A L L the Orissa Feudatory States with Patna and Kalahandi of the Chattisgarh States were merged into Orissa on January 1st 1948, except Saraikella and Kharsawan which were allotted to Bihar, and the transfer was confirmed in 1956 by the States Reorganization Commission. Mayurbhanj, a Bengal State, acceded one year later.

In the beginning the relationship between the rulers of the Feudatory States and the middle-class intelligentsia of the coast, which organized and led the Independence Movement, was amicable: in the end it came, literally in some cases, to open warfare. It closed apparently in the defeat of the ruling class in the Feudatory States.

In the ten years that followed Independence, the Raj families—some of them at least—entered politics, and once again the middle-class leadership of the coast found itself ranged against them, this time within the framework of a representative democracy. In one way this was the same fight carried on in a different arena: the protagonists were the same. But the objectives were different.

**Emerging Conflict**

In the early years middle-class political leaders of the coast received both the patronage and the active help of some important Raj families. In those days the coastal intelligentsia concerned itself with two objects: social reform and the union of Oriya-speaking peoples under a single administration. To both these causes some of the Rajas lent their aid. They subscribed to the building of schools and hospitals. They supported the demand for a university in Orissa. They presided at meetings of the Utakal (Orissa) Union Conference and signed the frequent memorials which were sent to the Government of India about the rights and grievances of Oriyas.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, politics in the coast began to shape into the more definite form of the Independence Movement. This, oh the whole, neither the Rajas of the Feudatory States nor the Zemindars of the coastal plains (some of whom had been leading figures in the Utakal Union Movement) supported. A few of them seem to have sympathized with the aims of the Congress: a few tried to remain outside the struggle: most were active sympathizers of the British.

**Against Feudal Privileges**

When the first Civil Disobedience Movement failed, it seemed to many of the Congress workers that Independence alone was too intangible and too remote an end to appeal to the ordinary man. Nationalism needed water from the parish pump. Consequently energy was turned, in some cases to constructive work, and in others towards identifying the Congress not only with agrarian reform but even with particular grievances in particular places. Most of these grievances were against the rights and privileges of the landlords and Zemindars and against the abuse of these privileges.

As the Independence Movement developed and became more forceful and aggressive, the Congress of the coastal districts turned its attention to the neighbouring Feudatory States. It had two aims: one was to subvert the authority of the Rajas who were regarded as the supporters of the British; the other was to bring about social and agrarian reform and ultimately to establish some form of representative government in the Feudatory States. At different periods, and by different members of the Congress, their work in the Feudatory States was regarded sometimes as an integral part of the struggle for Independence, sometimes more as an effort to bring about reforms in the name of justice and human rights and not solely as one step further on the road to Independence.

**Prajamandal Agitation 1937-42**

There had been sporadic agrarian unrest in many of the Feudatory States (though by no means in all) for some years. But not all the rebellions were against the exactions of the Rajas and their administrators. Some were sparked off by dynastic quarrels within the Raj families, although even in these cases agrarian unrest may have been the root of the trouble. Others were Adibasi risings against Hindu settlers. Hindu colonists, particularly of the mercantile classes, were merciless exploiters of the tribal population, and from time to time nemesis overtook them. These risings were not usually attacks on the Raja, but directly on the colonists, and they took place in British administered areas as well as in the Feudatory States. Although the agitations initiated by the Congress Socialist Party were against the rulers of the States, many of the Adibasi risings (in Nilgiri in 1947) were against the Congress agitators themselves and in support of the Raja.

The 1937-42 agitations in the Feudatory States were led not by the Congress under that name, but by organizations called Prajamandal. The Congress advised and trained the leaders of these movements, and in some cases provided men from their own ranks to direct the tight. The Prajamandal in the different States were connected with the States Peoples' Conference which had been convened first in 1931 by a graduate from Dhenkanal State, and which was closely associated with the Congress.

