

# Swadesi and Presidency College, Calcutta

Ladli Mohon Raychaudhury\*

The students' magazine of the Presidency College, Calcutta, as an accredited mouthpiece of the students' union organisation of the college came out first in 1914. Section V, sub-section 'The College Magazine', page 161 of *Presidency College, Calcutta, Centenary Volume, 1955* (a government of West Bengal publication, 1956) reads as follows :—

"Round about 1905, a College Magazine appeared for some time contributions to which included metrical translations from Kalidasa by Professor Harinath De and articles by Rajendra Prasad, ... and Atul Chandra Gupta... The College Magazine apparently existed for some time in a manuscript form, under the editorship of Pramatha Nath Bandyopadhyaya, before it was converted into a printed journal in November 1914."

The centenary number makes a vague reference to one (or may be even more than one) issue of the college magazine which appeared in 1905 i.e. nearly nine years before the publication of the printed series of the printed series of the same. The chronological list of the names of the editors to be found in all of the issues of the magazine also confirms that the first of the series came out in 1914. I have searched for the old issues of the magazine

in the college library but could not find either a copy of the manuscript edition or the so-called issue for 1905. The missing link, however, could be found in one of the government departmental files now preserved in the Historical Section of the State Archives of West Bengal. This is a B-Proceedings file of the Government of Bengal, Education Department, Bengal No. 4-P/28 of 1905. The contents of one of the documents in the file which may speak for itself is reproduced below :

No. 1936

From

P. K. Ray, Esqr., D. Sc. (Lond. and Edin.),

To

The Director of Public Instruction, Bengal.

Presidency College, the 23rd December 1905.

Sir,

With reference to your No. 18184, dated the 22nd December 1905 I have the honour to give below the names of the members of the Managing Committee of "The Students' Magazine" furnished by Sukumar Chatterjea, the Secretary of the Committee.

1. Atul Chandra Gupta	...	5th Year Philosophy.
2. Abinash Chandra Mazumdar	...	4th year A.
3. Rajendra Prasad	...	4th year A.
4. Benod Behari Sarkar	...	4th year A.
5. Sudhir Kumar Sen	...	4th year A.
6. Apurva Chandra Mukherjea	...	4th year A.
7. Mani Mohan Sen	...	4th year A.
8. Satis Chandra Sinha	...	4th year B.
9. Charu Chandra Biswas	...	3rd year A.
10. Girija Prasanna Sanyal	...	3rd year A.
11. Khetra Pal Chatterjea	...	3rd year A.
12. Aghar Nath Ghosh	...	2nd year.
13. Khitish Chandra Sen	...	1st year.
14. Nirmal Chandra Chandra	...	1st year.
15. Sukumar Chatterjea	...	5th year English, Secretary.
16. Manmohan Bose	...	5th year Philosophy

Manager of Magazine No. 3.

\* Alumnus 1956-58 (History)

# AUTUMN ANNUAL 1998-99

2. There is no editor of the magazine.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant

Sd./ P.K. Ray.

Offg: Principal, Presidency College.

N.N.C. 23.12.05.

From the text of the letter quoted above it now appears that a Managing Committee formed by the students themselves and consisting of sixteen representatives from each of the class years (6th year class excluded) arranged for the publication of a Students Magazine in 1905 of which the Secretary was Sukumar Chatterjea and Manomohan Bose was the Manager for the issue no. 3. This issue formed part of volume no. I of the Students' Magazine which was published in October 1905 being printed by Bepin Behari Nath at the Mohila Press, 36, Pataldanga Street, Calcutta. The Magazine as the colophone indicates was a priced publication. The

rate of annual subscription was Rs. 2/ for bonafide students in town, Rs. 2 and a half for students in mofussil (including Burmah and Ceylon), Rs. 3/ for the public in town, Rs. 3 and a half for the public in mofussil including Burmah and Ceylon) and 5 shillings for foreign subscribers. The magazine also published advertisements for which there were six different rates varying with the size of the space from Rs. 80/ to Rs. 20/ per issue. The contact place of the Secretary of the Students' Magazine was the Presidency College itself while the address of the General Manager was shown as 36, Eden Hindu Hostel. The issue no. III, Vol. I of October 1905 was a bilingual magazine of which the reading materials in English consisted of forty-six pages and those in Bengali consisted of only eight pages. The pagination mark (starting from 71 and ending with 124) shows that the previous two issues (i.e. nos. I and II of which no trace could be found out) consisted of only seventy pages excluding the advertisement pages if any. The contents of the English Section of the issue no. III were as under :

