CONCLUSION

A National awakening in Orissa dates back to the 1860s when Orissa fell victim to the great famine of 1866. Lakhs of people died and many more migrated during the famine. The state was partially depopulated. (Here the term state or even Orissa is used very loosely to denote the tracts inhabited by Oriya speaking people. This was known as Orissa even then.) Locally known as the Naanka Durvikhyā, the famine brought about a change in the social and political life of Orissa. The Oriya educated persons, though numerically not very strong, reacted sharply against the tragedy. Described as intellectuals or intelligentsia in the present work, they looked afresh at the British rule and criticised the unwise famine policy of the Government. But for the unwise policy, the famine and the resultant deaths could have been averted, the intellectuals felt. The lower level officials were also held responsible for the famine. Since hardly any of them were from Orissa, it was felt that they deliberately misinformed the higher officials about the real situation. Being unaware of the crises, the Government did not take adequate measures to prevent the famine.

Following the famine the intellectuals linked the large scale deaths to the question of human dignity. As a remedy they strove for a 'respectable' social order. The
lack of knowledge among the people, the careless and partisan attitude of the Government and the lower level officials, and the existing social evils, etc., were considered to be the major hindrances to their conceived social order. As a way out they proposed to start printing presses, newspapers and educational institutions for dissemination of knowledge among the people. In their writings in newspapers and journals they boldly criticised the obscurantist social order as well as the attitude of the Government. They asked the Government, the princes and the zamindars to take up certain welfare measures in their areas of influence. The intellectuals' concern for such common societal needs in the late 19th century is seen as the beginning of a nationalist identity movement in Orissa.

Before 1936 Orissa was fragmented into many parts, each one of them being attached to a separate Presidency or Provincial administration. In late 19th century, because the people were numerically weak everywhere, the Oriya linguistic and cultural identity was in the making as well as at stake. Thus the period witnessed the blooming of modern Oriya literature by its exponents like Fakir Mohan Senapat, Radhanath Ray, Madhu Sudan Rao and Gangadhar Meher, as well as faced up to the threats of the abolition of Oriya as a language in the schools and government records. In Sambalpur and its adjoining Oriya speaking tracts, which were attached to the Central Provinces, Oriya was replaced
by Hindi in 1896, only to be restored in 1901 after a pro-
longed agitation by the intelligentsia over the issue. In
Coastal Orissa attached to the Bengal Presidency, the threat
came from Bengali and in South Orissa - attached to the
Madras Presidency - from Telugu. In order to counter the
threat of regional domination, a linguistic and cultural
identity movement emerged alongside the nationalist identity
movement. This former movement continued until the formation
of a separate Orissa Province in 1936.

Led by a common group of intellectuals, the two move-
ments did not pose any threat to each other. The intelli-
gentsia cooperated with the nationalists outside Orissa on
national issues, regularly attended the annual sessions of
the Indian National Congress and championed the cause of
national unity. On the other hand, they set up a regional
platform called Utkal Union Conference (UUC) in 1903 to
take up local issues, consistently demanded the amalgamation
of Oriya speaking tracts under one provincial administration
and strongly protested against all attempts at cultural and
social domination by the neighbouring middle classes.

Active participation of the princes and zamindars in
the late 19th century political movements was an important
aspect of the history of Orissa during this period. Such
participation was possible because the princes and zamindars
were one with the others on the issue of linguistic and
cultural identity. Secondly, their landed interests suffered due to the infiltration of absentee landlords from outside. Third, even the nascent national movement of the period was not overtly anti-colonial. This provided sufficient scope to the 'loyalists' like the princes and zamindars to join the movement. Moreover the 'loyalists' help and cooperation to the intellectuals' movement in return fetched the latters' support to the former on many administrative and judicial issues. The intellectuals also badly required the help of the princes and zamindars, which came mainly in the form of monetary contributions.

Due to the loyalists involvement, the political movement faced many problems. First, it tilted towards parochialism. Secondly, with the passage of time (i.e., say since the Anti-Partition movement in Bengal in 1905) when the Indian National Congress representing the various nationalist forces became overtly anti-colonial, the loyalists restrained the Orissa movement from becoming so. As a result a more intimate relation between the intellectuals of Orissa and the Congress could not be maintained in the first two decades of the 20th century. Thirdly, the intellectuals increasingly realised the need for political mobilisation of the common people for the fulfilment of their demands. But such mobilisation was not possible because of the mutual antipathy between the 'loyalists' or feudal elements and the tribals and peasants,
the main constituent of the rural society, who were known for their anti-feudal defiance during the period.

