

From Subjects to Citizens: Reactions to Colonial Rule and the Changing Political Culture of Calcutta in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

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Since the Battle of Plassey (1757) and the subsequent reconstruction of Calcutta, the city continually grew in size and splendour. 'It is difficult to describe', wrote the *Samachar Darpan* in April 1819, 'how Calcutta has developed in the last sixty-two years. Today's Calcutta makes it difficult to imagine how it looked before. The city where one could hardly find houses worth even six thousand rupees, now can boast of buildings worth more than three crores, not to speak of other forms of wealth.'¹ This development and extension of Calcutta were as much due to its being a port city as to its becoming the administrative centre of an expanding British empire in India. It prospered as a colonial metropolis, simultaneously with the decline of the older centres of trade and administration, such as Dacca, Murshidabad or Hugli.

The English victory at Buxar (1764) and the grant of Diwane (1765) completed the first phase of empire building in India, as already with decisive military strength in command, the revenue collecting authority made the British the supreme power in Bengal. The exertions of Lord Wellesley and the Marquess of Hastings pushed the imperial frontiers even further beyond Bengal, so that by 1818 the British empire stretched from the coast of Bengal to the river Sutlej. The process was finally rounded off by Lord Dalhousie, who incorporated by 1856 the whole of Punjab, an already truncated Oudh, Lower Burma, Jhansi, Satara and Nagpore. This territorial expansion was also accompanied by measures to evolve an administrative system that would consolidate

British power as well as legitimise the new role of the 'Company as an Indian ruler'.² So far as Bengal was concerned, Warren Hastings in 1772 directly took over the control and management of the diwane, and in 1790 the functions of the nizamat were taken over as well. This ending of the so-called dual administration and Cornwallis' later attempt to Europeanise the civil services put an unmistakable foreign stamp on the new regime, which now enjoyed an absolute control over the fiscal, judicial and police administration of Bengal. And Calcutta emerged as the chief administrative centre of this new empire, as the Regulating Act of 1773 subordinated the Bombay and Madras governments to the office of the Governor General of Bengal stationed in this city; by the Charter Act of 1833, the post was formally upgraded to that of Governor General of India.

The colonial character of the city of Calcutta also determined the way its human environment developed in the eighteenth century. 'The process', as an expert on urban settlement in Calcutta comments, 'worked in an overall setting of dualism, basically a feature of all colonial cities, between the white and the black town.'³ This phenomenon of dualism reflected on the one hand the conquerors' concern for defence and security and on the other their racial pride and exclusivism. In the eighteenth century this spatial segregation along racial lines had been less sharply marked, as there was a White Town and a Black Town, intersected by a Grey Town or intermediate zone which was dominated by the Eurasians or East Indians but accessible to the 'natives' as well. Yet the oft-emphasised inter-racial social interaction and the army officers' attraction for Indian women in this period cannot obscure the fact that social life in the European quarters was being organised in such a way that to the 'natives' it appeared as a distant and inaccessible world. The spatial segregation also increased with the growth of the imperial élan, as the conquerors' impetuosity now surrounded them with an ambience befitting a master race. In the early nineteenth century, i.e. in the high noon of the British Indian empire, 'the social distance between the ruling race and the people' became an easily discernible reality in Calcutta's urban life.⁴ As racism primarily is a function of power, this social distancing, which took various forms, was essentially a calculated political gesture to make the 'natives' feel their subordinate position in the new imperial power structure.⁵ The Black Town or the 'natives'' quarter in Calcutta

therefore developed under conditions of subordination and segregation, and was peopled by those who were dependent on subordinate collaboration with their new colonial masters. It was within this social context of urban Calcutta that the impact of colonial expansion was experienced. The reactions of the limited number of Europeans were understandably different from those of the indigenous people. In the initial stages of British territorial expansion, the European community anxiously watched the growth of British power and was jubilant at the news of the success of English soldiers against the French, the Marathas or against the forces of Mysore. Hicky's *Bengal Gazette* is full of such reactions.⁶ About the Indian responses during this early period, precious little indeed can be gleaned from either the archival or the literary sources. The Persian-educated late eighteenth-century literati of Bengal, Ghulam Husain Tabatabai for example, felt alienated from British rule.⁷ But he belonged to a class in decline which, because of its association with the previous regime, had reasons to be apprehensive. But in the meanwhile, new classes had emerged in Calcutta, whose interests were intimately linked with the British power. The Calcutta *pundits* of the early nineteenth century, associated either with the Srirampur missionaries or with Fort William College, felt an identity of interest with the forces of the new regime. Rajiblochan Mukhopadhyay in his *Maharaj Krishnachandra Rayasya Charitram* (1805) and Mrityunjay Vidyalankar in his *Rajabali* (1808) depicted the establishment of British rule as a welcome change that brought the oppressive Muslim rule to an end⁸—a stereotype that was later upheld by Rammohun Roy, shared by even the radical members of the Young Bengal like Dakshinananjan Mukhopadhyay, and eventually subscribed to by almost every section of the Bengali intelligentsia.⁹ Rammohun Roy, who had settled in Calcutta in 1814, 'accepted British rule as a regenerative force'¹⁰—a faith, which many of his contemporaries as well as immediate successors also gradually internalised.

In fact, the existing historical literature is full of evidence of the dependent attitudes of the Calcutta elites who equated westernisation with modernisation and progress. Unable to foresee the negative and alienating aspects of Western education, it is alleged, they welcomed it because of the scientific values it preached, and were delighted when in 1835 Bentinck and Macaulay decided in favour of introducing English education for the Indians. The free trade logic was accepted

unquestioningly, with the expectation that there would be a bourgeois development in Bengal under the tutelage of the British. This failure to see that free trade could hardly benefit a predominantly agrarian economy, we are told, sprang from a pathetic ignorance of the already visible signs of reindustrialisation that had caused havoc in the countryside. They supported European colonisation of the interior, hoping that this would bring further agricultural development, although the plea itself had only been to help the Agency Houses to circumvent their problems of finance and investment. Rammohun and many others of his age lamented over the plight of the peasants, given over to unrestricted exploitation and oppression by the *zamindars*; but never was there any demand for the scrapping of the Permanent Settlement which had empowered the *zamindars*. Later, as the voluntary associations began to appear, this faith in the benevolence of British rule was expressed in the speeches delivered and resolutions passed at the meetings of the British India Society founded in 1843. The British Indian Association of 1851, which unlike its predecessor kept the Anglo-Indians out, proved to be no exception in accepting colonial rule and in operating within the parameters set by it.¹¹ The urban Bengali intelligentsia of the early nineteenth century, in other words, are usually stereotyped as the loyal subjects of the British empire, who looked at the establishment of colonial rule as an act of providence that was destined to deliver the Indian nation from medieval backwardness and set it in the path of modernisation and progress. And when this progress was seemingly threatened by the revolt of 1857, as the existing literature argues, this loyalty of the Calcutta literate society found an unabashed expression. It was not of course a 'slavish loyalty', writes a sympathetic critic, but a 'conditional' support of the British government.¹² 'Such men had material interests, and often a deep, ideological commitment to new ideas.' And hence they expressed loyalty and presented addresses of support to the government, instead of aligning with the rural rebels and disgruntled sepoys.¹³