Serial	Subject	Name of the contributor	Pages
1.	Foreign Influence in English literature	Suresh C. Dutt Gupta.	71.
2.	Perseus.	Manmohan Ghose	79.
3.	Selections (The Rede Lecture)	The Cambridge Review	82.
4.	Mussalmans in Bengal.	Nares Chandra Sen Gupta.	84.
5.	Club and College Correspondence.		92.
6.	Sakuntala (A metrical version from the text of Prof. Pischel)	Harinath De.	93.

The Bengali Section consisted of two prose and two poetry pieces viz., Swadeshir Prati (স্বদেশীর প্রতি), Palli O Nagar (পল্লী ও নগর), Pushpa (পুষ্প) and Chinta (চিন্তা).

It appears from what has been stated above that a Students' Magazine of Presidency was actually in circulation in 1905. But none of the copies of the same year is available now and they are not to be found even in the library of the college where a collection of the entire series without any break has been preserved in tact from 1914. It is not known why issues nos. I and II, Vol. I, have become totally untraceable now. But as for the issue no. III (of which the details have been given above) it is not to be found now because all the printed copies of the same were then impounded by an order of the government. The reason was that the publication appeared to be seditious. It contained an article entitled 'Mussalmans in Bengal' and as it seemed to be objectionable to the government it was impounded.

Complaints were received by A. Pedlar, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, against Nares Chandra Sen Gupta, the writer of the said article. Writing under a pseudonym 'Truth' the complainant in his letter dated December 4, 1905 reported that Nares Chandra, the contributor of many seditious articles in the 'Bengalee' was actively engaged in spreading disaffection among the students and hence deserved to be appropriately dealt with by the government. It is not clear as to how far the government was really put to act by this secret message received from an unidentified person. But even if a coincidence it is very surprising that the D.P.I. wrote a letter to the Principal, Presidency College, on the same day which reads as follows :

File number : 4P/28, Number in file : 1, Issue number : 17286

Date of letter : 4.12.1905, Date of despatch : 7.12.1905.

To

The Principal, Presidency College.

Sir,

I have to inform you that I have received a copy of the October number of 'The Students' Magazine conducted by the students of the Presidency College for the month of October 1905, and on reading the article entitled "Mussalmans in Bengal" I find parts of it to be seditious. I beg to enquire if the magazine is in any way official.

2. As the magazine is conducted by the students of the Presidency College it should be conducted properly and be looked after either by the Principal or one of the staff.

3. It seems no supervision or control is exercised in the way indicated above and as the magazine is not conducted properly it cannot be allowed to go and must cease to exist.

4. The author of the article Naresh Chandra Sengupta is guilty of gross misconduct and should be called upon to show cause why he should not be rusticated.

Finally I have to request you to be so good as to inform me who the editor and the managing committee are.

I have & c

Sd./ A. Pedlar, D.P.I.

If the letter of the D.P.I. appears to be impolite it must also be noted that the departmental secretary himself had held the Principal responsible for the so-called awkward situation. The very first note-sheet page of the file referred to previously contains the following observation of the Secretary (dated 6 December 1905) meant for the D.P.I.

"The article 'Mussalmans in Bengal' in this Magazine is seditious. It is extremely discreditable to the Presidency College. I am told that the Bengali portion is still more seditious, though the parts which I have read seem merely Bengali Journalese. Steps are, I believe, being taken to free Dr. Ray to take action in this matter by the Professors. But past experience of Dr. Ray compels me to say that he will not do anything that he can avoid doing and will try to postpone action until after he retires.

"Dr. Ray is also responsible for the starting of the Magazine. He is to blame for not supervising its character. This is another example of the lamentable lack of discipline at the chief Government College. I urge that sharp action be

at once taken concerning this publication and those responsible for it. It is notorious that the Presidency College and Eden Hindu Hostel are at present centres of sedition. The students are getting bolder, because they find that they can do practically that they like unpunished. In this they are encouraged by the leaders.

