. 264
(156) Romain Rolland, The Life of Swami Vivekananda and Universal Gospel, P. 11
(157) Life of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P. 178 (by His Eastern and Western Disciple)
people more than I do now." He found in England "a nation of heroes, a true Khatriya"

As a true lover of mankind, Swami Vivekananda emphasised on the right, liberty and equality of all individuals. These are the conditions in which the individual attains his best-self and perfection of life. According to Dr.Y.Chelysev, Swami Vivekananda founded his society on the lofty ideals of freedom and equality.

Swami Vivekananda's love for man made him a staunch individualist. He stood for right and liberty of man. He would perhaps say, "Every state is known by rights that it maintains. Our method of judging its character lies, above all, in the constitution that it makes to the substance of man's happiness." He did not allow any state interference in individual's right and liberty. To him state interference hinders the growth of the individual. So state should not make any law to limit the individual's liberty. As he felt too many laws are sure sign of death.

Swami Vivekananda exhorts that the law that impedes the growth of individual, should be thrown

(158) Romain Rolland, The Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.88
(159) Ibid, P.89
(160) Swami Vivekananda, A centenary Volume, P.150
(161) H.J.Laski, A Grammar of Politics, P.89
away out right and he appreciated the ability to break such laws. As he said, "It is not law that we want, but ability to break the law."

This intense sense of humanism of Swami Vivekananda turned him to a nationalist. His nationalism is the product of his humanism. As a spiritual personality he had no concern for nationalism and political freedom of the country. But his love for man made him realise the value and importance of nationalism and national unity. When he saw the Indian masses rotting in misery and hardship under British imperialism, his sense of humanism revolted against it. He fervently called on his country-men to rise against all such injustice and exploitation. He said, "India must rise, the masses, the poor are to be fed and made happy......" Again to awake his country-men nationally he said, "We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the chief cause of all mischief of British imperialism in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and raise the masses."

Encouraging a mass rising he also said, "The only hope of India is from the masses." Thus the nationalism of Swami Vivekananda has a humanistic basis. His nationalism

---

(163) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-V, P.289
(164) The Life of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-VI, P.55
(165) Ibid, Vol-I, P.306-07
(166) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-V, P.106
is the manifestation of his tender feeling of love and affection for the people of India. However his nationalism is not narrow nationalism confined to the interest of people of India alone, but to the humanity at large. Interest of humanity as a whole was his chief concern.

This very sense of humanism made Swami Vivekananda think in terms of internationalism also and "he called for the establishment of friendly relations between all nations, based on love of man for each other." So his nationalism, the product of his humanism is but universalism or cosmopolitanism, that embodies in itself the principles of peaceful co-existence of the nations on the basis of universal brotherhood. It is above regionalism, capitalist chauvinism and exclusiveness that characterise the Western nationalism of Germany, Italy etc. Based on sacrifice, and renunciation, it abhors greed for wealth, power and fabulous luxury of the West. Unlike the Western concept of nationalism Swami Vivekananda's nationalism conforms to the canons of morality, ethics and humanism. It does not accept military conquest or territorial aggrandizement as signs of national prestige; rather it

(167) Swami Vivekananda very often said, "I know my mission in life and no chauvinism about me; I belong as much to India as to the world..."

(168) Swami Vivekananda, Studies in Soviet Union, P. 216 (A centenary Volume)
believes in spiritual conquest for spiritualisation of the world. As he said, "India must conquer the world and nothing less than this is my ideal."

Swami Vivekananda wanted to synthesise the West and the East in the interest of international understanding and welfare of the humanity at large. He sought to integrate the world spiritually to achieve solidarity of the universe. In fact his scheme of the union of the East and the West and spiritual integration of the world - the greatest landmark in the history of internationalism - is the outcome of his strong sense of love for humanity at large.

Modern age is the age of complexity. International situation has become very vexed and complicated. Problems of each nation can not be solved at national level. So Swami Vivekananda earnestly aspired for international organisations and international laws. As he said, "Even in politics and sociology, problems that were only national twenty years ago can no more be solved on national grounds only. They are assuming huge proportions and gigantic shapes. They can only be solved when looked at in the broader light of international

(169) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P.73
grounds. International organisations, international combinations, international laws, are the cry of the day." His international outlook left deep marks on Nehru, who wrote in his Discovery of India "progressively Swami Vivekananda grew more international in outlook...."

