

ECONOMIC EXPANSION OF THE BENGALI PEOPLE



Prof. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR



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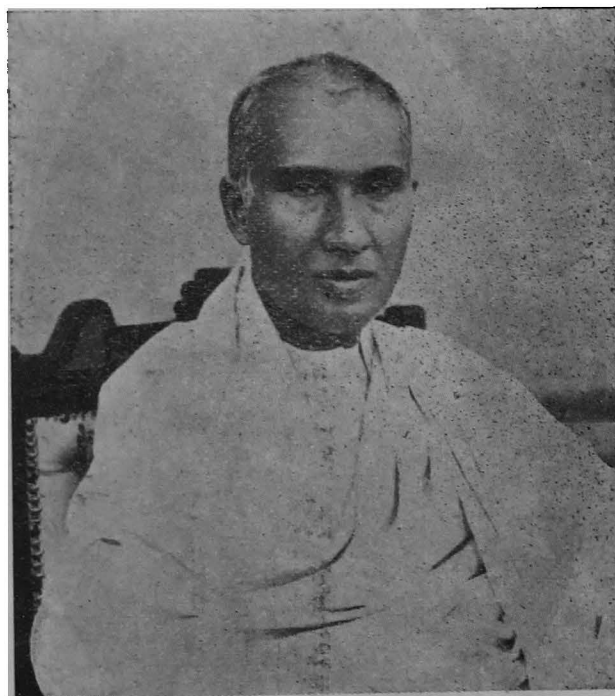
[Signs are not wanting to indicate that the attention of the Bengali people has been seriously directed towards taking a greater and greater part in the business enterprises of India both at home and abroad. It is at our request for an objective stock-taking of Bengali industrial and commercial activities such as may point to our attainments as well as limitations that the following paper has been prepared by Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, of the Calcutta University, Hony. Professor of Economics and sometime Rector at the College of Engineering and Technology, Jadabpur, Calcutta, Membre Correspondant de 'la Société d' Economie Politique de Paris, who was for two semesters (1930-31) Guest-Professor at the Technological University of Munich at the invitation of the Bavarian Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Deutsche Akademie.—Editor.]

The expansion of life can be measured objectively like the expansion of rocks or rivers. In the case of group life it is possible to examine the expansion not only from the standpoint of numbers but also from those of institutional structure and functions or activities.

POPULATION GROWTH

The Bengali people has grown 38 per cent in fifty years. This is the average rate or growth for All-India also. This shows that Bengal has neither declined nor grown relatively less than other parts of India. Every Division in Bengal embodies this expansion, although at different rates. Chittagong and Dacca's rates of growth are between 60 and 90 per cent whereas that for

Burdwan, Presidency and Rajshahi is between 17 and 27 per cent. The average Bengal rate is higher than that of France, Czechoslovakia and Spain. It is time to get rid of the conventional, erroneous ideas about the demographic conditions of Bengal.



Pramatha Nath Bose

IMPROVEMENT IN DEATH RATE

We should likewise pay due heed also to the fact that mortality conditions in Bengal have improved. The annual death rate has come down in certain areas from 30 to 21 per thousand inhabitants. It is the lowest in Chittagong Division, and lower in Dacca than in Burdwan and Presidency Divisions. In the interest of further improvement we should urge for the enactment of a Public Health Act in Bengal on British and German lines. But

it should be unwise in any case to ignore the improvements, however modest, that are already patent.*

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FOREIGN-BORN

Very often it is suspected by us that most of these improvements in Bengal are enjoyed exclusively by non-Bengalis. But there are not more than 363 non-Bengalis per 10,000 inhabitants in Bengal. In fifty years the growth is only 50 per cent, whereas in England the



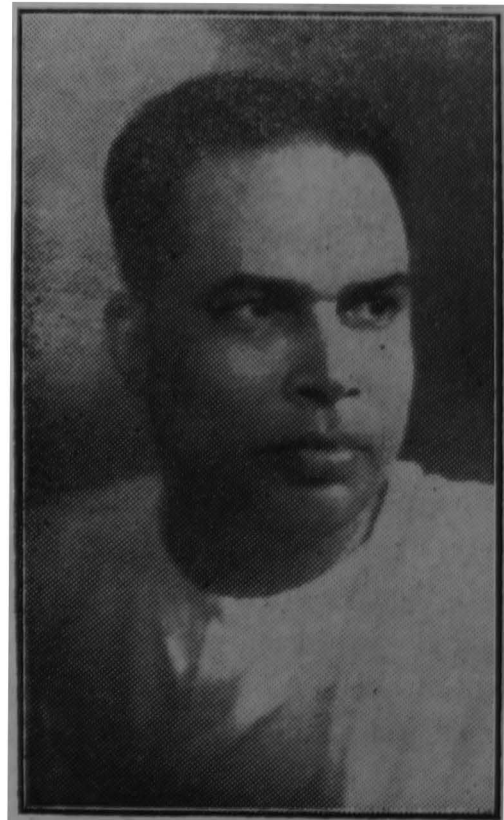
Brajendra Kishore Roy Choudhury

growth of foreign-borns during the same period is 100 per cent, in France 123 per cent and in Germany 344 per cent. Besides, the positive services of the foreign-borns must not be ignored or minimized. The tea-gardens, coal mines, railways, jute-works and other enterprises which have been directly and indirectly

helping forward the material and cultural progress of the Bengali people owe their present position in the main to the manual labour of non-Bengalis. The contributions in capital from non-Indian as well as from the so-called "Marwaris" are likewise considerable. Co-operation with Marwari and British finance will remain the bed-rock of Bengali economic expansion for some long time to come.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

