CONCLUSIONS

Our discussion centered on the subject of nationalist
thought in nineteenth century Bengal. We felt that it was important
to know how, and under what circumstances, the original idea came
to serve as a rallying point of anti-colonial struggle by widely
different and mutually exclusive forces; or what were the ambigui-
ties and conflicting tendencies in the idea itself which led to its
developing as it did? It is a well-known fact, to which history of
civilisation records no exception, that all important ideas are
subject to modification and differentiation as their influences
continue to spread, and though they are not totally subservient to
events they cannot endure from one generation to another without
some change in meaning.

There are, generally speaking, two common pitfalls in the
analysis of the dynamics of ideas. One tendency is to conceptualise
the ideas without relating them to associated events or their
contexts. In this mode of analysis ideas are treated as purely
mental constructs as if these are not situated in history. Even
when there is historical description of the dynamics of ideas such
description remains entirely chronological without sufficient
explanations of such changes and their implications. Another tendency
is to reduce every idea or any system of ideas to a subordinate part
of a given social formation. This absolutises historical situation
of ideas or the principle of social determination of ideas and

applies it to every level of analysis. The determinism makes the task of analysis simple but at the cost of truth which is the expression of totality. We wanted to avoid these pitfalls by focussing on the the complexities of ideas and their social relations in so far$_\wedge$ our subject was concerned. The conclusions that we can draw from our study are arranged below under the following heads :

A.   Explanatory adequacy of our theoretical framework, i.e., Colonial Syndrome of Nationalism (CSN).

B.   Answers to the Research Questions.

C.   General Observations.

A.   In section (1) of CSN (Chapter I) we observed that a colonial power must come into conflict with that part of the native society with which it shares a common but mutually exclusive goal. Accordingly, we observed in Chapter II that the East India Company indeed came into conflict with the Sannyasis and Fakirs in terms of the objective and mutually exclusive interest of trading. In the same section of the CSN we further deduced that the colonial power develops the scope for cooperation with a part of native society with which it developes a symbiotic relationship. Our analyses of Nationalist Models from Chapter III to V did bear out this deduction. We found that the Dharma Sabha group, the liberals like Raja Rammohun Roy and the Young Bengal members were parties to such symbiosis.

In section (2) of CSN we had observed that the colonial activities always lead to a divided response in the native society, that is to say, a division between power-concession and rank-concession. In Chapter II we noted how a large part of the native society, though not homogeneous, conceded power to the colonial rulers. In Chapter III on the other hand, as well as in Chapters IV and V, we have seen how the elites conceded rank to the colonial rulers and pursued an economic rank - path through emulation. Two illustrative cases of both these would be the way in which Sannyasi and Fakir rebellion was overpowered and the way in which the liberals like Rammohun Roy pursued their economic rank-path. The power-concession aspect was intimately associated with what we called 'Synergism' (section 5 of CSN). In Chapter II, for instance, synergism was shown to be a precondition of anti-colonial movements among the power-conceding part of the native society. We have seen how the Wahabis, Faraezis, Santals etc were experiencing synergistic effects in a negative way and how did they resort to horizontal mass-mobilisation and anti-colonial responses. They, therefore, in different ways made the mainstream nationalist thinking look like elitist and remote from the larger social reality. While the class aspect of this chasm in native society was not too readily recognisable the difference between these two levels was interpreted as one of tradition and modernity.

In section (3) of CSN we had observed that the content and the scale of social reform were in a sense emanations from and rationalisations of the class aspect of colonial rule. On the basis