Thus Swami Vivekananda's humanism not only seeks the unity of India for national freedom; it also seeks promotion of international peace and brotherhood. It has been befittingly observed, "Swami Vivekananda's impassioned call for general fraternity and unity of India's people...... were combined with an appeal for peace and friendship among the nations of the world, which is the corner stone of Indian tradition, the main concept of Indian-national character." Hence humanism inspired Swami Vivekananda to be a nationalist and internationalist and, provided a basis to his theory of nationalism.

Aurobindo, who like Swami Vivekananda, sought to regenerate India, also made humanism the basis of his nationalism. Among the contemporary humanists he occupies a unique place. His humanist

(171) Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, P.316
(172) Swami Vivekananda, Studies in Soviet Union, P.217
(1st Century Volume)
approach to nationalism has made him a man, belonging to all nations and all ages, eternal or Sanatana in character. Unlike Gandhi and Nehru he could not, of course, influence the vast masses. Even then those who go through his philosophy are bound to note his burning optimism about the future of human race. His realistic approach to the problems of life and his grand vision of human perfectability to achieve world unity as envisaged in his theory of nationalism, gives new hope to the bewildered mankind.

It is a fact to be reckoned with that like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo was primarily a humanist. Love for man was his innate philosophy. British imperialism that brought about social morass and political prostration in India, bringing in its wake poverty and starvation among the masses, told severely upon his sense of humanism. Reacting against this imperial injustice and oppression, he said, "I assert as our first and holiest duty, the elevation and enlightenment of the poor masses." For ameliorating the lot of the Indian masses he sought to arouse a sense of nationalism. It is said, "Aurobindo evinced a keen interest in the rehabilitation of the condition of the masses.......He felt......that greatness of India could

(173) Indu Prakash, December 4, 1895
only be brought out if national spirit among the masses was roused.......
Thus Aurobindo's national leadership was shaped by his humanistic philosophy.

Aurobindo's love for his motherland was not motivated by narrow nationalism. To him nationalism was spiritual Sadhana - a moral endeavour. So his nationalism is not selfish nationalism blind to the interest of humanity. On the contrary, like that of Swami Vivekananda it reflects an exuberant spirit of humanism, that makes it acceptable world over despite the diversities of world religion, race and geography.

He thought not only for India, its people, but for the whole world, the mankind. Indians were not only his concern; his concern was for the whole humanity also. In the freedom of India he saw the hope of the freedom of the entire world. Therefore he repeatedly said, "India awakes not for herself, but for the humanity." He said that India must be reborn because her rebirth is demanded by the future of the world. Thus we find that political freedom of India and his nationalism has a humanistic purpose.

(174) V.P. Varma, Modern Indian Political Thought, P. 304
(175) Quoted in Karan Singh, Prophet of Indian Nationalism, P. 80
Aurobindo's love for man was so great that he was in his lifetime ever prepared to lend his helping hand to every faltering being. He was confident that he could do it. As he said, "I am confident that I have the strength in me to bring salvation to these fallen people."

In his love for man, Aurobindo, like Swami Vivekananda recognised divinity in all man. To him "Man is Divine spirit on earth." He said, "Mankind on earth is one foremost self-expression of Divine Being in His Cosmic self unfolding." Again he said, "Mankind is godhead to be worshipped and served.... the respect, the service, the progress of human being and human life are the chief duty and chief aim of the human spirit. No other idol, neither the nation, the state, the family, nor anything else ought to take its place; they are only worthy of respect.... they are the images of Divine Spirit and enshrine its presence and its self manifestation."

Like Swami Vivekananda, a great humanist who considered human body as a holy temple, Aurobindo also glorified it and held it in high esteem.

(176) R.R.Diwakar, Maha Yogi Sri Aurobindo, P. 147
(177) Sri Aurobindo, The Ideal of Human Unity, P. 773
(178) Sri Aurobindo, The Human Cycle, P. 85
(179) Sri Aurobindo, The Ideal of Human Unity, P. 7
To him, human body, mind and soul, all are great objects of profound respect and deep veneration. People of all nations, should make it their motto. As he said, "The body of man must be respected, made immune from violence and outrage, fortified by science against disease and preventable death. The life of man is to be held sacred, preserved, strengthened, and ennobled, up-lifted. The heart of man is to be held sacred also, given scope, protected from violation, from suppression, from mechanisation. All this is not to be held as abstract or pious sentiment but given full and practical recognition in the persons of men, nations and mankind."