Among institutions the like of which did not exist in Bengal a generation ago are to



Nalini R. Sarkar

be named the co-operative societies of peasants, the trade unions of working men, the chamber of commerce and trades associations of merchants and industrialists. The Zamindars (land-holders or rent-receivers) whose work in the economic and cultural development of Bengal is well recognized by the leading men of the Mofussil have also established associations in almost every district. Then we have the organized

* Sarkar: "Comparative Birth, Death and Growth Rates" (*Journal of the Indian Medical Association* Calcutta, May 1932).

movements of the so-called lower castes. Last but not least, the dozens of institutions run by and for women for educational and social welfare point to some of the most creative features in Bengali society. Structural changes of a profound character mark therefore the present-day morphology of the Bengali people.

BENGALI BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

The character of the Bengali people has likewise undergone a tremendous transformation as manifest in the development of new qualifications, aptitudes, activities, and professions. Company promoters and directors, bank managers, insurance agents, manufacturers, exporters and importers, news agents, these constitute some of the new social classes of today. Incidentally, it may be observed that in Bombay, the Punjab and the C. P. Bengali coal merchants are prominent figures as well as Bengali engineers and chemists.

Last year three exhibitions were held in Calcutta, and several in the Mofussil. The shows do not appear to have been very striking. And yet the progress made by the Bengali people as manufacturers and merchants in the course of the last two decades or so could not but be noticed by those observers who are used to watching the happenings in Calcutta from year to year.

The feeling is one of all-round expansion in the economic activities of the Bengali people. And in and through this expansion is manifest the tremendous remaking of social Bengal that has been consummated.

HOMAGE TO RAMMOHUN ROY

1933 was the year of the centenary of Rammohun Roy's death. Perhaps nothing demonstrates more effectively and objectively the amount and variety of reconstruction in Bengali character and qualifications that has

taken place in this century than the factories, firms, companies, and associations, such as point to the remarkable development of Bengali enterprise in industry and commerce. These exhibitions have thus unconsciously turned out to be some of the most important expressions of the Bengali people's homage to the genius and spirit of the remaker as embodied in the thousand and one activities of Rammohun.*

BENGALI ENTERPRISES SMALL BUT NUMEROUS

But one feature of these exhibitions could not escape anybody's notice. They were all small in dimensions.

Here, indeed, we touch the very speciality of our Bengali enterprises. They are small in size but large in number. The multiplicity of ventures as well as the smallness of the undertaking constitute the fundamental characteristic of our economic activities.

It is interesting to observe that Bengal is in this regard essentially different from Bombay. Some time ago the number of joint stock companies in Bombay was something like 800 whereas Bengal possessed more than three times this number, not less than 2600. But the Bombay concerns as a rule are fairly large-sized, the average capital of each being nearly Rs. 1,250,000. In Bengal, on the other hand, the concerns, no matter whether Bengali, or non-Bengali, Indian or non-Indian,—are rather petty, each with less than one-third the Bombay average, namely, about Rs. 400,000 as capital.†

* Sarkar: "The Pursuit of Science and Scientific Research in Modern Bengal" (*India and the World*, Calcutta, 1932, December and 1933, January).

† Sarkar: Umfang und Kapitalkraft der industriellen Unternehmungen in Indien" (*Maschinenbau*, Berlin, 16 April, 1931).

In the immediate future Bengal is likely to remain a country of small business units, and our business heads should have to look upon, say, two to three hundred thousand Rupees as quite a decent financial outlay to strive after. The luxury of large enterprises and all the economies of "rationalization" such as such enterprises confer,—it may never be the luck of many of our present-day Bengali businessmen to enjoy.

It is not for them to cry for the moon in the shape of large scale production and trade. But like true pioneers they will be called upon to make the best of their small units and render them as economically worth while as possible. The "next stage" of our economic life will know how to organize fusions, amalgamations, cartels and similar formations.

FIFTY YEARS OF NEW BENGAL

But in the meantime the present developments will not fail to impress upon us the fact that the Bengali people has been expanding not only in education and culture but also in industry and commerce. Progress in science and technology will appear to be solid, no matter what be the rate at which progress is being achieved.*

Even fifty years ago, *i. e.* about the time when *Bande-Mataram* was being composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and the Indian National Congress established, the number of Bengali Hindus as businessmen in modern forms of industrial and commercial endeavour could be counted perhaps at fingers' ends. Today the Hindu elements of the Bengali people have grown into a powerful community of technically equipped and scientifically efficient industrialists and traders of all denominations. The industrial and commercial

professions have been attracting not only the Sahas, Tilis, Gandhavaniks and Suvarnavaniks, the traditional business castes of Bengal, but the so-called intellectuals or higher castes as well.



