SOCIAL IDEAS AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN BENGAL 1818 - 1835

Z. H. ZAHABUDDIN AHMED

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RDDHI • INDIA

First Published : 1965
Second Edition : June 1976

Rs. 60.00

Published by Mr. Shyamal Bhattacharyya on behalf of Messrs Rddhi, 28 Beniatola Lane, Calcutta 700 009 and printed at Messrs The Technical & General Press, 17 Crooked Lane, Calcutta-69.

FOR HAMIDA

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since the book which was originally published by E. J. Brill in 1965 went out of print several years ago, many friends have been advising me to bring out a second edition. Some had suggested that a Bengali translation of the book should be made available to ensure a wider circulation. I had, however, planned to rewrite the book stretching the period at both ends so as to cover the years between 1800 and 1857, but for various reasons this could not be done. The present publication is virtually a reprint of the first edition with minor alterations and additions. The appendices include a note analyzing the different views regarding the establishment of the Hindu College along with a hitherto unpublished document.

I am greatly indebted to Mr. Swapan Majumdar of the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, for taking upon himself willingly and ungrudgingly the onerous responsibility of bringing out this new edition. Mr. Majumdar is a well-read scholar of nineteenth century Bengal and his involvement in this work results from his keen interest in this field of study.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the University Grants Commission of India for inviting me to visit India on a three-month lecture and study programme under the Indo-Bangladesh Cultural Agreement. This enabled me to establish necessary contacts which helped to bring about this publication. I am indebted to the Director of the National Library, the Director of West Bengal State Archives and the Librarian, West Bengal Secretariat Library for allowing me to check up some source materials. "A note on the origin of the Hindu College" (Appendix II) is mostly taken from an article which was published in the *Nineteenth Century Studies* (Calcutta), no. 9, January 1975. I am grateful to the editor for his kind permission to include it in this book. My thanks are also due to the publisher Messrs. Rddhi and to all those who were involved in the production of this book in print.

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PREFACE

This is an attempt to study some aspects of social change which took place in Bengal during the early part of the nineteenth century. It also seeks to analyse the dominant ideas of the period, the influences which shaped them and the effect of those ideas on Government policy. Much has been written on the reform movements in Hinduism and Indian Islam, the press, the growth of education, the rise of the nationalist movement, the growth of Muslim separatism and the evolution of British Indian administration and policy. What has been lacking is an integrated view of these developments which have shaped modern India and Pakistan. While this book does not claim to have fulfilled this need, it seeks to trace objectively the roots and the origins to these important developments. Even in this respect, the study is far from complete.

I wish to express my gratitude and thanks to a number of people who have helped me in many ways in writing this book. The work was originally undertaken at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, under the supervision of Dr. K. A. Ballhatchet to fulfil the requirements for Ph.D. degree of the University of London. Throughout the period of my research and writing Dr. Ballhatchet gave me ungrudgingly his advice and assistance and helped me in clarifying my ideas. Professor A. L. Basham, Professor Holden Furber, Professor Susobhan Sarkar, and Professor A. R. Mallick have shown great interest in the work and have offered much valuable criticism and constructive comment. I am also grateful to Mr. Ranajit Guha, Dr. Barun De, Dr. Stephen Hay, Dr. John McLane, Mr. A. Razzaque, Mr. A. Majed Khan, Mr. Basudha Chakravarty, Mr. Badruddin Umar, and Dr. Abu Imam for reading the manuscript and making useful observations. For the judgements expressed in this book, however, the responsibility rests with me.

I am indebted to the various archives and libraries I have used: the Indian Office (Commonwealth Relations Office) Library, London; the British Museum; the Library of the University of London; the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London; the Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, London; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the Library of the University of Nottingham; the National Library, Calcutta; the Harvard University Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and the University of Chicago Library. My thanks are also due to Mrs. Margaret Morris for typing the Miss.

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

G.C.P.I.	*General Committee of Public Instruction.*
I.O.R.	*India Office Records.*
P.P.H.C.	*Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons.*
P.P.H.L.	*Parliamentary Papers, House of Lords.*
S.E.R.	*Selections from Educational Records.*
S.S.K.	*Sangbadpatre Sekaler Katha.*

SOCIAL IDEAS AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN BENGAL
1818–1835

INTRODUCTION

DURING the early decades of the nineteenth century significant developments were taking place in Indian society particularly in Bengal. These developments which were specially manifest during the period 1818-1835, were possible because of the influence of new ideas which were beginning to emerge as a result of British rule. The Western impact had presented a profound challenge to the entire social and cultural fabric of the country. It was during this period that this challenge was most keenly felt and most keenly answered. Apart from the fact that these years saw the great reform movement initiated by Rammohan Roy which brought about significant though not revolutionary changes in Bengali society, it was during this period that other changes of far-reaching importance took place, particularly in the field of education and in the economic and social life of the people. During this period again, some sections of Indian Muslims, particularly in the rural areas were involved in a reactionary religious movement which was affected by agrarian unrest. This movement had an impact upon the subsequent development of the Muslim community.

The year 1818 is a landmark in many respects. It was in this year that the first vernacular newspapers were published, and this event by itself constituted an important stage in the growth of public opinion in India. The year also witnessed the abolition of censorship on the press which had been imposed by Wellesley in 1799. This event greatly encouraged the publication of more newspapers both in English and the vernacular languages. By 1818 education had also made considerable advance particularly amongst Bengali Hindus. The Hindu College, originally founded in 1816 by private initiative, was by 1818 established on a sound footing, though it needed assistance from the Government for its further development. The College began to disseminate new ideas which produced deep stirrings in Bengali Hindu society. The establishment of the Calcutta School-Book Society in 1817, the Calcutta School Society and the Serampur College in 1818, marked further steps toward educational progress. Again, in the field of social reform, it was in the

year 1818 that Rammohan Roy published his famous tract on *sati* in which he openly denounced the custom sanctified by tradition.

The growth of new ideas in India during the early part of the nineteenth century was conditioned by the peculiar nature of English rule. In conducting the administration of India, the East India Company had sought to continue the old Indian traditions of despotism. There can be no doubt that the nature of its government was despotic. But this despotism could hardly be comparable to that which India had known before – an irresponsible autocracy based largely on the whims of individual monarchs.[1] True, the Government of the East India Company was not responsible to the Indian people. But the fact that it was responsible to the English Parliament made a great difference. Business in India whether commercial or administrative, could not just be managed according to the arbitrary whims of the Company's officials in India or even the directors in England, but required the ultimate sanction of Parliament. It had to be done in a constitutional manner with which Englishmen at home were familiar. And so English ideas and institutions came to be introduced into India and to influence in turn Indian ideas and institutions. Although the English constitutional practice of government by public opinion, whatever may be the dimensions of the public in a particular period, was carefully kept away from India, public opinion in India developed along channels familiar in England. Indian opinion began to be expressed through the press, associations or organisations formed to propagate the views of particular groups, public meetings and petitions addressed to the Government or Parliament.

The liberal views held by some of the Governors-General of India particularly Lord Hastings (1813-22) and Lord William Bentinck (1828-35), encouraged the growth of new ideas. Although, as Governor-General, Hastings generally allowed himself to be guided by conservative-minded officials, he could on occasion adopt a liberal policy and express liberal sentiments which facilitated the expression of public opinion. Thus, in 1818, without reference to authorities in England, he took the bold step of freeing the press. But the liberal policy which Hastings wanted to pursue could not be effective owing to the unsympathetic and uncooperative attitude of the Court of Directors

[1] It is true that theoretically these rulers were not above the law – at least the religious law. A ruler was expected to observe the law of his religion and enforce it on his subjects. In practice, however, a strong ruler like Akbar (1556-1605) for instance, would disregard the creedal law and act as he pleased.

as well as of his own officials, and also to his own somewhat vacillating attitude. Bentinck's liberalism, on the other hand, was of a more practical kind. He not only knew what he wanted to do, he also seemed to possess the will-power to get it done. In estimating the failure of Hastings or the success of Bentinck one must, however, take into consideration the circumstances under which the two men worked. The period of Hastings' Governor-Generalship coincided with a period of crisis both in England and India. While England suffered from the Napoleonic war and its impact, in India the English had to contend with the Marathas for supremacy in the sub-continent. During all this time England was ruled by a Tory oligarchy, conservative in outlook, which set its face resolutely against reform or change.

By 1828 when Bentinck became Governor-General of India, the situation had altered. The reform movement was gathering momentum in England and in many parts of Europe. British power in India no longer faced a major threat. Bentinck had fully imbibed the liberal spirit of the age.[1] As Governor-General of India he proved that he was not afraid of innovations. He refused to follow the beaten track. The period of his administration saw significant changes in the social and economic development of India. Bentinck allowed the press almost unrestricted freedom. He was the first Governor-General who seriously endeavoured to ascertain Indian opinion on matters relating to Indian affairs.[2] In

[1] This was illustrated in a remarkable letter which his friend Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, who after the French Revolution of 1830 became the first 'citizen-king' of the French, wrote to him on his appointment as Governor-General of India. He observed: "I am sure you will render important service both to India and to the mother country.... You know better perhaps than any other person, that it is chiefly by advancing the welfare of the governed that the security and interests of the governing may be promoted, a principle sadly fallen in oblivion amongst many of the governing ones, not to say of all of them. But I know that you will be fettered in many ways, that you will be recommended not to quit the old track, that you will hear continually the terrible words, 'Do as you are bid; do as we have always done, beware of improvement, beware of innovations....' " Louis Philippe to Lord William Bentinck, 16 July 1827. *Bentinck Papers.*

[2] The following notice issued by Bentinck's private secretary, which was published in the newspapers only a few months after the former's arrival in India, showed how anxious the Governor-General was to ascertain the views and sentiments of the different sections of the people in the country:

NOTICE

The Governor-General invites the communication of all suggestions tending to promote any branch of national industry; to improve the commercial

order that the people might know what the Government was doing, some of the proceedings of the Governor-General-in-Council were published in the newspapers.

Bentinck's Government not only helped the growth of Indian public opinion ; it was at least partially responsive to it. This is clearly evident from its measures, particularly those relating to social policy and education. Hastings' liberalism had been kept under effective restraint owing to the opposition not only of the officials in India but also the authorities in England. Bentinck, on the other hand, had no such restraints. His policy was enthusiastically supported by a group of brilliant officials such as Metcalfe, Trevelyan and Macaulay. He also had powerful supporters both in the Court of Directors and the Board of Control.

The activities of private British residents in India – missionaries and businessmen advocating free trade – also contributed to the growth of new ideas and promoted, though indirectly, social change. Most of the missionaries were undoubtedly men of unblemished character, considerable learning and unselfish devotion to the cause of Christianity. But many were also men of closed minds who failed to understand or appreciate the Indian point of view or character. They started with somewhat naive assumption that everything in Indian society and religion was bad and that Christianity was the only true religion that could save the afflicted soul. The typical missionary attitude towards Indian

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intercourse by land and water; to amend any defects in the existing establishments; to encourage the diffusion of education and useful knowledge ; and to advance the general prosperity and happiness of the British Empire in India.

This invitation is addressed to all Native Gentlemen, Landholders, Merchants and others, to all Europeans both in and out of the service, including that useful and respectable body of men, the Indigo Planters, who from their uninterrupted residence in the Mufussil, have peculiar opportunities of forming an opinion upon some of these subjects.

Communications to be addressed to the Private or Military Secretary of the Governor-General.

By Command
A. DOBBS
Private Secretary.

Government House
23rd February 1829.

Government Gazette, 2 March 1829. In another notice bearing the same date it was announced that the Governor-General "will give private audiences to Native Gentlemen, and to Natives of respectability, who may wish to see him." Persian and Bengali translations of this notice were also published for larger circulation. *Ibid.*

religions was reflected in the following remarks made by the Lord Bishop of Winchester: "Not only must the Christian religion be proved true, but the system of the Mussulman or of the Hindu, must be declared false."[1] Thus the missionaries launched indiscriminate attacks upon Indian religions through various kinds of publications. One positive, if indirect result of such hostile criticism was to produce a new sense of awareness amongst many Indians regarding the necessity of change and reform.

The movement of the English free-traders against the monopoly of the East India Company also greatly facilitated the growth of new economic and social ideas in India. These merchants who upheld the cause of free trade clamoured for unrestricted freedom in utilising the growing commercial opportunities. They also advocated the colonization of India by Europeans. Some of their views were shared by the growing class of Indian merchants whose interests were linked with those of the free-traders.

The English merchants sought support from their Indian friends in their fight against the Company's monopoly. They encouraged Indians to express their opinions freely. The free-traders who had imbibed the radical, rationalist political and economic doctrines of eighteenth century Europe actively sought to influence the minds of the new generation of English-educated Indians.[2]

The epoch which began in 1818, ended in 1835. By that time the first and the most important phase of the Hindu reform movement had run its course. The educational and, to some extent, the administrative pattern of the country had been set. The foundations of the new legal system had been laid. The beginnings had been made in the development of the great communication system. The foundations of Muslim separatism had also been laid during this period, owing to the different reactions of the Hindus and Muslims to Western education. And, finally, the Bengal press had come to reflect the ideas and aspirations of different sections of the people.

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[1] Speech by Lord Bishop of Winchester, 20 February 1829. *Report of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (London 1829), 11.

[2] Thus Rasikkrishna Mallick, the young editor of the radical Bengali journal, the *Jnananveshan*, drew loud cheers from his English audience when addressing a public meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall held on 5 January 1835, he accused the English Parliament of "looking to the interests of the East India Stock, and not to those of the inhabitants of the country." The meeting was called by the Calcutta free-traders to protest against the renewal of the East India Company's Charter (Act of 1833) by the Parliament. *Bengal Hurkaru*, 10 January 1835.

CHAPTER 1

BENGALI SOCIETY AND THE WESTERN IMPACT

The fact that the English acquired political sovereignty over India by way of commerce largely explains the character of their rule. It was, in the early stage, primarily dominated by commercial considerations. The early English rulers of India seemed to have regarded the business of Government as a necessary evil which had to be undertaken in order to preserve their commercial hegemony. Governmental activity was therefore reduced to the minimum. It was primarily concerned with the collection of taxes and preservation of order. Even in the administration of justice, the Company's Government was not eager to introduce the English legal system. The fear that a handful of Englishmen in India were always in danger of being overwhelmed by the 'native' inhabitants, once their feelings were roused by any imprudent measure, was sufficient to discourage any interference in the social and religious life of the people. This policy of non-interference was quite in harmony with the traditional English spirit of compromise, of allowing things to take their own course as long as they did not adversely affect English commercial and political interests.

Englishmen and Indians, however, could not remain in two hermetically sealed mental worlds. Intercourse, commercial and administrative, brought the two peoples into closer relationship. The establishment of English rule in Bengal was destined to produce far-reaching social and cultural changes.

The Permanent Settlement (1793), despite the fact that it resulted in serious injustice to the interests of the cultivators, had nevertheless, in the long run, promoted some kind of social stability in Bengal. The old landed aristocracy had been largely destroyed during the period of turmoil which followed the battle of Plassey, and this destruction seriously undermined the old social order.[1] Lord Cornwallis's Settlement had produced a new set of zamindars who, assured of the benefits of

[1] For detailed account of the ruin of the old aristocracy see W. W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal* (7th edition, London 1897), 56-58.

security, rapidly grew in wealth and influence.[1] Some of them like Dwarkanath Tagore, for instance, further enriched themselves by judicious investments in commercial enterprises. In fact, commercial activities in Bengal had increased enormously with the steady inflow of European merchants, particularly after the East India Company's monopoly of the India trade was broken by the Act of 1813. Many of these merchants took to indigo business and, since they could not under law hold lands in their own names, they operated through Indian agents.[2] The agency houses in Calcutta furnished capital to many of these traders. Thus a close partnership was being established between English and Indian merchants which benefited both.

In the commercial life of Calcutta, Indian bankers known as *banians* played an important role during the early part of the nineteenth century, when the modern banking system had not yet fully developed. They advanced loans to young English officers who lived beyond their means, and to newly arrived European traders who did not possess sufficient capital to start business enterprises. In fact, it was asserted that by 1828 the amount of Indian capital utilised in Government funds, loans to individuals, and internal and external trade was very large.[3] These Indian bankers actively participated in business speculations, invested capital on distant voyages, and constructed indigo establishments on behalf of their European clients.[4] They also furnished a considerable amount of capital to the English agency houses in Calcutta which in turn financed indigo business.[5] India still offered scope for

[1] It should, however, be noted that despite this assurance of security, the years immediately following the Permanent Settlement saw the ruin of many zamindars. Since the zamindars were now directly responsible for the payment of revenue to the Government, and since the revenue demand was exhorbitant, many of them had failed to realise the rent from the ryots. And, on account of revenue arrears, the Government confiscated their estates and put them up to auction. These were purchased mostly by Hindu merchants and bankers of Calcutta. To prevent the arrears of revenue from accumulating, the Government had, by Regulation VII of 1799, restored to the zamindars their former summary power over the ryots. Thus, the position of the zamindars was made secure. For relations between zamindars and Government, see Chapter V.

[2] Regulation XXXVII of 1793 forbade the holding of lands by Europeans.

[3] *East India Gazetteer*, 1828, i, 319.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Evidence of Thomas Davidson, formerly an indigo planter, before Select Committee of the House of Lords, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, 1830, 256. (India Office Library, Record Department, Parliamentary Branch Collection, no. 64.)

European merchant adventurers to acquire substantial capital and fortune through business speculation.[1]

The development of the mercantile community of Bengal during the first quarter of the nineteenth century was indeed a significant phenomenon in the social and economic history of the country. This community, however, comprised not merely Bengali Hindus but also a considerable number of Northern Indian merchants, mostly Marwaris, and also a number of Muslims, generally of Persian and Afghan extraction but long resident in Calcutta and known by the peculiar name of 'Mughal' merchants.[2]

The growth of this mercantile community was greatly facilitated by the English free-traders. The latter were not satisfied by the ending of the East India Company's monopoly of the India trade by the Act of 1813, and were clamouring for unrestricted freedom in the employment of their capital and skill in India. They criticised the various restrictions which had been imposed by the Government of India in this regard, including the restrictions on their residence beyond the jurisdictions of the Presidency towns. They also advocated the colonization of India by Europeans.[3] The free-traders carried on their agitation through the press; in fact, most of the Calcutta newspapers took up their cause.[4] They demanded the removal of all restraints from which merchants in

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[1] Capt. Turner Macan in his evidence before Select Committee of the House of Commons dated 22 March 1832, remarked "... in truth capital is, I believe, never taken from England to India; it is made there and remitted home." *Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons*, 1831-32, ix, 7551, 164.

[2] *Bengal Almanac and Annual Directory*, 1815-35 contains lists of these merchants and bankers.

[3] Between 1813 and 1832 the English free-traders carried on a powerful propaganda on their own behalf. A number of brilliant publications appeared advocating their cause. The tone of the free-traders' criticism of the East India Company's Government could be compared to that of the Indian Nationalists in the twentieth century. See R. Rickards, *India or Facts submitted to illustrate the character and condition of the native inhabitants with suggestions for reforming the present system of Government*, 2 vols. (London 1829-32). Also J. Crawfurd, *A View of the Present State and Future Prospects of the Free Trade and Colonization of India* (2nd edition, London 1829).

[4] The three leading English newspapers—the *Calcutta Journal*, the *Bengal Hurkaru* and the *India Gazette* advocated their cause. Some Indian newspapers e.g. *Mirat-ul Akhbar* (Persian) and the *Sangbad Kaumudi* (Bengali) with which Rammohan Roy was associated, also supported the free-traders.

India, both European and Indian, suffered in carrying on direct trade with Europe and America.[1]

These views were shared by the growing class of Indian merchants with landed interests, who clearly perceived the advantages which would result from free trade. They saw prospects of the increase in the value of land, and also of its development as a result of the investment of European capital and skill in Indian industry and agriculture. In fact, some of them, such as Dwarkanath Tagore and Prasannakumar Tagore, and also Rammohan Roy, who, though not a businessman himself was closely associated with them, went so far as to openly advocate the cause of the indigo planters.

During the period immediately preceding the renewal of the East India Company's Charter in 1833, English free-traders both in England and India, had intensified their agitation against the Company's privileges. On a requisition signed by a number of British and Indian merchants and other inhabitants of Calcutta, a public meeting was held at the Town Hall for the purpose of petitioning Parliament to meet the grievances of the free-traders.[2] The importance of this meeting can hardly be ignored. It was perhaps the first public occasion when Indians and Europeans, both representing the growing middle class, stood on a common platform. In a speech delivered at the meeting Dwarkanath Tagore dwelt on the advantages which resulted from indigo plantation and maintained that both zamindars and ryots had benefited from it.[3] He admitted, however, that there were certain

[1] *India Gazette* observed in its editorial: "... we are inclined to think that the direct trade of India with the other countries of the world, may be very greatly and very advantageously increased. India is too much regarded merely as a receptacle for British manufacturers while little is permitted and still less is done to furnish her with outlets for the produce which she has to exchange for those manufactures. Even her trade with Great Britain is shackled by the heavy duties imposed on some of her most important staples, while restrictions are laid on the introduction of European capital and enterprise which would develop and improve her internal resources. Freedom of trade and intercourse, both internal and external, is the grand desideratum for the prosperity of India." *India Gazette*, 20 April 1829.

[2] The requisition appears in the *India Gazette* of 3 December 1829, with the names of the following Indians who were among its signatories: Dwarkanath Tagore, Rammohan Roy, Radhamadhab Banerji, Raghuram Gosain, Pramathanath De, Ramratan Bose, Ramchand Bose, Ashutosh De, Radhakrishna Mitra, Krishnamohan Boral, Kalinath Roy and Ramanath Tagore.

[3] *Bengal Hurkaru*, 17 December 1829.

exceptions regarding the general conduct of the indigo planters, but then pointed out that they were "extremely limited" and were "of the most trifling importance." In support of his assertion he cited the example of one of his own estates which had greatly improved as a result of indigo cultivation. He pointed out that several of his own relations and friends had similarly improved their properties. He concluded:[1]

> If such beneficial effects as these I have enumerated, have accrued from the bestowing of European skill on one article of production alone (indigo), what further advantages may be anticipated from the unrestricted application of British skill, capital and industryto the very many articles which this country is capable of producing, to as great an extent and of as excellent a quality, as any other in the world, and which of course cannot be expected to be produced without the free intercourse of Europeans.

In fact, Dwarkanath Tagore himself moved a resolution, seconded by his cousin Prasannakumar Tagore, calling for the abolition of all restrictions on Europeans residing in India.[2] Rammohan Roy also spoke at the meeting and expressed similar sentiments. He maintained that "the greater the intercourse with European gentlemen the greater will be our improvement in literary, social and political affairs."[3] Like Dwarkanath Tagore, he also commended the activities of the indigo planters, though he too admitted that some of these men were guilty of the oppression of the cultivators.[4]

It was not only the English free-traders who had grievances against the East India Company. Bengali merchants were also to be found complaining against the tariff policies of a government which was still mercantile in its private corporate form. What they particularly resented were the heavy duties on the export of cotton and silk fabrics manufactured in Bengal. There were no duties on such fabrics of British manufacture, as were now coming into India. The Bengali merchants' sense of suffering from discrimination, and their vocal expression of it, is clear in a petition of September 1831 signed by "117 natives of high

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[1] *Bengal Hurkaru*, 17 December 1829.
[2] *Ibid.*, 16 December 1829.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

respectability" in Bengal, which was sent to the Privy Council.[1] "Your Lordships must be aware", they observed, "of the immense advantages the British manufacturers derive from their skill in constructing and using machinery, which enables them to undersell the unscientific manufacturers of Bengal in their own country."[2] The petitioners, however, did not expect any great advantage even if their prayer for the removal of the discrimination was granted.[3] Against the inflow of British machine made fabrics, the Bengal cotton industry was on the verge of ruin.

Nevertheless, during this period enterprising Bengali merchants were participating in various commercial activities, sometimes in close collaboration with European merchants. Thus, in 1834 Carr, Tagore and Company was established, largely with the capital of Dwarkanath Tagore.[4] Himself a leading zamindar, Dwarkanath was a man of great ability and varied interests. He had earned a great reputation and also considerably increased his wealth by holding for several years the lucrative position of *Diwan* or agent to the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium. Deeply attached to the cause of social improvement, he was closely associated with the reform movement started by Rammohan Roy. Dwarkanath had also strongly supported the demands of the free-traders and, when these were largely conceded by the Charter Act of 1833,[5] he decided to make use of the new commercial opportunities thus opened up.

The zamindars, the merchants and the bankers formed the upper strata of Bengali urban society. Below them stood those composing different professional groups: small traders, artisans, clerks in the different commercial and Government establishments and also teachers.

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[1] *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, x, part II, 573-74. The duty levied on fabrics of Bengal manufacture in England was as follows:

On Cotton fabrics	10 per cent.
On Silks	24 per cent.

For the full text of the petition see Appendix I.

[2] *Ibid.*, 574.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Dwarkanath Tagore to Lord William Bentinck, 20 August 1834. *Bentinck Papers.* The partners were William Carr, head of the Calcutta Agency House called Carr and Company which had been financing indigo business, and Dwarkanath Tagore.

[5] By the Act the Company's trading privileges were abolished; patronage was open to competition; and Europeans were allowed to hold land in India in their own names.

They formed the nucleus of what could be termed the middle class, a class comprising a growing number of people coming from a heterogenous social background, and in which there was a marked degree of social mobility. In fact, in the age of world-wide commercial boom which had opened, particularly after the Napoleonic wars, it was increasingly possible for an intelligent and hardworking man of poor circumstances to work his way up and gain social prestige by virtue of his newly acquired riches.[1] In Bengal the aristocracy of birth had largely been replaced by an aristocracy of wealth perhaps not always acquired by honourable means.

Calcutta, the metropolis of British India, was naturally the heart and centre of this affluent society. The city was rapidly growing in wealth and population. In 1822 the population of Calcutta was calculated at 265,000;[2] by 1828 it was estimated to have risen to about 300,000;[3] these calculations, however, were based on general reports of the police magistrates and are not strictly accurate. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt the continued and marked increase in the size of Calcutta's population throughout this period. Its suburbs were also densely populated.[4] It was also estimated that besides the resident population, about 100,000 persons entered Calcutta every day from the

[1] The early nineteenth century affords several examples of millionaires who started their lives virtually as paupers. Thus, Ramdulal De (1752-1825) the famous Bengali shipping magnate, was brought up as a destitute orphan by his grandmother who served as a cook in the household of a Calcutta merchant. He began his career as a mere bill collector (*sarkar*) on the very low salary of five rupees per month. By sheer hard work and honesty he soon won the complete confidence of his employer. His prosperity is said to have started with a fortunate accident. With the money of his employer he bought up a sunken vessel with its entire cargo and soon after sold it to an English merchant at a fabulous price thus gaining enormous profit. The English merchant who bought it probably knew the value of the cargo. It is stated that Ramdulal De after this transaction handed over the entire amount to his employer, but the latter returned the profit he had made saying that it rightfully belonged to him. Ramdulal De subsequently became one of the wealthiest *banians* of Calcutta. He was also the owner of several ships and it was largely through him that American private trade with Bengal was carried on. For further details see Grish Chunder Ghose, *A Lecture on the Life of Ramdoolal Dey, the Bengali millionaire* etc. (Belur 1868).

[2] *P.P.H.C.*, 1831, v, 320A, Appendix 42, 762.

[3] *East India Gazetteer*, 1828, i, 320.

[4] According to the estimate of police magistrates made in 1802 Calcutta with a circuit of twenty miles contained a population of 2,225,000. In 1819 the Indian population of Calcutta and its immediate suburbs was estimated at 750,000. *Ibid.*

neighbouring places.[1] Bishop Heber, who arrived in Calcutta in 1823, found it "a very noble city, with tall and stately houses ornamented with Grecian pillars, and each, for the most part, surrounded by a little apology for a garden."[2] He was particularly impressed by the Government House which appeared to him "a more shewy place than London has to produce."[3] The bishop, however, was describing only the European part of the city. The city's Indian section appeared to him "deep, bleak and dingy, with narrow crooked streets, huts of earth baked in the sun, or of twisted bamboos, interspersed here and there with ruinous brick bazars, pools of dirty water, coconut trees, and little gradens."[4] Amidst all this squalor, however, he did not fail to notice "a few very large, very fine, and generally very dirty houses of Grecian architecture, the residence of wealthy natives."[5]

In European eyes Calcutta appeared equal in splendour to any European city.[6] It was described as "not only the handsomest town in Asia, but one of the finest in the world."[7] By 1831 Calcutta proper extended along the east side of the Ganges to about seven miles in length; the breadth varied at different places not exceeding two miles."[8]

In the European section of the city which extended along Chowringhee, the houses were generally large, each with a considerable space of ground. An average building contained ten large rooms "well calculated to display the luxury of the proprietor, and to ensure that greatest of all blessings in a hot climate, a free circulation of air."[9] In the city's Indian section, the houses of upper class Indians were generally square with an open court in the centre, surrounded by two or three galleries. Some zamindars and merchants had villas or 'garden

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[1] W. Milburn, *Oriental Commerce* etc. (2nd edition, London 1825), 255.
[2] R. Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-25; with an account of a journey to Madras and southern India* (London 1828), iii, 238.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] R. Burford and R. Smith, *Description of a View of the City of Calcutta* (London 1831), 3.
[7] W. Milburn, *op. cit.*, 254.
[8] R. Burford and R. Smith, *op. cit.*
[9] *Ibid.*

houses' in the outskirts of the city where they spent their leisure hours in quiet surroundings.[1]

Calcutta was a typical Anglo-Indian city. Its architecture was hybrid. The mosques, temples and churches were built in the traditional styles; the public buildings and offices as well as the houses of Europeans and upper class Indians represented a pleasing combination of European and Oriental architecture;[2] but the rest of the city was an architectural hotch potch. Most of the buildings in the Indian quarter could not be classified as belonging to any particular style. They were built from utilitarian rather than aesthetic considerations.

Although Europeans and Indians lived in two distinct parts of the city and the contrast between these was somewhat striking, social intercourse between Europeans and Indians was by no means infrequent. In the grand parties given by the Governor-General and other English officials and dignitaries, representatives of the Indian upper class were invited and shown due respect. Thus, on the occasion of Bishop Heber's forty-second birthday, an evening party and dinner was given at the Bishop's House, Calcutta, on 21 April 1824, at which besides the Governor-General, Lord Amherst, and Lady Amherst and the European officials, several wealthy and distinguished Indians, e.g. Radhakanta Deb, Harimohan Tagore, were present. Although religious prejudice prevented them from taking food with Europeans, they were 'much pleased' when the Bishop's wife herself presented to them, according to Indian custom, "pawn (*pan*), rose-water and attar of roses before they went."[3] Europeans were also invited by wealthy Indians to their residences where they were entertained most lavishly, the *na'ch* invariably forming an important part of the entertainment.[4]

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[1] In a letter to William Wynn written from Calcutta on 1 December 1823, Bishop Heber noted "I have been acquainted with some of the wealthy natives, ...and we are just returned from passing the evening at one of their country-houses. This is more like an Italian villa, than what one should have expected as the residence of Baboo Huree Mohun Thakoor." R. Heber, *op. cit.*, iii, 234.

[2] The front portion of the buildings, the pillars and the flight of steps represented classical European architecture, while the inner portions, the verandahs, the large windows, represented some of the Eastern styles. This combination was the epitome of colonial architecture which was the prevalent fashion not only in British India but also in the southern United States and the West Indies.

[3] R. Heber, *op cit.*, i, 103.

[4] An English lady, who was invited to one such party at Rammohan Roy's residence recorded in her diary: "1823, May – The other evening we went to a party given

The elite of Calcutta lived in large mansions. Some of their apartments were furnished after the European fashion with "elegant chandeliers, pier glasses, couches, chests of drawers, writing desks and two or three hundred chairs."[1] Some of them took to the "English habits of drinking tea" and some "kept English coaches and equipages, and one individual was noted for having also an English coachman."[2]

Thus, Calcutta provided the convenient social and cultural setting for the meeting of East and West. Other cities of Bengal could no wonly shine in the reflected glory of the metropolis. The city of Murshidabad, for instance, once the capital of Bengal, was fast losing its importance. Its population in 1814 was estimated at 165,000, and the city extended eight miles on both sides of the river.[3] Its chief landmarks were the palace of the Nawab, a specimen of European architecture, the Chowk (the city's business and shopping centre) and the streets leading to it, and the mosques. The other city, Dacca, had by 1801 a population of about 200,000 and its suburbs extended six miles along the banks of the river Budiganga, a branch of the Ganges.[4] But like most other towns of Bengal, it was ill planned, "a mixture of brick, thatch and mud houses with very narrow crooked streets."[5] Its prosperity was linked with the manufacture of the famous muslin and with its decline the city also suffered. A number of English, Greek, Armenian and Portuguese merchants lived there. The Nawab of Dacca, a big zamindar, "was celebrated for the suavity of his manners, and his steady attachment to the British Government."[6] The inhabitants of Dacca were described as "a quiet and orderly race, remarkably attached to the public functiona-

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by Rammohun Roy, a rich Bengalee baboo; the grounds which are extensive, were well illuminated, and excellent fire-works displayed.

"In various rooms of the houses *nach* girls were dancing and singing.... The style of singing was curious; at times the tunes proceeded finely from their noses; some of the airs were very pretty; one of the women was Nickee, the Catalani of the East." F. Parkes, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim, in search of the picturesque, during twenty-four years in the east; with revelations of life in the zenana* (London 1850), i, 29-30.

[1] *East India Gazetteer*, 1828, i, 324.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 244.

[4] *Ibid.*, 478.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

ries placed over them."[1] Bishop Heber who visited Dacca in 1824 found "two thirds" of the city area "filled with ruins."[2] He was however, impressed by the upper class Muslims of Dacca with their "comparatively fair complexions, their graceful and dignified demeanour, particularly on horse back, their shewy dresses, the marital curl of their whiskers and the crowd, bustle and ostentation of their followers."[3] Other towns, Burdwan, Krishnagar, Natore and Dinajpur, were also fast declining.[4] The decay of these provincial towns was chiefly due to the decline of the old landed aristocracy.

While the outlying towns still clung to some of the old-world spirit and fashion, it was in Calcutta that a new world was taking shape. In fact, Calcutta was more than a new city. It was becoming the centre of a new middle class culture arising out of the dull stupor and mercantile narrowness, into which Bengal had been plunged during the insecurity of the last century.

Although the caste system existed in a rigid form in Bengali Hindu society and religious barriers separated the Hindus from the Muslims, inter-caste and inter-communal relationships were not always discordant. Whatever its religious value, or its value as a social institution in past centuries of economic stability, the caste system in Bengal had certainly been affected by the precipitation of mercantile wealth. The *banians* nourished by European trade in the deltaic towns, sought to stabilise their social position not only by acquiring landed property in the *mofussil* and houses with Grecian columns in North Calcutta. They also endeavoured to set themselves up as leaders of urban society notably in Calcutta. Radhakanta Deb, grandson of Nabakrishna Deb, the Company's Persian interpreter, a Sudra by birth,[5] could claim to be the leader of the Kayastha community in Calcutta and by 1830, the mouthpiece of Brahminism.[6] Whether this sort of vertical mobility

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[1] *East India Gazetteer*, 1828, i, 478.

[2] R. Heber, *op. cit.*, iii, 296.

[3] *Ibid.*, 297.

[4] These towns owed their one-time prosperity to the zamindars of those areas. Thus, Krishnagar in the 18th century had become the centre of Bengali literature and art patronised by Maharaja Krishnachandra Roy, the zamindar of Nadia. The fame of the Krishnagar terracotta, however, long outlived the prosperity of the town.

[5] *Samachar Darpan* quoted in the *India Gazette*, 10 January 1834.

[6] N. N. Ghose, *Memoirs of Maharaja Nobkissen Bahadur* (Calcutta 1901), 170-71.

already in evidence in the late eighteenth century[1] had been common before the British, cannot be exactly proved. But by the beginning of the nineteenth century the injection of foreign trade and property rights in a free market had introduced a large element of social mobility into the ancient institution of caste. Wealth—generally gained through trade in collaboration with the rulers—and not necessarily heredity or caste was the real basis of indigenous social leadership in Calcutta.

This social leadership was shared by Hindus and Muslims. But to some of the missionaries of the towns, the claims of racial or ethnic purity often seemed spurious. William Ward relying on the evidence of Ramnath Vidyavachaspati, a distinguished Pandit of the College of Fort William, pointed out that many wealthy Brahmins lived "with parier and Musulman women."[2] He particularly referred to the case of a Hindu zamindar who "retained an English concubine and afterwards had a family by a Musulman woman, whose sons were invested with the *poita* (sacred thread, mark of high caste), and all were married to Hindoos."[3] Ward further observed that "among the lower orders, this intermixture of casts for inquitious purposes is still more general."[4] The Baptist missionary was thus endeavouring to prove that there were social relationships sometimes intimate even between members of different religions.

The social evils of the time also in some way contributed in modifying caste restrictions. Thus, polygamy associated with *Kulin*ism[5] gave rise to many malpractices among the Brahmins. The *Kulin* male could marry as many times as he liked and he had no difficulty in doing so since *Kulin* grooms were eagerly sought after. For, it was considered a pious act to give a daughter in marriage to a *Kulin*. Many *Kuliu* Brahmins regarded marriage as a profitable business since they were

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[1] H. T. Colebrooke, *Remarks on the Present State of the Husbandry and Commerce of Bengal* (Calcutta 1795), 131-33.

[2] W. Ward, *A View of the History, Literature and Mythology of the Hindoos including a minute description of their manners and customs, and translation of their principal works* (3rd edition, London 1820), iii, 288.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Kulin* signified the highest order of the Bengali Brahmins. It represented a hypergamous division and is attributed to Raja Ballal Sen who ruled Bengal in the eleventh century.

not obliged to maintain their numerous wives.[1] It was thus found difficult for the non-*Kulin* to find wives for themselves. They were, in fact, compelled to pay a sort of bride price in order to marry. Thus, many unscrupulous Brahmins made a flourishing business. "It proceeded to such an extent," observes a Bengali Hindu scholar, "that Brahmins started collecting girls from all other castes and creeds and passed them on as their own daughters."[2] The story is told in a contemporary newspaper of how two Brahmins while travelling near Burdwan purchased at only six rupees a poor but good-looking Muslim girl and gave her in marriage to a non-*Kulin* Brahmin young man receiving from the latter as much as four hundred rupees.[3]

Bengali society in the early nineteenth century was thus in the melting pot. Morality was at a low ebb. The political anarchy of the preceding century had produced social chaos and promoted social evils characteristic of an age in transition.[4]

Political power has its impact upon culture and society. The Muslims who exercised political authority in India for nearly eight centuries left an indelible mark on the culture of the people. This was the more so because Muslim rule, unlike British, was not an alien despotism. Islam was Indianised and the great majority of the Muslims were of Indian origin. This, however, did not mean that Islam was merged with Hinduism. In fact, Islam and Hinduism represented two parallel streams of Indian culture with many sub-streams connecting the two, but the two streams flowed separately. Through centuries of experience of living side by side, Hindus and Muslims had come to

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[1] The radical Bengali newspaper the *Jnananveshan* published a list of a number of *Kulins* who had married from eight to sixty-two times. Quoted in the *Samachar Darpan*, 23 April 1836. Brajendranath Banerji (ed.), *Sangbadpatre Sekaler Katha* [hereafter referred to as *S.S.K.*] (3rd edition, Calcutta 1950), ii, 252-53.

[2] S. R. Das, "Some Aspects of the Nineteenth Century Bengali Society", *J. N. Banerjea Volume* (Calcutta 1960), 273.

[3] *Jnananveshan*, quoted in the *Samachar Darpan*, 13 June 1837. *S.S.K.*, ii, 255.

[4] In 1801 the Bengal Government had sent out a questionnaire to the district officials enquiring about the moral condition of the inhabitants. The answers received from all the thirty-five officials make melancholy reading. They all emphasize the low standard of morality among all classes of people. "Copy of the 15th and 35th Interrogatories; proposed, by the Governor-General in Council of Bengal, to the Judges of Circuit, and the Zillah Judges, in 1801 : – with the Answers of the said Judges to those Interrogatories." *P.P.H.C.*, 1812-13, viii, 166, 425-45.

recognise and also to respect each other's differences.[1] In fact, in many respects, the culture of the upper class Hindus was similar to that of the upper class Muslims, and this continued to be so down to the early part of the nineteenth century, long after Muslim political power had ceased to exist. As Rammohan Roy pointed out, during his time, besides the similarity in dress between upper class Hindus and Muslims, "the Mussulmans, as well as the more respectable classes of Hindus chiefly, cultivated Persian literature, a great number of the former and a few of the latter also extending their studies likewise to Arabic."[2] The parting of ways, however, had begun after 1835, when Persian was replaced by English as the language of official business.

The different reactions of the Hindus and Muslims to English rule and English education profoundly affected the subsequent development of the two communities. While the Hindus had welcomed English rule with enthusiasm, the Muslims regarded it as a calamity. Their failure to adjust themselves to the new situation not only brought about a sharp deterioration in their position from which they took a long time to recover; it also widened the gulf between the two communities.[3]

The establishment of English rule meant much more than the creation of a new political power. It brought in its train new ideas from the West which produced deep stir in Bengali society. The Muslim response was largely negative; it was born of contempt for those who had snatched away power from their hands. In fact, the Muslims were now rapidly losing the positions of privilege which they had enjoyed for centuries. Sir John Shore, the Governor-General, in a minute dated 22 June 1795, had observed that:[4]

> ...the assumption of the administration of the country by the servants of the Company has necessarily deprived a numerous

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[1] It is true that the caste system prevented Hindus from entering into close social relationships e.g. inter-dining and inter-marriage, and Hindus in general would not have such relationship with Muslims. But this did not necessarily mean any disrespect or hatred; both sides perfectly understood each other's prejudices.

[2] Written evidence of Rammohan Roy on the condition of India before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the East India Company, *P.P.H.C.*, 1831, v, 320A, 739-41.

[3] Muslim separatist feeling which led to the growth of a powerful Muslim nationalist movement in the twentieth century and eventually created Pakistan, may be traced to this period.

[4] *Bengal Secret Consultation*, no. 1, 22 June 1795.

class of the Counsellors and dependents of the Mahomedan rulers of the power, influence and means of accumulation annexed to authority, and that several families of respectability and opulence have been reduced to poverty and insignificance by the deprivation of the sources of their affluence and dignity.

He admitted that with the establishment of British rule the Muslims were "the greatest sufferers."[1] Consequently, they regarded anything associated with the new regime with suspicion and apprehension. Bishop Heber after visting Dacca in 1824 noted that "many of the younger Mussulmans of rank" who had no prospect of improving their stituation, "sooner or later sink into sots, or kindle into dacoits and rebels."[2]

Mutual suspicion was the keynote of Muslim-British relations during this period. In 1832 a former English official observed:[3]

> We took India from the Mahomedans, I may say, and the Mahomedans are most discontented. ... I do not say that the Mahomedans have relinquished all hopes of expelling us from the country; on the contrary, I believe such hopes to exist in the breasts of many of the higher Mahomedans ; and I think they would join any European power, even with but a slight prospect of success, in hopes of casting off the certain thraldom in which they are now held, for any future contingency. I should say, generally, that the Hindoos were considerably more attached to our rule than the Mahomedans.

Bereft of power and glory, without the means to retrieve their dignities, many Muslims turned introspectively to the solace of the spirit and sought refuge in religion. The echoes of the Wahhabi[4] movement

[1] *Bengal Secret Consultation*, no. 1, 22 June 1795.

[2] R. Heber, *op. cit.*, iii, 298.

[3] Evidence of Captain T. Macan before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 22 March 1832. *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, ix, 7351, 161.

[4] A puritanical revivalist movement in Islam associated with the name of Muhammad ibn Adbul Wahhab, which was started in Arabia towards the close of the eighteenth century. While the Muslim religious movements in Bengal (e.g. the *Faraizi* movement) as that of northern India (*Tariqua-i-Muhammadiya* of Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bareli, in the early decades of the nineteenth century could not strictly be called *Wahhabi*, they were undoubtedly similar in spirit if not directly inspired by it.

had reached India by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The feeling was gaining ground among many Indian Muslims that their ruin was due to the fact that they had moved away from the "true" faith; they began to fancy that a revival of Islam as it flourished in the days of the Prophet would restore to the Muslims what they had lost. A number of fanatical leaders appeared to preach the doctrine of *Jihad* (religious war) against the infidels which in fact resulted in a series of sporadic uprisings throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century. It is significant that these movements were almost wholly confined to the lower orders. The poor weavers and peasants – the illiterate folk – fell easy victims to fanatical propaganda. The leadership also came from the poorer classes. Thus, in Eastern Bengal, Haji Shariat-ullah and his son Dudu Miyan stirred up agitation, while in West Bengal, around Baraset, Titu Mir and his followers engaged themselves in plundering raids. These uprisings, though avowedly religious, took an agrarian and also a communal character because of the unrest of the peasantry, mostly Muslim, against the zamindars, mostly Hindu.[1]

One important, though indirect, result of English rule was the growth of vernacular literature. The establishment of Fort William College in 1800 by Marquis Wellesley for the training of young English officers was, in fact, an event of great significance for the development of Bengali literature.[2] The noted Bengali scholars of the day were appointed teachers at the College. It was found that there were no suitable text-books for the benefit of students and these scholars produced a number of works in a simple, elegant style which gave an entirely new turn to the development of Bengali prose literature.[3] The pioneering work in this field, however, had been done by the missionaries several years before the establishment of the College of Fort William. Among the most distinguished of these missionary scholars was William Carey of the Serampore Baptist Mission who was first appointed teacher and subsequently Professor of Bengali at the College of Fort William, a post which he held till 1831. Carey gathered round him a number of eminent Bengali scholars like Mrityunjay Vidyalankar and Ramram

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[1] For details of these disturbances see A. R. Mallick, *British Policy and Muslims in Bengal, 1757-1856* (Dacca 1961), 66-91.

[2] S. K. De, *History of the Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century, 1800-25* (Calcutta 1919), 116.

[3] *Ibid.*, 119.

Basu whose works gave an urban refinement to a language which had hitherto been relegated to the position of a rustic dialect.

In fact, one of the most significant results of Western impact was the development of Bengali literature. Not only were new books produced; translations from well-known English works were also brought out and through this process Western ideas and values were beginning to exercise a profound influence upon Bengali life and thought.[1] One aspect of this influence was the growing desire on the part of the Bengalis to learn English. It must, however, be admitted that this desire grew largely because of its pragmatic utility. English was the language of the rulers and its knowledge brought many advantages.

The avidity with which practical-minded Bengali Hindus sought the knowledge of English was indeed remarkable. According to the testimony of Captain Turner Macan, former Persian Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, "They have shown the greatest desire in Calcutta to learn the English language, and have gone to considerable expense for that purpose.... The want of competent instructors is indeed loudly complained of in Calcutta."[2]

By 1816 the desire on the part of Bengali Hindus to acquire a knowledge of European literature and science had reached such proportions that they resolved to establish an institution at their own cost without waiting for Government support. In this matter they received active encouragement from Sir Edward Hyde East, Chief Justice of the Calcutta Supreme Court (1813-22), who showed much enthusiasm for the cause of Indian education.[3]

It is generally believed that the first move towards the establishment of the Hindu College was taken by David Hare along with Rammohan Roy and a few of his friends.[4] The followers and admirers of Rammohan Roy in their zeal to associate him with every movement connected with

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[1] See David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta 1969).

[2] Evidence of Capt. T. Macan, 22 March 1832. *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, ix, 7351, 158.

[3] It is important to note that throughout this period individual Europeans both officials and businessmen, e.g. Sir Edward Hyde East, Sir Edward Ryan, David Hare and James Young, did much to promote English education among Bengalis. They were actuated by liberal and philanthropic motives and were held in high esteem by the Bengalis.

[4] P. C. Mitra, *A Biographical Sketch of David Hare* (Calcutta 1877), 63. Also Sir R. Lethbridge (ed.), *Ramtanu Lahiri, Brahman and Reformer: a history of the renaissance in Bengal from the Bengali of Pandit Sivanath Sastri* (London 1907), 12.

Westernization during the early part of the nineteenth century, have ignored the contributions towards the development of English education made by men like Gopimohan Deb and his illustrious son Radhakanta, and others representing orthodox Hindu opinion, who were opposed to Rammohan Roy's religious views. The fact, however, is that both Rammohan Roy and his orthodox opponents were equally anxious to promote English education but with motives not identical. Rammohan Roy while appreciating the possible practical advantages of English education, had also an intellectual interest in it. He looked upon English education as a vehicle for Western knowledge which would, he believed, free his countrymen from their age old superstition and blind faith and bring about their moral and cultural regeneration. The orthodox party on the other hand, desired English education for sheer mundane considerations. During Muslim rule Hindus did not hesitate to cultivate Persian and even Arabic which had secured them gainful employment. The continuance of Persian as the language of revenue and judicial business under the English Government was an anachronism which was clearly appreciated and the advantages of learning the English language quickly recognised. Thus, the eagerness to learn English was widespread among the Hindus of Calcutta.[1]

This desire for English education finally led to the establishment of the Hindu College which actually started to function from 20 January 1817. It soon became a popular institution. J. C. Marshman described the establishment of the Hindu College as "the first national movement in the cause of improvement."[2] In 1824 the College was placed under the superintendence of the Committee of Public Instruction, and from now on it received regular financial assistance from the Government. In fact, the Hindu College had become "a mighty instrument for improving and elvating the Hindoos."[3]

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[1] Captain T. Macan in his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 22 March 1832, stated: "The Hindoos would, I think, view the introduction of the English language into our judicial and revenue proceedings rather with pleasure than indifference." *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, ix, 7352, 158.

[2] J. C. Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward* (London 1859), ii, 119.

[3] K. C. Mitra, "The Hindoo College and its Founder", in P. C. Mitra, *op. cit.*, Appendix B, xxx.
For "A Note on the Origin of the Hindu College" see Appendix II of the present book.

With the establishment of the Calcutta School-Book Society in July 1817, a further move towards educational progress was taken. The object of the Society was to supply, at less than cost price, useful elementary books for schools. Here was another example of an excellent institution started by private initiative. In fact, it was the first institution of its kind which was sponsored by a number of public spirited individuals belonging to different religious creeds and occupations. Thus, the first managing committee of the Calcutta School-Book Society for the year 1817-18, included orthodox Hindus like Pandit Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, Radhakanta Deb, Ramkamal Sen and Tarinicharan Mitra. The Muslim members of the Committee were Maulvi Aminullah, the Company's vakil at the Sadr Diwani Adalat, and distinguished Persian and Arabic scholars like Maulvi Karam Hussain, Maulvi Abdul Wahid and Maulvi Abdul Hamid. The missionaries and churchmen were represented by William Carey, of the Serampur Baptist Missionary Society, and the Rev. J. Parson and the Rev. T. Thomason of the Company's Ecclesiastical establishment; while among the officials were W. B. Bayley who was elected President of the Society, Sir Edward Hyde East and J. H. Harrington. The two Indian secretaries of the Society were Tarinicharan Mitra and Maulvi Abdul Wahid, while the European Secretaries were Francis Irvine and Edward Montagu. James Calder, a leading English merchant of the House of Mackintosh and Company was appointed treasurer.[1] The Society was patronised and subscribed to by the Governor-General Lord Hastings and his wife and many English officials and businessmen, and also by a considerable number of Hindu and Muslim zamindars and merchants.[2] The fact that even orthodox sections of the Hindu and Muslim communities did not hesitate to cooperate with Christian missionaries and English officials and businessmen was due to the general desire to promote the cause of education. Any possibility of conflict was carefully avoided.[3] In fact the foundation of a secular educational system was laid in India.

[1] *First Report of the Calcutta School-Book Society* (Calcutta 1818), vi.

[2] *Ibid.*, 57-63.

[3] Rule 3 of the Society stated: "That it forms no part of the design of this Institution, to furnish Religious Books: – a restriction, however, very far from being meant to preclude the supply of Moral Tracts, or works of a moral tendency, which, without interfering with the religious sentiments of any person, may be calculated to enlarge the understanding, and improve the character." *Report of the Provisional Committee of the Calcutta School-Book Society* (Calcutta 1817), iii.

The Calcutta School-Book Society had separate departments for English, Bengali and Sanskrit, Hindustani (Urdu and Hindi), Persian and Arabic. By 1821 the Society, without any financial assistance from the Government, had put into circulation 126,446 copies of various useful works in the different languages.[1] From 1821 the Government began to make annual grants to the Society.[2]

It was evident that the object of the Calcutta School-Book Society could not be promoted efficiently without a sufficient number of schools to utilise the Society's publications.[3] Hence in September 1818 the Calcutta School Society was established. Its objects were to establish elementary schools first in Calcutta and its vicinity, and then in other parts of India especially within the provinces subject to the Presidency of Fort William ; to support the numerous schools already in existence; and finally, to train competent teachers for these schools.[4] The last object was to be realised by giving financial assistance to meritorious students to enable them to prosecute higher studies so that they might in turn serve as efficient teachers.[5] A strong committee of managers was formed which included both officials and non-officials, Europeans and Indians, as in the case of the School-Book Society.[6] Maulvi Mirza Kazim Ali Khan and Radhakanta Deb were appointed Indian Secretaries, while the European secretaries were Francis Irvine and Edward Montagu. In April 1823, in response to the managing committee's request, the Government decided to make a monthly contribution of Rs. 500 to the School Society.[7]

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[1] *Fourth Report of the Calcutta School-Book Society* (Calcutta 1821), Appendix, 36-38.

[2] Extract, Thomas Fisher's Memoirs, *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, ix, 7351, 405.

[3] *First Report of the Calcutta School-Book Society*, op. cit., 23.

[4] *Ibid.*, 26.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] The First Committee of Managers of the Calcutta School Society included Sir Anthony Buller, J. H. Harrington, E. S. Montagu, George Gordon, Lt. Francis Irvine and David Hare among its European members; the Muslim members were Maulvi Mirza Kazim Ali Khan (Mir Munshi in the office of the Persian Secretary to the Government), Maulvi Wilayat Hussain (Mufti, Calcutta Court of Circuit), Maulvi Darvish Ali (Vakil of the Raja of Benaras) and Maulvi Nurun Nabi (Vakil of the Nawab of Rampur). The Hindu members of the Committee were Radhamadhab Banerji and Rasomay Dutt, wealthy zamindars. Subsequently, Radhakanta Deb was also coopted and was appointed one of the Indian Secretaries. *First Report of the Calcutta School-Book Society*, op. cit., 26.

[7] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 53, 23 April 1823.

Both the Calcutta School-Book Society and the Calcutta School Society admirably served the purpose for which they were started, viz. the promotion of an improved system of elementary education in Bengal. The success of these institutions was largely due to the remarkable spirit of public service rendered by their members. The labours of Radhakanta Deb on behalf of the School Society greatly contributed to its success, particularly by neutralising the fears of many orthodox Hindus regarding the Society's objects.[1]

In July 1830, the Calcutta School-Book Society obtained permission to reprint books published by the London Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.[2] Sir Edward Ryan, who was elected President of the Calcuta School-Book Society in 1832, informed Lord William Bentinck that some of the Hindu College students with the assistance of the Society were preparing Bengali translations of well-known English literary and scientific works "with the pure and single view of being useful to their countrymen."[3]

The formation of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society in September 1819 was yet another example of Indo-British cooperation on a non-official level for the cause of general welfare. William Leycester, Judge of the Sadr Diwani and Sadr Nizamat Adalat, was its President, and the members of the managing committee included William Carey, Radhakanta Deb and Ramkamal Sen.[4] The object of this Society was to promote the agricultural development of India by encouraging the growing of better kinds of vegetables and fruits. Although orthodox leaders like Radhakanta Deb and Ramkamal Sen were actively connected with the Society from its beginning, some Hindus were suspicious of

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[1] As Radhakanta Deb himself noted: "I have great satisfaction in saying that our countrymen are convinced of the advantage derived by their children from our Society, and that the indigenous schoolmasters and the parents of boys, who were first alarmed, and refused to receive our school books, are now anxious to come under the control of the Society and that at the commencement of the institution, I persuaded sixteen or seventeen gooroos [Hindu teachers], only to use our reading-books, and to give examination thereon at my house, on the 2nd June 1819, pledging myself there should not be introduced any religious matter therein...." Extract of a letter from Radhakanta Deb. *Government Gazette*, 26 January 1826.

[2] *Ninth Report of the Calcutta School-Book Society* (Calcutta 1832), 13.

[3] Sir E. Ryan to Lord William Bentinck, 29 January 1832. *Bentinck Papers.*

[4] *Transactions of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India* (Serampur 1829), i, Appendix, iii.

its activities. Thus the Serampur missionary newspaper the *Samachar Darpan* observed :[1]

> The Chundrika [the *Samachar Chandrika*, orthodox Hindu newspaper] talks in terms of contempt for the Agricultural Society and insinuates that it has accomplished little beyond promoting the cultivation of *garlic* and *onions*, which it is forbidden to the Hindoos to eat. The Editor appears to think that it ought to have been the great object of this Society to make rice cheaper, and until this be accomplished it cannot be supposed to have done much. We have never yet heard that the Society has been very solicitous about the cultivation of onions and garlic, but it has laboured diligently to improve the fruits of the country and to introduce new fruit trees from other parts of the world. It has assiduously endeavoured to encourage the raising of better vegetables of every kind than the country ever possessed; and the show of vegetables at its annual exhibition proves beyond a doubt that more care and attention on the part of the gardeners would improve both the size and quality of vegetables.

Despite the sneers of conservative diehards, there seems to have been some appreciation of the usefulness of the Society in promoting agricultural improvement. During the next decades several branch societies were established in Bombay, Madras and the Punjab. The Society's *Transactions* and *Journal* contained "a mass of varied information, on subjects connected with the Agriculture, Horticulture and Floriculture" of the country.[2] With assistance from Government the Society continued to make experiments on a large scale for naturalising in India "useful and desirable plants" from other countries.[3]

In February 1823, an organization called the Gaudiya Samaj (Bengali Association) was established by some leading Hindus of Calcutta. It was a literary society whose object was besides promoting the cause of Bengali literature, counteracting the attacks made upon

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[1] Quoted in the *India Gazette*, 9 November 1829.

[2] *Calcutta Review*, 1854, xxii, 341-42.

[3] H. H. Spry, *Suggestions Received by the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India for extending the cultivation and introduction of useful and ornamental plants with a view to the improvement of the agricultural and commercial resources of India* (Calcutta 1851), iii.