Like Swami Vivekananda, who felt the importance of individual liberty and equality as the basis of human society, as discussed in chapter II and III, Aurobindo also stressed the need of liberty, equality and fraternity in the perfection of human society. He says that a perfect society is based upon these three ideals. If the society failed to promote these essential ideas it can not perfect its individuals. As a result the state they constitute fails to reach the goal. As he said, "The perfect society will be that which most entirely favours the perfection of the individual; the perfection of the individual will be

(180) Sri Aurobindo, The Ideal of Human Unity, P. 733
incomplete if it does not help him towards the perfect
government of the social aggregate to which he belongs."

Hence Aurobindo as a humanist, believed in individual
liberty and equality to be the criteria of a state.
M.N.Roy has observed, "......the merit of any pattern
of social organisation or political institution is to be
judged by the actual measure of freedom it affords to
individual." That was Aurobindo's attitude towards
liberty of the individual.

Sri Aurobindo felt that we have not been
able to achieve any of these ideals. Liberty of which
there is so much talk has been achieved only in outward
sense - it is only unreal, mechanical liberty. Similarly
equality of which the modern democrats talk so loudly is
also achieved in a formal sense. There is no real equali­
ty. Fraternity is yet thought of as impracticable. These
ideals can not be achieved so long as man lives in his
individual and communal ego. Only through the power of
human brotherhood these can be achieved. But brotherhood
exists only in the soul and in recognition of same soul
in others. As Annie Beasant said, "The recognition of
the one self, dwelling equally in all, is the one sure
foundation of brotherhood." That is why Aurobindo

(181) The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, Ed.by
H. Chaudhury, P.314
(183) Annie Beasant, The Ancient Wisdom, Pp. 189-90
emphasised the need of spiritual unification of mankind. Only unification in a spiritual and divine sense could be permanent, while unity brought about through world organisation such as U.N.C. would not be stable and real. Explaining it Aurobindo said, "A spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness not dependent upon any intellectual or outward uniformity and compel oneness of life not bound up with its mechanical means of unification, but ready always to enrich its secure unity by a free inner variation and free varied outer self expression - this would be the basis of a higher type of human existence."

Sri Aurobindo, though "the founder and precursor of the divine race of man" for the good of humanity, made a compromise with the materialistic West. As humanist and a realist he thought of the synthesis of Eastern and Western ideals - spiritualism and materialism in the interest of mankind. "While asking the Indians for abandoning a slavish imitation of the West and depreciating the excess of materialism, he also condemned superstitions and dogmatism in Indian spirituality. He said, "The exaggerated spirituality of the Indian effort has also registered a bankruptcy; we have seen how high individuals can rise by it, but we have

(184) Sri Aurobindo, The Essential Ideals of All Mankind, (185) The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo P.97 Ed.by H.Chaudhury, P.312
seen also how low a race can fall which in its eager­ness to seek after God ignores His intentions in humanity." Thus he advised to take a balanced view of both the Eastern and Western attitudes and ideals.

In the interest of humanity, Aurobindo repudiated the view that the West was purely materialistic and the East was exclusively spiritualistic. Both had materialism and spiritualism. In the past they met closely and influenced each other powerfully. Therefore his message was not to think of the West as different from the East. He said, "It has been customary to dwell on the division and difference these two (East and West) sections of human family and even oppose them to each other, but for myself I would rather be disposed to dwell on oneness and unity than on division and difference." At another place he said, "The safety of Europe has to be sought in the recognition of the spiritual aim of human existence, otherwise she will be crushed by the weight of her own unillumined knowledge of soulless organisation. The safety of Asia lies in the recognition of the material mould and mental conditions in which that aim has to be worked out." All these clearly show that he was equally concerned for both and for the whole

(186) Sri Aurobindo, Ideals and Progress, P.44
(187) Sri Aurobindo and Mother on the Essential Ideals of All Mankind, P.85
(188) Sri Aurobindo, Ideals and Progress, P.45
human race. Charles A. Moore has befittingly said, "Sri Aurobindo's philosophy provides two great needs of the time, namely a virtual synthesis of East and West, looking towards a philosophy acceptable to all mankind for its welfare and second, a richful interpretation of Indian thought correcting abuses and aberrations, thus providing a point of view."

Aurobindo in his love for man, like Swami Vivekananda as discussed in Chapter VI of this dissertation advocated the cause of self-determination i.e. free grouping of mankind. According to him the people of world must be allowed to group themself according to their free will and their natural unity and affinity. As he said, "Unity would be the largest principle of life but freedom would be its foundation stone." According to Aurobindo such free grouping will avert all wars and establish equal right of all nations, because he said, "The elimination of war and recognition of equal right of all peoples are intimately bound up with each other."

Aurobindo's love for man was not confined to the mankind in India but to humanity at large. So his nationalism like Swami Vivekananda was not narrow.