of our discussions in Chapters IV and V we can arrive at a number
of conclusions. The British rulers produced a pressure for reform
of native society. This was especially evident after Bentinck and
Macaulay came forward with an ideology of social reform. They
expected a strengthening of the 'social basis' and growing oppor-
tunity of trade to come through social reforms, although such
emphasis on reform appeared to be an intention of modernising a
traditional society. Similarly, the native elites like Rammohun,
Dwarakanath and the 'Young Bengal' formulated an ideology of social
reform which was to justify a new a set of social behaviour as
reflected in their pursuit of economic rank-path. In as much as
reform was intended as a class necessity, its extent was determined
by actual conflict of class interests. Thus, the power conceding
part of the native society, the Sannyasis and Fakirs, - the
'Subaltern' population did not come under the scale of social
reform. Social reform, thus, was bound to be partial. Nevertheless,
the different subjectivities of self-images of the native elites
became important for the development of Proto-nationalism around
the questions of reform. For example, the 'Young Bengal' went
ahead with an ideology of social reform obtained directly from the
colonial rulers or the liberal tradition as such. This gave the
impression that 'reform' was being imposed from ▄▄ above. This
attitude, therefore, limited the social reform to themselves and
made them unacceptable to the intra-societal relations (Model 2B).
In case of Rammohun and Dwarakanath however, the ideology of social

reform was not identified with Westernisation. Essentially, their ideology of social reform was also an emanation and rationalisation of the same class structure, but their self-image had some marks of distinction from the British bourgeoisie. That is to say, they synthesised or attempted to synthesise liberal social reform with trait-maintenance. As a result, social reform appeared to be the salvaging of a grand, old tradition or native culture. For all practical purposes this was a Hindu tradition and the 'Brahmo Samaj' was established with this end in view. Through the Samaj they tried to mobilise the masses vertically because they also wanted to ensure their social acceptability. However, the inner contradictions of such an attempt, one between a definite class position and social leadership also limited the scale of social reform. The power conceding part of the native society was generally outside the scope of such an ideology of social reform. Nevertheless, a type of 'Proto-nationalism' was given shape around the question of social reform. It revolved round various issues such as language, culture and religion (Chapter III). But its objective class position prevented it from acquiring any anti-colonial drive.

In section (6) of CSN we had observed that the volume of changes in the interactional level of colonial rulers and the native elites influenced the avenues of mobility for the native elites and their role. This actually explained the Model 1 (Chapter III). We found that a change from monopoly trading to free-trade policies restricted the economic rank path of a section of native elites like

Radhakanta Deb, who were then forced to react adversely to the
ideology of reform. So we found that the social role of conservatism
among the elites of nineteenth century Bengal was intimately connec-
ted, in particular, with the restricted avenue of economic rank path
and in general with the class relations of the colonial rule. In
the same section of CSN we had further observed that any change
toward decreasing cooperation would impose restriction on the econo-
mic rank-path for the native elites and would make the political rank
path a necessity. This explained the development of Model 3 (Chapter-
VI). There, we have seen that from the mid-fifties the British rulers
were following a rule of expediency that placated the landed magnetes
for their support and curved out an agrarian policy attractive to a
class of ryots who would, the rulers hoped, be both the producers
of raw materials and potential consumers of British goods. On the
other hand, the government was neglecting the provision for employ-
ment of the educated natives of urban roots while at the same time
restricting educational opportunities for them. This section of the
native elite, therefore, found their economic rank-path closing down.
In place of erstwhile economic rank-path a a political rank-path
was now substituted to retain the position and number of Bengali
elites in civil service and professions.

In section (7) of CSN we had observed that the adoption of
political rank-path tends to increase the pressure for solidarity
in the larger social context. Since the leadership comes from the
top layer of the segmented society, the technique of mass mobilisa-
tion is likely to be manipulative and necessarily political. Since

rank concession continues, there is no anti-colonialism about it.
Nevertheless, such political rank-path by virtue of its emphasis
on solidarity acts as a complement to the further development of
nationalism. This explains our Model 3 (Chapter VI). The educated
Bengali elites of urban roots were most ably led by Surendranath
Banerjee who also organised the Indian Association. The Association
energetically followed up objectives whose essence was the enjoy-
ment of political power. It also developed linkages between urban
centers of power and its rural hinterland, in course of the Rent
Bill agitations. The Association became, so to speak, the self-
styled leader of the ryots of Bengal. Its real objective was not to
represent the interest of the vast impoverished peasantry but to
take its competitive place along the channels of power forged by
the British rule. In doing so they only complemented the typical
goals of British imperialism. On its brighter side the Model indica-
ted a break with the past by giving a political content to the idea
of nationalism which was previously so much apolitical. National
consciousness was brought from its fluid state to specific political
issues of public interest. As a further complement to the development
of nationalist movement the liberal nationalists were altering the
equations of power within the framework of British rule and steadily
eroding the steel-frame of British empire.