Hinduism by its opponents. Obviously, the organizers of the Society had in view the criticism of the Hindu religion which the missionaries were making through their numerous publications. The Gaudiya Samaj sought to meet such criticism through counter-publications. As a Hindu reaction to the Christian challenge the Society was able to obtain the support not only of orthodox Hindus like Radhakanta Deb and Ramkamal Sen, but of those holding moderate and reformist opinions like Dwarkanath Tagore and Prasannakumar Tagore.[1] The Society, however, though it started amidst great enthusiasm and with ambitious projects, did not last long. In fact, it was not heard of after 1824. Nevertheless, it did represent one of the early manifestations of social consciousness among Bengali Hindus which was to crystallize eventually into a nationalist movement. The Gaudiya Samaj failed because the basis on which it was founded was weak. The members who composed it did not share common ideas regarding Hinduism itself, which they were expected to defend. Such a lack of harmony could not promote intellectual or literary activity of any value.

Thus, under the stress of the Western impact, the walls of the tradition-ridden Bangali society were beginning to crack. The nature of this impact was varied; so were the responses to it. The rise of a new landed aristocracy, the growth of a new business community and the beginning of a new educational movement, created the framework of a new social and economic order. It was not just a renaissance in the sense Europe knew it. For the problem before the age was not so much to discover the past, although this was clearly evident in the movement for religious reform, as to prepare for the future, with the example of achievements of the contemporary West.

[1] *Bengal Hurkaru*, 7 March 1823.

CHAPTER II

CONSERVATIVES AND REFORMERS

During the early part of the nineteenth century, Bengali society was gradually adapting to Western influences. The efforts made by the Hindus, particularly of the urban areas, to acquire a knowledge of the English language, though largely inspired by practical considerations, were bound to produce repercussions not foreseen by many. The primary object of the Hindu College of Calcutta was to promote knowledge of European literature and science among the Hindus.[1] Europe during this period was passing through a revolutionary transformation. The Industrial and the French Revolutions and all the ideas associated with these movements were deeply affecting society and government in every country of the West. European literature and science were also greatly influenced by the new ideas, the predominant aspect of which was their secular character. Freedom of thought and the spirit of enquiry were the twin foundations of Western knowledge in this age of enlightenment. Any attempt to introduce this knowledge into a tradition-ridden society with strong religious and social prejudices, was bound to create serious complications.

It is significant that this movement for Westernization particularly in the field of education, had been initiated by the Hindus themselves. Their eagerness to obtain English education has already been noted. The policy of the East India Company's Government was not to do anything which would affect the social and religious system of the country. But the very character of the English Government and of the persons associated with it, and the measures adopted by that government, were bound to produce changes of far-reaching importance.

In fact, a process of Westernization which was the inevitable consequence of Western rule, had started almost imperceptibly in Bengal. Through this process Hindu society faced a kind of challenge which it had never met before. It was a challenge as much from without as from within.

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[1] *Rules of the Vidyalaya or the Hindoo College* (Calcutta 1816), p. 1.

The Western impact produced three distinct patterns of reaction in Bengali Hindu society. Thus, there were those who could be described as conservatives, who were determined to uphold the social and religious *status quo* and maintain their position in a period of challenge. Like the upholders of the Catholic Church in the age of the Counter-Reformation, these Hindu conservatives sought to consolidate their position by accepting certain reforms particularly in the field of education. This attempt to protect the old order by repairing the old walls was considered unsatisfactory by others who wanted to build a new structure on the old foundations. These were the reformers who sought to meet the Western challenge not by rejecting Hinduism but by giving it a new look. They, in fact, attempted to reinterpret Hinduism in the light of contemporary knowledge and criticism. But this attempt to compromise between old and new, between tradition and heresy, was not only denounced by the conservatives; it was found untenable by yet another section of Hindus, mostly educated at the Hindu College. These young men were the radicals who rejected Hinduism in the light of the rationalist criticism of the age. The empiricism of Hume and the Utilitarianism of Bentham coupled with the romanticism of Shelley and Byron had profoundly affected their outlook. The conservatives, the reformers and the radicals, thus represented three distinct trends in Bengali Hindu thought during the early decades of the nineteenth century, each of which left its mark upon the social outlook of the Hindu community. A comparative study of these intellectual movements is necessary for an understanding of the state of public opinion in Bengal during this period.[1]

The conservatives formed the most numerous section of the people, who saw nothing wrong with their religion or social customs and regarded with dread and contempt anything that came from outside. They would scrupulously avoid contacts with the *mlecchas* or the barbarians. Centuries of Muslim rule had brought little change in this attitude and the Hindus continued to preserve to a great extent their separate and exclusive existence so as to constitute a sort of state within a state as far as their religious and social positions were concerned. This, however, did not mean that changes did not take place within the fold of Hinduism. In fact, Hindu society did respond to

[1] This categorisation was first formulated by Professor Susobhanchandra Sarkar in his booklet *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance* first published in 1946.

the various kinds of challenge which came largely from outside, and modified itself in certain ways. But the basic and orthodox character of Hinduism had remained unaltered.

The establishment of English rule was regarded by the Hindus in general as the beginning of yet another period of foreign domination. They seem to have taken it in a spirit of stoic resignation and many of them had, in fact, readily cooperated with the new masters and were able to reap the consequent rewards.[1] It would be wrong to think, however, that the Hindus had welcomed everything associated with English rule. Their attitude was rather to obtain as many benefits as possible under an alien government without compromising their religious and social position. The policy of the East India Company's Government also admirably suited their interests. The zeal with which even the conservative sections of the Hindu community sought English education reflected their practical sense. But while they began to cultivate the English language, they were afraid of English ideas. They would have nothing to do with anything that would in any way subvert the religious and social *status quo*. This was indeed a difficult situation. How could one learn a foreign language and yet entirely avoid any of the ideas which that language conveyed? Contact with the West could not be just mechanical; it was bound to affect the realm of ideas. The contradiction between the acceptance of Western education on the one hand and social conservatism on the other, was reflected in the attitude of the Hindu conservatives typified by Radhakanta Deb.

Foremost among the orthodox Hindu leaders, Radhakanta Deb belonged to a family which had come into prominence after the establishment of English power in Bengal and was thus a typical example of that new aristocracy which owed its existence to the new regime.[2] The

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[1] In their answers to the interrogatories transmitted to them by the Governor-General-in-Council in 1801 the Judges of Circuit and the Zillah Judges in Bengal reported that among the inhabitants, the Hindus in particular were satisfied with the British Government. *P.P.H.C.*, 1812-13, ix, 264, 5-216.

[2] Radhakanta Deb (1784-1867) was the son of Gopimohan Deb, who was the adopted son and heir of Nabakrishna Deb with whom the prosperity of the family began. Nabakrishna was of obscure origin although his descendants later claimed an ancient and respectable lineage (Cf. *A Rapid Sketch of the Life of Raja Radhakanta Deva Bahadur, with some notices of his ancestors, and testimonials of his character and learning*, Calcutta 1859). Some credence can be attached to the account that on a certain day in the year 1756 while Nabakrishna, then in his early youth, was walking through a Calcutta street, he came across an employee

religious and social outlook of Radhakanta was so much at variance with his enthusiasm for the cause of education and particularly English education, that he was described by a writer not unsympathetic to him as "an anachronism."[1] An accomplished scholar in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, he had also acquired a fairly good knowledge of English.[2] His reputation as a Sanskrit scholar was to gain international recognition by the publication of his Sanskrit dictionary, the *Sabda Kalpadruma*.[3]

Radhakanta Deb always showed marked interest in promoting education, particularly English education, among the Hindus.[4] He, with his father Gopimohan Deb, stood at the forefront of all educational movements in the country, beginning with the establishment in 1816 of the Calcutta Hindu College. In fact, Radhakanta was an active director of the Hindu College for over thirty years.[5] His influence in the management of this institution throughout this period was predominant. He was also an active member of the Calcutta School-Book

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of the East India Company and was entrusted with the task of interpreting a Persian letter which was written by the Murshidabad conspirators and addressed to Drake, then Governor of Calcutta. Because of the secret nature of the communication the Company's Muslim *munshi* could not be trusted. The young Nabakrishna is said to have performed his task so creditably that he was immediately appointed *munshi* to the East India Company. In this capacity he soon built up a large fortune. He held responsible positions under Clive and Warren Hastings, and was honoured with the title of Maharaja. "Account of the late Muha Rajah Nobkissen Bahadoor required by and delivered to A. Stirling Esq. Persian Secretary to Government on the 30th April 1825." *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 773, 859-87.

[1] *Calcutta Review*, 1867, xlv, 90, 323.

[2] Bishop Heber, who had a personal acquaintance with Radhakanta Deb, described him as "a young man of pleasing countenance and manners, speaks English well and has read many of our popular authors particularly historical and geographical." R. Heber, *op.cit.*, i, 92.

[3] A work in eight volumes, the first of which appeared in 1822 and the last in 1858. For this work he received honours from Oriental Societies in Europe.

[4] The Serampur missionary journal the *Friend of India* though disapproving of Radhakanta Deb's religious views, paid him a handsome tribute by observing : "To elevated rank and large possessions, he (Radhakanta Deb) adds a wide and extensive acquaintance with science, a liberality of sentiment, and an ardent attachment to European knowledge." *Friend of India* (Quarterly Series), September 1820, i, 1, 129.

[5] Radhakanta became a director of the Hindu College in 1818. He resigned in 1850 owing to ill health.

Society from its formation. His association with this useful institution obtained for it the cooperation of the conservative Hindus, who would otherwise have been afraid to purchase books published by the Society "lest they should contain direct attacks upon their faith."[1] With the establishment of the Calcutta School Society in 1818, Radhakanta Deb became its Honorary Secretary. With David Hare, who was later appointed European Secretary of the School Society, Radhakanta Deb took a keen interest in promoting the cause of elementary education in Bengal.[2]

At a time when female education suffered from utter neglect because of social apathy and prejudice, Radhakanta advocated the education of girls and had actually published, in collaboration with an orthodox Hindu Pandit, Gaurmohan Vidyalankar, a pamphlet in Bengali called *Stri-siksha Vidhayaka* (1822), advocating female education. His conservatism, however, would not allow him to approve of girls being sent to school, but he insisted on their education "in their own homesteads, or in those of their neighbours, under some sort of general surveillance."[3] Radhakanta was also an active member of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India from its establishment in 1818, and subsequently became its Vice-President. On the establishment of the British Indian Association in 1851 he was elected its President, a position which he held till his death.

Despite his valuable contribution to the cause of educational improvement, Radhakanta Deb was almost a blind champion of social conservatism. He became the leader of a party of orthodox Hindus who fanatically defended the social and religious *status quo* and were bitterly opposed to those who advocated reforms. He was oblivious of the great changes that were taking place around him. Although a loyal supporter of the British Government,[4] Radhakanta was opposed to any interference by the Government in the social and religious life of the people. Thus, although *sati* was not practised in his own family,[5] he came for-

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[1] *A Rapid Sketch of the Life of Raja Radhakanta Deva* etc., op. cit., 18.

[2] As Secretary of the Calcutta School Society Radhakanta Deb greatly improved the existing schools "by introducing order and system into them, by bringing them under an energetic and efficient supervision, and by testing their progress by periodical examinations which were held in his own house at Shova bazar." *Calcutta Review*, 1867, xlv, 90, 320.

[3] *A Rapid Sketch of the Life of Raja Radhakanta Deva* etc., op. cit., 19.

[4] *Ibid.*, 17.

[5] Jogeshchandra Bagal, "Radhakanta Deb", *Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala*, ii (Calcutta 1951), 39.

ward to defend it when the Government contemplated its prohibition. According to Bishop Heber, when the Hindus of Calcutta held a meeting to vote an address of thanks to Lord Hastings on the eve of his departure from India, Radhakanta Deb proposed an amendment that the Governor-General be particularly thanked for "the protection and encouragement which he had afforded to the ancient and orthodox practice of widows burning themselves with their husbands' bodies."[1] The proposal, however, was disapproved.[2]

When Lord William Bentinck's Government had finally abolished *sati* by a regulation in December 1829, Radhakanta Deb, along with his conservative Hindu friends, protested against that measure by presenting a petition to the Governor-General on behalf of the orthodox section of the Hindu community.[3] Soon after, in January 1830, an association of orthodox Hindus called the Dharma Sabha was established. Radhakanta Deb along with his father Gopimohan Deb and other conservative Hindu leaders were its chief patrons. The methods which these people now began to practise in their social agitation were organization to stir up latent and unvocal opinion, petitions to Government, abuse of opponents, and social ostracism.

The primary object of the Dharma Sabha was to arrange for the sending of a petition to the Privy Council in England urging repeal of the anti-*sati* regulation. The Dharma Sabha also took upon itself the task of defending the Hindu religion and social system from onslaughts from various quarters. Most of the wealthy Hindu zamindars who were dissatisfied with the Government on account of the new revenue policy (Regulation III of 1828) whereby lands with defective titles were resumed by the Government,[4] also joined the Dharma Sabha to give vent to their feelings. In fact, the Dharma Sabha soon became "the largest and the most opulent" Hindu party in Calcutta.[5] Its chief public

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[1] R. Heber, *op.cit.*, i, 92-93. The allusion was obviously to the policy of non-interference which the Government had been following with regard to the Hindu custom. Since local officers were required to be present at every case of *sati* in order to see that the widow was not forced to burn herself, it was erroneously believed by many that *sati* was practised under Government protection. See Chapter V.

[2] *Ibid.*, 93. The proceedings of this meeting were also reported in the *Samachar Darpan* of 28 December 1822. *S.S.K.*, i, 233-34.

[3] See Chapter V.

[4] See Ibid.

[5] *Anglo-India, Social, Moral and Political ; Being a collection of papers from the* Asiatic Journal (London 1838), ii, 82.

organ was the Bengali newspaper, the *Samachar Chandrika*, whose editor Bhavanicharan Banerji was himself the Secretary of the Dharma Sabha. Other Bengali newspapers like the *Sangbad Prabhakar* and the *Sangbad Ratnakar* also subscribed to its orthodox views. By 1831 this Hindu 'holy alliance' had proclaimed a crusade against the heretics. Thus, at a meeting of the Dharma Sabha held in February 1830, it was resolved to institute a social boycott against those Hindus who were in favour of the abolition of *sati*.[1] But this attempt to intimidate persons who would not subscribe to the views of the Dharma Sabha did not always succeed. The *Samachar Darpan* reported a strange situation that arose in 1834 at the wedding of the niece of Mathurnath Mallick, a wealthy and influential zamindar who happened to be a friend of Rammohan Roy. The Dharma Sabha had asked its supporters not to attend this wedding. The guardians of the bride and the bridegroom (the latter was the cousin of another liberal-minded zamindar, Rajkrishna Singh), on the other hand, sought to make the orthodox party's ban ineffective by giving monetary rewards to those who attended the wedding. Consequently, the Dharma Sabha also had to spend money on those who did not attend. Thus it was reported that:[2]

> The sum given to the highest grade of the Kayasthus who attended the wedding was 25 Rupees a head; the sum given by the Dharmo Shobah to those who did not go was only 20 Rupees; so that many regret now that they did not attend the wedding, and some have in consequence of the small sum given by the Dharmo Shobah returned to the conductors of the wedding to receive the larger gift.

It was indeed unfortunate that a man of Radhakanta Deb's influence, attainments and talents should have placed himself at the head of a movement for social reaction and religious fanaticism at a time when the forces of reform and change were beginning to produce an impact upon Bengali opinion. His learning, which was undoubtedly profound, especially in the field of Oriental literature, was like that of a medieval schoolman and made him an almost uncritical admirer of the past. He stood for a social order which was breaking down before

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[1] *Samachar Darpan*, 13 February 1830. *S.S.K.*, i, 306.
[2] *Calcutta Christian Observer*, May 1834, iii, 5, 254-55.

his eyes, and sought to defend some of the indefensible institutions associated with that order. In this respect his work meant, in the opinion of his younger contemporary Kishorichand Mitra, "putting back the clock of improvement."[1]

And yet in all fairness to Radhakanta Deb, it must be admitted that if he and his conservative friends had not seriously endeavoured to promote English education among the Bengali Hindus, the remarkable progress of that community in the nineteenth century would perhaps have been deferred. Thus, although Radhakanta Deb was almost a blind champion of orthodox Hinduism, his own actions, particularly in the field of education, had contributed to undermining it.[2]

The reform movement in Hindu society which began in early nineteenth century is uniquely associated with the great name of Rammohan Roy (1774-1833). Unlike that of many of his leading contemporaries, Rammohan's family could claim an ancient Brahmanical lineage with a long tradition of respectability, though not uniform material prosperity.[3] The generally known account of his early life[4] has been so much interwoven with Regent that it is difficult to ascertain the actual facts. Thus, it has been maintained that at the early age of twelve, Rammohan Roy was sent by his father to Patna to study Arabic and also to improve his knowledge of Persian, which he had already acquired at home under private tuition.[5] It was at Patna that Rammohan Roy is said to have studied Aristotle and Euclid in the Arabic language in addition to Islamic theology and jurisprudence under his Muslim teachers and thereby to have imbibed those ideas which were to exercise a considerable influence in moulding his life and thought.[6] After completing his studies at Patna, Rammohan Roy, it is

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[1] Speech of Kishorichand Mitra at the meeting held in the hall of the British Indian Association, Calcutta, on 14 May 1867, to condole the death of Radhakanta Deb. See Lokenath Ghose, *Modern History of the Indian Chiefs, Rajas, Zamindars* etc. (Calcutta 1881), ii, 112.

[2] Krishnamohan Banerji, the radical Hindu who later was converted to Christianity and became a distinguished clergyman, publicly acknowledged the debt which he owed to Radhakanta Deb. See Lokenath Ghose, *op. cit.*, 113-14.

[3] Nalin C. Ganguly, *Raja Rammohun Roy* (Calcutta 1934), 1-3.

[4] Sophia D. Collet, *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy* (2nd edition, Calcutta 1914), 6-7.

[5] Nagendranath Chattopadhyay, *Mahatma Raja Rammohan Rayer Jibancharit* (Calcutta 1881), 14-15.

[6] *Ibid.*

believed, went to Benaras to study Sanskrit. Thus a comparative study of Muslim and Hindu scriptures, together with a knowledge of Aristotelian logic learnt through Arabic medium, enabled him at an early age to develop a somewhat revolutionary approach towards the established religions.[1] On his return home Rammohan is said to have developed a conflict with his parents on account of his unorthodox views and had to leave the paternal roof and proceeded to Tibet, where he came in touch with Buddhist monks which enabled him to acquire some knowledge of Buddhism.[2] Recent investigation has, however, cast doubt on this story connected with Rammohan's early life.[3] It is quite probable that Rammohan's boyhood and early youth were largely spent at his village home at Radhanagar where he was born, and it was there that he received his early education. Rammohan's father, who owned considerable property, "had the prudence to train his sons in the vocation of a landlord from an early age."[4] Rammohan showed such keen intelligence for business that very soon he possessed an independent property of his own, while the fortunes of the other members of his family began to decline. Realising that land was rather an uncertain source of wealth, he had begun to invest in private banking business, serving as a *banian* to some English officials. The remarkable fact about Rammohan is that in spite of the marked success in his business career, he would not rest content as a mere businessman or a zamindar. Possessed of keen intelligence and remarkable vision he was able to see which way the wind was blowing. The fact that at a comparatively early age Rammohan was able to pursue an independent career, gave him freedom to choose his ideas. His education was also largely self-acquired and rather unconventional. There is no definite evidence to show that Rammohan Roy was sent by his father while just a young boy, first to Patna to study Arabic and Persian and later to Benaras to study Sanskrit, while such education could be easily obtained in Calcutta.[5] Since the establishment of the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781,

[1] Nagendranath Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, 15.

[2] *Ibid.*, 16-17.

[3] Brajendranath Banerji's painstaking researches, unfortunately not properly acknowledged, have unearthed much valuable information on the early life of Rammohan Roy. See Brajendranath Banerji, "Rammohun Roy : The First Phase", *Calcutta Review* (Third Series), December 1933, xlix, 3, 233-56.

[4] Brajendranath Banerji, *op.cit.*, 235-36.

[5] It is significant that the letter containing an autobiographical sketch attributed to Rammohan Roy which was published after his death by Sandford Arnot in the

the centre of Muslim learning had shifted to Calcutta. Some of the most distinguished Muslim scholars of the day were associated with the Madrasa and the Sadr Diwani Adalat and also with the College of Fort William. Similarly, there was no lack of competent Sanskrit scholars in Bengal. Most of the Pandits associated with the College of Fort William and the Supreme Court were Bengalis.[1] Rammohan's close acquaintance with the leading Muslim scholars of Calcutta is evident from the letter which his English patron and friend John Digby wrote to the Board of Revenue while recommending Rammohan for the post of *Diwan*. In that letter he requested the Board to refer to the Chief *Qazi* of the Sadr Diwani Adalat and the Head Persian *Munshi* of the College of Fort William "and other principal officers of those Departments" regarding "the character and qualifications of the man" he had proposed.[2]

Rammohan must have also acquired his elementary knowledge of English from his business contacts with English officials and merchants in Calcutta. In fact, Calcutta provided the natural setting for the confluence of three streams of culture, Hindu, Muslim and English. An extraordinary man like Rammohan could not have failed to draw inspiration from each of these sources in developing his own ideas.

It appears that from 1805 till the middle of 1814, Rammohan was closely associated with John Digby, an English Civil Servant, in the capacity of his personal *Diwan* or manager. But the relationship between the two was more than a business one. A deep personal understanding seemed to have developed between them and they regarded each other with mutual respect.[3] It was during this period that, through his association with Digby, Rammohan was able to improve his knowledge of English considerably. He soon imbibed the current European ideas

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Athenaeum, 5 October 1833, does not contain any reference to Rammohan Roy's education at Patna and Benaras.

[1] Thomas Roebuck, *Annals of the College of Fort William* (Calcutta 1819), Appendix III, 49-51.

[2] Brajendranath Banerji, *op.cit.*, 250.

[3] S. D. Collet, *op. cit.*, 16. While Collector at Rangpur (1809-14) Digby had appointed Rammohan as officiating Diwan, to act as the Chief Indian Officer dealing with Revenue affairs. But this appointment was not approved by the Government, and Rammohan continued to serve Digby as before as his private Diwan.

through the English newspapers of which he became a regular reader.[1]

By the middle of 1814, when John Digby sailed for England on leave, Rammohan Roy also retired from business and settled down in Calcutta. By now he had become a man of considerable means and had no difficulty in securing a status among the city's rich aristocrats. Soon he was able to gather round him a small but influential circle of friends, both Indian and European. Among the latter were free-traders who held Utilitarian and radical views.[2]

It was chiefly as an advocate of religious and social reform that Rammohan Roy began his new career in Calcutta. Unlike his orthodox contemporary Radhakanta Deb, he could clearly perceive defects in the existing social system which was closely connected with the traditional Hindu religion. But he assumed the role of a cautious reformer rather than a militant revolutionary. He did not, as many of his European friends expected him to do, reject Hinduism, but reinterpreted it in the light of contemporary knowledge and criticism. He would not openly denounce Hinduism but worked from within and attempted to create a climate of opinion favourable to reform. He did not believe in leading or creating a mass movement by openly defying established practices. He believed in polemics not in barricades. Therefore, his technique was to propagate his views through private conversation and discussion; pamphleteering on specific social and religious issues and publication of newspapers; the establishment of schools and the promotion of general education; and, finally, under considerable stress and after much groping, the establishment of a public association

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[1] While Digby was in England on leave, he published from London in 1817, Rammohan Roy's translations of the *Kena Upanishad* and *Abridgment of the Vedant*. In his introduction, Digby referred to Rammohan Roy's enthusiasm for "continental politics" and his admiration for revolutionary France and for Napoleon. But later on, according to Digby, Rammohan Roy changed his opinion, having realised the evils of Napoleon's rule. S. D. Collet, *op.cit.*, 15.

[2] Among Rammohan's close English friends were James Young, a disciple of Bentham, James Silk Buckingham, the radical editor of the *Calcutta Journal*, and David Hare, the great philanthropist. It was James Young who through his letters introduced Rammohan to Jeremy Bentham. The philosopher seems to have developed some regard for the Hindu reformer. In a letter he addressed Rammohan as "Intensely admired and dearly beloved collaborator in the service of mankind." See J. Bowring (ed.), *Works of Jeremy Bentham* (Edinburgh 1843), x, 589.

– the Brahma Sabha (later Samaj). Between 1815 and 1828 Rammohan by employing these methods was able to create a considerable public interest in his views and activities.

Some ten years before he came to live in Calcutta, Rammohan Roy had already made his unorthodox religious views known by a publication in Persian called *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhiddin* (A Gift to Deists) which had an Arabic preface. It was published at Murshidabad some time in 1804-05, and aroused some commotion among the Hindus.[1] Rammohan was then a young man of about thirty years and this work represented his first intellectual venture. In this tract he not only attacked the system of idolatry; he boldly asserted that "falsehood is common to all religions without distinction."[2] This was undoubtedly a bold step which created for him many enemies. As Rammohan himself afterwards stated:[3]

> Rammohun Roy...who, although he was born a Brahmun, not only renounced idolatry at a very early period of his life, but system; at that time a treatise in Arabic and Persian against that published and no sooner acquired a tolerable knowledge of English, than he made his desertion of idol worship known to the Christian world by his English publication – a renunciation that, I am sorry to say, brought severe difficulties upon him, by exciting the displeasure of his parents, and subjecting him to the dislike of his near, as well as distant relations, and to the hatred of nearly all his countrymen for several years.

Within a year of his arrival in Calcutta, Rammohan had, in 1815, established the Atmiya Sabha (Society of Friends), a private discussion group of like-minded individuals who met regularly at his residence. It was a sort of forum where members exchanged their views on religious and social problems. But the idea of breaking away from Hinduism never occurred to him. He was only endeavouring to discover support for his monotheistic doctrine in the ancient Hindu scriptures,

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[1] Brajendranath Banerji, "Rammohan Roy", *Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala*, i (Calcutta 1946), 42-43.

[2] *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhiddin* (English translation by Moulvi Obaidullah-El-Obaidi).

[3] "An Appeal to the Christian Public." This tract was published by Rammohan Roy in 1820 under the pseudonym "A Friend to Truth." K. Nag and D. Burman (eds.) *English Works of Rammohun Roy* (Calcutta 1945-48), v, 58.

of which he had made a thorough study. He now began to publish translations of the Vedas in Bengali and English with his own commentaries, and tried to show that Hinduism in its pure and original form was a monotheistic religion.

While Rammohan Roy's attack upon the system of idolatry brought upon him the wrath of the orthodox Hindus, his advocacy of strict monotheism brought him into close and intimate contact with the Muslims.[1] Although Rammohan was an enthusiastic champion of English education, he could not take part in the proceedings connected with the establishment of the Hindu College in 1816, because the orthodox Hindus would have nothing to do with any institution with which he was connected. In fact, such was their hatred towards him that Sir Edward Hyde East, Chief Justice of the Calcutta Supreme Court, at whose residence were held the meetings connected with the establishment of the Hindu College, noted that the orthodox Hindus "particularly disliked (and this I believe is at the bottom of their resentment) his (Rammohan Roy's) associating himself so much as he does with Mussulmans, not with this or that Mussulman, as a personal friend, but being continually surrounded by them, and suspected to join in meals with them."[2]

And yet in Rammohan Hinduism perhaps found its ablest champion. Having made a study of other religions he could prove with consummate skill and logic that since every religion had the same end, namely, the moral regeneration of mankind, each stood in need of reinterpretation and reassessment in the changing circumstances of the time.[3] Therefore, he thought, there was no reason for him to give up Hinduism and accept Christianity or any other religion.[4] He would

[1] It was strongly suspected that Rammohan Roy had a Muslim wife whom he had secretly married and out of this marriage he had a son and daughter. The son was no other than Rajaram Roy who accompanied him to England while the daughter was married to a Muslim of a respectable family of Hughly. Sushilkumar Gupta, *Unabingsa Satabdite Bangalar Nabajagaran 1801-1860* (Calcutta 1959), 54.

[2] *Fulham Papers 1813-26.* These papers contain copy of a letter written by Sir Edward Hyde East to Earl of Buckinghamshire which throws interesting light on the origins of the Hindu College. See Appendix I.

[3] Rammohan Roy had not only studied the Hindu scriptures in Sanskrit; he had read the Quran in Arabic and the Bible in Hebrew and Greek. It was believed that he knew as many as ten languages – Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English and French – "most of which he could write and speak fluently." *Anglo-India*, op. cit., iii, 257.

[4] Rammohan's rejection of idolatry had led many Christians to fondly believe that

accept the universal moral teachings and values of every religion but without its dogma, ritual and superstition.[1] Thus, for instance, Rammohan believed in the moral precepts of Jesus Christ but not in his divinity. In fact, he had published in 1820 a tract in English, Bengali and Sanskrit called *Precepts of Jesus, the guide to peace and happiness*, which contained selections from the teachings of the Bible. This publication involved Rammohan in a long and bitter controversy with the orthodox Christians, particularly the Serampur missionaries, whose feelings were scandalized by this interpretation of Christianity by a 'heathen'. The controversy was largely carried on in the press for several years. Throughout this period Rammohan ably defended his position. His views on Christianity corresponded largely to those of the Unitarians and, in fact, Rammohan Roy was able to convert a Baptist missionary, William Adam, with whom he was collaborating in preparing a Bengali translation of the Gospels, to Unitarian Christianity.[2] Rammohan Roy went so far as to help Adam in establishing the Calcutta Unitarian Committee in 1821, of which he, with his friends, Dwarkanath Tagore and Prasannakumar Tagore, and also his eldest son, Radhaprasad Roy, became members.[3] During the next few years Rammohan was closely associated with the Unitarians, even attending their prayer meetings.[4] A "Unitarian Press" was established in Calcutta at his own expense,[5] and he and his friends liberally contributed to the

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he was on his way to acceptance of Christianity. See *Friend of India* (Quarterly Series), 1820, i, 1, 136.

[1] It was reported that when Rammohan Roy was introduced to Bishop Middleton, the first Lord Bishop of Calcutta, the latter, believing that Rammohan had become a Christian, congratulated him on "embracing the purer faith." To this Rammohan is said to have made the characteristic reply: "My Lord, you are under a mistake – I have not laid down one superstition to take up another." *India Gazette*, 8 October 1829. This remark, if correctly reported, would perhaps indicate the influence of the Philosophical Radicals, whose chief exponents in Calcutta were James Silk Buckingham editor of the *Calcutta Journal*, and James Young, a Calcutta merchant.

[2] Adam's conversion took place in 1821. See S. D. Collet, *op.cit.*, 68.

[3] S. D. Collet, *op.cit.*, 74.

[4] Many Unitarians had come to believe that Rammohan had become a Unitarian Christian, and this belief persisted even after his death. See Rev. J. Scott Porter, *A Sermon Occasioned by the Lamented Death of Rajah Rammohun Roy Preached on Sunday November 10th, 1833 in the Meeting House of the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast* (Belfast 1833), 42-43.

[5] *Ibid.*, 75.

Unitarian Mission in Calcutta.[1]

Rammohan Roy, however, had not ceased to be a Hindu at least in the sense in which he understood that religion. In fact, from 1821, he had started publishing a periodical journal in English and Bengali called the *Brahmunical Magazine or the Missionary and the Brahmun*, chiefly with a view to defending Hinduism from the attacks of the missionaries.[2] During this period Rammohan's religious position was indeed very peculiar. Disowned by the orthodox Hindus and not accepted by the Christians, he stood at the crossroads. Finally, by 1828, his religious views had taken some definite shape when, in August that year, he established the Brahma Sabha (later Samaj) or Society of God. Although this new-born society had laid the theoretical claim to be regarded as a universal religion,[3] it only became and remained asect of Hinduism. The religious tenets of the new creed were embodied in the Trust Deed of the Brahma Samaj.[4]

Rammohan Roy thus never broke away from Hinduism. The very name and rituals of the Brahma Samaj clearly signified its Hindu character.[5] Rammohan himself in his public life also strictly observed the caste regulations, and had the Brahmanical thread (*poita*) on his

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[1] *Ibid.*, 92. A monthly journal edited by Adam, called the *Unitarian Repository and Christian Miscellany* was also published from Calcutta largely with the support of Rammohan Roy. This journal lasted for about a year, 1823-24.

[2] Between 1821 and 1823 Rammohan had published altogether four numbers of the *Brahmunical Magazine or the Missionary and the Brahmun : Being a vindication of the Hindoo religion against the attacks of Christian missionaries*. See *English Works of Rammohun Roy*, op. cit., ii, 135-89.

[3] In 1829 Rammohan published a tract entitled *The Universal Religion; Religious instructions founded on sacred authorities* the significant feature of which was that it did not contain any reference to any Hindu deity even Brahma by name. Even the word 'God' was substituted for 'Divine' or 'Supreme Being.' See *English Works of Rammohun Roy*, op. cit., ii, 128-34.

[4] S. D. Collet, *op.cit.*, 159-61.

[5] The weekly service of the Brahma Samaj was conducted by well-known Brahman Pandits. It consisted of the reading and explanation of Vedic texts and the singing of hymns mostly composed by Rammohan himself. Here one can clearly discern Methodist influence. Although theoretically the Brahmo Samaj was open to anyone irrespective of religion, it was actually confined to the Hindus. Some Europeans occasionally joined its meetings merely as observers. The only Muslim associated with the Brahmo Samaj was the musician Gholam Abbas whose performance on the *tabla* accompanying the singing of hymns was "truly astonishing." See *Calcutta Christian Observer*, March 1833, ii, 3, 109.

body till his death.[1] This was chiefly because of his anxiety not to give his orthodox Hindu opponents any opportunity to excommunicate him. In private, however, Rammohan scarcely adhered to the Hindu prejudices regarding eating and drinking.[2] Although this conduct opened him to the charge of inconsistency, Rammohan Roy, as a practical reformer, seemed to have realized that the only effective manner in which he could exercise some influence on the Hindu community was by working from within. The Brahma Samaj could only exist as a distinct sect of Hinduism rather than as an independent creed or religion.

Rammohan Roy has been described as a "religious Benthamite."[3] His political sympathies were also decidedly liberal.[4] He was, as has been noted, closely associated with English free-traders in Calcutta who held liberal and almost radical opinion. He keenly followed through the newspapers the post-Napoleonic revolutions in Europe and was an enthusiastic supporter of the liberal cause. Although he was dismayed at the collapse of liberal uprisings in many parts of Europe during the period immediately following the overthrow of Napoleon, he confidently believed that: "Enemies to liberty and friends of despotism have never been and never will be, ultimately successful."[5]

Rammohan's liberal sympathies were fully reflected in his attitude towards social and educational reform. In 1818 he had published a pamphlet in Bengali and English advocating the abolition of *sati*.[6]

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[1] S. D. Collet, *op.cit.*, 226. It was reported that after Rammohan Roy's death his family in Calcutta performed his funeral obsequies according to the Hindu ritual and this act had "given no little exultation to all the enemies of that great character." *Samachar Darpan* quoted in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, 24 March 1834.

[2] Nagendranath Chatterji, *op.cit.*, 70-72.

[3] *Calcutta Review*, 1867, xliv, 87, 230. Jeremy Bentham himself had described Rammohan as follows: "Rammohun Roy has cast off thirty-five millions of gods, and has learnt from us to embrace reason in the all-important field of religion." *Works of Jeremy Bentham*, op. cit., x, 571.

[4] According to James Sutherland, editor of *The Bengal Hurkaru* who travelled with Rammohan Roy to England, Rammohan though not a republican in politics "admired republicanism in the abstract, and thought that in America it worked well." He had great admiration for the United States where he "had many friends", *India Gazette*, 18 February 1834.

[5] Rammohan Roy to James Silk Buckingham, 11 August 1822. *English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, op. cit., iv, 89.

[6] *A Conference between an Advocate for and an Opponent of The Practice of Burning Widows Alive* etc. (Calcutta 1818).

It immediately created a stir in the Hindu community, which led him to bring out in 1820 another pamphlet on the same subject.[1] Conscious, however, of the strongly entrenched prejudice of the Hindus in favour of the revolting custom, Rammohan Roy wished to see it abolished gradually by means of public discussion and persuasions rather than by legislation.[2]

In 1822 Rammohan Roy published another tract entitled *Brief Remarks Regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females* in which he pleaded for social justice for Hindu women. A few years later, in 1830, he published his famous *Essay on the Rights of the Hindoos over Ancestral Property according to the Law of Bengal.* In this pamphlet Rammohan forcefully advocated the freedom of the individual in the matter of the disposal of property. He himself claimed that he only sought "to reconcile law with reason."

Similarly, Rammohan Roy favoured liberal education for Indians at a time when the policy of the Government was to patronize ancient and medieval Oriental learning.[3] Though he strongly disapproved of the proselytizing aspect of the missionary activities, he did not hesitate to cooperate with the missionaries in promoting education. Even before the establishment of the Hindu College, Rammohan Roy is said to have established an "English Free School for the education of Hindoo children on a liberal scale."[4] In 1822 he had established another school known as the Anglo-Hindu School with the help of his friend William Adam.[5] He also actively helped Alexander Duff, the great Scots missionary, to establish a school in 1830, and even procured students for it.[6] In 1823, Rammohan Roy had addressed his famous letter to Lord

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[1] *A Second Conference* etc. (Calcutta 1820).

[2] For further analysis of views on *sati*, see Chapter V.

[3] See Chapter VI.

[4] *India Gazette*, 15 February 1834.

[5] S. D. Collet, *op.cit.*, 75.

[6] Rammohan took so much interest in this school that he was personally present on the opening day 13 July 1830. According to an account, when the Rev. Duff after reciting the Christian prayer, presented the students with copies of the Bible, the students immediately raised a murmur. Rammohan, it is stated, intervened saying "Christians like Dr. Horace Hayman Wilson have studied the Hindu Shastras and you know that he has not become a Hindu. I myself have read all the Quran again and again; and has that made me a Mussalman ? Nay, I have studied the whole Bible, and you know I am not a Christian. Why then do you fear to read it ? Read it and judge for yourselves." S. D. Collet, *op.cit.*, 163.

Amherst protesting against the Government proposal to establish a Sanskrit College at Calcutta. In that letter he boldly pointed out that such a measure would only help in prolonging superstitious beliefs among his countrymen by encouraging medieval scholastic learning which had long outlived its utility.[1]

While Rammohan Roy and his friends were thus endeavouring to influence Hindu opinion in Bengal in favour of reform, a new and radical movement had emerged which threatened to subvert the whole fabric of Hindu society and religion. It grew out of the new educational movement as well as the rational Benthamism in vogue in England in the 1820's, whose echoes had reached India. This radical movement took some definite shape after 1826 largely under the influence of that brilliant Anglo-Indian, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-31), a teacher at the Hindu College. A free-thinker and a rationalist, Derozio had he been born in Europe would have been regarded as a typical product of the age of enlightenment.[2] He was also a poet of considerable talent. He was appointed a teacher at the Hindu College in May 1826 at the very young age of seventeen. The subjects he taught were English literature and history, and his mode of teaching was as unconventional as were his ideas. In fact, Derozio's activities as a teacher were not confined to the class-rooms. He was ever willing to converse with his students even outside the College premises, frequently at his own residence, on any matter which aroused their interests.[3] In fact, his teaching covered a wide range of subjects – literature, history, philosophy and science. Very soon he was able to arouse so much enthusiasm among his students that in 1828 he helped them in establishing a literary and debating club of their own known as the Academic Association which provided "a common meeting ground outside the restrictions of the class-room" where young men under his guidance could discuss freely the various topics that absorbed their attention.[4] The Academic Association was a successful venture and its fortnightly meetings which were held at a garden-house at Maniktala, were attended by a large

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[1] See Chapter VI.

[2] For his background and education, see T. Edwards, *Henry Derozio: The Eurasian poet, teacher and journalist* (Calcutta 1884).

[3] *Ibid.*, 31-32.

[4] F. B. Bradley-Birt, *Poems of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, A Forgotten Anglo-Indian poet* (Oxford 1923), xxx.

number of students and some liberal and philanthropic Europeans.[1] Its success encouraged students to establish similar societies in various parts of Calcutta. In fact, by 1830, students not only of the Hindu College, but those belonging to Rammohan Roy's Anglo-Hindu School as well as the English schools run by the Calcutta School Society, had established as many as seven associations of this kind.[2] The proceedings of these associations were conducted in the English language. Most of their meetings were held once a week, some at longer intervals; and the number of members belonging to each varied from seventeen to fifty.[3] Although Derozio was President of the Academic Association, he was also connected with most of the other societies as a member, and took an active interest in their activities. At some of these societies written essays were produced upon which discussions followed; others were mere debating societies. These student societies had become so popular that several non-student groups also established associations of a similar kind, where discussions on various subjects were held exclusively in the Bengali language.[4] In 1830, Derozio had started giving a course of weekly evening lectures on metaphysics in the rooms of the Calcutta School Society's school at Pataldanga (subsequently known as Hare's school), which were attended by about one hundred and fifty young men.[5] Derozio's technique was thus unconsciously Platonic: the use of the Hindu College as an 'academy' and the formal debating groups to spread discontent with the existing order.

This extraordinary intellectual activity which Derozio was promoting soon produced a terrific social impact. He brought about an intellectual revolution among his students. By 1829, as a near-contemporary observer put it:[6]

> ... several of the boys in the first and second classes (of the Hindu College) had acquired a remarkable degree of courage and spirit in expressing their opinion on all subjects, particularly on the subject of religion. The principles and practices of the Hindoo

[1] Among those who used to attend its meetings were David Hare, Sir Edward Ryan, Col. Benson (Private Secretary to Lord William Bentinck) and Dr. Mills, Principal of the Bishop's College, Calcutta. See T. Edwards, *op.cit.*, 31.

[2] *Alexander's East India Magazine*, June 1831, i, 7, 704.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, 705.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Calcutta Christian Observer*, August 1832, i, 3, 124.

> religion were openly ridiculed, and condemned, and angry disputes were held on moral subjects. The sentiments of Hume had been widely diffused and warmly patronized. Reason was now promoted to be a God, and custom voted to be the idol of fools. There were few who would now venture to rally under the latter. The Rationalists had it all their own way... The Hindoo religion was denounced as vile and corrupt and unworthy of the regard of rational beings.

Derozio actively promoted these radical ideas.[1] The young Hindu students who had gathered round him were not just rebels without a cause. They had, it is true, begun to measure everything with the yardstick of reason. But they were not mere critics. They possessed definite opinions on the problems which confronted them. Their political views coincided with those of the Benthamites, and Thomas Paine also exercised great influence upon them. Thus, it was reported that in 1832 an enterprising American publisher had shipped about a hundred copies of Paines' works to Calcutta. These were acquired by a local book-seller who began to sell each copy for one rupee. But soon the demand had increased to such proportions that the book-seller raised the price to five rupees per copy, and even at that price the whole stock was sold out within a few days. Someone even started translating Paine's *Age of Reason* into Bengali, parts of which were published in a Bengali newspaper.[2]

The radicals also advocated social reforms and education, including female education, and demanded freedom of thought and expression. Their views on economics were influenced by the writings of Adam Smith. They demanded the abolition of monopoly, advocated freedom of trade, and also supported the colonization of India by intelligent Europeans which, they believed, would contribute to the welfare of the country.[3] In their philosophical views they drew inspiration from Francis Bacon and from later empiricists like David Hume as well as from the philosophers of the "common-sense" school – Thomas Reid,

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[1] According to the testimony of one of his own followers (Rasikkrishna Mallick?): "It was he (Derozio) that first awakened in the minds of his pupils a curiosity and a thirst for knowledge.... It was he that aroused them to think for themselves." *Englishman*, 25 May 1836.

[2] T. Edwards, *op.cit.*, 35.

[3] *India Gazette*, 17 February 1830.

Dugald Stewart and Thomas Brown.[1]

These young radicals, who actually called themselves 'liberals,' were not only bitterly critical of the views and manners of the orthodox Hindus but equally vehement in their attacks on followers of Rammohan Roy, whom they characterised as 'half-liberals.'[2] Derozio justified this epithet by a reference to the contradictions in Brahma practice.[3] In fact, the young editor of the *Enquirer*, Krishnamohan Banerji, and his fellow radicals regarded Rammohan Roy's opinions as vague and confused and leading nowhere. They roundly condemned his followers as mere opportunists whose sole motive was to acquire wealth and position. In their eyes these 'half-liberals' were a set of unscrupulous persons who, "in order to secure the patronage and influence of the high folks of Calcutta," did not hesitate to behave wholly according to their convenience.[4] "Before the bigots they are bigots; before the liberals they are liberals; before the Whigs they are Whigs; and before the Tories they are Tories."[5]

This rigorously honest attempt to categorise all society, this adolescent naivete in sitting in judgment on all their elders, did not carry the radicals very far. Society was up in arms against them. In fact, many of these young men did actually suffer severe persecution even from their own families on account of their heretical opinions. Krishnamohan Banerji, who belonged to an old Brahman family, was expelled from his home for his alleged involvement in a beef eating party.[6] He had already incurred the displeasure of his community by

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[1] *Englishman*, 25 May 1836.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1 June 1836.

[3] "What his (Rammohan Roy's) opinions are, neither his friends nor foes can determine. It is easier to say what they are *not* than what they are, ...Rammohun, it is well known, appeals to the *Veds*, the *Koran*, and the *Bible*, holding them all probably in equal estimation extracting the good from each, and rejecting from all whatever he considers apocryphal..... He has always lived like a Hindoo..... His followers, at least some of them, are not very consistent. Sheltering themselves under the shadow of his name, they indulge to licentiousness in everything forbidden in the Shastras, as meat and drink; while at the same time they fee the Brahmins, profess to disbelieve Hindooism, and never neglect to have poojahs at home." *East Indian*, October 1831, quoted in the *India Gazette*, 5 October 1831.

[4] *Englishman*, 1 June 1836.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] The story of his expulsion indicates the immaturity of the radical movement. It was stated that one of Krishnamohan's friends, while feasting on the forbidden

his public declaration that he did not believe in the Hindu religion.[1] He had further offended the orthodox Hindus by declaring his intention publicly to violate the caste prejudice by participating along with another friend in a dinner which was to be given at the Town Hall by the Anglo-Indians in honour of their leader John Ricketts.[2] Sympathetic Englishmen like Sir Edward Ryan and Colonel James Young unsuccessfully tried to dissuade them from taking this bold step, fearing that they would face further persecution from their orthodox countrymen. Eventually, the influence of the great David Hare prevailed "upon their feelings, but not their reason" and they revised their earlier decision to join the dinner.[3] In fact, Krishnamohan Banerji's activities had annoyed the orthodox Hindus to such an extent that their leader Radhakanta Deb, who was Secretary of the Calcutta School Society, approached Sir Edward Ryan with a request that he, as a member of the School Society's managing committee, would authorise the dismissal of Krishnamohan from his post of teacher at one of the schools conducted by the Society.[4] Sir Edward obviously could not agree to this unwarranted proposal, and it was again through David Hare's benign influence that the matter was allowed to drop for a while.[5]

Indeed, the position of Krishnamohan and his fellow radicals was far from happy. Public opinion, predominantly orthodox, was against them. Most of the vernacular newspapers which were owned by the conservative Hindus poured forth venom against them. Even the English radical opinion in Calcutta was not very sympathetic towards their conduct. In fact, the *India Gazette*, the radical English newspaper,

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meat in his room, threw a few pieces into the compound of the adjoining house belonging to an orthodox Brahmin. This foolish action brought upon the whole party the wrath of the neighbourhood. Krishnamohan was forced to leave his home. He then went to stay with a friend, but was driven out from there also. Since no Hindu was now willing to receive him as a tenant, he lived for some time with a European as a lodger. *Enquirer*, September 1831 quoted in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, 15 October 1831.

[1] This incident happened when in May 1831 he went to the Police Office to obtain a license to publish his newspaper. *Enquirer*. While making the required affidavit he was asked as a Hindu to swear by the Ganges' water, which he refused, stating his disbelief in the Hindu religion. Sir Edward Ryan to Lord William Bentinck, 13 June 1831. *Bentinck Papers*.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

did not hesitate to condemn these young Bengalis for "unnecessarily running counter to the customs and institutions of native society."[1] To such attacks the radicals could only reply with reasoned though passionate arguments stating that their point of view had been misunderstood and misinterpreted.[2] Sir Edward Ryan, who knew the situations in which many of these radicals were placed, wrote to the Governor-General:[3]

> ... it is clear that things cannot remain in this state, and the sad truth is ... that for Hindoo boys of very considerable acquirements and as I believe most firmly, of strict honour and integrity, there is no honourable or appropriate employment... it cannot be a right state of things, that under British Government, moral and intellectual improvement should be to those subject to that Government, rather a curse than a blessing, and rewarded by poverty a debasing and vile superstition should be that abandoning and disgrace; and yet such is the condition of these Hindoo boys.

What Sir Edward was actually suggesting was that these young men should be appointed to responsible positions under the Government. This measure, he believed, would not only save them from social persecution. The very persons who despised and ill-treated them would begin to regard them "in a very different light and the stronghold of Hindooism would eventually be broken down."[4] Sir Edward forwarded to the Governor-General several letters written to him by a number of young men who were living in precarious circumstances on account of their unorthodox opinions.[5] The letter of Rasikkrishna Mallick, who subsequently became the editor of the radical newspaper the *Jnananveshan*, was typical.[6] His father was dead and he was under the guardianship of his uncle who always asked him to join in the

[1] *India Gazette*, 21 October 1831.
[2] *Enquirer*, October 1831, quoted in the *India Gazette*, 29 October 1831.
[3] Edward Ryan to Bentinck, 13 June 1831. *Bentinck Papers*.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] David Hare had informed Edward Ryan that he personally knew "between 20 and 30" young men who were "pretty much in the same situation" as those referred to above. David Hare to Edward Ryan, 6 June 1831; Enclosure to Edward Ryan to Bentinck, 13 June 1831. *Bentinck Papers*.
[6] *Ibid.*

family's "religious ceremonies." But Rasikkrishna's "principles" prevented him from complying with his uncle's wishes. He described his plight as follows:[1]

> Not a day passes over my head without my being abused by the bigoted Hindoos. My relations try their utmost to prevent me from seeing those whom alone I consider my true friends. They are determined to confine me in my house, and even there they will not allow my friends to visit me; and they have already threatened to put me in chains under pretence of madness.

Rasikkrishna further informed Sir Edward Ryan that circumstances of a serious nature prevented him from freely expressing his opinions. The small salary he was receiving by serving as a teacher at the Calcutta School Society's Pataldanga School was hardly sufficient for his maintenance, for which he was dependent upon his family. If, therefore, he expressed his views openly, he was afraid he would lose his job, as most of the Indian members of the School Society's managing committee were orthodox Hindus. There was also the further danger of his being turned out of his family home and being deprived of his family property.[2]

The conservative Hindus were clearly on the war-path. They had been shaken by Rammohan Roy's movement, which called for only moderate reforms. The young radicals now went a step further and sought to destroy Hinduism itself. The conservatives were therefore determined to stamp out this heresy from the very bosom of Hindu society. They did not have much difficulty in perceiving that the heresy arose from the English education which they themselves had promoted. Early in 1830 the managers of the Hindu College passed a resolution which stated:[3]

> It having come to the knowledge of the managers that a belief prevails very generally, that the students of the Hindoo College

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Calcutta Christian Observer*, August 1832, i, 3, 124. It is significant that the term "natural religion" which was associated with the eighteenth century European rationalist thought (cf. Voltaire), is now used by the Hindu conservatives to describe their own religion. While it showed their somewhat vague acquaintance with Western thought, it might also indicate an attempt to resist Western ideas by using Western terminology.

> are liable to lose all religious principles whatever: it was resolved that Mr. D'Anselme [the Head Master] be requested, in communication with the teachers, to check as far as possible all the disquisitions tending to unsettle the belief of the boys in the great principles of natural religion.

This resolution, however, proved ineffective. There was a widespread alarm among the parents and guardians of the students owing to the increasing influence of radical ideas. During this time Hinduism faced another onslaught from a new quarter. Alexander Duff, the Scots missionary, had started giving a course of lectures on Christianity which were attended by many inquisitive Hindu students. The managers of the Hindu College then passed another resolution whereby teachers of the College were strictly forbidden from having any communication with the boys on the subject of religion.[1] This was followed by an order prohibiting the students from attending meetings where political and religious questions were discussed.[2] As a result, Duff was, for a time, obliged to discontinue his lectures. It was quite evident, however, that the Hindu College authorities had no power to prevent their students from attending meetings held outside the College premises. In fact, Duff was soon able to resume his lectures, while the various radical student societies like the Academic Association, continued to hold their meetings.

By Spring 1831, the situation had taken an ugly turn. Many students had been withdrawn from the Hindu College by their guardians for fear that they might be infected with heretical views and renounce faith in Hinduism. The orthodox Hindu press of Calcutta had joined the battle against "the infidels."[3] Alarming reports were published regarding the heretical behaviour of the young radicals which shocked the conscience of the believers.[4] The authorities of the Hindu College now determined upon taking an unprecedented step. A special meeting

[1] *Ibid.*, 125.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] "At present in every Hindu house the chief subject of conversation is that several persons have become infidels." *Samachar Chandrika* quoted in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, 16 May 1831.

[4] To what extent orthodox Hindus of Calcutta were alarmed is illustrated in a letter which was published in the Bengali newspaper the *Sangbad Prabhakar* in which a conservative Hindu father complained against the behaviour of his English educated son inside the temple at Kalighat. The son had not only refused

of the managers of the Hindu College was convened on 23 April 1831, following a requisition prepared and canvassed by one of the managers, Ramkamal Sen, a close associate of Radhakanta Deb. The requisition referred to the alleged misconduct of Derozio whose teaching, it was believed, had promoted a tendency "destructive" to the "moral character" of the students and "to the peace in society." The requisition further referred to the withdrawal of "no less than twenty-five pupils of respectable families" from the College and the significant absence of "no less than one hundred and sixty boys" from their classes, which indicated the growing public alarm caused by Derozio's teaching.[1] The requisition finally proposed a resolution which stated that Derozio "being the root of all evils and cause of public alarm" should be dismissed from the College. It also demanded that all students who were "publicly hostile to Hindooism and the established custom of the country" should be expelled. It was further proposed that such books as might injure the "morals" of the students "should not be allowed to be brought, taught or read in the College."[2] At the meeting of the managers, although the majority of the members, particularly the Europeans, David Hare and H. H. Wilson, agreed that Derozio was a competent teacher, the question arose "whether it was expedient in the present state of public feelings amongst the Hindoo community of Calcutta," to dismiss Derozio from the College.[3] Of the seven Hindu members present, all except one voted for the motion for dismissal. Hare and Wilson, although very sympathetic to Derozio, refrained from voting, believing that they should keep aloof from a matter which solely concerned Hindu sentiments. The managers had also decided to expel twenty-two boys from the College on account of their alleged misconduct. No sooner was the decision of the managers known than Derozio sent his letter of resignation in which he bitterly complained against the intolerant conduct of the managers in taking a decision against him without affording him a hearing. Wilson who had communicated the decision of the managers to Derozio wanted to know if the latter was really guilty of having inculcated among his

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to offer his prayer to the goddess *Kali*; he scandalized his father's feelings by greeting the idol with "Good morning, madam." Quoted in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, 17 May 1831.

[1] *Calcutta Christian Observer*, August 1832, i, 3, 126.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

students as alleged, the following doctrines: the non-existence of God; the lawfulness of disrespect towards parents; and the lawfulness of marriage with sisters.[1] In his reply to Wilson, Derozio categorically denied the last two allegations. But as regards the first, he maintained that although he had "never denied the existence of a God in the hearing of any human being" he had stated "the doubts of philosophers" upon this subject, chiefly with a view to enable his students to examine both sides of the question.[2] He justified his stand by quoting the following remarks of Lord Bacon: "If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts."[3] Wilson, apparently impressed by Derozio's arguments, circulated his letter among the managers of the Hindu College, hoping that they would revise their decision. But the managers, most of whom were orthodox Hindus, seem to have taken no notice of it, and the matter was considered closed.[4]

The dismissal of Derozio from the Hindu College, however, did not crush the radical movement. On the contrary, it seemed to have given it a fillip. For Derozio had now more freedom than before to express his idea. Nor had he lost contact with his students, who continued to flock around him. Derozio was also actively connected with the welfare of his own Anglo-Indian community and had begun editing a daily English newspaper, the *East Indian*.[5] He now encouraged some of his young Hindu disciples to take to journalism and disseminate ideas through this important medium. Thus, Krishnamohan Banerji had started in May 1831 an English weekly newspaper, the *Enquirer*, and in the following month Dakshinaranjan Mukherji and Rasikkrishna Mallick began to publish a Bengali (later also English) newspaper, the *Jnananveshan*. Through these journals, apparently conducted under Derozio's guidance, the young radicals launched bitter attacks upon Hinduism.[6]

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[1] Some Hindu fanatics had made it their business to invent and circulate wild stories regarding Derozio's personal character. For instance, his attachment towards his own sister was grossly misinterpreted.

[2] Derozio to Wilson, 26 April 1831. *Bengal Obituary* (Calcutta 1848), 104.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Calcutta Christian Observer*, op. cit., i, 3, 128.

[5] Prior to his editing the *East Indian*, Derozio was the editor of an English newspaper called the *Hesperus*, with which he severed his connection owing to some difference of opinion with its Anglo-Indian proprietor.

[6] According to a contemporary missionary observer, the *Enquirer* and the *Jnananveshan* "are the organs of that small party of educated Hindoos, who have made

In October 1831, another disciple of Derozio, Madhabchandra Mallick startled and shocked the Hindu community by publicly denouncing Hinduism. "If there be anything under Heaven," he observed in a letter to the editor of the *Bengal Hurkaru*, "that either I or my friends look upon with *most abhorrence*, it is Hindooism."[1]

Derozio's death in December 1831, gave a severe blow to the cause of the radicals.[2] They were suddenly deprived of a leadership which, though it had come from outside the fold of Hinduism, had given them a new vision and a conviction in justification of their movement. Because of their youth, inexperience and intellectual limitations the radicals failed to throw up a leadership equal to that which they had lost. In sheer frustration some like Krishnamohan Banerji sought refuge in Christianity.[3] Others subsequently modified their views and returned to the Hindu fold. Only a few like Rasikkrishna Mallick retained the radical tradition and handed on the torch to the generation which came to be known as Young Bengal.[4]

The reform movement in Bengal was greatly weakened owing to the dissensions amongst the moderate reformers and the radicals. Contemporary European sympathizers, while lamenting this unfortunate division amongst "the common friends of liberty and knowledge," put the blame squarely upon the heads of the radicals.[5] It is, however, difficult to see how this division could have been avoided. The followers of Rammohan Roy, who represented the moderate reformers, were men of mature age as distinguished from

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the highest attainments in English literature and the highest advances in liberality of sentiments; who, alive to the inefficacy of half-measures and scorning the hypocrisy of double-dealing, have at once renounced in theory and practice the whole system of Hindooism, pure and impure, ancient, modern, Vedantic and Pouranic; and who, being thus left in a region of vacancy as regards religion, have announced themselves to the world as free inquirers after truth." *Calcutta Christian Observer*, October 1832, i, 5, 213.