(189) C.A. Moore, The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, P. 108
(190) Sri Aurobindo, The Ideal of Human Unity, P. 723.
(191) Ibid, P. 723
and fanatical but had a cosmopolitan character. Universalism is the most cardinal feature of his nationalism that makes way for perfect international relation. Hence in his love for mankind, he envisaged a World Union for humanity. In such a World State, there would be no discrimination of any sort on the ground of wealth and power among the nations, that shall put an end to domination of the powerful nations over the weaker nations. As he wrote, "The ultimate result must be the formation of a World State and the most desirable form of it would be a federation of free nationalities in which all subjection or forced inequality and subordination of one to another would have disappeared and, though some might preserve a greater natural influence, all would have an equal status. A confederacy would give the greatest freedom to the nations, constituting the World State."

Aurobindo's profound sense of humanism is reflected on his theory of spiritual evolution of man. In his theory he refuses to accept the world of matter as an illusion, a dream or Maya. On the other hand he emphasised that "it is the sense of evolutionary unfolding of being which moves towards the relations

(192) Sri Aurobindo, The Ideal of Human Unity,
PP. 399-400
of supreme spiritual light and power and joy and oneness. The theory helps to transform an individual from mere physical and mental being into a spiritual being - a divine being. It establishes that every man is a fragment of Divinity, clothed in matter. Aurobindo himself said, "Evolution is nothing but a progressive unfolding of spirit out of the density of material consciousness and the gradual self-revelation of God out of this apparent animal being."

The fact is that man is often ignorant of divinity and is unable to foresee the future possibilities. But Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution, dispels such ignorance and leads man to Divinity. "Spiritual evolution," as said Aurobindo, "is the transformation of life of ignorance into the divine life of truth conscious spirit." Hence Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution, reflecting tremendous humanistic optimism serves as a solace to the bewildered mankind.

Thus, as in case of Swami Vivekananda, so also in case of Aurobindo, humanism is the basis of his theory of nationalism. His whole theory of nationalism seeks welfare of the humanity at large. Even though

(193) Sri Aurobindo, The Life Divine, P.606
(194) Sri Aurobindo, A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga,
(195) Sri Aurobindo, The Life Divine, P.660
he directed his nationalism against the British exploitation and oppression of the Indian people, his love for the British people was little affected by it. Like Swami Vivekananda, he was so much devoted to the cause of humanism in his theory of nationalism that he never conceived of any prejudice against the British people. He had no jealousy nor hatred against them. But all that he did was to condemn and criticise their imperialistic mentality and exploitative temperament. That apart, he had no hatred or ill-feeling against the British race. As he said, "It is interest warring against interest and hatred is directed not really against the race, but against the adverse interest. If the British exploitation were to cease tomorrow, the hatred against the British race would disappear in a moment.... No hatred against the foreigners but antipathy to evils of foreign exploitation...."

Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi was also a great humanist. Humanism the most cardinal feature of Gandhi's philosophy of life, is also the basis of his theory of nationalism. He was first a humanist and then a nationalist. His love for man, subsequently turned him to a nationalist. As Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, moved by imperial oppression and exploitation of India, turned nationalist, so also turned Gandhi

(196) Sri Aurobindo, Bande Mataram, Early Political Writings, P.126
a nationalist. His love for man compelled him to involve himself in the politics of the country and the struggle for national freedom. As he said, "For it was not politics, but work for awakening public spirit. The work of securing freedom for an enslaved nation is not politics but service." Vinoba has accordingly remarked, "Gandhi never practised politics .... what he pursued, could be called service of the people..... Gandhi took politics because at the time the main task before the country was the securing of freedom. Hence Gandhi's theory of nationalism is characterised by a strong sense of humanism.

Gandhi accepted the most important Western criterion of human well being - justice. By justice he meant devotion to the cause of elevation of the oppressed and the out-caste. He decided to fight against British rule in India because it led to the degradation of the poor and created an unjust society. Similarly he considered it to be his foremost duty to uplift the untouchables because thereby they would get social justice. Like Swami Vivekananda Gandhi launched vigorous crusade for their social and economic emancipation.

In the words of F.R.Moraes, "Posterity in assessing the

(197) Quoted in Vincba on Gandhi, P.31
(198) Ibid, P.29
(199) F.R.Moraes, Gandhi, The Humanist, PP. 19-20
place of Mahatma Gandhi will rank him higher as a humanist than as a politician and nationalist."