But was this loyalty beyond question? Some recent historians have raised doubts. 'The boundary between "revolt" and "collaboration" was often very faint ...', writes one such sceptical historian. 'Many of those who apparently collaborated, the Calcutta intelligentsia for instance, regarded the British with contempt at some level....'¹⁴ Such doubts become clearer from the writings of S. N. Mukherjee, who shows

how the image of Calcutta in the Anglo-Indian literary imagination gradually changed during this period from one of excitement and harmony to that of gloom and doom. The imperial partnership with the Bengali *babu*, as he suspects, had come to an end by the middle of the nineteenth century and so the Anglo-Indians turned against Calcutta.¹⁵ And by the end of the century, Calcutta was a city of rebels, loudly questioning the legitimacy of the Raj. So the question is, when and how did this metamorphosis happen? To answer this question, it is perhaps necessary to re-examine the political culture of Calcutta in the first half of the nineteenth century, usually stereotyped as the culture of loyalty. The most convenient method to do this would be to examine Calcutta's reactions to various rebellions against British rule that had become endemic during this period, culminating in the revolt of 1857. This re-examination would show that, despite overt expressions of loyalty, there was probably never a total acceptance of British rule in Calcutta society, and that certainly from the middle of the nineteenth century, since the troubled days of 1857 itself, a new consciousness began to emerge that completely turned the so-called 'loyal' subjects of the imperial city of Calcutta into articulate citizens.

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The people who originally lived in the region that later developed into the Black Town of Calcutta, were mainly those who have been called the 'lower orders'—the artisans, labourers and the menials—who were gradually marginalised and driven out of the precincts of the city as urban development gained in momentum.¹⁶ The rest of Calcutta society could be divided, *à la* Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay, into four categories.¹⁷ To the first group belonged the most fortunate people who depended either on rental income of the *zamindaries* or on interests from other investments—the so-called *abhijat* or aristocratic elements, mainly the absentee landlords or the 'pure rentiers', created by the Permanent Settlement, 'who performed no economic functions towards the improvement of agriculture'.¹⁸ The second category consisted of the *banians* and *dewans* (or agents) of the foreign commercial concerns or English private traders—the compradors in other words, who had made money through trade in collaboration with the foreigners and later had invested it in landed estates.¹⁹ To the next two categories belonged

the *grihasthas* or the upper and the lower middle classes, who did not have enough money to spend time in splendid idleness like those in the other two categories. In many cases their dwindling income from subordinate landed interests had forced them to migrate to Calcutta in search of alternative means of livelihood. It was from these two classes that there was the highest demand for English education. Around 1833, about three thousand young men were studying English in Calcutta²⁰ and most of them belonged to the middle classes. In 1842, out of 500 students of the Hindu College, only 20, according to the *Bengal Spectator* (July 1842), were in a position to live on their patrimony, while the rest had to look for subordinate government services or clerkships in merchant offices.²¹ Despite Cornwallis' distrust of the Indians and the consequent Europeanisation of the civil services, the Company was hardly in a position to dispense with the services of the Indians, particularly in the subordinate positions. Such job opportunities for the Bengali middle classes increased further after the Act of 1833. In the course of the nineteenth century, the number of Indians employed by the Company's government, particularly in the uncovenanted lower grades of services, had increased phenomenally,²² creating in the process a large group of intermediaries dependent on foreign rule for their subsistence. In Calcutta, therefore, people belonging to all the four categories of élite society were either the creation of, or at least dependent on, British rule—the people whose interests, as the *Hindoo Patriot* observed, were 'bound up with the interest of their rulers'.²³ These people could only be expected to be the Company's most loyal subjects. And the perceptions of the lower orders as regards colonial rule and protest against it, as we have been told, were also coloured largely by those of the elites.²⁴ There was also a sizeable population of Muslims in the city. But till the middle of the nineteenth century they do not appear to have been articulate enough and therefore remain outside the purview of our present discussion.

The early political culture of this Calcutta society, whose interests were so obviously tied to the fortunes of the new empire, can be very easily delineated from its reactions to various rebellions against British rule in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. In contrast to the urban society, the rural society in India reacted much more vehemently to the imposition of colonial rule from the early days of its inception, since some of the colonialist administrative measures had

seriously dislocated the existing social equilibrium in the countryside. The revenue experiments had created a class of *zamindars* whose only interest was in rent. Strengthened by the repressive powers conferred through Regulation VII of 1799, many of them took to rack renting and subinfeudation, thus shifting the burden of high revenue demand onto the shoulders of the unprotected *raiyyats* (peasants). Many of these rentiers lived away in Calcutta, leaving the management of their estates in the hands of their tenure holders or their more rugged underlings. As a result, barring a few, the peasantry in general found their sufferings intensified by the beginning of the nineteenth century and this was at a time when pressure on agriculture was increasing due to the destruction of indigenous industries. Apart from this, the mystery that shrouded the new Supreme Court and the new district courts, with British judges and their unfamiliar linguistic and formal paraphernalia, only evoked terror. These institutions therefore came to be viewed as an 'unwelcome imposition by an alien authority'.²⁵ The Indians, it is true, were to be governed by their own traditional Hindu and Islamic laws. But the way the European judges interpreted, applied and later tried to codify these laws tended to change both their content and appearance.²⁶ Thousands of cases remained pending before the new courts, making judicial redress of the people's grievances an elusive proposition.²⁷ The new police system appeared to be another alien agent of oppression, as the *darogah* or the local police officer was often corrupt and tyrannical. And the gradually emerging *darogah-zamindar* nexus made life miserable for the poor peasants.²⁸

