Chapter 2

A Contextual Introduction to Brahmabandhab Upadhyay's Life and Thought

Introduction
Brahmabandhab Upadhyay’s life coincided with unprecedented historical transformations which took place in the context of colonial modernity which significantly influenced his life and thought. In this chapter we shall outline the complex historical context surrounding the life and thought of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay. The objective of this chapter is to delineate such contexts in order to understand Upadhyay’s life, his thought and his concerns. This chapter consists of four main sections: (1) Upadhyay’s early life and formative influences (2) the search for religious identity and ideals (3) Upadhyay’s religious activism and (4) the nationalist phase of Upadhyay’s life.

1. Bhavani: Formative Factors
In this section we shall delineate some of the early influences on Upadhyay’s life by focusing on the following aspects: (1) Upadhyay’s family background, (2) the religious atmosphere (3) his educational background and (4) the social stratification and class formation of the nineteenth century Bengal.

1.1 Early Life
Bhavanicharan Banerji or Bhavani was born on February 11, 1861 in a village called Khannyan (Hooghly district) which is located between the town of Bardhaman and Howrah-Calcutta. Khannyan is around 35 miles north of Calcutta, the capital of British India. We had noted in the previous chapter that Calcutta was the centre of British Orientalist activities. At the time of Bhavani’s birth, Calcutta, which was the capital of British India, also stood as a symbol of Western influences in terms of cultural transformations. English education in particular had been a significant contributor to the Westernizing influences. Bhavani was born into a Brahman family which is usually classified as bhadralk or elite in terms of social status. Bhavani’s father Debicharan was an officer in the police force. Debicharan had three sons from his wife Radhakumari: the eldest was Haricharan, who became a doctor in

Calcutta, the second was Parbaticharan who practiced as a pleader in the mofussil, and the third was Bhavani. Though Bhavani grew up in a family atmosphere open to western influences, the family was deeply rooted in Hindu and Bengali culture.²

Bhavani lost his mother, Radha Kumari, when he was about a year old. It was his paternal grandmother Chandramani who took the responsibility of bringing up Bhavani. Chandramani was very fond of Bhavani and seems to have exerted considerable influence over the boy as a maternal figure. She was deeply rooted in religious and cultural traditions of Bengal. As Animananda points out, it was Chandramani who instilled in Bhavani a deep knowledge and love of traditional rural Bengal.³ Lipner informs us that Chandramani who ‘ruled the household with a firm hand’ was a ‘proud and caste-conscious lady.’⁴ In later years Upadhyay would defend the practice of caste system vigorously through the various journal articles he wrote.

A significant formative factor in Bhavani’s infancy was the religious atmosphere in the family. The deity of Bhavani’s household was Kali who was popular among the high-caste Shakta Bengalis. Durga puja, the main festival of Bengali Hindus was celebrated by Bhavani’s household. Along with Shaktism there was also Vaishnava influence in Bhavani’s household. By the age of thirteen Bhavani had read the Hindu epics, Ramayana thirteen times and Mahabharata seven times.⁵ Vaishnavism in general and Krishna cult in particular were an integral part of Bengali culture. Later in life Bhavani would give religious aspects pertaining to Kali, Durga, and Krishna, a prominent place in his thinking and writings.

³ Animananda points out that Chandramani’s ‘pious devotions, her sacred stories, her very life was an embodiment of the old Hindu ideal; Bhavani would never forget it. B. Animananda, *The Blade: Life and Work of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay* (Calcutta: Roy and Son, n. d [1946]) 10. Hereafter this book will be referred to as *The Blade*.
There is yet another religious factor which seems to have influenced young Bhavani which has to do with Bhavani’s uncle Kalicharan Banerjee who had become a Christian against the wishes of his family in 1864 at the age of seventeen when he was a student in Calcutta. Kalicharan was a regular visitor to the house of Bhavani. While remaining an outstanding Christian, Kalicharan also took part in the nationalist movement. Kalicharan seems to have spoken out consistently against what he believed to be the ‘denationalizing’ effect of Western Christianity in India. Some years later one of the chief concerns which occupied Upadhyay’s thought was precisely along these lines: making Christianity indigenous to India. In fact a significant portion of his writings focused on this particular aspect which he termed ‘Hindu-Christian’ synthesis. Both Bhavani and Kalicharan kept in touch, and died within a few months of each other.