As a humanist Gandhi had tremendous faith in the goodness of man. As he said, "Man's nature is not essentially evil. Brute nature has been known to yield to the influence of love. You must never despair human nature." Like Rousseau he never considered man a born sinner. His faith in the inherent goodness of human nature is the basis of his humanism. As he declared, "The most practical the most dignified way of going on in the world is to take people at their word, when you have no positive reason to the contrary. I refuse to believe that the tendency of human nature is always downeward."

Gandhi's faith in mankind was so great that even bloody communal riots could not shake his faith in man. It could not make him a pessimist. He wrote to Amrit Kaur, "You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean. If few drops of ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty." The very statement established the truth of the fact that Gandhi's love for mankind was deep-rooted and unmoved.

(200) Quoted in Louis Fischer - The Life of Gandhi, Part-II P.286
(201) Young India, November 5, 1938
(202) Ibid, December 26, 1926
(203) Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol-VI, P.401
Gandhi like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, recognised divinity in man. The nationalist trio believed, "of all the manifestations of the Divine, man is incomparable. The human self is unique, because in it God reveals Himself in a special manner." Gandhi himself said, "If I could persuade myself that I should find Him in a Himalayan cave, I would proceed there immediately. But I know that I can not find Him apart from humanity."

Gandhism is the philosophy of love. Gandhi not only accepted the lines of Bible, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' but he added his own version to this line that every living being is thy neighbour. Hence love of man was the creed of his political philosophy. In the words of Sarojini Naidu, "He shared with Christ the gospel of love and with the Great Mohammed, the gospel of brotherhood, and equality of all man."

Gandhi even loved the British people though he revolted against British exploitation and oppression. This is really a special trait of his humanistic approach like that of Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo as discussed earlier. His love for the British people was

(204) R.N.Tagore, Sadhana, P.41
(205) Quoted in D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol-IV, P.109
(206) Ibid, Vol-VIII, P.142
so great that he warned the Indians not to humiliate the British even for the sake of national independence.

Prescribing the duty of a Satyagrahi, he also said that a Satyagrahi should never harbour any hatred or ill-feeling against his opponent or the evil doer.

Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi a humanist, had tremendous faith in the inherent equality of all men. Gandhi condemned such inequality as a crime against man and Swami Vivekananda as a social curse or sin. They recognised no inequality on the ground of caste, creed, colour and wealth. They opposed untouchability as a social superstition. Swami Vivekananda deplored Hinduism losing its Vedantic ideology and being reduced to narrow sectarian Don't-touchism. He overwhelmingly exclaimed, "We are neither Vedantists ... nor Puranics nor Tantrics. We are just 'Don't touchists'.

He strove hard to do away with this superstition and restore Hinduism to its grand majestic form. Similarly Gandhi expressed his grave concern to reform the society and its religion by abolishing such ugly superstition. He said, "I believe that if untouchability is really rooted out, it will not only purge Hinduism of a terrible blot but its repercussions will be world wide. My fight

(207) Harijan, August 4, 1940
(208) Young India, August 8, 1929
Gandhi's concern for the people of India was the same as his concern for mankind of the world. By serving the people of India, he wanted to serve the people of the whole world. As he said, "I am a humble servant of India and in trying to serve India I serve humanity at large." In his opinion his service to the world will be incomplete, if his service to India is not complete. He wrote, "God has cast my lot in the midst of the people of India. I should be untrue to my Master, if I fail to serve them. If I do not know how to serve them I shall never know how to serve humanity."

Gandhi looked upon humanity as the children of one family, like branches of a same tree. He asked his countrymen to develop a sense of love for humanity. He went much ahead of his contemporary nationalists when he sought to infuse in to Indian minds the love for humanity and share their sorrows and sufferings.

Hence like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi was universalistic and cosmopolitan in his

---

(211) Young India, November 7, 1933
(212) Ibid, June 18, 1925
outlook. His theory of nationalism is deeply rooted in universalism and humanism. He has rightly said that 'Indian nationalism is neither exclusive nor aggressive. (213)
It is health giving and humanitarian." "Indian nationalism"
he has also said, "wants to organise itself or to find full self-expression for the benefit or service of the humanity at large." (214)

Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo,
Gandhi thought that India under fetters of British imperialism, could not serve humanity, her age-long mission. So India must be free to take up her responsibility of human welfare. He declared, 'India under Swaraj must serve the world.' But as he saw "An India, prostrate at the feet of Europe can give no hope to humanity. An India, awakened and free has a message of peace, (215)
good will and brotherhood to the groaning world." He frankly declared, "My mission is not merely brotherhood of Indian humanity. My mission is not merely the freedom of India. But through realisation of freedom of India, I hope to realise and carry on the mission of the brotherhood of man." (216)