The countryside therefore reacted violently to the imposition of colonial rule and the dislocations that it created in its social and economic life. During the hundred years that followed the Battle of Plassey, different parts of India were rocked by a series of revolts by traditional elements, like the dispossessed local chiefs, zamindars and religious leaders, with whom the disgruntled lower classes joined. In addition, there were peasant uprisings and tribal revolts that defiantly challenged the power of the new regime.²⁹ Bengal itself was rocked by a series of violent protests. Starting with the uprising in Midnapore by Chuars, and 'hill men' in Bishnupur and Birbhum, as well as the mountainous Chakmas in Chittagong, and the riots against high taxes in Rangpur in 1783 and repeated insurrections against revenue assessments in Birbhum in the 1780s, the disaffection of the Bengal

peasantry found expression through the Sanyasi uprisings in northern and eastern Bengal through the second half of the eighteenth century, the Paik uprising among the Midnapore Chuars and Ghatwals (1798–99) and the Nayek revolt (1806–16) in Midnapore, the Pagalpanthi movement in Mymensingh (1802–33), Titu Mir's revolt in Barasat (1831), the Faraizi movement in eastern Bengal (1834–47), and the various minor uprisings in Sylhet, Chittagong, Bakarganj and Jessore-Khulna in the last few decades of the eighteenth century.³⁰

Apart from these organised protests, there had been endemic violence and dacoities in the nominally pacified countryside. Even in Calcutta, as the *Samachar Darpan* reported in 1819, hardly a night passed without a dacoity.³¹ Dispossession and consequent impoverishment of the people were certainly among the root causes of these violent acts that challenged the colonial state and its rule of law. As Lord Minto wrote in 1809, the bandits appeared to have 'established a terrorism as perfect as that which was the foundation of the French Republican power, and in truth the *sirdars*, or captains of the band, were esteemed and even called the *hakim*, or ruling power, while the real government did not possess either authority or influence enough to obtain from the people the smallest aid towards their own protection'.³² This rising spirit of defiance and the accumulating grievances of the people all over India found an articulate expression in the great conflagration of 1857, that started from Barrackpore near Calcutta and then rapidly spread over large parts of northern India, but left Bengal more or less unaffected.

Calcutta during the early years of colonial rule remained apparently placid and impervious to, or even critical of, all these violent manifestations of protest. While various parts of India were being shaken by violent revolts, the Calcutta *babus* were enjoying their peace and, as Sibnath Shastri describes it, spending their time in afternoon naps, kite flying, watching bird fights, playing on musical instruments, patronising folk literature and spending nights in brothels.³³ While the rural folk or *gatha* literature of Bengal extolled the valour of the Sanyasi rebels and condemned the exploitation of the colonial rulers and their Indian agents,³⁴ the *Kabigan* of Calcutta remained immersed in the romantic love of the heavenly couple Radha and Krishna. And at the élite level, the urban Bengali literature, like Rajiblochan Mukhopadhyay's *Maharaja Krishnachandra Rayasya Charitram* (1805), adored the English for being as valiant as Arjuna and as

benevolent as Yudhisthira—the epic archetypes of perfection—while stereotyping the Sanyasi rebels as criminals who indiscriminately attacked the wealthy households in the countryside.³⁵ It was not until 1886 that a novel, *Dewan Gangagobinda Singha*, by Chandicharan Sen appeared in Calcutta with the courage to condemn the atrocities perpetrated by Gangagobinda Singh, Debi Singh and their patron Warren Hastings, which caused the rebellion in north Bengal. Our educated men, the same author had written a year earlier, were painfully unaware of this history of their land. But he too appears to have shared with his contemporaries an intrinsic faith in the righteousness and sense of justice of the British, critiquing only what he considered to be an aberration.³⁶

Thus in contrast to its rural counterpart, Calcutta society in the early nineteenth century seemed to be all praise for its new English masters. In January 1819, a few months after the death of Warren Hastings, the *Samachar Darpan* wrote in praise of his great achievements, like the extension and consolidation of British power in this country. A year later, notable Indians were contributing generously for the erection of his statue in Calcutta.³⁷ It was, therefore, not unnatural that the peasant rebels of Bengal—the Sanyasis, the Fakirs, the Chuars or the Pagalpanthis—would not find an advocate or sympathiser in this city of loyal subjects. The people in Calcutta believed that subduing these revolts would be ‘child’s play’ for the mighty British army. And so they advocated—as Harachandra Ghose did with reference to the Chuars in a meeting of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge, the forum of the Young Bengal—proper education for these people ‘to elevate their character’, otherwise they would ‘ever remain in ignorance and would commit great mischief by their seditious disturbances which are constantly occurring’.³⁸

The later rebels were even less fortunate, as their movements had an Islamic overtone. Titu Mir’s revolt was thus portrayed in communal colours and condemned as senseless troublemaking. The *Samachar Darpan* condemned the revolt as ‘seditious activity’ of the Muslims under Titu Mir, who were oppressing the Hindus.³⁹ The *Jnanannesan* of the Young Bengal expressed the same condemnation, while the *Samachar Chandrika*, the mouthpiece of the orthodox Dharma Sabha, fanned further communal hatred on this occasion. The *Hurkaru* expressed relief as ‘the government took such prompt measures in

despatching an effective force against these marauders'. The *Samachar Chandrika* went even further to 'assert' that 'if ... the Moosoolmans who have been guilty are set at liberty, or no punishment be inflicted upon those who have not yet been apprehended, then a hundred of those Teetoos will again be seen'. To warn such future rebels, sixty-six years after the revolt, Beharilal Sarkar wrote a thoroughly critical biography of Titu Mir, portraying his protest as nothing but communal frenzy and sheer madness. Even some of his Muslim contemporaries in Calcutta—as a report in the *Reformer* (5 December 1831) indicates—were not sympathetic to Titu's defiance of British rule.⁴⁰ To many of them British India was *Dar-ul-Islam* and a *jihad* against the British government was therefore unjustified.⁴¹ The Faraizi movement, taking place at a safe distance in eastern Bengal, attracted much less attention in Calcutta. But, whenever mentioned, it received the same communal portrayal and condemnation. A letter published in the *Samachar Darpan* in April 1837 described Shariatullah as a hundred times more harmful than Titu Mir. An appeal was made to the government for his subjugation which was deemed necessary for the protection of Hindu religion, properties and lives.⁴²