**Parallel Government Institutions**

The movement began in earnest in 1937 when the Orissa States Peoples Conference was convened in Cuttack. In 1938 the Congress organized a States Enquiry Committee and in the following year published its report, detailing the excesses of the rulers and the burdens to which their people were subjected. Demands were made upon the rulers, in some cases for the complete abdication of their powers, in others for reform, in particular the abolition of various services which the people were expected to perform for members of the ruling house and other privileged persons. 'No tax' campaigns were organized, people were urged to refuse their services, meetings and processions were held. The agitators worked towards two complementary ends: the first to subvert...
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the authority of the Raja and the British, and the second to establish, even before the first aim was achieved, parallel government institutions. In areas where the Prajamandals gained control they set up panchayats, heard cases, and fined people, exactly as if they had become the government.

But government in the Feudatory States was more direct than in the British-administered territories, and the rulers, in defending themselves against the agitators, were not unduly bothered by the due and sometimes lengthy processes of law. Agitators found their work in the states more perilous than in the British territories. In some of the states the movement collapsed. In others the people of the states fled in large numbers to camps organized for them in the British territories by the Congress. In Ranpur the Political Agent was murdered; and here and there the movement seems to have lost sight of its non-violent intentions, and became something not very different from guerilla warfare.

No Centralized Campaign

The agitation continued until 1939, when there seems to have been a period of compromise, the agitations ceasing, and some of the rulers in the states most affected by the disturbances announcing constitutional reforms. The lull continued for some time and then was broken during the 1942 Movement, when violence broke out again in some of the states. But it was short-lived. Most of those who had directed the movement were arrested and gaolied as security prisoners; other leaders became fugitives and the agitation died down.

This ended the first phase of direct hostility between the rulers of the Feudatory States and the intelligentsia of the coastal districts, which formed and led the Congress in Orissa. Neither side co-ordinated its activities efficiently. The Prajamandals were guided by the States Peoples Conference and the Congress, and from time to time directives about strategy and policy came down to them. But for each Feudatory State there was a separate Prajamandal, and the agitation waxed and waned according to the turn of fortune in each state separately. There was no centralized and organized campaign.

Different tactics were employed in different states, according to the inclinations of the Prajamandal leaders, and some were more successful than others.

Nor do the rulers seem to have cooperated with one another to suppress the movements. Each ruler fought the battle on his own. When parleys look place, they were usually between a leading Congressman from the coast (seeking, usually without success, to assume the role of mediator), the Political Agent, and the ruler of the state concerned.

Nor was the movement widespread. Although there were Prajamandals throughout the hills, it was only (in the period before the Second World War) in some of the Feudatory States which bordered on the coastal districts that the movement made itself felt. British districts provided a base and a training ground and a refuge when the Raja reacted too strongly.

Concessions Withdrawn

In both its aims the agitation of the period 1937-42 failed. No social reforms were brought about in the states, none at least of any fundamental importance, and when the agitation was suppressed in 1942, some rulers who had made concessions to the agitators withdrew them again. Secondly, as a part of the struggle for Independence, the agitations in the Feudatory States collapsed with the 'general failure of the 'Quit India' Movement when its leaders were interned. On the credit side the Congress gained some experience of agitation in the Feudatory States, and recruited some men of those areas into its organization: and it was able to make use both of the experience and the personnel when the struggle was resumed after Independence.

The First Period of agitation in the Feudatory States was an appendage to the Independence Movement in the Orissa coast. The Congress had within it a strong leaning towards social reform, and it was in the shape of social and agrarian reform that the movement was first launched in the states. While it continued in this form, individual Britons looked upon it not without favour. But their sympathies vanished when the movement became more overtly linked with Independence, and when it moved further in the direction of violence.

The 1947 Conflict

The agitation in the Feudatory States immediately before and after Independence differed from the earlier movement which took place before the war. The same persons took part in both struggles: the same demands for agrarian and constitutional reform were put forward. But this time bigger armies, so to speak, were in the field.

Both sides had reorganized. The rulers had begun to combine in a Union of the Eastern States, to include the Chota Nagpur States, the Orissa States, and some Chhattisgarh States. Their opponents worked at two levels. An Orissa and Chhattisgarh States Regional Council reorganized the Prajamandals in the different Feudatory States and directed their agitations. Veterans' from the coast, now out of prison, were available for the job. But the battle was also fought at the higher level of diplomacy, between the collectivity of rulers on the one side, and the Government of Orissa backed by the Union Government on the other. The scalp of the struggle on the eve of Independence and afterwards was larger than it had been before the war. It took place between two relatively large integrated forces, and was no longer an affair of piecemeal harassment and counter-harassment.