Dr. S. C. Roy

The Kayasthas of Bengal today are not all scribbling clerks, the Vaidyas, not all Kavirajes with mortar and pestle, and the Brahmans, not all priests or cooks. Nor is the community of Brahmans, Vaidyas and Kayasthas at the present moment a community exclusively or chiefly of school masters, lawyers and medical men. The Bengali intellectuals, *bhadraloks* or castemen of the present generation can count among them hundreds, nay, thousands of manufacturers, factory-

* See the foot-note at the end of this paper.

directors, mill-managers, engineers, chemists, contractors, bus-owners, exporters and importers, shippers and carriers, aviators, bank officials, insurance agents, industrial artists, film producers, printers, publishers, journalists, and what not. The tone of life among caste-Hindus is being furnished not by lawyers and school masters but by businessmen, technologists, managers of industrial establishments, and company promoters.

TRANSFORMATION OF BENGALI CHARACTER BY NEW PROFESSIONS

The population of Bengal has grown, as indicated at the outset, only 38 per cent in fifty years,—from 37 to 51 millions. But in each of the so-called higher castes the number of persons that have taken to manufacture, export-import, banking, insurance, and transportation etc., in other words, the new lines of economic and professional activity, has increased several hundred per cent. Today their name is legion. The character of the upper-caste Hindus is in course of being entirely transformed on account of these new careers and means of livelihood. The caste-Hindus of Bengal have taken to industry and trade in a manner unparalleled in the Bengali annals of the nineteenth century and of course of previous centuries. The number of industrial and commercial magnates among Bengalis is yet insignificant. But not even Bankim would recognise us today as Bengalis, and naturally neither Rammohun nor the author of *Kavi Kankan Chandi*.

Virtually, none of the businesses, manufactures, commercial enterprises etc., in which Bengali brain and administrative power have been manifesting themselves so markedly today were known to or rather seriously attempted by the Bengalis half a century ago.

It is during the last decades, especially since the glorious *Swadeshi* Movement of 1905 that all these professions and careers have been assiduously explored by the adventurous and energistic spirit of Young Bengal and annexed to the realms conquered by Bengali ambition. This achievement of Young Bengal's deserves to rank as one of the most marvellous items in the social revolution of modern Asia.*

NEW TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS

Kshiti Sen-Gupta who has attempted fishery and agriculture and is now engaged in sugar plantation, Karuna Kar of the fisheries and land development enterprise at Dum Dum near Calcutta, Charu Guha (Germany-returned) photo-artist, Niranjana Pal (England-returned) of the Dramatic and Publicity Film Co., as well as P. Mukherjee of the Punjab National Chamber of Commerce.

Jatin Datta of Barisal is in the stock exchange and share business, Monmotha De (Japan-returned) of Malda is directing the Silk Institute at Bhagalpur. The Bengal Canning Co., of Anath Sarkar (America-returned) is popular. Akhil Chakrabarti of Rajshahi, tube-well borer, and Khagen Mitra of Malda, engaged in vegetable gardening, are likewise both America-returned.

The timber merchant and contractor Jatin Chakrabarti of Barisal, Charu Ghosh of Ganesh Rice mill, and Jogesh Mookerji of Dacca, proprietor of Calcutta Builders' Stores, the oil mills of Raja Reshee Case Law, Bipin Bihari Sadhukhan and others are well-known in Calcutta. All-Bengal fame is enjoyed by G. Ghosh of Dacca, manufacturer of *til* oil.

H. D. Mallik of Nadia is jute-broker at Hamburg in Germany, Ahin Chatterjee and

* Sarkar: *The Futurism of Young Asia* (Leipzig 1922), pp. 206-302, 363-377.

Mukunda Chakravarty are in hardware business, Ishan Chakrabarty of Rangpur is a cloth dealer, mica business has attracted Sisir Kumar Shome. The French Laundry which has been in business for nearly twenty years is a Bengali concern.

WELL-KNOWN NAMES

Of substantial importance in Bengali society is Dr. Kartic Bose, manufacturer of and dealer in scientific apparatuses, who like the illustrious Prafulla Chandra Ray, is indeed one of the founders of the Bengal Chemical. Equally important as a distinguished Bengali businessman is the insurance organizer, Abinash Sen of Comilla, whose National Agency Ltd., manages also a large number of tea estates.