It was really the Santhal rebellion that shocked Calcutta society more visibly and deeply, as its sense of security was now shaken by the apparent failure of the mighty British government to curb these primitive tribal rebels. 'The Sonthal revolt', lamented the *Hindu Intelligencer* (19 November 1855), 'has not yet been quelled with a large military and police force at the disposal of the authorities....' The *Hindoo Patriot* (26 July 1855) wondered how 'a few thousands of savages, armed with primitive clubs, bows and arrows, kept the British power at bay ...'!⁴³ It was earlier expected, wrote the *Samachar Sudhabarshan*, that the Santhals would run away at the very sight of the British army. But this did not happen and the British, who subdued the mighty Marathas, Rajputs and the Sikhs, have been humbled by the savage tribals. So what looked like an impossible thing had now happened, it continued, as now the uncivilised Santhals would become the rulers.⁴⁴ The reports that appeared in the *Sambad Prabhakar* also depicted the Santhals as 'uncivilised hill people' who had unleashed a reign of terror in the countryside. The pillage and plunder, arson and murders had forced peace-loving people to leave their homeland, the government sadly failing to provide any protection for its loyal

subjects.⁴⁵ Iswar Gupta's pen wore out while writing about the Santhals, yet this 'unholy trouble' did not stop—on the contrary it went on increasing day by day.⁴⁶

But there was not condemnation alone, one must admit, for lurking behind the generally loyalist overtone there was also a plea for introspection. It was indeed the *Sambad Prabhakar* which raised the most important question: 'Is it true that those who were always loyal [i.e. the Santhals] have taken up arms against the king without any reason?' Since the railway officials exploited them and raped their women, it was quite expected, it wrote further, that a martial race like the Santhals would not take this dishonour lying down. But in the end, the same report expressed satisfaction as the British army made successful advances against the rebels.⁴⁷ The *Hindoo Patriot* (19 July 1855) also expected, perhaps with a sense of relief, that the insurrection 'will be quelled in a few days, we may almost say, hours'. But it also admitted that the rebels had a cause to fight for: 'Oppression is the cause, revenge the motive, and the object of the insurrection a vague undefined idea of freedom from sorely felt annoyances'. It, therefore, advocated a full and impartial enquiry into the grievances of the Santhals, objected to the promulgation of martial law in the disturbed districts and protested against revengeful treatment of captured rebels. But along with this, there was also an expressed concern for the Bengali peasants of the plains, who were harassed, tortured and dispossessed of their land by the unruly insurgents, and a statement of satisfaction at the return of 'peace and security'.⁴⁸ Similarly the *Sambad Prabhakar* published a letter which described in an uninhibited tone of condemnation the inhuman way the Santhal prisoners were treated in Birbhum. Yet the same journal also criticised the Lieutenant Governor for his earlier patronising attitude to the Santhals which, it suspected, had initially increased their courage and inspired them to take up arms to fight for freedom.⁴⁹ In other words, the Santhals had legitimate grievances, the Calcutta literati agreed. But they were condemned as they attacked the lives and property of the settled peasantry; and the condemnation grew bitter as British power, in which the *bhadralok* had reposed their faith for ensuring protection, failed to curb them.

This sense of insecurity and panic became far more manifest during the days of the revolt of 1857. As Sibnath Shastri tells us, the Calcutta streets wore a deserted look after sundown and there

were rumours all around that the rebel sepoy were coming and they would kill all the Englishmen and plunder the city.⁵⁰ 'The inhabitants of Calcutta are reasonably in dread of a sepoy emeute', wrote the *Hindoo Patriot* (21 May 1857), as the 'sepoys in and near Calcutta have already evinced a not very loyal disposition'.⁵¹ The news of the fall of Delhi and Kanpur, followed by that of the other parts of north-western India, spread like wild fire in the city and struck terror in the minds of those whom Kaliprasanna Sinha called in this context the 'unfortunate sheepish Bengalees'.⁵² Their interests, observed the *Hindoo Patriot*, 'were bound up with the interest of their rulers'. They had, as they thought, 'a splendid future before them, but which ... [could] be realised only by the existence of the British rule'.⁵³ The Bengalees had benefited in a number of ways from the *pax Britannica*, said an editorial in the *Sambad Prabhakar* (17 Ashadh 1264 BS). They had received education, earned money and enjoyed the privileges of an improved communication system. 'Indeed, never before had the Bengalees enjoyed so much peace and happiness as they did under the tutelage of the British government....'⁵⁴

The basis of this happiness was the security of life and property which British rule had provided, and this now seemed to have been threatened by the revolt. The 'Bengalees of Calcutta', wrote a panicky *Hindoo Patriot* (30 July 1857), 'would not have their heads particularly safe on their shoulders or their properties in their houses if a rising took place of the nature apprehended'.⁵⁵ 'India has become cheerless', exclaimed another *Sambad Prabhakar* editorial (15 Jaistha 1265 BS), 'due to loss of life, property, honour and everything'.⁵⁶ This sense of crisis was further exacerbated as some of the Englishmen, particularly the editors of the European-owned newspapers, held the entire Indian nation, the Bengalees included, guilty of disloyalty and treason, and therefore not trustworthy for appointment in government services.⁵⁷ The ever obedient Bengalee *babu*, 'who was never capable of holding the sword',⁵⁸ was now about to lose his means of livelihood due to the haughtiness of some headstrong sepoy. It was therefore essential to restate their loyalty as loudly as possible and condemn the rebels as bitterly as the literary capabilities of the educated Bengalees could.

In May 1857, a meeting was convened at the Hindu Metropolitan College, with Radhakanta Deb in the chair and many other notables of the city in attendance. It expressed unflinching loyalty to the British

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and assured them of all possible help for suppressing the sepoys who had risen in revolt against their masters and disturbed peace in the empire. Such demonstrations of loyalty took place all over the city and addresses were sent to Lord Canning to convince him that, whatever might have been his other difficulties, disaffection or disloyalty of the Bengalees was certainly not one of them. And in this ebullience the *Hindoo Patriot* saw only the manifestation of 'an unmistakable spirit of genuine patriotism and devotion'.⁵⁹ The motives are not difficult to imagine, as the same paper made it clear in an editorial on 4 June 1857:

It has been insinuated that the Bengalees sympathise with the mutineers. That they are disaffected towards the Government. That they ought not to be trusted. And all manner of idle and malicious stories have been sent forth against men whose whole lives have been patterns of loyalty, zealous and devoted loyalty....⁶⁰