Eastern States Union

The merging of the Feudatory States with Orissa had been advocated in the report of the Congress States Enquiry Committee in 1939, and there was no doubt in the minds of some of those who led the pre-war Prajamandal agitations. But at that time the issue seemed remote; it took second place to Independence.

By 1946, with the arrival of the Cabinet Mission, it was clear that the British were about to leave, and that this was the time to stake out claims in the area of power left vacant. The rulers of the Eastern States Union were attempting to form a unit big enough to exist as a separate state within the Indian Union. Such a state, although backward in every respect, had potential forest and mineral wealth. But if the state came into existence, Orissa would consist only of the four coastal districts and some enclaves in the hills, and it would be without the forest and mineral wealth of the hill areas. Much of the industrial belt now being deve-

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loped in northern Orissa lies in the former Feudatory State areas. To the leaders of the Congress it must have seemed that they were fighting for the very existence of their Orissa as a viable State in the new Indian Union.

**Diplomatic Contest**

There were others concerned in this dispute besides the Orissa Congress and the rulers.

The attitude of the British officials of the Political Department varied. Some were outright hostile to the Congress and encouraged the rulers to combat Congress moves, and to bring about an Eastern States Union. To the rulers to combat Congress and the rulers.

The attitude of the British officials of the Political Department varied. Some were outright hostile to the Congress and encouraged the rulers to combat Congress moves, and to bring about an Eastern States Union. A few, gratefully quoted by Congress writers, thought that Princely rule was a vicious anachronism and that it should be abolished. Yet others respected the rulers, but, thought that their states should be merged with the new Orissa, because the hill and plain areas together formed a natural economic unit. They also thought that the rulers should participate in the new State politics to provide some 'administrative experience' and a 'stable right-wing element' to stiffen the Congress Government, the members of which were regarded at best as socialists and revolutionaries, and at worst as irresponsible agitators. But, whatever their views, by 1946 the British were a spent force and had no real power to shape events one way or the other.

Both sides made appeals to the Union Government. The rulers who appealed for protection received bland and unhelpful advice. The Union, with one eye on the bigger problem of Princely India, stood behind the Congress Government in Orissa, and the Orissa States in the end capitulated after discussions with Sardar Patel, who visited Orissa in December 1947.

**The Agitations**

It is not easy to discover exactly how extensive were the Prajamandalist agitations. Those I have interviewed on this subject have been interested parties and their accounts conflict. Nor have I been able to find any detailed written account of what went on. The disorders seem to have been strongest in those states, neighbouring on the Regulation districts, which had been most affected in the period 1937-42. Some rulers handed the government of their state to Prajamandal organizations. In others the Prajamandals set up parallel governments in defiance of the ruler. In other places Adibasis were deserting the Prajamandals and joining their own communal organizations. (This account is drawn from History of the Freedom Movement in Orissa ed H K Mabtab, Cuttack, 1957, Vols IV and V.)

Nilgiri, the first state taken over by the Orissa Government in November 1947, capitulated not because the Prajamandalists had won their battle with the ruler, but because the local Adibasis, taking advantage of the prevalent disorders (it is alleged they were encouraged by the ruler) began to seize the property of Hindus in the area, and to redress their grievances by the most direct action. At this point the Orissa Government intervened and the Collector of Balsore was ordered to take over the administration of the state. A month later the rulers of the remaining states capitulated and signed the Merger Document. On January 1st 1948 the Congress Government or Orissa assumed responsibility for the Government of all the former Feudatory States, with the three exceptions noted earlier. The rulers lost all their former powers, but retained some personal privileges.