"For these reasons, and considering it an urgent matter, I would recommend that

- (1) The Magazine be stopped permanently
- (2) The authors of the seditious articles expelled from the College, if still there, and debarred from Govt. employment.
- (3) The editors and Managing Committee estts. expelled or at least rusticated.

and that orders be given to Dr. Ray to carry this out at once."

In response to the letter of the D.P.I. written to him, the Principal, Presidency College, unhesitatingly admitted that Naresh Chandra, the writer of the so-called seditious article should be at once punished for his offence and proposed that rustication being not an adequate punishment the student should no more be allowed to enjoy his post-graduate research scholarship. He also informed the government that he had already ordered for immediate surrender of all the copies of the magazine whether distributed or not. The contributor and the managing committee responsible for the publication were also individually advised to show cause as to why they should not be punished for their indiscipline. But while enumerating the deterrent measures taken by him against the students, the Principal had already pointed out "that the publication is entirely unauthorised and unofficial" and hence perhaps the college authority might not be held responsible for what appeared in the text of the same.

The Principal's stand that the publication was entirely 'unauthorised and unofficial' was also fully supported by the students against whom the charge of indiscipline was brought. Writing on behalf of the managing committee, its secretary, Sukumar Chatterjee, informed the Principal (vide his letter dated 7 December 1905) that although the General Committee and the Managing Committee responsible for the publication were democratically constituted from among the students of the college "we did not know that it was necessary to ask the permission of the authorities" and hence this unfortunate lapse on the part of the students. But although unauthorised the Students' Magazine was never intended to be

used as a vehicle for dissemination of political views. Its objects being clearly written on the very first issue of the magazine read as follows :

"The one eternal rebuke hurled against the students is that all their interests are centred in the university curriculum and their vision confined within the four walls of the class room. Our little magazine aspires to stimulate free thought by undertaking to publish what students may think out for themselves. It desires to supplement the education imparted in schools and colleges. Its ambition is to change the attitude of the students—from a state of mere passive receptivity of bookish information resulting generally in an intellectual nausea, to that of conscious activity—by providing them with a medium of exchanging the thoughts among themselves. The magazine will also try by the same methods to help the growth and development of an *esprit de corps* among the students by giving them an opportunity of meeting on terms of intellectual equality as contributors to and workers for the advancement of a common cause".

It is clear that the Students' Magazine was 'unauthorised' only in a technical sense since it is unlikely that the college authority had no knowledge of it. Even then the Principal tried to defend his position by putting the blame entirely on the writer of the article. The situation thus turning unfavourable, the student had to apologise to the authority. His letter is reproduced here.

To

The Principal,

Presidency College, Calcutta.

Sir,

I have been asked by you to explain my conduct in contributing an article to the Students' Magazine headed 'Mussalmans in Bengal'. I understand that it has been taken to be seditious. I beg to state, however, that in writing the article I had no intention of exciting hatred or disaffection against the Government, but only incidentally criticised Government policy. The article was written in extreme haste, and if there is any passage in it which you consider objectionable, as seditious, I sincerely regret that it should be there and am willing to withdraw it publicly if you consider it necessary.

As to the discussion of politics being against rules of discipline in a Government College, I beg to state that when I wrote I was under the impression that the magazine had no connection with the College. I sincerely regret however that I shall have done anything which you regard as being against the rules

of college discipline and am willing to do anything you desire to make reparation.

I understand however that the Managing Committee has decided to recall all the copies of the number of the magazine and make them over to you along with those yet undistributed.

I have the honour to be

Sir

Presidency College      Your most obedient pupil  
Calcutta      Sd./ Nares Chandra Sen Gupta  
The 9th December      Post-Graduate  
Research Scholar.

This was enough to soften the authority. The matter as it is learnt from a letter written by G. Gordon, Education Secretary (dated 18 December 1905) was referred to the Lieutenant-Governor who refused to terminate the scholarship of Nares Chandra as suggested by the Principal, Presidency College. He expressed his dissatisfaction for the lack of supervision of the college authority which made it possible for the misguided student to get his seditious article published in the Students' Magazine. "But his Honour does not think that the scholarship should be stopped during the currency of the year for which it has been granted on account of the article, provided that the student is doing his research work properly, and has not committed a breach of the rules regarding these scholarships".