(213) Young India, October 13, 1921
(214) Ibid, June 18, 1948
(215) Ibid, March 12, 1931
Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi belonged to all times and entire mankind. He bent his energies for the upliftment of humanity. He belonged not to India but to the whole world. He belonged not only to our generation but to posterity as well. Since Gandhi's profound humanism inspired him to serve entire humanity, Dr. Rajendra Prasad has aptly compared his life with river Ganges which serves all who seek to make use of her. "If we want peace and happiness and to live as a human being we must follow the path, chalked out by Gandhiji, for it lies our own good and that of the world."

Thus the concept of nationalism of Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo and Gandhi is based on the solid foundation of humanism.

(E) SECULARISTIC NATIONALISM

Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi as nationalists were deeply committed to secularism. All the three were spiritual personalities yet all of them were deeply secular.

(217) Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Legacy of Gandhi, P. 65
Swami Vivekananda was a religious personality. Yet he was enamoured of India partly because of her spirit of religious toleration in all ages of history, and felt proud to proclaim his country as 'the glorious land of religious toleration'. He at the same time criticised the Western countries for their religious persecution and hostility, which is still in vogue.

Swami Vivekananda sought to eliminate the outward differences between religions and show that all religions are but one that leads man to the same goal i.e. Moksha or Salvation. As Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan has observed, "The fundamental principle of all religions are the same though details differ because faith takes the colour and flavour of the soil from which it springs."

However, Swami Vivekananda's secularism went much beyond the principle of religious toleration, harmony and unity. He elevated secularism beyond mere religion and Spiritualism and brought it to the world of hard realities of work-a-day world, which is chiefly concerned with stomach rather than the soul or spirit and declared that what India needs is more of spirituality

(218) Lectures from Colombo to Almora, P.89
(220) Quoted in Peter Heehs, India's Freedom Struggle, P.156
but at the same time she needs bread. The material demands of the poor is as important as the spiritual demands. So Swami Vivekananda stood for the complete separation of religion and social laws. As he said, "Social laws are created by the economic condition..... the terrible mistake of religion was to interfere in social matters. What we want is that religion should not be a social reformer, but we insist at the same time that society has no right to become a religious law-giver. Hands off! keep your self to your own bounds and everything would come right."

To Swami Vivekananda religion is meaningless to a starving man. Man's mind is guided by stomach. If his stomach is full everything will impress his mind but if it is empty his mind will catch nothing. All preachings and philosophy will fall in deaf ears and fail to have any hold upon him. Religion will stand supreme if it has an economic back-ground. As he said, "Whenever any religion succeeds, it must have economic value. Thousands of similar sects will be struggling for power, but only those who meet the real economic problem will have it." He further said, "You may preach a religion that may not be perfect in every detail but if

(221) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P. 480
(222) Letters of Swami Vivekananda, P. 454
there is an economic back-ground to it......you can convince the whole country."  

Aurobindo, like Swami Vivekananda felt that religion is a great shaping force. It moulds every individual and society in the direction of social solidarity and national unity. He said, "To make all life religious and to govern all activities by the religious idea would seem to be the right way to the development of the ideal individual and ideal society." However he was an advocate of a secular conception of religion that does not identify itself with any creed, sect, faith, cult, church or dogma. He believed that the purpose of all religions is one i.e. "lifting the whole life of man in to the Divine." As a secularist, he did not even hesitate to condemn Indian dogmatic spirituality and said that 'the exaggerated spirituality of Indian efforts registered a bankruptcy.' He advised the Hindus to take a secular view of their religion and also said, "If the conservative mind in this country opens itself sufficiently to the necessity of secularism, the resulting culture, born of a resurgent India, may well bring about a profound modification in the future civilization of the world."

(223) Proletariat! Win Equal Rights, p. 57  
(224) Shri Aurobindo, The Human Cycle, p. 232  
(225) Ibid, p. 223  
(226) Sri Aurobindo, Ideals and Progress, p. 44  
(227) Ibid, p. 38
Aurobindo as a secularist, apart from being a nationalist had little faith in sects and creeds, faiths and dogmas. He considered them as the greatest disintegrating forces in human history. But he believed in spirituality as the greatest integrating and unifying force in human society. So he said, "Our aim is not to found a religious faith or a school of philosophy or a school of Yoga but to create a ground of spiritual growth."

Hence it is obvious that Aurobindo like Swami Vivekananda was a spiritual personality, very much concerned with secularism, rather than religious sectarianism or fanaticism.