This energetic effort to get away from the stigma of disloyalty was mainly, if not exclusively, to reassert their claims to government services; 'what we contend for', as another editorial in the *Hindoo Patriot* about a month later declared, 'is the employment of the fittest person in such offices without reference to their colour or creed ... we look upon the puny efforts ... to damage the character, reputation and prospects of our countrymen with sheer contempt....' To disarm such efforts and to set all suspicions at rest, 'signal chastisement' was advocated for the 'brutal and unprincipled ... body of ruffians' who had 'disgraced a uniform'.⁶¹

The *Sambad Prabhakar* also appealed to all its readers to pray to God for the victory of the government and the early restoration of peace. The rebel soldiers were criticised as an ungrateful and ill-advised lot who had been fighting a hopeless battle against the mighty British. The cacophony of condemnation of the rebels often crossed limits of civility, as the sepoys were described as dwarfs trying to reach the moon, or as foxes fighting the mighty lion, as frogs trembling at the sight of the snake or as ants who had developed wings to face an imminent death.⁶² And Iswar Gupta's satirical portrayal of some of the leaders of the revolt, as it is well-known, often lapsed into vulgarity. This hysteria also seems to have affected the lower orders of Calcutta society. Although a few Kalighat *pats* (paintings) depicted Rani Lakshmbai

as a valiant heroine riding a horse, popular songs in Calcutta sang of the glory of the highlander army which, it was expected, would curb the pride of Tantia Topi, catch Nana Sahib and recapture Delhi with ease.⁶³

All these expectations and tensions of the Calcuttans ultimately came to an end with the final crushing of the revolt. On the afternoon of 1 November 1858, when in front of a mammoth gathering in central Calcutta Cecil Beadon read out the Queen's Proclamation extending the Crown's rule over the Indian empire, the whole city was immersed in celebrations and merrymaking that started from the evening and continued through the whole night.⁶⁴ To cash in on the popular euphoria, Praney Moira, an enterprising confectioner of north Calcutta, introduced a new sweetmeat, which is still popularly known as *Ledi-keni*, named after Lady Canning, the wife of the victor of the last pacificatory war in British India.⁶⁵

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However, the year 1857 also stands as a turning point in Calcutta's response to colonial rule. The profession of loyalty by the Calcutta intelligentsia during this troubled year was not without dilemma, as behind this loyalism there was also a growing awareness of the ignominy involved in their state of subordination. This emotional crisis of the Calcutta élite is writ large on the pages of the *Hindoo Patriot*. An editorial (21 May 1857)⁶⁶ in the early phase of the revolt started with a critique of foreign rule and a glorification of the rebels in unequivocal language:

How slight is the hold the British government has acquired upon the affections of its Indian subjects has been made painfully evident by the events of the last few weeks.... It is no longer a mutiny, but a rebellion ... [which has] from the beginning drawn the sympathy of the country.... They [the sepoys] have rebelled against the authority ... and their countrymen view them as martyrs to a holy cause ... there is not a single native of India who does not feel the full weight of the grievances imposed upon him by the very existence of the British rule in India—grievances inseparable from subjection to a foreign rule. There is not one among the educated classes who does not feel his

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prospects circumscribed and his ambition restricted by the supremacy of the power....

But soon on a much more cautious note the same editorial hastened to conclude:

Yet the grievances felt and the delusion believed in have not neutralised in the mass of the Indian population the feeling of loyalty which the substantial benefits of the British rule has engendered. We believe the prevailing feeling is that any great disaster befalling the British rule would be a disastrous check to national prosperity. We do not deny, that [there is] a pettish desire to see the high handed proceedings of its officials rebuked and the insolence ... of the Anglo-Indian community checked.... But, on the whole, the country is sound. The sympathy which the mutineers have found from the people extends no further than to a wish to see the British government humiliated to a certain extent.

Within a week the paper backtracked further and began to support the 'spontaneous bursts of fervid loyalty' by the Calcutta elites.⁶⁷ About six months later, when the revolt was coming to an end, it declared unabashedly: 'The Hindoo is essentially Tory in his politics. He cannot conceive of a sovereign who can do wrong.... As they [the people of Bengal] have gained the most by British rule, they have sympathised the most with British power in its day of trouble'.⁶⁸

There in the above statements of the *Hindoo Patriot* was also perhaps concealed a pathetic sense of helplessness and self-rebuke, that haunted all right-thinking, educated people in the city of Calcutta around this time. A self-styled spokesman of the Young Bengal, who boasted that the majority of the educated natives did not entertain any 'cordiality of attachment to the British government', had to admit that there might have been '*an interested attachment to the government*', as 'under existing circumstances', he confessed, 'we know of no better government'.⁶⁹ The dilemma was indeed most aptly summed up by the *Hindoo Patriot* itself: 'The most enlightened self-interest ... prompts the "educated natives" to be loyal. *This loyalty, it may be true, springs nearer from the head than from the heart*'.⁷⁰

Indeed, signs of this agonising of the Calcutta intelligentsia could be traced back to the early nineteenth century. Dwarkanath Tagore and his generation, bred in the atmosphere of eighteenth-century rationalism

and nineteenth-century liberalism, had visualised an empire based on inter-racial collaboration.⁷¹ But this precocious image began to fade out as the reality of an exploitative economy unfolded itself. Calcutta being the seat of this empire, the exploitative process was most visibly at work in this city, leading to a selective criticism of the various objectionable aspects of the new administration. It was Rammohun Roy who could legitimately claim the credit for beginning in a modest way a constitutional agitation for demands like separation of powers, freedom of the press, trial by jury, Indianisation of the services or modification of the Act of 1833.⁷² Many of these issues were later taken up by the more radical members of the Young Bengal, who were also critical of various other aspects of colonial governance. Rasikkrishna Mullick, Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay and Pyarichand Mitra criticised in no uncertain words the Act of 1833 and the Company's police, judicial and fiscal administration. The importance of these protests—like Rasikkrishna's condemnation of 'a body of merchants ... placed over us as our sovereigns', Dakshinaranjan's description of the courts as 'shamelessly corrupt', serving only the interests of the rich, Ramgopal Ghosh's spirited defence of the so-called 'Black Acts', Krishnamohan Banerjee's critique of the absolute monarchy and Kailashchandra Dutta's apocalyptic vision of an armed revolt against the foreigners in 1945—need not be unduly minimised, even though many of the protesters in their later lives made compromises with the same foreign rule.⁷³