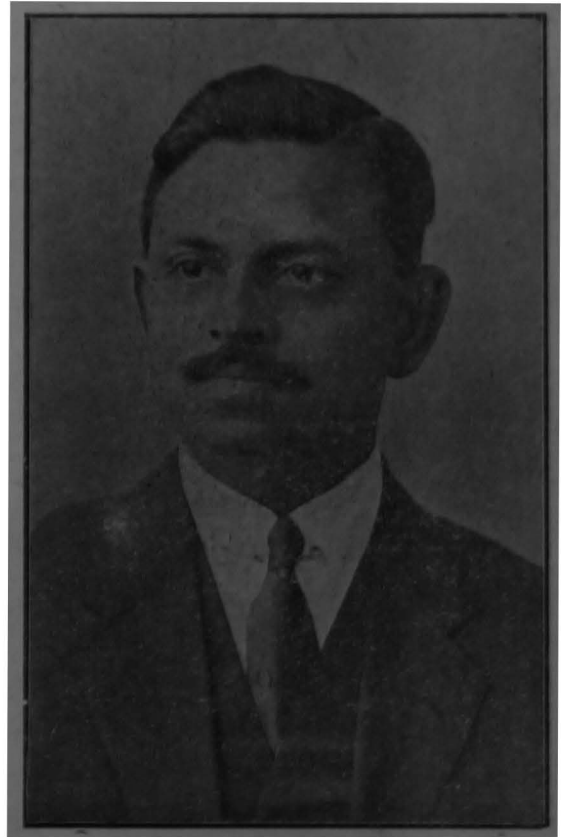
As owners, directors or managers of big business such as would be regarded as big by higher Indian standards also, we may mention Satis Chowdhury of Mymensingh and Sachchidananda Bhattacharya of Faridpur, whose connections with the Banga-luxmi Cotton Mill, Shillong Motor Service, Woollen Manufacturing Co., of Amritsar (Punjab) etc., are well-known. In the same category of Bengali businessmen enjoying all-India reputation are the Roy's of Bhagyakul (Dacca), whose Premchand Jute Mills and East Bengal Shipping Service have served to break new ground for Bengali talent.

ZAMINDARS IN BUSINESS

The Zamindars (land-holders) also have been showing evidence of the acquisition of industrial and commercial aptitudes.* Brajendra Kishore Roy-Chowdhury of Gouripur (Mymensingh), Kumar Sarat Roy of Dighapatia (Rajshahi),

* Sarkar : "Bengali Zamindars and Bengali Industry and Commerce" (*Arthik Unnati*, Calcutta, September, 1933).

Kumars G. C. Law Suren Law, Dr. N. Law and others of the Law family of Calcutta, Satyendra Mohan Ray-Chowdhury and Nalini Ray-Chowdhury of Tapa (Rangpur), the Roy Family of Bhagyakul (Dacca), Surendra Nath Sen of Barisal, Radhika Roy-Chowdhury of Tarash (Pabna), the Pakrashis of Sthal (Pabna),



Abinash Chandra Sen

Ramani Roy of Chowgaon (Rajshahi), Bhaben Roy of Narail (Jessore), Manindra Chandra Roy-Chowdhury and Radharaman Majumdar of Rangpur, Tulsi Goswami of Serampore, Ramanath Das of Dacca, Arun Sinha of Paikpara, Raja Prasanna Deb Raikut of Jalpaiguri and others have interest in modern business not only as share-holders but to a certain extent as director and managers as well. And the activities comprise diverse lines from agri-flori-horticulture, poultry-farming, and mining

to banking, insurance, printing, publishing and so forth. Finally, one can never forget the manifold activities of the late Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi of Cossimbazar in the promotion of modern business, industry and technical education in diverse ways.

MANAGERS OF COTTON AND HOSEIERY MILLS

Bengali business brain is today responsible for the management of several cotton mills. Ramanath Das of Dacca, Akhil Guha of Mymensingh, Jiten Roy of Pabna, Manab Kundu of Dacca, Prof. Atul Sen of Barisal, Girija Chakrabarti of Kustia, and others have enriched the Bengali people with new administrative experience. About a dozen and a half of hosiery mills,—Beliaghata, Parjoar—Howrah (Anath Guha), Calcutta Hosiery (Jatin Hui), Pabna Silpa Sanjibani, etc.—are being run by Bengalis in different parts of the country.

BUSINESS MEN IN COAL MINES AND TEA ESTATES

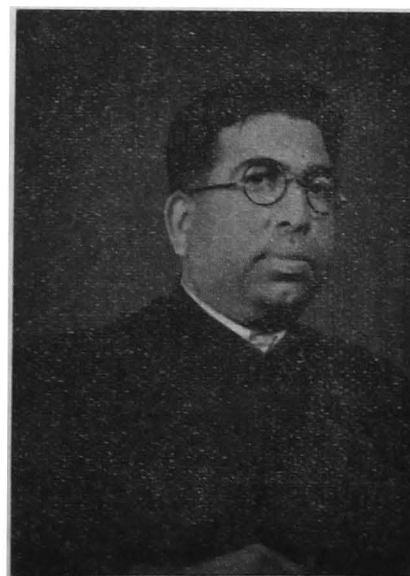
A large number of West Bengal men has been attracted to coal-mining and coal business. The pioneers in this line were the late Nibaran Sarkar of Burdwan, Nilmoni Chowdhuri of Tarakeswar, Jadab Banerji of Birbhum and Mukunda Laik of Barakar. Among the coal men of today Bipin Bose of Twentyfour Pergannahs, Prasad Datta of Howrah, Bata Kristo Roy of Manbhum, Baidyanath Mandal of Burdwan, and Biswanath Sanyal of Calcutta are well known. Bijay Chatterjee of Bankura, ex-M. L. C. is a coal man. Sushil Ghosh of Beliaghata and a number of Banerjis, such as Satyakinkar, Woomeshchandra, Rai Bahadurs Haripada and Abinashchandra, and others have also

built up their names in the coal industry and trade.