[1] *Bengal Hurkaru*, 3 October 1831.

[2] He was stricken with cholera on 17 December and died on 26 December 1831 in his twenty-third year.

[3] Krishnamohan Banerji was baptised on 17 October 1832, by the Rev. Alexander Duff of the Church of Scotland. Prior to his conversion he had been regularly attending Duff's lectures on Christianity. Later he joined the Anglican Church and became a distinguished clergyman.

[4] See Susobhanchandra Sarkar, "Derozio and Young Bengal", in A.C. Gupta (ed.), *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance* (Jadavpur 1958), 24-31.

[5] *Bengal Hurkaru*, 25 October 1831.

the radicals, many of whom had not yet passed the age of adolescence. Some of the former were quite learned and possessed considerable wealth and social prestige. But in their religious and social outlook they sought a compromise between Western ideas and traditional Hinduism. It was evidently an uneasy compromise which resulted in a contradiction between thought and action. This was reflected in the personal life of Rammohan Roy. Thus, while theoretically denouncing caste prejudices and rituals, he actually observed them, at least in public.[1] Whatever be their justification, the fact remains that Rammohan lacked the courage or conviction of a Martin Luther and had failed to bring about a religious revolution. Nevertheless, his ideas continued to exercise considerable influence upon Hindu religious thought. In the field of social reform, however, Rammohan's contribution was undoubtedly great. His criticism of the practice of *sati*, for instance, prepared the minds of many for its eventual abolition. But the scepticism of Rammohan Roy and his followers weakened them before the revivalism of the Dharma Sabha. Socially, these Hindu reformers catered for the *babus* and not the masses. Thus there was no mass movement for reform which in the conditions of public opinion could only come by religious sanction.

The radicals were much handicapped by their age. As compared to Rammohan Roy's followers, they were mere boys and hence were not taken seriously by any section of the people. Even their English liberal friends admonished them for what they considered their juvenile enthusiasm for reform and change.[2] Nevertheless, the radicals included many of great courage and noted for their open-minded devotion

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[1] This contradiction was also apparent in the conduct of his friends and followers. Thus Prasannakumar Tagore who publicly denounced idolatry in his journal, the *Reformer*, himself used to perform the *Durga Puja* at his residence with the usual pomp and ceremony. Derozio bitterly criticized his conduct, charging him with inconsistency. In reply, one of Prasannakumar's friends wrote a letter to the editor of the *India Gazette* explaining that "He (Prasannakumar Tagore) had celebrated the idolatrous Poojah in his family house, not because he approves of it, but because he cannot avoid doing it. The property he inherits from his ancestors is left to him on condition of celebrating this Poojah every year..... Under these circumstances what is he to do?" *India Gazette*, 19 October 1831. But this argument was perhaps weakened by the fact that the property which Tagore had inherited was nothing in comparison to what he had acquired by his own initiative.

[2] *India Gazette*, 21 October 1831 ; *Bengal Hurkaru*, 25 October 1831.

to the cause of truth. They sincerely tried to live up to their ideals and suffered much on that account. Theirs was indeed a passionate protest against what they considered irrational and absurd aspects of Hinduism, a Promethean attempt to break the shackles of the old order. But their attitude was rather negative. They lacked a positive philosophy and had isolated themselves from Hindu society. They were thus both the products and the victims of the age. But the radicals did create a climate of opinion which was used by the English Utilitarians in India – Trevelyan, Macaulay and Bentinck – in working out a programme of reform. In this respect, their Anglicism had succeeded.

The conservatives ultimately gained ground. They were able to obtain popular support by representing popular beliefs and defending popular customs against the attacks of those who stood for reform and change. Indeed, such was the strength of Hindu conservatism that a social reform long overdue, like the abolition of *sati*, had to be enforced by an alien government. Although the conservatives were opposed to social reform, they had, nevertheless, taken an active part in the educational movement which, undoubtedly, enabled them to strengthen their hold upon the community. Further, the degree of attention they received from the Government, and the close association of some of them with the European Orientalists like H. H. Wilson, for instance, also enhanced their social prestige.

CHAPTER III

THE BENGAL PRESS : ANGLO-INDIAN

Although newspapers had existed in India since as early as 1780,[1] it was only after 1818, with the publication of the vernacular newspapers, that they came to be recognized as they are today, as the most effective organs through which public opinion was expressed. Prior to 1818 the newspapers published in India were all in the English language and were English-owned. They catered to the needs of the small English community in India and reflected their views and aspirations, their passions and prejudices.

This Anglo-Indian[2] community was broadly divided into two sections—official and non-official. The non-official section of the community resided in the country under license granted by the East India Company which could be revoked at pleasure by the Government. There were also persons who had managed to smuggle themselves into the country in search of fortune and did not possess any license. In the eyes of the Government these 'interlopers' as they were called, resided in the country "by sufferance only."[3] By an Act of Parliament[4] the Company's Government was empowered to deport to England any English resident whose conduct was considered undesirable. British rule in India did not have any stable social basis. The constant awareness of the fact that the Company's authority in India rested largely

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[1] The first newspaper published in India was *Hicky's Bengal Gazette*. It was printed in Calcutta by James Augustus Hicky, a former employee of the East India Company. Its first number appeared on 29 January 1780. Popularly known as *Hicky's Gazette*, it began to indulge in indiscriminate and libellous attacks upon important individuals including Warren Hastings, the Governor-General, and Sir Elijah Impey, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Hicky was imprisoned for libel and his paper ceased publication having lasted for about two years. See M. Barns, *Indian Press* (London 1940), 54-55 ; also H. E. Busteed, *Echoes from Old Calcutta* (3rd edition, Calcutta 1897), 162-91.

[2] In early 19th century the term Anglo-Indian was used to describe an English resident or institution in India. Later it came to denote a person of mixed parentage.

[3] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 537, 118.

[4] 53 Geo. III. Cap. 155. Section 104.

on its military strength, led the Government to adopt a very cautious policy. It would not tolerate anything that would appear to threaten its position or make it embarrassing. The policy towards the press in India was largely determined by this very consideration. But to what extent the press should be subject to control, or whether the freedom of the press was at all compatible with the preservation of British power in India : were questions over which no definite decision could be reached. Much depended upon the personal views of the English officials in India. An imperious Lord Wellesley would forthwith place the press under strict censorship whenever it showed any tendency towards what was considered licentiousness. A cautious Lord Hastings would hesitate on the other hand to take any extreme measure against the press for fear of criticism in Parliament for infringing upon liberty of expression, regarded as the birthright of every Englishman. A liberal Lord William Bentinck and his successor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, would allow the press almost unrestricted freedom, believing that nothing but good would follow from it.

The early English newspapers published in Bengal contained information of various kinds. Overseas news, particularly from England, occupied much space. The Indian news included local intelligence, official appointments, and reports regarding affairs in the Indian states particularly Oudh. In fact news about Court intrigues at Lucknow featured prominently in the Calcutta Press.[1] There were also letters to the Editor, Government notices, social news, notices of marriages, births and deaths, and various kinds of advertisements. In fact, a good deal of Anglo-Indian social life of the period could be known from a perusal of these newspapers.

It would not be quite correct to assume that the early newspapers of Bengal "appeared to devote scant attention to the land in which they were published."[2] It is true that these newspapers were conducted by Englishmen and their reading public comprised exclusively the English residents; therefore, they largely contained matters which were of sole interest to them. But the intellectual interest of Englishmen in India was not confined to European subjects only. That remarkable venture known as Orientalism—a genuine and sincere attempt to discover and understand Eastern literature and culture—was already

[1] This was so because Calcutta banking interests both English and Indian, were involved in Oudh.

[2] M. Barns, *op.cit.*, 62.

beginning to draw a number of talented European scholars to the study of Eastern subjects. This was fully reflected in the early English press of Bengal. Some of the English journals contained translations from Sanskrit and Persian literature. Sir William Jones's learned speeches on Oriental subjects delivered at the Asiatic Society, appeared regularly in the *Calcutta Monthly Register*, the *Asiatic Miscellany* and other journals.

Till 1799 the Government did not have any definite policy towards the press. In fact in the early stage of its development, the press was not considered sufficiently important to draw serious attention of the Government. The power of deportation which was the only extra-ordinary power the Government possessed in dealing with the possible danger from the activities of European residents in India could not be exercised indiscriminately. Till 1818 only two persons connected with newspapers were deported and the East India Company had to face considerable embarrassment on that account.[1]

In May 1799 Lord Wellesley's Government decided to impose a strict system of control on the press. The Governor-General was annoyed at what he considered to be irresponsible conduct of the Calcutta newspapers particularly at a time when British position in India faced serious peril. In 1799 Napoleon was in Egypt and his correspondence with Tipu Sultan, the implacable enemy of the British, was already known. Zaman Shah, the Afghan ruler, was threatening India from the North-West. The Government was also alarmed at the conspiracies of some Indian powers and also of the French residents in

[1] The first newspaperman deported from India was William Duane, American born editor of the *Indian World*, a newspaper published from Calcutta. Duane had incurred the displeasure of the Government for writing against an official of the Indian state of Oudh with whom the Company's Government had friendly relations. Duane was also suspected of holding radical views. England then was at war with revolutionary France and the Government was determined to suppress any tendency towards Jacobinism which appeared among its subjects. Duane on his arrival in England made an unsuccessful representation to the Court of Directors against the action of the Bengal Government. In their letter to the Bengal Government dated 5 January 1796, the Court observed : "We highly approve of your conduct in sending home this turbulent and seditious person (Duane) and his subsequent behaviour since his arrival justifies your proceedings." *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 537, 225 ; also M. Barns, *op. cit.*, 63-66. In 1798 another person, Charles McLean, was deported for what the Government considered prejudicial publication. His offence was that he had refused to apologise for a letter he had written to the *Telegraph* of Calcutta, casting aspersions on the official conduct of the English magistrate of Ghazipur. M. Barns, *op.cit.*, 67-70.

India. Wellesley was anxious to take all possible precautions and would not tolerate anything which could weaken the Government's position. He particularly resented comments in the Calcutta newspapers on the position and strength of the military forces of different powers. Such comments, he believed, could be prejudicial to British interests. In a letter addressed to the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Bengal, Wellesley expressed his determination to impose a body of rules for regulating the conduct of "the whole tribe of editors."[1] Such rules were eventually promulgated by the Governor-General's Council on 13 May 1799.[2] These rules established a strict censorship on the Press. The names and addresses of the editor and printer or proprietor of every newspaper were to be communicated to the Government. All material meant for publication had to be submitted beforehand to the Government for inspection. Any violation of these rules was to be punished by immediate deportation to England. The Chief Secretary to the Government was to act as censor of the press.

These regulations were fololwed by several other prohibitory orders. Thus the newspapers were forbidden to publish any report regarding the strength or position of the army and were further asked not to print any information regarding the movement or position of English naval forces in the Indian seas during the war.[3]

Despite these restrictions and Wellesley's determination to drastically reduce the number[4] of newspapers published in Calcutta, they continued to flourish. In fact, the number of newspapers in Calcutta by 1818 was not less than those in 1799, and their number began to increase steadily.

After the departure of Lord Wellesley from India in 1805 the enforcement of the press rules was considerably relaxed. When some of the newspapers began to publish articles and news in violation of the rules and regulations, the Government limited its action to issuing periodical warnings.

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[1] Letter of Marquis of Wellesley to Sir Alured Clarke, Commander-in-Chief, dated 26 April 1799. See R. R. Pearce, *Memoir and Correspondence of the Most Noble Richard Marquess Wellesley* (London 1846), i, 277.

[2] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 537, 339-40. Also M. Barns, *op.cit.*, 73-75.

[3] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 537, 365-79.

[4] In his letter to Sir Alured Clarke, written from Madras dated 26 April 1799, Lord Wellesley referred to "the extravagant number of newspapers now published in Calcutta." He further stated that on his return to Bengal he was "determined to limit that number within very narrow bounds." R. R. Pearce, *op. cit.*, i, 282.

It was, however, becoming increasingly evident that while Lord Wellesley in his characteristic manner could impose harsh regulations against the press, their continued working was beset with serious difficulties. On the one hand, the censor of the press was overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of his work. The Government, on the other hand, always felt that it did not possess any legal authority to deal with the press except the power of deporting the offending editors to England, a power which could not however, be applied in the case of persons of Indian extraction. Again, much depended upon the personal attitude of the Governor-General. While Lord Wellesley was conservative and authoritarian in his character and dealings, Lord Hastings, who came to India as Governor-General in 1813, was of a liberal disposition.[1] In fact he had respect for freedom of expression and was not at all happy at the censorship of the Indian press which Wellesley had imposed.

In the spring of 1818 an incident occurred which clearly proved that Wellesley's regulations could not work any longer. One Jacob Heatley, who was born in Bengal of an English father and an Indian mother, had become proprietor and editor of the Calcutta newspaper, the *Morning Post*. In April 1818, W.B. Bayley, who was acting as Chief Secretary to Government during the absence on leave of John Adam, had certain paragraphs meant for publication in this paper expunged on the ground that they were objectionable. Thereupon Heatley personally saw Bayley, argued at length, and insisted that he would print the expunged paragraphs. He further stated that, he being of Indian extraction, the Government could not deport him to England. In fact, no action could be taken against Heatley.[2] As Bayley himself noted, after the Heatley episode, "the obvious inutility of maintaining the

[1] Lord Hastings's political career as a member of Parliament (1797-1813) prior to his appointment as Governor-General in India, clearly showed his liberal attitude. He had "denounced British rule in India as 'founded in injustice and originally established by force', and opposed Lord Wellesley's policy there." He criticised the Government's repressive policy in Ireland and opposed the Union on the ground that it was not acceptable to the people, and even voted against it in the Irish House. He was also a consistent advocate of Catholic emancipation. But, as his conservative biographer pointed out, "he went too far and was censured for it," Major Ross-of-Bladensburg, *Marquis of Hastings* (Oxford 1893), 32-33.

[2] We have, however, no means of ascertaining what was actually written which was objected to. Bayley while referring to this incident in his minute dated 10 October 1822, did not give the details. *Bengal Public Consultation* no. 8, 17 October 1822.

office of censor, unless legal power could be vested in the Government to support his authority, as well as the importance of obtaining such legal powers was immediately felt and acknowledged by the local Government."[1] Lord Hastings was away on a tour of Northern India and no decision could be taken pending his return to Calcutta. When he returned towards the end of July, the whole situation relating to the press was reviewed. It was finally resolved to abolish the censorship and to establish in its place some general rules for the guidance of the editors.[2] These rules prohibited the editors from publishing any critical comments on the measures or proceedings of the East India Company's authorities in England or the Government of India, or the public conduct of officials. The editors were asked to refrain from "discussions having a tendency to create alarm or suspicion among the native population" in relation to the Government. They were further asked not to reprint from the English home newspapers anything "calculated to affect the British power or reputation in India." And, lastly, they were prohibited from publishing any report concerning "private scandal and personal remarks on individuals tending to excite dissension in society."

Lord Hastings's Government thus abolished the censorship, "relying on the prudence and discretion" of the editors for their careful observance of the above rules. The editors were now held "personally accountable" for anything they would publish in contravention of these rules. They were further asked to send to the Chief Secretary's office "one copy of every newspaper, periodical or Extra," published by them.[3]

These rules represented a compromise between rigid censorship and unrestricted freedom. They could not work smoothly for long. The general prohibitions which were now imposed on the editors were not clearly defined and could be interpreted differently according to the convenience of the parties concerned. In fact the situation soon became complicated owing to difference of opinion between the Governor-General and his principal officials regarding the status of the press in India and the operation of the rules regulating it. While Lord Hastings was inclined to take a magnanimous and charitable view in dealing with the press, regarding it as a useful instrument in promoting

[1] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 4, 28 August 1818.
[2] *Ibid.*, no. 9.
[3] *Ibid*, no. 9. Also M. Barns, *op. cit.*, 90.

good government, his Chief Secretary, John Adam, looked upon it as a source of limitless mischief, which could endanger British authority in India if not subjected to strict control. This latter view was shared by the Court of Directors. In a draft despatch to Bengal which was sent to the Board of Control on 7 April 1820, they expressed their extreme displeasure at the action of the Bengal Government in abolishing press censorship and pointedly directed the Governor-General to "revert to the practice which had prevailed for nearly 20 years previous to 1818, and continue the same in force until you shall have submitted to us, and we shall have approved and sanctioned some other system of responsibility and control adapted alike to all our presidencies in India."[1] The Board of Control headed by Lord Canning disapproved of the draft which was not returned.[2] Although Canning's views were similar to those of the Directors, and he privately disapproved of Hastings's policy towards the press, he had decided not to endorse the Directors' strongly-worded despatch because he wanted to avoid criticism in Parliament by opposition members who were very sensitive on the question of freedom of the press.[3]

While authorities in England regarded with apprehension Hasting's action in releasing the Indian press from the irksome and humiliating restrictions which Wellesley had imposed, in India it was greeted with unprecedented enthusiasm. This enthusiasm had a particular manifestation in Madras, where the Governor, Hugh Elliott, had made himself obnoxious because of his bureaucratic temperament. A number of prominent European residents of that town, at a meeting held on 26 May 1819, resolved to present a congratulatory address to Lord Hastings on the liberal policy he had adopted towards the press.[4] Despite the local Government's discouragement, the address was signed by "about five hundred of the most enlightened gentlemen of the Presidency" which included Judges of the Supreme Court.[5] The address emphasised the importance of "freedom of discussion"

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[1] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 538, 1-3.

[2] *Ibid.* The draft was finally returned to the Court with the Board's disapproval. *Letter from the Board of Control to the East India Company*, no. 864, 8 July 1823, Also *P.P.H.C.*, 1834, viii, 601, 102-03.

[3] C.H. Philips, *East India Company* (Manchester 1940), 224.

[4] L. Stanhope, *Sketch of the History and Influence of the Press in British India* (London 1823), 13.

[5] *Ibid.*, 32.

and praised the "liberal and enlightened" character of Lord Hastings's administration.[1]

The address was carried to Calcutta by Major Blaker, a special representative of the European community in Madras. It was presented to Lord Hastings on 24 July 1819 at a special ceremony at the Government House. The Governor-General seemed to be hihgly pleased with the tone of the address and, in his reply, he clearly expressed his liberal sentiments. In his speech he maintained: "if our motives of action are worthy, it must be wise to render them intelligible throughout our Empire, our hold on which is opinion."[2] Hastings was thus emphasising the importance of public opinion in relation to the Government. He pointed out that free expression of opinion was necessary for the mutual benefit of the Government and the public.

Lord Hastings's speech was cited by the advocates of a free press as a clear indication that the Government actually did not want to impose any restrictions on the press. They seemed conveniently to ignore the fact that the rules of 1818 had laid down certain restrictions, though of a vague nature, and that the extraordinary power which the Governor-General possessed of deporting any Englishman who was considered for one reason or other undesirable, itself constituted a major permanent threat to freedom of expression. These enthusiasts were politically Whig liberals and radicals. Their economic doctrine was that of free trade. Since many of them represented commercial interests, they were bitterly opposed to the East India Company's monopoly. A free press would be a powerful instrument to further their cause. Lord Hastings's views on the press perfectly fitted in with their point of view. But neither officials in India nor authorities in England seemed inclined to share the Governor-General's sentiments. They were obsessed by the possible danger to British supremacy in India from a free press.[3]

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[1] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 538, 5.

[2] *Ibid*, 9-12.

[3] In a lengthy memorandum dated 12 April 1822, Sir John Malcolm argued against free press in India. Emphasising the peculiar nature of English rule in India he pointed out that it had to be despotic. *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 534, 419-52. Another respected official, Sir Thomas Munro, expressed similar sentiments. In his minute of the same date he admitted that the British power in India was not based on "the liberties of the people" and pointed out that a free press would only promote "insubordination, insurrection and anarchy" among its subjects. *P.P.H.C.*, 1834, viii, 601, 102-03.

But as long as Lord Hastings remained Governor-General, the press of Calcutta enjoyed virtual freedom. The abolition of censorship in 1818 had, in fact, given a great impetus to the growth of the press in India. A number of new newspapers not only in English but in the vernacular languages began to be published. These papers fully reflected the dominant ideas of the age. The reform movement associated with the Whigs and the Philosophical Radicals in England during the post-Napoleonic era had its echoes in India. From October 1818 the famous *Calcutta Journal* began to be published. Starting as a bi-weekly the *Calcutta Journal* became a daily newspaper in June 1819. In fact it was the first daily newspaper in India. It was financed by the Calcutta free-traders and reflected their views and aspirations. Its political tone was radical. Its editor, James Silk Buckingham, was a remarkable person. He had had a chequered and adventurous career before he became a journalist.[1] He took to sea at the early age of ten and participated in illegal trade in Spain. Later he journeyed through the Middle Eastern countries dressed as an Arab traveller and facing considerable hazards. Possessed of a keen intellect, Buckingham was a self-educated man. His visit to different lands at an impressionable age, which brought him into close contact with peoples of different races and creeds, had widened his outlook. He became a free-thinker and imbibed radical ideas. Possessing unusual business ability, he soon came to acquire the majority of shares of the *Calcutta Journal* which soon outstripped its contemporaries in circulation and popularity.[2] Within three years of its publication the *Calcutta Journal* had nearly one thousand subscribers in different parts of India. As editor Buckingham freely expressed his radical views. He was on very friendly terms with Rammohan Roy and the Bengali reformers, and strongly upheld their cause.[3] He also readily published in the *Calcutta Journal* grievances against the Government, particularly from the Company's own servants.[4] These grievances,

[1] See *Autobiography of James Silk Buckingham*, 2 vols. (London 1855). Also Ralph E. Turner, *James Silk Buckingham* (London 1934).

[2] Charles Lushington, a former Secretary to Bengal Government in his evidence given on 8 March 1832, before a Parliamentary Select Committee, testified that soon after it was founded the *Calcutta Journal* "became extremely popular." He further admitted that "the editor certainly created in India a great taste for literature, and for the prosecutions of enlightened pursuits." *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, 7351, 113.

[3] *Calcutta Journal*, 14 February 1823.

[4] According to Buckingham's statement "the subscribers to the *Calcutta Journal* were almost wholly composed of the civil and military servants of the East India

which chiefly related to appointment and promotion in the different branches of the Company's administration, were published in the form of letters written anonymously.[1] Buckingham also made frequent editorial criticism of the Government, accusing it of favouritism and injustice.[2]

Such publications were viewed by the Government as highly improper. Buckingham was warned and reprimanded time and again, but in the absence of any clearly defined rules regulating the press, no legal action could be taken against him. The only effective action, however, which the Government could take was to deport him to England. But Lord Hastings was not willing to take such an exterme measure, although he was constantly advised to do so by the members of his Council, particularly John Adam. The latter held the view that the English newspapers published in India and conducted by Englishmen represented not the views of the Indian public, but those of a few Englishmen in India. Thus, in one of his minutes, Adam contested the claims of the English residents in India, whose views Buckingham represented, to exercise the same privileges as they were allowed to enjoy in England, including the rights "of sitting in judgment on the acts of Government, and bringing public measures and conduct of public men, as well as the concerns of private individuals before the bar of what they miscall public opinion."[3]

Between 1819 and 1823 numerous letters passed between the Chief Secretary to the Government and the editor of the *Calcutta Journal*,

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Company, the officers of His Majesty's army, and the respectable English merchants settled in India." *Oriental Herald*, January 1824, i, 1, 9.

[1] See *Calcutta Journal*, 6 November 1820.
Ibid., 10 July 1821.
Ibid., 17 May 1822.
Ibid., 20 May 1822.
Ibid., 21 May 1822.

[2] *Ibid.*, 26 May 1819.
Ibid., 11 January 1820.
Ibid., 2 July 1821.
Ibid., 3 July 1821.
Ibid., 1 November 1821.
Ibid., 3 November 1821.
Ibid., 31 August 1822.
Ibid., 8 February 1823.

[3] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 532, 541.

the former charging the latter with impropriety and warning him of serious consequences if he did not behave according to the wishes of the Government. Buckingham, while refuting these charges, consistently maintained that as an English citizen he had a right to freedom of expression for which Lord Hastings himself had expressed his great regard. Buckingham also plunged into a bitter controversy with the Rev. James Bryce, editor of the *John Bull in the East*, a pro-Government newspaper which had been started in July 1821 as a rival of the *Calcutta Journal*. As opposed to the radicalism of the *Calcutta Journal* the *John Bull* reflected conservative Tory opinion and strongly supported the interests of the East India Company against the attacks of the free-traders. It was believed that many conservative officials like John Adam had personal interests in the *John Bull*. The conflict between the *Calcutta Journal* and the *John Bull* was thus a conflict between two opposite interests. It was occasioned by two completely different interpretations of the rules of 1818 which had replaced the censorship of the press. The Government party maintained that the abolition of censorship did not make the press free, and emphasised the fact that the press was bound by the rules of 1818 which had imposed certain restrictions. Buckingham, on the other hand, argued that since these rules had not been passed into a regulation through the necessary official procedure, they were not valid in law. He boldly asserted that the restrictions of 1818 were, therefore, "mere waste of paper."[1]

Buckingham's conduct had caused much annoyance among senior officials, who urged the Government to take strong action against him. Adam had, in fact, repeatedly suggested Buckingham's removal from India.[2] The conservative official attitude was typified by the minute of W.B. Bayley dated 10 October 1822, in which he described the British Government in relation to its Indian subjects as "substantially and necessarily despotic" and pointed out that :[3]

> The stability of the British dominion in India mainly depends upon the cheerful obedience and subordination of the officers of the army, on the fidelity of the native troops, on the supposed character and power of the Government, and upon the opinion which may be entertained by a superstitious and unenlightened

[1] *Calcutta Journal*, 31 August 1822.
[2] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 532, 631 ; *Ibid.*, 538, 333.
[3] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 7. 17 October 1822.

native population of the motives and tendency of our actions as affecting their interests.

The liberty of the press however essential to the nature of a free state, is not in my judgment, consistent with the character of our institutions in this country or with the extraordinary nature of our dominion in India.

Lord Hastings, however, was still reluctant to take any severe action against Buckingham as suggested by his advisers in the Council. He believed that without any specific sanction from the authorities in England he could not adopt any extraordinary measure in dealing with the press. In a letter to the Court of Directors dated 17 October 1822, the Bengal Government, therefore, asked for suggestions for "a more efficient and decided control over the Press in India than they at present have the power of exacting."[1]

Meanwhile, Hastings's tenure of office had come to an end, and in January 1823, John Adam became the acting Governor-General. The latter was now free to pursue has own policy with regard to the press. The provocation came from Buckingham himself. In the *Calcutta Journal* of 8 February 1823, he had made sarcastic comments on the appointment of the Rev. James Bryce, a Scots missionary and former editor of the *John Bull*, as Clerk to the Committee of Stationery. Buckingham's main point of criticism was that the appointment was a glaring instance of favouritism shown towards a person whose qualification for the post was open to question.[2] Adam, with whom the appointment had originated, viewed Buckingham's criticism as an attack upon the Government which could not be ignored. He was now determined to take decisive action. It was resolved to cancel Buckingham's license to reside in India and he was asked to leave the country within two months.[3]

Buckingham left India in April 1823. He had handed over the editorship of the *Calcutta Journal* to Francis Sandys, who was described as "a gentleman of Hindoo-British or Anglo-Indian birth (well known as a public writer and editor of an Indian newspaper some few years ago)."[4]

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[1] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 532, 529-30.
[2] *Calcutta Journal*, 8 February 1823.
[3] *Bengal Public Consultation*, nos. 6, 7, 20 February 1823.
[4] J. S. Buckingham to W. B. Bayley, 17 February 1823. *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 5, 6 March 1823.

Just before his departure Buckingham had also published a pamphlet in which he denounced the Government's action as tyrannical.[1] He expressed the hope that his enforced absence from India would be temporary and that he would be able to return to India after obtaining the annulment of the Government order from the higher authorities in England. He also made it clear that, although he had resigned the editorship of the *Calcutta Journal*, the policy of the paper in advocating liberal principles would not change. He thought that the new editor Sandys, being of Indian extraction, could not be deported.

Meanwhile, the Bengal Government was determined to enact a new regulation in order to bring the press under its effective control.[2] A draft regulation providing for compulsory licensing of all printing presses, periodical publications and newspapers was passed by the Governor-General-in-Council on 14 March 1823. It was then submitted to the Supreme Court for registration in accordance with the required procedure.

But opposition to Government policy now came from an unexpected quarter. Until now the conflict between the press and the Government had involved Englishmen only. It related to the English newspapers which were owned and edited by Englishmen. But after 1818 Indian vernacular newspapers were beginning to appear and this marked a distinct stage in the growth of Indian public opinion. The articulate section of Bengali opinion, led by Rammohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore and their friends, whose economic interests were linked with those of the European free-traders, were not slow in realizing the danger to freedom of expression as a result of Government policy. There is no doubt that they were greatly influenced by the stand taken

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[1] *A Few Brief Remarks on the Recent Act of Transportation without Trial with Copies of Correspondence between W. B. Bayley Esq., Chief Secretary to Government and Mr. Buckingham, the late Editor of the* Calcutta Journal. Printed for the private information of Mr. Buckingham's friends but neither published nor sold. (Calcutta, 24 February 1823.) Shortly after Buckingham's departure from India, a tract entitled *Statement of Facts Relative to the Removal from India of Mr. Buckingham, late Editor of the* Calcutta Journal, was published in Calcuta in April 1823, which clearly stated the Government position. It was believed that Adam himself was its author.

[2] The Governor-General-in-Council was empowered by an Act of Parliament (13 Geo. III, 1772-73, Chapter 63, Section 36) to make such regulations. See *Acts of Parliament Relating to India*, India Office Library, Record Department (Parliamentary Branch) Collection I, 1320-21.

up by Buckingham and the *Calcutta Journal.* On 31 March 1823, a petition was presented to the Supreme Court by an English lawyer of Calcutta, R. Cutlar Furgusson, on behalf of "Rammohan Roy and five or six other of the most respectable native inhabitants of Calcutta,"[1] protesting against the proposed regulation relating to the press. In reply to Furgusson's forceful arguments in which he maintained that the proposed act of Government was repugnant to the law of England, Justice Sir Francis Macnaghten (the only sitting Judge at that time) pointed out that India was not a free country, and therefore the laws and institutions of a free country could not be applicable there. A free press, he contended, "might follow, but it could not precede, a free constitution."[2] Hence the Supreme Court rejected the Indian petition. The new regulation (Regulation III of 1823) was formally enacted by the Government on 5 April 1823.[3] It not only provided for compulsory licensing of newspapers, journals, and printing establishments. It contained a set of elaborate restrictions which, if enforced, would reduce the press, both English and vernacular, to a state of complete subservience to the Government. Any infringement of the regulation by an English newspaper was to be reported to the Government by the Chief Secretary; while the Persian Secretary was to keep a watch over the vernacular press.[4] In its action regarding the press the Bengal Government could count on the full support of the Court of Directors.[5]

In fact, the Court of Directors would have liked very much to see censorship of the press re-established and had been asking the Board of Control for a parliamentary enactment for the effective control of the Indian press. But the Board's new President, William Wynn, a liberal Whig who was hostile to the East India Company, rejected this proposal.[6]

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[1] *India Gazette*, 17 April 1823. The signatories to this petition were Chandrakumar Tagore, Dwarkanath Tagore, Rammohan Roy, Harchandra Ghose, Gauricharan Banerji and Prasannakumar Tagore. *Calcutta Journal*, 1 April 1823.

[2] *India Gazette*, 17 April 1823.

[3] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 533, 241-44.

[4] *Ibid.*, 244.

[5] In fact, the Court in their despatch dated 30 July 1823 had stated : "We feel no hesitation in assuring you of our most strenuous and cordial support in whatever legal measures you may adopt in the exercise of your discretion for the purpose of restraining the licentiousness of the Press in India, from which, if unchecked, the most dangerous consequences are to be apprehended." *Ibid.*, 533, 41-42.

[6] C. H. Philips, *op.cit.*, 237.

Meanwhile the Bengal Government was going ahead with the enforcement of the new regulation. The editors and publishers of all the newspapers including the *Calcutta Journal* applied for and were granted license. But the tone adopted by the *Calcutta Journal*, though under new management, soon brought it into conflict with the Government. Although Buckingham had departed, his spirit still seemed to inspire the writings of the *Journal*. Thus, while describing the position of the press in India, the causes of Buckingham's expulsion were referred to in an article in the *Calcutta Journal* of 30 August 1823 ; to this the Government took serious objection, and determined to act. The responsibility for what was considered an offensive article was fixed upon Francis Sandys, the editor, and Sandford Arnot, the assistant editor. But since the Government could not lay its hands on Sandys, being Indian-born, it decided to deport Arnot, who was an Englishman.[1] This action of the Bengal Government, however, did not receive the Court of Directors' approval. The Court, in fact, asked the Bengal Government to exercise its power "with moderation and forbearance."[2]

The Bengal Government, meanwhile, had revoked the license of the *Calcutta Journal* on 6 November 1823, on a charge of attempting "to revive the discussion of topics which had been officially prohibited."[3] The offence was that the *Calcutta Journal* had started reprinting extracts from Colonel Leicester Stanhope's pamphlet, *A Sketch of the History and Influence of the Press in British India*, which expressed very liberal opinions on the freedom of the press.[4] Attempts to revive the *Calcutta Journal* under new management and editorship did not succeed.[5]

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[1] *Public Letter from Bengal*, 30 December 1923, paras. 5, 6. Arnot was arrested and put on a ship which caught fire off the coast of Malaya and he was brought back to Calcutta. He was subsequently put on another ship which took him to England. For details of this incident see Sandford Arnot, *A Sketch of the History of the Indian Press* (London 1829), 36-37.

[2] *Public Letter to Bengal*, 6 July 1825, paras 13, 14.

[3] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 533, 387.

[4] This pamphlet was published in London in early 1823. Leicester Stanhope was an admirer of Lord Hastings. He was one of the signatories to the address which was presented to Lord Hastings on behalf of the inhabitants of Madras in 1819 congratulating him on abolishing press censorship. Extracts from this pamphlet were reprinted in the *Calcutta Journal*, 22-30 October 1823.

[5] The Columbian Press which printed the *Calcutta Journal* pressed into the hands of one Dr. Muston, a surgeon in the Company's service who was also the son-in-law of J. H. Harrington, a member of the Governor-General's Council. Muston

Thus passed away the *Calcutta Journal* and with it the most turbulent period of Calcutta journalism. Buckingham had made the Calcutta press a formidable instrument of public opinion. The Government now found the press a power to reckon with. Although the *Calcutta Journal* went down fighting, it left its impact upon the subsequent development of the Indian press, but English and vernacular.[1]

It was soon evident that the Regulation of 1823, hastily enacted during the temporary Governor-Generalship of John Adam, could not work smoothly. The newspapers found the new restrictions too galling to observe and the Government found it difficult to cope with the violations of the rules.[2]

The new Governor-General, Lord Amherst, was not very keen to enforce the new regulation strictly. His policy was one of non-interference with the press as far as circumstances would permit. The position of his Government had been made embarrassing owing to Buckingham's agitation in England. Soon after his arrival there Buckingham had presented an appeal to the Privy Council against the Bengal Government's restrictions on the press on the grounds that they tended "to produce discontent" among the various classes of British subjects in India, prevented "the extension of knowledge," and were "repugnant to the laws of the realm."[3] The appeal was rejected. Nevertheless, Buckingham was able to win the sympathy of important circles in England, particularly in the Court of Proprietors, for the losses he had suffered on account of the Bengal Government's action against him.

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brought out a new English daily, the *Scotsman in the East*. Its tone was liberal. But unlike Buckingham, Muston was not a successful businessman and his paper did not last for more than two years for lack of funds. S. Arnot, *op.cit.*, pp. 39, 42.

[1] For the influence of the *Calcutta Journal* on the vernacular press see below, p. 104.

[2] Such violations mostly related to discussions on the case of Buckingham and on the freedom of the press. In fact, the Bengal Government reported to the Court of Directors that: "...if the letter of the Press Regulations were to be strictly enforced, almost everyday would furnish cause for a censure or remark. It would be easy...to multiply restrictive rules, but the Government was desirous to trust as long as it could do so with propriety to the prudence and discretion of the Editors, and to interfere as rarely as a regard for the public interests would admit." *Public Letter from Bengal*, 31 March 1825, para 50.

[3] *Proceedings before His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council in relations to the Appeal by James Silk Buckingham, Esq., against certain regulations of the Bengal Government on the subject of the press* (London 1825), 10. Inspired by Buckingham, Rammohan Roy and his friends had also sent a memorial addressed

Till 1828 the Bengal Government did not follow a uniform policy in dealing with what could be considered violations of the press regulation by the newspapers. Perhaps the difficulty arose from the fact that the law did not provide adequate scope to distinguish between the various degrees of violations. Thus at one time the Government would limit its action to the mere issue of a warning to the editor or publisher concerned, while on another occasion, it would resort to such an extremely disproportionate measure as suppressing the paper altogether. There were, again, instances where it would take no action at all.[1]

In 1826, the *Bengal Chronicle*, a new English weekly was started under the editorship of James Sutherland, a former associate of Buckingham. This journal soon came under the unfavourable notice of the Government. It took serious objection to an article which appeared in the *Bengal Chronicle* of 6 August 1826 in which the decision of the Privy Council on Buckingham's petition against the Bengal Government's press regulation was criticised. The Government regarded the article as a violation of the regulation and severely warned the publisher, Monte D. Rozario, that it would not hesitate to cancel the paper's license in case of future violation.[2] In 1827, the *Bengal Chronicle* passed into the hands of Samuel Smith and Company, the publishers of the *Bengal Hurkaru*, while Sutherland still remained its editor. In December 1827, the Government decided to cancel the license of the *Bengal Chronicle*, for having made some critical comments on the operations connected with the Burmese War.[3] But the proprietors of the *Bengal Chronicle* expressed regret for the article and put the blame for its publication on the editor, James Sutherland. The Government

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to "the King of England," protesting on behalf of Indian subjects against the Press Regulation of 1823. The memorial contained arguments against despotic rule and showed marked influence of English liberal ideas. The memorial was considered by the Privy Council along with Buckingham's petition and rejected. *Oriental Herald*, May 1825, v, 17, 503-15.

[1] Thus, in a letter to Sandford Arnot dated 20 November 1825, James Sutherland wrote : ".....we have of late enjoyed a latitude of discussion here (in Calcutta) unsurpassed by anything admitted in the time of Lord Hastings. But then we exercise it in danger and enjoy it by sufferance, and it affords a most striking proof of the injustice and tyranny of suppressing the journal (the *Calcutta Journal*) for what, compared with what is *now* tolerated, was a most venial offence against the restrictions." S. Arnot, *op. cit.*, 42.

[2] *Bengal Public Consultation*, nos. 1, 2, 17 August 1826.

[3] *Ibid*, nos. 1, 2, 14 December 1827.

thereupon decided not to proceed with the case, but only after Sutherland had been removed from the editorship.[1] Shortly afterwards, Sutherland became the editor of the daily newspaper, the *Bengal Hurkaru*. In fact, the Government was generally inclined to give some latitude to the newspapers in their violations of the press regulation. It would not, for instance, take any action for the first offence noted. But in the case of the *Calcutta Chronicle* the Government took an extraordinarily severe step. This newspaper, published thrice a week, had been started in 1827 under the editorship of the Rev. William Adam, a former Baptist missionary who had become a Unitarian under the influence of Rammohan Roy.

As editor of the *Calcutta Chronicle* Adam showed great ability and talent. His newspaper, which expressed liberal views, soon became popular and gained a wide circulation. According to Sandford Arnot the *Calcutta Chronicle* "was conducted with greater power and ability ...than was any journal which had preceded it."[2] It had lasted for several months when it was suddenly suppressed by the Government without any previous warning.[3] The ostensible cause for this action was "the generally disrespectful character of the Editorial articles" in the paper, which was considered by the Government as a "direct violation" of the second rule of the press regulation.[4] As no specific charge could be framed against the *Calcutta Chronicle*, its proprietors remonstrated against the action and requested an explanation, to which the Government "declined to accede."[5] In fact, the Government went so far as to refuse to grant a license to any other newspaper using the premises of the *Calcutta Chronicle*.[6] According to Sandford Arnot the real cause of the suppression of the *Calcutta Chronicle* was "the vigorous

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[1] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 3.

[2] S. Arnot, *op.cit.*, 44.

[3] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 174, 31 May 1827.

[4] *Public Letter from Bengal*, 23 August 1927, paras 70, 71. The second rule prohibited the newspapers from making any "Observations or statements touching the character, constitution, measures or orders of the Court of Directors or other public authorities in England connected with the Government of India or the character, constitution, measures or orders of the Indian Governments, impunging the motives and designs of such authorities or Governments or in any way tending to bring them into hatred or contempt, to excite resistance to their order or to weaken their authority." *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 533, 241.

[5] *Public Letter from Bengal*, 23 August 1827, para 72.

[6] *Bengal Public Consultation*, nos. 1, 2, 28 June 1827.

public spirit" which it had shown by firm opposition to certain unpopular measures of the Government, particularly the Stamp Regulation (Regulation XII of 1826), by which the stamp duties were raised.[1] Its editor, William Adam, had already incurred the displeasure of the conservative section of the European residents in Calcutta because of his conversion to Unitarianism. His liberal views were regarded with suspicion by the officials. This attitude largely explains the harsh manner in which the *Calcutta Chronicle* was dealt with. The Bengal Government's action was approved by the Court of Directors.[2]

It was evident that the Government policy regarding the press was largely determined by the personal views of the Governor-General and the officials. Thus, the censorship rules of 1799 had the imprint of Lord Wellesley's own opinion regarding the nature of British power in India. His despotic outlook was reflected in his despotic policy. So was the case with the regulation of 1823 ; it was permeated with the conservative official spirit personified by John Adam. The working of the Adam Regulation was left to Lord Amherst, who, lacking strong opinions, was reluctant to enforce it rigorously. Consequently, during his regime (1823-28) the Government's policy towards the press was not consistent.

Lord William Bentinck's Governor-Generalship (1828-35) marks a distinct epoch in British Indian history. Though not a doctrinaire liberal, he was thoroughly permeated with the liberal spirit of the age and was able to infuse it into every branch of Indian administration.[3] Lord Hastings, in spite of his liberal disposition, had failed to achieve this chiefly because of the stubborn opposition from his own advisers in the Council and also because of the criticism of the Court of Directors, particularly with regard to the liberal policy towards the press which he advocated. Consequently the policy which he actually pursued was inconsistent and pleased no one. In fact, it turned his enthusiastic admirers like Buckingham into bitter critics.[4] Bentinck, on the other hand, had the necessary conviction and will-power to carry through a

[1] S. Arnot, *op.cit.*, 45.

[2] *Public Letter to Bengal*, 22 September 1829, para 26.

[3] T.G.P. Spear, "Lord William Bentinck", *Journal of Indian History*, April 1940, xix, 102.

[4] Buckingham on his return to England bitterly criticised Hastings for keeping the press under restraint in spite of his liberal pronouncements. See the *Oriental Herald*, 1824, i, 374.

liberal policy. He also received steady support from his advisers in the Council, particularly from Charles Metcalfe and subsequently from Macaulay. He had a powerful backing from home authorities.

Bentinck started his career as Governor-General as a cautious liberal and ended as "a radical reformer."[1] This is clearly reflected in his attitude towards the press. Within a few months of his arrival in India, Bentinck had made detailed enquiries regarding the position of the Indian press. In a minute recorded on 28 December 1828, he observed that upon his arrival in India he had found "the Press at Calcutta and Bombay enjoying practically at least as much freedom as in England," and although his opinion had been always alive "to the very great evil that might arise from an unrestricted liberty of the Press," he was satisfied that "under existing circumstances" it was "productive only of advantage to the Government and to the Community."[2] He was aware of the possible danger to British power from the influence of a free press upon the minds of the Indian population, but he was assured as a result of his enquiries that the danger was non-existent because of the very limited circulation of the newspapers.[3] Referring to the relations between press and Government he maintained that it was wiser to :[4]

> .....leave the Press alone, than to attempt to coerce or stifle it by prosecutions, which had no other effect than to give celebrity to the Editor, greater notoriety to an objectional doctrine and to drag the local Government before the tribunal of public opinion in England, with the addition of much inconvenience to the home authorities.

The Governor-General's enquiries revealed that the circulation through the post office of the English newspapers published from Calcutta in 1828 was as follows :[5]

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[1] T.G.P. Spear, *op.cit.*, 103.

[2] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. A, 6 January 1829.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.* The obvious reference was to the case of J. S. Buckingham.

[5] Report submitted by G. Stockwell, Post Master General. Enclosure B to Bentinck's minute dated 28 December 1828. This calculation was based on one week's circulation 16-26 September 1828. *Bengal Public Consultation*, 6 January 1829. Also M. Barns, *op. cit.*, 181-82.

DAILY NEWSPAPERS :

Bengal Hurkaru : weekly circulation 1089 ; average daily circulation 155. One Bengali subscriber at Santipur.
John Bull : weekly circulation 1432 ; average daily circulation 204. One Bengali subscriber at Jangipur.

BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS :

India Gazette : weekly circulation 561 ; average daily circulation 280. One Parsi subscriber in Bombay.
The *Government Gazette* : weekly circulation 595 ; average daily circulation 297. Seven Indian subscribers, one each at Lucknow, Chandernagar, Burdwan, Kanpur, Santipur and Murshidabad.
Bengal Chronicle :[1] weekly circulation 379 ; average daily circulation 189.

This, however, only showed the number sent through the post office and did not take into account the number of copies which must have been delivered locally by messengers.[2] Again, it must be noted that the number of readers, as is always the case, must have exceeded that of the subscribers. This was especially so because of the high price of the newspapers.[3]

By 1830, the newspaper press of Calcutta was, "as respects frequency of publication and circulation, in the British dominions, second in importance only to that of London, and superior to that of the whole of the British dominions besides."[4] In fact, by December 1830, the number of daily newspapers published from Calcutta had increased to four : *Bengal Hurkaru, John Bull, Calcutta Gazette* and *India Gazette.* The daily *Calcutta Gazette* subsequently (in 1832) changed its name to *Calcutta Courier.*[5] In 1832 after the failure of the Agency House (Cruttenden, McKillop and Company) which owned the *John Bull,*

[1] Stockwell in his report wrongly mentions *Calcutta Chronicle* which had been suppressed in 1827. Barns seems to have overlooked this mistake. M. Barns, *op. cit.*, 182.
[2] *Ibid.*, 181.
[3] The price of the *Bengal Hurkaru,* for instance, was about 5 annas per copy.
[4] *Alexander's East India Magazine,* December 1831, ii, 12, 586.
[5] *Calcutta Courier* was a semi-official newspaper. It was published from the Military Orphan Society which also continued to publish the *Government Gazette* twice a week. In 1832, the *Gazette* ceased to be a newspaper and its publications were confined to official orders and advertisements.

this paper passed into the hands of J.H. Stocqueler, an Englishman with liberal views who, with financial assistance from Dwarkanath Tagore, transformed it into a liberal journal.[1] In 1833, the name of *John Bull* was changed to the *Englishman*. The ownership of the *India Gazette* also passed into the hands of Dwarkanath Tagore.[2] In 1835, it was amalgamated with the *Bengal Hurkaru*. Although the latter was still published by Samuel Smith and Company, Dwarkanath had come to possess a substantial share in it. In 1831, two new daily English newspapers were published from Calcutta, namely, the *Hesperus* and the *East Indian*, both representing the interests of the Anglo-Indian community.

A number of new English weekly newspapers were also published during this period. Thus in 1829, Robert Montgomery Martin, a former surgeon, started publishing a journal called the *Bengal Herald*, with which Rammohan Roy and his friends Dwarkanath Tagore and Prasannakumar Tagore were also connected. The *Bengal Herald* advocated liberal principles and became an organ of the Indian reform movement. It was printed in English, Bengali, Persian and Hindi. Martin soon came into conflict with the Government for having published an article in the *Bengal Herald* of 1 August 1829, criticising the Government on the half-batta question. The Government considered this criticism as offensive, "calculated to excite a spirit of mutiny and discontent in the minds of the European soldiery."[3] Martin thereupon transferred the ownership of the journal to a Bengali Hindu, Nilratan Haldar. The latter obtained a new license from the Government to publish the *Bengal Herald*[4] which thus became the first full-fledged English newspaper owned by an Indian. Its reformist spirit continued unabated.

By 1830, with the growth of radicalism among the students of the Hindu College under Derozio's influence, a new and disturbing phenomenon in Hindu society was created. Soon this phenomenon expressed itself through the press. Some students ventured to publish a weekly journal in English which they called the *Parthenon*. Its first number appeared on 15 February 1830 and it was full of attacks upon Hindu religion and Hindu society. It strongly supported the movement

[1] J. H. Stocqueler, *Memoirs of a Journalist* (Bombay and London 1873), 92.
[2] *Bengal Almanac and Annual Directory*, 1834, 337.
[3] *Public Letter from Bengal*, 22 September 1813, para 587.
[4] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 67, 29 September 1829.

for colonization of India by Europeans. It thus echoed the voices of the English free-traders and radicals. The radical English contemporary, the *India Gazette*, described the *Parthenon* as a "very favourable specimen" of what "Hindus by birth yet Europeans by education" could do.[1] But the young radicals had misfired and had to face the consequences. Opposition came from the guardians of the students themselves. The authorities of the Hindu College were not prepared to tolerate heresy and so the *Parthenon* could not appear any more.[2]

But the spirit of radicalism could not be crushed so easily. In May 1831, Krishnamohan Banerji, a former student of the Hindu College, brought out another weekly English newspaper called the *Enquirer*. It at once became the organ of the young Hindu rebels.[3]

Another weekly newspaper in English, the *Reformer*, appeared in August 1831. It was edited by Prasannakumar Tagore and it reflected the views of the Hindu reformers of Rammohan Roy's school.[4] In January 1833, the English edition of the Bengali weekly newspaper, the *Jnananveshan* (the search for knowledge) was published. It was a radical journal and was ably edited by Rasikkrishna Mallick, a former Hindu College student.

The period of Lord William Bentinck's Governor-Generalship constitutes a landmark in the development of public opinion in Bengal. A number of important issues relating to social reform and education, the question of renewal of the East India Company's Charter and similar other matters, agitated the minds of the educated sections in the country. These questions were discussed in the newspapers with great alacrity and enthusiasm. The growing popularity of the newspapers was revealed by the steady increase in their number and circulation.

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[1] *India Gazette*, 17 February 1830.

[2] *Ibid.*, 5 March 1830.

[3] In a letter to Lord William Bentinck dated 23 November 1831, Krishnamohan Banerji wrote : "With the intention of making an attempt to eradicate prejudice from the Hindoos, my countrymen, I have been for the last 4 or 5 months editing a newspaper under the title the *Enquirer* ...." *Bentinck Papers*. In 1834 the *Enquirer* became a monthly journal.

[4] According to a contemporary account, the *Reformer* was "conducted with great ability." Its contributors were mostly "young men educated at the Hindoo College." The subjects discussed in the journal were "of the highest moment to the interests of British India", and they were "treated in a spirit and tone, creditable alike to the intelligence and good taste of the writers." *Alexanders' East India Magazine*, January 1832, iii, 14, 44.

It was significant that by 1831 as many as four English newspapers were owned and edited by Bengalis themselves. The following abstract will show the state of the Calcutta English press in 1834.[1]

DAILY NEWSPAPERS	Circulation
Bengal Hurkaru	726
India Gazette	373
Calcutta Courier	175
Englishman	306
TRI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS	
Bengal Chronicle	208
India Gazette	195
BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS	
Calcutta Courier	225
Calcutta Gazette	300
WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS	
Bengal Herald	292
Reformer	400
Jnananveshan (published in English and Bengali)	100
Samachar Darpan (published in English and Bengali)	250
Calcutta Literary Gazette	338
Philanthropist	92
Oriental Observer	230

Besides these newspapers a number of periodical publications, both literary and commercial were also published.[2]

In January 1835, the Serampur missionaries revived their English journal, the *Friend of India*.[3] It was now published as a weekly newspaper. It soon established itself as a respectable journal and by the end of 1835, had nearly 200 subscribers.[4]

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[1] *Bengal Almanac and Annual Directory*, 1834, 340.

[2] For a list of these journals see *Ibid.*

[3] *Friend of India* had been established as a monthly journal in 1818. In 1820, it became a quarterly journal. It had ceased publication in 1826.

[4] J. C. Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward* (London 1859), ii, 487-88.

Lord William Bentinck had prudently decided to "leave the Press alone." This policy was quite in harmony with his liberal temper. Although he did not officially liberate the press from the restrictions of 1823, he allowed it "almost unchecked freedom."[1] Only on one occasion, however, did he interfere with this freedom, and that reluctantly. This was regarding the agitation in the press on the so-called "Half-Batta" question. The Court of Directors had as a measure of economy resolved to reduce by half the enhanced allowance known as *batta* which the army officers in India were drawing in addition to their salary. Bentinck by an order issued on 29 November 1828, put into execution the Court's resolution. Immediately there was a storm of protest among the army officers, who began to ventilate their grievances through the press. The reason why most of the English newspapers of Calcutta took up the cause of the army officers may be explained by the fact that a considerable number of their subscribers was drawn from the army.[2] The officers of the Bengal Army sent memorials to the Court of Directors requesting them to revise their decision.[3] Meanwhile, Bentinck

[1] H. H. Wilson, *Mill's History of British India* (London 1840), ix, 245.

[2] The following table illustrates classification of subscribers to the English daily newspapers and their weekly edition :

	Civil	Military	Medical	Mercantile	Legal	Clerical	Miscellaneous	Gratis & Exchange	TOTAL
Bengal Hurkaru and Chrocicle	136	308	51	206	24	3	154	52	934
India Gazette	103	123	40	79	0	3	172	46	568
Calcutta Courier	69	122	15	121	0	11	4	55	397
Englishman	104	81	9	0	13	14	60	25	306
Total	412	634	115	406	37	33	390	178	2205

Bengal Almanac and Annual Directory, 1834, 341. It may be presumed that although the number of subscribers to the newspapers in 1829-30 was smaller than that of 1834, the number of subscribers belonging to the military service was proportionately higher than that of any other class as was in 1834.

[3] See *A Collection of Facts and Documents relating to Batta* etc. *With other pending questions concerning the Indian army* (Calcutta 1829).

persistently ingored the criticism which continued to be made against him in the press "in a strain which preceding administrations would scarcely have tolerated."[1] But when the Court of Directors in their despatch of 31 March 1830, communicated to him their final decision to reject the army officers' memorials, he decided to put an end to any further discussion in the press regarding a question which had now been finally settled. Bentinck's view was that such discussion was not only futile but could be harmful by promoting disaffection in the army.[2]

The firm position which Bentinck had taken regarding the Half-Batta question grew out of his conviction that the army must always remain under the control of civil authority. He believed that disgruntled elements in the army should no longer be allowed to utilise the press for their own selfish ends. William Astell, Chairman of the Court of Directors, in a private letter to Bentinck also referred to the danger of promoting disaffection in the army through the press and suggested that steps should be taken to check the evil, conceding, however, that Bentinck was "no advocate for restrictions upon the Press."[3] Bentinck, taking a realistic view of the situation, had rather compromised his liberalism by suggesting in his minute of 6 September 1830, that no discussion on the Half-Batta question should be allowed in the press. William Bayley, one of the members of the Council, concurred in this view.[4] But Sir Charles Metcalfe, the senior member of the Council and a staunch liberal, was not willing to accept this position. In his minute[5] he put forward clear and forceful arguments against any interference with the freedom of the press. Referring to the discussion of the Half-Batta question in the Calcutta newspaper he maintained that it would be "infinitely better to allow anything to be said that can be said, than to furnish a new source of discontent, by crushing the expression of public opinion." He thought that any sort of discontent should be allowed to express itself because there was more danger in "suppressing the publication of opinions, than in keeping the valve open, by which bad humours might evaporate." He believed that "to prevent men from thinking and feeling" was impossible.

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[1] *Mill's History of British India*, op. cit.

[2] Minute by Lord William Bentinck, 6 September 1830. *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 8, 6 September 1830.

[3] William Astell to Lord William Bentinck, 3 June 1830. *Bentinck Papers*.

[4] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 9, 6 September 1830.

[5] *Ibid.*, no. 10.

Metcalfe's objection, however, was overruled and the Chief Secretary, under orders of the Government, issued a letter to the editors of the English newspapers asking them not to publish any comment relating to the Half-Batta question.[1]

The order had, however, a salutary effect. At least, it saved the press from being utilised as a platform of parochial interests. The echo of resentment soon died down and the press occupied itself with more important problems connected with education, social and administrative reforms and the great discussions on the question of the renewal of the Company's Charter. Lord William Bentinck's Government did nothing further to interfere with the freedom of the press to discuss these problems. That the press exercised a powerful influence upon public opinion, especially in preparing the minds of the educated section of the people to accept the reforms which were introduced during this period, cannot be doubted.

In 1834, Thomas Babington Macaulay had joined as additional member of the Governor-General's Council. With his strong liberal views he soon came to exercise great influence on Government policy. Since he wrote his famous article on Milton in the *Edinburgh Review* (August 1825), Macaulay's views on the freedom of the press were well known and it was naturally expected that after his arrival in India he would do something for the removal of those restrictions upon the press which, though not enforced, were still officially recognised.

On 5 January 1835, a public meeting was held at the Calcutta Town Hall under the presidentship of William Hicky, the Sheriff. The object of the meeting was to appeal to the Government for the repeal of the unpopular press regulation of 1823. The meeting was so largely attended by both Europeans and Indians that David Hare declared that during his long stay in India he "had never seen anything like it."[2] It was in fact, a remarkable mainfestation of public opinion. The *Bengal Hurkaru* congratulated the Indian people "on this proud and glorious triumph of public principle and public spirit."[3] The meeting was addressed by distinguished English lawyers of Calcutta, like Thomas Turton and Longueville Clarke, the great philanthropist David Hare and a number of other Englishmen representing commercial interests.

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[1] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 11, 6 September 1830. Also M. Barns, *op. cit.*, 192-96.

[2] *Bengal Hurkaru*, 6 January 1835.