From 1905-06 onwards a new political trend emerged within the Oriya movement. It demanded complete integration of the movement with the Congress and marginalisation of the loyalists in politics. Described as 'moderate nationalists' in the present work, it comprised the second generation of intelligentsia. The first generation of nationalists, described as the 'liberals', also wanted the same thing but at a slower pace. The difference between the two intellectual trends existed throughout the period. The 'loyalists', of course, opposed every move of the 'moderate nationalists' and extended their unqualified support to the Government.

The first decade of 20th century witnessed intense struggle between the three political trends for hegemony over the national movement. Formation of the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee (UPCC) on the eve of the Non-Cooperation Movement in December 1920 marked the initial assertion of the 'moderate nationalists' over others.

The Non-Cooperation Movement was the first mass movement in Orissa. The nationalist leadership consisting mostly of students and youth, with very little political backing from the experienced and elderly people, used its innovative faculties and youthful zest to expand the movement throughout Orissa. In view of regional peculiarities, it created
a local ethos, used cultural symbols and intermixed the regional issues with the national issues to achieve the maximum involvement of the people. This, however, did not divert the Orissa nationalists from the all-India strategy of the Congress. Thus, the failure of the Mont-Fort Reforms of 1918 to provide concessions to the nationalists was seen as humiliating the local Oriya Movement too; adoption of Hindustani as the language of the Congress in 1919 and non-violence as the means of struggle were considered to be the Congress' attempts to follow the ideology of the UUC; and the Congress decision to allow the formation of its provincial units on a linguistic basis was highlighted as the recognition of Oriya identity by the nationalists outside Orissa.

Similarly, the use of cultural symbols like kirtan and Bhajan (Prayer songs), drapping of the Lord Jagannath and his car by khadi and the organisation of bonfires of foreign cloth on the religious sacrifice (Jagna) model helped in internalising the movement. Local issues like the Sarbarkar's (village officer) rights over land, salaries of the primary teachers and the hardships suffered by the peasants during settlement operations were also successfully highlighted.

This observation, however, does not mean that national issues like the 'Punjab killings' and the 'Khilafat wrong'
did not have any impact. In fact they had such a great impact that even some of the hardcore liberals changed their views and became strong critics of the Government after the Jallianwalabag incident. Likewise the Khilafat issue moved the Muslim middle classes en masse. As a result in almost all Muslim localities, Non-Cooperation was widespread.

While the response of the students and youth was almost as spectacular, the women, tribals and the business class were largely distanced from the movement. Lack of tribal participation, though the tribals were well known for their defiance of the colonial rule and feudal oppression during the period, can be directly traced to the nationalists' failure to understand the complex tribal question. Unlike their liberal predecessors, the nationalists understood the peasant question and highlighted the Raja-Praja (Prince-Peasant) dichotomy. But, like the liberals, they failed to comprehend the tribal-non-tribal differences.

The response of the lawyers and government officials during the Non-Cooperation was a mixed one. Some of the lawyers like Gopabandhu Das and Bhagirathi Mahapatra gave up their practice and some government officials like Gopabandhu Choudhury, Surendra Nath Das and Jaymangal Rath resigned from service once and for all to jump into the movement. Many others extended their passive support
to the Congress by occasionally attending the meetings, by indoctrinating the students into nationalism or by misleading the enemies of the movement such as the police. But the lawyers as a class did not join the movement and conveniently identified themselves with the 'liberals'. The Congress leaders often held the lawyers responsible for the relative failure of the movement in Orissa.

During the movement, establishment of Swaraj panchayats and the khadi and the prohibition campaigns became very popular due to their traditional base in the society. Even without any formal, or with very little nationalist, link with the Congress, many panchayats worked in the rural areas and served the same purpose as the Congress panchayats. In the traditional strongholds of handicrafts cloth such as Sambalpur and Ganjam, Swadeshi campaign became very effective. In Sambalpur the Congress workers helped to save a dying handloom industry. Similarly the social taboo against consumption of liquor provided the Congressmen an upper hand in their campaign for prohibition. Hence they could even appeal to the arch enemies of Non-Cooperation, i.e., the princes and zamindars, to take up the case of prohibition.

Establishment of nationalist institutions like national schools, Ashrams and newspapers and journals was a significant feature of the movement. Though they were established by Congressmen, the UPCC did not have any control
over them. Generally they functioned through local initiatives. That is why the national schools, except for a few, were not very different from other schools and the nationalist newspapers in their own peculiar way popularised their understanding of the Congress and the Congress-led movement.