The story narrated here may make the readers eager to know the full text of the article which provoked the government to propose such extreme measures against persons responsible for its publication.

It was a period of great political excitement which reached its climax when the government took the decision for partition of Bengal against the determined opposition of the people. The anti-partition agitation which sparked off on the 17th October 1905 (when the partition order was actually effected) although often said to have remained confined only among the *bhadralogs* including the impressionable students and young people, had greatly perturbed the bureaucracy. The government did not like the public demonstration of disaffection and tried to suppress it by all means. We do not know how far the students of the Presidency College actually participated in this upsurge along with the entire students community of the province. Of course the later generation stalwarts like Rajendra Prasad, Nirmal Chandra Chandra, Atul Chandra Gupta etc. had been the students of Presidency College at the time and one may

reasonably argue that not all of them sat idle or kept themselves aloof from the movement. The article written by Nares Chandra and published in the Students' Magazine (including those in Bengali which the Education Secretary thought equally seditious) in the same month when the anti-partition agitation flared up in the province indicates that the Presidency College boys were also swept by the impulse and the trends of the time. It is therefore natural that the government would try to extirpate political heresy from the college.

Before we conclude this with a reprint of the so-called seditious article of Nares Chandra, readers may have a look at his political career. Nares Chandra Sengupta (1882-1964), a veteran scholar, winner of many academic distinctions, an advocate of the Calcutta High Court and a reputable novelist of his times joined the anti-partition movement (1905) and became a Congress leader during the later years of his life. In 1925 he was elected President of the newly constituted Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal which was known for its strong affiliation with the early Communists (including Muzaffar Ahmed, Soumendra Nath Tagore, etc) of Bengal. In 1934 he was also elected President of the Labour Party of India of which Atul Chandra Gupta was the Vice-President.

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### MUSSALMANS IN BENGAL

The Partition resolution of the Government of India which is an *odious document in more ways than one is particularly objectionable as embodying in a practical and most insidious shape a sinister maxim which finds favour with none more than the Government of India*. "Divide and rule" is a bad principle in any case, and it is especially so when by its means an attempt is made to split a compact people into two irreconcilable parts. *For a fairly long time the Government has been trying to play on this theme but it is only now that it has hit upon a novel expedient to make it tell*. It fondly hopes that by creating a pre-eminently Mussalman province it can most effectively divide the compact Bengali people into two great parts which would most likely be at daggers drawn. How far it will succeed is extremely questionable, but in the meantime it may be worth while to show that its first assumption is false.

By continually thrumming on the theme of the opposed interests of Hindus and Mussalmans, the Government has succeeded in creating some sort of fissure through the Bengali race, but I have reasons to believe that in the past the Hindus and

Muhammadans always made up a compact people in Bengal and it is only the *insidious policy of the British rule* that could have divided them. Now, if we look at the actual state of affairs in East Bengal where an enormous Muhammadan population is still living unsophisticated by the influence of British rule, we shall find that the utmost cordiality exists in the social relations of the followers of the two different religions. In high life, the Muhammadan Zemindars and Hindus are on best terms and there is so much of cordial relation between them that one would never think of whispering a word of their opposed interests. Hindu Zemindars too are only too glad to be courteous to their Mussalman friends, though unfortunately owing to the exigencies of their social life they cannot employ them in their immediate service, a matter which is made much of by dubious philo-Mussalmans of today. In the middle class there is utmost sociality between the two classes. Among the lower classes, while the Hindus and Mussalmans smoke and gossip over their joys and sorrows side by side in the fulness of their simple sympathy, they are treated similarly by the upper classes. In fact, to any impartial observer of social life in East Bengal the Hindu-Mussalman problem cannot but look like an absolute fabrication of over-ingenuous politicians.