Tea has likewise engaged the business capacity of Bengalis,—especially in North and East Bengal. Moni Datta, Paresh Bhattacharya and Jogesh Das-Gupta of Comilla, Jogesh Ghosh, Tarini Roy, Prof. Jogesh Mitra, Satis Roy, Rajen Niyogi, Satnidhan Roy, Nalini Rahut, Upen Mukerjee and others of Jalpaiguri have acquired a position in this business.

MANUFACTURERS

Among manufacturers we have Dhiren Saha (educated at the College of Engineering and Technology, Jadabpur) who makes Clyde fans, and Madhusudhan Majumdar (also



Susil Chandra Ghosh

educated at Jadabpur) who makes motor batteries. The one has come back from Glasgow and the other from the U. S. A. Jiten Bhattacharya, Atin Roy, Prafulla Chatterjee and other founders of the engineering works, known as House of Labourers, Comilla, have a name in East Bengal. All-India reputation is enjoyed by Satya Sundar Deb (Japan-and Germany-returned), founder

of Bengal Potteries, and Dinesh Majumdar, (also Japan-and Germany-returned) of Gwalior Potteries.

P. C. Ray, manager of match factories Jiten Ganguli (America-returned), manufacture, of electric blubs and canvas belting, Sures Bose (Germany-returned), manufacturer of ice at Cuttack, Manmatha Ghose (Japan-returned), manufacturer of combs, Datta-Gupta, manufacturer of buttons, S. C. Dutt of Faridpur (Manchester-returned), manufacturer of motor boats, Ashutosh Lahiri and Rajani Bhattacharya of Rangpur, manufacturers of tobacco, Ashutosh Ganguly, Jiten Banerji and Jagadish Saha, manufacturers of soaps, Samar Sen, manufacturer of fountain pen ink, Fani Gupta, manufacturer of pencils, as well as Gokul Law, manufacturer of fountain pens, can not be ignored.

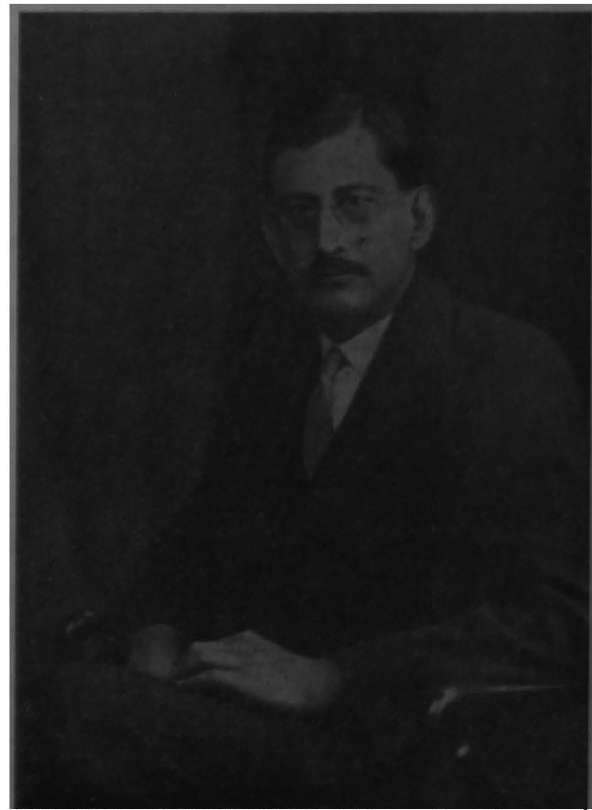
Suren Bose (America-returned) manufactures oil cloth in Calcutta, and Bhupati Bose at Malkhanagar in Dacca. The Bengali Ice-cream Manufacturing Co. of Dalhousie Square, the Soap Works of Jadabpur, the Sisir Soap Works of Dum Dum, the National Soap Works and the Das-Gupta Ink factory are becoming popular. Biren Sen of Barisal is a prime mover in the Calcutta Creamery and Dairy Ltd. Captain Naren Dutt's association with the Bengal Immunity Co. is known to publicists in Bengal.

Scores of small industries have already felt the touch of Bengali manufacturing genius. Be it observed that the Bengali constructive talent began for the first time to be in evidence when during the *Swadeshi* period of 1905-10 our great educational benefactors like the eminent jurist Rashbehari Ghosh as well as the philanthropist Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi and the illustrious Brajendra Kishore

Roy-Chowdhury came forward as patrons of industrial experiments.

MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL AND CHEMICAL ENGINEERS

Biren Banerji (Germany-returned), A. C. Mitra, P. C. Mukerji and several other America-returned engineers are running the International Motors and Tyres Co, Calcutta. Bose is managing the Great Indian Motor Works, likewise at Calcutta. Suren Bose (America-returned) is head of the Electrical Engineering Department of Tata Iron and Steel Works, in which Naren Sen of Faridpur (also America-returned) has a position in the Mechanical Engineering Department. A very large number of Bengali engineers educated