At the same time there was also a growing awareness of the economic ruin that colonial rule had brought to Bengal, and by contrast even the preceding Muslim rule, which had been a subject of general condemnation, began to receive admiration. Previously under Muslim rule, wrote the *Jnanannesan*, the people of this country had the freedom to engage in any business or to do anything they liked for a living. But now, having lost this freedom of choice, they had been reduced to a group of clerks and agents. The 'natives of British India still continue to think', it wrote further by way of condemning the conquest of Punjab, 'that the people of the West have come to rob them of all that they possess....'⁷⁴ The *Bengal Spectator* (15 September 1842) also wrote eloquently of this drainage of national wealth as a result of colonial exploitation and pointed out (15 October 1842) that the amount of revenue assessed under the decennial settlement had been

four times greater than that which prevailed under Muslim rule, the Permanent Settlement being even more oppressive.⁷⁵ The *Tattabodhini Patrika* (Sraban 1778 Saka) therefore concluded that the outward glitter of development that dazzled the eyes of many in British Bengal only concealed the boundless sufferings of the people. When every family in every village had been so distressed, and when this was due only to the continued exploitation by the foreigners, only a deaf and blind person could call Bengal fully developed!⁷⁶ Such realisation certainly stemmed from a consciousness of dependent status, as the *Tattabodhini Patrika* wrote again: 'we are under foreign rule, we are being educated in a foreign language and we are tolerating a foreign tyranny....'⁷⁷ That this was the root of all sufferings was also quite explicitly stated in October 1841 by the Derozian, Saradaprasad Ghosh, in the inaugural meeting of the short-lived *Deshahitaishini Sabha* [Society for the Welfare of the Country]: 'our deprivation of the enjoyment of political liberty is the cause of our misery and degradation'.⁷⁸

As the revolt of 1857 gradually lost its intensity and the horror disappeared, this sense of disenchantment with foreign rule among the Calcutta intelligentsia was further reinforced. And this growing alienation was largely due to the unabashed display of racism that reflected the classic colonial dilemma of the colonisers professing certain principles which they themselves were unable to practise in order to maintain their monopoly of power. The debate over discriminatory state policies that reached its climax in the Black Acts controversy, had started with the passing of the Jury Act in 1826. The racial arrogance of the whites that had sought to deny the conquered race the right to equality now compelled the Calcutta elites to confront the stark reality of subordination. In the great Non-Exemption meeting (1857), the same Radhakanta Deb, who had earlier presided over a loyalist gathering at the Hindu Metropolitan College, now protested against justice taking a milder form for the conquering and a harsher one for the conquered race.⁷⁹ Even the *Sambad Prabhakar* wrote disapprovingly of the discriminatory attitude of the rulers: punishing white soldiers guilty of treason with only deportation, while sending to the gallows sepoys charged with the same offence. The harassing of innocent civilians by *gora* (white) soldiers now forced the local press to raise a voice of protest.⁸⁰ And often such protestations were couched in counter-racial language, as the *Hindoo Patriot*, writing about the

white volunteers guarding the city, demanded that 'the town be not overrun with drunken *European anarchy*'.⁸¹ The racial animus, as it thus appears, now had made the Bengali intelligentsia painfully aware of the inferior status that they had been relegated to in the new imperial power structure. The expressions of indignation against this state of existence also therefore became relatively more overt and uninhibited compared with those in the insecure days of the revolt.

The failure of the revolt also filled the Calcutta elites with a sense of frustration, or perhaps with an urge for fresh introspection. As Sibnath Shastri put it, 'The excitement of the revolt did a great benefit to Bengal and her society; a new society was born; a new desire was generated in national life'.⁸² The Bengali *babu*, in spite of his loyalty during the troubled days of 1857, was gradually turning into a rebel and claiming his rights as a citizen. The European newspapers took up the cudgels against him and, as a result, official patronage after the revolt moved northwards to favour the so-called martial races, leaving the Bengalees in the lurch as objects of suspicion and contempt. They appealed to reason and complained against racism. But persuasion and prayers proved ineffective and loyalty remained unrewarded. It was this experience which articulated a latent consciousness, a proto-nationalism, that went ahead to proclaim that the 'Bengalee will not remain a slave. He is strong enough, if not in body, still in mind and knowledge to *assert his right of citizenship*....'⁸³ The new desire which Sibnath Shastri spoke of found a lyrical but candid expression in Rangalal Bandyopadhyay's *Padmini Upakhyan* (1858):

Swadhinata heenatay ke banchite chay he,
Ke banchite chay?
Dasatva-srinkhal balo ke paribe pay he
Ke paribe pay?

Who wants to live without freedom?
Who wants to wear on his feet the chains of slavery?

4

Within a few years after the suppression of the revolt of 1857, a sense of remorse for what they had done during this critical period began to haunt the Bengali literati. About four years later, Kali Prasanna Sinha

in his inimitable satirical expression lashed out at the scandalous display of loyalty: 'Mother [Queen Victoria], we are your Bengali sheep; we have no desire to be Americans'.⁸⁴ These words of self-rebuke certainly evinced a new consciousness and an awareness of global political trends. By 1870, as the literary critic Gopal Haldar writes, the 'unmixed denouncement' of the 'mutiny'—though it was never unmixed as we have already noted—was 'definitely a thing of the past'.⁸⁵

It was this new spirit which was partly responsible for the bold stand that the Calcutta elites were to take later in support of the indigo rebellion in 1861. Their faith in the benevolence of the British, weakened in the 1850s, was ultimately shattered by the undisguised display of racism in 1882–83 during the agitation against the Ilbert Bill, which even the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Rivers Thompson, is reported to have condemned for 'ignoring race distinctions' to 'establish equality' by 'a stroke of the pen'.⁸⁶ The vernacular press raised a hue and cry as the government ultimately succumbed to the pressure of the non-official Europeans. The political excitement which was thus generated in Calcutta finally transformed Her Majesty's loyal subjects into conscious citizens, preparing the ground for the emergence of the radical nationalists of the early twentieth century. At a lower level, the more plebeian culture of Calcutta in the nineteenth century also evinced an awareness of the basic contradiction between the rulers and the ruled, although it had not been able to develop as yet an idiom necessary to overthrow that oppressive order.⁸⁷ But that was the limitation from which, unlike their contemporary peasant patriots, the urban élite leaders of early nationalism suffered. Yet, despite this limitation, these leaders were also developing gradually an ideological critique of colonialism and starting to imagine a nation based on shared citizenship. If the suppression of the revolt of 1857 brought to an end the last phase of post-pacificatory resistance of traditional India to British imperialism, it also ushered in a new era of modern nationalism in India, Calcutta being at the heart of this new awakening.