Ingenuous iteration of the theory of opposed interest has been, however, making its influence felt. The Government officials are always trying to look at the Hindus and Mussalmans as opposed and there has arisen a new race of short sighted local politicians who think they are doing good to their community by regarding the two parties as distinct and irreconcilable. If the uninterrupted harmony of social life among the Hindus and Mussalmans of East Bengal should have been blurred to some extent by this insidious principle, past history may perhaps correct our vision. *I do not speak, of course, of the factitious and often manufactured, history which is put into the hands of our youths and which forgets to deal with anything but kings and invaders and their scuffles and triumphs, leaving most awkward things to be inferred about Bengal*, but of that real history of Bengal so far as it can be traced at this time. This history tells us that while the throne of Bengal was the home of bloodshed and intrigue, while wave upon wave of foreign aggression and internal disorders seemed to have been almost tearing the vitals of Bengal, real Bengal was living a silent and peaceful life under her leafy shades and by her rippling rivulets. Poets without number and philosophers and scholars in abundance grew up and lived out their unostentatious lives in simple contentment. This history would relate that

beyond the paraphernalia of the throne, within the heart of real Bengal, the Hindu and the Mussalman were leading a life of completest peace. Few were drawn into the angry vortex of political life, and such as were, were either fresh indents from Central Asia or the greatest men among the people. This is not a fanciful picture and would not require much proof; I shall simply point to one fact; that in the history of struggles and revolutions which make up Bengal's political history for a very large space of time, the names we meet with at the head of the several parties are scarcely those of any Hindu or any naturalised or converted Mussalman but almost entirely of Syeds and Shaiks, Abyssinians and Tartars and hosts of foreigners who made the purlieus of the throne the hunting ground for their brief space of life. So soon as they have settled down for some generations their names disappear from history. The same conclusion would also follow from an examination of Bengali literature in which Hindus and Mussalmans participated.

And it is of these people who had settled down as well as of indigenous Hindus and Mussalman converts that the real Bengali people were made up. In the quiet life they led in the retirement of villages far off from the turmoil of political life, they slowly and silently built up a wealth of sympathy among themselves and most effectively contributed to the gradual evolution of a Bengali people. *When the English found us, we were still in our villages untouched by the influences of court life* and untarnished by the licence and vice which raged round it—Hindus and Mussalmans, all in one. Those that were in power were almost all aliens or such Hindus and indigenous Mussalmans as found the charms of an ambitious court life too much for their naturally peaceful and contented temperament. We were then, as we hope to be always, a compact people. The intrigues and broils did not touch us, petty jealousies of magnates did not concern us, and the strength and the weakness of the Bengali people grew up in silence round the winterfire of the village headman's yard.

Times have changed since then—those that were aliens in Bengal at that time have settled down as its inhabitants, but the beauty and harmony of a compact people are threatened with a serious shaking. Englishmen, used to dealings with an absolutely homogeneous people, found before them one people with differences in habits which they easily mistook or wilfully misconstrued as differences in essence. Their successors are now always glibly talking about aggregation of various races and opposed interest in

the place of one united Bengali people. Nor is that all; we have been used to taking so much on trust from Englishmen that some people amongst ourselves have been talking of this difference as a fact which needs no proof. They fail to notice that in actual life the Hindus and Mussalmans do not dwell apart and that one life runs through both. I quite confess that the Hindus have very often tripped on that line but it must be admitted most painfully that it is some of the Mussalmans who have put forward publicly as a political doctrine that Hindus and Mussalmans of Bengal are distinct and have opposed interests.

The most ludicrous and at the same time the most objectionable part of this newfangled theory is that Bengali is not the vernacular of the Mussalmans of Bengal. In this connection I most thankfully acknowledge the services of the small but strong body of Mussalman gentlemen who have opposed a bold front to this irrational proposition. I confess that there is a class of Mussalmans mostly high born who were aliens in the land not long ago and have so far failed to settle down so much as to appropriate the language and the habits of the Bengali, and I am aware that Bengali is not their mother-tongue. But to say that the vast mass of Muhammadan population of Bengal consisting of descendants of long domiciled Moguls, Pathans, Arabs and of an immense number of native converts, to say that they have Persian or even Hindustani as their mother-tongue is preposterous. These people prattle out their first words in Bengali, talk and think in Bengali, and in all their dealings in life have nothing to speak but Bengali, yet Persian or Hindustani is the mother-tongue set up on their behalf by some of their officious mouth-pieces. I do not belittle the importance of Hindustani for every Indian, or of Arabic or Persian for the Mussalman; any Mussalman is welcome to attain proficiency in these tongues, but, nursed in the arms of the foster mother, let him not disown his own mother. Bengali is the mother-tongue of every Mussalman in Bengal and as such worthy of his loving appreciation. It is not in the beauties of Persian poets or the sublimity of Arabian philosophers that he should take natural pride, but in the sweet flowing measures of the born poets of Bengal.