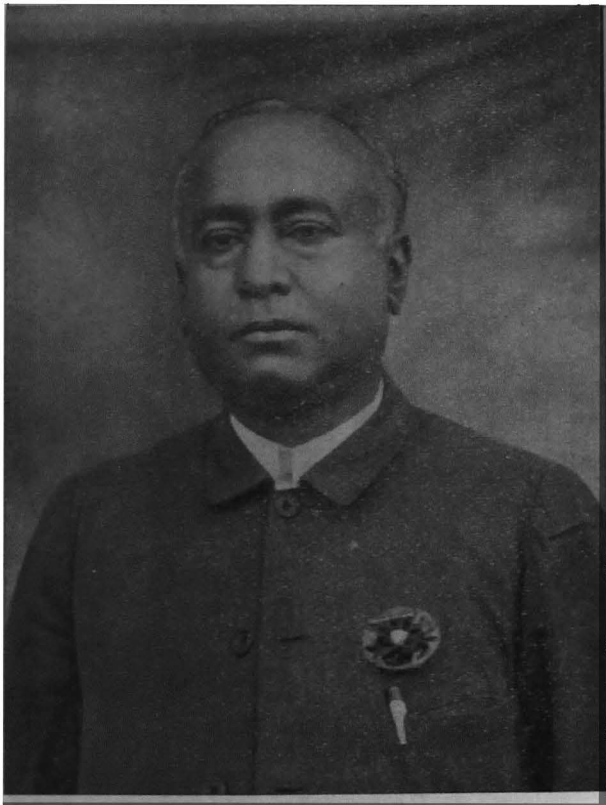
Dr. Naren Law

at Jadabpur has been absorbed by the Tatas in diverse capacities. Deben Chowdhury and Bankim Roy, both America-returned, have had successful career as electrical engineers in different parts of India. The

one is now Superintendent of lighting installation in a Madras town and the other in the Calcutta Corporation. Satis Mitra, Rasik Datta, Adinath Sen and Karuna Guha are employed as engineering and chemical experts in the Government of Industries, Department: Calcutta. The Chemical engineer, Prof. Banesvar Dass furnished as he is with extensive practical experience in America and Germany, has likewise been a source of business inspiration and guidance to commercially minded people.

FOUNDERS OF CHEMICAL WORKS

It is not necessary to mention the Bengal Chemical as it is too well-known throughout



W. C. Banerjee

India as a big Bengali concern. Dr. Abinash Bhattacharyya (Germany-returned) of Comilla's Techno-chemical Laboratory manufactures acids, alkalis, medicines and drugs. The Asiatic Chemical Works of Jnanada Das-Gupta

(America-returned) of Barisal are functioning in the same line. Khagen Das-Gupta (America-returned) has been successfully managing the Calcutta Chemical Works for the manufacture of soaps, pastes, perfumes, oils, drugs etc. Among the directors of chemical concerns must be mentioned the names also of Rajsekhar Bose, Satis Das-Gupta and Suren Sen.

ARCHITECTS AND CONTRACTORS

Builders or architects, contractors and engineers have grown in number with the expansion of Calcutta. Jatin Banerjee, Amiya Sanyal, Nagen Sen-Gupta (concrete patent engineer), Sudhansu Chakravarty and others' names meet our eyes every day in the streets. Rai Mohan Banerjee of Bird Co. is an expert in bridge and concrete bricks.

EXPORTERS AND IMPORTERS

The electrical engineer Biren Das-Gupta of Dacca (America-and Germany-returned) along with his partners Jatin Hui of Pabna, Satin Das-Gupta and others (all Germany-returned) is a pioneer of Young Bengal in the export-import trade with the Continent. Their Indo-Swiss Trading Co. has agents in different cities of India and they have an independent office in Hamburg. As importer from the continent Sarat Datta (Germany-returned) was another pioneer. Mahes Bhattacharya of Comilla has a name as an importer of chemicals. Butto Kristo Paul and Co, as importers of the same line are known to every Bengali, so to say. Manoranjan Ghosh of Faridpur is the manager of International Electrical Co. (an American concern).

TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES

In the carrying line Bengali brain has been functioning with some success. Owners and managers of bus companies are to be

found in every district. Sudhir Roy's Motor Bus Transport in Calcutta and Bhattacharya Co's Motor Service in Shillong may be singled out.

The Roys of Bhagyakul (Dacca) have been running the East Bengal Steam Service for a long time. The Brahman Serang, Bipin Bhattacharya of Dacca, has organized the Steam Navigation Co. at Ghatal (Midnapore).

The Bangiya Jalajan Samiti of the Indo-Swiss Trading Co. (Biren Das-Gupta) conducts ferry service in North Calcutta as well as passenger service in Khulna and Jessore. The Bengal River Service Ltd. has been recently started by N. K. Chowdhury and Co, to transport cargo between Calcutta and East Bengal.

Sudhansu Mitra has established the Overseas Corporation at Calcutta to serve as travel agents to persons going abroad. His office is in business contact with Ocean Liners.

In the construction of railways Bengalis have acquired experience in and through the activities of Upen Kar (Jessore-Jhenidah) and Deben Bhattacharya (Rajshahi-Malda).