The Non-Cooperation Movement remained largely confined to a few pockets in the state. Except for a very few states like Kanika and Keonjhar, none of the princely states and zamindari estates were affected by it. Tribal and women, who constituted a major section of the population, were seldom involved. The urban middle classes, which included the (non-Oriya) businessmen and the 'English educated people' (as the 'liberals' were known those days), did not come out spontaneously in support of the movement.

In spite of all these drawbacks, the Non-Cooperation Movement was a major breakthrough in the political life of Orissa. Formally, it inaugurated the Congress movement in the state and intimately involved many people in the anti-colonial movement. Under its influence the Oriya Movement became militant. The agrarian movements of the tribals and peasants also acquired a new dimension after their useful contacts with the Congressmen. Henceforth they got nationwide publicity, and their inhuman suppression by the feudal elements and the colonial administration attracted large scale condemnation.
The aftermath of Non-Cooperation between 1923 and 1927 is characterised as the non-active phase of the national movement. There were charges of corruption against many prominent leaders, squabbling between them, disintegration of the Congress into several factions, the rise of parochial tendencies questioning the basis of nationalism, and emergence of communal forces in different parts of Orissa. As the different nationalist forces had integrated into a single force on the eve of the Non-Cooperation, now they disintegrated and tried to maintain their distinct regional identities. Absence of any mass action and disillusionment among the people were the main causes of the crisis.

The period witnessed intense struggle between different factions for hegemony over the movement. It was so because the Congress was the only political movement to reckon with. Congressmen from Sambalpur complained of coastal hegemony. Similarly, the Satyavadi group felt ignored by the Bharati Mandir-dominated UPCC leadership. On the other hand, many ardent supporters of the Congress during the Non-Cooperation advocated a political line independent of the Congress. Such a line was considered the best way to serve the interest of the people of Orissa.

But even during the height of this 'anti-climax', a small group of Congressmen faithfully followed the nationalist line of politics. They urged the integration of regional forces into the nationalist stream, advocated a secular line
of political thought and quietly prepared for the active phase to come. With the passage of the non-active phase these Congressmen gained strength and were recognised as the leaders of the national movement in the state.

A split in the Congress into Swarajists and No-changers was a significant event during the non-active phase. In Orissa the No-changers controlled the provincial Congress. Instead of forming a separate party, the Swarajists acted as a part of the No-changer controlled UPCC. This tactical move, however, did not prevent them from aligning with the Swarajist Party outside Orissa. Due to this complicated political process, there were differences as well as co-ordination between the two camps of the nationalists. Unlike the No-changers, the Swarajists concentrated on work in the councils, but along with the No-changers they participated in district and local board activities, village reorganisation, the khadi campaign and various other aspects of the constructive programme. At times they even criticized the No-changers for not taking up the constructive programme effectively.

Within the councils the Swarajists took up various basic issues like the revival of the local salt industry, the land revenue hikes, prevention of floods and the release of political prisoners. Outside the councils the Congressmen highlighted these issues through newspapers and public meetings, and prepared to launch mass agitations on their
basis. Such coordination no doubt minimised the dichotomy between the two camps.

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In 1928-29, the non-active phase was gradually replaced by the consolidation of nationalist forces. Once again a nationalist tempo was witnessed in different parts of society. Congressmen of various trends showed unprecedented unity in different party meetings. Even non-Congress nationalists such as the liberals and the Hindu Mahasabha activists came along with the Congress and accepted the latter's leadership.

The momentum is to be directly traced to the emergence of new forces such as those of students and youth, 'lower' castes, women, tribals, peasants and labourers. The anti-Simon Commission feelings and the timely visit of Mahatma Gandhi for 20 days in December 1927 were also responsible for creating a general nationalist urge among the people. Besides these, the continuity in Congressmen's efforts throughout the post-Non-Cooperation period and the mass agitation on local issues like salt, floods and religious endowment properties, etc., have also to be stressed. These efforts, though often without adequate follow up measures, continued alongside intense factional fights and squabbling, etc. In spite of some adverse conditions, the Congressmen tried to sustain the nationalist current. Hence when the momentum picked up again they could easily identify
with it and were allowed to retain the leadership during the ensuing Civil Disobedience Movement. Nationalist institutions like the Ashrams and newspapers, which were created or maintained during the non-active phase, became the centres of hectic nationalist activities during the Civil Disobedience Movement.