

Snippet

From Vice Chancellor's Desk

4 September, 2023

Mahatma Gandhi, in his *Hind Swaraj* (1909) persuasively argued that British rulers imposed their hegemony with assistance from the Indians who were “tempted at their sight of their silver”: a clearly-argued statement. He, of course, paid the price for being so candid and bold.

Aurobindo Ghosh was falsely implicated in the Maniktola Bomb case as he effectively challenged the alien governance. CR Das faced insurmountable difficulties because he too was opposed to the British rule. So did Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and many other unsung heroes of freedom struggle which finally culminated in the transfer of power in 1947.

It is a matter of great relief that Nirode Chaudhuri, Rabindranath Tagore and Sajani Kanto Das are no more; otherwise, Nirode Chaudhuri would have been harassed by the state agencies in independent India for articulating his realization in *Atmaghati Banagali*, Rabindranath Tagore would have been equally tortured for his frank opinion about Banagalis in *Charitra Puja* (1895) and Sajani Kanto Das would have faced the wrath of the so-called *Buddhijibi* and self-proclaimed moralists of West Bengal for having put, for public attention, what Gurudev Tagore mentioned to him in his dialogue in 1937 (*Karmi Rabindranath*) with the bard; my teacher who explained the decline of Banagali as a race with reference to an analogy would have lost his public esteem. Rajnarayan Basu would have been subject to harassment by the minions of the state and also the politically-engineered law enforcement agencies for his text, *Eekal aar Sekaal*, where he scathingly critique the *Gentus* (Bangali lackeys of the British authority) for utilizing a holy festival, Durga Puja, to please the British rulers. For his conceptualization of *Gentus* who happily resorted to this, could not have avoided the wrath of the state had he written this text now in the twenty-first century.

Banagalis rose to prominence, as history demonstrates, by being creative which was possible by being introspective. Now, we do not seem to appreciate this just it happened in colonial India which the Mahatma sharply put in his *Hind Swaraj*. The tough steps taken by the present dispensation in Visva-Bharati are directed to weed-out **corruption, indiscipline** and **lackadaisical** attitude of those enjoying fat salaries. Dangerous are those who, by being self-proclaimed custodians of Gurudev Tagore's legacy, are actually engaged in activities to devastatingly harm this Institution of repute. Gurudev introduced many rituals which he thought were immensely important in developing human beings according to his perception. Hence, Wednesday prayers, various festivals,

among others were introduced to articulate his philosophy of education. These self-proclaimed custodians of Tagore-heritage do not bother to be part of this and yet they had the courage to make suitable arguments (selfish argument actually) to defend their absence. Visva-Bharati was a den of corruption. This present administration has recovered Rs. 5 Crore from truant teachers and non-academic staff; recently, Visva-Bharati has stopped illegal enhancement of salary of school teachers and has started recovering money to the tune of Rs. 70 lakhs. There are landsharks in the campus who enjoy illegally appropriated leased land. I don't have to elaborate this aspect except stating that out of 72 acres of illegally appropriated land, the present administration has reclaimed 15 acres of land.

The landsharks, the truant teachers and non-teaching staff are now alarmed as the new administration is too alert to be deceived. Hence, the state agencies and their lackeys have become proactive to demonize those determined to completely to push out the devilish forces either by persuasion or by means other than persuasion. That there will be counter-attacks - is not unusual as per history: Gurudev Tagore suffered, Netaji suffered, Aurobindo suffered, Nirode Babu suffered and so did my teacher-cum-mentor for being candid and courageous to put what they felt so strongly while figuring out the decline Bengali as per their priorities.