[3] *Ibid.*

Among the Indian speakers were Dwarkanath Tagore and Rasikkrishna Mallick, the young editor of the *Jnananveshan*. The meeting resolved to present a petition to the Governor-General on behalf of the inhabitants of Calcutta requesting him to repeal the press regulation. The fact that public opinion in India, both English and Indian, could move in the same direction in a matter of such vital importance as the freedom of expression was illustrated by the speech of Dwarkanath Tagore.[1] He recalled that when the press regulation was passed in 1823, he along with his friend Rammohan Roy, and a few of his own relations had made a petition to the Supreme Court against it. At that time, he observed, it required sufficient courage to publicly protest against any measure of the Government. In fact, Dwarkanath had failed to induce many Indians to join him in the protest because it was feared that he "would be hanged the next day" for his boldness. He thought that under Lord William Bentinck the press was enjoying real freedom in spite of the regulation. Emphasising that this freedom was not secure as long as the regulation existed, Tagore remarked :[2]

> If we could secure Lord William Bentinck as a Governor-General, there would be no need of a petition, for with him this law [Regulation of 1823] is a dead letter...but we do not know who we may get next,...This then is the time we ought to petition ; and I have very hope, from the known character of Lord William Bentinck, and from the interest he has always taken in the welfare of the natives, and in that of the community at large, that he will repeal the regulation.

The petition was duly presented to the Governor-General and considered by the Council on 6 February 1835. In a communication (it was actually drafted by Macaulay)[3] sent to the petitioners, the Government stated that "the unsatisfactory state of the laws relating to the Press" had already engaged its attention and that it was considering the introduction of a system "which while it gives security to every person engaged in the fair discussion of public measures will effectively secure the Government against sedition and individuals against calumny."[4]

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[1] *Bengal Hurkaru*, 9 January 1835.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Draft in Macaulay's hand, undated. *Bentinck Papers.*
[4] *India Public Consultation*, no. 39, 6 February 1835.

But before the Government could take any decision, Lord William Bentinck had resigned and left for England in March 1835. Had he continued as Governor-General, he would have definitely repealed the press regulation. This was evident from a letter which he wrote to J.S. Buckingham shortly after his retirement. In this letter dated 27 August 1835, which was written from Frankfurt where Bentinck had gone for a change soon after his return to England, he expressed his liberal sentiments more freely than he could possibly have done while in office.[1] Bentinck was succeeded by Sir Charles Metcalfe as temporary Governor-General. Metcalfe's liberal views regarding the press were well known. Soon after his assumption of office, he asked Macaulay to draft an Act which would replace the 1823 regulation. Macaulay completed his draft by the middle of April 1835 and submitted it before the Governor-General's Council. "The question before us", observed Macaulay in his minute of 16 April 1835, "is not whether the Press shall be free, but whether, being free, it shall be called free."[2] He pointed out that the danger from a free press had been overemphasised in the past. He contended that the Government was sufficiently armed to deal with any emergency that might arise from a free expression of opinion in the press. The Act which he had drafted would, while repealing the regulation of 1823, allow anyone to publish a newspaper without the previous permission of the Government. But no person would be permitted to "publish sedition or calumny without imminent risk of punishment."[3]

Metcalfe in his minute[4] of 17 April 1835, fully approved Macaulay's draft. The other members of the Council, H.T. Prinsep and Lt. Col.

[1] Bentinck wrote : "My early determination was not to interfere with the Press ; and I had, therefore, no occasion to compare the different degrees of freedom of discussion prevailing before and subsequent to my arrival. The boldness of language which I have heard ascribed to you (Buckingham), did not probably exceed that which has been assumed by the Calcutta journals in later years ; but its novelty would probably alarm all those – and especially the older functionaries – who consider the existence of a free Press to be incompatible with the safety of our Indian Empire. I am happy to say that that apprehension has gradually given way to as general a conviction that free discussion, instead of producing any of those dreaded evils, has been productive of great benefit, and has led to a very perceptible improvement of our administration." Quoted in the *Morning Chronicle*, 17 September 1835.

[2] *India. Civil Judicial Consultation*, no. 1, 18 May 1835.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, no. 2.

Morison, while signifying their approval of the proposed Act, emphasised the possible danger from a free press conducted by Indians.[1] Another member of the Council, Alexander Ross, however, did not apprehend any danger from the "native" press at all.[2] In a final minute,[3] recorded on 27 April 1835, Metcalfe dismissed the arguments on the danger from the Indian press and pointed out : "we ought to be very careful not to make invidious distinctions between European and native subjects." He believed that the new Act would be "productive of good by giving general satisfaction and promoting knowledge."

On 3 August 1835, the new press act was passed by the Governor-General-in-Council unanimously. It repealed the Bengal Press Regulation of 1823 and the Bombay Press Regulations of 1825 and 1827 and established a uniform law for the whole of British India. The Act became effective from 15 September 1835.

By taking a step which was considered by many as "merely the complement of Lord William Bentinck's work,"[4] Metcalfe, however, had brought upon himself the wrath of the Court of Directors. In their despatch to the Governor-General dated 1 February 1836, they severely criticised the repeal of the press regulation "without previous reference to the home authorities."[5] They went so far as to suggest that he should revert to the former system.[6] They also pointed out that if Metcalfe refused to act according to their wishes, they would have his order cancelled by the new Governor-General, Lord Auckland.

But a return to the old system was not possible, and Metcalfe's Act remained in force until 1857.

By 1835, the English press of Bengal had come to represent not only the opinions of the different sections of the English community ; Indian opinion, certainly that of the educated section, was also expressing itself through a number of Indian-owned English newspapers, particularly the *Reformer* and the *Bengal Herald.* As the most powerful organ for expressing public opinion, the press had established itself in India. The impact of the English press upon the Indian press was

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[1] *India. Civil Judicial Consultation*, nos. 3, 5.

[2] *Ibid.*, no. 4.

[3] *Ibid.*, no. 6. Also M. Barnes, *op. cit.*, 217-19.

[4] Evidence of C. E. Trevelyan, 21 June 1853, before the Select Committee of the House of Lords. *P.P.H.L.*, 1852-53, xxxii, 445, 160.

[5] *Public Letter to Bengal*, 1 February 1836, para 8.

[6] *Ibid.*, para 9. Also M. Barns, *op.cit.*, 224-26.

undoubtedly great. While the general tone of the English newspapers was liberal and thus reflected the spirit of the age, this liberalism was not always unqualified or uniform. Thus, on the vital question of the freedom of the press, while most of the English newspapers were uncompromising and would not make any distinction between Europeans and Indians, there were some, like the *Englishman*, which had the shortsightendess to declare that freedom of experession should be limited to the European-owned newspapers, and that the Indian press should be kept in bondage in the interest of English rule.[1]

The English press of Bengal was still not entirely free from the factious spirit which had permeated it since the days of Hicky. Personal jealousy and business rivalry played their parts, and adversely affected its healthy development. But after the restrictions were removed the general tone of the press showed marked signs of improvement, which certainly believed the apprehensions of those who saw nothing but danger from a free press.

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[1] "We should gladly see the existing Press regulations abolished, as regards *European proprietors and editors*.... We limit ourselves to European conductors of the public journals, because we feel perfectly satisfied that an unrestrained Press in the hands of designing, talented, and dissatisfied natives in the interior might become a very mischievous instrument—an instrument destructive, if not of some portions of our power, at least of the happiness, peace and security of the population within its influence." *Englishman*, 3 January 1835.

CHAPTER IV

THE BENGAL PRESS : VERNACULAR AND PERSIAN

Prior to the publication of newspapers, manuscript newsletters mostly in Persian, known as *Akhbars*, were in private circulation in the courts of the Indian princes and among wealthy individuals, particularly businessmen. These were transmitted from one place to another through special couriers. Even news from Europe sometimes reached India through these agencies. Since they were brought by the overland route through the Middle East, they moved faster than official communications which were sent by ships travelling by circuitous route via the Cape of Good Hope. Thus the news about the Battle of Waterloo was known in the bazars of Calcutta "many days before any official intelligence was received."[1]

The publication of newspapers in the Indian languages after 1818, marked a significant development in the growth of Indian public opinion. It was no accident that the early newspapers in Oriental languages, such as Bengali, Persian, Urdu and Hindi, all appeared in Bengal, the home of the first English newspaper in the East. It was here that the two conditions for the success of a newspaper were early fulfilled, namely the growth of a literate urban community and the steady development of commerce, both internal and external. Demand for information, the *raison d'etre* for any newspaper, was greatly increasing in Bengal with the progress of education. It was estimated that between 1810 and 1820 not less than fifteen thousand volumes of works in the Bengali language alone were printed and sold.[2] These were mostly printed in presses owned by Indians.[3] Describing the effects of the 'native press' in Bengal at that period, the Serampur missionary journal observed : "An unprecedented impulse has been communicated to the inhabitants of Bengal, and the avidity for readnig has increased beyond

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[1] *Alexander's East India Magazine*, 1830, i, 1, 50.

[2] *Friend of India* (Quarterly Series), 1820, i, 1, 125.

[3] By 1820 there were at least four printing presses in Bengal owned by Indians. *Ibid.* 123.

all former example."[1] Although the general quality of the publications issued from the different printing establishments was rather low, their ready sale certainly indicated the growth of the reading public.

The Baptist missionaries of Serampur, who had made great contributions towards the development of Bengali literature, were also the pioneers in the field of Bengali journalism. By early 1818 they were contemplating the publication of a regular newspaper in Bengali.[2] But they were not sure how the Government and the public would react to it. The newspaper press in Bengal, till then exclusively English, was under censorship. The Indian public was not yet accustomed to newspaper reading. In order to "feel the pulse of the public authorities" on the subject, the missionaries decided to bring out a Bengali periodical publication.[3] It was called the *Dig Darsan* or the *Indian Youth Magazine*. Its first number appeared in April 1818, and it was the first periodical journal in the Bengali or in any Indian language. The *Dig Darsan*, which was a monthly journal, was edited by John Clark Marshman, son of Dr. Joshua Marshman of the Baptist Missionary Society. Although the chief object of the missionaries was evangelical, they had realized that this object would be facilitated by the creation of an educated public. Hence, they laid great stress on promoting education among the people. The *Dig Darsan*, therefore, appeared primarily as an educational journal and it contained information of various kinds, historical, geographical and commercial.[4] In fact, the journal scrupulously avoided publishing any article which was likely to provoke a religious controversy.

The success achieved by the *Dig Darsan* was unexpected. The editor had taken care to send copies of the first number to some senior Government officials, who received the magazine "with unexpected approabation."[5] The Calcutta School-Book Society subscribed to

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[1] *Friend of India* (Quarterly Series), *Ibid.*, 122.

[2] J. C. Marshman, *op. cit.*, ii, 161.

[3] *Ibid.*, 161-62.

[4] The contents of the first number of the *Dig Darsan* were as follows :

No. 1, April 1818.

(1) Of the discovery of America.
(2) Of the boundaries of India.
(3) Of the trade of India.
(4) Journey from Ireland to England in a Balloon.
(5) Of Mount Vesuvius.

[5] J. C. Marshman, *op. cit.*, ii, 162.

one thousand copies of each of the first three numbers for use in the Bengali schools.[1] Subsequently, at the request of the Society, an English-Bengali edition (in which one page was written in English and the other in Bengali), and also an English edition of the *Dig Darsan* was published. By 1821, the Calcutta School-Book Society had actually purchased a total number of 61,250 copies of the *Dig Darsan* in all its three editions.[2]

The enthusiasm with which the *Dig Darsan* was received in different quarters immediately after its publication encouraged the missionaries to embark on a new venture – the publication of a Bengali newspaper. The initiative in this was taken by Joshua Marshman and William Ward.[3] They drew up a prospectus for the proposed Bengali newspaper, and its advertisement appeared in the English newspapers of Calcutta.[4] It seems, however, that at about the same time a Bengali Hindu, Harachandra Roy, was also planning to start a Bengali newspaper from his own printing press at Chorebagan Street, Calcutta.[5] But before he could actually bring out his publication, the missionaries had published their own newspaper from the Serampur press on 23 May 1818.[6] It was called the *Samachar Darpan* (Mirror of News) and had thus the distinction of being the first vernacular newspaper published in India.

The *Samachar Darpan* was published every Saturday and was edited by J. C. Marshman. Its price was four annas per copy. It contained news, both Indian and European, collected from various sources particularly from the English newspapers. It also contained brief articles on various subjects. In fact, the *Samachar Darpan* was more than an ordinary newspaper. It carried some material of educational value which made it respected and popular among educated people. The Government's attitude was also favourable. Lord Hastings thought that "the effects of such a paper must be extensively and importantly

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[1] *First Report of the Calcutta School-Book Society* (Calcutta 1818), 6.

[2] *Fourth Report of the Calcutta School-Book Society* (Calcutta 1821), Appendix 1, 20-22.

[3] J. C. Marshman, *op.cit.*, ii, 162.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Government Gazette*, 14 May 1818.

[6] *Friend of India*, 1826, iv, 12, 143. J. C. Marshman wrongly puts the date 31 May 1818, J. C. Marshman, *op. cit.*, ii, 163. See also Brajendranath Banerji, *Bangla Samayik Patra* (3rd edition, Calcutta 1948), i, 5-7.

useful."[1] The Government, however, is said to have warned the missionaries that "extra-ordinary precautions must be used not to give the natives cause for suspicion that the paper had been devised as an engine for undermining their religious opinions."[2] The newspaper was allowed to be circulated through the post office at one-fourth the usual charge.[3]

The general tone of the *Samachar Darpan* was moderate as compared with other missionary publications.[4] It had to be so if the newspaper was to gain some partronage from the public. That it was not a losing concern was evident from the fact that it had an uninterrupted career till the end of 1841. Its circulation by 1836, had reached 400, which was much higher than that of any other Indian language publication.[5] Both in typography and contents the *Samachar Darpan* maintained a fairly good standard. Its coverage of local news was certainly better than that of any other existing newspaper, English or vernacular. Again, by reprinting news and comments from other Bengali newspapers, the *Samachar Darpan* enabled its readers to have some acquaintance with the different sections of Bengali opinion. Although Marshman junior was its editor, the editorial staff included some of the distinguished Hindu pandits of the time.[6] In fact, so greatly dependent was the missionary editor upon the assistance of the Hindu pandits, that at least on one occasion when the pandits delayed their return to Serampur from their village homes after *puja* holidays, the publication of the newspaper was delayed, for which the editor apologised to his subscribers.[7] The association of these pandits in the

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[1] J. C. Marshman, *op. cit.*, ii, 164.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Bengal Public Consultation*, nos. 47-49, 25 September 1818.

[4] This was so particularly with regard to editorial comments. Occasionally, however, criticism of Hindu religion and society appeared in the form of letters to the editor. One such letter which was published in the *Samachar Darpan* of 14 July 1821, provoked Rammohan Roy to bring out his journal, the *Brahmunical Magazine or the Missionary and the Brahmun* in September 1821, in defence of Hinduism. See *English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, ii, 135-89.

[5] *Friend of India*, 7 July 1836.

[6] *Samachar Darpan* of 2 July 1836, for instance reported that Pandit Jaygopal Tarkalankar, who had been appointed Professor of Sanskrit literature at the Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta, was for several years associated with its editorial board. *S.S.K.*, ii, 163.

[7] *Samachar Darpan*, 26 October 1833. *S.S.K.*, i, xi.

production of the *Samachar Darpan* gave it a somewhat Indian character and cerainly contributed to its success and popularity.[1]

The Government seemed to have appreciated the usefulness of the *Samachar Darpan* as a medium of communication with the literate public. In fact, the press in Bengal was coming to be recognized as an instrument by which the views of the people and the Government became known to each other. In 1826, the Government requested the missionaries to bring out a Persian edition of the *Samachar Darpan*, to provide a better communication with people in Upper India, which did not have any Indian language newspaper as yet.[2] Accordingly the Persian newspaper called *Akhbar-i-Serampur* was published on 6 May 1826. The Government subsidised this newspaper with a monthly grant of one hundred and sixty rupees.[3] But after about two years it was discontinued for want of sufficient patronage. It appears that the Government was also not satisfied with its style, which was considered to be somewhat poor.[4] It could not obviously compete with the other newspaper, the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* which was better edited and was partonised by commercial interests.[5] From July 1829, the *Samachar Darpan* began to appear in both English and Bengali ; the English and Bengali portions represented translations of each other.[6] This English-Bengali edition of the *Samachar Darpan* must have been popular because it facilitated the learning of English, so eagerly sought by the Bengali youth of the day. From January 1832, the *Samachar Darpan* began to appear twice a week, the additional number being published every Wednesday, and the price was raised from one rupee a month to one and half rupee.[7] But as a result of increase in the postage rate, the *Samachar Darpan* again became a weekly paper from 8 November 1834, the publication of the Wednesday number being discontinued.[8]

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[1] "The *Durpan* [the *Samachar Darpan*], upon which the natives are accustomed to look with complacency, owed whatever purity of style, or happiness of expression it may possess, to the revision of the pundit; and the editor claims no merit beyond that of being able clearly to convey his own meaning and to appreciate the suggestion of his learned native associate." *Friend of India*, 26 February 1835.

[2] *Bengal Public Consultation*, nos. 53-56, 16 February 1826.

[3] *Ibid.* no. 43, 14 April 1826.

[4] M. Barns, *op. cit.*, 163.

[5] See below, p. 103.

[6] *Samachar Darpan*, 11 July 1829. *S.S.K.*, i, xii.

[7] *Ibid.*, 31 December 1831. *S.S.K.*, ii, 176-77.

[8] *Ibid.*, 5 November 1834. *S.S.K.*, ii, 177.

In December 1841, the missionaries decided to discontinue the publication of the *Samachar Darpan*. The reason given was that J.C. Marshman, who was still its editor, did not have sufficient time to conduct it owing to other preoccupations.[1] But the main reason seems to be the fact that it had not been very successful in promoting the primary object with which it was established, the propagation of Christianity. Again, by 1841, many other Bengali newspapers, owned and edited by Bengalis, were competing with the *Samachar Darpan*. The missionaries, therefore, could find no reason to tie down their activities to the newspaper business.[2]

As a pioneer in the field of Bengali journalism the *Samachar Darpan* holds a unique position in the history of the Bengal press. Although conducted by the missionaries it had come to be accepted as an Indian newspaper. Reformist and liberal-minded Hindus, generally found in the *Samachar Darpan* a valuable ally because of its strong support in favour of social reform and education. To the rising generation of Bengali youth it served as "an adult school master."[3] Its correspondence columns reflected an important section of the Bengali opinion of the time. Its literary style was simple Bengali. It had in fact, set a standard in Bengali journalism which was followed by subsequent newspapers. The latter freely borrowed news and other information from the *Samachar Darpan*. Its political views, according to the editor's own assertion, were "neither whig nor tory, ministerial nor anti-ministerial ;" but it steadily supported "the interests of the British Government."[4]

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[1] Besides editing the *Samachar Darpan*, J. C. Marshman was also the editor of the English weekly newspaper, the *Friend of India*. In July 1840, he became the editor of the Bengali edition of the *Government Gazette*. He now felt that with this additional assignment it was no longer possible for him "with a due regard to the interests of his subscribers and his own reputation," to conduct the *Samachar Darpan* as efficiently as before. *Friend of India*, 30 December 1841.

[2] *Samachar Darpan* was later revived under Indian management in 1842, but lasted only for a year. The missionaries again revived it in 1851, but it was finally discontinued in 1852. *S.S.K.*, i, xii-xiii.

[3] *Calcutta Review*, 1850, xiii, 25, 144.

[4] *Friend of India*, 1826, iv, 12, 144. An English radical journal described the *Samachar Darpan* as "a large journal...it wisely touches but little, if at all, on religion, — embraces a great variety of intelligence, foreign and domestic, — is liberal in its political tone, of extensive circulation, and tends considerably to facilitate the acquirement of the natives in the English language, in consequence of its juxtaposition translations. It receives, most deservedly, the countenance of

The second Bengali newspaper from the point of age, and the first newspaper owned by an Indian, was published shortly after the appearance of the *Samachar Darpan*. It was called the *Bengal Gazette*. The exact date of its publication cannot be ascertained because no copies of it are extant. The earliest reference to it is found in an advertisement which appeared in the Calcutta *Government Gazette* of 14 May 1818, in which one Harachandra Roy had announced his intention to publish a Bengali newspaper called the *Weekly Bengal Gazette* from his own press at Calcutta.[1] As already stated, before Harachandra Roy could actually publish his newspaper, the Serampur missionaries had brought out their own. But his advertisement perhaps gave the impression to some Englishmen not acquainted with the Bengali language, that his journal had been published soon after the advertisement itself. Thus, the Calcutta English newspaper, the *Oriental Star* of 16 May 1818 reported in a somewhat patronising tone : "Amongst the improvements which are taking place in Calcutta, we observe with satisfaction that the publication of a Bengalee newspaper has been commenced...."[2]

The *Samachar Darpan* was published on 23 May 1818. Therefore, the above statement would lead one to believe that the *Bengal Gazette* was published earlier than the *Samachar Darpan*. In fact some writers subsequently did maintain that the *Bengal Gazette* and not the *Samachar Darpan* was the first Bengali newspaper, and even went so for as to put back the date of its publication to 1816.[3] But

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the present Governor-General [Lord William Bentinck]." *Alexander's East India Magazine*, 1830, i, 1, 51.

[1] The advertisement which was dated 12 May 1818, ran as follows : "HURRO-CHUNDER ROY begs leave to inform his friends and public in general, that he had established a BENGALEE PRINTING PRESS, at No. 45 Chorebagaun Street, where he intends to publish a WEEKLY BENGAL GAZETTE, to comprise the translation of Civil appointments, Government notifications, and such other local matter, as may be deemed interesting to the reader, into a plain, concise and correct Bengalee language ; to which will be added the Almanack, for the subsequent months with the Hindoo births, marriages and deaths..." *Government Gazette*, 14 May 1818. Also Brajendranath Banerji, *op. cit.*, 12.

[2] Quoted in the *Asiatic Journal*, January 1819, vii, 37, 59. Also Brajendranath Banerji, *op. cit.*, 15.

[3] The Rev. James Long in a return compiled under Government instructions of the names and writings of persons connected with Bengali literature including periodical publications up to the year 1855, stated that the *Bengal Gazette* was first published in 1816. J. Long, *A Return of the Names and Writings of 515 Persons*

there is no positive evidence to support such a statement. It appears that the *Bengal Gazette* was actually published "within a fortnight" after the appearance of the *Samachar Darpan*.[1] While Harachandra Roy was the publisher of the *Bengal Gazatte*, it was in fact edited by one Gangakishore Bhattachrji.[2] This man started his career as an employee of the Baptist Missionary Press at Serampur and later set up a publishing concern of his own.[3]

The *Bengal Gazette* lasted for about a year.[4] In the absence of a single extant copy of this newspaper, it would be hazardous to make any comment regarding its tone or character. An indirect reference to it, however, is to be found in a report appearing in the London *Asiatic Journal*[5] from which it may be inferred that the *Bengal Gazette* was at least utilised by the Hindu reformers like Rammohan Roy to propagate their views.

The success of the *Samachar Darpan* had revealed that a newspaper in the Bengali language, if conducted efficiently, could become popular. But being associated with European missionaries, the *Samachar Darpan* could not reflect genuine Indian opinion. Since the failure of the *Bengal Gazette* in 1819, the need for a full-fledged Indian newspaper was felt by many. The abolition of the press

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Connected with Bengali Literature etc. (Calcutta 1855), 145. Also M. Barns, *op. cit.*, 87. A recent writer again maintains without any authentic evidence that the *Bengal Gazette* was not only published in 1816 but that it was "the first Indian newspaper in English." S. Natarajan, *A History of the Press in India* (London 1962), 26-27.

[1] *Friend of India*, 1820, i, 2, 134-35.

[2] Rev. Long wrongly puts Gangadhar Bhattacharji, see J. Long, *op. cit.*, 145.

[3] *Friend of India*, 1820, i, 1, 135. Brajendranath Banerji, *op, cit.*, 13-14.

[4] J. Long, *op. cit.*, 145.

[5] "A Brahmin, whose dissertations have excited a vivid sensation, published, sometimes since, a little tract on the subject of *suttees*.

"The *India Gazette* says : 'We have been informed that this little work has been republished in a newspaper, which for sometime past has been printed and circulated in the Bengali language and character, under the sole conduct of the natives. This additional publicity which the labours of Rammohun Roy will thus obtain, cannot fail to produce beneficial consequences ; and we are happy to find that the conductors of the Bengalee Journal have determined to give insertions to articles that are likely to prove more advantageous to their countrymen, than the pompous and inflated productions of a most learned Hindoo, who, we understand, has declared that the cholera morbus can never be overcome, until a general pooja shall be performed to conciliate the angry deity, by whom this affliction has been occasioned !" *Asiatic Journal*, July 1819, vii, 43, 69.

censorship by Lord Hastings also encouraged the publication of more newspapers.

In November 1821, the prospectus of a new Bengali newspaper called the *Sangbad Kaumudi* or the "Moon of Intelligence" was printed in both English and Bengali and circulated. Thus, it was announced that the proposed newspaper would include such subjects as "religious, moral and political matters, domestic occurrences, foreign as well as local intelligence including original communications on various hitherto unpublished interesting local topics etc."[1]

The *Sangbad Kaumudi* was the property of Rammohan Roy and was to be the organ of reformist Hinduism. Indeed, Rammohan seems to have realised that the best way of reaching the public and influencing public opinion was by means of a newspaper. Earlier, he had been publishing an irregular journal in both English and Bengali called the *Brahmunical Magazine or the Missionary and the Brahmun* which dealt exclusively with religious polemics.[2] By this time Rammohan had come under the influence of English liberal and radical ideas and his friend J. S. Buckingham, editor of the *Calcutta Journal*, must also have encouraged him to take to serious journalism as an effective means of propagating his reformist views.

Although Rammohan Roy was the proprietor of the *Sangbad Kaumudi*, it was actually published in the name of Bhabanicharan Banerji.[3] This man soon found Rammohan's ideas too radical and parted company to start a rival newspaper called the *Samachar Chandrika*, which became the organ of orthodox Hinduism.

The first number of the *Sangbad Kaumudi* was published on 4 December 1821. It contained an "address to the Bengal Public" in which it proclaimed that the primary object of its publication was to promote "the public good."[4] Thus, the necessity of influencing Bengali opinion by means of a newspaper now appears to have been well recognized. An analysis of the contents of the early issues of the

[1] Quoted in translation in the *Calcutta Journal*, 20 December 1821.

[2] This journal was started with a view to defend Hinduism against the attacks of the Christian missionaries. Between 1821 and 1823 only four numbers of this journal were published. See *English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, iii, 135-89.

[3] In an advertisement which appeared in the *Samachar Darpan* of 23 March 1822, Bhabanicharan Banerji claimed that he had published the *Sangbad Kaumudi* up to its 13th issue. *S.S.K.*, i, 98.

[4] Translation in the *Calcutta Journal*, 20 December 1821.

Sangbad Kaumudi clearly shows that its political character was liberal, and that it zealously advocated social and religious reforms.

The appearance of the *Sangbad Kaumudi* produced mixed reactions among both Indians and Englishmen. While it voiced reformist Hindu opinion, it antagonised the orthodox Hindus. English opinion towards it was also divided. The radicals hailed it with enthusiasm. The *Calcutta Journal* began to publish periodically English translations from it. "If we were to attempt to predict the future glories that await England", wrote the *Calcutta Journal*, introducing the new Bengali contemporary to its readers, "we would say that this will rank among the highest, that she will be the means of the moral and intellectual renovation of India."[1] The official attitude, however, was one of suspicion. It was reflected in a minute by W. B. Bayley in which he referred to the controversy carried on in the Bengali newspapers particularly with regard to *sati*.[2] "Were this dispute", he observed, "voluntarily and really conducted by the natives without the intervention of Europeans, the discussion might lead to beneficial results."[3] In fact, officials like Bayley suspected that the *Sangbad Kaumudi* was inspired by Buckingham's *Calcutta Journal*. The authorities of the East India Company were very apprehensive of possible danger from the Indian press. The London magazine, the *Asiatic Journal*, which was the Company's un-official organ, took Buckingham to task for encouraging and patronising an Indian newspaper like the *Sangbad Kaumudi* which, it thought, could serve no other purpose than to promote Indian disaffection against British rule.[4]

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[1] *Calcutta Journal*, 20 December 1821.

[2] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 7, 17 October 1822.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] "A Journal published in the language of the natives, conducted by natives, designed for the perusal of native Indians, and of them almost exclusively, is set on foot, avowedly, if Mr. Buckingham is to be credited, for the purpose of fomenting their accidental discontents, of opening their eyes to the defect of their rulers, of encouraging and giving utterance not to their complaints but to their remonstrances." *Asiatic Journal*, August 1822, xiv, 8, 139. Buckingham replied to this criticism by denouncing the "Machiavellian doctrines obscurely developed by this Oracle of Leaden Hall (sic) Street, which seems to have no nobler purpose in view than an account of Dr. and Cr. or the wrapper of a pound of Tea,—to be a mere article of Trade, whose reasonings have much the same object as those which usually pass over a Shopkeeper's Counter." *Calcutta Journal*, 14 February 1823.

Despised by conservative Hindus and suspected by English officials, the *Sangbad Kaumudi* encountered many difficulties. The first editor, Bhabanicharan Banerji having deserted, he was succeeded by one Harihar Dutta, a writer in the office of the Military Board. The latter also left in May 1822, and one Gobindachandra Kongar was then appointed editor.[1] It seemed that a newspaper which dared to move against the powerful current of religious orthodoxy could not last long. In fact, for want of sufficient patronage, the *Sangbad Kaumudi* had to stop publication in October 1822. But the valiant newspaper was not to die so soon. It appeared once again after a lapse of a few months. In April 1823, a license was granted under the new Press Regulation to Gobindachandra Kongar to publish and Anandagopal Mukherji to edit the *Sangbad Kaumudi*.[2] Although Rammohan Roy seems to have relegated himself to the background so far as the management of the *Sangbad Kaumudi* was concerned, he was still its guiding spirit, and the journal lasted for another thirteen years. That it was slowly gaining popularity among the liberal-minded Bengalis was evident from the fact that from January 1830, it began to be published twice a week.[3] The radical London journal, *Alexander's East India Magazine*, in a special article on the Indian press, described the *Sangbad Kaumudi* as "*The Morning Chronicle* of India, advocating freedom, civil and religious, opposed to corruption and tyranny, and labouring, we are happy to say effectively and extensively, to eradicate the idolatrous rites of the Brahmins, and to awaken the Hindoos to a sense of the degradation and misery into which they have been plunged."[4] When Rammohan Roy left for England in November 1830, the actual control of the *Sangbad Kaumudi* passed into the hands of his eldest son Radhaprosad Roy.[5] But the absence of Rammohan seems to have adversely affected the position of the newspaper. It lingered for several years and finally ceased publication in 1836.

While reformist Hindu opinion was reflected in the *Sangbad Kaumudi*, conservative Hindus brought out their own newspaper, the *Samachar Chandrika* or the "Moonlight of Intelligence." It was published and edited by Bhabanicharan Banerji. Possessed of some

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[1] *Sangbad Kaumudi*, no. xxiv ; translation, *Calcutta Journal*, 14 May 1822.
[2] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 44, 8 May 1823.
[3] *Samachar Darpam*, 30 January 1830. *S.S.K.*, i, 98.
[4] *Alexander's East India Magazine*, December 1830, i, 1, 50-51.
[5] *Samachar Darpan*, 21 January 1832. *S.S.K.*, ii, 185.

literary talents[1] he had been appointed by Rammohan Roy to edit the *Sangbad Kaumudi*. But Rammohan's unorthodox views seemed too much for him, and particularly on the question of the abolition of *sati*, which Rammohan zealously advocated, the inevitable breach occurred. Bhabanicharan left the *Sangbad Kaumudi*. By now he had turned into a fanatical champion of orthodox Hinduism. He had no difficulty in finding new patrons among wealthy conservative zamindars like Gopimohan Deb, father of Radhakanta Deb, and Harimohan Tagore.

Having been assured of the patronage of the conservative Hindus, Bhabanicharan Banerji began to publish the *Samachar Chandrika* from 5 March 1822, as a weekly newspaper. Its first number appeared on Tuesday, but its subsequent numbers on every Monday at a price of one rupee a month. Most of its news was taken from the other newspapers, particularly, the *Samachar Darpan*. Although the editorial articles of the *Samachar Chandrika* invariably represented the point of view of orthodox Hinduism, its correspondence columns revealed that many of its readers were less fanatical and some even shared liberal sentiments.[2]

From the very outset of its publication, the *Samachar Chandrika* had made it its business to indulge in virulent attacks against the *Sangbad Kaumudi*, and thereby sought to win over many subscribers from the *Kaumudi*, in which aim it to some extent succeeded. The latter repelled these attacks with equal virulence. The two newspapers were thus engaged in reviling each other, and disgraced the Bengali journalism of the day. Wisely, the Serampur missionary newspaper, the *Samachar Darpan*, took a neutral and dignified stand in this battle.[3]

[1] He was the author of *A Grammar in English and Bengalee* (Calcutta 1816), and several literary and religious tracts. *S.S.K.*, i, 449.

[2] Thus, in the 18th number of the *Samachar Chandrika*, there appears a letter from a correspondent "advising the editor to insert in his paper trnslations from various scientific works in the English, Persian and Arabic languages, instead of such things as he now publishes, which the correspondent alleges cannot be of any advantage to the country." Qutoted in translation in the *Calcutta Journal*, 6 July 1822.

[3] One of its correspondents deplored the fact that "the two well known newspapers" (the *Kaumudi* and the *Chandrika*) would continue to indulge in acrimonious attacks against each other often using vile language. He pleaded that the two papers should refrain from mutual denunciation and should publish useful information from various sources which would please and enlighten their readers and would also help in removing causes of misunderstanding between them. *Samachar Darpan*, 20 March 1822. *S.S.K.*, i, 98.

The *Samachar Chandrika* had a prolonged career of about thirty-two years.[1] By 1836, it had little less than four hundred subscribers.[2] Thus, it was just behind the *Samachar Darpan* in point of circulation. The *Chandrika* was able to make itself a popular journal, though in a limited sense, by using orthodox arguments in the religious and social controversies of the day. It was, for instance, vehemently opposed to the abolition of *sati*. When Lord William Bentinck's government declared this custom illegal, it was the editor of the *Samachar Chandrika* who sought to mobilise conservative Hindu opinion against that measure. In fact, he was among those on whose initiative the conservative Hindu association, the Dharma Sabha, of which he himself became the secretary, was formed in January 1830. The *Samachar Chandrika* now became the organ of the Dharma Sabha. Its chief task was to fight heresy among young Hindus.[3]

Bengal also produced the first Urdu, Persian and Hindi newspapers. The Urdu weekly newspaper, the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa*, appeared on 28 March 1822. It was published by Harihar Dutta. He was a reformist Hindu and was formerly connected with the *Sangbad Kaumudi* as an editor. He seems to have combined extraordinary linguistic accomplishments with a keen aptitude for business management. Realising that a Bengali newspaper, however well conducted, could not be a great business success in view of its necessarily limited circulation. Harihar Dutta thought of bringing out a newspaper in the Urdu or Hindustani language to gain a wider circulation in the greater part of northern India. News from this region collected from various sources was given greater prominence in the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa*. It also contained European news, mostly translated from the English newspapers.

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[1] It ceased publication in 1853.

[2] *Friend of India*, 7 July 1836.

[3] In March 1830, the *Samachar Chandrika* made a virulent attack on a Hindu College student who had dared to eat biscuits purchased from a Muslim baker's shop. It denounced the boy's action as heretical and asserted that he actually belonged to Rammohan Roy's reformist party. To this criticism the *Sangbad Kaumudi* replied by denying the boy's connection with the Brahma Samaj and maintaining that the boy had done nothing wrong. It countered the *Samachar Chandrika*'s charge by pointing out that among the supporters of the orthodox Hindu party there were persons of very doubtful character and advised its opponent to put its own house in order before criticising others. *Samachar Darpan*, 13 March 1830. *S.S.K.*, i, 136.

Having published seven successive issues of the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa*, the editor realised that a newspaper conducted in the Urdu language could not as yet be a profitable concern, because the elite of northern India universally preferred Persian to Urdu. In fact, Persian still had the place of honour in Bengal itself. Hence, from the eighth number,[1] the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* began to be published in both Urdu and Persian. Very soon the Urdu portion was discontinued and the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* became a wholly Persian newspaper.

As a Persian newspaper the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* had a remarkably long career. It lasted till 1845. Its tone was moderate. Unlike some of its contemporaries it avoided taking part in any controversy. But it generally supported the cause of social reform, particularly the abolition of *sati*.

The success of the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* was largely due to the fact that it consistently received the support and patronage of some officials and English commercial interests. Thus W. B. Bayley, in his minute dated 10 October 1822, stated that the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* was "understood to be the property of and to be principally conducted by an English mercantile House in Calcutta."[2] It was evident that it was not possible for Harihar Dutta, a man of moderate means, to run a newspaper without any financial assistance. It is significant that the English merchants of Calcutta were now beginning to take an interest in Indian journalism with a view to influencing Indian opinion. The *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* was also able to obtain the support of the officials. Andrew Stirling observed that the newspaper owed its continued existence "to the patronage of a few English gentlemen, myself included."[3] In fact, this official was so keenly interested in the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* that he described it as "the best native newspaper that has yet appeared."[4] Throughout its career the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* remained a pro-government newspaper.[5]

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[1] 16 May 1822. Translation in the *Calcutta Journal*, 22 June 1822.

[2] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 7, 17 October 1822.

[3] *Ibid.* 6 January 1829, no. c. Enclosure to Bentinck's minute dated 28 December 1828.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] The radical London journal, *Alexander's East India Magazine*, described the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* as "entirely a Government organ, and does little for the credit of the Press, or the advantage of the people." *Alexander's East India Magazine*, December 1831, ii, 13, 590.

To Rammohan Roy again belongs the credit of bringing out the first Persian language newspaper in India. Himself an accomplished Persian scholar, Rammohan seems to have realised that he could express himself best in Persian and that a newspaper published in that language would be welcomed by many. Hence, he began to publish the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* or the "Mirror of News" every Friday from 12 April 1822. Unlike the Bengali newspaper, the *Sangbad Kaumudi*, which he owned but did not edit, the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* was personally edited by Rammohan and most, if not all, of its articles were from his own pen. In conducting this newspaper, he seems to have obtained the assistance of his English friend James Silk Buckingham.[1]

The influence of the radical views of Buckingham was clearly discernible in the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*. It demanded attention not only by the brilliant style of its writings but by the wealth of information it contained. In it Rammohan sought to express his political and social views. Thus, in the second number of the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* Rammohan Roy began a discourse on the causes of "the flourishing state and superiority of the English nation" and emphasised that England's greatness was mainly due to her constitution.[2] He did not, however, hesitate to criticise the English Government for the injustices perpetrated in Ireland.[3] The strong Muslim influence upon Rammohan in spite of his admiration for European liberalism was evident from the fact that he wrote in the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* in support of the Turks in the Greek War of Independence.[4]

The passion which Rammohan Roy always had for religious discussion was fully expressed in the columns of the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*.

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[1] "Of all the papers which have yet appeared in the Native languages, none has created a more favourable impression on our mind than the MIRAT-OOL-UKHBAR...The Editor, we are informed, is a Brahmin of high rank, a man of liberal sentiments, and by no means deficient in loyalty, well versed in the Persian language, and possessing a competent knowledge of English ; intelligent, with a considerable share of general information and an insatiable thirst after knowledge. The Paper is besides under the superintendence of a person whose great experience and extensive acquaintance with the history, learning and manners of both Europe and Asia, cannot fail to be of great utility to the Editor, and to secure him from those errors to which his inexperience in this new and arduous undertaking would naturally expose him." (Here Buckingham was obviously referring to himself.) *Calcutta Journal*, 24 April 1822.

[2] Translation in the *Calcutta Journal*, 2 May 1822.

[3] Translation in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, 15 October 1822.

[4] Translation in the *Calcutta Journal*, 1 May 1822.

While he was still engaged in a controversy with the Baptist missionaries over his publication, the *Precepts of Jesus*, the first Lord Bishop of Calcutta, Dr. Thomas Middleton, died. The obituary notice in the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*, after extolling the virtues of the late Bishop, concluded with the following passage : "Having been relieved from the distress and anxieties of this uncertain world, he now reposes in the bosom of the mercy of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost."[1] This observation was considered offensive and objectionable by many Christians, who regarded it as a satirical reflection on the doctrine of the Trinity. The Government was also displeased.[2]

But the newspaper which had gained so much notoriety was soon to close. Rammohan was dismayed by the expulsion of Buckingham from India and the introduction of the Press Regulation of 1823, which provided for licensing periodical publications and printing establishments. He and his friends had already made a public protest against the Government measure, but without success. He now decided to express his displeasure in his characteristically dignified manner. He resolved to suspend the publication of his favourite *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*. In its last and extraordinary number, which appeared on 4 April 1823, Rammohan sought to explain his own position. After describing the hazards of publishing a newspaper under Government license as required by the new regulation, he maintained that he had resolved to avoid any risk by stopping the publication, of the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* altogether.[3]

Thus ended the meteoric career of the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*, undoubtedly the most brilliant among the early Indian newspapers. It represented a phase in the life of Rammohan Roy, whose interests were now turning to wider fields of social and religious reformation.

Throughout this period the attitude of the Bengal Government towards the press was one of suspicion, in spite of the liberal pronounce-

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[1] *Calcutta Journal*, 12 July 1822.

[2] W. B. Bayley, Chief Secretary to the Government, noted that "the expression coming from a known impugner of the doctrine of the Trinity, could only be considered ironical." *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 7, 17 October 1822.

[3] Translation in the *Calcutta Journal*, 10 April 1823. Rammohan quoted the following verse from his favourite Persian poet Hafiz in which lay hidden an indictment of despotism :

"Thou O Hafiz, a poor retired man, be silent :
Princes know the secrets of their own policy."

ments of Lord Hastings. The officials did not share the complacency of the Governor-General and repeatedly drew his attention to the danger arising from a free press. Thus, W. B. Bayley, the Chief Secretary, in a lengthy minute dated 10 October 1822, had criticised the general tone of the Indian press, which he considered was harmful to British interests.[1] He particularly referred to the reports appearing in the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* and the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* about court intrigues, corruption and maladministration in Oudh. Such reports published in the Calcutta newspapers, he feared, would be prejudicial to British relations with that kingdom. Bayley expressed his particular disapproval of the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* because "the editor's known disposition for theological controversy" led him to make certain remarks on the Trinity which the Chief Secretary regarded as "exceedingly offensive." According to him the Bengali newspapers also contained "objectionable passages." He especially referred to "much bitter and acrimonious controversy" carried on in the Bengali newspapers regarding the *sati* question. Thus, not merely for political reasons but also on account of religious susceptibilities, English officials like Bayley were extremely suspicious if not positively hostile towards the Indian press. In fact, Bayley had strongly supported Johan Adam's proposal that the press in India should be kept under strict Government control. This proposal was actually effected in 1823, with the passing of the Press Regulation.

The impact of the regulation of 1823 upon the Indian newspapers could be seen from the fact that very few new publications appeared during the next few years. The first of these was a Persian and Urdu newspaper called the *Shams-ul-Akhbar*. It was published from Chorebagan, Calcutta, by a Bengali Hindu, Mathurmohan Mitra, who conducted it with the assistance of a north Indian Hindu, Maniram Thakur.[2] Its first number appeared on 30 May 1823, and it was published every Friday.[3] The *Shams-ul-Akhbar* could not become a popular newspaper and did not last long. Its general tone was conservative but not communal ; it believed in the religious and social *status quo*. In May 1827, it stopped publication for want of a sufficient number of subscribers, having lasted for about five years.[4]

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[1] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 7, 17 October 1822.
[2] *Ibid*,, no. 65, 8 May 1823.
[3] *Bengal Annual Directory*, 1824, p. 337.
[4] *Government Gazette*, 21 May 1827.

In October 1823, a new Bengali newspaper called the *Sangbad Timirnashak* or "The Destroyer of Darkness" was published by one Krishnamohan Das. It was published every Friday. The *Sangbad Timirnashak* was a conservative Hindu newspaper. "It brings to light", observed the missionary *Friend of India*, "most wonderful and portentous prodigies. From the perusal of its columns one might almost fancy the golden age of Hindooism returned, and the gods so far reconciled to men as to renew their personal visits for the succour of the faithful."[1] The *Sangbad Timirnashak* lasted till 1836.

Calcutta also produced the first Hindi newspaper. On 16 February 1826, Jugalkishore Sukul, a Proceedings Reader to the Sadr Diwani Adalat and Munnu Thakur of Banstalagali, Calcutta, obtained a license to publish a Hindi weekly newspaper in the Davanagri script called the *Udant Martand* or the "Sun of Intelligence."[2] The newspaper, however, was actually published on 30 May 1826. It came out every Tuesday. This Hindi newspaper had, from the very outset of its publication, great difficulty in finding a sufficient number of subscribers. Its publisher, therefore, sought Government patronage by writing to the Secretary, Judicial Department, soliciting the favour of allowing eight numbers of his newspaper post free circulation in the countryside "where most of my countrymen reside" (he was obviously referring to the Hindi speaking areas of northern India), in order that they might know of the existence of a Hindi newspaper.[3] He took care to assure the Government that "it will be my prime object to instil into the minds of my readers a reverence for the reigning power in India."[4] Despite this assertion of loyalty, the Government response was not very favourable. Considering this publication to be of little importance, the Government allowed only one single number of the *Udant Martand* to be circulated free of postal charges.[5] Without Government patronage in the form of subscription or postal privilege, the *Udant Martand* was doomed. It stopped publication in December 1827, after a brief career of one and half years.[6]

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[1] *Friend of India*, 1826, iv, 12, 144,
[2] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 59, 16 February 1826.
[3] *Ibid.*, no. 64, 29 June 1826.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, no. 65.
[6] *Samachar Darpan*, 15 December 1827. *S.S.K.*, i, 102.

In May 1828, the Government had decided as a measure of economy, to withdraw its subscription to the Indian language newspapers.[1] As a result, the Persian newspaper published by the Baptist missionaries, the *Akhbar-i-Serampur* ceased publication. The other newspapers affected were the Bengali *Samachar Darpan* and the Persian *Jam-i-Jaham-Numa.* But they were able to maintain their existence on private subscription.

Despite the withdrawal of Government subscription the liberal policy of Lord William Bentinck greatly encouraged the growth of the press in Bengal. In fact, more newspapers were published during his Governor-Generalship than at any time before. Not long after his arrival, Bentinck sought to ascertain the influence of the press in Bengal by asking his Private Secretary, Andrew Stirling,[2] to prepare for him a detailed report on this subject. The report[3] which Stirling submitted is important because it not only reveals interesting facts regarding the Indian newspapers, but also the attitude of the officials towards the Indian press in general. In his report Stirling noted that between 1824 and 1827 of the eight newspapers published in Bengal in Bengali, Persian, Urdu and Hindi, three (*Shams-ul-Akhbar*, *Udant Martand* and *Akhbar-i-Serampur*) had gone out of circulation for want of public support and government patronage. In fact, the Private Secretary was "quite certain" that in the existing state of Indian society, an Indian language newspaper was "a luxury" for which there was "no real demand beyond the limits of Calcutta." What he was, however, emphasizing was that within Calcutta there was a considerable demand particularly for Bengali newspapers for :

> The papers in the Bengali language have always flourished because they find abundant supporters in that large class of the Hindoo population.....who have become imbibed to a certain extent with English tastes and notions, and amongst the rest a love of news which is thus supplied to them in a cheap and accessible form.

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[1] *Bengal Pubic Consultation*, nos. 60-61, 23 May 1828.

[2] Andrew Stirling, formerly Persian Secretary to the Governor-General, was appointed in March 1828, Private Secretary to the Governor-General and Acting Secretary to the Government in the Political and Secret Department. As Persian Secretary he had had the task of keeping a watch on the Indian language newspapers.

[3] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. c, 6 January 1829.

Analysing the contents of the Indian language newspapers Stirling pointed out that they included chiefly local news e.g. shipping notices, Government appointments, Supreme Court proceedings, police reports and cases of *sati*. The newspapers hardly discussed political questions. That most of the Bengali newspapers (except the *Samachar Darpan*) were conservative in tone was evident from the fact that they occasionally contained remarks in defence of *sati* while answering the criticism of the custom by some English editor. Stirling betrays his partiality towards the Persian newspaper, the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa*, when he describes it as "the best Native Newspaper that has yet appeared." It contained articles translated from the Calcutta English newspapers particularly the *Bengal Hurkaru*, and also abstracts of intelligence from the courts of the Indian princes largely drawn from the Indian newsletters, the *Akhbars*. In spite of the patronage it received from officials, the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa*, Stirling noted, appeared to be "sinking." He expressed doubts regarding the paper's future because, as he noted, outside Calcutta it was not popular while within Calcutta "Persian is not a language generally understood or cultivated by those classes who alone feel interested in acquiring a knowledge of passing events." Stirling concluded his report by observing that "the poverty of our native subjects" living in the countryside and "their want of curiosity" in general, prevented a wider circulation of newspapers.[1]

But in spite of this rather pessimistic note, the remarkable fact is that between 1828 and 1835 not less than sixteen Bengali and four Persian newspapers were started in Bengal. The controversy on *sati*, the effects of English education, the revenue policy of the Government, the agitation of the free-traders, all contributed to the growth of public opinion in Bengal during this period, which was reflected in the growing popularity of the newspapers.

In May 1829, the Bengali weekly newspaper the *Banga Dut* was published.[2] It was actually the Bengali edition of the English newspaper, the *Bengal Herald* which was being published by R. M. Martin and with which Rammohan Roy and his reformist Hindu friends were associated. The *Banga Dut* was thus a reformist and liberal newspaper. It had also a Persian and a Hindi edition. The publication of this multi-language newspaper, at a time when Lord William Bentinck was contemplating the abolition of *sati*, was significant. It obviously

[1] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. c, 6 January 1829.
[2] *Samachar Darpan*, 23 May 1829. *S.S.K.*, i, 103.

endeavoured to influence Indian opinion in favour of reform. In September 1829, the *Bengal Herald* with its vernacular editions passed into the hands of Nilratan Haldar, who obtained a new license in his own name.[1] He appears to have been a very capable person "conspicuous for his extensive oriental acquirements, and acquaintance with European literature and politics."[2] In April 1830, however, the *Banga Dut* was taken over by Bholanath Sen[3] who was associated with the business of Dwarkanath Tagore. It discontinued publication in 1839. This reformist journal had long been the eyesore of the orthodox Hindus, from whom it earned the contemptuous epithet the *Banga Bhut* or the "Bengal ghost."[4]

In January 1831, the *Sangbad Prabhakar* was published.[5] It was edited by Iswarchandra Gupta, the most popular Bengali poet of the time. Its publication was largely financed by a Hindu Zamindar, Jogendramohan Tagore, who was a friend of the poet. The *Sangbad Prabhakar* immediately became a popular journal. Its popularity was chiefly due to the witty, light and satirical poems of Iswar Gupta which used to appear in it. Having made a brilliant start, however, its career was interrupted in May 1832, after the death of its chief patron, Jogendramohan Tagore. It was revived in August 1836 and began to be published thrice a week. From 14 June 1839, the *Sangbad Prabhakar* became a daily newspaper, the first in the Bengali language. It had a prolonged career, till 1865. It remained all through a conservative newspaper.

Another Bengali newspaper called the *Sangbad Sudhakar* appeared in February 1831.[6] It was published and edited by Premchand Roy. The tone of this newspaper was moderate and it stood between the conservatives and the radicals in matters relating to social reform.[7] The *Sangbad Sudhakar* lasted for about four years.

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[1] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 67, 29 September 1829.

[2] *Alexander's East India Magazine*, December 1830, i, 1, 51.

[3] A new license was granted to Bholanath Sen to publish the *Banga Dut*. *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 77, 13 April 1830.

[4] *Samachar Darpan*, 21 January 1832. *S.S.K.*, ii, 185.

[5] License was granted on 7 January 1831. *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 74, 11 January 1831.

[6] *Ibid.*, no. 67, 15 February 1831.

[7] For instance, it strongly advocated the cause of female education and did not hesitate to criticise the views of the extreme conservatives. Quoted in the *Samachar Darpan*, 5 November 1831. *S.S.K.*, ii.

Till 1830, Indian newspapers even in Persian and Urdu were almost exclusively conducted by the Hindus. The first Muslim to take to journalism was Sheikh Alimullah, a resident of Calcutta. He seems to have been sufficiently well versed in both Bengali and Persian to venture on the publication of a newspaper in both languages. On 7 September 1830, license was granted to him to publish the newspaper called the *Samachar Sabha Rajendra* in Bengali and Persian.[1] It was, however, actually published on Monday 7 March 1813.[2] Unfortunately, not a single copy of this newspaper is extant, but references to it are found in contemporary Bengali newspapers. Thus, according to a report appearing in the *Sangbad Timirnashak* (which again was quoted in the *Samachar Darpan*) the *Samachar Sabha Rajendra* was "formost among new publications" and had "many subscribers both Hindu and Muslim."[3] That it was able to draw such generous comments from an orthodox Hindu contemporary like the *Sangbad Timirnashak*, may be explained by the fact that the *Samachar Sabha Rajendra* was orthodox Muslim but not anti-Hindu in tone. It should be noted that Hindu conservatism also at this period was not necessarily anti-Muslim. Thus, the conservative Hindu organ the *Samachar Chandrika* commended the Muslim journal for not hesitating to criticise those English-educated Hindu radicals who had turned critics of their own religion.[4]

The *Samachar Sabha Rajendra* was thus a conservative Muslim newspaper. It represented the views of Bengali Muslims, who generally disapproved of the ideas and institutions associated with the British regime. The Muslims were naturally dismayed at the gradual and deliberate neglect of the Persian language both by the Government and by the English-educated Hindu youth. They suspected the motives of the British Government. It was the period when the Indian Muslims, particularly of the lower orders, were stirred by militant religious movements. To precisely what extent the first Indian Muslim newspaper, *Samachar Sabha Rajendra*, reflected these views, we have, unfortunately, no means of ascertaining. But it may be said that from 1831 onwards Muslim opinion in Bengal was beginning to express itself through the press. The *Samachar Sabha Rajendra* lasted till 1835.

[1] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 106, 7 September 1830.
[2] Brajendranath Banerji, *op. cit.*, 55.
[3] *Samachar Darpan*, 21 January 1832. *S.S.K.*, ii, 186.
[4] Brajendranath Banerji, *op. cit.*, 39.

An outstanding publication of the period was the *Jnananveshan* to which reference has been made in the previous chapter. This Bengali weekly newspaper was first published in June 1831. It was started by Dakshinaranjan Mukherji, a young Hindu radical, a former student of the Hindu College. The *Jnananveshan* was thus an organ of Hindu radicalism. The commotion it created in the Bengali society of the day was reflected in the contemporary press. Thus, the reformist Hindu *Sangbad Kaumudi* welcomed its appearance with a tone of caution ;[1] the Baptist missionary *Samachar Darpan* referred to it in a rather patronising manner ;[2] but the conservative Hindu *Sangbad Timirnashak* denounced it as anti-Hindu and charged it with holding heretical and atheistic opinions.[3] In January 1833, the *Jnananveshan* passed into the hands of Dakshinaranjan's friends, Rasikkrishna Mallick and Madhabchandra Mallick.[4] It now began to be published in both Bengali and English. The Bengali edition was edited with great competence by Pandit Gaurishankar Tarkabagis, a follower of Rammohan Roy, while the English edition was conducted by Rasikkrishna Mallick. The *Jnananveshan* lasted till 1840.

Another Bengali weekly journal called the *Anubadika* appeared in July 1831. It was published by Bholanath Sen. The *Anubadika* was actually the Bengali edition of the English newspaper, the *Reformer*, also published by Bholanath Sen but actually owned and edited by Prasannakumar Tagore. The *Anubadika* was distributed free to promote the cause of social and religious reforms which the journal advocated. It lasted, however, for less than a year.[5]

In August 1831, one Madhusudan Das brought out a Bengali weekly called the *Sangbad Ratnakar*. It was an extremely conservative Hindu newspaper and it did not hesitate to use gross and abusive language in attacking the radicals.[6] Such a journal could not have a long career. Public taste did not approve it, and it went out of existence after a few months.

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[1] Quoted in the *Samachar Darpan*, 2 July 1831. *S.S.K.*, ii, 178.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2 July 1831. *Ibid.*, 179.

[3] Quoted in *Ibid.*, 21 January 1832. *Ibid.*, 186.

[4] In 1833, a new license was issued in their names. *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 50, 15 January 1833.

[5] *Bengal Hurkaru*, 16 April 1832.

[6] *Samachar Darpan*, 28 January 1832. *S.S.K.*, ii, 172.

Another short-lived journal was the *Sangbad Sarsangraha*, a Bengali and English weekly published by Benimadhab De. It appeared in September 1831, and it merely contained a summary of news published in the other newspapers. As such, it was the first newspaper of its kind. It could not obtain a wide circulation chiefly because its price was higher than the other Bengali newspapers.[1] The *Sangbad Sarsangraha* lasted for less than a year.

The factions into which Calcutta Hindu society was torn in an age of reform and reaction were reflected in a journal of a very special kind called the *Dalbrittanta*.[2] The peculiarity of the Bengali weekly paper lay in the news it printed about the differernt factions in Hindu society. But a journal which sought to flourish simply on scandal-mongering could not have a smooth sailing. It disappeared after a very brief career.

After the publication of the *Samachar Sabha Rajendra* in 1831, some Bengali Muslims began to take an interest in journalism. But the medium of their intellectual expression was still Persian, the language associated with their past glory, rather than Bengali, the language which most of them spoke. Thus, between 1833 and 1835, three Persian newspapers were published by Bengali Muslims from Calcutta. These were the *Ain-i-Sikandar* (1833-40), the *Mah-i-Alam Afroz* (1833-41) and the *Sultan-ul-Akhbar* (1835-41).[3] Although details about these newspapers are lacking, they seem to reflect the opinion of the upper class Bengali Muslims which was generally conservative and suspicious of British rule.

By 1835, the opinion of the Hindu upper and middle classes of Bengal was being reflected in the vernacular press. The views and aspirations of the various classes of people, the zamindars, the merchants and the urban literati, were expressed in the newspapers of the time, although no particular newspaper can be taken to represent the specific opinion of any particular class or group. Not only did the press reflect opinions of different kinds ; it actually helped in moulding opinion itself. As a contemporary London journal specialising in Indian affairs noted :[4]

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[1] Its price was 2 rupees per month while the average price of other Bengali newspapers was 1 rupee.

[2] *Samachar Darpan*, 21 July 1832. *S.S.K.*, ii, 182.

[3] Brajendranath Banerji, *op. cit.*, 72.

[4] *Alexander's East India Magazine*, December 1830, i, 51.

> The abolition of suttee has been carried into successful execution at a time when the Bengal Press, native as well as English, was in a virtually freer state than it had ever before enjoyed.....Lord William Bentinck, aware of the importance of previous discussion in the newspapers on the subject (sati), sagely courted, rather than repelled, the aid of the Indian Press on this ever memorable and glorious occasion, —and without the aid of the Press, the supertitions native mind would not have been prepared for so great a change.