To this the philo-Mussalman of to-day urges one objection, that is, that the Bengali literature is an essentially Hindu literature and particularly that it is often anti-Mussalman. It must be confessed that the Bengali literature is pre-eminently Hindu, but that is scarcely any fault of the Hindoos as we shall presently show; as for the other statement, I am disposed to think that it is only in the most recent developments

of the Bengali literature that some amount of anti-Mussalman writing, though perhaps not the feeling, may be traced. The literature of the past agreeably to my supposition of the cordiality of the Hindus and Mussalmans does not, so far as I recollect, anywhere make a statement that a Mussalman may object to. It is only recently when the cordiality was well nigh forgotten that the antipathy of Bengali authors to the Mogul conquerors of their race occasionally found vent in pictures and statements of Moguls to which many Mussalmans have taken objection. This is extremely regrettable, but at the same time my personal conviction is that no instance has been found where any antipathy to Islam or to Bengali Mussalmans has been exhibited to any remarkable extent. The instances discovered are trifling, and in a question of such great national importance they should not be permitted to assume exaggerated prominence and create a division where there was unity all along.

That the Bengali literature is eminently Hindu must be admitted, but without any concession to any argument that it is unworthy of being studied by a Mussalman. For, though pre-eminently Hindu, Bengali literature was not and is not destined to be for ever exclusively Hindu. In the past, Mussalman votaries of Bengali Muse were abundant. Moulvi Abdul Karim with a commendable zeal has hunted out the names of 85 Mussalman authors from Chittagong alone, and all of them are more than a century old. Forty of these wrote *Vaishnava* poems, some wrote about *Sakti*, others on other Hindu subjects, and others again on subjects of interest to the Mussalmans. Among the works of these authors there are several of high poetic merit, and occasional touches of inferior poets are sometimes beautiful. The Bangiya Sahitya Parishat has also unearthed some poetic works of great merit and such a comprehensive work as the *Mahabharata* by Mussalman authors.

These names prove one thing most surely that in the initial stages of the Bengali literature it was not the monopoly of the Hindus. But it became so as abler Hindus espoused Bengali literature as their vocation and the best among Mussalmans were drawn away from it to more ambitious spheres of life for which they had ample scope. After the British conquest and precisely at a time when the Bengali literature came in for popular favour and the best intellects among the Hindus began to serve it, the Mussalmans stood askance and let the new Bengali literature be moulded entirely by the Hindus. It is thus by their own negligence that Bengali literature has become Hinduised and it is by the endeavours

of the best Mussalmans that the Hindu influence can be neutralised. Indeed there is need for some Mussalman authors at the present moment to throw light on Mussalman life and habits in Bengal and to bring out the hidden lights of the Moslem age in Bengal. Will such authors not be forthcoming ?

Another of the fallacies is the habitual lookout of the Bengali Mussalman for a receptacle of his sympathy out of Bengal. With Asiatics religion has always been a far stronger bond of union than any racial or local consideration and the Mussalman of Bengal is no exception. He feels far greater sympathy with his Turkish co-religionist than with his Hindu neighbour. I am a great admirer of the solidarity of the entire Mussalman population of the world and have no fault to find with their sympathy with co-religionists. But it is no reason why they should throw away their own kith and kin—those whose destinies are inevitably bound up with theirs. It is a matter of great regret that Mussalmans do not realise that if the Sultan were to grant unusual rights to their co-religionists in Turkey or Arabia, or if the Shah of Persia were to give a free franchise to his subjects, the Mussalmans of Bengal may rejoice but they will not be one whit better or worse for it ; if on the contrary an earthquake, a famine, a political calamity like the Partition of Bengal, or any bondage were to come upon the Hindus of Bengal, Mussalmans must share with them all these disasters as much as they will participate in their joys. Forgetting this fellowship in joys and sorrows which must inevitably grow up from common interests the average Mussalman of Bengal looks forward with joy or sorrow to a rise or fall of the power of the Sultan of Muscat with whom he has nothing but religion in common. But if Mussalmans are really to realise an idea of good citizenship, they must learn to look nearer home for their joys and sorrows.