**Hill and Coast**

There are many aspects to this struggle: social and agrarian reform; the Independence of India; the contest of an old aristocracy with a middle-class; the creation of a viable Orissa State in the Indian Union; and so forth. But they all exhibit the cleavage between the hill areas and the coastal plains. The merger of 1948 put an end to an administrative division which had existed for a century and a half. But a merger, while it could change the holders of power, could not change the attitudes which had become ingrained in the people both of the hills and the coast. There remained a legacy of suspicion on the one side and contempt on the other.

The rulers were fighting to protect the institution which gave them eminence and without a doubt they lost the battle. Princely rule has gone, and the servants of the bureaucracy are busy rooting out the last remnants of feudal institutions. Hereditary unspecialized officials are vanishing. In so far as the merger put an end to conflict between the middle-class and the aristocracy, or between feudalism on the one side and representative institutions combined with a bureaucracy on the other, there is no question but that feudalism and the aristocracy have been annihilated.

But the conflict was also between the hill and the coast, and it is this conflict which continued until very recently in the arena of democratic politics. The history of the ex-state areas from 1948 onwards will be analysed in a later article on the rise of the Ganatantra Parishad. But the events of this and the preceding article make it clear why the conflict continued and why the main opposition to the Congress has come from the hill area of Orissa.

**Not Yet Integrated**

Orissa has not yet become a well-integrated and homogeneous social or political unit. No member of the Oriya intelligentsia, of the coast certainly, would accept this statement as it stands, and so I will say exactly what it means. It does not mean that there are no issues over which all Oriyas unite, whether they come from the hills or the coast; nor does it mean that these two areas have in common no social or cultural features. Nor does it contradict the obvious fact that Orissa is under a uniform administration, and that the hill and the coast areas are to some extent economically necessary to one another. 'Integration' is here used in the sense of 'organic solidarity' which refers to the degree to which sub-groups within the whole depend upon one another and are linked to one another by cross-cutting social ties.

A hypothetical example will make this clear. The protagonists on each side of the struggle, the Raj families and the coastal middle-classes, were two entirely self-contained groups. There were no ties of kinship between them. Nor were there any ties arising from common membership of, for instance, a profession. Had large numbers of the younger sons of Raj families become lawyers or teachers or doctors, then the absolute cleavage between the two groups might have been softened by the fact that cutting across the cleavage was the common professional interest. In other words, the degree to which loyalties and obligations are dis-
persed through different groups and categories, and not concentrated all in a single group, is also the degree of integration of the whole society.

Had there been a large professional middle class in the hills, then the ties of persons of this class with their fellows of the coast might have made the conflict less bitter. The tighter and more comprehensive the ties to the sub-group, whether this is a class or a region or even a village community, the lower is the degree of integration in the total society, and the weaker is the sense of responsibility to society at large. The cleavage between the hill peoples and the coast peoples, their attitudes of mutual disdain, and the struggle between the Rajas and the middle class politicians of the coast, are examples of that kind of localization of social ties, which are the negation of integration and the repudiation of a sense of responsibility towards a wider unit. In this sense Orissa is not integrated.

Interdependence

But, although the division between the hill and the coast is founded on more than a hundred years of history, and although it involves fundamental differences in demography and natural resources, there is no reason to think that it is there for ever. Indeed, the differences in natural resources of the two regions are a reason why they should become more integrated. More and better opportunities for education in the hill areas will create an indigenous middle class and remove one of the fundamental differences between the two areas. The uniform administration of the two areas removes one of the main factors which in the past has maintained the cleavage between them. As the industries in the northern part of the hills come into production and supply power and raw materials and goods to the rest of the State, the whole State, and not the industrial hill areas alone, will benefit and become more an organic unity.

This cleavage between hill and coast will not last, so far at least as concerns politics, even another generation. The differences in administration have gone. Aristocratic institutions are vanishing. The ruling families, none so very rich or so very important, will become absorbed into the middle-class: and this class, with the increasing professional opportunities in the hill areas becoming available both in industry and the services, will spread over the whole of Orissa. 'We are middle-class like they are,' one ex-ruler said, 'no richer and no poorer than some of them. The only difference is we are punctual and most of us are honest. We also know something about administration, and not many of them do.

The present Coalition is a sign that both sides are beginning to recognise their common interest.