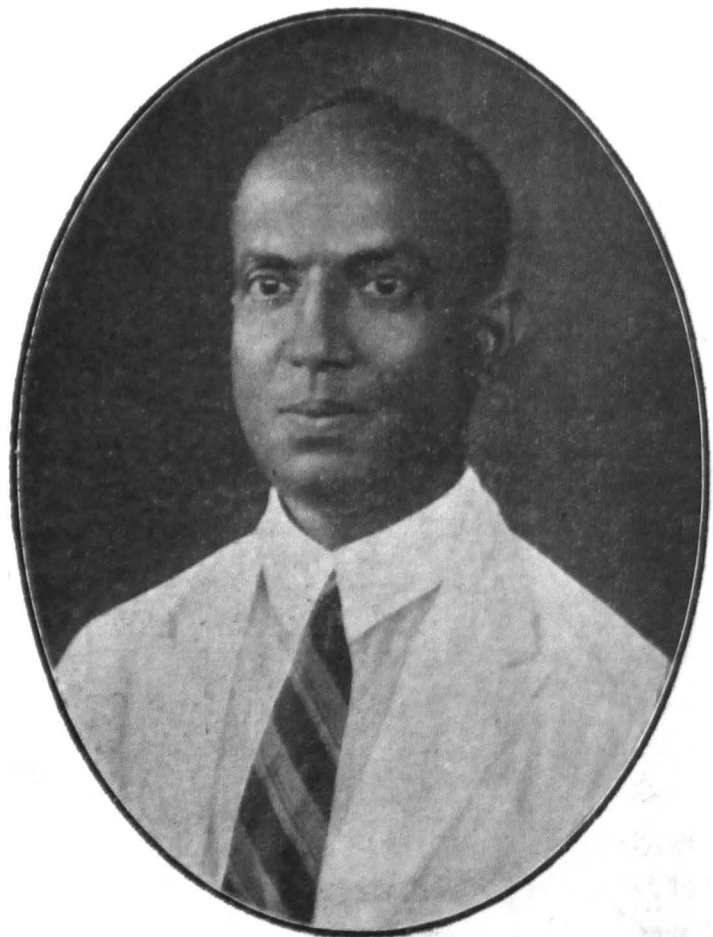
BANK MANAGERS

Several thousand men are employed in the eight to nine hundred Loan Offices—those "cottage banks" of the Mofussil as well as for the Metropolis. Among managers may be singled out a few from Calcutta, for instance, Hiralal Sen-Gupta of the Union Bank of Bengal, Bhabes Sen of the Bhowanipur Banking Corporation, Jogesh Sen (America-returned) of Comilla Union Bank, Kshetra Dalal of Noakhali Nath Bank, Amitabha Ghosh (France-returned) of Calcutta Finance Company, and Jotish Das (America-returned) of Bengal Central Bank.

The management of banks in the districts is in the hands of men like Lalit Sanyal of

Bogra, Satis Ray and Atul Ray of Rangpur, K. P. Ray of Jalpaiguri, Jogin Chakravarti of Dinajpur, the Pakrashis of Pabna, Tripura Chowdhury and Mohini Das of Chittagong, Indu Datta of Comilla, and Upen Mukerji of Faridpur.

The Bengali people has confidence in the Bengali bank managers. It is not out of place to mention in this connection that the proportion of deposits commanded by the Bengali cottage banks in relation to paid-up



Banesvar Dass

capital is not less than that commanded, for instance, by the Central Bank of India.*

* Sarkar: *Applied Economics* Vol. I. (Calcutta 1932): chapter on "The Bank Capitalism of Young Bengal."

INSURANCE MEN

Insurance was pioneered in Bengal by, among others, that remarkable man, Ambika Ukil, who promoted at the same time banking and co-operation and left the impress of his business talent upon the U. P. and Bihar. Another pioneer in this line was Pannalal Banerjee. Many Bengalis have been successfully associated with non-Bengali insurance societies, for instance, Abinash Sen, Suren Gupta, Jnan Ghosh-Dastidar, Indu Sen, Dr. Sures Roy, Prof. Hemanta Sarkar, Mani Datta, Pramatha Bose of Dacca, Mohini Mukerji of Barisal, Umesh Chakladar of Mymensingh, Mahatab Bhattacharya of Purulia and so on. Binod Roy worked as the acting manager at the head office of General Assurance Society of Ajmer. Suren Bose is managing the Bihar National Insurance Company Limited at Bankipore.

Among Bengalis associated with Bengali insurance companies may be mentioned Satyen Banerjee, Purna Roy, Jogen Ghosh, Nalini Ray-Chowdhury, Girija Sanyal, Karuna Kar, Prof. Nalinaksha Sanyal, Sures Ray and Prof. Suren Sen of Barisal. Of late, Bengali women also have entered the insurance business and agents and promoters. It is well-known, besides, that Suren Tagore, Ambika Ukil's friend and colleague, has taken a prominent part in insurance, and that Nalini Sarker is today the *doyen* of Bengali insurance men.

While speaking of insurance one should not overlook the fact that Bengali insurance agents, several thousand in number, are as a rule to be counted amongst the finest specimens of Bengali intelligence and will.

PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS

A large number of printing works belong to Bengalis. One or two may be enumerated,

namely, Chintamani Ghosh's Indian Press (Allahabad, Benares and Calcutta), Sures Majumdar's Sree Gauranga Press, Anil De's Calcutta Trading Company, Art Press, New India Press, Vishwakosha Press etc.

Publishing business has been attempted with success by Gurudas Chatterjee and Sons, Basumati Publishing House S. K. Lahiri and Company, Ramesh Chakravarti (Chucker-vertty Chatterjee and Company) N. M. Ray-Chowdhury and Co, Book Company, Calcutta Oriental Book Agency, and a host of others.