These are but two upshots of the modern movement which tends to divide a hitherto compact and homogenous population into two great unreconciled sections. In their inmost heart the Mussalmans are tied up with their Hindu brethren, their interests are common but not more so than their thoughts, feelings and aspirations. If therefore they must part, they must drive their thoughts and feelings in some other channel ; and, in the lookout for this, they have gone so far as to seek their mother tongue as well as the home of their sympathies elsewhere. It was time now that this modern movement should end. *I am aware that this movement is unconscious, but it is rapidly spreading through the fostering care of British diplomacy.* But

all the same it must be checked by a most vigorous conscious endeavour of the rank and file of the Mussalman community.

I am most willing to admit that the movement is not due to the failings of the Mussalmans alone. There are other and more potent factors at work, and the most important of this is the policy of the British Government. *Though, as is patent to every right thinking man, the Government has no love for the Mussalmans whom it has robbed of an empire any more than for the Hindus*, yet it chooses to humour the Mussalmans with small favours. The most remarkable is the hope it holds out to the Mussalmans of a preferential treatment in the scramble for official appointments. The favour sometimes grows rather lukewarm, but as a rule the Mussalman may expect lower orders of Government service with an education which would be regarded as commonplace in a Hindu, and in the higher orders the same rigorous test of educational qualifications is not applied to the Mussalman as to the Hindu. *I am not jealous of the Mussalmans in their good fortune in this and all the more so as I look upon Government service not as a blessing but a curse upon the people.* But I certainly believe that this policy of distinction does not do any good to the Mussalman community while it helps to create a good deal of bad blood. The argument in favour of such preferential treatment is that the Mussalmans are more backward than Hindus. Applied to Mussalmans individually, this is a libel; applied to the class it is true in so far as the vast mass of Mussalman population belong to the lower classes and are necessarily uneducated. But I have grave doubts as to whether the great mass of well-born Mussalmans are really any more backward than the well-born Hindus in education. But even granting this, throwing Government services open to them is not the best way of encouraging Mussalman education. There are more direct ways of education which the Government scarcely thinks of adopting with reference to Mussalmans by way of preference. *As it is, easy access to Government service far from doing the Mussalman community any good is really causing two great evils in their society. The Mussalman is by this means deterred from having the best education and it curbs the growth of independence in educated Mussalmans inasmuch as it creates in such Mussalmans as receive education a morbid hankering after Government service and deters them from developing a spirit of independence in view of a prospective comfortable berth in Government service.* These two are evils that strike at the root of the life of the educated Mussalman and

robs him of much of the good effect of his education. Manliness is not likely to be developed in the Mussalmans with this bait ever hanging before them. *They are not likely to have much real love for the British rule, for they can yet recall days when its pioneers took off their shoes and made obeisance as they approached the Mussalman sovereign.* But they have not the courage of their convictions and in view of the small favours shown to them are always profuse in their show of loyalty.