Notes

- 1 Samachar Darpan, 13 Baisakh 1226 BS, in Haripada Bhaumik, *Sekaler Sambadpatre Kolkata* (Calcutta in old newspapers), Vol.1, Calcutta, 1987, p.55. Translation mine.
- 2 P. Spear, *A History of India*, Vol.2, Harmondsworth, 1970, p.93.

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- 3 P. Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*, Calcutta, 1978, p.7.
- 4 K. Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj*, London, 1980, p.vii.
- 5 Some of these ideas on race relations in early Calcutta I derived from Basudeb Chattopadhyay, 'Changing Inter-Racial Relationship in Nineteenth Century Calcutta', unpublished paper presented at a seminar in the History Department, University of Calcutta in 1990.
- 6 T. K. Mukhopadhyay, *Hicky's Bengal Gazette*, Calcutta, 1988, pp.18–53.
- 7 For a discussion on Ghulam Husain's ideas, see A. Sen, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and His Elusive Milestones*, Calcutta, 1977, pp.150–2.
- 8 S. K. De, *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century (1757–1857)*, Calcutta, 1962, pp.180–1, 193.
- 9 S. Sarkar, 'Rammohun Roy and the Break with the Past' and 'The Complexities of Young Bengal', reprinted in his *A Critique of Colonial India*, Calcutta, 1985, pp.9, 28–9.
- 10 B. De, 'A Biographical Perspective on the Political and Economic Ideas of Rammohun Roy', in *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernisation in India*, ed. V. C. Joshi, Delhi, 1975, p.145.
- 11 For details, see S. Sarkar, 'The Complexities of Young Bengal' and 'The Radicalism of Intellectuals', in his *A Critique of Colonial India*, pp.1–36, 58–70; A. Sen, 'The Bengal Economy and Rammohun Roy', in *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernisation in India*, ed. Joshi, pp.103–35.
- 12 Benoy Ghose, 'The Bengali Intelligentsia and the Revolt', in *Rebellion 1857: A Symposium*, ed. P. C. Joshi, Calcutta and New Delhi, 1986, p.103.
- 13 Judith Brown, *Modern India: The Origins of An Asian Democracy*, New York, 1985, p.85.
- 14 C. A. Bayly, *The New Cambridge History of India: Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, Cambridge, 1987, p.170.
- 15 S. N. Mukherjee, *Calcutta: Essays in Urban History*, Calcutta, 1993, pp.57, 65.
- 16 S. Banerjee, *The Parlour and the Street: Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Calcutta*, Calcutta, 1989, pp.59–60; also Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*, p.34.
- 17 Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay, *Kalikata Kamalalay*, Reprint, Chittagong, 1975, pp.35–6; for more details on the class composition of the Indian society in Calcutta, see S. N. Mukherjee, *Calcutta: Essays in Urban History*, pp.127–34.
- 18 A. Sen, 'The Bengal Economy and Rammohun Roy', p.115.
- 19 For details on these people, see Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*, Chapter 3.
- 20 R. Mitra, 'Unpublished Reports of the Calcutta School Society', *Bengal Past and Present* 96 (1977): 151.
- 21 Cited in N. Kabiraj, 'Bengal Spectator O Adhunik Chinta', in *Unish Sataker Banglar Jagaran: Tarka O Bitarka* (The Awakening in Nineteenth Century Bengal: The Debates), ed. N. Kabiraj, Calcutta, 1984, pp.41–2.
- 22 S. N. Mukherjee, *Calcutta: Essays in Urban History*, pp.121–2.
- 23 *Hindoo Patriot*, 26 November 1857, in *Selections from English Periodicals of*

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- 19th Century Bengal (hereafter *SEP*), ed. Benoy Ghose, Calcutta, 1979, Vol.4, p.202.
- 24 Banerjee, *The Parlour and the Street*, p.67.
- 25 B. Chattopadhyay, 'The Initial Impact of the Introduction of the English Law in Bengal (1773–1792)', *The Calcutta Historical Journal* 5 (1981).
- 26 *Ibid*; also, P. J. Marshall, *Bengal the British Bridgehead*, Cambridge, 1987, p.126.
- 27 Marshall, *Bengal the British Bridgehead*, p.129.
- 28 B. Chattopadhyay, 'Crime and Control in Early Colonial Bengal, 1770–1860', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Calcutta University, 1987.
- 29 From the long list, mention may be made of the tribal uprising at Rajmahal (1784), the Travancore revolt (1800–09), Khurdah rebellion (1804), Paik revolt in Orissa (1817–19), Bhil revolt (1818–31), Ho revolt (1820–21), Khasi revolt (1829–31), the Wahabi movement (1813–69), Kol revolt (1831–32) and the Santhal revolt (1855–56). Kathleen Gough gives a list of 77 violent peasant uprisings during this period. See her 'Indian Peasant Uprisings', in *Peasant Struggles in India*, ed. A. R. Desai, New Delhi, 1981.
- 30 We have by now a rich literature on these peasant movements, but still the most comprehensive account is Suprakash Roy, *Bharater Krishak Bidroha O Ganatantrik Sangram* (Peasant Rebellions and Democratic Movements in India), Calcutta, 1972.
- 31 Bhaumik, *Sekaler Sambadpatre Kolkata* 1: 64.
- 32 Quoted in Marshall, *Bengal the British Bridgehead*, p.98.
- 33 Sibnath Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkalin Bangasamaj* (Ramtanu Lahiri and the Bengali Society of His Age), 2nd edn, Calcutta, 1368 BS, p.56.
- 34 R. K. Samaddar, *Bangla Sahitya O Sanskritite Sthaniya Bidroher Prabhab* (The Impact of Local Rebellions on Bengali Literature and Society), Calcutta, 1982, pp.44–73
- 35 De, *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, pp.180–1, 273–349.
- 36 Samaddar, *Bangla Sahitya O Sanskritite Sthaniya Bidroher Prabhab*, pp.87–8, 94, 98–9.
- 37 *Samachar Darpan*, 23 January 1819 and 1 April 1820 in Bhaumik, *Sekaler Sambadpatre Kolkata* 1: 40, 110–11.
- 38 Quoted in Sarkar, 'The Complexities of Young Bengal', p.35.
- 39 Brojendranath Bandyopadhyay, *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha* (Tales of the Olden Times in the Newspapers), Vol.2, 4th edn, Calcutta, 1384 BS, pp.379, 658.
- 40 For details, see Beharilal Sarkar, *Titu Mir ba Narkelberiar Larai* (Titu Mir or the War of Narkelberia), ed. S. Basu, 3rd edn, Calcutta, 1987, pp.1, 58–9, 61, 66, 80.
- 41 Abhijit Datta, *Muslim Society in Transition: Titu Mir's Revolt (1831)*, Calcutta, 1987, p.98.
- 42 Bandyopadhyay, *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, pp.379–80.
- 43 *SEP* 2: 182–3.