In section (8) of CSN we had observed that political techni-
que of mass-mobilisation and organisation were likely to accompany
cultural movements in a colonial context. The main idiom of such a
movement appears to be resistence to assimilation and it is primarily

felt necessary to counter centrifugal tendencies. However, in a
multicultural society there can hardly be any integrative movement
of introspective nature. This explains to some extent what we
observed in Chapter VII, - to some extent, because CSN does not
explicitly state the imperatives which tend to distort a genuinely
creative cultural movement. It may be suggested however that when
political solidarity becomes the goal of mutually conflicting
classes or elites in a situation of cultural pluralism, any genuine-
ly creative and integrative cultural movement tends also to be
distorted and insular. In fact, the cultural movement in Bengal in
the seventies of the nineteenth century proved genuinely creative.
It blended classical tradition with humanism and rationalism inspite
of the fact that it proceeded through different interpretations of
Hinduism. But when it came to be used politically, only the elements
of Hindusism and Anglophilism were emphasised to the exclusion of
the ideas of religious toleration and service to the downtrodden.
As a result, the movement could be used to provide philosophical and
cultural justifications for anti-colonial struggle but not to cement
the popular sentiments of a heterogeneous society. While the Hindu
elites made to look a broad-based movement insular the Muslim elites
destroyed the potentiality of a creative Islamic movement in their
political interest. Thus, the native elites' goal of solidarity did
not have any assistance from a genuinely creative cultural movement
but from distortions of it. Nationalist movement, therefore, failed
to base itself on a sound conceptual understanding of nation and
nationality. Rather, it was more anti-colonialism than integrative

of virtues that set the tunes for nationalist struggle. The section (8) of CSN explained this clearly.

B.   The previous discussion generally confirmed the explanatory adequacy of CSN with respect to ideas and their complex relations with social reality in nineteenth century Bengal. CSN has been found to be an adequate intellectual construct to discover the patterns of nationalist thought. Though no comparative study was undertaken to test its applicability to other colonial situations it remains comparable with respect to other unexplored areas. Let us now bring in sharper focus the conclusions of our study in regard to the major research questions formulated in Chapter I.

The first question was concerned with the point of time and the circumstances of nationalist thought in nineteenth century Bengal ,and again of the development of anti-colonial drive in such thinking.

It was found that the first and original expression of nationalism could be seen in the third decade of nineteenth century Bengal which was articulated by liberals like Raja Rammohun Roy. The emergence of nationalist thought was fully apolitical (in the sense that it had no opposition to colonial rule) and was expressed through trait-maintenance and attachment to traditional symbol systems of language, customs, religion and the like even when the persons concerned were undergoing pressures for reform and modernisation. While doing this, all the time they were viewing themselves

in terms of a nation distinct from Great Britain (Model 2A).

A few important changes in the colonial situation formed the circumstances of this expression of nationalism. Firstly, for some Britishers it became a mission to do away with the Company monopoly and social conservatism. These were of course connected with the industrial revolution in Europe and the American War of independence. Secondly, the native elites were being exposed to liberal ideas and the prospects of colonial rule and free-trade. Thus an identity crisis for the native elites became inevitable. Whether it was the British initiative at social reform or the emulative practices of the native elites themselves, or their own attempts at social reforms to minimise their social distance from a traditional society, each was bound to result in an identity crisis for them. It was Proto-nationalism that became their response to such problems of identity. It could not be full-fledged nationalism with an anti-colonial garb. There was no necessity for such a formulation. The class interest of the formulators was in favour of maintenance of the system. They had simply a problem of identity which a civilisational claim could easily solve. So, nationalism began and remained for a considerable period of time at the level of Proto-nationalism.