Before concluding, I feel bound to mention the other great social fact which has been tending to promote the growing division of the Bengali people. It is the want of sympathy of the Bengali people. It is the want of sympathy of the Bengali Hindu of to-day. The old fellowship of Hindus and Mussalmans is fast disappearing and the Mussalmans alone are not to blame for it. The Hindu of to-day does not feel the same interest in the affairs of his Mussalman neighbour as two generations ago. He does not care to understand the Mussalmans, to study their habits, their religious and social customs, and altogether to initiate himself into the inmost heart of the Mussalman community. This our ancestors did better than we do, and as a result we inadvertently trample too often upon the tender susceptibilities of our Mussalman brethren. This, needless to say, is most deplorable, but the Hindus are guilty of more. They are not always kind or courteous in their treatment of Mussalmans. This is probably due to the fact that the vast majority of Mussalmans belong to the lower classes—classes to which society seems to have a licence to be cruel and unsympathetic. The Mussalman with whom a well-born Hindu comes into contact is perhaps his servant or his raiyat or somehow his dependent to whom he finds no necessity to be courteous. Very naturally, therefore, he cannot treat Mussalman gentlemen as well as he ought to do. He has learnt to look upon all Mussalmans with a bit of contempt and he finds it difficult to change this attitude to one of another sort. Thus results a lamentable want of sympathy and not overcourteous behaviour of which the Mussalmans justly complain. It is a fact of common experience that in the matter of courtesy the Mussalman with his great traditions always comes off the best, while the courtesy of the Hindu, however sincere, always falls short of it in polish. Another thing worthy of remark is that in high life Mussalmans behave with those of a lower social status better than a Hindu magnate is habituated to do. And thus to the polished Mussalman a want of courtesy naturally appears highly offensive.



It is time that we should bridge over these differences by a strong conscious effort. The Mussalman must be ready to give more sympathy to the Hindu and the Hindu must adequately reciprocate. To do so we must be intimate, we must try to understand each other thoroughly. Completer social intercourse and a more widespread and liberal study of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian literature as well as

a thorough study of the history of India during the Mussalman era should be encouraged, as nothing will help more to produce sympathy and better understanding.

Naresh Chandra Sen Gupta ■

(Italicised words indicate the words the scrutinising authority underlined)

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CONTENTS.		
1. English Section.		Pages.
1. Foreign Influence in English literature	...	71
2. Persian	...	79
3. Selections	...	82
4. Mussalmans in Bengal	...	84
5. A Spanish Sonnet and its Translations	...	91
6. Club and College Correspondence	...	92
7. Sakuntala—a metrical translation	...	93
2. Bengali Section		
১. ভারতীয় সাহিত্য	...	১১৭
২. পারস্য	...	১১৭
৩. নির্বাচন	...	১১৭
৪. মুসলমানেরা বাংলায়	...	১১৭
৫. সাকুন্তলা—মিথিতরাজ্যের একটি অনুবাদ	...	১১৭
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### MUSSALMANS IN BENGL.

The Partition resolution of the Government of India which is an odious document in more ways than one is particularly objectionable as embodying in a practical and most insidious shape a sinister maxim which finds favour with none more than the Government of India. "Divide and rule" is a bad principle in any case, and it is especially so when by its means an attempt is made to split a compact people into two irreconcilable parts. For a fairly long time the Government has been trying to play on this theme but it is only now that it has hit upon a novel expedient to make it tell. It fondly hopes that by creating a pre-eminent Mussalman province it can most effectively divide the compact Bengali people into two great parts which would most likely be at daggers drawn. How far it will succeed is extremely questionable, but in the meantime it may be worth while to show that its first assumption is false.

By continually thrumming on the theme of the opposed interests of Hindus and Mussalmans, the Government has succeeded in creating some sort of fissure through the Bengali race, but I have reasons to believe that in the past the Hindus and Muhammadans always made up a compact people in Bengal and it is only the insidious policy of the British rule that could have divided them. Now, if we look at the actual

state of affairs in East Bengal where an enormous Muhammadan population is still living unsophisticated by the influence of British rule, we shall find that the utmost cordiality exists in the social relations of the followers of the two different religions. In high life, the Muhammadan Zemindars and Hindus are on best terms and there is so much of cordial relation between them that one would never think of whispering a word of their opposed interests. Hindu Zemindars too are only too glad to be courteous to their Mussalman friends, though unfortunately owing to the exigencies of their social life they cannot employ them in their immediate service, a matter which is made much of by dubious philo-Mussalmans of today. In the middle class there is utmost sociality between the two classes. Among the lower classes, while the Hindus and Mussalmans smoke and gossip over their joys and sorrows side by side in the fulness of their simple sympathy, they are treated similarly by the upper classes. In fact, to any impartial observer of social life in East Bengal the Hindu-Mussalman problem cannot but look like an absolute fabrication of over-ingenious politicians.

Ingenuous iteration of the theory of opposed interest has been, however, making its influence felt. The Government officials are always trying to look at the Hindus and