JOURNALISTS

The Bengali journalist, Keshab Roy was one of the founders of the news-agency, the Associated Press, to which his colleague Ushanath Sen still belongs. The news-agency, the United Press, has been established by Bidhu Sen-Gupta of Comilla. Some of the greatest men of Bengal have been great also in professional journalism, for instance, Harish Mukherjee, Sisir Kumar and Motilal Ghosh, Suren Banerji and others. Today the business of *Amrita Bazar* is still in the possession of the founders' family. So also are those of *Basumati* and *Hitabadi*.

Teaching was given up by Ramananda Chatterjee and the Bar by Prafulla Chakrabarti in order that they might devote themselves seriously to journalism. Hem Nag has been in this line for over two decades. Satyen Majumdar (*Ananda Bazar*), Kishori Banerji (*Industry*), Kshetrapal Ghosh (*Calcutta Commercial Gazette*) and many others in Calcutta and the Mofussil are instances of the strenuous pursuit of journalism as a career.

PIONEERING PERSONALITIES

Modern industry, commerce and business organization generally are also, like the ancient

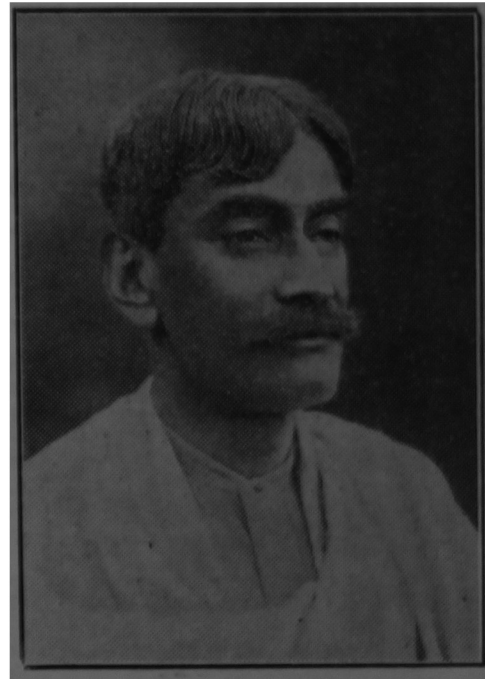
an, medieval, broad-based on moral and spiritual forces. And in this regard Young Bengal can look upon Pramatha Bose, the geologist, whose discoveries enabled the Tatas to select the site for their Iron and Steel Works, as a great pioneering personality. A powerful formative agency has been the educative activity of Satis Mookerjee whose Dawn Society constituted the nucleus of industrial as well as social service thoughts and movements on the eve of the glorious *Swadeshi* Movement of 1905. Equally substantial is the contribution of Jogen Ghosh, whose Association for the Industrial Education of Indians in Foreign Countries, started early in the century, has served to furnish Young Bengal with a large number of persons active in the trades and industries of today.

THE BENGALI WILL TO CONQUER

It is neither necessary nor possible to mention all the different lines or all the different individuals or families that have taken a pioneering or prominent part in the development of each, whether as an inspiring force or as an active businessman. Besides, we must remember that not every Bengali that has explored or entered new industrial and commercial professions has become a millionaire. Nor has everybody's career in these lines been a record of uninterrupted success. In terms of Rupees-annas-pies as in the size of business concerns the achievements of Young Bengal are as a rule certainly very modest.

The hindrances are too many, opportunities are few, and poverty is universal and immense. But while discovering these new paths or trying them out the adventurers of Young Bengal have demonstrated their capacity to persist in

their endeavours in spite of failures. The thousand and one fields of modern industry and commerce that are being attempted by them point to so many instances of heroic struggle, the pursuit of new professions under difficulties, and the will to conquer of the Bengali people.



Suren Law

Neither the German nor the Japanese nor the American youths have exhibited a greater tenacity and strenuousness in the midst of the same kind and amount of handicaps, hardships and discouraging circumstances than have the Bengali youths bent on conquering and to conquer in the realms of modern economic enterprise. And so far as our forefathers are concerned, very few of them were as a rule superior in industrial or commercial skill, intelligence and organizing power to the present generation of Bengalis.

And yet it is only the start that has been made. But the journey is uphill, long and tedious. The challenge from mountains of difficulties and obstacles has however been boldly accep-



Benoy. Sarkar

ted by Bengali brain and brawn. Young Bengal will not fail to inject an increasing

stream of dare-devil adventurers, scouts and pioneers into the regions of the industrial and commercial Unknown.

The institutional and functional expansion of the Bengali people is encouraging so far as it goes. But "the highest is yet to come". We have to improve our business methods and enlarge our technical experience in addition to attempting new fields of industry and commerce. It is time to redouble our activities along the entire front of economic life and concentrate them in an intensive manner each in his special domain.*

* Sarkar : "Economic Planning for Bengal" (*Insurance and Finance Review*, Calcutta, March 1933) ; "The Bengali People in the course of Expansion (1881-19331)" in *Arthik Unnati*, (Economic Progress), Calcutta, February 1934, which is to be consulted for the statistical measurements of progress in diverse lines.

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