There was no place for anti-colonialism in the conceptualisation of nationalism in the first half of nineteenth century Bengal, especially in terms of conceptualising nationalism as an anti-colonial movement. Some members of the 'Young Bengal' displayed some sense of anti-colonialism but that remained largely their

personal feelings and that too, only exceptionally. Anti-colonia-
lism became prominent in nationalist thought only as part of the
cultural movement in the sixth and seventh decade of the nineteenth
century. Anti-colonialism at cultural level did quickly become a
part of the solidarity requirement of political rank-path. Thus, a
shift from rank concession and liberal nationalism to one type of
militant cultural nationalism could be possible under the situation
of widespread conflict between claims and civilisations. Of course,
there had been anti-colonial movements before, such as Sannyasi and
Fakir Rebellion, Santal Insurrection etc. But what was distinctive
about the anti-colonialism in the late nineteenth century was not
so much the militancy of it, but a vision of nation together with
an attempted vertical mobilisation of the masses by the leaders
who applied the appeals of religion, language and traditional
symbol-systems of the native society. This brought to a great extent
erstwhile rank-conceding native elite closer to the power-conceding
part of the society. While this was not a unity of their basic
interests for the time being it nevertheless appeared to be so and
thus nationalism was given its ideological formulation.

The second research question was concerned with the different
patterns of nationalist thought and their impact on the nationalist
movement.

In our study we have been able to identify five major
patterns of nationalist thought in nineteenth century Bengal, four
of which have been analysed in terms of the following models : Un-

developed Nationalism, Proto-nationalism, Vicarious Nationalism
and Liberal Nationalism. Another type emerging in the period of
our study was indicated in terms of trends and developments which
was described as Religious Nationalism.

We have found that while different patterns of nationalist
thinking co-existed at different points of time and did interact
with each other, each also succeeded the other at a sufficient
period of discontinuity. In other words, there were phases of domi-
nant thinking coexisting with dissipating or developing patterns of
nationalist thinking. Nevertheless, there was a major and continuous
development throughout these phases. In so far liberalism is taken
as the guidepost, the two terminal points of contituity would be
Proto-nationalism and Liberal Nationalism (The latter was, in a
sense, the forerunner of Moderate Nationalism). In that case the
Vicarious Nationalism should be taken as the in-between pattern
which reflected liberal spirit and anticipated, to some extent,
Liberal Nationalism. The continuity can be traced on another level
also. However strategically and partially directed, the nativist
claim of the Undeveloped Nationalism was taken in full and
elaborated upon in the Proto-nationalist model and then it was com-
bined with a vision of nation state in the model of Liberal Nation-
alism. Religious Nationalism later supplied the necessary anti-
colonial drive and anticipated, to some extent, the Extremist natio-
nalism. It would be thus too naive to look for a purely liberal
premise of nationalist thought in Bengal as it would be to regard
conservative reaction as paving the way for the politics of communa-
lism. In fact, each model, in terms of actual effects and consequen-

ces, steadily prepared the ground for the politics of separatism
and communalism in the nationalist movement.

The third research question was concerned with the reasons
in case of any of the patterns of thinking failing to contribute
successfully to the growth of nationalism.

Our study did not corroborate David Kopf's thesis that the
Dharma Sabha movement was the first Proto-nationalist movement in
nineteenth century Bengal, which ultimately took the form of militant
religious nationalism in the late nineteenth century. We have found,
on the contrary, that nationalism of the Conservatives was neither
a response to the totality of the alien civilisation, nor was it a
claim of civilisation in its totality. The nationalism of nativist
reaction was limited, strategic and therefore it was undeveloped.
The response was directed to a part of colonial civilisation and
was not developed to challenge the alien civilisation as a whole.
We have found again that the phenomenon of religious nationalism in
the late nineteenth century was the mature stage of a developing
process of false consciousness of communalism to which both the
so-called Conservatives and the Liberals contributed. Kopf's thesis,
thus, neglected vital stages of the growth of nationalist thinking,
their consequences and relationships which should be considered for
a fuller explanation of religious symbolism in nationalist thought.