But while the Indian-owned English newspapers were reformist in their views most of the vernacular newspapers were conservative in tone. This showed the temper of the time. In the conflict between the conservatives and the reformers, the latter had gained significant victories. But the eventual swing was on the side of the conservatives. The cause of the reformers was weakened not only by internal dissension among their ranks but also by the fact that the spirit of reform had lost much of its force and fervour after the abolition of *sati*. The social outlook of the Hindu community remained basically conservative and this was reflected in the press.

CHAPTER V

THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC OPINION : THE REACTION TO SOCIAL POLICY

It is commonly known that the almost fixed policy of the East India Company's Government till the early part of the nineteenth century had been to avoid interference in the social and religious life of its Indian subjects. This policy was not only suited to the peculiar nature of English rule in India ; it was quite in harmony with English political tradition and English political practice. Changes took place under the garb of restoration. New institutions were created in order to preserve old ones. Old laws were given new meaning. These facts of English history reflected themselves in India also. Thus, having conquered Bengal by diplomacy and arms, the English considered it necessary to obtain the sanction of the Mughal emperor, whose authority was more nominal than real, to administer the country on his behalf. By securing the *diwani* of Bengal in 1765, Clive sought to clothe the newly established English power in a legal garb familiar to Indian tradition and practice. The new English government sought to maintain the old laws and institutions, the established customs and usages, so long as they did not affect English interests.

But this policy of non-interference was essentially a negative one. It could not keep up artificially a system which was fast crumbling. The old social and economic order was bound up with the old political power. When that power was broken, the social and economic structure which it sustained was bound to disintegrate. The early English rulers of India had to learn this lesson in the school of experience.

Thus the chief idea behind Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement was to "bring order and stability to a society fast dissolving, and not to bring about a social revolution which would effect its complete transformation."[1] But in the course of its operation, the Settlement tended to

[1] E. Stokes, *English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford 1959), 26.

destroy the old aristocracy or whatever remained of it, and bring about important changes in society.[1]

The rise of a new landed aristocracy is an important phenomenon in the social history of Bengal. Although it inherited from the old order the traditions of social conservatism and political reaction, it had also imbibed, chiefly because of its commercial and urban background,[2] some of the liberal ideas of the age as reflected in the character and activities of Dwarkanath Tagore and Rammohan Roy. This dualism in the social character of the zamindars was fully reflected in the pattern and outlook of Bengali society in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Reference has been made[3] to the close relations which developed between the English free-traders of Calcutta and a section of Bengali zamindars with banking and commercial interests. These zamindars, not considering land as the chief source of wealth, were anxious to exploit to their advantage the investment and commercial opportunities offered by the free-traders and the 'interlopers'. The other section of the zamindars, which had kept aloof from commercial enterprise, regarded with suspicion the activities of these English merchant adventurers and their Bengali friends. These newly raised landed aristocrats, aligning themselves with the remnants of the old landed interests, jealously guarded the rights and privileges which they had secured under the Permanent Settlement. Their social outlook was intensely conservative. They were very apprehensive regarding the activities of the European merchants, especially the indigo planters, which, they believed, would disturb the economic and social *status quo* in the countryside. The Bengali merchant-zamindars and their friends, such as Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasannakumar Tagore, Kalinath Roy Chaudhry[4] and Rammohan Roy, on the other hand, had publicly supported the movement of the free-traders. When, in December 1829, they signed the petition addressed to the Parliament on behalf of the Calcutta free-traders demanding the abolition of restrictions on trade and advocating colonization of India by Euro-

[1] See above, p. 6.

[2] See above, p. 7-8.

[3] See above, p. 9-12.

[4] He was described as "a zamindar paying about 30,000 Rupees annual revenue and said to be the proprietor of several Indigo factories." *Letter from Bengal*, para 126, 23 February 1830.

peans, the conservative Bengali newspaper the *Samachar Chandrika* observed :[1]

> The English desire to become *Talookdars* and cultivators ; this will be advantageous to them ; more particularly to the Indigomen. They are now obliged to carry on their operations by taking Izars (leases) from natives ; in time they will become *Talookdars*, and acquire sovereignty over the poor wretched inhabitants of the country. Be that as it may, we want to know what advantage this will bring to the natives who have signed or may sign the petition ?

In fact, the conservative zamindars found their vested interests in the countryside threatened by the activities of the European indigo planters and their Bengali friends. As Rammohan Roy noted : "if any class of the natives would gladly see them (the indigo planters) all turned out of the country, it would be the zamindars in general."[2]

Representing dual interests, landed and commercial, Rammohan Roy and his friends like Dwarkanath Tagore and others chose the latter whenever any clash between the two occurred. Commerce appeared to them more important not merely because it was more profitable ; it held aloft the banner of change and progress and was therefore, ideologically more acceptable. Thus the Bengali upper class society was torn by an internal conflict between the growing commercial and the decaying landed interests.

Under the Charter Act of 1833, the Europeans were for the first time allowed to hold land in their own names. The years immediately preceding the passing of the Act saw a sharp conflict between the conservative zamindars and the indigo planters. This conflict, which was the precursor of the violent clashes which occurred after 1850, was reflected in the Calcutta press. Thus, a certain indigo planter had addressed a letter to the editor of the *India Gazette*, in which he asserted that because of the oppression of the zamindars many of the poor ryots had taken to robbery and brigandage. He suggested that the zamindars should be lenient towards the ryots and reduce the

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[1] Quoted in the *India Gazette*, 28 December 1829.

[2] Rammonhan Roy's letter to Nathaniel Alexander, head of a well-known English mercantile house in Calcutta (undated). J. K. Majumdar (ed.), *Indian Speeches and Documents on British Rule 1821-1918* (Calcutta 1937), 42.

land rents.[1] This letter evoked a scathing rejoinder from "a zamindar" whose letter was published in the *Bengal Herald*.[2] In this letter the writer vehemently denounced the activities of the indigo planters and accused them of promoting lawlessness in the countryside. "Many Indigo Planters have teken *Ezeras* or farms, from the Zamindars ; have *they* lowered the rents to restrain the Ryots from turning dacoits ?" asked the "zamindar." That the commercial classes in Bengal, both European and Indian, should claim that they stood for the protection of the peasantry from the oppression of the landlords was a feature of the period. In Europe, particularly from the eighteenth century onwards, the bourgeoisie was making similar claims, maintaining that its interests were identical with those of the people in their struggles against the feudal vested interests.

While the interests of the landed aristocracy of Bengal clashed with those of the commercial classes, the relations of the former with the Government were also not cordial. By 1818, the attitude of the Government towards the Permanent Settlement with zamindars had undergone a marked change. While the financial burdens of the East India Company had increased enormously with involvement in wars and increase in territories, the need for a revision of the entire revenue policy was being seriously considered. Lord Hastings in a minute written in 1819, admitted that the Permanent Settlement had "subjected almost the whole of the lower classes throughout these provinces to most grievous oppression ; an oppression too so guaranteed by our pledge that we are unable to relieve the sufferers."[3]

Perhaps more important than the concern for the welfare of the peasantry was the realisation that the Permanent Settlement had deprived the Government of enormous revenue. Holt Mackenzie, who was one of the chief architects of the new revenue policy which the Bengal Government was to follow from 1819, in his evidence before a Parliamentary Select Committee, later observed that if there had not been a Permanent Settlement "the amount of government rent would have been double what it is now."[4]

While the Government could not do any thing with regard to the Permanent Settlement, it was anxious not to allow the zamindars any

[1] *India Gazette*, 2 July 1829.
[2] Quoted in *Ibid.*, 6 July 1829.
[3] *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, viii, 734, 63.
[4] *Ibid.*, xi, 735, iii, 221.

extra benefits from the lands beyond those actually provided by the Settlement. In fact, the Government suspected that after the settlement of 1793 considerable areas of land had been brought under cultivation, the rents of which the zamindars were appropriating illegally ; there were also the *la-khiraj* (rent-free) lands enjoyed by the zamindars whose documents needed scrutiny.[1] In February 1819, the Government passed an act (Regulation II) which provided for the assessment of all lands which were not included within the estates of the zamindars at the time of the Permanent Settlement but were subsequently reclaimed from forests and brought under cultivation, and the rents of which the zamindars had been enjoying without valid or legal title. Such lands were in the Sunderban forests in South-East Bengal, and also the *char* lands or lands formed since the 1793 Settlement "either from an intercession of the sea, an alteration in the course of rivers, or the gradual accession of soil on their banks."[2] It was, however, clearly laid down that the estates embraced by the Permanent Settlement should be exempted from the operation of the regulation. In May 1825, the Government passed another regulation (Regulation IX) which empowered Collectors to investigate the titles under which rent-free lands were held by zamindars.[3] Finally, in June 1828, a regulation (Regulation III) provided for the appointment of Special Commissioners for determining cases arising from the operation of the previous regulations. It was further provided that such decisions of the Commissioners were to be final.[4]

These proceedings of the Government were regarded by all sections of the Bengal zamindars with serious alarm. They began to regard these actions as infringements of the Permanent Settlement and ventilated their grievances through the press and other channels. In fact, it seemed that the zamindars were able to enlist the sympathy of most of the newspapers. Thus, the Serampur missionary paper the *Samachar Darpan* observed in its editorial columns that the Government action had "given rise to much disquietude in India" and pointed

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[1] It was asserted that the Government's right to resume these lands held on invalid tenure was already recognized by Regulation XIX of 1793, section 26, and Regulation XXXVII of 1793 section 21.

[2] R. Clarke (ed.), *Regulations of the Government of Fort William in Bengal* etc. (Calcutta 1854), ii, 529.

[3] *Ibid.*, 743.

[4] *Ibid.*, 812.

out that under Regulation I, sections 2, 3 and 7 of 1793, the new regulations "require to be confirmed by the authorities in England, without which confirmation no alteration in the Permanent Settlement is valid."[1] Even the *India Gazette*, the organ of the free-traders, was not unsympathetic. While it recognized the Government's right to assess lands not covered by the Permanent Settlement, it suggested in a rather cautious tone that the Government should also allay the fears of the zamindars. It further pointed out the defects of the Permanent Settlement under which "the interests of the great body of *Ryuts* have been left almost entirely unprotected and that while the claims of Government on the Zumeendars have been fixed and defined, those of the Zumeendars on the cultivators remain loose and fluctuating...a permanent settlement between the Zumeendars and *Ryuts* is as necessary as that which has been formed between the Government and Zumeendars."[2]

To what extent the propertied classes in Bengal could be roused to public activity when their interests were touched, was illustrated by the concerted action which they took in protesting against Government policy. Three separate petitions were made to the Government complaining particularly against Regulation III of 1828. The first petition was signed by fifty-five individuals, mostly Hindu zamindars of Bengal ;[3] the second by one hundred and twenty, mostly Muslim zamindars of Bihar.[4] The third petition, which was at first submitted anonymously "on behalf of the inhabitants of Bengal, Behar and Orissa", was subsequently presented with the signatures of two hundred and nine persons.[5] These included not only conservative Hindu zamindars like Gopimohan Deb, Radhakanta Deb and Rasamoy Dutt, but also those having commercial interests and holding liberal opinions, like Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasannakumar Tagore and Rammohan Roy.[6] Thus, in matters affecting their common interests these men were willing to sink their differences and act together.

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1 *Samachar Darpan*, 10 October 1829, quoted in the *India Gazette*, 12 October 1829.

2 *India Gazette*, 12 October 1829.

3 *Bengal Revenue Consultation*, no. 3, 19 May 1829.

4 *Ibid.*, no. 5.

5 *Ibid.*, no. 4. For full text see Appendix I.

6 Rammohan Roy may have put his signature to the petition more out of his regard for his zamindar-businessman friends like Dwarkanath Tagore than from his own conviction. That Rammohan held a different opinion, at least subsequently,

The chief arguments put forward in the above petitions were, that the Government had by Regulation XIX of 1793 given the zamindars a solemn pledge regarding the *la-khiraj* lands ; that in many cases the documents under which such lands were held had been lost by accident in the course of time ; that in many cases again these lands had passed into different hands through sale. To resume them under the new regulation would, therefore, amount to great injustice and oppression and "ruin thousands of families."

The petitions were considered by the Governor-General-in-Council on 29 September 1829, and rejected, being based on what was considered to be insufficient.[1]

The zamindars reacted to the rejection of their petitions by expresssing their discontent publicly through the press. Thus, soon after the Government resolution rejecting the petitions was known, a letter was published in the *Bengal Herald* signed by "One of the many petitioners against the Regulation 3d of 1828", in which the Government was bitterly criticised.[2] It was pointed out :

> .....from a naked view of the petition (the petition "on behalf of the inhabitants of Bengal, Behar and Orissa" was also published along with the letter) your readers will at once perceive that the national faith which had been pledged to us by the noble Lord Cornwallis in 1793, is about to be violated by the local Government, and the right of the native subjects invaded.

It is significant that although in one of the petitions, the zamindars had claimed to represent "the inhabitants of Bengal, Behar and Orissa", the Government was not prepared to recognize this claim. This was evident from the Government resolution of 29 September 1829, in which the petition was described as having been submitted by "certain

was evident from the communication which he sent to the Board of Control at the latter's request when he visited England. In that communication he clearly pointed out the evils of the Permanent Settlement with regard to the ryots and feelingly described their plight under oppressive zamindars. "Communication between Rammohan Roy and the Board of Control relative to the Revenue and Judicial System of India." *P.P.H.C.*, 1831, v, 65, 719.

[1] *Bengal Revenue Consultation*, no. 7, 29 September 1829.

[2] Quoted in the *India Gazette*, 19 October 1829; also in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, 19 October 1829.

inhabitants of Bengal, Behar and Orissa."[1] In making this specification the Government of Lord William Bentinck seemed to emphasize the fact that the interests of the zamindars could not be indentified with those of all the inhabitants particularly the ryots, about whom no reference was to be found in any of the petitions. In its letter to the Court of Directors dated 23 February 1830, the Bengal Government, while referring to the above petitions, observed :[2]

> There is always some difficulty in knowing precisely how to estimate the character of representations purporting to come from a considerable number of natives of influence and property, and complaining of being aggrieved by any particular act of Government ; such representations are seldom agreed on at public meetings held in the district or province where the petitioners reside, by which the local officers of Government might be able to ascertain how far the sentiments embodied in the petitions are those of the people. Nor are the petitions themselves presented to those officers ; but they are usually presented at the Presidency to the Governor-General, or at the Secretary's office, by some attorney purporting to act for all the subscribing parties; and we have reason to believe that all representations the objects of which are general, and not the redress of individual grievances, are in nine out of ten cases got up by a few individuals interested in opposing the measure or act complained of.

The Government further referred to "the well known fact" that in almost every district of Bengal there were "thousands of beeghas of land" held rent-free on invalid titles and this sufficiently explained "why there should be many persons who have the strongest motives to make every effort for the repeal of a law calculated speedily to bring to light their illegal tenures."[3] In considering the above petitions, the Government, therefore, felt it necessary to be on its guard "lest the opposition of the comparatively few whose interets it is to deceive the Government, should be magnified into the expression of the voice

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[1] *Bengal Revenue Consultation*, no. 7, 29 September 1829.
[2] *Letter from Bengal, Revenue*, para 86, 23 February 1830.
[3] *Ibid.*, para 87.

of the people."[1] The Government then proceeded to explain in detail the objections raised in each of the three petitions against Regulation III of 1828, together with its own answers to those objections. The fact that the Government came forward with a lengthy explanation in defence of its revenue policy, indicated that it was not wholly unresponsive to the opinion of the most vocal section of its Indian subjects.

The discontnent of the propertied classes in Bengal could not be ignored by the Court of Directors. In their reply to the Bengal Government's letter, they characterised the resumption proceedings undertaken under Regulation III of 1828, as a "worse than arbitrary act."[2] They particularly objected to the continued employment of Collectors in conducting the primary investigation of land tenures. They pointed out that under the existing regulations the equitable claims of individuals were being too little secured. The Court noted that the activities of the Collectors on account of their inexperience had produced great misapprehension among the zamindars. They, therefore, maintained that "the Collectors should not be the judges in the resumption questions."[3] They suggested that special Judges should be appointed to investigate cases of resumption, and approved of the creation of the Special Tribunals provided under Regulation III of 1828, to deal with appeals, but emphasized the need for their quick disposals. The Court also prohibited the Bengal Government from undertaking further resumptions until satisfactory rules were framed.[4] In fact, in their anxiety to calm the feelings of the Bengal zamindars, the Court of Directors were even willing to modify the law. As regards the contention of the zamindars that many of the documents under which they were holding rent-free lands had been lost in course of time by accidents, the Court observed that "the question of title by prescription, or the length of unchallenged possession, which should be considered as creating a right deserves a very careful consideration."[5] Referring to the petitions of the zamindars the Court believed that if their suggestions were acted upon, they "would obviate all reasonable ground of complaint."[6]

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1 *Letter from Bengal, Revenue*, para 88, 23 February 1830.
2 *Revenue Despatch to Bengal*, para 15, 28 September 1831.
3 *Ibid.*, para 39.
4 *Ibid.*, para 53.
5 *Ibid.*, para 54.
6 *Ibid.*, para 56.

The revenue policy of the Government made the Bengal zamindars class-conscious and led them eventually to form an organization of their own, the Bengal Landholders Association, in 1837, to protect their interests.[1] It was the first strictly secular organization in India with a political object, to defend the class interests of property-owning individuals against the encroachment of an alien government. The relations between the zamindars and the Government seem to have been based on mutual suspicion, as is suggested by the following observations of Holt Mackenzie, a former senior official of the Bengal Government :[2]

> I am not aware of their (the zamindars) doing anything to uphold the government ; the indirect effect of a large body interested in maintaining the existing state of things may be considerable. But they (the zamindars) still generally, I fear, dislike and fear us ; and they certainly embarrass the government whenever they think their own interests are likely to be affected by its acts.

This attitude towards the zamindars, however, was not shared by the East India Company's authorities in England. They had already reprimanded the Bengal Government for benig unduly harsh in its dealings with the zamindars. In fact, they seemed to have realised that their hold in India would be in jeopardy if they failed to create a strong public opinion in the country in their favour. And that sort of opinion under existing conditions could only be created by the propertied classes. A rapprochement between the zamindars and the Government was, therefore, an imperative necessity in the interests of British rule. Thus, Thomas Love Peacock, senior Assistant Examiner of India Correspondence at the India House, in his evidence before a Parliamentary Select Committee observed :[3]

> .....our tenure of our Indian empire is the tenure of the sword. There is only one portion of public opinion in India that comes in aid of.....our military power, and that is the

[1] Landholders Association, *Rules and Regulations and Proceedings of Meetings held in B. S. 1244 and 1245* (Calcutta 1838).

[2] Evidence of Holt Mackenzie before the Select Committee of House of Commons, 18 April 1832. *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, xi, 735; iii, 221.

[3] Evidence of Thomas Love Peacock before the Select Committee of House of Commons on the *Calcutta Journal*, 15 July 1834. *P.P.H.C.*, 1834, viii, 601, 121.

opinion of the Zamindars under the permanent settlement that their interests are indentified with ours. Beyond this there is no public opinion that works in our favour.

The Bengal Government, had, therefore, to readjust its relations with the zamindars to the mutual advantage of both the parties. Henceforth, the zamindars were to be reckoned as the steady supporters of the British raj.

The anxiety of the Government not to interfere with the religious and social life of its Indian subjects was clearly evident from its attitude towards what came to be known as *sati*.[1] Early nineteenth century Hinduism represented a broad cultural stream embracing varied religious ideas and practices belonging to different stages of social development. At exactly what period *sati* was introduced into Hindu society, we have no means of ascertaining. The custom existed from time immemorial and was thus sanctified by age. But at no time was it universally practised. It would seem that there were always certain classes of persons particularly belonging to the priestly order who had a vested interest in perpetuating the custom. And since they alone could propound and interpret the religious laws, they had little difficulty in doing so in a manner which would suit their interests. Sometimes the relations of the unfortunate widow also encouraged her to perform *sati* with the hope of material gain.[2]

Under Warren Hastings's direction a manual of Hindu law was prepared by pandits for the guidance of law officers. In this manual *sati* was encouraged.[3] In fact, the Brahman Pandits took care to include in the manual everything that tended to preserve the ancient customs and usages. Thus, *sati* being recognized as a part of the Hindu religious law, the English government continued to tolerate it in accordance with its declared policy of non-interference. But the nature of the custom itself and the fact that officials in the districts[4]

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1 The term originally was used to denote a virtuous Hindu widow who burnt herself with the dead body of her husband. But it came to be used to describe the custom of the widow's self-burning rather than the widow herself. *Cambridge History of India*, vi, 131.

2 J. Peggs, *India's Cries to British Humanity* etc. (London 1828), 23.

3 *Cambridge History of India*, vi, 132.

4 The Supreme Court which had jurisdiction over Calcutta did not allow *sati*. Hence, those who wished to perform it had to do so in the suburbs. It was also prohibited in the Danish Settlement of Serampur and the French Settlement of Chandernagar.

could not remain indifferent to it, and also the growing Evangelical criticism in both England and India that the Government was giving protection to an inhuman practice, made the Government's position rather embarrassing.

Notwithstanding the declared policy of non-interference, individual officials on their own initiative, chiefly on humanitarian grounds, had interfered and stopped *sati* from taking place within their jurisdiction. But the Government did not authorize such action, hoping that the custom would eventually "fall into disuse" in course of time.[1] This attitude towards *sati* was maintained by the Government throughout the period until Lord William Bentinck abolished it in 1829, by a regulation.

The Government, however, could not remain wholly indifferent to the question. Cases were reported of young widows forced to perform *sati* after being administered intoxicating drugs or subjected to constant persuasion by persons interested in their self-immolation. Some officials again were in serious doubts if the custom itself was actually sanctioned by the Hindu religion or just superimposed by greedy priests. In fact, the Government began to consider various measures to restrict the custom without directly interfering with it. In a letter dated 5 February 1805, the Judicial Secretary of the Government asked the Register of the Sadr Nizamat Adalat to ascertain "by means of a reference to the Pundits" how far the practice of *sati* was "founded upon the religious opinions of the Hindoos."[2] The question was, accordingly, referred to the pandits of the Sadr Nizamat Adalat. The Chief Pandit, Ghanashyam Sharma, in his reply stated :[3]

> Every woman of the four casts...is permitted to burn herself with the body of her husband, provided she has not infant children nor is pregnant, nor is in a state of uncleanliness, nor under the age of puberty ; in every of such cases she is not allowed to burn herself with her husband's body.
>
> But a woman who has infant children, and can procure another person to undertake the charge of bringing them up, is permitted to burn. It is contrary to law, as well as to the usage of the country, to cause any woman to burn herself against her wish, by administering drugs to stupify or intoxicate her.

[1] *P.P.H.C.*, 1821, xviii, 749, 22.
[2] *Ibid.*, 23.
[3] *Ibid.*, 28-29.

The Pandit then quoted a passage from Sanskrit scripture extolling *sati*. In reply to additional questions he observed :[1]

> If any woman declared her intention of burning, but afterwards recedes from her declaration, without having pronounced her Sunkulp (determination) and performed other ceremonies, she is not enjoined by the Shaster to undergo any puraschit or penance ; neither is there anythng contained in the law, prohibiting her relations from associating with her.
>
> But if a woman, after pronouncing her Sunkulp, and performing other ceremonies, has not courage to proceed to the funeral pile, she may recover her purity by undergoing a severe penance; and her relations may then associate with her.

Other pandits had also expressed similar opinions. Being thus acquainted with the views of the pandits, the Government in a circular dated 5 December 1812, addressed to the Register of the Sadr Nizamat Adalat, made its views known on the subject. It stated :[2]

> The practice (of *sati*), generally speaking, being thus recognized and encouraged by the doctrines of the Hindoo religion, it appears evident that the course which the British Government should follow, according to the principle of religious toleration...is to allow the practice in those cases in which it is countenanced by their religion ; and to prevent it in others in which it is by the same authority prohibited.

The Sadr Nizamat Adalat was accordingly asked to prepare a draft in Persian containing directions to be issued by the magistrates to the Police darogahs. In fact, the Government appeared to have taken up the position that, far from abolishing *sati*, it was only enforcing the rules laid down in the Hindu shastras regarding its performance.

In 1813, on a further reference made by the Government, the Pandits declared that a woman "whose child is under three years of age, and whose nurture cannot be provided for by any other person, is inhibited from becoming a suttee."[3] The Government, accordingly,

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[1] *P.P.H.C.*, 1821, xviii, 749, 29. (*Puraschit* is obviously a mispronunciation of *prayaschitta*.)

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 38.

decided to enforce this rule. These measures illustrated the anxiety of the Government to restrict *sati* to the minimum. In 1817, the pandits of the Sadr Diwani Adalat were asked to state their views on the legal disabilities which prevented a woman from performing *sati* subsequent to the cremation of the body of her husband. Pandit Shubi Ray Shastri gave his opinion that a woman who was in a state of pregnancy at the time of her husband's death could perform *sati* subsequently provided "the disqualifying cause" was "removed in a short interval."[1] The Government's attention was again drawn to the fact that among certain Hindus belonging to the *jogi* sect in Eastern Bengal, the custom was to bury the dead, and cases were reported of widows burying themselves along with the bodies of their husbands. The question was referred to one of the pandits belonging to this sect, Srichandra Tarkalankar, who was also the pandit of the Provincial Court of Appeal for Dacca division. The pandit replied that the Shastras did not allow this custom which was "founded merely on practice." But then he pointed out that if the husband's body was cremated, the widow could burn herself with it.[2] This view, however, was not shared by the Hindu law officers of the Court who maintained that it was lawful for the widows of the *jogi* sect to bury themselves with the bodies of their husbands.[3]

Again, the Government's attention was drawn to the fact that on certain occasions widows intending to perform *sati* were either tied with the dead bodies or pressed with bamboos to prevent them from escaping the fire. The question was referred to the pandits of the Sadr Diwani Adalat who categorically stated that "no authority permits any restraints to be used," that is, the practice of tying a woman with the dead body or forcing her down on the funeral pile by other means, if followed, had no religious sanction. The pandits further declared that a woman who slipped off or escaped from the burning pile would be accepted into society after being "purified by undergoing a penance."[4]

Thus, the position of the Government with regard to *sati* was peculiarly embarrassing. It could only deplore the custom and take certain measures, not always effective, to check it ; but it could not, in view of the declared policy of non-interference, abolish it. What made the

[1] *P.P.H.C.*, 1821, xviii, 749, 111.
[2] *Ibid.*, 112.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, 115.

situation particularly unfavourable was the fact that the Government was unable to produce any evidence to show that any section of Indian opinion was opposed to *sati*. On the contrary, the Brahman pandits, the acknowledged interpreters of the Hindu law, were all unanimous in upholding the custom as a part of their religion. This explains why the Government positively refused to consider any proposal for the outright abolition of *sati* notwithstanding the recommendations made in this regard by officials from time to time.

In 1817, however, the case for the abolition of *sati* received an unexpected support from a quarter equally unexpected. The Chief Judge of the Sadr Diwani Adalat had requested Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, the Chief Pandit of the Supreme Court, to ascertain, from a comparative study of all the known works on Hindu law, to what extent *sati* was permissible. The pandit's reply was significant. After carefully analysing the views held by the different schools of Hindu law on the subject, he asserted that it was not specificially enjoined in the Hindu Shastras that the widow must burn herself. He observed :[1]

> As the act of anoomarana (following the husband in death) is purely voluntary, it cannot be an ordinance of the Shasters... The directions of the Shasters on this head apply only to such as are afflicted with pain arising from disease or separation, as consider death preferable to the sufferings they endure ; and come forward voluntarily, with a firm resolution of putting a period to their existence. The act of dying is not enjoined ; but merely the mode of it, as entering the fire, falling from a mountain etc. The Shasters say, if you are obstinately bent on death, at all events, put an end to yourself by such and such means....

He concluded :[2]

> I regard a woman's burning herself as an unworthy act, and a life of abstinence and chastity as highly excellent. In the Shasters appear many prohibitions of a woman's dying with her husband, but against a life of abstinence and chastity there is no prohibition.

[1] *P.P.H.C.*, 1821, xviii, 749, 119.
[2] Quoted in the *Friend of India*, October 1819, 475.

Mrityunjay Vidyalankar was the most distinguished pandit of his time. According to Baptist missionary testimony he was "a colossus of literature."[1] Formerly he had held the position of Chief Pandit at the College of Fort William. While his statement that *sati* was not an essential part of Hindu religion was not, and perhaps could not be challenged by any other pandit, it undoubtedly encouraged reformist Hindus like Rammohan Roy, for instance, who wished to see the custom abolished. There is no reason to think that Mrityunjay stood for religious reformation. In fact he remained all through his life an extremely conservative Hindu.[2]

In 1818, Rammohan Roy published his famous pamphlet on *sati*. It was in the form of a dialogue between an advocate and an opponent of the custom. It was originally written in Bengali and was extensively distributed, particularly in those areas where *sati* was most prevalent. The pamphlet drew wide-spread public attention, which encouraged Rammohan to bring out in November 1818, an English translation of it under the title *A Conference between an Advocate for and an Opponent of, the Practice of Burning Widows Alive*.[3] In preparing this edition the author hoped, as he himself noted in its preface, "that the arguments it contains might tend to alter the notions that some European gentlemen entertain on this subject."[4] Rammohan Roy was here obviously referring to those officials who opposed any interference with *sati* on the ground that it formed part of the Hindu religion. In this pamphlet he skilfully used his agruments to show, as the conservative pandit Mrityunjay Vidyalankar had done, that the Hindu shastras did not recognise *sati* as obligatory for a widow. Quoting extensively

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[1] J. C. Marshman, *op.cit.*, i, 180.

[2] Thus, he had come forward as the defender of the faith against the heresy of Rammohan Roy when the latter brought out in 1816 his translations from the Vedas. Published in Bengali and English with Rammohan's own commentaries, these tended to show the fallacy of the existing Hindu mode of worshipping many deities in place of one. In the very year (1817) that he had made his important pronouncement on *sati*, Mrityunjay Vidyalankar published a tract in Bengali called *Vedanta Chandrika* with an English translation entitled *An Apology for The Present System of Hindoo Worship*, in which he strongly criticised the views propounded by Rammohan. Brajendranath Banerji (ed.) *Vedanta Chandrika* (Calcutta 1937); also Brajendranath Banerji, "Mrityunjay Vidyalankar", *Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala*, i, (Calcutta 1948).

[3] *English Works of Raja Rammohoun Roy*, iii, 87-97.

[4] *Ibid.*, 88.

from Manu and other ancient authorities, he pointed out that they all recommend a widow to lead a life of abstinence and piety rather than to destroy herself physically. Rammohan's approach, though not direct and authoritative like that of Mrityunjay, was nevertheless, subtle and effective. He anticipated and took into consideration all the arguments put forward by the advocates of *sati* and then answered them.

Rammohan's pamphlet produced a commotion in Calcutta Hindu society. He had already become a controversial figure on account of his unorthodox views on religion. It took his opponents one full year to bring out their reply. It was published anonymously under the title, *Vidhayak* or Preceptor.[1] Rammohan Roy promptly issued his second pamphlet in Bengali towards the end of 1819, which contained a lengthy reply to the points raised by his opponent. This pamphlet was also translated into English and was published in February 1820, under the title *A Second Conference between an Advocate for and an Opponent of Burning Widows Alive.*[2] It was dedicated to Lady Hastings, wife of the Governor-General. In this pamphlet Rammohan put forward strong agruments against *sati* quoting from *Gita* and other sources. He also emphasized the need for improving the condition of Hindu women in general. These publications served to arouse public interest on the question of *sati* on a scale hitherto unthinkable. Public discussion of the subject was taken up by the vernacular newspapers which had begun to appear after 1818.[3] The English press had also been taking a keen interest in the subject. Thus, the Serampur Baptist journal, the *Friend of India* of December 1818, referred to the views expressed by Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, and emphasized that *sati* did not "have the force of law."[4] A few months later the journal carried another article containign extracts from the statement of the venerable pandit on *sati.*[5] The article tended to show that, since even an orthodox pandit like Mrityunjay disapproved the custom, its toleration by the British Government could not be justified. In March 1821, another

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[1] The author of this pamphlet is not known.

[2] *English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, iii, 98-127.

[3] The Serampur missionary newspaper, the *Samachar Darpan*, was opposed to *sati*; so was Rammohan Roy's the *Sangbad Kaumudi*; the conservative Hindu *Samachar Chandrika* was a strong upholder of *sati.*

[4] *Friend of India*, December 1818, i, 8, 310.

[5] *Ibid.*, October 1819, ii, 16, 473-76.

article appeared in the *Friend of India* on the same subject.[1] In fact, the missionaries continued to criticise the Government's social policy on the ground that it was tending to perpetuate certain inhuman customs. The attack was joined in by the liberal and radical English newspapers of Calcutta such as the *India Gazette*, the *Bengal Hurkaru* and the *Calcutta Journal*.

By 1826, the attention of the English-educated Bengali youth was also drawn to the subject. In the *Bengal Hurkaru* of 26 January 1826, appeared a letter written by one Brajamohan Mukherji in which he narrated a typical case. His own father-in-law was on his death bed, and his mother-in-law had determined to perform *sati* in the event of his death. While Brajamohan was doing his best to dissuade his mother-in-law from performing the sacrifice, her other relations were constantly encouraging her to perform the rite.[2] Brajamohan's letter seemed to have produced a sympathetic reaction among his fellow young men. Two other letters were published in the *Bengal Hurkaru* written by Madanmohan Mallick[3] and Shyamcharan Seal,[4] in which they not only denounced *sati* and all those who encouraged it, but called upon the Government to take effective measures to prevent it. These letters reflected the sentiments of the young English-educated Bengalis, who were soon to come under the influence of radical ideas. Commenting on the fact that criticism of *sati* came from such individuals, the editor of the *Bengal Hurkaru* hoped that "the period is not far distant, when the whole race will look back with horror upon the time when they could be induced to countenance such enormities."[5]

The Government, however, was still not prepared to modify its policy in accordance with the expressed opinion of any section of the Bengali public. It was rather inclined to believe that the unexpressed opinion of the vast majority of the people, particularly in the countryside, had little to do with the opinion expressed by a handful of educated individuals living in Calcutta. Any measure touching upon the religious or social prejudices of the masses might provoke an uprising which would endanger British power. Nevertheless, at the instance of the Government, the Court of Nizamat Adalat had, in September

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1 *Friend of India* (Quarterly Series), 1821, 332-52,
2 *Bengal Hurkaru*, 26 January 1826.
3 *Ibid.*, 30 January 1826.
4 *Ibid.*, 1 February 1826.
5 *Ibid.*, 30 January 1826.

1817, drawn up certain rules for the guidance of magistrates and Police officers, authorising them to prevent cases of *sati* declared illegal under Hindu law.[1] The rules laid down that every case of intended *sati* should be reported to the local police officer and that no *sati* should be "performed or commenced" without his knowledge. The police officer or his agent was also required to be present at every performance of *sati*.[2]

These rules were not formally approved by the Government and had, therefore, no legal sanction. Nevertheless, attempts were made by the local officers to enforce them as far as possible. The number of *satis* taking place in the Bengal Presidency during the period 1815-18, showed a marked increase every year.[3] The Government had considered it "inadvisable" to pass into an official regulation the rules drafted by the Court of Nizamat Adalat on the ground that they were founded on insufficient and inaccurate information relating to Hindu law "and to the local usages prevailing in different parts of the country."[4] The Government explained the increase in the number of *satis* by pointing out that it was due to greater vigilance on the part of the police in ascertaining and reporting cases, and to epidemic diseases like cholera which resulted in a large number of deaths. It was also probably due to "fanaticism rather influenced than repressed" by Government interference.[5] It was believed that the presence of a Government official at every performance of *sati* not only seemed to accord it an official sanction, but also increased its prestige value. Hence the Government resolved not to interfere with the custom. The Court of Directors also, despite the fact that they wished to see *sati* abolished, refused to dictate any measure to the India Government believing that "no general rule can be laid down with either safety or efficiency ; and that the adaptation of practical measures to local

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[1] As has been noted, the Government had, from time to time, obtained from the pandits interpretations of Hindu law relating to *sati*. These revealed that the rite was prohibited under certain circumstances.

[2] *P.P.H.C.*, 1821, xviii, 749, 139.

[3] Statistics of sati 1815-18 :

1815	378
1816	444
1817	707
1818	839

[4] *Letter from Bengal*, para 58, 1 February 1820.

[5] *Ibid.*, para 59.

peculiarities can only be effected by the Indian Government."[1] The Court wished to see the abolition of *sati* "effected by influence and the cooperation of the heigher order of the natives."[2] Thus, in determining their social policy in India the authorities of the East India Company were anxious to consult the feelings of the Indian upper classes who alone under the existing conditions could create public opinion in the country.

The Government of Lord Amherst, however, was not very optimistic regarding the prospect of the abolition of *sati* in the near future. It did not expect much from the Indian upper classes, whose social outlook was in general as conservative as that of the masses. Believing that the custom was "sufficiently general to have a strong hold on the feelings of the native population," the Government maintained that "even the best informed classes of the Hindoo population are not yet sufficiently enlightened to recognize the propriety of abolishing the rite."[3] The Government nevertheless thought that the custom would gradually disappear by itself with the spread of education.[4]

Individual officials, however, remained sharply divided on the question of abolition of *sati*. J. H. Harrington, a member of the Governor-General's Council, in a minute recorded on 28 June 1823, observed that "the toleration of the practice of suttees is a reproach to our government" and "that the entire and immediate abolition of it would be attended with no sort of danger."[5] But this view was not shared by others. W. B. Bayley in his minute dated 13 January 1827, opposed total abolition, stressing on the antiquity of the custom and the strong hold it had upon the Hindu mind. He believed in adopting a pollicy of "caution in dealing with such inveterate religious prejudices."[6] In view of such differences of opinion among senior officials on the question of the abolition of *sati*, Lord Amherst could not take a definite decision. In fact, he seemed to support the views of those officials who opposed abolition on the ground of expediency. In his minute dated 18 March 1827, Amherst concluded : "I would rather wait a few years

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1 *Despatch to Bengal*, para 2, 18 December 1822.

2 *Ibid.*, 9.

3 *Letter from Bengal, Judicial Department*, paras 7, 8, 3 December 1824.

4 *Ibid.*, 13, 14. Also K. Ballhatchet, *Social Policy and Social Change in Western India 1817-1830* (London 1957), 275.

5 *P.P.H.C.*, 1825, xxiv, 508, 18.

6 *Ibid.*, 1830, xxviii, 178, 125.

for the gradual consummation of this desirable event (abolition of sati), than risk the violent and uncertain, and perhaps dangerous expedient of a prohibition on the part of the government."[1]

While the Government was thus troubled by the fear that Indian public opinion would violently react to any serious interference with the ancient custom,[2] in England, thanks to the growing Evangelical influence, public opinion was being roused against *sati*. In 1828, a book written by James Peggs, a former missionary at Cuttack, was published, in which the author tried to show that *sati* could be abolished without any danger to British rule.[3]

With the appointment of Lord William Bentinck as Governor-General, the cause for the abolition of *sati* gained ground. Undaunted by the experience of the Vellore mutiny[4] while he was Governor of Madras, Bentinck seemed determined to take the decisive step which his predecessors had cautiously avoided.[5] He had also been advised by the Court of Directors "to consider definite measures for the immediate or gradual abolition of sati."[6] Soon after his arrival in India, Bentinck took up the question. One encouraging development was that the current official opinion in India, unlike that of previous years, was now generally in favour of the abolition. There was also a marked decline in the number of *satis* during the years immediately preceding 1829.[7] The Register of the Nizamat Adalat, W. H. Macnaughten, in

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1 *P.P.H.C.*, 1830, xxviii, 178, 133.

2 K. Ballhatchet, *op. cit.*, 291.

3 J. Peggs, *India's Cries to British Humanity containing the Suttees' Cry to Britain : Showing that the Burning of Hindoo Widows may be abolished with ease and safety* etc. (London 1828).

4 In 1806, the Company's Indian troops stationed at Vellore, rose in mutiny and massacred a number of European officers in protest against the introduction of certain dress regulations which, the soldiers believed, interfered with their religious or caste formalities. The Court of Directors charged Lord William Bentinck, then Governor of Madras, with the responsibility of this uprising, and recalled him.

5 G. Seed, "The Abolition of Suttee in Bengal", *History*, xl, October 1955, 286.

6 *Cambridge History of India*, vi, 140.

7 The number of *satis* during the period 1824-28 was as follows :

1824	572
1825	639
1826	518
1827	517
1828	463

his annual report to Government dated 9 August 1829, expressed the opinion that "the practice of suttees may be prohibited without danger and that it should therefore be prohibited."[1] This was also the unanimous view of the Judges of the Nizamat Adalat.[2]

Meanwhile, Bentinck was anxious to ascertain the possible Indian reaction to the proposed abolition of *sati*. It was believed that the only section of the population from whom danger in the form of insurrection could be apprehended in protest against the proposed measure, was what was called "the native army." Hence, in November 1828, a confidential circular was sent out to fifty-three European officers of the Bengal Army, selected on the basis of long experience and distinguished service, requesting them to state :[3]

> Whether in their opinion, the adoption of public measures for the suppression of the usage of suttee would create surprise or resistance amongst the Hindoos in our ranks or prepare their minds to be practised upon by ill disposed but influential persons, who might avail themselves of such an occurrence to promote their own mischievous purposes.

A similar circular was also issued to a number of European civil officers and non-officials.

The question was also being seriously discussed in the Bengal press. The Anglo-Indian newspapers, particularly the *Bengal Hurkaru*, the *India Gazette*, and the Serampur missionary newspaper the *Samachar Darpan*, were in favour of the immediate and total prohibition of *sati*.[4] The sharp difference of opinion which existed among Bengali Hindus on the subject was fully reflected in their newspapers. Thus, the reformist Hindu newspaper, the *Bengal Herald*, referring

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[1] *Bengal Criminal and Judicial Consultation*, no. 9, 4 December 1829.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, no. 11.

[4] The *India Gazette* reported that the Government had already decided to abolish *sati* and was now considering various "plans and means" for that purpose. It was further stated that "an eminent native philanthropist who has long taken the lead of his countrymen on this great question of humanity and civilized government" (obviously referring to Rammohan Roy), had had a personal discussion with Lord William Bentinck on the subject. *India Gazette*, 27 July 1829.

to the reported rumour regarding the Government's decision on *sati*, observed :[1]

> We believe that many of the Hindoos of Calcutta are decidedly in favour of the determination of Government to put down these sacrifices, but there are no doubt a vast number of natives in the interior who are still wedded to this rite (as they erroneously believe it to be) of their religion. The abolition of the practice will therefore not be unattended without considerable difficulties, and much, we think, of the feasibility of the plan will rest on the character, judgment, and the ability of the public functionaries to whom the execution of these orders are confided.

These sober reflections, however, immediately drew the wrath of the *Samachar Chandrika*, organ of the conservative Hinduism. Referring to the above report regarding the impending Government decision, it noted in its characteristic language that :[2]

> At this awful intelligence we have trembled from head to foot, and are distressed and terrified and astonished, for even under the Moosoolmans our law Shastrus were left untouched.... If then it (*sati*) be abolished, under a just Government, what greater cause of affliction can arise ? On hearing this intelligence we have been seized with such an alarm, that we believed that the Hindoo religion is on its last legs.

The *Samachar Chandrika* then referred to the pledge supposed to have been given by the British Government not to interfere with the religion and custom of the country, and lamented that whenever a new Governor-General arrived, "some fellows who dislike the Hindoo religion, wait upon him, and tell a parcel of lies, about the burning of widows being contrary to Shastrus."[3] The *Chandrika*, however, noted that the Governor-General, "after a diligent search, as soon as he discovers that it (*sati*) is authorised by the shastrus, drops all interference. Thus under each successive Governor has the Hindoo religion

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[1] Quoted in the *India Gazette*, 9 November 1829.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*

escaped."[1] The newspaper was obviously referring to the efforts made by Rammohan Roy and his friends to bring about the abolition of *sati*. After denouncing these persons, "a few pretended Hindoos... who to please the English, condemn the Hindoo shastrus," the *Chandrika* informed the public that "the learned, the wealthy, the virtuous, the noble, the polite, the mild inhabitants of Calcutta," had determined to make a petition to the Governor-General praying that "this holy rite" be preserved.[2] These remarks revealed how the conservative Hindu mind could react to possible Government measures against an ancient custom handed down by tradition.

By November 1829, the Government had already taken the decision to prohibit *sati* by a regulation. In a carefully written minute dated 8 November 1829, Lord William Bentinck set forth the reasons for abolition.[3] He did not believe that the decrease in the number of *satis* during the period 1824-28 was due to the "progress of education and civilization" among the Hindus. He maintained that "though in Calcutta, truth may be said to have made a considerable advance among the higher orders ; yet in respect to the population at large, no change whatever has taken place, and that from these causes at least no hope of the abandonment of the rite can be rationally entertained." He did not agree with those who believed that *sati* could be abolished through indirect measures rather than by an enactment or regulation which might arouse public commotion. He pointed out that he was :

> decidedly in favour of an open, avowed and general prohibition, resting altogether upon the moral goodness of the act, and our power to enforce it, and so decided is my feeling against any half measure, that were I not convinced of the safety of total abolition, I certainly should have advised the cessation of all interference.

Bentinck then referred to the views of H. H. Wilson and Rammohan Roy. Wilson had expressed his opposition to the proposal for the abolition of *sati*. His contention was that it was difficult to prove that *sati* did not form a part of the Hindu religion. He had further argued that the success of the proposed measure would be partial ; that it

[1] Quoted in the *India Gazette*, 9 November 1829.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Bengal Criminal and Judicial Consultation*, no. 10, 4 December 1829.

would promote suspicion among Indians that the British Government was abandoning its hitherto followed policy of non-interference and toleration with regard to the religion of its Indian subjects ; that Indians would being to suspect every action of the Government. Similarly, Rammohan Roy, "a warm advocate for the abolition of suttees," had also advised the Governor-General against direct intervention. The Hindu reformer had suggested that the practice might be suppressed "quickly and unobservedly" by increasing the difficulties, and by the indirect agency of the police. He had further expressed his apprehension that the possible reaction would be that the people would begin to think that the Government's real intention was to force them to give up their own religion and to accept that of their rulers.

Bentinck did not agree with these views. While his conscience would not allow him to make any compromise with inhumanity, his decision was largely the result of a realistic appraisal of the situation. He had before him the relevant facts and opinions on *sati* and, having carefully weighed them, he had come to the conclusion that the prohibition could be enforced without the least danger to British authority. He pointed out that the overwhelming majority of the cases of *sati* occurred in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.[1] The people of these regions, he emphasized, were traditionally peace-loving. He also pointed out, that the zamindari system created by the Permanent Settlement, despite its defects, had one advantage ; it helped in maintaining security in the countryside, because as the very existence of the system was bound up with British power, the zamindars in their own interests were anxious not to disturb the *status quo.*

Bentinck also referred to the fact that the Judges of the Nizamat Adalat and the two Superintendents of Police in the Upper and the Lower Provinces had strongly supported the cause for immediate abolition of *sati*, maintaining that no danger would follow from it. In fact, he believed that "nine tenths" of the officials were in favour of the abolition.

Bentinck pointed out that besides Calcutta and Delhi,[2] *sati* was not allowed in some European settlements such as Chinsurah (Dutch) and Chandernagar (French), and this prohibition had been effected

[1] Of the 463 cases of *sati* reported in 1828, 420 took place in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Of these 287 occurred in the Calcutta division alone.

[2] Sir C. T. Metcalfe while Resident at Delhi, had prohibited the custom in 1814, without encountering any opposition.

without any trouble. Nor could he discern any evidence of direct and organised opposition "bearing the semblance of resistance" in the representation made by a number of conservative Hindus against the proposed measure. From these facts he concluded : "I venture then to think it completely proved that, from the native population, nothing of extensive combination or even of partial opposition may be expected from the abolition."

Turning to the possible reaction in the Indian army to the proposed regulation against *sati*, Bentinck referred to the replies from the Army officers to the confidential circular in which the majority of them had supported abolition. Bentinck, therefore, asserted that in promulgating the regulation for the abolition of *sati* the Government "will only be following, not preceding the tide of public opinion long flowing in this direction."[1]

Other members of the Governor-General's Council, C. T. Metcalfe, W. B. Bayley and Lord Combermere, the Commander-in-chief, expressed their entire concurrence with Bentinck's proposal. Hence, on 4 December 1829, a regulation (Regulation XVII) was passed by the Governor-General-in-Council, declaring *sati* "illegal and punishable by the Criminal Courts" throughout the Presidency of Fort William.[2] The Court of Nizamat Adalat was asked to prepare detailed instructions for the guidance of magistrates and local officers regarding the mode of enforcing the regulation. It was emphasized that in dealing with cases of violation the officers should exercise moderation and avoid forcible means, particularly "during the early period of (its) suppre-

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[1] Bentinck concluded his long minute with these sentiments : "The first and primary object of my heart is the benefit of the Hindoos. I know nothing so important to the improvement of their future condition, as the establishment of a purer morality, whatever their belief, and a more just conception of the will of God. The first step to this better understanding will be dissociation of religious belief and practice from blood and murder. They will then, when no longer under this brutalizing excitement, view with more calmness, acknowledged truths... thus emancipated from those chains and shackles upon their minds and actions, they may no longer continue as they have done, the slaves of every foreign conqueror, but that they may assume their just place among the great families of mankind. I disavow in these remarks or in this measure any view whatever to conversion to our own faith. I write and feel as a Legislator for the Hindoos, and as I believe many enlightened Hindoos think and feel."

[2] For full text of the regulation see R. Clarke (ed.), *Regulations of the Government of Fort William in Bengal* etc., ii, 878-80.

ssion when great allowance is to be made for the feelings and prejudices of the people."[1]

Subsequent events proved the complete success of Bentinck's measure. It was immediately received with great public enthusiasm. Addresses on behalf of the Hindu, Muslim and Christian inhabitants were prepared "to thank the Governor-General for having passed this long-wished-for Regulation."[2] It is interesting to note the reaction particularly of the Bengali Hindus to this measure. Radical Hindus were jubilant and their spokesman, the young Anglo-Indian poet Derozio, composed a poem to commemorate the occasion.[3] Rammohan Roy and his followers, representing reformist Hindu opinion, while advocating social reforms including the abolition of *sati*, did not believe that these could be effected by government legislation. Hence they had been endeavouring patiently, in face of constant attacks from their conservative opponents, to create a climate of public opinion in favour of reform. But once the regulation was passed they gave their whole-hearted support to it. They now hastened to prepare an address on behalf of the Hindus, congratulating the Governor-General for this measure, and sought to obtain the signatures of as many Hindus as possible to signify their representative character. The conservative Hindus, as Bentinck had anticipated, though vehementaly opposed to the abolition of *sati*, did not react violently to the regulation. Their actions were limited to submitting representations and memorials protesting against the Government's measure. And the tone of their remonstrance was that of loyal subjects rather than that of

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[1] *Bengal Criminal and Judicial Consultation*, no. 21A, 4 December 1829.

[2] *India Gazette*, 7 December 1829. It appears that the Muslim address was not presented.

[3] Stanza 3.

"BENTINCK, be thine the everlasting meed
The heart's full homage still is virtue's claim,
And it's the good man's ever-honored deed
Which gives an immortality to fame :
Transient and fierce though dazzling is the flame
That glory lights upon the wastes of war :
Nations unborn shall venerate THY name,
A triumph than conqueror's mightier far ;
Thy memory shall be blest, as is the morning star."

India Gazette, 10 December 1829.

rebels.[1] For a time the Hindus of Calcutta, both reformers and their opponents, were engaged in a signature-collecting campaign in support of their respective petititions.

The Government could not remain disinterested in this situation. In fact, public reaction to the regulation was being carefully watched. Officials and individual Englishmen who were anxious to see the regulation work smoothly, actively encouraged those Hindus who were willing to support the Government measure publicly. Thus, James Calder, a Calcutta merchant,[2] in a letter to Captain Benson, Military Secretary to Bentinck, noted that :[3]

> Ramchandra Sarma head pundit of the College (Sanskrit College) who is of Rammohoun Roy's school and was expected to sign the address of the abolitionists has been prevailed upon to sign the anti abolition petition, but I am afraid his real sentiments are with the abolitionists. Ramcomul Sen is leading away all those connected with the College to oppose the abolition out of compliment to H. H. Wilson to whom he owes many things.

Calder further observed that Prasannakumar Tagore, cousin of Dwarkanath Tagore, who was "remarkably intelligent and better informed in English literature than his brother (cousin)" was another "useful opponent of the suttee."[4] In another letter Calder informed Benson that he had "just ascertained from Dwarkanath Tagore that the head Pundit of the Supreme Court, Ramjoy Tarkalunkur", son of the famous pandit Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, "declaring himself openly

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[1] Thus on 19 December 1829, Nilmoni De presented a petition to Captain Benson, Military Secretary to the Governor-General, with a request that it be forwarded to him. The petition was made on behalf of "the Hindoo inhabitants of Calcutta", with the opinions of 121 pandits and extracts from Colebrooke's *Digest of Hindoo Laws* relative to *sati*. The main arguments contained in the petition were that *sati* formed an integral part of the Hindu religious and social system. Its abolition would, therefore, produce serious misgivings among the Hindus regarding the intentions of the Government. De subsequently sought an interview with Bentinck hoping to persuade the latter against the abolition of *sati*. *Bentinck Papers*.

[2] He was a partner in Mackintosh & Company, a well-known English firm.

[3] James Calder to Benson (undated). *Bentinck Papers*.

[4] *Ibid*.

strongly in favour of the abolition and will be happy to avow himself before Lord William and sign the address."[1]

These backstage manoeuvres were important in so far as they revealed the anxiety of the different sections of people, including Government officials, to mobilise public opinion in support of or in opposition to a particular act of Government.

During this time Rammohan Roy, it appears, was in close touch with the Government House. Bentinck wished to utilise Rammohan's influence not only in obtaining public support for the measure against *sati*, but also to neutralise the opposition. Thus, James Calder who appears to have been very active in ascertaining the views of the Hindu leaders of Calcutta and passing them on to the Government House, informed Bentinck's Private Secretary that he had learnt from Rammohan Roy that Kalinath Roychaudhry, a leading zamindar and philanthropist was also "a bold and independent supporter of the abolition of suttees."[2]

Bentinck had decided to meet personally the representatives of the various sections of people who wished to present him with addresses or petitions regarding the abolition of *sati*. As noted before, conservative Hindu leaders of Calcutta were already preparing a petition protesting against the anti-*sati* regulation. It is significant that it was through Rammohan Roy that a meeting between Bentinck and the representatives of the conservative Hindus was arranged.[3] On 14 January 1830, a number of Hindu leaders, Gopimohan Deb, Radhakanta Deb, Nilmoni De, Bhabanicharan Mitra and a few others, were called at the Government House where they presented a petition to the Governor-General. It appears that Rammohan Roy had some misapprehension regarding the behaviour of the Calcutta Hindus on this occasion. He had advised Captain Benson "to take necessary measures to prevent a mob or more people getting into the Government House."[4] He also seems to have given the Governor-General some sort of briefing, as to how to deal with these petitioners. For instance, he wrote to Bentinck :[5]

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[1] James Calder to Benson (undated). *Bentinck Papers*. As has been noted, the Pandit's father had in 1817 declared that *sati* did not form a part of the Hindu religion.

[2] Calder to Benson (undated). *Bentinck Papers*.

[3] Rammohan Roy to Benson, 14 January 1830. *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Rammohan Roy to Bentinck, 14 January 1830. *Ibid.*

> Your Lordship will perceive how your Predecessors were politicians and how cautiously they acted.... You may without hesitation promulgate the Regulation.... I assume that you will settle the point against all sorts of impediments and save yourself harmless – and send my friends [away] satisfied. If your immediate shortness of time may not allow you, you can lay the Petition under consideration till you return from your circuit.

The arguments contained in the conservative Hindu petition[1] were typical. The petitioners regretted that the Government had thought it necessary to abolish the custom of *sati* and thus abandon the hitherto followed policy of non-interference on the advice of a few Hindu reformers. Denouncing these persons because they had "apostatized from the religion of their forefathers", and had "defiled themselves by eating and drinking forbidden things in the society of Europeans", the petitioners pointed out that these men had misrepresented to the Government that *sati* was not enjoined by the Hindu religion. They expressed their resentment that the Government had been led to pass the measure against *sati* which would "be regarded with horror and dismay throughout the Company's dominions as the signal for an universal attack upon all we revere."

In his reply to the petitioners,[2] Bentinck reiterated his conviction that *sati* could not have been enjoined by the Hindu religion ; that the religious writings of the Hindus did not command women to destroy themselves after the death of their husbands ; that "the choice of a life of strict and severe morality is everywhere expressly offered." Bentinck was thus echoing the arguments put forward by the Hindu reformers. Refuting the petitioners' contention that his Government by passing the regulation against *sati*, was abandoning the policy of non-interference so long followed by his predecessors in office, Bentinck pointed out that the preceding Governors-General had, at different times, found it necessary to prohibit certain customs and usages, "for the security of human life, and the preservation of social order." With regard to *sati* Bentinck asserted that it was "an urgent duty of the British Government to prevent the usage." However, he assured the

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[1] *Government Gazette*, 18 January 1830. For full text see Appendix IV.
[2] *Ibid.*

petitioners that if they wished to make an appeal to the Privy Council in England against the Government measure, he would "be most happy to forward" it.

On 16 January 1830, Bentinck received two addresses of congratulation on the abolition of *sati*. One was from Rammohan Roy and his friends on behalf of the "native inhabitants of Calcutta and its vicinity"; and the other from the Christian inhabitants, to both of which he made suitable replies.[1]

Bentinck's measure was fully supported by the authorities in England. Both William Astell,[2] Chairman of the Court of Directors, and Charles Grant,[3] President of the Board of Control, congratulated him on the success of the measure.

Meanwhile, conservative Hindus had resolved to make a petition to the Privy Council against Bentinck's regulation. They obtained the services of an English barrister, Francis Bathie, who was sent to London with the petition. The case was presented before the Privy Council in June 1832, but was dismissed.[4] "The rejection of the petition", it was noted, "was not followed by any excitement : an easy and sullen suspicion of the objects and intentions of the British Government continued for a while to pervade a considerable portion of the Hindu population, but it never assumed the form of popular agitation."[5]

The abolition of *sati* was Bentinck's greatest achievement. He succeeded where his predecessors had failed. His humanitarian and Utilitarian outlook[6] convinced him that a cruel custom like *sati* could never be a part of any moral order. Bentinck was the first Governor-General who seriously considered the necessity of consulting public opinion on matters relating to public affairs.[7]

The opposition of the conservative Hindus towards the abolition of *sati* was a half-hearted one. Many Hindu zamindars had opposed the abolition not wholly out of religious considerations. They were already dissatisfied by the Government policy regarding rent-free lands.