Aurobindo as a secularist, distinguished between true religion and religionism. The first is spiritual or secular religion, which informs all beings about the higher light, the law of spirit. The second entrenches itself in some narrow pietistic exaltation and rests on some fixed moral code. As religion must be able to spiritualise mankind for unity and common brotherhood, it must be a bonafide and lived religion. As he said, "Religion has to be lived not learned as a creed, no religious teaching is of any value unless it is lived." He defended ancient Indian religion and

(228) Sri Aurobindo, A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga, P.56
(229) Ibid, P.224
culture because it held that man could become conscious of the eternal and he could spiritualise and divinise himself by self-knowledge. It filled the purpose of true secular religion.

To Aurobindo, religions may be different but the inner spirit of all religions is same. This inner spirit of all religions is meant for inspiring and influencing man for divinisation. As he said, "A religion of humanity means the growing realisation that there is one secret spirit in all religions, a divine spirit, in which we all get a lift." Hence Aurobindo's secularist nationalism upholds the cause of religious toleration and abhors all communal discords leading to religious persecution and bloodshed.

Aurobindo, like Swami Vivekananda not only believed in religious unity; he also believed in the unity of godhead. To him there is but one God for people of all religions, though He differs in name and form. Some call Him God, some others may call Him Allah and some others say Him Krishna. But He is the same God everywhere, assuming different names for different sects of people. As he said, "All ....... is one .... not a separate existence ...... separate in names and forms only." (231)

(230) Sri Aurobindo, The Ideal of Human Unity, P. 775
(231) Sri Aurobindo, Life Divine, P. 136
Aurobindo's secularistic religion served as a stimulus for the growth of nationalism in India. By secularising religion and eliminating all communal discords he developed a harmonious and unified living among the people of India that eventually galvanised the sense of national unity. Aurobindo described it as "Divine Unity in the nation," which is not marred by any fanaticism or sectarianism. Commenting on it, it is said, "Aurobindo's creed of nationalism is not narrow and fanatical, but had a cosmopolitan character."

Aurobindo's secularistic ideology is more explicit in his synthesis of East and West. By secularising the religions of East he could succeed to bring about such a unique synthesis. But for such new philosophy i.e. secularisation of spirit, coupled with spiritualisation of matter, the two divergent ideals could not have been reconciled. Hence it is said, "Aurobindo hoped that Indian spiritualism and European secularism and materialism could be reconciled and felt that this was possible only by the creation of a new secular philosophy which gives equal importance to the claims of both spirit and matter."

Charles A. Moore has also remarked, "Aurobindo's new

(232) Bande Mataram, September 22, 1907
(233) V.P. Varma, Modern Indian Political Thought, P. 307
(234) Ibid, P. 300
philosophy (secularism) provides two great needs of the time, namely, a virtual synthesis of East and West, locking towards a philosophy, acceptable to all mankind and second a richful interpretation of Indian religion, correcting abuses and aberrations. (235) However Aurobindo's secularism like that of Swami Vivekananda went much beyond the frontiers of religion and spirituality. He raised secularism to its status of materialism which is the prime concern of day to day world. He did not like to down-grade materialism, which, as he felt, has equal value and importance like spiritualism for the balanced improvement of the world. He felt that material needs of the poor is as important as the spiritual needs. Besides, amidst wretchedness, poverty and starvation it is too difficult to preach Advaitism and realise the grand dream of Universal Unity. So he decided that the poor must be given bread first and then religion. A hungry stomach knows no religion nor philosophy, nor anything else but bread and bread only. When his stomach is full, the world for him is O.K. orelse it is a devil's workshop. Such consideration made Aurobindo a critic of the modern capitalism, which is characterised by oppression and exploitation of the poorer sections of the people. He criticised the imperialistic drain of

(235) C.A.Moore, The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, P. 106
wealth from the back-ward parts of the globe and its piling up in the capitalistic areas of the West that causes poverty and starvation in one part and plentitude (236) in another part of the world.

Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi also advocated that secularism adds strength to a nation of diverse faiths. As a practical spiritualist, he realised very well the evils of religion. Religious spirit no doubt serves as a unifying factor of a nation but if there is over emphasis on religion it acts as the greatest disintegrating force. Hindu-Muslim communal conflicts opened his eyes to it. He considered communalism as the worst social evil in India. Communalism meant a fight between two different faiths for their respective supremacy. A truly spiritual man is always secular in his outlook. But most of the time religion is misinterpreted and misunderstood by the orthodox and fanatic section of the people who take religion in a narrower sense. So in order to help both the section of people like Hindu and Muslim to live peacefully he suggested the ideal of secularism.