As regards the anti-colonial movements like Wahabi and
Faraezi Rebellion, Santal Insurrection etc. we found that they were
all reactions to the class-divided society of their time. They tried

to react against the synergistic effects (perhaps the Sannyasis and Fakirs witnessed less of synergism and their reaction was more class-specific) and therefore, they were not just anti-British. In fact, they resisted, though unsuccessfully, the structure of colonial rule, the very parasitical symbiosis between British rulers and their native allies. But to react they relied ts on horizontal mass mobilisation within their own members which could give them internal solidarity. Nevertheless, this way of fostering solidarity also limited the potentiality of these movements for developing into a mass movement cutting accross the boundaries of communities. They actually caused division within the larger power-conceding population and committed them to a sideline when mainstream nationalism was being developed by the elites.

The fourth research question was concerned with the probable class basis of the different patterns of thinking and the nature of relations of these patterns with such basis.

Our study brought out in bold relief, that each pattern of thinking had a class basis but each did not have a one to one relation with the objective class position of the thinkers. In other words each pattern of thinking was not just a reflection and a rationalisation of the actual class position of the thinkers or actors, it was in most cases a reflection and a rationalisation of a perceived class position also. More importantly we found a steady lack of congruence between the subjective awareness of the actors as constituting a class and their actual class positions. The Dharma

Sabha group was realistic about their own class position. The Proto-nationalists displayed some lack of realism when they were consider-ing themselves as productive bourgeoisie or nearly becoming so. The radicals in even increasing degree wrote as if they constituted a middle class in the European sense. The Liberal Nationalists went further and dreamt of being even politically equal. This incongruence was the direct outcome of their lack of realism about colonial struc-ture. No doubt this was responsible for the spread of communalism which constituted a false consciousness by concealing the contradic-tions between Indian people and the colonial rulers and by legitimi-sing the structure of domination.

Let us now make some observations in respect of the questions we raised about the 'objective setting' of nationalist thought.

In our study we found definite relations between the Bengali elites' perception of and reaction to the major mass-movements and issues of nineteenth century Bengal. Generally speaking, the nature and extent of their reactions to these were proportionate to the enhancement or decrease of their prospect of economic rank-path, and in some cases, to the requirement of political support. The radicals, for example, sensed that they had everything to lose and nothing to gain if the Revolt of 1857 proved to be a success. They, therefore, together with the landlords and the Conservatives, took much pain to demonstrate their loyalty to the British rulers. Again, the same Radicals almost guided the Indigo Revolt through when they found that the administration was not interested in continuing the

indigo cultivation and that the indigo was fast loosing its export
potential. Again, the Liberal Nationalists who sided with the Pabna
Rent Bill agitation complemented the British policy of elivating a
class of protected peasantry and crippled the movement by using it
as a springboard for their ambitions of constitutional politics.
In other words, they were prepared to go as far as necessary for
their pursuit of political rank-path and no more. Thus, the elites
throughout maintained their pro-colonial position with respect to
the mass movements.

While the elites evaluated their economic and political
prospects and shaped their reactions to different issues, the
agrarian structure featured prominently. The Conservatives, for
example, began to assert their nativism when they feared attacks on
their land rights. Rammohun Roy also accepted the structure of
Permanent Settlement in its basics and supported unlimited landed
property of the Zamindars. The radicals criticised 'the radically
wrong basis of Permanent Settlement' but it was not clear whether
they wanted the benefits to go to the substantial ryots or to the
impoverished peasantry. However, the first possibility seems to be
strengthened when we find that the Liberal Nationalists wanted to
keep the marginal peasants on the sidelines of land reforms. The
agrarian issue was also the major issue around which the first
political association, the Landholders' Society, organised itself.
Other influential organisations, namely, the British Indian Associa-
tion and the Indian Association, were predominently concerned with
the agrarian structure. The agrarian dimension of elite behaviour

explained the quickly shifting alliances and enmities among them.
For example, the Conservatives who opposed indigo planters after
the Charter Act of 1833 put up a common front with them in the
case of Resumption Proceedings.