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[1] *Government Gazette*, 18 January 1830.

[2] William Astell to Bentinck, 3 June 1830. *Bentinck Papers*.

[3] Charles Grant thought that the measure "would of itself be enough to immortalise a Government." Charles Grant to Bentinck, 20 October 1831. *Ibid.*

[4] *Asiatic Journal* (New Series), viii, 32, August 1832, 223-24.

[5] H. H. Wilson (ed.), *Mill's History of British India*, ix, 274.
George D. Bearce, "Lord William Bentinck Bentick : The Application of Liberalism in India", *Journal of Modern History*, xviii, 3, September 1956, 237.
See above, pp. 3-4.

In the abolition of *sati* they found an opportunity to express their discontent. But, as already noted,[1] their disaffection could never assume the character of open hostility to the Government. There were, again, many Hindus who were opposed to Government action not because they believed sincerely that *sati* formed an integral part of the Hindu religion. They had, in fact, failed to produce strong arguments in support of this contention, and the custom itself was not generally observed in their own families. Their opposition largely grew out of feelings of communal pride and vanity when they found that foreigners and *mlecchas* were seeking to meddle in the affairs of their own religion. They were bitterly critical of Rammohan Roy and those who stood for reform, because they had dared to wash dirty linen in public.

The abolition of *sati*, however, contributed to strengthening the cause of Hindu conservatism. Purged of a revolting custom, Hinduism now could be made to appear less offensive to its enemies. The activities of Hindu reformers and radicals, the Christian missionary propaganda, and the Government measure against *sati*, all tended to bring together orthodox Hindus under one banner. By January 1830, the *Dharma Sabha* had been formed to defend the old order against the encroachment of those who stood for the new.[2] Confusion in the ranks of the reformers helped the cause of the conservatives. Notwithstanding their remonstrance against Government policy, the Conservatives assiduously sought and obtained Government patronage. This dual policy served to strengthen their hold upon Hindu society. Later in the next decades, through the rapid growth of education, Hindu conservatism evolved a *rationale* more in accord with the social ideas of the age. But it could not completely get away from the contradictions that lurked within it. The result was the rise of a Hindu revivalist movement which was to play an important part in the development of Indian nationalism.[3]

At a time when nationalism was a far cry, Indians of different sections and communities, however, could on occasion, stand together

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[1] See above, p. 124-25.

[2] See above, p. 34.

[3] Bankimchandra Chatterji (1838-94) is a typical example of this social phenomenon. While his writings indicate the profound influence of contemporary European thought, they also reveal his deep attachment to traditional Hindu ideas and, also, almost blind hatred for the Muslims.

in matters of general interest, and express a common opinion in public according to English constitutional practice. This was illustrated by the petition on behalf of the inhabitants of Calcutta addressed to Parliament protesting against certain provisions of the Jury Act of 1826. By this Act the Indian inhabitants of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were, for the first time, made eligible for appointment as Jurors.[1] But the Act contained certain provisions which marred the benefits which it sought to confer. Thus, while it made Indians eligible for appointment as Petty Jurors, none but Christians could serve on Grand Juries. Again, even in cases involving Christian offenders, the Petty Juries would consist entirely of Christians.[2] This discrimination, based solely on grounds of religion, was considered particularly galling by the literate and well-to-do sections of Calcutta. In August 1828, a petition signed by one hundred and twenty-eight Hindus and one hundred and sixteen Muslims was addressed to Parliament on behalf of the inhabitants of Calcutta.[3] The representative character of the petition can hardly be doubted. Unlike the petitions made by the zamindars in 1829 protesting against the resumption proceedings,[4] or those of 1835 relating to the new education policy,[5] this petition did not represent the interests of a particular group or community, but, in fact, reflected the sentiments of the most influential sections of the people of Calcutta, both Hindus and Muslims.[6]

The petition, therefore, is an important document on public opinion. It reveals how an important section of population could be aroused on a matter affecting public interest. The petitioners bitterly complained against the provision of the Act by which they were exclud-

[1] The inhabitants of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were subject to English criminal law which included the system of trial by jury. But till 1826 only Europeans were appointed on Juries.

[2] "An Act to Regulate the Appointment of Juries in the East Indies", section III, 5 May 1826. See *Acts Relating to India 1697-1850*, Collection no. 1, Record Department (Parliamentary Branch), India Office Library, 317-18.

[3] *India Gazette*, 11 August 1828 ; also the *Journal of the House of Commons*, 1829, 84, 384-85. For full text see Appendix V.

[4] See above, p. 120.

[5] See below, p. 186.

[6] When the petition was presented to the House of Commons on 5 June 1829, Thomas Cutlar Fergusson who had spent many years in Calcutta as a practising barrister testified "to the respectability of the petition which included among its signatures all the natives of wealth and talent in Calcutta." *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (New Series), xxi, 1755.

ed from "the honourable right" of serving on Grand Juries, and were debarred from sitting as Petty Jurors in the trial of Christians, while there was no provision in the Act to prevent a Hindu or Muslim being tried by a Jury composed wholly of Christians. They boldly asserted that they had "a right to complain of these enactments" which they believed resulted from ignorance on the part of the British Parliament regarding conditions in India. The petitioners further pointed out that the Act was "unpopular with the respectable natives of Calcutta" and maintained that "no Hindoo or Mahommedan inhabitant will willingly serve as a Juror in any capacity", in protest against unjust discrimination. Drawing the attention of Parliament to the position of Indians under British rule, the petitioners deplored that "the better classes of the natives" were placed "in a state of political degradation" which was "absolutely without a parallel in their former history." They pointed out that even under Muslim rulers the Hindus "were not only capable but did fill numerous employments of trust, dignity and emoluments, from which under the existing system of the Honourable Company's Government they were absolutely shut out."

The petitioners were thus complaining not only against certain discriminating clauses of the Jury Act ; they were protesting against the exclusion of Indians in general from all responsible offices under the Government. These sentiments reveal the nature of the discontent among a growing section of Indians, which was aggravated, if not promoted, by the resentment of the zamindars against the Government's revenue policy. The petition was the first Indian public indictment of British rule.

The petition was laid before the House of Commons on 5 June 1829, by Charles Wynn, President of the Board of Control.[1] In the course of his speech Wynn admitted the injustices done to the Indians in the matter of public employment, and concluded that "although he was most favourable to the object of the petitioners, he did not regret that the privilege in question was not granted until it had been asked for ; as it could not be before known whether it would be considered as a boon or a burthen."[2]

While Parliament was thus willing to consider the petition favourably, the Court of Directors expressed their opposition to it.

[1] *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (New Series), xxi, 1754.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1755.

They pleaded caution in dealing with Indian affairs. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Court in a letter to the President of the Board of Control, sought to justify the discrimination with regard to the appointment of Indian jurors on the ground that "the idea of being tried by Hindoo or Mussulman jurors must be intolerable to every Englishman."[1] But this view was not accepted by Charles Grant, the new President of the Board of Control. At the latter's initiative a bill was eventually passed by Parliament in August 1832, which not only repealed the discriminatory provisions of the Jury Act of 1826, but made Indians eligible for appointment as Justices of the Peace.[2]

[1] Robert Campbell and John G. Ravenshaw to Charles Grant, 8 December 1831, *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, xxxi, 3.

[2] "An Act to amend the Law relating to the Appointment of Justices of the Peace, and of Juries, in the *East Indies*", 16 August 1832 ; see *Acts Relating to India 1697-1850*, op. cit. 1037-38.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC OPINION : THE REACTION TO EDUCATION POLICY

The first educational institution established by the Government was the Calcutta Madrasa. It was founded by Warren Hastings in 1781 in response to the request of the Muslims of Calcutta.[1] Ten years later the Benares Sanskrit College was established by Jonathan Duncan, Resident at Benares.[2] In establishing these institutions the Government sought to conciliate its Indian subjects.

Although the character of the education imparted in both the Madrasa and the Sanskrit College was largely religious, it nevertheless served secular purpose. The business of revenue and judicial administration was still conducted in the Persian language. In the administration of justice Hindu and Muslim legal systems were generally followed. The Government, therefore, needed trained Hindu and Muslim young men to fill subordinate positions in the administration.[3] The two Government institutions, in fact, were suited for this purpose.

But while the Government was not yet prepared to assume the responsibility of promoting education amongst its Indian subjects, a strong evangelical movement had been putting pressure upon the British Parliament to send out missionaries and teachers to India. Charles Grant, a retired official of the East India Company, and afterwards a member of the Court of Directors and also of Parliament, was one of the leaders of this movement, which came to be known as the Clapham sect.[4] In 1792 Grant had written a remarkable treatise entitled *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to morals ; and on the means of improving it*, which he submitted to the Court of Directors and

[1] Minute by Warren Hastings, 17 April 1781. *Selections from Educational Records*, i, 7-9.

[2] Letter from J. Duncan to Lord Cornwallis, 1 January 1792. *Ibid.*, i, 10-11.

[3] C. E. Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India* (London 1838), 2.

[4] So called after the name of the area in London where Grant and his friends lived.

Parliament in 1797.[1] In this treatise Grant had rather grossly over-emphasized the moral degradation of the Indians and sought to draw the attention of the English public authorities to the need for imparting education to them. Education, however, according to Grant's conception, was linked up with Christianity, and educating Indians would prepare them for the acceptance of it.[2] But neither the Court of Directors nor Parliament was willing to assume any responsibility in this regard, in accordance with the declared policy of non-interference with Indian religion and society.[3]

In fact, till 1813 the East India Company was "suspicious, if not hostile" to English missionary efforts in India.[4] But, despite Government reluctance to assume any responsibility with regard to education, the problem could not be entirely ignored.[5] The establishment of the College of Fort William in Calcutta in 1800 by Lord Wellesley was itself a landmark in the history of Indian education. Although this institution was designed with the sole purpose of training young civil servants of the Company in the laws and languages of India, it undoubtedly gave a great impetus to the cause of Indian learning. Between 1800 and 1805 the College had on its staff no less than one hundred and ten Indian scholars who, besides acting as teachers and translators, were also engaged in "composing original works in the Oriental Languages."[6] There was, again, another aspect of the question which could not be ignored. The Vellore Mutiny (1806) had revealed unmistakably the inherent weakness of British power in India which, being an alien despotism, had no roots in the soil. Some Englishmen, particularly the missionaries, therefore felt that the spread of Christianity and English education in India could provide the necessary links between the rulers and the ruled. In 1813 Joshua Marshman of the Baptist Missionary Society published a pamphlet in which he stressed

[1] Although written in 1792 this tract was printed in 1797 for private circulation. Later it was printed in Parliamentary Papers in 1813 and 1832. See *P.P.H.C.*, 1812-13, x, 282 and *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, viii, 734.

[2] B. T. McCully, *English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism* (New York 1940), 12.

[3] For impact of Grant's *Observations* on British public opinion see A.T. Embree, *Charles Grant and British Rule in India* (London 1962), 155-57.

[4] P. Hartog, *Some Aspects of Indian Education, Past and Present* (Oxford 1939), 5.

[5] It should be noted, however, that at this time the Government in England itself did not show much concern to promote education.

[6] C. Buchanan, *The College of Fort William in Bengal* (London 1805), 239.

the need for propagating Christianity in India to secure British interests.[1] This pamphlet was written in reply to the criticism which had appeared in several tracts published in England after the Vellore Mutiny, in which the uprising was ascribed to the reaction caused by missionary activities.[2] In his pamphlet Marshman asserted that he was "fully convinced that one of the most effectual means of perpetuating the British dominion in India will be the calm and silent, but steady and constant, diffusion of Christian light among the natives."[3] He pointed out :

> Every converted Hindoo or Mussulman is necessarily the cordial friend of the British, on the ground of his own interest and security ; for on the continuance of their empire in India his very existence depends.... What a powerful counterpoise in favour of the British Government would be created in India, even by the partial progress of Christianity ! Say, that of the millions of Hindoostan, only five hundred thousand persons had embraced Christianity: who can calculate the value of five hundred thousand such friends, thus united to us, both by inclination and interest, and scattered up and down throughout the British dominions in India ?

Thus the need to create a stable social basis for British rule in India was emphasized. Although officially the British Government did not accept these views, they may well have exercised some influence in the making of its policy towards India. In fact, the Charter Act of 1813 included two important clauses, educational and ecclesiastical. The former provided that in the event of a surplus in the revenue "a sum of not less than one lack (lakh) of rupees each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction

[1] J. Marshman, *Advantages of Christianity in Promoting the Establishment and Prosperity of the British Government in India, containing remarks occasioned by reading a memoir on the Vellore mutiny* (London 1813).

[2] Of these tracts the following had drawn much attention : T. Twining, *Letter on the Danger of Interfering in the Religious Opinions of the Natives of India* (London 1807) ; *Vindication of the Hindoos* by "a Bengal Officer" (London 1808); J. Scott-Warring, *Remarks on the Rev. Doctor Buchanan's Christian Researches in Asia* (London 1813).

[3] J. Marshman, *op. cit.*, 6.

and promotion of a knowledge of sciences" among the Company's Indian subjects.[1] The ecclesiastical clause provided for the establishment of a Bishopric for the whole of British territories in India and one Archdeaconry for each of the three presidencies, Bengal, Madras and Bombay. The salaries of the Bishop (£5,000 per year) and the Archdeacons (£2,000 each) were to be paid out of the Indian revenue.[2]

Even before the passing of the Charter Act of 1813, the Government of the East India Company had been contemplating some measures to promote education among Indians. The Governor-General, Lord Minto, in a minute dated 6 March 1811, deplored the decay of learning in India and pointed out the evils which resulted from it.[3] He in fact proposed the establishment of four new Colleges, two for the promotion of Sanskrit learning, and two for Arabic and Persian. The Sanskrit Colleges were to be located one at Nadia (Bengal) and the other at a place in Tirhut district (Bihar) ; while the Muslim institutions were to be established at Jaunpur (Bihar) and at a place "in the ceded and conquered Provinces."[4] The proposal, however, was not put into effect for want of sanction from the Court of Directors.

The East India Company's duty to promote education among its Indian subjects was for the first time publicly acknowledged in the educational clause of the Charter Act of 1813. In a despatch dated 3 June 1814, the Court of Directors explained its implications to the Governor-General. The Court, however, discouraged the establishment of institutions of the Western type and suggested that the traditional Indian system of imparting education by teachers at their own houses should be encouraged.[5] They urged the Government to direct its attention "in an especial manner to Benares" and devise ways and means to promote the study of different branches of Sanskrit literature.[6]

This despatch of the Court of Directors indicated that if the Company's Government had anything to do with regard to education,

[1] 53 Geo. III. Cap. 155. Clause XLIII. A lakh of rupees amounts to Rs. 100,000. Considering the fact that the exchange value of the rupee has varied greatly this amount in 1813 may be taken as equivalent to anything between £10,000 and £6,500. See A. Mayhew, *Education of India* (London 1926), 290.

[2] *Ibid.* Clause XLIX.

[3] *S.E.R.*, i, 19.

[4] *Ibid.*, 20, 21.

[5] *Public Despatch to Bengal*, 3 June 1814, paras 13, 14.

[6] *Ibid.*, para 16.

it was to promote 'Oriental' learning in preference to 'Western' learning. It also revealed a shift of emphasis from Persian to Sanskrit. It was indeed significant that the above despatch did not contain any reference to Persian or Arabic literature. This omission, however, could be explained by the fact that the feeling might have gained ground among the Company's authorities that, in comparison to the position of Persian and Arabic, the ancient Sanskrit literature venerated by the majority of their Indian subjects was suffering from neglect for want of sufficient patronage.

Despite the official interest which the East India Company had now begun to take in the matter of Indian education, nothing positive was actually done until 1823, when the General Committee of Public Instruction was established. Lord Hastings, the Governor-General (1813-23), seemed to be aware of the educational responsibilities of the Government. Thus, in a minute dated 2 October 1815, he referred to "the important object of public education" as a means for removing the various evils of Indian society, and stressed the need for helping "the humble but valuable class of village schoolmasters."[1] He advocated moral instruction without any bias in favour of a particular creed.[2] Hastings was apparently apprehensive of the activities of the European missionaries who were rendering valuable service to education by establishing a number of improved elementary schools, but whose proselytizing zeal had led them to vehemently denounce the Indian religions and had aroused widespread suspicion against them. Hastings believed that the only way the missionaries could hope for any success was by attempting "to open the minds of the rising generation by due instructiion."[3]

In spite of these noble sentiments, however, the Government of Lord Hastings was not able to undertake any substantial measure to promote education. Nevertheless, during the period of his Governor-Generalship, several independent and non-official efforts were made with Government encouragement to improve education in Bengal.

In July 1814, a Christian missionary, Robert May, established a school at Chinsurah based on the monitorial system as developed by the English educationist, Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838). It was a system

[1] Minute by Lord Hastings (Moira), 2 October 1815 on the Judicial administration of the Presidency of Fort William, paras 119, 120. *S. E. R.*, i, 24.

[2] *Ibid.*, para 121, 25.

[3] *Ibid.*, para 122, 25.

under which senior students taught their juniors. This system had gained popularity in England at this time. May's school was a great success and he soon established a number of affiliated schools in the villages around Chinsurah. It was reported that by 1815 there were not less than 800 children in all these schools where they were taught reading, writing and arithmetic in the Bengali language.[1] In 1815 the Government sanctioned a monthly grant of six hundred rupees for the purpose of establishing schools according to the plan introduced by May who was put in charge of the project.[2] Some more schools were thus started under May's supervision within the next few months. These schools came to be known as "the Company's schools" and, by September 1815, the total number of students attending these schools was estimated to be one thousand two hundred and ninety-six.[3] In 1816, May had established a separate school for teachers and also suggested that efforts should be made so that every village could support its own school.[4] The Government had now raised the monthly grant to May's schools from six hundred rupees to eight hundred rupees. At the time of his death in August 1818, May had founded thirty-six schools which had a total attendance of three thousand students, both Hindus and Muslims. In the school for teachers there were more than two hundred and twenty-six scholars.[5] The success of the Chinsurah schools clearly showed the increasing demand for an improved system of education even outside Calcutta. The fact that students came from different castes and communities also indicated that caste and religion were no strong barrier to education.

The establishment of the Calcutta Hindu College (1816), the Calcutta School-Book Society (1817) and the Calcutta School Society (1818) also illustrated that the leaders of the different sections of opinion in Bengal were becoming aware of their social responsibilities to promote education among the people irrespective of what the Government was doing in this regard. Although Lord Hastings' Government did not actually undertake any measure of its own to promote education, it nevertheless, encouraged and supported every significant effort made by non-officials, both Indians and Europeans, in that direction.

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[1] Extract from Thomas Fisher's Memoir, *P.P.H.C*, 1831-32, ix. 7351, 403.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, 404.

Till 1823, the Government, in fact, was more concerned with improving the existing institutions than with creating new ones. Its attention was naturally turned to the Calcutta Madrasa, whose condition was not very satisfactory. In 1785 the Government had issued an instruction that vacancies in the *Faujdari* (criminal) Courts should be filled from qualified students from the Madrasa.[1] In 1788, Muhammad Muiz-ud-din, who had been appointed superior or guardian of the Madrasa, was dismissed on account of "mismanagement and misconduct" and the post itself was abolished.[2] The Governor-General, Sir John Shore, took over the administration of the Madrasa's funds while the internal management of the institution was entrusted to Maulvi Majiduddin, the head preceptor.[3] But the condition of the Madrasa continued to deteriorate and in 1791 it was discovered that some of its students were "persons of most depraved characters." This state of affairs was attributed to the neglect of duty on the part of Majiduddin who was dismissed and a new preceptor was appointed.[4] The Government then decided that the future administration of the institution should be in the hands of a committee of superintendence consisting of the Acting President of the Board of Revenue, the Persian translator to the Government, and the Preparer of reports.[5]

The Madrasa comprised of five classes, and each student received a monthly grant of Rupees 15, 10, 8, 7 or 6 according to his class. The Committee of Superintendence was to regulate the number of students to be taken, and it was resolved that all surplus funds should be used for the purchase of books.[6]

But the Madrasa did not show any signs of improvement. It was therefore decided in 1819 to appoint a European Secretary to supervise its internal administration.[7] Capt. F. Irvine was appointed to this post. Soon he found out that the library of the Madrasa "laboured under a remarkable poverty of books ; its stock consisting of only twelve volumes, of which number, not four were of standard celebrity or general utility."[8] Hence the Committee of Superintendence re-

[1] *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, ix, 7351, 397.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*, 398.
[8] *Ibid.*

commended that the whole savings of the year 1820, which amounted to Rs. 818-3-7. be appropriated towards building up "a respectable library of Arabic and Persian works." This proposal was accepted by the Government.[1]

The repeated intervention of the Government in the affairs of the Madrasa ever since it was established not only indicated the anxiety of the Government to maintain this institution. It also afforded a striking illustration of the general apathy of the Muslims towards education. The state to which the Madrasa, the only institution of higher learning for the Muslims in Bengal, had been reduced by 1819 was an index of the prevailing Muslim attitude.

Lord Minto's proposal for the establishment of two Sanskrit Colleges at Nadia and Tirhut had not been carried out. Instead, the Government had, by 1821, resolved to establish a College for Sanskrit studies in Calcutta upon a larger scale, which would serve as the Hindu counterpart of the Madrasa.[2]

This decision to establish a Sanskrit College in Calcutta marked the strong influence in the Government of the so-called Orientalists whose views coincided with those expressed in the Court of Directors' despatch of 1814.

The foundation stone of the new Sanskrit College was laid in 1821 and an annual grant of thirty thousand rupees was sanctioned by the Government for its maintenance. A Committee of Superintendence, which included the noted Sanskrit scholar H. H. Wilson, was formed, with a European Secretary. The institution was to consist of fourteen Pandits, a librarian, servants, and one hundred scholars on the foundation.[3]

The original intention of the Government in taking the decision to establish this institution was revealed in a resolution passed by the Governor-General-in-Council on 21 August 1821 which stated *inter alia* :[4]

> ... the immediate object of the institution is the cultivation of Hindu literature. Yet it is in the judgment of His Lordship in Council, a purpose of much deeper interest to seek every

[1] *P.P.H.C.*, 1831-32, ix, 7351, 398.
[2] *Ibid.*, 402.
[3] *S.E.R.*, i, 79.
[4] *Ibid.*

> practicable means of effecting the gradual diffusion of European knowledge. It seems indeed no unreasonable anticipation to hope that if the higher and the educated classes among the Hindoos shall, through the medium of their sacred language, be imbued with a taste for the European literature and science, general acquaintance with these and with the language whence they are drawn, will be as surely and as extensively communicated as by any attempt at direct instruction by other and humble seminaries.

Here indeed was the theoretical basis of the policy propounded by 'the Orientalists' like H. H. Wilson, who maintained that the way to reach the people was through the classes already educated.[1] Western science and learning were to be promoted only through those who were acquainted with Eastern traditional learning. In fact, the Government went ahead with the plan to establish the Sanskrit College, which was formally opened on 1 January 1824.

With the establishment of the General Committee of Public Instruction in July 1823, a significant step was taken by the Government to promote education. The Committee was asked to enquire into the state of learning in the Bengal Presidency and also to suggest to the Government "such measures, as it may appear expedient to adopt with a view to the better instruction of the people, to the introduction among them of useful knowledge and to the improvement of their moral character."[2] It was decided to place at the Committee's disposal, in addition to the sum of one lakh of rupees per annum, sanctioned by the Act of 1813, any other amount set apart for the purpose.[3] The Committee was to exercise superintendence over all Government institutions, and was also asked to give assistance and encouragement to the private schools in any way it considered suitable. The personnel of the Committee of Public Instruction would suggest the strong influence in the Government of those officials who favoured the conservative line. Holt Mackenzie, Secretary to the Government in the Territorial Department, and a member of the Committee of Public Instruction, in a lengthy note dated 17 July 1823, fully explained their point of

[1] P. Hartog, *op. cit.*, 16.
[2] Resolution dated 17 July 1823. *S. E. R.*, i, 53.
[3] *Ibid.*

view.[1] He thought that the Government "should apply itself chiefly to the instruction of those who will themselves be teachers... and to the translation, compilation and publication of useful works." He suggested that the immediate concern of the Government should be to provide instruction for "what may be called the educated and influential classes." He believed that Western knowledge "should descend from the higher or educated classes and gradually spread through their example." He advocated "association of Oriental with European science, and the gradual introduction of the latter, without any attempt arbitrarily to supersede the former." Hence he suggested the establishment of two or more Sanskrit Colleges and one Madrasa on the above lines. In September 1823, H. H. Wilson, the Secretary to the Committee of Public Instruction, sent out a circular letter to the districts asking for detailed information on the state of education in those areas.[2] The Committee now confidently proceeded to implement the measures outlined in Holt Mackenzie's note.

Meanwhile certain developments had taken place both in India and England which rather threatened to upset the plans of the Committee. In December 1823 Rammohan Roy addressed a letter to Lord Amherst, the Governor-General, in which on behalf of his countrymen, while welcoming Government interest in education, he disapproved of its policy, and particularly of the proposal regarding the establishment of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta.[3] Rammohan's chief arguments were that Sanskrit learning resembled the pre-Baconian scholastic learning of medieval Europe ; he apprehended that the plan to establish a Sanskrit College could "only be expected to lead the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practicable use to the possessors or to society." He therefore made a fervent appeal to the Government to :

> promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy with other useful sciences which may be accomplished with the sum proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe, and providing a College furnished with the necessary books instruments and other apparatus.

[1] Note dated 17 July 1823 by Holt Mackenzie. *S.E.R.*, i, 57-64.
[2] *Ibid.*, 69.
[3] *Ibid.*, 99.

This remarkable letter was forwarded by Lord Amherst to the Committee of Public Instruction for its consideration. But the Committee dominated by the 'Orientalists' seemed to ignore it. Consequently, the letter remained unanswered, and the new Sanskrit College was established.[1]

In fairness to the Committee, however, it should be pointed out that Rammohan Roy's remonstrance, though in itself a significant manifestation of a new trend in Indian opinion, was nevertheless based on a superficial understanding of Government policy. Perhaps it was the fault of the Government that it did not deem it necessary to keep the public, at least the educated section of it, sufficiently informed of its education policy which, however, was still in its formative stage. In fact, the comprehensive plan of education which the Committee of Public Instruction was drawing up did not exclude Rammohan Roy's positive suggestion of establishing an "English College" for higher education in Western science and literature.[2] Although Rammohan Roy's letter of protest was "the first shot fired in the Anglo-Orientalist conflict",[3] it should be remembered that the differences which subsequently developed between the 'Anglicists' and the 'Orientalists' were more with regard to the means than to the end. Both the parties agreed that the chief purpose of education was the promotion of useful knowledge, and by useful knowledge they meant knowledge as developed in the West. The over-zealous 'Anglicists' were obsessed with the idea that everything in the East was bad and everything in the West good, an attitude which made them impatient in their demand for the wholesale replacement of Indian learning by Western learning. The over-cautious 'Orientalists', on the other hand, approached the problem with a fixed notion. They failed to appreciate the changes which were taking place in the minds of the articulate sections of the Indian community. They refused to recognise the important fact that the demand for English education was growing not only among the upper and middle classes of Bengali Hindus of Calcutta, but also among those belonging to the more numerous poorer classes even in the countryside, who seemed to be realising the practical utility of English education. The conviction was gaining ground that a knowledge of

[1] C. E. Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, 71.

[2] *Letter from Bengal*, 27 January 1826, para 61.

[3] B. K. Boman-Behram, *Educational Controversies in India* (Bombay 1943), 55. Also A. Mayhew, *op. cit.*, 12.

the language of the rulers was a sure means of acquiring prosperity. It is indeed significant that no conservative Hindu came forward to oppose Rammohan Roy's proposal to the Government to establish a College exclusively devoted to the promotion of European learning in place of the Sanskrit College which the Government had proposed to build, at a time when the reformer's comments on any question relating to social or religious reform scarcely went unchallenged. It would, however, be too rash to surmise that the conservative Hindus approved Rammohan Roy's condemnations of Sanskrit literature. On the contrary, they were undoubtedly happy at the Government's patronage of it. What they probably wanted was that, besides patronising Sanskrit, the Government should also offer more facilities for the learning of English.

The education policy of the Government drew sharp criticism from another quarter equally unexpected. Until now the Government had been actually endeavouring to implement the suggestions contained in the Court of Directors' despatch of 1814 which formed the basis of the 'Orientalist' policy. But from 1819 new influences were at work at India House with the appointment of James Mill, the Utilitarian philosopher, as assistant to the Examiner of India correspondence.[1] In his official position Mill was exercising a considerable influence on his superiors in policy making. The Utilitarian influence at the India House was further strengthened with the appointment in May 1823 of the philospher's brilliant son, John Stuart Mill, as a junior clerk in the Examiner's office under his father. The Court of Directors' despatch of 18 February 1824, addressed to the Governor-General of Bengal, clearly indicated the new spirit which permeated the Home Government.[2] In this despatch the Court did not conceal their utter scepticism regarding the success of the Bengal Government's education policy. Referring to the Government's plan of combining Eastern and Western learning the Court pointed out that so far as the sciences were concerned "it is worse than a waste of time to employ persons either to teach or to learn them in the state in which they are found in the Oriental books."[3] They condemned the Government's plan of

[1] At the time of his death in 1836 he had become by gradual promotion, Examiner of India Correspondence and head of the department. See *Dictionary of National Biography* (London 1894), xxxvii, 385.

[2] George D. Bearce, *British Attitudes towards India 1784-1858* (Oxford 1961), 282.

[3] *Despatch to Bengal*, 18 February 1824, para 82.

establishing Oriental institutions as "originally and fundamentally erroneous."[1] In typical Utilitarian phraseology the despatch emphasized that "the great end should not have been to teach Hindoo learning, but useful learning."[2] The Court warned the Bengal Government that in establishing institutions "for the purpose of teaching mere Hindoo, or mere Mahomedan literature, you bound yourself to teach a great deal of what was frivolous, not a little of what was purely mischievous and a small remainder indeed in which utility was in any way concerned."[3]

Nevertheless, the Court of Directors did not wholly condemn the Bengal Government's education policy. They were critical only of its operative part. The policy itself, they thought was 'rational'.[4] While it cautioned against introducing changes too rapidly, they suggested that the Government should make endeavours "to supersede what is useless, or worse, in the present course of study by what your better knowledge will recommend."[5] The views expressed by the Court were brought to the notice of the Committee of Public Instruction. In a letter addressed to the Governor-General, the Committee fully explained its position. Replying to the criticism contained in the Court's despatch, it pointed out that no particular mode of learning could be imparted to the people unless they were willing to receive it. The Hindus and Muslims had great attachment for their own learning, and if the Government really wished to promote any kind of learning among them it had to take into consideration the sentiments of the people. The Committee further emphasized that the Calcutta Sanskrit College was established in place of two similar institutions which the Government had already promised to establish.[6] The Committee refuted the Court's sweeping observations on the value of Oriental literature and science and concluded :[7]

> We must for the present go with the tide of popular prejudice... the course is by no means unprofitable. At the same time we

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[1] *Despatch to Bengal*, 18 February 1824, para 83.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, para 84.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *S.E.R.*, i, 95.
[7] *Ibid.*, 98.

> are fully aware of the value of those accessions which may be made from European science and literature, to the sum total of Asiatic knowledge, and shall endeavour, in pursuance of the sentiments and intentions of Government, to avail ourselves of every favourable opportunity for introducing them when it can be done without offending the feelings and forfeiting the confidence of those for whose advantage their introduction is designed.

The Court of Directors had no desire to interfere seriously with the policy of the Bengal Government except by offering from time to time suggestions or admonitions of a general nature. They thought it expedient to allow their representatives in India a large measure of freedom to formulate and work out a policy according to the exigencies of the local situation. The Bengal Government was also sufficiently impressed by the arguments put forward by the Committee of Public Instruction in reply to the Court's criticism, and it generally approved of the Committee's actions. To what extent the Committee succeeded in its plans to impart higher education among Indians may be judged by reviewing the progress made by the three principal institutions of Calcutta – the Hindu College, the Madrasa and the Sanskrit College – during the years immediately following its establishment.

One of the earliest acts of the Committee was to go to the assistance of the Hindu College. The affairs of the College were not running smoothly and in 1823 the managers had approached the Government for financial assistance. The Government agreed on condition that the College be opened to inspection. Accordingly, H. H. Wilson, Secretary to the Committee of Public Instruction, was appointed Government Visitor to the Hindu College. He also became the ex-officio member of the Managing Committee of the College. Wilson's appointment gave the Hindu College a new lease of life. He was chiefly responsible for procuring for it generous financial assistance from the Government. Upon the suggestions of the Committee of Public Instruction, a joint building programme for both the Government Sanskrit College and the Hindu College was inaugurated.[1] Measures were also taken for the teaching of Western science to the students of both the institutions. The Committee recommended the appointment of a European Professor for this purpose. In a letter

[1] *S.E.R.*, i, 87.

to the Governor-General, dated 6 October 1823, the Committee confidently expressed the hope that "the union of European and Hindu learning being thus quietly effected in one case, it will hereafter be comparatively easy to carry the combination into other departments, and the improved cultivation of science, and literature may be thus successfully and extensively promoted."[1]

In 1824 on the Committee's recommendation, a new building for the Madrasa was constructed. In a letter to the Court of Directors the Bengal Government reported that the new Madrasa building "promises soon to become no less an ornament to the city, than a striking monument of the interest taken by the British Government in the welfare and moral improvement of its subjects, and the importance which it attaches to the flourishing and respectable condition of an Institution destined for the education of one of the principal and most influential classes of the native population."[2]

The Committee also endeavoured to include European science in the Madrasa curriculum through translation in Arabic and Persian of various English works. One Abdul Rahim, a Muslim scholar with a fairly good knowledge of English, was appointed for this purpose. He undertook to translate the article on Geometry from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* into Persian, *Hutton's Course of Mathematics* into Arabic and *Bridge's Algebra* into Persian.[3] The Committee also printed well-known Persian works on Muslim law, namely, *Fatwa-i-Hamadi* and *Fatwa-i-Alamgiri* for the use of students.[4] In 1827 a medical class was established in the Madrasa, where the students read Anatomy by English authors translated into Arabic.[5] In spite of the Committee's endeavours since 1824 to introduce the teaching of English in the Madrasa, no English class was established until 1828, but it did not attract many students.[6] The Madrasa, in fact, never had a very large number of students. In 1826 their total was 85, all stipend holders; in 1827 it had decreased to 73 ; during the subsequent years the number slightly increased.[7] The report of the Committee of

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[1] *S.E.R.*, i, 87.
[2] *Letter from Bengal*, 27 January 1826, para 39.
[3] *Ibid.*, para 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, 21 August 1829, para 5.
[5] *Ibid.*, para 7.
[6] The English class included only 42 students. *Ibid.*, para 37.
[7] *Ibid.*, paras 5, 7.

Public Instruction for the year 1831 does not mention the total number of students studying in the Madrasa in that year but merely states that the English class consisted of "one hundred pupils."[1] That the students of the English class did not all belong to the Madrasa is evident by the further statement that "the [English] class is open to Mahomedan boys in general, as well as to the students of the Madrasa."[2] And, in this class only "the rudiments of the English language" were taught.[3] In fact, the progress of the English class was not at all statisfactory. The Committee tried to encourage the learning of English by enforcing a rule that every student receiving a stipend from the Arabic Department must "learn English an hour or two a day", and those who did not receive stipends were allowed to join the English class by paying two rupees a month.[4] But this experiment did not prove satisfactory. It was found that as a result of the new rule the English class "was filled with unwilling scholars who were too old to acquire a correct pronunciation, and devoted too short a time to the study to be able to make more than a very limited progress in it."[5] Since admission into the Madrasa was restricted to those who already had acquired marked proficiency in Persian and some knowledge of Arabic, the average age of the students was over twenty years.[6]

Although the Committee of Public Instruction could congratulate itself on its achievements in transmitting "useful knowledge" among the students by requiring them to read translations from certain European scientific works, the knowledge thus acquired by the students was very superficial indeed. Thus as early as 1825 the Rev. Thomason,[7] who conducted the examination of the students in Euclid, in a letter addressed to Dr. Lumsden, Secretary to the Madrasa, expressed serious doubts as to the efficacy of the mode of teaching Western science through the medium of an Oriental language.[8] Another examiner, the Rev. Dr. Mill, Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta,

[1] *Report of the General Committee of Public Instruction in Bengal*, 1831 (Calcutta 1832), 4.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, 1835, 27.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] The Rev. Thomas Thomason, Junior Chaplain belonging to the E.I. Company's Ecclesiastical Establishment and a competent mathematician.
[8] *Letter from Bengal*, 27 January 1826, para 42.

who conducted the examination in mathematics "as taught in the work called *Kholassatool Hisab*", an Arabic treatise, expressed a similar opinion. In this letter to Dr. Lumsden he emphasized that the state of science as taught in Arabic texts was about a thousand years out of date and was thus far behind European science. He therefore suggested the teaching of European science through the medium of the English language. He concluded that the "intellect has no sufficient room to expand itself" under the traditional Oriental learning.[1]

But with only an elementary knowledge of English, learnt half-heartedly, the students of the Madrasa were not to be expected to proceed far in the acquisition of European knowledge. The Committee of Public Instruction could not ignore the weighty remarks of the two examiners. It proposed to the Government that an English College be established in Calcutta, open to both Hindu and Muslim students "for gratuitous instruction in literature and science through the medium of the English language."[2] It had earlier proposed the appointment of a European Professor of Experimental Philosophy for the Hindu and Sanskrit Colleges.[3] It now suggested that for the proposed English College two other Professors should be appointed from England for teaching mathematics and general literature.[4]

The Government communicated the views of the Committee to the Court of Directors. Regarding the proposal for the establishment of an English College the Committee had emphasized that the British Government, having established separate institutions for Muslim and Hindu learning, should now "uphold a public seminary for the instruction of their subjects in that knowledge which their enlightened judgment shows to be most worthy of attention."[5] The Committee hoped that the Court of Directors would approve of its proposal, which would be in conformity with the latter's despatch of 18 February 1824, in which they had advocated the promotion of "useful learning."[6]

The Government, while forwarding the views of the Committee of Public Instruction to the Court, only recommended the appointment of two European Professors. On the proposal for the establishment of

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[1] *Letter from Bengal*, 27 January 1826, para 43.
[2] *Ibid.*, para 61.
[3] *Ibid.*, para 49.
[4] *Ibid.*, para 62.
[5] *Ibid.*, para 61.
[6] *Ibid.*, para 62.

a separate English College it kept silent. In fact the Committee was also not quite sure that its proposal in this regard would be accepted. Hence it had emphasized that even if its proposal for an English College was not accepted the two European Professors would still be required for the Hindu College for "improved teaching" in English literature and science.[1] And the Bengal Government seemed to accept this view.

In not specifically recommending the proposal for the establishment of a new English College, the Bengal Government seems to have been guided by practical considerations. The apathy, if not aversion, shown by the Muslims towards English education was revealed by the fact that despite serious endeavours made by the Committee of Public Instruction, no English class was established at the Madrasa until 1828. And, when at last it was established, as has been noted, not many students were forthcoming. It was therefore rather too early to expect that the Muslims would be able to take full advantage of a new institution for higher education in Western literature and science, at a time when not many of them were acquainted even with the rudiments of the English language. In contrast to this situation, the Hindus had already made remarkable progress in acquiring English education through the Hindu College. The Government, therefore, felt that the Hindu College was probably "capable of answering the purpose" of the proposed English College.[2] Hence it resolved to raise the standard of teaching in the Hindu College by the appointment of European Professors and tacitly abandoned the project of establishing a new English College.[3]

From 1823, when the Hindu College was brought under the supervision of the Committee of Public Instruction, it made steady progress while maintaining its private status. The teaching of physics in the College was facilitated by the supply of laboratory equipment made by the British India Society.[4] The College was divided into

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[1] *Letter from Bengal*, 27 January 1826, para 62.

[2] *Despatch to Bengal*, 29 September 1830, para 12.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Letter from Bengal*, 27 January 1826, para 58. The British India Society was formed in England in 1820 by a number of English philanthropists including retired officials of the East India Company "to promote the intellectual and moral improvement" of the Indians. *Fourth Report of the Calcutta School-Book Society's Proceedings* (Calcutta 1821), Appendix III, 25-27.

junior and senior departments. In the former boys between 8 and 12 years were admitted. After successfully completing their courses in this section, they were promoted to the senior department.[1]

The College had "a good library of the best classical writers in the English language and of works on science", and also a laboratory with various physical instruments.[2]

The Committee of Public Instruction was highly satisfied with the progress made by the Hindu College by 1830, which in fact had surpassed its expectation.[3] It was particularly impressed by the students of this institution acquiring "a command of the English language, and a familiarity with its literature and science... to an extent rarely equalled by any schools in Europe."[4] The Committee further noted :[5]

> A taste for English has been widely disseminated, and independent schools conducted by young men, reared in the Vidyalaya [Hindu College], are springing up in every direction. The moral effect has been equally remarkable, and an impatience of the restrictions of Hinduism, and a disregard of its ceremonies, are openly avowed by many young men of respectable birth and talents, and entertained by many more who outwardly conform to the practices of their countrymen. Another generation will, probably, witness a very material alteration in the notions and feelings of the educated classes of the Hindu community of Calcutta.

But it would be wrong to assume that English education produced only Hindu rebels. As has been noted, many conservative Hindus favoured English education from practical considerations. There were some whose conservatism was strengthened by English education. They sought to justify and rationalise everything associated with Hindu religion and tradition by using arguments borrowed from the West. A remarkable illustration of this tendency was represented by Kasiprasad Ghose.[6] He was among the most brilliant of the early

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[1] *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1831, 12.
[2] *Ibid.*, 14.
[3] *Ibid.*, 47.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Not Cassinath Ghose. *Government Gazette*, 14 February 1828.

students of the Hindu College and the first Bengali Hindu to write poems in English.[1] His intellectual attainments were evident when he wrote a critical review of the first four chapters of James Mill's *History of British India*, extracts of which were published in the *Government Gazette* of 14 February 1828. In his review Kasiprasad ably refuted Mill's criticism of the chronology, law and government of the Hindus during the ancient times. Displaying a fairly good knowledge of the ancient history of Greece, Egypt and Babylon, by referring to a number of English authors, he attempted to show that Hindu civilization was not as bad as protrayed by Mill. Thus, he pointed out, the ancient Hindu government though monarchical was not absolute. It was "a species of limited monarchy, where the power of the King, though not so immediately, as in some of the states of Europe, was yet effectively restrained, by the people and the law. The Sacerdotal class were the Senate, and the philosopher of the ancient Hindoos."[2] Here was indeed a significant example of a serious attempt to reconstruct ancient history on the basis of Western knowledge. Kasiprasad was thus anticipating the arguments used by some later Hindu scholars of the next century.

The founding of the Calcutta Sanskrit College in 1824 was one of the first major educational projects undertaken by the Government since the establishment of the Madrasa. In conformity with Hindu prejudice, it was first contemplated that only Brahmin students would be admitted into the Sanskrit College.[3] But it appears that when the College was actually started a few students belonging to the Vaidya caste were also taken.[4] In accordance with the Government's aim of

[1] Some of his poems were published in the *Bengal Annual* edited by D. L. Richardson. See the *Bengal Annual*, 1830, 320; also *Ibid.*, 1831, 272, 299-300. For Kasiprasad's autobiographical letter see J. Long, *Handbook of Bengal Missions* (London 1848), 506-10.

[2] *Government Gazette*, 14 February 1828.

[3] *Samachar Darpan*, 13 April 1822. *S.S.K.*, i, 24.

[4] *Ibid.* 27 March 1830. *Ibid.*, i, 31. It appears, however, from the report of the European Secretary of the College, A. Troyer, dated 31 January 1835, that the Sanskrit College was theoretically open to Hindu students irrespective of caste. But it seems unlikely that students belonging to lower castes were taken, not so much because of caste prejudice as because they were not qualified by previous training to pursue higher studies in Sanskrit at the College. . For the Secretary's report see *S.E.R.*, i, 39-44. According to C. E. Trevelyan "none but Brahmins and a few persons of the medical caste [*Vaidya*] are admitted to study at this institution." C. E. Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, 92 fn.

grafting Western science upon Oriental learning, provision was made by 1830 for the teaching of English and Western systems of Anatomy and Medicine, in addition to the different branches of Sanskrit literature, which included Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Logic, Medicine, Vedanta and Law.[1] The study of English was made optional, and it appears that in January 1835 out of a total number of 181 students, the English class contained only 83 students.[2]

The introduction of the English class in the Sanskrit College, however, did not prove a success. The students were all drawn from the most orthodox section of the Hindu community. With the example of many members of the Hindu College before them, they were afraid that their minds might be polluted by English education. Many of the students of the Sanskrit College, again, belonged to priestly Brahmin families. The orthodox Hindu newspaper *Samachar Chandrika*, reported that several patrons of such families had made it known that if the students of these families pursued the study of English they would cease to call upon their services as priests at their own family puja ceremonies.[3]

The English class in the Sanskrit College was eventually abolished in 1835,[4] and this decision was hailed by a section of conservative diehards.[5] The Committee of Public Instruction had realised that it would not be generally fruitful "to teach two learned languages to the same student in this country."[6] It pointed out that "the effect of attempting to teach two such languages as English and Sanskrit, or English and Arabic, is to give the student a smattering of both, without a competent knowledge of either."[7] The Committee further observed that the experiment of teaching Arabic and English simultaneously in the Madrasa had ended in "total failure."[8] Nevertheless, it had resolved to maintain the English department there as "it alone offers an opportunity to the Mahomedan community of studying English."[9]

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[1] *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1831, 6-10.
[2] *S. E. R.*, i, 40.
[3] *Samachar Chandrika*, 26 April 1831. *S. S. K.*, ii, 4.
[4] *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1835, 30.
[5] Quoted in the *Samachar Darpan*, 12 December 1835. *S. S. K.*, ii, 4.
[6] *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1835, 30.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*

The following abstract based on returns for the years 1834-35 indicates the respective position of Hindus and Muslims with regard to higher education in Bengal.

	Hindus	*Muslims*
CALCUTTA		
The Madrasa. 31 December 1835	—	132[1]
The Hindu College. 31 December 1835	407[2]	—
The Sanskrit College. 31 December 1835	135[3]	—
SERAMPUR		
The Serampur College. 31 December 1834	34[4]	—

While the students of the Madrasa were receiving stipends from Government, the great majority of the Hindu students in the above institutions paid for their own tuition, a fact which reflected the better economic condition of the Hindus. During the years 1825-26 a number of Hindu zamindars had made a total contribution of Rs. 1,48,000, to the education fund of the Committee of Public Instruction.[5]

To what extent the Muslims had been neglecting the study of English was illustrated by the fact that when the Calcutta Medical College was established in 1835, "there was not a single Mahomedan candidate who had a sufficient knowledge of English to allow of his being admitted."[6]

In fact, by 1835 the Government also seems to have realised that the implications of its education policy had adversely affected the interests of the Muslim community. The Committee of Public Instruction was constrained to admit that "the Mahomedan community at the capital [Calcutta] labours under great disadvantages from the little encouragement which has as yet been held out to them to cultivate English literature."[7] The Committee, however, noted that notwithstanding these disadvantages, "two or three" Muslims had been able to acquire "a good English education."[8] It therefore resolved to give

[1] *Report G.C.P. I.*, 1835, 55.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] W. Adam, *Report on the state of Education in Bengal* (Calcutta 1835), 62.
[5] *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1831, 57.
[6] *Ibid.*, 1835, 28.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid.*

every encouragement to the Muslims to become acquainted with English literature and science, and decided to appoint an English Professor for the Calcutta Madrasa as soon as some students of that institution knew enough English to profit from his teaching.[1]

One significant result of the growth of education among the Bengali Hindus was their demand for the replacement of Persian by English or the vernacular language in the law courts outside Calcutta.[2] The continued use of Persian as the language of judicial business in the province was a legacy of Muslim rule which, like many other legacies, the British Government was not anxious to do away with. But it was clearly an anachronism. Its utility was now being seriously questioned in the Bengal press. The first shot was fired by the *Samachar Darpan* which, though a missionary journal, to some extent reflected reformist Hindu opinion. Thus, in an editorial dated 26 January 1828, the *Samachar Darpan* was critical of the continued use of Persian in the law courts on the ground that it was not the language of any of the parties concerned. It suggested that, if any foreign language was to be used as the language of judicial business, it should be English rather than Persian. In support of its contention it referred to the fact that within the past few years a great many people had learnt English and could express themselves fluently in it. It estimated that at least one thousand students were in the process of learning English in the different institutions of Calcutta. The editor, however, suggested that the Bengalis themselves should take the initiative towards making English the official language in the courts by submitting a petition to the Government.[3]

The *Reformer*, edited by Prasannakumar Tagore, in one of its early issues also demanded the abolition of Persian. Comparing the status of Persian in India to that of Latin in pre-Reformation Europe, it pointed out that one of the aspects of the Reformation was the substitution of the vernacular language for the Latin. It wondered why the English who "were at the head of that Reformation, and were

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[1] *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1835, 28.

[2] The Supreme Court had jurisdiction over all the inhabitants of Calcutta and over Europeans residing in the Presidency. While English law was applied in the case of Europeans, cases involving Hindus and Muslims, particularly relating to inheritance and succession, were dealt with according to Hindu and Muslim laws. The Proceedings of the Supreme Court were conducted in English.

[3] *Samachar Darpan*, 26 January 1828. *S.S.K.*, i, 33-34.

the first to oppose the use of an unknown language", behaved differently in India.[1] Pointing out the abuses which resulted from the continued use of Persian, it asked:[2]

> When the Mahomedans conquered India, they abolished the use of the Sanscrit language from our Courts, because they understood it not, and shall we continue to use a language, which, at present, is understood neither by ourselves nor our rulers?

It therefore, suggested the use of the vernacular language in the Provincial Courts.[3]

The radical newspaper the *Enquirer*, edited by the young rebel, Krishnamohan Banerji, was more forthright in its criticism of maintaining the old usage. "What is the use of the Persian language in the Muffussill courts?" it wanted to know, and observed:[4]

> It seems only to do mischiefs without, in the least, being beneficial to the community.... It sounds very odd indeed that a language neither of the conquerors nor of the conquered should be the medium of administering justice in a country. The Greek and Latin languages may with as much propriety be tolerated.

There were orthodox Hindus who treated the question in a somewhat communal and down-to-earth manner, which also revealed a certain hostility for the Muslims, who were still enjoying a relatively privileged position in the administration conducted according to the old system. Their organ, the *Samachar Chandrika*, remarked :[5]

> We hear that it is the intention of our Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, to abolish the use of the Persian language altogether. We are overjoyed at this intelligence, and offer a hundred benedictions to our chief, for this arrangement will be

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[1] Quoted in *Alexander's East India Magazine*, September 1831, ii, 10, 276-77.
[2] *Ibid.*, 278.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Quoted in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, 26 November 1831.
[5] Quoted in the *India Gazette*, 26 December 1831.

> highly beneficial to the country.... When the Regulation is promulgated, first and foremost the haughtiness of these Juvuns [*Yavana* a term of contempt by which a non-Hindu particularly a Muslim was designated by the orthodox Hindus] will be brought low ; which will be of much service to us.... When the Bengalee language is brought into use, all the natives, besides Moosoolmans, may be employed in the public service. The Moosoolmans will be driven out, and never will be able to read and write Bengalee.

This was a naive expectation which was not based on the facts. Bengali was the spoken language as much of the Muslims as of the Hindus.

Meanwhile, the Government had been contemplating the abolition of Persian. The Committee of Public Instruction in its report to the Government had pointed out that unless English was made "the language of business, political negotiation and jurisprudence", it would not be "universally or profoundly studied" by Indians.[1] The Government authorized the Committee of Public Instruction to announce that it was "the wish and admitted policy of the British Government to render its own language, gradually and eventually, the medium of transacting public business throughout the country."[2]

But it made it clear that it was not as yet "prepared to come forward with any distinct and specific pledge as to the period and manner of accomplishing so great a change."[3] It thought that it should rather wait until "the superiority of our English education is more generally recognized and appreciated."[4]

This declaration of the Government that it intended to replace Persian by English evoked a sharp rejoinder from the Court of Directors. The Utilitarian influence was again clearly evident in the despatch dated 29 September 1830, in which the Court pointed out that if any change was to be made in the existing practice, it was "deserving of great consideration, whether that change ought not rather to be the adoption of the vernauclar language, than of our own, as the language at least of Judicial proceedings."[5] They emphasized that justice

[1] *Letter from Bengal*, 21 August 1829, para 49.
[2] *Ibid.*, para 50.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Public Despatch to Bengal*, 29 September 1830, para 28.

should be adminstered in the language "familar to the litigant parties."[1] The Court, however, did not object "in an equal degree" to the use of English as the language of correspondence with Indians of rank or political negotiations with Indian chiefs. But then it pointed out the danger that such communications could be misunderstood owing to the ignorance of the English language by the parties concerned, which would make them dependent on others who while explaining such communications might "put their own representation into English."[2]

Thus the attitude of the authorities of the East India Company towards the question of abolition of Persian as the language of judicial business was marked by their characteristic reluctance to change the old order. It was only after some kind of public opinion was created in Bengal in support of the abolition that they finally decided to act.

In February 1835, a memorial signed by 6,945 Hindu inhabitants of Calcutta, including all the managers of the Hindu College, the parents and guardians of the students of English, and such students themselves, was presented to Lord William Bentinck, praying that the existing restrictions on the use of English in the law courts be removed.[3] The memorialists, after pointing out that Persian was "as foreign to the natives of Bengal as to their rulers", referred to the advantage which the English language possessed "of being expertly read and written by all the principal functionaries of the state, – an advantage by which the ends of justice might be essentially promoted and the abuses of ministerial influence suppressed." The memorialists concluded with a moderate request that "they seek no preference in favour of English but merely that attainments in that tongue should have the same advantage as attainments in Persian." It is indeed remarkable that they did not ask for the abolition of Persian ; they only wanted that Persian should lose its exclusive privileges. The Government in reply assured the memorialists that the subject of their application had already engaged its attention and that an enactment for this purpose was under consideration.[4] What would be the precise nature of the enactment, however, was not revealed.

The Court of Directors, in their Judicial Despatch to Bengal dated 26 June 1835, ascribed economy as the chief reason for its desire to

[1] *Public Despatch to Bengal*, 29 September 1830, para 29.
[2] *Ibid.*, para 30.
[3] *India. Public Consultation*, 10 February 1835, nos. 27, 28.
[4] *Ibid.*, no. 29.

abolish Persian.[1] It was, however, not before 1838 that the final decision was taken. Under Government order, the Register of the Sadr Diwani Adalat issued a circular addressed to the magistrates and the Judges in the districts, asking them "to take immediate measures for substituting, for the Persian, the vernacular language" in their court proceedings.[2]

The period of Lord William Bentinck's Governor-Generalship (1828-35) finally saw the abandonment of Orientalism in education policy. That policy was based upon an uneasy compromise not so much between two different systems as between two different cultures or rather two different ages. "Hindu and Muslim culture of this period", as has been pointed out, "was unprogressive and static in outlook ; its purpose was to hand on the traditions of the elders rather than to develop anything new."[3] Through a different process of historical development, the culture of the West had become dynamic and revolutionary. While the traditional culture of the East sought to conserve old ideas and old institutions, Western culture impelled men to think new thoughts and create new institutions in face of changing and challenging circumstances.

The new education policy inaugurated by Bentinck was not wholly altruistic. The Home Government had charged him with the difficult task of making economies in the administration.[4] This could only be done by employing a considerable number of Indians on small salaries in place of Europeans appointed on high ones. Some of these highly paid officials, recruited on the basis of patronage rather than merit, did not prove very useful to the Government. Thus, in a private letter to Bentinck, Lord Ellenborough, President of the Board of Control, wrote :[5]

> I am sure you will do all you can to educate the natives for office and to encourage them by the possession of it. Some little risk of failure must be run at first ; but without being really

[1] *Judicial Despatch to Bengal*, 26 June 1835, para 23.

[2] Circular Order no. 3. Lower Provinces, 9 February 1838. *Circular Order Passed by the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, and Communicated to the Zillah and City Judges by the Register of that Court*, vol. iii (Calcutta 1843), 5-6.

[3] T.G.P. Spear, "Bentinck and Education", *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vi, 1, 1938, 87.

[4] A. Mayhew, *op. cit.*, 13.

[5] Ellenborough to Bentinck, 23 September 1830. *Bentinck Papers.*

> responsible they do practically a great deal now through the weak or corrupt or indolent Europeans they serve. My wish is that they should act ostensibly, with the honour, the responsibility and the emoluments of office. We cannot govern India financially without this change of system.

But the education policy of the Government still guided by the 'Orientalists' was not producing a sufficient number of Indians qualified for administrative employment. The type of instruction imparted to the students in the educational institutions established by the Government was not conducive to their acquirement of respectable employment or even social prestige. In March 1834 several former students of the Sanskrit College addressed a petition to the Secretary of the Committee of Public Instruction, bitterly complaining about their lot.[1] They stated that having studied for a period of from ten to twelve years in the Sanskrit College, and having successfully completed the courses in "Hindoo literature and science, more especially Law", they found "but little prospect" of improving their condition. They complained :[2]

> The indifference with which we are generally looked upon by our countrymen leaves no hope of encouragement and assistance from them, and neither can much support be expected from other quarters since Law cannot be of much use to private individuals, unless supported by Government. That the prospect which the Government holds out to us is very scanty, since the office of the Zillah Court's Pundits alone is open to us wherein few can obtain employment, and that mostly depends in most cases upon the power of the superiors in office.

The petitioners fervently appealed to the Government to do something to help them. Their demands were modest. They did not "aspire to high situations at once" but merely wanted "means for a decent living." They concluded :

> ...after having passed almost the whole of our youth in study at a place so liberally supported by Government, we nevertheless

[1] Quoted in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, 19 March 1834.
[2] *Ibid.*

are condemned under our present condition to continue unseen and unknown, which can hardly be the wish of our own patrons.

This remarkable petition was itself an indictment of the Government's policy of over-emphasizing traditional learning regardless of its practical utility. Macaulay in his famous minute referred to this very petition to illustrate the failure of the Orientalists' policy.[1]

The policy also came under heavy fire from the Bengali radicals. Krishnamohan Banerji in a long article in the *Enquirer* strongly condemned the activities of the General Committee of Public Instruction.[2] He criticised the Committee for neglecting its duty of implementing the education clause of the Charter Act of 1813. He pointed out that the Committee had been "so unmindful of the true interests of the population of this country, that far from devoting any considerable part of the public money in their hands to the purposes of education they have squandered away thousands after thousands in a useless and even sometimes in a positively injurious manner." He severely criticised the Committee for patronizing traditional Hindu learning through the Sanskrit College which he thought only encouraged young Brahmins to learn "their wicked trade." He concluded that the Committee had "done much evil both by the *instructions* they have given and still are giving, and by the *manner* of their doing so. Their precepts as well as their examples have tended to much evil."