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- 44 'Haibe asabhya jati nripati santal', quoted in Samaddar, *Bangla Sahitya o Sanskritite Sthaniya Bidroher Prabhab*, pp.372–81.
- 45 Benoy Ghose, *Samayik Patre Banglar Samajchitra* (Social Portrait of Bengal as Reflected in the Periodicals; hereafter *SBS*), Calcutta, 1962, Vol.1, pp.197–205.
- 46 'Santhaliya samachar likhite likhite lekhanecr mukh kshay hoiya gelo tathacha e pap gol nibaran hoilona, barang din din briddhi paitechhe', quoted in Samaddar, *Bangla Sahitya O Sanskritite Sthaniya Bidroher Prabhab*, p.388.
- 47 *SBS* 1: 201–02.
- 48 *Hindoo Patriot*, 19 July, 9 August, 30 August 1855, *SEP* 3: 180, 186–90.
- 49 Samaddar, *Bangla Sahitya O Sanskritite Sthaniya Bidroher Prabhab*, p.386–7.
- 50 Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkalin Bangasamaj*, pp.195–6.
- 51 *SEP* 4: 61.
- 52 'Hatabhaga myada Bangalee' is the term that Sinha had actually used; Kaliprasanna Sinha, *Hutom Pyanchar Naksha* (The Satires of the Owl called Hutom) ed. Brojendranath Bandyopadhyay and Sajanikanta Das, Calcutta, 1355 BS, p.54.
- 53 *Hindoo Patriot*, 11 June and 26 November 1857, *SEP* 4: 90, 202.
- 54 *SBS* 1: 217–18. Translation mine.
- 55 *SEP* 4: 137.
- 56 *SBS* 1: 229.
- 57 *Sambad Prabhakar*, 1 Baisakh 1265 BS, *SBS* 1: 229.
- 58 *Ibid*, 7 Ashadh 1264 BS, *SBS* 1: 219.
- 59 *Hindoo Patriot*, 20 May 1857, *SEP* 4: 70–2.
- 60 *SEP* 4: 80.
- 61 *Hindoo Patriot*, 4 June, 9 July 1857, *SEP* 4: 80, 116.
- 62 *Sambad Prabhakar*, 14 Jaishtha, 7 Ashadh, 9 Ashadh 1264 BS, 1 Baisakh 1265 BS, *SBS* 1: 213–28.
- 63 Banerjee, *The Parlour and the Street*, pp.145–6.
- 64 *Sambad Prabhakar*, 21.7.1265 BS, *SBS* 1: 235.
- 65 Banerjee, *The Parlour and the Street*, pp.228–9.
- 66 *SEP* 4: 63–6.
- 67 *Hindoo Patriot*, 28 May 1857, *SEP* 4: 70.
- 68 *Ibid*, 3 December 1857, *SEP* 4: 211–12.
- 69 Letter to the editor, by a 'A Loyal Bengali', *Hindoo Patriot*, 25 July 1857, *SEP*, 4: 129–31. Italics added.
- 70 *Hindoo Patriot*, 11 June 1857, *SEP* 4: 90. Italics added.
- 71 B. B. Kling, *Partner in Empire: Dwarkanath Tagore and the Age of Enterprise in Eastern India*, Calcutta, 1981, pp.1–2, 248–9.

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- 72 Susobhan Sarkar, *Bengal Renaissance and Other Essays*, New Delhi, 1970, pp.12, 101–2.
- 73 For more details see S. N. Mukherjee, *Calcutta: Essays in Urban History*, pp.141–8; *Awakening in Bengal in Early Nineteenth Century*, ed. Gautam Chattopadhyay, Calcutta, 1965, pp.xvii–xviii, 21–2; Sarkar, ‘The Complexities of Young Bengal’, p.30; Susobhan Sarkar, *Bengal Renaissance*, pp.21, 23; R. Mukherjee, ‘Radical Who Became a Raja’, *The Statesman*, 23 October 1983.
- 74 S. C. Maitra, *Selections from Jnanannesan*, Calcutta, 1979, pp.83, 155–8.
- 75 Cited in Kabiraj, ‘Bengal Spectator O Adhunik Chinta’, pp.45–6.
- 76 Cited in N. Kabiraj, ‘Tattobodhini Patrikar Bhumika’, in *Unish Sataker Banglar Jagaran*, p.59.
- 77 Quoted in *ibid*, p.61.
- 78 Quoted in Sarkar, ‘The Complexities of Young Bengal’, p.31.
- 79 For details see N. S. Bose, *Racism, Equality and Indian Nationalism*, Calcutta, 1981, p.101 and *passim*.
- 80 *Sambad Prabhakar*, 15, 22, 27 Sraban 1265 BS, *SBS* 1: 232–4.
- 81 *Hindoo Patriot*, 18 June 1857, *SEP* 4: 97. Italics added.
- 82 ‘Sipahi bidroher uttejantar maddhey Bangladeshher o samajer ek mahopokar sadhito hoilo; ek nabasaktir suchana hoilo; ek naba akanksha jatiya jibane dekha dilo....’ Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri*, p.201.
- 83 *Hindoo Patriot*, 18 June 1857, *SEP* 4: 97. Italics added.
- 84 Quoted in Gopal Haldar, ‘Bengali Literature Before and After 1857’, in *Rebellion 1857: A Symposium*, ed. P. C. Joshi, p.267.
- 85 *Idem*.
- 86 Quoted in R. K. Ray, *Social Conflict and Political Unrest in Bengal 1875–1927*, Delhi, 1984, p.26.
- 87 Banerjee, *The Parlour and the Street*, p.201.
- * I am indebted to Professor Barun De and Dr Basudeb Chattopadhyay for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper. The errors that remain are mine.