While the elites' reactions to mass movements and various
issues of the day and to their associational activities were logical
in themselves and perhaps consistent with their perception of the
colonial system, they were clearly at variance with the logic of
the colonial system. For example it was logical for Rammohun to
invest in Agency Houses from the viewpoint of economic rank-path,
but not so when he was also dreaming of capital accumulation and
growth of national bourgeoisie. In fact, this he failed to understand
the incongruence between his actual class position and his perceived
class position. This was not the case of Rammohun alone but this
was generally true about the investment patterns of the native
elites. The talents, capital and energy of the native elites were
predominently directed to land, to subordinate trading and to the
service sector, contributing, therefore, not to the growth but to
a hidebound economy while they vainly hoped that the process of
liberal economic development, as it happened in Britain, was repeat-
ing itself in India and they were to take the leadership. What they
were having actually was far from being liberal, - a mere caricature
of liberal development. This went a long way in shaping the systems
of social, political, economic and therefore nationalist thought.
These were, it follows, the analytical products, rationalisations
and justifications of an essentially distorted process of liberal

development. It further follows from this that the process of nationalist thought could not but be full of distortions, of which the most important were the politics of separatism and communalism.

C.   There can be no simple explanation of the steady decline in realism among the Bengali elites. Even if one seeks to explain this in terms of reproductive social practice one has to precede one's analysis with the idea of the mode of production prevailing at that time in India, which itself has become problematic as a result of diverse interpretations. What can be seen, however, is that communalism was a by-product of such decline in realism and therefore, a false consciousness in itself. Having observed this we should also discount any simple explanation of how such false consciousness emerged. The effects of each nationalist model which we studied revealed that communalism was not, contrary to popular beliefs, the mere reflection of basic conservatism of the native society, of traditional values or traditional hostility. These also reflected the inadequacy of the steriotype explanation of communalism in terms of the British design. One may not also be quite right in explaining the development of the false consciousness of communalism as logical products of colonial structure, unless one is prepared to accept that the subjective identification of native elites with the British bourgeoisie was inevitable and the colonial realfty incomprehensible. Our present study suggests, however, that the false consciousness of communalism was a product of complex situations and forces, including the acts of ommissions and commi-

ssions by the nationalist elites, which distorted the very process of liberal development in nineteenth century Bengal.

A position like this raises doubts about a proposition put forward by scholars who claim to be Marxists and who seem to be predisposed to find a parallel to European history in India. They would suggest that the nationalist phase of native thinking followed a liberal phase. Considering the fluid state of knowledge among the Marxists about pre-capitalist development in India this is not obviously the Marxist proposition. On the basis of our study we would have to qualify the proposition to some extent. We have found that important distortions took place in the process of liberal development in nineteenth century Bengal at least on two levels: firstly, there was no such development of market economy which we found in Europe, but only of a hidebound economy, and secondly, the bourgeois self-image was developed by the native elite without creating the necessary socio-economic conditions. So, to put it in this way, nationalist thought in Bengal was distorted to the extent it was an heir to a distorted process of liberal development in nine-teenth century Bengal.

Despite important distortions, however, the nationalist thought in Bengal had displayed a very strong side which rejected with equanimity the old atavistic form of Indian nationalism as well as the self assertive and parochial nationalism of the western type. This strong side was 'syncretism', the fusion of Indian and Western elements of thought. The nationalists of nineteenth century Bengal

saw themselves as the defenders of both a rich and living Indian
tradition and of the positive aspects of Western civilisation.
Their belief in universalism was therefore a consistent part of
this syncretism.

Democracy in this sub-continent is generally considered
to be an outgrowth of nationalist movement. In so far as democracy
in modern India is an expression of the nationalist movement, it
reflects the stronger elements of that process, and the absence
of democracy in the neighbouring countries, its opposite. However,
as an heir to a distorted process of liberal development, at least
to the extent all India pattern of nationalist movement adhered to
the process initiated in Bengal, democracy in India is also likely
to display internal tensions despite its inherent strength. This
actually makes the task of understanding Indian democracy exceeding-
ly difficult. The 'Polyarchy' model would not be fully explanatory
because of its over rationalistic assumptions. Similarly, a Marxist
would face major difficulties in applying the laws of dialectics to
the grey areas of the modes of production. Our present study seeks
to draw attention to this theoretical problem.

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