Another radical journal, the *Jnananveshan*, while referring to the petition of the former students of the Sanskrit College pointed out that the instruction which they had received had "not given them any knowledge of the actual business of life."[3] The journal asked :

> What then... is the use of maintaining an institution which answers no earthly purpose that we can conceive ? Why are the students of the Sanskrit College bribed to receive an instruction, which, according to their own confession, makes them useless members of society ? Is there none in the Education Committee who takes this common sense view of the question, and would seek to change the plan which has been hitherto so injuriously pursued ?

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[1] *S.E.R.*, i, 113.
[2] Quoted in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, 19 March 1834.
[3] *Ibid.*

This journal, however, believed that some members of the Committee of Public Instruction shared its views and that the Government also was contemplating a review of its education policy. The journal concluded by observing :

> May we hope that the result of all this discussion will be the adoption of plans by which the lights of European knowledge may be communicated to our countrymen, whether through the medium of the English language, or through that of the vernacular dialects of the country.

Thus, not only were the radicals critical of the Government's education policy, but they also anticipated the policy which the Government was eventually to follow. In fact the wisdom of the policy hitherto pursued was being seriously questioned in the Committee of Public Instruction. By 1834 a strong Anglicist group had been formed within the Committee which began to attack the education policy on the ground that instead of promoting useful learning it was only helping to perpetuate obscurantist ideas. It advocated the replacement of the old system by a new one which would promote Western education through the medium of the English language.

One of the chief advocates of the new policy was a young English official, C. E. Trevelyan, in whom "the Utilitarian and Evangelical approaches to the education problem were combined."[1] In a letter which he wrote to Lord William Bentinck he stated with almost missionary fervour that "the great enterprise" of his life was "the moral and intellectual renovation of the people of India."[2] Trevelyan's Utilitarian ideas were revealed in his desire to see established in India a comprehensive system of national education such as "already exists in the states of New York, in the New England states and in Prussia and such as it is now proposed to establish in France and England."[3] He was confident that if such a system was introduced in India, it would within twenty-five years "entirely change the moral face of the country."[4] His evangelical zeal was evident when he wrote in another letter :[5]

[1] K. A. Ballhatchet, "The Home Government and Bentinck's Education Policy", *Cambridge Historical Journal*, x, 2, 1951, 228.
[2] C. E. Trevelyan to Lord William Bentinck, 20 March 1834. *Bentinck Papers.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, 9 April 1834.

> It cannot be concealed that India is on the eve of a great moral change. The indications of it are perceptible in every part of the country. Everywhere the same decided rejection of antiquated systems prevails - everywhere the same craving for instruction in a better system is to be perceived and the abolition of the exclusive privileges which the Persian language has in the Courts and offices of Government will form the crowning stroke which will shake Hinduism and Mahommedanism to their centre and firmly establish our language, our learning and ultimately our religion in India.

Referring to his evangelical views, however, Trevelyan cautioned Bentinck that :[1]

> I hope Your Lordship will understand that in speaking thus largely I am speaking only to Your Lordship. With regard to the public I should suggest that merely the practical part of the scheme should be presented to them in which . all parties whether they be Church of England, Dissenters, Deists, Mahommedans or Hindoos, will cordially agree.

In the same letter Trevelyan informed Bentinck that within the Committee of Public Instruction "the advocates of the old and new systems are almost equally balanced. Sometimes the victory is on the side of darkness and at other times light prevails."[2] Outside the Committee, however, as Trevelyan pointed out, the position was completely different. "There the advocates of popular education have it all their own way and their opponents scarcely venture to brave public opinion by an open avowal of their sentiments."[3] In referring to "the advocates of popular education" Trevelyan obviously had in view the Bengali reformers and radicals ; the latter were the most vociferous in criticising the Orientalist policy. Apparently with Bentinck's approval, the Anglicists were preparing for the final onslaught. They were thinking of mobilising the support of "the influential members of the Indian community."[4]

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[1] C. E. Trevelyan to Bentinck, 9 April 1834. *Bentinck Papers.*
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

Bentinck, however, as Trevelyan noted, was not as yet prepared to take a definite decision. He thought it expedient not to express his views "on the great question of national education until the public mind should be better prepared for their reception."[1]

With Macaulay's arrival in Calcutta in the autumn of 1834, the position of the Anglicist party was greatly strengthened. On the other hand, H. H. Wilson's departure for England at the beginning of 1833, to take up the post of Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, had weakened the position of the Orientalists.[2] They were now clearly on the defensive. By the beginning of 1834, C. E. Trevelyan was engaged in a bitter controversy with H. T. Prinsep and John Tytler, the principal supporters of the Orientalist policy. The controversy assumed a public character with the publication of the correspondence of the rival parties in the press.[3] Public discussion revealed the growing strength of the Anglicist party. Trevelyan noted that "it was only when we began to have recourse to the Press and to supply a new power to the Committee from without that anything effectual was accomplished.... The effect of the appeal to the newspapers was almost magical."[4] In fact, several months before Macaulay's arrival in Calcutta, the Anglicists had secured a dominant position within the Committee of Public Instruction. In the same letter Trevelyan recounted that his party, however, had to fight a hard battle before it could secure this position.[5]

In spite of Trevelyan's confident assertion that the victory was complete,[6] all was not yet quite well with the Anglicists. A serious clash had occurred over a resolution passed at the meeting of the Madrasa sub-committee on 26 April 1834, requiring every candidate for stipend to agree to learn English along with Arabic. H. T. Prinsep who was a member of the sub-committee but was not invited to attend the meeting, strongly denounced this resolution as "hasty and indiscreet."[7] He pointed out that the effect of the resolution would be to

[1] C. E. Trevelyan to Bentinck, 9 April 1834. *Bentinck Papers.*

[2] *Cambridge History of India*, vi, 111.

[3] See the *India Gazette*, 28, 29 January and 8, 12, 15, 27 February 1834. The controversy had started with Trevelyan's advocacy of writing Oriental languages in the Roman script.

[4] C. E. Trevelyan to Bentinck, 30 April 1834. *Bentinck Papers.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *S.E.R.*, i, 103.

convert the Madrasa which was originally founded for the promotion of a particular branch of Oriental learning into "a mere seminary for the teaching of English."[1] He therefore considered the resolution "as involving nothing less than a breach of trust."[2]

Meanwhile Macaulay had joined as additional member of the Legislative Council of India. Bentinck also appointed him President of the General Committee of Public Instruction. Although apparently Macaulay had not as yet taken part in the fierce controversy that was raging within the Committee, he and Bentinck must have exchanged views on the subject and reached certain conclusions. In fact ever since Macaulay's arrival in India he began to exercise a considerable influence upon Bentinck.[3]

The Government had realised that it could not pursue any policy effectively without a knowledge of the actual state of education in the country. Bentinck had already had some discussion on this subject with William Adam, a Unitarian missionary and a friend of Rammohan Roy who was also the editor of the *India Gazette*. In a minute dated 20 January 1835, Bentinck proposed to appoint Adam to conduct an enquiry into the state of education in Bengal and Bihar.[4]

Earlier, the Government had also appointed a Committee consisting of Dr. James Grant (President), J. C. C. Sutherland, C. E. Trevelyan, Thomas Spens, Dr. M. J. Bramley and Ramkamal Sen to enquire into the state of medical education in Bengal. The Committee submittted to the Government a comprehensive report in which it suggested the establishment of a Medical College for training in Western medicine and surgery through the medium of the English language. It was further suggested that a select number of students after receiving five

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[1] *S.E.R.*, i, 103.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Even before Macaulay had landed in India, his fame had reached Bentinck, who had formed a very favourable impression about his qualities. In a letter to the Bishop of Calcutta, Bentinck wrote : "I cannot tell you how much I am delighted with Macaulay's appointment. I think he has more power of doing good to India than any other man, Governor-General or other, who ever came to India... We want a giant like him to conquer prejudices, European and native." Bentinck to Lord Bishop of Calcutta, 1 May 1834. *Bentinck Papers*.

[4] *India. Public Consultation*, 22 January 1835, no. 2. Between 1835 and 1838 Adam submitted three reports to the Government. Though not without faults, they constitute an invaluable source of information on the subject.

years' professional training at the College, should be sent to England for higher studies.[1]

On 28 January 1835, the Governor-General-in-Council passed a resolution which declared the abolition of the medical classes in the Calcutta Madrasa and the Sanskrit College. It also announced the decision to establish a new Medical College in Calcutta under the control of the Committee of Public Instruction. It was also resolved that instruction in the Medical College would be given through the medium of the English language. It was declared that every student seeking admission into the College would be required to know English and either Bengali or Hindustani (Urdu).[2] The Medical College was finally opened on 1 June 1835.[3]

Thus, while the Anglicist-Orientalist controversy was raging in full swing within the Committee of Public Instruction, the Government had already taken an important step which anticipated the new policy. The division within the Committee had produced a deadlock. Government intervention became necessary. J. C. C. Sutherland, in his letters dated 21 and 22 January 1835, reported the differences of opinion in the Committee and asked the Government to arbitrate in the matter.[4]

It was now left for Macaulay, in his dual capacity as a member of the Governor-General's Council and President of the Committee of Public Instruction, to give his views. What of course his views would be was not unknown. Before coming to India he had already distinguished himself in his speeches and writings as an advanced liberal. The Orientalist education policy was to him a repugnant compromise. He was impressed by Trevelyan not solely for personal reasons ;[5] he fully shared his ideas on the education problem. On 2 February 1835 Macaulay presented his famous minute in which he sought to demolish the whole edifice of the Orientalist policy.[6] He charged the Orientalists with putting a wrong interpretation on the education clause of the Act of 1813. He maintained that the Act did not direct any particular manner in which the funds allotted for education were to be used,

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[1] "Report of the Committee appointed by the Governor-General-in-Council on Native Education", *India Gazette*, 9, 11, 15 March 1835.

[2] *Bengal Public Consultation*, no. 28, 28 January 1835.

[3] *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1836, 49.

[4] *S.E.R.*, i, 104-06.

[5] Trevelyan married Macaulay's sister in Calcutta.

[6] *S.E.R.*, i, 107-17.

which the Government was free to decide ; that the Government should use them for teaching English which was "better worth knowing" than Sanskrit or Arabic ; that it was possible to make Indians "thoroughly good English scholars", and that to this end the efforts of the Government should be directed.

His specific proposals were : printing of Arabic and Sanskrit works by the Committee should be stopped at once ; the Calcutta Madrasa and the Calcutta Sanskrit College should be abolished ; the Sanskrit College at Benares and the College at Delhi might remain as the two centres of Sanskrit and Arabic learning ; and that no stipends should be given to students wishing to pursue Oriental learning at these institutions, "that the people shall be left free to make their own choice between the rival systems of education without being bribed by us to learn what they have no desire to know." All the funds set apart for education should be utilised in improving the Calcutta Hindu College and establishing in the chief cities throughout the Presidencies of Fort William and Agra "schools in which the English language might be well and thoroughly taught."[1]

Bentinck was so much impressed by Macaulay's reasoning that instead of recording a separate minute he expressed his "entire concurrence" with the views contained in Macaulay's minute.[2]

The minute, as has been pointed out, "neither instigated nor dictated a new policy, nor even decided a doubtful issue. It was the shot that signalled the advance, but not the shot that decided it. It provided the ideological banner for the new policy but it was not the new policy itself."[3] In fact instead of settling a controversy the minute provoked a new one. In his characteristic brilliant style Macaulay, in his minute, summed up the attitude not only of the young English officials like Trevelyan, but also of an important section of Bengali Hindus.[4] His contemptuous reference to traditional Oriental literature might be condemned on account of his own ignorance which he himself admitted.[5] His sweeping comments and his rash judgments

[1] *S.E.R.*, i, 116-17.
[2] *Ibid.*, i, 117.
[3] T.G.P. Spear, *op. cit.*, 85.
[4] See A. Mayhew, *op. cit.*, 12-13.
[5] Macaulay wrote : "I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanskrit works. I have conversed, both here and at home, with men distinguished by their proficiency in the

are also apparent. But the fact cannot be denied that his arguments in support of English education were precisely similar to those which Rammohan Roy used in his famous letter addressed to Lord Amherst on the subject. Macaulay's construction of the meaning of the Act of 1813 has been criticised on the ground of his "ignorance of the facts and events which preceded the Charater Act."[1] But the Act itself was not quite clear on the subject. It reflected the half-hearted attitude of the East India Company and Parliament towards the question of Indian education. There was thus ample scope for a reconstruction of the meaning of the Act in a way different from that given by the Orientalists. It is significant that Macaulay's interpretation of the Act was again, precisely similar to that given by the Bengali radicals, Krishnamohan Banerji and Rasikkrishna Mallick, when they criticised the education policy of the Government, several months before he himself arrived in Calcutta.[2] While the implication of Krishnamohan's arguments was that the Government was not bound by the Act of 1813 to patronize Oriental learning, Rasikkrishna emphasized the utter inutility of this learning which the Government was promoting nevertheless. Macaulay cleverly used these very arguments to support his case. Macaulay's minute was a typical Whig document, and reflected the Whig tendency to charge old laws with new meaning. It gave the whole Anglicist policy its theoretical basis and justification.

Macaulay was now anxious to prove that the policy which he advocated had the support of public opinion. A few days after he wrote his minute, he suggested to Bentinck that the proceedings of the Committee of Public Instruction "should be regularly laid before the public."[3] He believed that "it was only by letting the public know what we are about that we can induce the public to cooperate with us."[4]

While Bentinck's education policy was still in the formative stage, certain measures taken by his Government had produced a significant

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Eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." *S.E.R.*, i, 109.

[1] B. K. Boman-Behram, *op. cit.*, 313.

[2] Quoted in the *Bengal Hurkaru*, 19 March 1834; also see above, pp. 298-99.

[3] Macaulay to Bentinck, 5 February 1835. *Bentinck Papers.*

[4] *Ibid.*

public reaction. The decision to abolish the medical classes in the Calcutta Sanskrit College and the Madrasa "filled the Pundits and Mouluvees, as well as their students, Hindoo and Mahomedan, with alarm."[1] They knew what was going on inside the Committee of Public Instruction. They knew that the Anglicists were now in the dominant position and that Bentinck supported them. Meanwhile the purport of Macaulay's minute in which he had suggested the abolition of the Madrasa and the Sanskrit College, had somehow leaked out. There was great commotion among the Muslims of Calcutta, particularly the teachers and students of the Madrasa. A massive petition in Persian signed by 8,312 Muslims[2] was prepared and presented to the Governor-General-in-Council, praying that the Madrasa be allowed to continue.[3]

This petition is undoubtedly a valuable document reflecting Muslim public opinion.[4] It reveals not only the attitude of the Muslims towards the Government but also their notions regarding their own position. The petition began by praising the Government for its wisdom in "seeking the affections of all classes of their subjects by showing kindness and consideration to all." It pointed out that the English rulers "in order that the foundations of their dominion might settle deeply" had taken care "especially to consult the feelings of the Moosulmuns, and to avoid by all means giving them just cause of offence and vexation. In all ways they have endeavoured to gladden the hearts of this class of their subjects, because it was from them and through them that they derived their dominion."

To illustrate the special consideration shown towards the Muslims by the Government, the petitioners referred to the fact that the Muslim legal system and institutions were still being maintained ; also the Madrasa had been established "for conveying instructions in the languages and literature of Islam." When, therefore, the petitioners

[1] *Friend of India*, 26 February 1835.

[2] H. T. Prinsep writing his memoir some thirty years after the event recalled that after the intention of the Government to abolish the Madrasa and the Sanskrit College was known, "the mind of the public of Calcutta was immediately in ferment. In three days a petition was got up signed by no less than 30,000 people on behalf of the Madrasa and another by the Hindus for the Sanskrit College." (*S.E.R.*, i, 133-34). As stated above, the petition was actually signed by 8,312 persons.

[3] *India. Public Consultation*, no. 9, 13 March 1835.

[4] For full text see Appendix VI.

received "the mournful report" of the contemplated abolition of the Madrasa, they could not believe it to be true, "deeming it opposed to the uniform policy of all preceding Governments." But since the intention to abolish the Madrasa had been conveyed to them "over and over again and by many", the petitioners were confounded. Considering it their duty "as subjects and dependants to represent humbly what may occur to them calculated to promote the welfare and reputation of their Sovereign", the petitioners put forward certain arguments against the abolition of the Madrasa. They emphasized the fact that the establishment of the Madrasa by Warren Hastings had increased the reputation and credit of the East India Company in the eyes of its Indian subjects. But they lamented that "some men utterly ignorant of the literature and science of Arabia, and blind to its beauties and advantages", had now "conceived the project of destroying" the Madrasa.

The petitioners also pointed out that there were about two hundred persons holding high offices under the Government who had received their education at the Madrasa. To abolish this institution now would engender "nothing but evil and maladministration." Referring to the general alarm among the Muslims on hearing that the Madrasa would be abolished, the petitioners observed :

> From the time when the report of the abolition of the *Mudrissa* first gained ground, all classes small and great of the people have taken up the idea that the object and end of this measure is to eradicate the literature and religious system of Islam, in order that the measure may tend to the dissemination of the religion of the proposers and originators of the measure itself, and so the subjects of the State may be caused to become Christians.

The petitioners finally concluded by hoping that the Government would "from motives of justice, philanthropy, and general benevolence, and to ensure its own stability", desist from abolishing the Madrasa.

That Muslim fears were genuine cannot be doubted. That the abolition of the Madrasa, the abolition of Persian as the language of judicial business, and the reorganization of the legal system, all implied in the policy of the Anglicists, would seriously affect the interests of the Muslims, was also evident. The Muslims had long since lost political power. The special privileges which they had enjoyed, privileges

associated with political power long after that power had ceased to exist, seemed to be at an end. The fact that the East India Company's Government had allowed these privileges to continue for so long had produced among the Muslims a predilection for believing that their power was still such that the English Government did not dare to touch their interests. The contemplated move to abolish the Madrasa had, in fact, produced a rude awakening. The petition indicated the tragic situation in which the Muslims suddenly found themselves, wholly unprepared.[1]

The petition could not be ignored by the Government. On 9 March 1835 an official reply was given to the petitioners.[2] The Government assured them that it had no intention of abolishing the Madrasa. They were informed that the reform which the Government was contemplating was in the system of granting stipends to scholars, and that it had been decided that in future stipends would not be granted to scholars merely in order to induce them to pursue the study of any particular branch of learning in the Government institutions. The Government was also considering "the future adaptation of the Instruction to the demand for it, as exhibited by the condition of the classes." In all other respects, the Government assured the petitioners that the Madrasa would continue as an institution for the education of the Muslim youth "on the same footing precisely as it was established by its illustrious founder, and has existed to the present day." The Government, however, expressed its concern that the petitioners had acted upon a rumour regarding the abolition of the Madrasa, and had shown their "distrust of the beneficient intentions of the Government" towards them. Finally the Government assured the petitioners that it had no intention of destroying "the literature and religious system of Islam" nor had it any desire to impose Christianity upon the Muslims, as the petitioners had apprehended.

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[1] The state of mind which was reflected in the Muslim petition continued in some form or other throughout the greater part of the century. The Muslims had taken up a somewhat negative attitude to what was taking place around them. It had become almost a mental fixation for them to continue to dream of past glories and past achievements without endeavouring seriously to participate in any constructive activity. Instead of drawing lessons from the past they allowed themselves to be dominated by it. When, after 1835, as a result of British policy, their position took a sudden turn for the worse, they began to develop, in sheer desperation, a sort of persecution complex which partly expressed itself through the great uprising of 1857 but did not die with it.

[2] *India. Public Consultation*, no. 10, 13 March 1835.

That the Muslim petition had some influence in the making of Government policy was evident from the resolution passed by the Governor-General-in-Council on 7 March 1835, just two days before the answer to the petition was given. The resolution[1] which seemed to have been drafted by Macaulay[2] announced the new education policy. It represented a substantial modification of the views expressed by Macaulay in his minute which had been fully approved by Bentinck. The resolution laid down the principle that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India ; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone."

But contrary to the suggestions contained in Macaulay's minute that the Calcutta Madrasa and the Sanskrit College be abolished, the resolution stated :

> .. it is not the intention of His Lordship in Council to abolish any College or School of native learning, while the native population shall appear to be inclined to avail themselves of the advantages which it affords, and His Lordship in Council directs that all the existing professors and students at all the institutions under the superintendence of the Committee shall continue to receive their stipends.

The resolution, however, pointed out that the Government "decidedly" objected to the hitherto prevailing practice of maintaining the students at the above institutions at Government expense. This practice, it was explained, amounted to "giving artificial encouragement to branches of learning which, in the natural course of things, would be superseded by more useful studies." Hence, it was declared that no stipend would be granted hereafter to any student at these institutions. It was also resolved that before filling any vacancy in the post of a "professor of Oriental learning", the Government should take into consideration "the number and state of the class." It was further declared that no more Oriental works would be printed by the Committee of Public Instruction. And all funds available to the Committee should be employed in imparting to the people "a

[1] *S.E.R.*, i, 130-31.

[2] Draft undated in Macaulay's hand. *Bentinck Papers.*

knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language." The Committee was asked to draw up a plan for the above object.

On 19 March 1835, a petition signed by seventy-six students of the Calcutta Sanskrit College was presented to the Governor-General praying that the decision to discontinue the practice of giving stipends to students be reconsidered.[1] The petitioners submitted that if the above decision was carried out, the Sanskrit students would be put to "very great distress" and would be compelled to discontinue their studies. One interesting point raised by the petitioners in support of their claim that the stipends should continue was that "India pays a large amount of revenue to the British power in various ways." By discontinuing the stipends the Government would be saving only a small amount "even less than the salary of many a public functionary." Here was but a faint echo of what could be Indian nationalist criticism of British rule in the next century.

The Government in its reply informed the petitioners that it could not grant their prayer.[2] The petitioners, however, were assured that the students already receiving stipends would not be affected by the Government decision, "but no new grants of the kind will be in future made to any individual attending a Government College for the purpose of instruction."[3]

Having thus formulated its policy, the Government was determined to carry it out. It was considered necessary to reorganize the Committee of Public Instruction. At Macaulay's suggestion,[4] the following new members were appointed : Sir Edward Ryan, Sir Benjamin Malkin, Christopher Smith, Captain R. J. H. Birch, C. H. Cameron, Ross Mangles, all enthusiastic supporters of the new policy.[5] Another new member was James Young, a personal friend of Bentinck and a disciple of Bentham. The Government had also decided to

[1] *India. Public Consultation*, no. 44, 8 April 1835.

[2] *Ibid.*, no. 45.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Macaulay to Bentinck, 7 February 1835. *Bentinck Papers.*

[5] Sir Edward Ryan in a letter to Bentinck noted that he was pleased to find that his own ideas on Indian education were similar to those of Macaulay. He wrote : "Any little assistance I can give to the cause I have so much at heart, he [Macaulay] may at all times command and I most cheerfully consent to being nominated one of the members of the Committee of Public Instruction." E. Ryan to Bentinck, 18 February 1835. *Ibid.*

appoint a few Indians as members of the Committee in order to give it a somewhat representative character. Macaulay had suggested that initially only two such appointments should be made, and the convenient way of doing so was to give the managers of the Hindu College the opportunity to nominate two delegates. He had pointed out that "the Government in this manner pays a high compliment to the natives as a body, and yet escapes from the invidious task of selecting individuals."[1] One difficulty about such selection was, however, that the Muslims would go unrepresented. As Macaulay himself noted :[2]

> The Hindoo College admits no Mahometan students. None of the Directors are Mahometans. The high compliment paid to this institution is therefore a compliment paid to the Hindoos at the expense of the Musselmans. And I see no way of remedying this inconvenience. For there is no Mahometan institution which bears the smallest resemblance to the Hindoo College.

Macaulay, therefore, had suggested that the Government while announcing its decision on education policy should make it known to the Muslims that if, like the Hindus, they "exert themselves in the cause of education, they will like the Hindoos, be admitted into the education Committee."[3]

The Government accepted Macaulay's suggestion of appointing Indian members to the Committee of Public Instruction. The managers of the Hindu College were asked to nominate two persons from among them and they recommended Radhakanta Deb and Rasamoy Dutt, who were appointed members of the Committee. Subsequently, one Muslim representative, Nawab Tahawar Jung, was appointed member of the Committee.[4]

By 1835 the Government seems to have decided that it should not establish any other communal institution for the exclusive benefit of any particular community. This was evident from the character of the institutions established in Hugly, Murshidabad and Dacca. Out

[1] Macaulay to Bentinck, 27 February 1835. *Bentinck Papers.*
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1835, iii.

of the funds left by a Muslim philanthropist, Haji Muhammad Mohsin, the Government had established a Madrasa and an English school at Hugly.[1] In 1835 the Government resolved to amalgamate the two institutions into a College for the teaching of English literature and science along with Oriental subjects.[2] In Murshidabad also a school had been established with two separate departments, English and Oriental. Although this institution was meant primarily for the benefit of the members of the Nawab's family, it was open to others as well, irrespective of religion or sect. In 1835 it was brought under the control of the Committee of Public Instruction, and it was decided to raise its status to that of a College.[3] Similarly, in Dacca an English school had been established in 1835.[4]

In framing the new education policy Lord William Bentinck's Government was guided not only by liberal sentiments but also by practical considerations. Utilitarian and evangelical forces were at work ; but they alone could not have influenced Government policy.[5] The policy was evolved by force of circumstances. As noted before, the Government had been contemplating, as a measure of economy to employ Indians in the administration on a large scale. But the old education policy was not producing a sufficient number of qualified Indians for such appointments. Public opinion in Bengal, particularly that of the Hindus, had also expressed itself strongly against this policy. The reports of the Calcutta School-Book Society from 1832 onwards clearly showed that the demand for English books was growing at a phenomenal rate. Thus, during the period January 1832 to December 1833, as many as 14,792 English books were sold by the Society as against 4,896 Bengali, 870 Persian, 208 Sanskrit and 13 Arabic books.[6] During the next two years the sale of English books had more

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[1] *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1831, 14-15. The popularity of the English school was evident from the fact that at the end of 1835 there were 87 students of whom 5 were Muslims, 5 Christians, and the rest Hindus. *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1835, 35.

[2] *Ibid.*, 35-36.

[3] *Ibid.*, 36. In 1836 in the English department there were 80 students of whom 58 were Muslims, 21 Hindus and 1 Christian. In the Oriental department there were 88 students of whom 82 were Muslims and the rest Hindus. *Report G.C.P.I.*, 1836, 146.

[4] In 1835 there were 136 students in the Dacca School, the exact number belonging to each community is not known. In 1836, however, there were 149 students of whom 8 were Muslims, 7 Christians and the rest Hindus. *Ibid.*, 98.

[5] K. A. Ballhatchet, *op. cit.*, 228.

[6] *Tenth Report of the Calcutta School-Book Society's Proceedings*, 1832-33, 26.

than doubled. Thus, during the period January 1834 to December 1835, the sale of English books was 31,649 as against 5,754 Bengali, 1,454 Persian, 16 Sanskrit and 36 Arabic books.[1] During the same period 4,525 "Anglo-Asiatic" books or books partly in English and partly in some Indian language, which included dictionary, grammar, vocabulary, were sold.[2] In fact the School-Book Society's report for the years 1832-33 seemed to anticipate the new policy. It stated :[3]

> Under the present circumstances, it is no longer a question, whether English, or Arabic and Sanskrit, are to be preferred. The popular taste, as far as it can be judged of by the operations of the Society, and the statement of books sold during the last six years has declared in favour of English, and it remains now only to be determined, whether scope should be given to the study of this language and literature, or to that of Eastern ones, less useful and less sought after.

In his minute Macaulay had fully used such statements in support of his case. But, as already pointed out, the policy which was eventually adopted did not originate with him, although he exercised a powerful influence in moulding it. The policy itself was largely determined by Bentinck himself.[4] His strong liberal sympathies and commonsense approach to every problem led him to see which way the wind was blowing. He wanted to move with the wind but was determined not to be swept away by it.

The influence of Bengali opinion in the making of Government policy has been noted. Macaulay and the Anglicists had, in support of their case, drawn heavily upon the arguments put forward by the Bengali reformers of Rammohan Roy's school and the radicals. But, when the policy was formulated, the Government seemed to rely for its working upon the support of the conservative elements. Radhakanta Deb, Rasamoy Dutta and Ramkamal Sen, whose active cooperation the Government had been able to obtain in carrying out its policy, were all diehard conservatives, prominent members of the *Dharma*

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[1] C. E. Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, 79.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Tenth Report* etc., 13-14.

[4] T.G.P. Spear, "Lord William Bentinck", *Journal of Indian History*, xix, 1, April 1940, 102.

Sabha.[1] Practical considerations again dictated Government policy. The Government was already assured of the support of the followers of Rammohan Roy and the Derozian radicals. But these groups did not exercise much influence upon Bengali society. The conservative Hindus though not effective as a group could, in view of their strong social and economic basis, draw wide popular sympathies. The Government, therefore, thought that after the policy had been formulated, it would be advantageous to carry it through with the support of the conservatives who could obtain for it the necessary public cooperation.

Despite the fact that Bentinck's education policy met with severe condemnation by the Court of Directors,[2] it could not be completely reversed because it showed better chances of success than the policy previously followed. It was indeed significant that the conservative Hindus against whose expressed wishes Bentinck had carried through the abolition of *sati*, did not hesitate to readily cooperate with his Government in carrying out the new education policy. In fact, although the conservatives were critical of certain measures taken by the Government, they were, on the whole, not hostile to it. This was illustrated by the public testimony given to Bentinck and his wife on the eve of their departure from India.[3] Thus the 'Orientalists' were let down by their own Indian friends. H. H. Wilson, writing from Oxford to Ramkamal Sen, expressed his displeasure at the attitude of his Hindu friends towards Bentinck. He wrote :[4]

> I am aware of the meetings at the College in honour of Lord and Lady Bentinck. I think you were extremely mistaken in your

[1] Ramkamal Sen was a member of the Medical Education Committee appointed by Bentinck. Subsequently, he became a member of the Committee of Public Instruction. As already noted, Radhakanta Deb and Rasamoy Dutta were the first two Indian members of the Committee.

[2] K. A. Ballhatchet, *op. cit.*, 224.

[3] A public meeting was held at the Hindu College Calcutta on 30 January 1835 which was attended by "five or six hundred persons of all parties of Hindoos" in order to express public appreciation of Lord William Bentinck. The meeting was presided over by Gopimohan Deb, father of Radhakanta Deb. An address to be presented to Bentinck was approved, and speeches praising Bentinck and his wife were made by Rasamoy Dutta, Radhakanta Deb, Ramkamal Sen, and others. It was significant that no Muslim was present at the meeting. *Friend of India*, 5 February 1835.

[4] H. H. Wilson to Ramkamal Sen, 25 September 1835; quoted in P. C. Mitra, *Life of Dewan Ram Comul Sen* (Calcutta 1880), 19-20.

appreciation of their merits ; but still I like to see a public feeling growing up amongst my Calcutta native friends. When they gain courage and, above all, combine, they will do for themselves much more good than the Government can do for them by multiplying ill-paid offices.

It is interesting to note that, inspired by Wilson and the 'Orientalists', "a public feeling" of the kind they wanted was at last roused among the Bengali Hindus. In December 1837, a memorial in Sanskrit signed by "about 10,000 Hindus, the inhabitants of Calcutta and zillas in Bengal" was sent to the Court of Directors.[1] In this memorial Bentinck's resolution of 7 March 1835 was denounced as "most injurious, spiteful, subversive of our professions and religion and conducive to the ill-fame of the Government."[2] The petitioners prayed that : the Sanskrit language and literature be encouraged ; measures be adopted for the cultivation of "pure Bengalee reading and writing" ; the Sanskrit College be kept on the same footing as before and the system of granting stipends to students be restored ; funds be allocated for the publication of Sanskrit and Bengali books ; and "works on European arts and sciences be translated into the vernacular language."[3] To understand the true character of the Bengali Hindu attitude, it must be pointed out that, while a note of discontent with Government policy permeated the whole memorial, conservative Hindu leaders during all this time were actively cooperating with Government in carrying out its education policy.

Having lost the battle the 'Orientalists' engaged in a rearguard action. In the *Asiatic Journal* of January 1836, appeared H. H. Wilson's article on "Education of the Natives of India", which was a severe indictment of Bentinck's policy.[4] The fact that this article was published in the unofficial organ of the East India Company was significant. It foreshadowed the Court of Directors' hostility towards Bentinck's policy as clearly revealed in their draft despatch[5] which, however, was

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[1] India Office Records, *Revenue, Judicial and Legislative Committee. Miscellaneous Papers*, vol. 9.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Asiatic Journal*, 1836, xix, 73, 1-16.
[5] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, vol. 723; also I.O.R., *Revenue, Judicial and Legislative Committee. Miscellaneous Papers*, vol. 9.

disapproved by the Board of Control. In returning the draft John Hobhouse, the Board's President, in a letter to James Carnac, Chairman of the Court, explained the reasons for its disapproval. Referring to the arguments put forward in that draft which, in fact, were an echo of the points raised in Wilson's article Hobhouse remarked :[1]

> The facts appear to me to be mistated [sic] — the reasoning to be inconclusive and the decision tainted with manifest partiality towards a Party whose mode of conducting the arguments was anything but decorous.

Thus, Bentinck's policy was allowed to stay, though with certain modifications.[2]

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[1] I.O.R., *Revenue, Judicial and Legislative Committee. Miscellaneous Papers*, vol. 9.

[2] In August 1836, a petition signed by 70 students of the Calcutta Sanskrit College was presented to Lord Auckland praying for restoration of stipends. A similar petition had been made on behalf of the Calcutta Madrasa. Auckland in his minute dated 24 August 1836, observed that while he considered the indiscriminate granting of stipends undesirable, he favoured a system of providing scholarships to the best students in all the institutions on a competitive basis. His government eventually took a compromise decision on continuing Bentinck's policy of promoting English education while preserving the character of the Oriental institutions by providing separate funds for their maintenance. *S.E.R.*, i, 145-70.

CONCLUSION

British rule in India had originated in Bengal and it was inevitable that Bengali society would be first to feel the all pervasive impact of the West and undergo changes which later spread to other parts of India. These changes had manifested themselves in the early decades of the nineteenth century. One aspect of the transformation was social mobility particularly among certain sections of the people, despite the inhibitive influence of caste, religious customs and traditions. The process had started in the eighteenth century, with the breakdown of the old political order. This mobility was in fact facilitated by the peculiar nature of British rule. Representing an alien government and culture, it precluded the possibility of any particular class of persons exercising the monopoly of privilege by virtue of traditional hierarchy. The social position of individuals was, therefore, largely determined by their relations with the new Government and everything associated with it.

The reform movement in England, particularly the movement of the free-traders, had a great impact upon the social and economic development of Bengal. The attempts of the free-traders to enlist the sympathy and support of the Indian merchants in their struggle against the monopoly of the East India Company, promoted remarkable commercial activity which greatly facilitated the growth of the Indian business community. Utilitarian and evangelical influences provoked social consciousness among people of different classes and helped in creating a climate of opinion which favoured both reform and reaction. It should be noted that English interest in Indian reform was linked with the reform movement in England itself, and when the latter lost its earlier fervour in the late 1830's the interest in Indian reform also began to decline.

But the reform movement in India, once started, followed its own course, guided by the peculiarities of the Indian stituation. It was largely determined by the character of the social composition of Bengali society. Land still provided the predominant badge of leadership. But the character of the landed aristocracy itself had undergone a change. Wealth, acquired largely under British patronage, was the

real basis of the new aristocracy of Bengal. This class was again split into two basic groups. One group was conservative in outlook. It had more links with land than with trade ; it was a close ally of the East India Company and was favoured by the English conservatives. Radhakanta Deb was a typical example of this class which, though created by the British, had imbibed the spirit of the old order. The other group, typified by Dwarkanath Tagore, was relatively progressive. Its merchant origins were more recent, or at least more marked. It was anti-monopolist, had close connections with the free-traders and was favoured by the English reformers. These merchant-zamindars were generally reformist in their social outlook, although their reformism did not go very far. But when it came to defending the economic interests and privileges associated with the Permanent Settlement, *all* zamindars, conservatives and reformers, Hindus and Muslims, tended to show a remarkable degree of unanimity of opinion, as is evident from their outcry against the new revenue policy of the Government.

The new generation of the English-educated people particularly of the urban areas, which was not directly involved in landed or commercial interests, tended to become radical in outlook. The radicals derived their ideas from Western rationalism. But their spirit of revolt grew out of the fact that society had as yet no place for them. The radicals were thus the status-seekers of the age, who could not long be neglected either by society or the Government.

The great bulk of the people, living in the countryside and largely consisting of the peasantry, remained steeped in poverty and illiteracy. It had developed a somewhat fatalistic outlook through centuries of oppression and misery. But occasionally it now tended to manifest a spirit of revolt against intolerable conditions. Left to itself, its leadership was taken by illiterate or near-illiterate but strong-willed men of rural background like Titu Mir, who, incapable of appreciating or understanding the true nature of the problem, sought a naive solution in religious puritanism and in communal violence drawing inspiration from the past. No attempt was made by the land-owning and the middle classes of the population to help the peasantry. The attitude of the Government was also negative, despite the reaction against the Permanent Settlement.

Public opinion in India during this period, therefore, meant the opinion of the upper and the middle classes mostly concentrated in the

towns. And since they alone were capable under the existing conditions of furnishing leadership to the people, their influence extended beyond the limits of their own class or group. In fact they sometimes claimed to represent whole communities, for example in the petition against certain discriminatory clauses of the Jury Act of 1826. Even in matters affecting the class interests of particular groups, such as the zamindars, they claimed to express the opinion of the whole people. Thus, the petition of the zamindars against Regulation III of 1828 was made on behalf of "the inhabitants of Bengal, Behar and Orissa."

On specific issues such as those relating to free trade and colonization, religious and social reform and education, opinions were sharply divided. There were again issues such as those connected with missionary activities or the question of the freedom of the press on which particular groups expressed strong opinions. The modes of expressing all these opinions were distinctly Western or rather modern—newspapers, associations or oganizations, public meetings and petitions.

By 1835 the press in Bengal had developed as the most effective organ of public opinion. A significant development during this period was the anxiety on the part of certain commercial interests, both English and Indian, to influence public opinion by exercising financial control over some of the leading newspapers. Thus, the Persian newspaper, the *Jam-i-Jahan-Numa* was actually owned by an English agency house though its nominal proprietor was a Bengali Hindu. Similarly Dwarkanath Tagore had taken over the *India Gazette*. He also had financial interests in other newspapers such as the *Bengal Herald* and the *Bengal Hurkaru*. Conservative Hindu zamindars also began to evince an interest in the newspapers. In fact, most of the Bengali newspapers started between 1831 and 1835 were owned by them.

Associations and organizations like the Dharma Sabha, the Brahmo Samaj and the Academic Association also represented serious attempts on the part of the different sections of the people to secure their objects by propagating their views.

Yet another recognized means of expressing opinion was the holding of public meetings through which specific grievances were expressed with a view to drawing the attention of the Government to them. Most of these meetings, however, were held at the initiative of the English merchants who stood for free trade.

Petitioning constituted another common medium of expressing opinion. The petitions represented the views of particular classes of

people on particular measures of the Government relating to the administration of justice, trade, land revenue, press, social reform and education. These were variously addressed to the Supreme Court, the Governor-General, the Privy Council or the Parliament.

The impact of Indian opinion upon Government policy, even at this early period of social consciousness, was considerable. Not only was the Government unable to ignore any opinion publicly expressed, it was very often obliged to modify its policy in face of public sentiment. Thus on the question of the abolition of *sati* the Government took action only after a fairly strong public reaction had developed in Bengal against the custom. Similarly, the education policy was also influenced by the ideas of the age. Macaulay's 'Anglicism' could not go very far. As a result of strong Muslim protest, the proposals contained in Macaulay's minute, for which Bentinck had expressed his warm support, were substantially modified.

The ideas which constituted public opinion in Bengal in early nineteenth century greatly helped in shaping the later history of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. While these ideas grew out of contact with the West, they developed peculiar characteristics of their own. In fact, they promoted some kind of reaction and resistance not only to Western political domination but also to Western thought and culture. Indian nationalism, Muslim separatism, Hindu revivalism and secular radicalism, these ideas which have shaped the contemporary history of the sub-continent, existed in their incipient forms in Bengal during the early period of the nineteenth century.

APPENDIX I

Petition of Natives of Bengal relative to Duties on Cotton and Silk.

Calcutta, 1st September 1831.

To the Right Honourable the Lords of His Majesty's Privy Council for Trade, &c.

The humble Petition of the undersigned Manufacturers and Dealers in Cotton and Silk Piece-Goods, the fabrics of Bengal ;

Sheweth,

That of late years your Petitioners have found their business nearly superseded by the introduction of the fabrics of Great Britain into Bengal, the importation of which augments every year, to the great prejudice of the native manufactures.

That the fabrics of Great Britain are consumed in Bengal without any duties being levied thereon to protect the native fabrics.

That the fabrics of Bengal are charged with the following duties when they are used in Great Britain :

On manufactured cottons, 10 per cent.

On manufactured silks, 24 per cent.

Your Petitioners most humbly implore your Lordships' consideration of these circumstances, and they feel confident that no disposition exists in England to shut the door against the industry of any part of the inhabitants of this great empire.

They, therefore, pray to be admitted to the privilege of British subjects, and humbly entreat your Lordships to allow the cotton and silk fabrics of Bengal to be used in Great Britain "free of duty", or at the same rate which may be charged on British fabrics consumed in Bengal.

Your Lordships must be aware of the immense advantages the British manufacturers derive from their skill in constructing and using machinery, which enables them to undersell the unscientific manufacturers of Bengal in their own country ; and although your Petitioners are not sanguine in expecting to derive any great advantage from having their prayer granted, their minds would feel gratified by such a manifestation of your Lordships' goodwill towards them ; and such an instance of justice to the natives of India, would not fail to endear the British Government to them.

They, therefore, confidently trust, that your Lordships' righteous consideration will be extended to them as British subjects, without exception of sect, country or colour.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Signed by 117 natives of high respectability.

APPENDIX II

A Note on the Origin of the Hindu College.

Till recent times there has been a controversy regarding the origin of the Hindu College. As early as 1832 the *Calcutta Christian Observer* maintained that it was

David Hare with whom the idea of the Hindu College originated.[1] The Rev. Alexander Duff (1806-78) in his evidence given on 3 June 1853 before a Parliamentary Select Committee noted that "the system of English education commenced in the following simple way in Bengal. There were two persons who had to do with it ; one was David Hare, and the other was a Native, Rammohun Roy."[2] Subsequently, Pearychand Mittra and his brother Kissorychand maintained that the idea came from David Hare.[3] Radhakanta Deb, however, in a letter to Pearychand pointed out that it was Sir Edward Hyde East who was the real founder of the Hindu College.[4] The controversy has continued in the present century. B. D. Basu tried to prove that the idea of the Hindu College actually originated with Rammohan Roy.[5] Brajendranath Benerji at first agreed with this view,[6] but later maintained that the real founder of the College was David Hare.[7] Dr. R. C. Majumdar in an article published in 1955 analysed the different views stated above and concluded that it was at David Hare's suggestion that the Hindu College was founded.[8] Dr. Majumdar has now revised his opinion saying that if any *one* person was responsible for founding the Hindu College, it was neither Rammohan Roy nor David Hare but Sir Edward Hyde East.[9] Dr. Majumdar, however, maintains that "no individual has any claim to be the founder of the Hindu College or originating the idea. It was, really speaking, conceived by the orthodox Hindus, and established by the orthodox Hindus, for the orthodox Hindus."[10] Dr. N. S. Bose has come forward with the view that the idea of establishing the Hindu College originated with David Hare "which appeared acceptable not only to Rammohan and his friends but also the conservative Hindu elite of Calcutta."[11]

[1] *Calcutta Christian Observer*, June 1832, p. 17 : July 1832, pp. 68-69.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers, House of Lords*, 1852-53, XXXII, 48.

[3] P. C. Mittra, *Op. cit.*, pp. 5, xii.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 39-40.

[5] B. D. Basu, *History of Education in India under the Rule of the East India Company* (2nd edition), Calcutta 1935, pp. 37.

[6] Brajendranath Banerji, "Rammohun Roy as an educational pioneer", *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, 1930, XVI, ii, p. 160.

[7] Brajendranath Banerji (ed.), *Sangbadpatre Sekaler Katha*, II, pp. 707-11.

[8] R. C. Majumdar, "The Hindu College", *Journal of the Asiatic Society, Letters*, 1955, XXI, i, pp. 39-51. Majumdar drew his conclusion from the evidence of Alexander Duff given before the Select Committee of House of Lords on 3 June 1853 in which he stated obviously from heresay (Duff arrived in India in 1830) that it was David Hare who first conceived the idea of establishing an institution for promoting English education. Duff in course of his evidence gave details of the duscussion that was supposed to have taken place between Rammohan Roy and David Hare which preceded the meeting at the residence of Sir Edward Hyde East. *P.P.H.L.*, op. cit., pp. 445, 48.

[9] R. C. Majumdar, *On Rammohun Roy* (Calcutta 1972), p. 39.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] N. S. Bose, "Rammohun Roy and English education : a revaluation", *Nineteenth Century Studies*, no. 1, January 1973, pp. 88-89. This view again is based on the evidence of Alexander Duff before the Parliamentary Committee of 1852-53. *P.P.H.L.*, op. cit., pp. 445, 48.

The above views regarding the origin of the Hindu College are, however, based on a single source, namely, the Report of the Parliamentary Committee of the House of Lords for the session 1852-53 which contains evidences of Sir Charles Trevelyan, Alexander Duff and William Wilberforce Bird. In course of his evidence given on 30 June 1853, Bird read out a paper which contained what he believed to be extracts of several letters written by Sir Edward Hyde East to J. H. Harrington in which some interesting details regarding the establishment of the Hindu College were given.[1] According to Bird this paper was given to him by Sir Charles Trevelyan (1807-86) who again had received it from Sir Edward Hyde East shortly before his death (8 January 1847). According to Bird, in giving this paper to Trevelyan, East was anxious to see "that having been principally instrumental in establishing that institution [Hindu College], the information it contained might not be lost to the world."[2] Earlier, Sir Charles Trevelyan in his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee given on 21 June 1853, had observed : "In the year 1816, the Hindoo gentlemen of Calcutta, assisted by Mr. David Hare, and Sir Edward Hyde East, the Chief Justice, established the Hindoo College for giving instruction in English literature and sciences."[3] In his subsequent evidence given on 28 June 1853, Trevelyan quoted extract from a letter supposed to have been written to J. H. Harrington by Sir Edward Hyde East on 28 May 1817.[4] The same extract was reproduced by Bird in his evidence. It appears that shortly after he had given his evidence, Trevelyan handed over the paper to Bird containing extracts of letters believed to had been written by Sir Edward Hyde East to J. H. Harrington.

There is a manuscript copy of a letter hitherto unnoticed, written by Sir Edward Hyde East, in a volume of documents preserved in the archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, London.[5] This letter which is dated 17 May 1816 and written from Calcutta is addressed to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, President of the Board of Control. Sir Edward obviously did not know that Buckinghamshire had already died on 4 February 1816 in London as a result of a fall from his horse.[6] In those days letters despatched from India by sailing ships used to take about five months to reach their destination in England. This letter[7] clearly shows that it was at the initiative of the conservative Hindu leaders of Calcutta that the Hindu College was established. The letter also indicates the bitter feelings of the conservative Hindus towards Rammohan Roy. It is significant that David Hare's name is not mentioned at all. In fact, the managing committee of the Hindu College was throughout the subsequent period dominated by the conservative Hindus, *e.g.*, Gopimohan Deb, Radhakanta Deb, Ramkamal Sen. Their control over the management was so strong that they had little difficulty in removing Derozio from teaching position in 1831 when the influence of his radical ideas had threatened to bring about a revolution in Hindu society.

[1] For relevant portions of Bird's evidence see Enclosure II.
[2] *P.P.H.L.*, op. cit., pp. 445, 235.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 146.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 191.
[5] *Fulham Papers 1813-27*, Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.
[6] C. H. Philips, *East India Company* (Manchester 1940), p. 208.
[7] For full text see Enclosure I.

There is a remarkable similarity in language and contents between the extracts of a letter dated 18 May 1816 which Bird had read out in course of his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on 30 June 1853 and the one found in the S. P. G. archives. That the letters of Sir Edward Hyde East, extracts of which Bird produced before the Parliamentary Committee could not have been written to J. H. Harrington is proved by the fact that Harrington was very much in Calcutta in 1816 and, as the letter preserved in the archives of the S. P. G. indicates that his name was proposed by East himself for membership of the Committee of management of the Hindu College.[1]

The obvious conclusions which can be drawn from the above discussion are : (1) The letter found in the archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts is the original letter of Sir Edward Hyde East which he had written to the Earl of Buckinghamshire. But the letter reached London after Buckinghamshire's death and somehow found its place in the missionary archives. (2) The paper which Sir Edward Hyde East had given to Sir Charles Trevelyan shortly before his death represented what may be described as a later reconstruction from memory and also probably from random notes. In trying to recollect an event which had taken place over thirty years before, East's memory was perhaps somewhat confounded.

Nevertheless, the question arises, if the first letter dated 17 May 1816 found intact in the S. P. G. archives which East had written to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, is the original letter, and the extracts of the letter dated 18 May 1816 which Bird had produced in his evidence represented a later reconstruction of the same, then to whom were the subsequent letters, *i.e.*, those of 21 May 1816, 28 May 1817, 28 April 1818 and 11 September 1818 written ? The letter of 21 May 1816 was obviously written to Buckinghamshire. But was it Canning who succeeded Buckinghamshire as President of the Board of Control to whom the subsequent letters were addressed ?

Finally, the exercise to find out who was the person with whom the idea of establishing the Hindu College originated, is rather a futile one. A particular idea advocating social changes need not always originate with a particular individual. Social changes take place because important segments of society collectively desire it. As has been stated above, by the beginning of the nineteenth century Bengali Hindus in general for a variety of reasons were keen to acquire Western education.

ENCLOSURE I

Calcutta, 17 May 1816.

My Lord,

I have ventured to trouble you with the following communication, as containing matter of interest as well of curiosity –

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[1] Recently Subarna Ghose and Asokelal Ghose have in their articles published in the Bengali weekly *Desh* shown that J. H. Harrington was very much present in Calcutta in 1816 and, therefore, the letters mentioned by Bird in his evidence could not have been written to him. From this discovery the Ghoses have cast doubts on the authenticity of East's correspondence as an historical document. *Desh*, 13 Magh 1379, pp. 1289-96 ; 5 Sravan 1380, pp. 1277-82.

A proposition was brought to me about a fortnight ago by a Brahmin of Calcutta well-known for his intelligence and active interference amongst the principal native inhabitants and intimate with many of our own gentlemen of distinction, signifying that many of the leading Hindoos are desirous of forming an establishment for the education of their children in a liberal manner as practised by Europeans of condition and desired me to lend my aid towards it, by having a meeting held under my sanction. Not being entirely satisfied how the Government felt upon this subject, as no active measures had been publicly taken for applying the annual sum directed by Parliament towards the religious and moral improvement of the Hindoos tho' I believe the matter was then under consideration I at first gave him an evasive answer, stating that however much I might approve of such a measure as an individual, yet in the public situation I held, I should be cautious not to give any appearance of acting from my own impulse in a matter which I was sure that the Government would rather leave to themselves the Hindoos to act in as they thought right than in any manner to control them : but that I would take the matter into consideration and if I saw no objection ultimately to the course he proposed, I would inform him of it, and if he would then give me a list of the principal Hindoos to whom he alluded, I would send them an invitation to meet at my house.

In fact several of them had before at different times addressed themselves to me upon this topic but never before in this direct manner. Having dismissed him I had an opportunity soon afterwards of consulting Lord Moira (with whom I went to pass a few days at Barrackpore) upon the subject; and on his Lordship's return to Calcutta he laid my communication before the Supreme Council, all the members of which approved of the course I had taken and signified through his Lordship, that they saw no objection to my permitting the parties to meet at my house. In fact it seemed to be as good an opportunity as any which could occur of feeling the general pulse of the Hindoos as to the projected system of national moral improvements, without committing the Government in the experiment. The success of it has much surpassed any previous expectation.

The meeting was accordingly held at my House on the 14th of May, at which about 50 and upwards of the most respectable Hindoo inhabitants attended, including the principal Pundits, when a sum of nearly half a lack of rupees was subscribed and many more subscriptions were promised. Those who are well acquainted with this people and know how hardly a Hindoo parts with his money upon any abstract speculation of mental advantages will best know how to estimate this effort of theirs.

It is however a beginning made towards mental improvement which surprises those who have known them longest and many of themselves also. Most of them however appeared to take great interest in the proceedings and all expressed themselves in favour of making the acquaintance of the English language a principal object of education together with its moral and scientific productions.

One of the singularities of the meeting was, that it was composed of persons of various castes, all combining for such a purpose whose children are to be taught but not fed together. Another was that the most distinguished Pundits who attended declared their warm approbation of all the objects proposed, and when they were about to depart, the head Pundit in the name of himself and the other said that they rejoiced in having lived to see the day when literature (many parts of which had formerly been cultivated in this country with considerable success, but which had

been nearly extinct) was now about to be revived with greater lustre and prospect of success than ever.

The principal objects proposed for their adoption had been the cultivation of the Bangallee and English languages in particular. The Hindoostanee tongue as convenient in the Upper Provinces, and the Persian if desired as ornamental. General duty to God. The English system of morals (the Pundits and some of the most sensible of the rest deplored their national deficiency in morals), Grammar, Writing (in English as well as Bengallee), Arithmetic (this is one of the Hindoo virtues), History, Geography, Astronomy, Mathematics, English Belles Letters, Poetry in time as the fund increases.

Several days have now elapsed since the meeting and I continue to receive numerous applications for permission to attend the next meeting which was appointed to be holden at my house at the distance of a week from the first and I hear from all quarters of the approbation of the Hindoos at large of the plan. They promise that a lack shall be subscribed to begin with. I have desired them to appoint a Committee of their own for management taking care only to secure the attendance of 2 or 3 respectable European gentlemen to see that all goes on rightly. I have already proposed for this purpose Mr. Harrington, the Chief Judge of the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut and Mr. Blaymere, one of the magistrates of the city ; and hereafter they must ornament their trust with the names of the members of the Supreme Council for the time being. If anything more occurs in the progress of the business worthy of remark it shall be communicated to your Lordship.

May I request the favor of you to forward the enclosed paper to Lord Ellenborough.

I have the honor to be
Your Lordship's
Very faithful and obliged
humble servant
Signed. E. H. EAST

The Rt. Hon'ble The Earl of Buckinghamshire.

P. S.

I have forgotten to mention some little incidents which as they are characteristic of the people may serve to amuse your Lordship.

I first received some of the principal Hindoos in a room adjoining to that where the general meeting was to be held. There the Pundits, to most of whom I was before unknown were introduced to me. The usual mode of salutation was on this occasion departed from : instead of holding out money in his hands for me to touch (a base and degrading custom) the chief Pundit held out both hands closed towards me ; and as I offered him my hand thinking he wished to shake hands in *our* English style, he disclosed a number of small sweeted scented flowers which he emptied into my hand, saying that those were the flowers of literature which they were happy to present to me on this occasion, and requested me to accept from them (adding some personal compliment). I brought the flowers to my face, and told him that the sweet scent of them was an assurance to me that they would prove to be the flowers

of Morality as well as of Literature to his nation by the assistance of himself and his friends. This appeared to gratify them very much.

Talking afterwards with several of the company, before I proceeded to open the business of the day, I found one of them in particular a Brahmin of good caste, and a man of wealth and influence was mostly set against Ramohin Roy, son of the Rajah of Burdwan,[1] a Brahmin of the highest caste, and of great rank and wealth (concerning whose religious opinions and schisms from the common Hindoo faith, I have already made some mention to your Lordship in the papers transmitted by the William Pitt.[2] He expressed a hope that no subscription would be received from Ramohin Roy. I asked "Why not ?" "Because he has chosen to separate himself from us and to attack our religion." "I do not know (I observed) what Ramohin's religion is, not having had any communication with him, or being acquainted with him, but I hope that my being a Christian, and a sincere one to the best of my ability, will be no reason for your refusing my subscription to your undertaking." This I said smilingly in a tone of gaiety, and he answered readily in the same style. "No, not at all ; we shall be glad of your money, but it is a different thing with Ramohin Roy, who is a Hindoo, and yet has publicly reviled us, and written against us and our religion, and I suppose and hope there is no intention to change our religion." I answered that I knew of no intention of meddling with their religion. That every object of the establishment would be avowed, and a Committee appointed by them to regulate the details which would enable themselves to guard against everything they should disapprove. That their own Committee would accept or refuse subscriptions from whom they pleased. I added that I being a Christian upon my deliberate conviction, would, as a man, spare no pains to make all other men such, if any persuation of mine could work such a change ; but being sensible that such a change was wholly out of my power to effect, the next best thing I could do for them was to join my endeavours to theirs to make them good Hindoos, good men, and englighten their nation by the benefits of a liberal education which would enable them to improve themselves and judge for themselves. The Brahmin said he had no objection to this, and some of the others laughed and said to me they saw no reason if Ramohin Roy should offer to subscribe towards their establishment, for refusing his money which was as good as other people's. This frank mode of dealing with them I have not had occasion to observe is the best method of gaining their personal regard and confidence. Upon another occasion I had asked a very sensible Brahmin what it was that made some of his people so violent against Ramohin. He said in truth they did not like a man of his consequence to take open part against them. That he himself had advised Ramohin against it ; that if he had found any-

[1] Sir Edward Hyde East was here obviously referring to Rammohan Roy. It is not surprising that Sir Edward was not acquainted with the reformer personally nor did he remember his correct name. Rammohan had in fact only settled down in Calcutta in 1815 and he was not as yet very much known to the high officials although he had already created a stir in Calcutta Hindu society by his attacks on idolatry. Again, someone must have misinformed Sir Edward that Rammohan Roy was the son of the Raja of Burdwan with whom in fact he had no connection except a legal dispute regarding property in which he was involved for sometime.