(236) V.P. Varma, Modern Indian Political Thought, P. 308
Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Gandhi also laid stress on the principle of religious toleration, harmony, co-operation and unity. To him these principles are the only road to happy and peaceful co-existence of the people of various faiths of a country. He explained that "religious toleration and harmony consists in our having a common purpose, common goal and common sorrows. It is best promoted by co-operating with each... by sharing one another's sorrows and by mutual tolerations."

Like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, he glorified India for her grand principle of religious toleration and hoped that after independence, India would stand as a great example of it to the world. As he said, "India of the near future stands for perfect toleration of all religions."

Like Swami Vivekananda, who said "God is one but sages call Him differently" Gandhi also believed in the unity of God-head. As he said, "There is one God, who is everywhere." He also believed in the principle of equality of all religions. He considered different religion as different roads leading to the same destination.

(237) Young India, February 25, 1930
(238) Ibid, December 12, 1922
(239) Chandra Sekhar Sukla, Conversation of Gandhi, P. 28
i.e. Moksha or Salvation. Brotherhood and friendship but not enmity, as he said to Dr. Iqbal, is the true essence of all religions.

Gandhi fervently appealed to the people of all sects and faiths to forget religious bickerings and develop universal brotherhood for the cause of our motherland. He frequently laid stress on the unity of all religions for unity of India despite our various faiths and beliefs. As he said, "Let all of us Muslimes, Persis, Sikhs, Christians live amicably as Indians, pledged to live and die for our motherland. Let it be our ambition to live as the children of same mother, retaining our individual faiths and yet being one, like the countless leaves of one tree."

Gandhi's toleration for all religious faiths made him an advocate of secularism or a nation based on secular foundations. As he said, "The state should undoubtedly be secular."

His secular attitude was best expressed in his address to All India Congress Committee on August 8, 1942 when he said, "The Congress does not believe in the domination of any group or any community. It believes

(240) M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence in Peace and War, Vol-II, P.249
(241) Young India, April 23, 1931
(242) Harijan, August 29, 1947
in democracy which includes in its orbit Muslims, Hindus, Christians - every one of the communities, inhabiting (243) this vast country."

As a staunch secularist, he favoured neutrality of state in the matter of religion. India should not accord any preference to any particular religion. In matters of religion she must maintain strict neutrality. All religions will be treated equal. As he said, "In free India every religion should prosper on terms of equality unlike what is happening today. Christianity being the nominal religion of the rulers, it receives favours which other religions enjoy. A government responsible to the people dare not favour one religion over another."

The state shall not accord any priority or preference to any particular religion. Instead it shall show equal respect to all religions. Religions shall not become the cause of discord among members of a nation. Therefore he said, "I hold it to be utterly wrong to divide man on the ground of religion. What conflict of interest can there be in the matter of revenue, sanitation, police, justice or the use of public conveniences? The difference can only be in religious

(243) Quoted in D.G.Tendulkar,Mahatma,Vol-V I, P.59
(244) Harijan, December 30, 1939
usages and observances with which a secular state has no concern."

Gandhi said that a state has nothing to do with any religious matter. As he said, "In matters of religion I am against any state interference."

Thus Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi were secularists apart from being nationalists. Their nationalism emits secularistic fervour.

To sum up Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh and Mahatma Gandhi had, as opposed to the moderate nationalists, identical objective in the sense that all the three had as the end of their nationalism, Swaraj for the country. For them Swaraj was the birth-right of every people and every nation. All the three were basically spiritual personalities and believed in the rich spiritual heritage of India. Hence their nationalism is spiritual in tone and temper. They felt that India has a spiritual mission for the whole world and that mission can be fulfilled only when India attains her nationhood. They realised the tremendous importance of education for building up a mighty nation and advocated Indianisation of educational system with its

(245) Quoted in Peter Heehs, India's Freedom Struggle, (246) Young India, July 7, 1927
emphasis on spiritual basis of education and education through the medium of mother-tongue. All the three were great humanists apart from being nationalists. As a matter of fact their nationalism emanated from their deep sense of humanism. Hence their nationalism did not suffer from narrowness and exclusiveness but is marked by universalistic favour and intense desire for effecting welfare of mankind. Although all the three were spiritual personalities, their nationalism is secular in nature in the sense that all believed in the spirit of mutual toleration by people of different faiths. That they felt shall strengthen the nation by unifying people of different religious belief.