[2] Unfortunately these papers still remain untraced.

thing in his opinion, wrong against them, he should have endeavoured by private advice and persuation to amend it ; but the course he had taken set everybody against him and would do no good in the end. They particularly disliked (and this I believe is at the bottom of their resentment) his associating himself so much as he does with Mussalmen not with this or that Mussalman as a personal friend, but being continually surrounded by them and suspected to join in meals with them. In fact he has I believe nearly withdrawn himself from the society of his brother Hindoos whom he looks down upon ; which wounds their pride. They would rather be reformed by anybody else than by him, but they are now very generally sensible that they want reformation ; and it will be well to do this gradually and quietly under the auspices of government without its sensible interference in details.*

ENCLOSURE II

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE BIRD, Esquire, is called in, and further examined

Perhaps the best thing I can do to explain exactly how the matter originated is to read a very interesting paper which bears upon the subject. It is from Sir Edward Hyde East, who was Chief Justice in the Supreme Court, and it contains extracts of letters addressed by him to Mr. Harrington, who was the Senior Judge of the Sudder Dewanny and Nizamut Adawlut at Calcutta, then absent in England. It is dated the 18th of May 1816, and gives an account of the origin of the Hindoo College. It was given by Sir Edward Hyde East to Sir Charles Trevelyan a short time before his death, in order, he said, that having been principally instrumental in establishing that institutuion, the information it contained might not be lost to the world. Sir Charles Trevelyan, hearing that I was summoned to-day to be examined, put it into my hands, and I should be glad to read it if the Committee will give me leave.

7098. *Chairman.*) Will you have the goodness to read it ?

The same is read, as follows :

Calcutta, 18 May 1816.

An interesting and curious scene has lately been exhibited here, which shows that all things pass under change in due season. About the beginning of May, a Brahmin of Calcutta, whom I knew, and who is well known for his intelligence and active interference among the principal Native inhabitants, and also intimate with many of our own gentlemen of distinction, called upon me and informed me, that many of the leading Hindoos were desirous of forming an establishment for the education of their children in a liberal manner as practised by Europeans of condition ; and desired that I would lend them my aid toward it, by having a meeting held under my sanction. Wishing to be satisfied how the Government would view such a measure, I did not

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* Having read my article containing a copy of Sir Edward Hyde East's letter (*Nineteenth Century Studies*, no. 9, January 1975), Dr. R. C. Majumdar obtained a mimeograph of the same from London. He compared his copy with that of mine and discovered a few minor errors. He was kind enough in pointing out these errors to me which have now been corrected. I am grateful to Dr. Majumdar for his kind gesture.

at first give him a decided answer ; but stated, that however much I wished well, as an individual, to such an object, yet, in the public situation I held, I should be cautious not to give any appearance of acting from my own impulse in a matter which I was sure that the Government would rather leave to them [the Hindoos] to act in, as they thought right, than in any manner to control them ; but that I would consider of the matter, and if I saw no objection ultimately to the course he proposed, I would inform him of it ; and if he would then give me a written list of the principal Hindoos to whom he alluded, I would send them an invitation to meet at any house. In fact, several of them had before at different times, addressed themselves to me upon this topic, but never before in so direct a manner.

After his departure I communicated to the Governor-general what had passed, who laid my communication before the Supreme Council, all the members of which approved of the course I had taken, and signified, through his Lordship, that they saw no objection to my permitting the parties to meet at my house.

It seemed indeed to be as good an opportunity as any which could occur of feeling the general pulse of the Hindoos, as to the projected system of national moral improvement of them recommended bv Parliament (and towards which they have directed a lac to be annually laid out), and this without committing the Government in the experiment. The success of it has much surpassed any previous expectation. The meeting was accordingly held at my house on the 14th of May 1816, at which 50 and upwards of the most respectable Hindoo inhabitants of rank or wealth attended, including also the principal Pundits ; when a sum of nearly half a lac of rupees was subscribed, and many more subscriptions were promised. Those who were well acquainted with this people, and know how hardly a Hindoo parts with his money upon any abstract speculation of mental advantage, will best know how to estimate this effort of theirs. It is, however, a beginning made towards improvement which surprises those who have known them the longest, and many of themselves also. Most of them, however, appeared to take great interest in the proceedings, and all expressed themselves in favour of making the acquisition of the English language a principal object of education, together with its moral and scientific productions.

I first received some of the principal Hindoos in a room adjoining to that where the generality were to assemble. There the Pundits, to most of whom I was before unknown, were introduced to me. The usual mode of salutation was on this occasion departed from ; instead of holding out money in his hand for me to touch (a base and degrading custom), the chief Pundit held out both his hands closed towards me ; and as I offered him my hand, thinking he wished to shake hands in our English style, he disclosed a number of small sweet-scented flowers, which he emptied into my hand, saying that those were the flowers of literature, which they were happy to present to me upon this occasion, and requested me to accept from them (adding some personal compliments). Having brought the flowers to my face, I told him that the sweet scent was an assurance to me that they would prove to be the flowers of morality, as well as of literature, to his nation, by the assistance of himself and his friends. This appeared to gratify them very much.

Talking afterwards with several of the Company, before I proceeded to open the business of the day, I found that one of them in particular, a Brahmin of good caste, and a man of wealth and influence, was mostly set against Ramohun Roy,

son of the Rajah of Burdwan, a Brahmin of the highest caste, and of great wealth and rank (who has lately written against the Hindoo idolatry, and upbraids his countrymen pretty sharply). He expressed a hope that no subscription would be received from Ramohun Roy. I asked, why not ? "Because he has chosen to separate himself from us, and to attack our religion." "I do not know," I observed, "what Ramohun's religion is" – (I have heard it is a kind of Unitarianism) – "not being acquainted or having had any communication with him ; but I hope that my being a Christian, and a sincere one, to the best of my ability, will be no reason for your refusing my subscription to your undertaking." This I said in a tone of gaiety : and he answered readily in the same style, "No, not at all; we shall be glad of your money ; but it is a different thing with Ramohun Roy, who is a Hindoo, and yet has publicly reviled us, and written against us and our religion ; and I hope there is no intention to change our religion." I answered that, "that I knew of no intention of meddling with their religion ; that every object of the establishment would be avowed, and a committee appointed by themselves to regulate the details, which would enable themselves to guard against everything they should disapprove of ; that their own committee would accept or refuse subscriptions from whom they pleased." I added that, "I being a Christian, upon my deliberate conviction, would, as a man, spare no pains to make all other men such, if any persuasion of mine could work such a change ; but being sensible that such a change was wholly out of my power to effect, the next best thing I could do for them was to join my endeavours to theirs to make them good Hindoos, good men, and to enlighten their nation by the benefits of a liberal education, which would enable them to improve themselves, and judge for themselves." The Brahmin said he had no objection to this ; and some of the others laughed and observed to me, that they saw no reason, if Ramohun Roy should offer to subscribe towards their establishment, for refusing his money, which was as good as other people's.

This frank mode of dealing with them, I have often before had occasion to remark, is the best method of gaining their personal regard and confidence. Upon another occasion I had asked a very sensible Brahmin what it was that made some of his people so violent against Ramohun. He said, in truth, they did not like a man of his consequence to take open part against them ; that he himself had advised Ramohun against it : he had told him, that if he found anything wrong among his countrymen, he should have endeavoured, by private advice and persuasion, to amend it ; but that the course he had taken set everybody against him, and would do no good in the end. They particularly disliked (and this I believe is at the bottom of the resentment) his associating himself so much as he does with Mussulmans, not with this or that Mussulman as a personal friend, but being continually surrounded by them, and suspected to partake of meals with them. In fact, he has, I believe, newly withdrawn himself from the society of his brother Hindoos, whom he looked down upon, which wounds their pride. They would rather be reformed by anybody else than by him. But they are now very generally sensible that they want reformation ; and it will be well to do this gradually and quietly, under the auspices of Government, without its sensible interference in details.

The principal objects proposed for the adoption of the meeting (after raising a subscription to purchase a handsome piece of ground, and building a college upon part of it, to be enlarged hereafter, according to the occasion and increasing of

funds), were the cultivation of the Bengalee and English languages in particular ; next, the Hindostanee tongue, as convenient in the Upper Provinces ; and then the Persian, if desired, as ornamental ; general duty to God ; the English system of morals (the Pundits and some of the most sensible of the rest bore testimony to and deplored their national deficiency in morals) ; grammar, writing (in English as well as Bengalee), arithematic (this is one of the Hindoo virtues), history, geography, astronomy, mathematics ; and in time, as the fund increases, English belles letters, poetry, &c. &c.

One of the singularities of the meeting was, that it was composed of persons of various castes, all combining for such a purpose, whom nothing else could have brought together ; whose children are to be taught, though not fed, together.

Another singularity was, that the most distinguished Pundits who attended declared their warm approbation of all the objects proposed ; and when they were about to depart, the head Pundit, in the name of himself and the others, said that they rejoiced in having lived to see the day when literature (many parts of which had formerly been cultivated in their country with considerable success, but which were now nearly extinct) was about to be revived with greater lustre and prospect of success than ever.

Another meeting was proposed to be held at the distance of a week ; and during this interval I continued to receive numerous applications for permission to attend it. I heard from all quarters of the approbation of the Hindoos at large to the plan ; they have promised that a lac shall be subscribed to begin with. It is proposed to desire them to appoint a committee of their own for management, taking care only to secure the attendance of two or three respectable European gentlemen to aid them, and see that all goes on rightly.

21st May. – The meeting was held to-day, and all going on well. I wrote to you last, by the Indian dak which sailed in June, an account of the Hindoo meeting here for the purpose of establishing a college or school for the English language and literature ; nearly a lac of rupees has been subscribed by the Hindoos, of which more than half has been paid in, and the rest is in the course of collection. The completion of the institutuion has been retarded in deference to the opinion of one of the members in Council, who thought that Government should not show any outward marks of countenancing any plan of this description, by giving patronage, land or money (all of which the subscribers wished), which might give umbrage to the Hindoos in the country, though it was desired by all the principal Hindoos in Calcutta. The intervening time, however, since the plan was set on foot, has shown how groundless this apprehension was; for not long after, the Rajah of Burdwan, one of the greatest Hindoo landowners under the Company, sent in a subscription of 12,000 rupees, with an offer of much more if the plan succeeded ; and other sums have been subscribed by the Hindoos in the different provinces, who have their agents in Calcutta ; many, indeed, of the principal Hindoos in Calcutta who were the promoters of the institutuion, are themselves considerable landowners, by purchase, in different parts of the country. The committee appointed amongst themselves have framed their general rules, and take the active management of it on themselves, and intend opening their under school in January next. They still hope that the Government will patronise their endeavours and assist them, either with land or money, to build their college, and encourage their efforts to acquire something more of a classical

knowledge of the English language and literature than they are able individually to acquire in general by private instruction. When they were told that the Government was advised to suspend any declaration in favour of their undertaking, from tender regard to their peculiar opinions, which a classical education, after the English manner, might trench upon, they answered very shrewdly, by stating their surprise that any English gentleman should imagine that they had any objection to a liberal education ; that if they found anything in the course of it which they could not reconcile to their religious opinions, they were not bound to receive it ; but still they should wish to be informed of everything that the English gentlemen learnt, and they would take that which they found good and liked best. Nothing can show more strongly the genuine feeling of the Hindoo mind than this clinging to their purpose, under the failure of direct public encouragement in the first instance. Better information as to their real wishes, and accumulating proofs of the beneficial effects of an improved system of education amongst them, will, I trust, remove all prejudices on this subject from amongst ourselves, with some of whom they actually exist in a much stronger degree than amongst the Hindoos themselves.

Calcutta, 28 May 1817.

I send you the enclosed rules of our Hindoo College as a curiosity (*see* Paper marked A.) ; it is making progressive improvement, and is very popular with the Hindoos, who have subscribed nearly a lac of rupees, and have paid up above two-thirds of the subscription. If it be approved at home, the Hindoos will consider themselves much honoured by the subscriptions of their friends in England.

This plan, having taken so well, has encouraged the formation of another for the providing books of moral and amusing and scientific instruction, for Native youths of all descriptions ; in which plan the Hindoos and Mussulmans have united with English gentlemen. I send you also a prospectus of this society (*see* Paper marked B.). This is the only safe and practical method to stop the fearful course of demoralization amongst this people, and to give them in time better views. In the meantime its immediate effect is to promote honest, peceable and orderly habits.

Calcutta, 28 April 1818.

When I wrote to you in May last, I enclosed the printed rules of our Hindoo College, and also those of the British, Hindoo, and Mussalman School Book Society. That they will do good I have no doubt, but it will be imperceptible for a time. There are some few well-disposed and sensible Hindoos with whom one of these institutions has brought me into close and frequent contact. They wish much for improvement, but this cannot come at once. They have difficulties to overcome much beyond the sphere of their personal feelings and influence ; in respect to which latter, I have generally found them ready to give a liberal confidence, which it has been my wish to encourage by friendly advice, and as far as I can, by prudent counsel. I have always dealt frankly and candidly by them ; and I believe that the course we are pursuing is nearly the best practical course which the state and condition of them and of ourselves will allow of. It is noiseless at least, though it is slow.

I have not much intimate acquaintance among the Mussalmans, excepting with a very few of rank ; but the General School Book Society has made me acquainted with a few more of them amongst their learned ; generally speaking, they are a much

more enlightened race than their neighbours, but with much stronger prejudices, and greater bigotry. No person who has not lived amongst and familiarized himself with either class can judge at all of their present state, and, therefore, the lucubrations in the English reviews upon the Hindoos and Mussulmans are, for the most part, very superficial. The knowledge of their feelings, and the view of their difficulties, can only be comprehended well by personal intercourse and observation ; you must make great allowance, therefore, for all the expectations which different sets of men are apt to raise from particular examples before their own eyes, and still more from the relations of others.

I mention these things, not to repress hope of future or even of some present amelioration, but to regulate it, and keep it within the sober bounds of experience. In the actual state of human sense of these countries, moral and useful education will be the best handmaid to sounder doctrine. As the heart is made to feel and enjoy domestic relations and social virtues, and the intellect is exercised in useful knowledge, the mass of the people will be naturally lifted above their gross and puerile superstitions, and be led to the true knowledge of God. Let each class of persons, therefore, lend its aid in its own vocation to this happy result. The most that any person can contribute is, after all, but as a grain of sand; but by patience in such well-doing, a soil will at last be formed fit for the reception of the good seed, to which God only can give the increase.

In a general point of view, the late political events in India cannot fail to be very interesting, inasmuch as they will greatly accelerate the civilization and national happiness and prosperity of the whole Indian peninsula, and greatly improve the condition of the people at large, who have been for many ages the prey of rapine and cruelty. The very principle of the Mahratta rule was founded in barbarism, and many of its military hordes subsisted systematically upon plunder. It cannot be expected that this spirit can be immediately extinguished ; but the body of its power is broken, and it remains only for our Government at home to consolidate and improve that which has been so ably achieved here.

Calcutta, 11 September 1818.

I wrote to you in April last, giving you some account how matters are going on here ; since which time they have been progressively improving, both morally and politically. Peace is re-established under the best auspiees of future prosperity to the country. The general desire of the people (with the exception of a few ambitious chiefs) is to come under the British rule throughout all Hindostan ; and the school system is spreading every day, and requires only prudence and patience to perfect good instruction. England has a high destiny to fulfil.

APPENDIX III

Petition of the Zamindars of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa against Regulation III of 1828.

To The Right Honorable Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, G.C.B.
Governor General in Council etc. etc. etc.

Fort William.

The humble Petition of the Undersigned Inhabitants of Bengal, Orissa and Behar.

Sheweth,

That placed as your Petitioners are under the sole protection of British Rule, they confidently feel justified, when oppressed, in claiming justice and paternal care from that power, and approaching for redress the footstool of your Lordship, the local representative of their Sovereign, and the immediate Guardian of the safety and security of their lives and property – With this strong impression your Petitioners most humbly appeal to your Lordship in Council against the operation of Regulation III of 1828 recently passed by Government which appears to your Petitioners unprecedented in severity and unparalleled in oppression.

That your Petitioners in the first instance entreat your Lordship's permission to bring to your notice the preamble of Regulation XIX of 1793, containing the solemn assurances of justice couched in the following terms, the Governor General in Council, "has further resolved that the claims of the public on their lands (provided that, the holders of such lands, as are exempted from the payment of public revenue, register the grants as required in this Regulation) shall be tried in the Courts of judicature, that no such exempted lands *may be subjected to the payment of revenue*, until the titles of the proprietor shall have been adjudged invalid by a *final judicial decree*." Your Petitioners trust that after a reference to the language above quoted, your Lordship will not consider their hopes of legal protection founded upon slight grounds, and their fears excited by the contrary plan laid down in the present Regulation, as mere creations of fancy. The whole of the tenor of the preamble, your Petitioners presume, clearly exhibits that although Marquis Cornwallis, then the Governor General of India, was desirous as any of his successors, to resume such lands as were alienated in opposition to the ancient and existing laws of the country, yet from a strict regard for the principles of justice and for the spirit and usages of the British Law, his Lordship felt dissuaded from empowering a Collector, an agent in behalf of the Government, to exercise Judicial power over the parties whose rights were to be contested by the Government.

That your Petitioners in the second place beg your Lordship's attention to Regulation II of 1819, which though it varies from Regulation XIX of 1793 in some essential points, yet guarantees to your petitioners that no part of their property can be rendered liable to attachment without the decision of a higher and more adequate authority than a Collector of land revenue or can be subjected to forfeiture without a chance of redress from the established Judicial Courts and the regular Courts of Appeal. Your Petitioners however deeply regret to find themselves suddenly deprived of their long cherished confidence, by the threatening promulgation of Regulation III of 1828, and being in the eve of ruin, they are driven to the necessity of appealing to your Lordship in Council and humbly but earnestly solicit your Lordship's Condescending attention to the grounds of their complaint.

That clause 1st Section IV of the Regulation in question, totally overlooking the solemn pledge contained in the Preamble of Regulation XIX of 1793, has authorized a Collector to institute inquiries in regard to lands free of assessment without previously obtaining the sanction of the Board of Revenue for such enquiry, as required in Sec. 15 Regulation XIX and in article first sec. V Regulation II of 1819, and has transferred "the force and effect" of a Judicial decree to any decision that the Collector may pass upon such enquiry against the present holders of the lands of the above description, that the second and third articles of the same section not only invest a

Collector with unrestrained power to adjudge any land in possession of individuals to be the property of Government, but give him further absolute authority "to carry immediately into effect" his decree by attaching and assessing the land "so adjudged", without being required to refer his decision to a higher authority for confirmation, as directed in Sec. XX Regulation II of 1819. Your Lordship will now perceive that a Collector of Land Revenue is, by virtue of his office, empowered in the first instance to search out lands subject to the claims of Government, he again is authorized to prefer an action before himself as a judge against the party who may be supposed to have been illicitly in possession of them, and lastly he is rendered competent not only to judge the land to be the property of Government, but also to dispossess the present proprietors of the same land by a stroke of his pen in a Persian Rubukaree held by himself. In short a Collector is, under one capacity commissioned to act the part of plaintiff, while under another the same Collector is vested with the power of discharging functions of an absolutely judicial nature, in passing a decree in cases in which he, in fact stands a Plaintiff or informer, and to carry immediately into effect whatever decree he may pass, a system which your Petitioners presume the most despotic Government might feel reluctant to adopt.

That your Petitioners further beg leave to bring to the notice of your Lordship the hardship and difficulty they naturally dread from the operation of the Regulation at issue. In Sec. XXII Regulation II of 1819 Government bestowed upon your native subjects the privilege of seeking redress against the decision of the highest revenue authorities (Board of Revenue) from the nearest zillah or city Court, in cases in which the amount of demand did not exceed 500 Rupees, that the most indigent individuals or men engaged in husbandry or humble professions might easily have access to that Court without experiencing much inconvenience or incurring heavy expenses. Besides they were permitted in Section XXVII Regulation II of 1819 to appeal to a higher judicial authority for the vindication of their rights on the supposition that the decision passed by a zillah or city Judge was unjust or erroneous. But your Petitioners with the deepest regret feel compelled to entreat your Lordship will refer to clause fifth Sec. IV of the present Regulation, virtually denying your native subjects all means of self defence. Though the above clause justifies in theory an appeal to a Special Commissioner against the decision of a Collector, yet it has rendered such an appeal in almost two cases of three absolutely impraticable, since numerous individuals possessing small pieces of land of the above description are so occupied in the pursuit of their livelihood as to make it practically impossible for them to leave their respective families and occupations to proceed to a distant station for the purpose of conducting an appeal before a Special Commissioner. Moreover, the Collectors in general from their want of experience of judicial duties, are not and cannot, your Petitioners presume, be regarded as sufficiently competent to institute judicial investigation, their decisions consequently could not bear that weight and respect which are attached to a decree passed by an experienced Judicial officer of Government. Under the circumstances any investigation that may be held by a Special Commissioner, when appealed to him against the decision of a Collector would, in point of fact, be the first as well as last Judicial trial.

Your Petitioners further beg your Lordship's liberal consideration of the long period that has elapsed since the officers of Government were commanded to enquire into the validity of the Tenures of Lakheraj lands. Severe as the provisions of the

present Regulations are widely as they depart from the spirit of that of Lord Cornwallis, it would have been happy for the people had even such modes of investigation as are there laid down been acted upon with promptitude. Not only however has the cautions and just regard for the safety of private property evinced by that just and wise statesman been set aside but that too under circumstances in many instances far more unfavourable for the security of your native subjects than if their rights had been tried at his time.

Sunnuds and other records, which might then have been produced so as to place your Petitioners' titles beyond dispute, have, from the many accidents to which papers are liable, been lost or destroyed. In cases of disputed and divided succession and of dispossession by judicial or revenue sales your Lordship will readily understand how often the possession of the titles must have been withheld from the actual owner of the Land however rightful his succession to the property. Fire, inundation and the ravages of destructive insects or vermin, have in the course of 35 years, necessarily caused many important documents to perish and it is after the lapse of such a period that they rae now called upon to make good before a new species of tribunal rights which have so long remained undistrubed.

Your Petitioners confidently affirm that on reference to the revenue and Judicial Records of the zillahs and cities it will be found that there are innumerable instances in which lands free of assessment have been, since 1793, transferred to different hands by sale at the public auctions superintended either by Revenue or by Judicial Officers for the recovery of arrears of Revenue due to Government or for the satisfaction of Judicial Decrees. These have been purchased by individuals of course on the public faith and hiterto possessed by them without molestation. Now Your Lordship in Council may be pleased to judge whether it would be in any way consistent with justice that such lands should again be resumed from these purchasers on the ground of their titles being invalid, and be assumed by Government whose public officers once previously obtained their value in satisfaction of the demand of Government upon their prior possessors.

That your Petitioners without fear of contradiction can plead their past and present conduct as a proof of their unshaken and continued loyalty and attachment to the British rule in India. They have cheerfully entertained the hope of daily amelioration in their condition from the augmenting and established power and possessions acquired by the wisdom of their Rulers, but they feel painfully disappointed in their expectation, when, on comparing with each other, the language used and the spirit manifested on one and the same subject in Regulations XIX of 1793, II of 1819, and III of 1828, your Petitioners perceive with inexpressible grief a gradual indifference exhibited towards their rights and interests. As loyal subjects, however, they are in duty bound to lay candidly before Your Lordship their grievances, and sincerely pray that Your Lordship in Council, for the honor of the British name and from a sense of justice, may be pleased to rescind the Regulation complained of, and thereby save thousands of families of your dutiful subjects from utter ruin.

And your Petitioners as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

APPENDIX IV

Petition of the Conservative Hindus against the Abolition of Sati (Regulation XVII of 1829).

To
The Right Honorable Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, G.C.B. and G.C.H.
Governor General of India etc. etc. etc.

My Lord,

We the undersigned, beg leave respectfully to submit the following Petition to Your Lordship in Council, in consequence of having heard that certain persons taking upon themselves to represent the opinions and feelings of the Hindoo inhabitants of Calcutta, have misrepresented those opinions and feelings, and that Your Lordship in Council is about to pass a Resolution, founded on such erroneous statements to put a stop to the practice of performing Suttees, an interference with the Religion and Customs of the Hindoos, which we most earnestly deprecate and cannot view without the most serious alarm.

With the most profound respect for Your Lordship in Council, we, the undersigned Hindoo inhabitants of the city of Calcutta, beg leave to approach you in order to state such circumstances as appear to us unnecessary to draw the attention of Government fully to the measure in contemplation, and the light in which it will be regarded by the greater part of the more respectable Hindoo population of the Company's Territories, who are earnest in the belief, as well as the profession of their religion.

From time immemorial, the Hindoo Religion has been established, and in proportion to its antiquity has been its influence over the minds of its followers. In no religion has apostasy been more rare, and none has resisted more successfully the fierce spirit of proselyteism which animated the first Mahomedan Conquerors.

That the Hindoo religion is founded, like all religions, on usage as well as precept, and one when immemorial is held equally sacred with the other. Under the sanction of immemorial usage as well as precept, Hindoo widows perform, of their own accord and pleasure, and for the benefit of their Husbands' souls and for their own, the sacrifice of self-immolation called Suttee—which is not merely a sacred *duty* but a high privilege to her who sincerely believes in the doctrines of her religion—and we humbly submit that any interference with a persuation of so high and self-annihilating nature is not only an unjust and intolerant dictation in matters of conscience, but is likely wholly to fail in procuring the end proposed.

Even under the first Musselman Conquerors of Hindostan, and certainly since this country came under the Mogul Government, notwithstanding the fanaticism and intolerance of their religion, no interference with the practice of Suttee was ever attempted. Since that period, and for nearly a century, the power of the British Government has been established in Bengal, Behar and Orissa, and none of the Governors General, or their Councils, have hiteherto interfered in any manner to the prejudice of the Hindoo Religion or Customs ; and we submit that by various Acts of the Parliament of Great Britain, under the authority of which the Honorable Company itself exists, our religion and laws usages and customs, such as they have existed from time immemorial, are inviolably ecured to us.

We learn with surprise and grief that, while this is confessed on all hands, the abolition of the practice of Suttee is attempted to be defended on the ground that there is no positive law or precept enjoining it. A doctrine derived from a number of Hindoos who have apostatized from the religion of their forefathers, who have defiled themselves by eating and drinking forbidden things in the society of Europeans, and are endeavouring to deceive your Lordship in Council by assertions that there is no law regarding Suttee practices, and that all Hindoos of intelligence and education are ready to assent to the abolition contemplated, on the ground that the practice of Suttee is not authorized by the Laws fundamentally established and acknowledged by all the Hindoos as sacred. But we humbly submit that, in a question so delicate as the interpretation of our Sacred Books, and the authority of our religious usages, none but Pundits and Bramins, and teachers of holy lives, and known learning and authority ought to be consulted ; and we are satisfied and flatter ourselves with the hope that Your Lordship in Council will not regard the assertion of men who have neither any faith nor care for the memory of their ancestors or their religion ; and that if Your Lordship in Council will assume to yourself the difficult and delicate task of regulating the conscience of a whole people, and deciding what it ought to believe and what it ought to reject, on the authority of its own sacred writers, that such a task will be undertaken only after anxious and strict enquiry and patient consultation with men known and reverenced for their attachment to the Hindoo Religion, the authority of their lives and their knowledge of the Sacred Books which contain its doctrines ; and if such an examination should be made satisfied we are confident that Your Lordship in Council will find our statements to be correct, and will learn that the measure will be regarded with horror and dismay throughout the Company's dominions as the signal of an universal attack upon all we revere.

We further beg leave to represent, that the enquiry in question has been already made by some of the most learned and virtuous of the Company's servants, whose memory is still reverenced by the Natives who were under their rule, and that Mr. Warren Hastings, late Governor General, at the request of Mr. Nathaniel Smith, the then Chairman of the Court of Directors (the former being well versed in many parts of the Hindoo Religion) having instituted the enquiry, was satisfied as to the validity of the Laws respecting Suttees—that a further similar enquiry was made by Mr. Wilkins, who was deported to, and accordingly did proceed to Benares, and remain there a considerable time in order to be acquainted with the religion and customs in question, that his opinion was similar to that of Mr. Warren Hastings ; and that this opinion was since confirmed by Mr. Jonathan Duncan, whose zealous and excellent administration in Benares and other parts of Hindostan, will long be remembered by the Natives with gratitutde.

In the time of Lord Cornwallis, some of the Christian Missionaries, who then first appeared in this country, secretly conveyed to the Council some false and exaggerated accounts of the suttee practice, and first advanced the assertion that it was not lawful. His Lordship in Council after enquiry, and by the assistance of Mr. Duncan, was satisfied of its lawfulness, and was contented to permit us to follow our customs as before.

In the time of Lords Moira and Amherst, a number of European Missionaries, who came out to convert Hindoos and others, renewed their attack upon this custom and by clamour and falsely affirming that by compulsive measures Hindoo women

were thrown into the fire, procured the notice of Government, and an order was issued requiring Magistrates to take steps that suttees might perform their sacrifice at their pleasure, and that no one should be allowed to persuade or use any compulsion. On the cuncurrent reports of various Gentlemen, then in the Civil Service, that in all instances which had come under their cognizance, the Widows went to the funeral piles of their deceased Husbands cheerfully, these Governors General were satisfied, and no further interference was attempted.

The qualified measure last adverted to, did not answer the object proposed, and it proved (as we humbly submit) the impolicy of interference in any degree with matters of conscience.

The fact was, that the number of suttees in Bengal considerably increased in consequence within a short time, – and in order to ascertain the cause, a reference was made to the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, who could assign no satisfactory cause to account for it. Though it might, perhaps, have occurred to gentlemen of so much experience, that the interference of Government, even to this extent, with the practice, was likely, by drawing to it the attention of the Native community in a greater degree than formerly, to increase the number of votaries.

From a celebrated instance relating to Suttees that we immediately hereafter beg leave to cite, Your Lordship in Council will find, that on the occasion alluded to, no other good was obtained by an attempt to prevent the Widow burning with her deceased Husband than that religion was violated, and to no purpose a suttee. In the time of Lord Clive, his Dewan, Raja Nobkissen, endeavoured to prevent a Widow's performing the sacrifice by making her believe that her Husband had been already burnt, and when she discovered that she had been deceived, offering her any sum of money that might be required for her support as a recompense, but nothing would satisfy her – she starved herself to death. His Lordship then gave orders that no one should be allowed to interfere with the Hindoo religion and custom.

Independent of the foregoing statement, Your Lordship in Council will see that Your predecessors, after long residence in India, having a complete knowledge of the laws and customs of Hindoos, were satisfied as to such laws, and never came to a resolution by which devout and conscientious Hindoos must be placed in the most painful of all predicaments, and either forego, in some degree, their loyalty to Government, and disobey its injunctions, or violate the precepts of their Religion.

Before we conclude, we beg to request your impartial consideration of the various Acts of Parliament passed from time to time since the reign of His Majesty George the Third, and which have since been strictly preserved ; the substance and spirit of Acts of Parliament passed from time to time since the reign of His Majesty George the Third, and which have since been strictly preserved ; the substance and spirit of which may be thus summed up, viz. that no one is to interfere in any shape in the religion or the customs of Hindoo subjects. These Acts, conceived in the spirit of the truest wisdom and toleration, were passed by men, as well acquainted at least as any now in existence with our Laws, our Language, our Customs and our Religion, have never been infringed by the wisest of those who have here administered the powers of Government, and we trust will be preserved for the future as for the past inviolated constituting as they do a most solemn pledge and Charter from our Rulers to ourselves, on the preservation of which depend rights more sacred in our eyes than

those of property or life itself—and sure we are that, when this most important subject has been well and maturely weighed by Your Lordship in Council, the Resolution which has filled us and all faithful Hindoo subjects of the Honorable Company's Government with concern and terror, will be abandoned, and that we shall obtain a permanent security through Your Lordship's wisdom against the renewal of similar attempt.

And Your Petitioners shall ever pray, etc.

APPENDIX V

Petition against Certain Clauses of the Indian Jury Act of 1826.

"To
The Honorable the Commons of the United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.
The Humble Petition of the undersigned Hindoo
and Mahommedan Inhabitants of Calcutta.
Sheweth,

First. That more than a century has passed away since the laws of England have been established and administered within the limits of Calcutta, under the authority of various Royal Charters and Acts of Legislature of Great Britain.

Second. That during all that period your Petitioners and their fathers have been in all respects subjected to the operation of the Criminal Law of England ; though by a statute passed in the Twenty first year of His late Majesty King George the Third, c. 70, s. 17, they are entitled to the benefit of their own Civil Codes and usages in all matters relating to marriage inheritance and succession to property and contracts, and dealing between party and party.

Third. That along with the introduction of the Criminal Law of England, the right of Trial by Jury in criminal cases was also introduced, and has always prevailed, but that such of your Petitioners as are Hindoos or Mohammedans have, until very lately, never enjoyed the right of sitting on Juries, even for the trial of persons of their own persuations, or have been practically excluded from the exercise of that right.

Fourth. That by an Act passed in the last session of the last Imperial Parliament entitled 'an Act to regulate the appointment of Juries in the East Indies', your Petitioners who have all along been subject to the penal provisions of the Law of England, have at length been partially admitted to the exercise of one of its most valuable privileges.

Fifth. That your Petitioners feel the utmost gratitude for the concession thus afforded to them, and it is in the performance of a grateful duty that they humbly approach Your Honorable House with an expression of their warmest and most respectful acknowledgements.

Sixth. But your Petitioners also owe a sacred duty to themselves and their posterity, and while they express their joy at having been at length deemed worthy by the Legislature of Great Britain to be adopted as British subjects and to participate in some degree in the administration of those laws to which they are subject,

they cannot but make known the deep regret with which they have perceived that the Statute adverted to contains provisions which seem to betoken a distrust of your Petitioners, which they feel to be unjust, and which brand them with a stamp of inferiority in the eye of the law, and establish and perpetuate distinctions not only useless but odious and impolitic.

Seventh. That your Petitioners advert to the third section of the Act already mentioned, by which it is provided that the Grand Juries in all cases, and all Juries for the trial of persons professing the Christian religion, shall consist wholly of persons professing the Christian religion ; by these provisions your Petitioners are subjected to heavy disabilities for adhering to the religious opinions of their forefathers, in the full enjoyment of which they are secured by repeated acts of the Legislature and repeated assurances of the Local Government, and which opinions, therefore, they conceive can never be made a ground of civil disqualifications, without a breach of the compact which has been made with them.

Eighth. But without insisting on this argument alone, your Petitioners humbly submit that these distinctions were wholly unnecessary ; for they beg to recall to the recollection of your Honorable House, that it is now nearly fifty years since a Committee, composed of the members of your Honorable House most distinguished for talent and knowledge of the affairs of India, reported that your Petitioners ought to enjoy to its fullest extent the right of sitting on Juries, and did not couple that recommendation with any reserve on the ground of religious opinions. Your Petitioners will not complain that the recommendation thus given was not carried into effect ; but they venture to assert that it might have been even then adopted without the smallest inconvenience or danger ; and now that another generation has passed away, and the different classes of the native population of Calcutta have become so much more familiar with the English language, and the usages and practice of the English law,—now that they have formed connections so much more numerous, and intimate with their European fellow subjects, there seems the less necessity for a measure, in speaking of which, your Petitioners trust they do not exceed the limits of respect when they say that it is one which nothing but the most clearly established necessity could justify.

Ninth. That your Petitioners conceive the very act in question proves that no such necessity exists ; for, since the legislature has deemed them worthy to enjoy the privileges and competent to perform the duties of Jurors in so many instances, it is clear that it has deemed them capable of performing those duties in all cases ; though, in all cases, it has not chosen to confer the privilege of performing them.

Tenth. By the third section of the Act above quoted for regulating the appointment of Juries in the East Indies, your Petitioners are altogether excluded from the honorable right of sitting on Grand Jurors, and are debarred from sitting as Petty Jurors on the trial of any Christian ; while there is no provision in this Act to prevent a Hindoo or a Mohammedan being tried by a Jury composed wholly of Christians. Your Petitioners conceive that they have a right to complain of these enactments ; they are persuaded that they can demonstrate that all the arguments on which they may be supported are fallacious ; and they are also persuaded, that when the legislature of Great Britain turned its attention to the administration of justice in a country so distant from the Metropolis, with the beneficient intention of improving the social and political condition of so large a portion of its subjects, it was from want of

information alone that an Act was drawn up, by the main provisions of which those intentions will be wholly disappointed.

Eleventh. The Act is now unpopular with the respectable natives of Calcutta, and your Petitioners do not go too far in asserting, that if the disabilities imposed upon them by it be not removed, it will become still more unpopular than it already is with the great body of respectable Natives ; and the result will be, that no Hindoo or Mohammedan inhabitant will willingly serve as a Juror in any capacity. The upper classes, finding themselves excluded from the lists of the Grand Jury by its provisions, have already shewn a great repugnance to the Bill, and are unwilling to serve as Special Jurors ; while the lower classes, perceiving the Act to be unpopular with their superiors, and being less qualified to appreciate the importance of the privilege conferred, are also inclined to contemplate its provisions with dissatisfaction.

Twelfth. Such is the feeling produced by the Act in its present state among all classes of the Hindoo and Mohammedan inhabitants, and your Petitioners profess themselves wholly unable to discover any good or valid reasons by which these invidious exclusions can be justified. The only reasons by which they can be supported, seem to resolve themselves into the four following heads :

1st. It may be intended to operate as a motive to conversion to Christianity, and may be proposed to intimate the people of India in this indirect manner, that the road to European privileges and distinctions, and an equality with the governing classs, can only be reached by a profession of the religion of the greater part of Europe.

2nd. It may have been supposed that Europeans and persons professing the Christian religion constituted a minority of the Inhabitants of Calcutta; and that as Europeans orginally stood in the political relation of conquerors, such a relative condition of the different classes of society formed a reason, while the numbers of the Hindoos and Mohammedans would afford an opportunity for dangerous and unjust combinations, which would carry party spirit into the tribunals of Justice and hazard the safe an impartial administration of Criminal law.

3rd. It may also have been hastily supposed that there were no individuals professing the Hindoo and Mohammedan religions who moved in the rank of society from which Grand Jurors are selected ; though this is an opinion which we can scarcely permit ourselves to ascribe to your Honorable House.

4th. It may have been considered, that as the Grand Jury are called upon to judge of the value of evidence without the aid of the debates of counsel and the directions of a Judge, such functions required an intellect of a higher order than that which is necessary for the due performance of those of a Petty Juror, and of a higher order than that possessed by any competent member of respectable Hindoos or Mohammedans in Calcutta.

Thirteenth. If the first of those reasons (conversion to Christianity) did really constitute the true ground for excluding them in a manner so degrading from an equality of privileges, your Petitioners (though among the most faithful and attached subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, and firm in their determination ever to remain so) feel it a sacred duty to express their grief, their astonishment and their alarm. Your Petitioners beg earnestly to remind your Honorable House, that the Legislature of Great Britain itself, as well as the Local Government of the East India Company,

is bound by the most solemn and repeated pledge to protect the natives of India, in the full enjoyment of their laws, customs, and religion ; and Your Petitioners humbly urge, that it would not be an observance of such a pledge in that spirit of perfect and sacred good faith which disdains a like insidious and indirect attack and open infraction, to hold out to them the alluring boon of an equality of privileges with their rulers, as the price of the desertion of the faith of their ancestors. Your Petitioners are satisfied the exclusion never was really intended so to operate, but the measure bears that construction, and a feeling of distrust has gone forth, and may be confirmed, among the millions of men who acknowledge the British rule, if so suspicious an indication be not explained. The better classes of the natives of India are placed under the sway of the Honorable the East India Company, in a state of political degradation which is absolutely without a parallel in their former history. For even under the Mohammedan conquerors, such of your Petitioners as are Hindoos, were not only capable of filling but actually did fill numerous employments of trust, dignity and emolument, from which under the existing system of the Honorable Company's Government, they are absolutely shut out. The present object of your Petitioners, and of your Hindoo Petitioners in particular, is not to detail these grievances, (which, however, they hope to see one day removed,) but to press on your Honorable House the conviction, that they have submitted in tranquility to these exclusions reconciled in some measure to them, from a persuation of the tolerant spirit of the Local Government, and from an implicit reliance on its often renewed assurances, that their religious opinions and observances should be inviolably protected. If these assurances be withdrawn, or if a system of indirect attack be commenced on all religions to which Christianity is opposed, your Petitioners will no longer know where to look for protection, and the only equivalent which they have ever possessed for their former advantages will be withdrawn.

Fourteenth. Your Petitioners well aware of the respect which they owe to your Honorable House, feel bound to abstain from all remarks indicating their firm conviction of the superiority of their own systems of religion, but they entreat your Honorable House to consider that they at least believe them to be true, and they feel themselves at liberty to assert that the religious opinions which they profess, exercise at least as great an influence over their general conduct and their daily actions as any modes of religious faith existing on the face of the earth throughout those regions of Asia which your Petitioners inhabit. Religion is not merely a system of theories and opinions, but is interwoven with the laws, the manners, the daily necessities, and daily actions of every condition of human life. In such religions the faith and the fervour of their supporters are nourished and confirmed by the incessant demands which are thus created upon their time and their attention ; and religion is the most important business of human life and the most constant spring of human actions, and any interference with it is therefore peculiarly hard to be borne. Your Petitioners humbly trust they have not urged those topics too far, their only desire is to describe their feelings in language becoming men who plead earnestly for all that is most dear and sacred to them, before a tribunal in whose sense of justice they feel secure, and whose power to redress is not inferior to its justice.

Fifteenth. If the exclusion of your Petitioners be justified by the second reason, —namely, that the number of the Hindoo and Mohammedan Jurors would greatly outnumber those of the Christian persuation, —this is their answer. If it were true

that the Hindoo and Mohammedan Natives of Calcutta eligible to sit either as Grand or Petty Jurors outnumbered the Christian population so qualified, a remedy for the supposed evils might at once be provided by taking care to have Juries formed according to the custom of England in analogous cases : —a Jury composed (where either party desired it) half of Christians and half of Hindoos or Mohammedans would obviate all the supposed inconvenience, and it would be easy to enact that in no case more than eleven persons professing the Mohammedan or Hindoo religions should ever sit on the Grand Jury ; but your Petitioners beg to assure your Honorable House, that if it is not the fact that the persons professing the Hindoo and Mohammedan religions eligible under the rules wisely framed by the Judges of the Supreme Court under the powers given them by the act of the last Sessions already mentioned, at present outnumber those professing the Christian religion ; on the contrary, the number of Christian Jurors in the list drawn out by the Clerk of the Crown for Calcutta, and published by the authority of the Supreme Court, contains the names of upwards of six hundred Christians, and of only eighty-two Hindoos and Mahommedans.

Sixteenth. It is to be expected moreover, that this numerical superiority of Christian Jurors will rather have a tendency to increase than to diminish, owing to the greater resort of Europeans, which the daily augmenting intercourse between England and India must naturally produce ; all Englishmen are eligible as Petty Jurors without reference to property, while all other Petty Jurors are selected according to a qualification of property, and in respect to Grand Juries as a high qualification in point of wealth, besides a competent knowledge of the English language will be required from natives if ever they are made eligible, the number chosen will be small, and is not, and likely for generations to come, to equal that of the European gentlemen who resort to India, altho' from the effects produced by the establishments for public education founded by the munificence of the Local Government for the benefit of Hindoos and Mohammedans, and also from the impression of the advantages to be derived from an acquaintance with the English language, the number of Hindoo and Mohammedan Jurors may, at some future period, equal that of Christians, if no ultimately exceed it ; but even were this epoch arrived, your Petitioners submit that the precautions which they have already pointed out would be amply sufficient to prevent all evil consequence.

On the third reason which it is possible may be urged in favour of the restrictions complained of, your Petitioners have already observed that they cannot permit themselves to believe that your Honorable House proceeded upon an opinion so unfounded and unjust in excluding your Petitioners from the right of sitting on Grand Juries. They cannot believe that a social ban so absolutely revolting would ever have been sanctioned by the legislature of a civilized nation. It is true that the Princes and Rulers of British India, and many families who also possessed intelligence, rank, wealth, power and influence at the period of British conquest, have in a great measure disappeared or are now fallen into a state of destitution and decay, but it is a matter of history, that it soon after became one of the favourite objects of the British Government in Bengal to build up a landed Aristocracy, and that the permanent settlement of the land revenue in the lower provinces carried into execution by the late Lord Cornwallis with the perfect approbation of the Court of Directors and the Board of Commissioners for the affairs of India, was chiefly directed to that end, because it

was truly supposed that it was the best mode to secure the cultivation and improvement of the soil and the happiness of the whole community. It is true that at first, from various causes, that measure seemed to have failed in its objects. But since the commencement of the present century of a new race of landed proprietors possessed of more energy and capital, and many of whom enjoy great wealth and consequence, has been created in the lower provinces of the Presidency, some of whom actually reside within the limits of Calcutta. The free trade of late years permitted, has also improved the condition of the generality of the native inhabitants of Calcutta, so that there are now within its walls native merchants in wealth equal, in intelligence but little inferior to the most respectable of its European commercial residents. Such having been the policy of the Government – such being its effects, your Petitioners cannot believe that your Honorable House at once intended to exalt and to debase, and that after the local Legislature, with the approbation of the Government of Great Britain, had for upwards of thirty years declared it essential to the prosperity of the Country that a race of native gentry should exist, and had directed its efforts and its policy to create such an order that it should now declare that not one individual can be found within the metropolis of British India after a conquest of seventy years worthy of the name of gentleman or entitled to rank in the eyes of Government as an equal within the merchants of Calcutta or the Civil Servants of the Honorable Company, or to sit with them on the same bench in the performance of a public duty. If such an assertion could be made with truth, how signal would be the failure of the grand political experiment which the local Government has tried, and in what terms would history characterize the system of Government which Great Britain has established by her arms over a people whose numbers are equal to one eighth of the whole population on the habitable globe, and what opinion could posterity form of the effects of that Government.

Seventeenth. On the last reason which they conceive may have urged against them, – namely, that the duties of a Grand Juror demand more intellect than is required for the due performance of those of a Petty Juror, and more than is possessed by any Hindoo or Mohammedan, – your Petitioners scarcely feel it necessary to enlarge ; but they submit that the duties of a Petty Juror, if not so honorable, are beyond all comparison more difficult than those of Grand Jurors : it is true that Grand Jury have to decide upon the value of testimony unassisted by Judges or Advocates, but it is ex parte evidence only, and it requires incomparably more sagacity to discern the truth among the conflicting statements of adverse witnesses, and the eloquent and artful addresses of counsel against which the dry and impartial charge of a Judge is sometimes but an imperfect protection, than to come to the conclusion whether a story of guilt is sufficiently established by the complainant's proof to warrant of further judicial investigation ; and your Petitioners cannot avoid suggesting to your Honorable House, that though necessarily inferior in knowledge of the Laws of England to European gentlemen, yet they are, in fact, from their superior acquaintance with the very peculiar habits, manners and prejudices of their own countrymen, much better qualified to judge of the nature of their testimony, and must prove most useful auxiliaries in the administration of justice, which never can be perfectly administered in any country without the aid of the people themselves. In comparing the difficulties of performing the duties of Grand and Petty Jurors, it is further to be observed, that for the latter functions in which both Judges and Barristers take part, a more accurate knowledge of the English language is required

than for the former, where the familiar examination of evidence (almost always native) is nearly the sole duty to be performed.

Eighteenth. Your Petitioners have now briefly to advert to their exclusion from sitting as Petty Jurors on the trial of their Christian fellow subjects : they will not detain Your Honorable House with a repetition of arguments which they have already urged, but they cannot but observe, in justice to themselves, that they feel the operation of the new law which has been an unqualified boon to many classes and races of their countrymen hitherto labouring under the same exclusions as themselves, and whom they cannot deem more worthy of relief than they are to be for this very reason doubly injurious and degrading to the Hindoo and Mohammedan inhabitants of Calcutta. It is injurious not only because it exposes them without defence to the operation of prejudices arising from religious feelings among the strongest which actuate the human mind, if once awakened, but because the Indian born Christians being much more numerous than the Europeans, and intercourse between them and Hindoos and Mohammedans much more frequent and familiar, feelings of rivalry and animosity are more likely to exist between them than between your Petitioners and Europeans, with whom their intercourse though increasing, is necessarily more limited. It is degrading because your Petitioners now see those whom they certainly never regarded in any point of view as their superiors, and who were never so regarded by the European residents, elevated above them by the sole circumstance of their religious profession. While your Petitioners saw the more valuable privileges of the English law, and the rights which it bestows were confined to the ruling class, – to Europeans, – who, coming from a distance might be supposed to have no local partialities or passions, and who were comparatively few in number, your Petitioners were content to submit without repining to a state of things in which they were not distinguished from the rest of their countrymen of any description ; but now that they behold themselves branded with inferiority, and a numerous and increasing class of their own countrymen who were before scarcely even on a level with themselves in public opinion, withdrawn from their community to be enclosed within a circle of immunities into which your Petitioners are debarred from penetrating, they feel themselves practically degraded in the same measure as their countrymen are exalted, and experience the deepest humiliation. If your Honorable House does indeed suppose it impossible, that among men of different religions, a common sense of justice and a common regard for impartiality should prevail, your Petitioners trust that you will at least extend to them in conformity with the sacred pledges given by the Legislature the protection that is deemed so necessary to afford to others. If it were indeed necessary to protect the Christian population of Calcutta from the possible operation of Hindoo or Mohammedan prejudices in the administration of Criminal Justices, surely it would be at least equally necessary to protect Mohammedans and Hindoos from the operation of Christian prejudices ; and your Petitioners would implore your Honorable House to extend to them the safeguard which must then be deemed essential to their well being. But while your Petitioners feel persuaded that no such prejudices do as yet exist, they cannot but perceive the danger that the invidious distinctions which the Legislature has sanctioned may create them, and they most earnestly supplicate your Honorable House to reconsider the law and weigh the suggestions for its improvement, which they offer with the most respectful humility.

Nineteenth. They entreat that the legal distinction between them and their fellow subjects which this act has established may be abolished altogether, either by permitting half the Jurors to be chosen from those persuasions in all cases in which a Hindoo or Mohammedan may be arraigned at the bar of justice, or that the enactments of the third section of the Act of the seventh year of his present Majesty, c. 37, entitled an act to regulate the appointment of Juries in the East Indies, may be simply repeated and the formation of the Jury lists left to His Majesty's Judges, on whose impartiality and anxious disposition to fulfil the great object of protecting the natives (for which their Court was originally instituted), your Petitioners fully rely. And your Petitioners have already stated that the number of Christian Jurors on the present lists is very much greater than of the Hindoos and Mohammedans together, and is likely long to continue so, they trust that this fact will be sufficient to quiet the apprehensions of the most timorous advocates for precautions.

Twentieth. Your Petitioners have now humbly laid before your Honorable House the grievances to which they are exposed by the operation of an Act intended, as they fully believe and gratefully acknowledge, for their benefit and improvement ; they have also ventured, with respect they trust, but with an earnestness proportioned to the importance of the object, to examine the argument which may have induced the measures of which they complain, to point out their insufficiency, and not to suggest a remedy. In this they will not believe they can have offended. Become by conquest or cession at a now remote period, the subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, they have found by experience the advantages of its dominion, and have learned enough of the beneficient principles of British law to know that in the August assembly of the Legislature, a prayer like theirs will not be disregarded. Though their voice has never yet been heard within its walls, they feel the most perfect conviction, that now when it is heard for the first time pleading the cause of Justice, which they are not more interested in demanding than the Legislature in granting, it will not be heard in vain. They are aware of the peculiar situation in which they stand ; they are aware of the difficulties of legislating for a country, situated at a distance of half of the globe, and penetrated with the conviction that if their rights and feelings have suffered injury, it has been because they have been overlooked, and not because they have been disregarded. They approach Your Honorable House in the full confidence that their representations will be met with favour, and their prayers with compliance. The manner and extent of the remedy they have in some degree ventured to suggest, but whether it shall please your Honorable House simply to repeal the third section of the statute for regulating the appointment of Juries in the East Indies, or to modify its provisions by new enactments, they leave to the wisdom of Parliament.

APPENDIX VI

Petition on behalf of the Muslims of Calcutta against the Proposed Abolition of the Madrasa.
(Translation from Persian)

The Sovereigns of former times, in all ages and of all religions, have made it a principle to encourage literature and the sciences, and to promote the cultivation of

the languages of different tribes and nations, deeming their own credit and the character of their rule to be dependent thereon ; but more particularly have the rulers of the British Nation of past times adopted this principle. – Further, it has been an object of the especial care of all Kings, past and present, and of all rulers of cities and countries, to study the improvement of every class of their subjects, and to keep them contended and happy, deeming this course essential to the security and strengthening of their rule ; they have never wilfully vexed the spirit of their people, nor have they thought it right to follow courses tending to break the hearts and hurt the feelings of those under their sway. Every one of them, in proportion as he has been actuated by these principles, has obtained the reward of fame and popularity ; and the designs of their enemies have been confounded and utterly consumed like straw and stubble in the fire of their good intentions and good government. But more especially the rulers of Inglistan, from the very first commencement of their rule in Hindoostan and Bengal, studious of their good name amongst the people, have sought the affections of all classes of their subjects by showing kindness and consideration to all ; and that the foundation of their dominion might settle deeply, it has been their principle especially to consult the feelings of the Moosulmans, and to avoid by all means giving them just cause of offence and vexation. In all ways they have endeavoured to gladden the hearts of this class of their subjects, because it was from them and through them that they derived their dominion. On this account in particular the reputation of the English Rulers has become resplendent as the sun at noonday, and the fame of their justice and equitable administration is on the tongues of the natives of all countries as a proverb and a by-word. In illustration of this, it will be sufficient to refer to the measures adopted for establishing the situation of *Kazee*, and the practice of taking *Futwahs* in trials ; but a stronger sample was in the establishment of the *Mudrissa* for conveying instruction in the languages and literature of Islam. Accordingly, when heretofore the mournful report of the dissolution of the *Mudrissa* was bruited abroad, we looking to the past line of conduct and principles of our Rulers treated this report at once as a falsity, deeming it opposed to the uniform policy of all preceding Governments ; but as this matter is now confirmed to us from various quarters, and though contrary to all expectation is yet what we have to apprehend and fear (for the intention to abolish the *Mudrissa* has been told to us over and over again and by many) we are confounded and beside ourselves at the intelligence. It is the duty of subjects and dependants to represent humbly what may occur to them calculated to promote the welfare and reputation of their Sovereign ; we therefore presume to submit the following few reasons why this *Mudrissa* should be allowed to continue.

1st. On the grounds of general benevolence and charity, the promotion of which in the time of all past Sovereigns and Rulers has been an established motive of action, and the discarding which has been repugnant to all received principles of good policy.

2nd. Through the foundation of the *Mudrissa* the English India Company, in all towns, cities, and countries, from the East to the West, has obtained reputation, and credit for well-directed charity and the support of worthy objects, as well as for the cultivation of literature. The contrary course at this present moment would lead to loss of this character in all climates and all lands.

3rd. Warren Hastings (who was well acquainted with the excellencies of Arabic Literature, and with the extent of its Science, and who apprecaited intelligent and well informed persons, and was himself preeminent for intelligence and a highly cultivated mind) founded this *Mudrissa* of high repute out of his love for the people under his rule, (for in truth he was a Father of the People, and regarded them as his own children,) and more especially out of his regard, and high consideration for men of learning and elegant literature, who stood to him in the relation of respected dependants before a well-beloved superior.

His object was that we poor men or in the straightened circumstances, then wanting the adornments of learning and cultivated intellect, might through it attain the great blessing of these accomplishments ; and that we helpless wanderers in the darkness and bewilderment of ignorance, might be clad in the bright garments of knowledge and enlightenment. From this cause especially has the reputation of this gentlemen for philanthropy and tender consideration towards the poor spread far and wide in all countries and cities, and his name is high as a promoter of science, and encourager of learned men, no less than as a liberal protector of all under his rule. Every one is open-mouthed in singing praises and in offering prayers for this unparalleled statesman ; and small and great, from the date of the founding of the *Mudrissa* to this day, are united in admiration of his high qualities. But now some men utterly ignorant of the literature and science of Arabia, and blind to its beauties and advantages, have conceived the project of destroying the *Mudrissa*, and causing the sciences of Arabia to cease ; at which all men and all subjects of the state are in a ferment of agitation and despair at what may not come next.

4th. The British authorities who established and have supported the *Mudrissa*, had in view only the welfare of the people, the gratification of the poor, and the teaching of the children of those in narrow circumstances. The establishment of schools and hospitals has no other more beneficial end than this; to destroy this institution and restrain people from the acquisition of the knowledge it imparted, and the moral and religious principles it imparted, and the moral and religious principles it instilled, can only produce distress, vexation, and heartrending to all classes.

5th. Through the continuance of the *Mudrissa*, and the cultivation of the literature and science taught therein, the territory of the Company has derived lustre, and the credit of its Government stands high amongst nations ; if it be destroyed, and this knowledge-market be closed (that is, if the sources of instruction be dried up) and there be a dearth in consequence of men of learning and education, this bright reputation will be clouded, and the credit of the country ruined and destroyed.

6th. Through the establishment of the *Mudrissa* many, many students are annually instructed in useful knowledge, and thence proceeding into the interior obtain high appointments in the cities and zillahs of Hindoostan. There are at this time near two hundred (200) persons holding high offices who have received there their education, and from their intelligence and good conduct the administration of the country derive its character. By the demolition

of the establishment which is the source of these benefits, nothing but evil and mal-administration will be engendered in each and every town and zillah.

7th. From the time when the report of the abolition of the *Mudrissa* first gained ground, all classes small and great of the people have taken up the idea that the object and end of this measure is to eradicate the literature and religious system of *Islam*, in order that the measure may tend to the dissemination of the religion of the proposers and originators of the measure itself, and so the subjects of the state may be caused to become Christians. It has never been the custom of past Sovereigns of esteemed reputation, to endeavour to lead their subjects to their own religion by inflictions and injuries ; therefore all persons are distressed and heartbroken, and bewildered and alarmed at the idea of the Government yielding to such a proposition. We trust and hope that, in consideration of all that has been urged above, the Government will, from motives of justice, philanthropy, and general benevolence, and to ensure its own stability, give orders for the continuance of the *Mudrissa*, and of the teaching and learning of the literature and science of Islam (the benefits of which are so evident and widely disseminated) on the footing on which it has so long existed, and thus relieve us from the anxiety, and distress, and alarm, the bewilderment, the state of agitation into which we have been thrown by the report above referred to.

(Signed and sealed by 8,312 persons)

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Year	*Volume*	*Paper*
1812-13	viii	166
	ix	264
1821	xviii	749
1823	xvii	466
1824	xxiii	443
1825	xxiv	508
		518
1826	i	130
1826-27	xx	354
1828	xxiii	435
		547
1830	xxviii	178
		550
1831	v	65
1831-32	viii	734
	ix	735I
	x	735II
	xi	735III
	xii	735IV
	xxxi	37
		483
1833	xxvi	626
1834	viii	601
	xliv	330
1835	ii	55
	xxxix	393
1836	xl	165
		380
1857-58	xliii	253
1878	lvii	C. 2078

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	Year	*Volume*	*Paper*
	1852-53	xxxii	445

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