1.2 Educational Background

Bhavani began his education in the local village school. In the village school which is usually known as pathsala, discipline was strict and corporeal punishment common. There was only one teacher at the pathsala who was something of a disciplinarian. Animananda informs us

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6 According to Lipner, “Kalicharan’s continued contact with the family throws credit on both sides- on the family for their tolerance of one of their own who had broken formally with tradition, and on Kalicharan whose grasp of his new faith ‘in no wise’ allowed him to differ in his habits ‘from the homely customs’ of the village.” J. Lipner, “Brahmabandhab Upadhyay 1861-1907: A Résumé of his Life and Thought,” J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, xxiii.

7 Animananda writes: “On a Saturday, from Calcutta, would come the Uncle Kalicharan Banerjee... He had become a Christian, but his habits in no wise differed from thee homely customs of Khannyan. He would settle down in the parlour and teach Bhavani his first lessons.” B. Animananda, The Blade: Life and Work of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, 10.


10 Lipner’s observation about Kalicharan is pertinent: The important thing was that by becoming a Christian without being abrasively unHindu, Kalicharan had broken an important psychological barrier vis-à-vis his family. If he hadn’t legitimized conversion to the Christian faith, he had at least made the prospect conceivable. Perhaps a seed had been sown in the impressionable Bhavani’s mind that was to come to fruition years later. J. Lipner, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary, 38.

11 Years later Upadhyay would recall him as Pitambara the Lame and a ‘veritable yama-raja’ (God of death). B. Animananda, The Blade, 9-10.
that the highly intelligent Bhavani was also an ‘independent little fellow.’ Soon Bhavani discontinued his studies at the village school and began attending schools run on English lines. The change of school had to with Debicharan’s transfers from place to place; the family had to move to different locations according to Debicharan’s transfers. According to his biographers, Bhavani was a good student and excelled at English. When he was nine years old Bhavani attended the General Assembly Institution in Calcutta. It was here that Bhavani was first introduced to the Bible. Narendranath Datta, who later became famous as Vivekananda, was Bhavani’s class-mate in General Assembly Institution. At the age of thirteen he attended the Hooghly Collegiate School at Chinsurah, from where he passed the Entrance Examination which qualified him for undergraduate study.

An important event at this point in Bhavani’s life was the investiture of the sacred thread at the age of thirteen which marked the right of passage in the Hindu community. This ceremony is called upanayana, which means ‘introduction to knowledge,’ for by it a Brahmin acquires the right to study scriptures. After the upanayana Bhavani decided never to eat meat or fish. He kept this resolution for the rest of his life except on one occasion. Some of these features of young Bhavani reflect the future orientation and commitment he was to take in later years. Bhavani attended akhada (local gymnasium) where he learned wrestling and became a favourite student of the well-known wrestler Ambika Guha. While he was in Chinsurah Bhavani received training in Sanskrit and traditional Hinduism from a famous religious school at Bhatpara. The knowledge of Sanskrit and of traditional Hinduism would play a significant role in later life when he earnestly sought a synthesis between Hinduism and Christianity. In later life we do see a blend of two influences, namely that of traditional Hinduism and modern western education. This blend of two streams would become part and parcel of Upadhyay’s intellectual heritage in later years.

2. Social Contexts of Bengal

From the perspective of formative influences on Bhavani’s life and thought it is important to understand the wider social and religious contexts of Bengal. The rise of the Indian middle-

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class elite, to which Bhavani belonged, was the outcome of the British colonial policies. We shall focus on two key factors in the nineteenth century class formation in Bengal: Permanent Settlement and the emergence of English education.

**2.1 Bengal Permanent Settlement**

One of the policies which helped in the creation of the middle-class elite was the Bengal Permanent Settlement (BPS) of 1793. By the eighteenth century the colonial administration had come to the conclusion that private property in land alone ensured progress and stability in society. The model they had in mind was the hereditary landed aristocracy of Britain. The Zamindar, according to this vision, was an Indian edition of the English aristocrat; once Zamindar’s property rights were assured, he would be as enterprising as his English counterpart. The Court of directors hoped that “by making the revenue demand permanent, they would induce the landlords to make improvements and in many indirect ways benefit the country.” The scheme was legislated in 1793 under Lord Cornwallis, when the BPS, with serious consequences for the region, vested in the province’s Zamindars a full property right in their estates with a revenue assessment fixed in perpetuity.

The BPS created a new type of property right in land for the Zamindars with the obligation to pay the land revenue. This new system also brought in an increased number of court cases and fragmentation of land. Under the new system on the one hand, the peasantry found themselves reduced to the status of tenants without rights. On the other, the Zamindars as proprietor found his entire estate liable to sale if he did not pay the taxes. It has been pointed

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14 In this context B. B. Misra points out two stages in the formation of the middle-class in the colonial period: “The first was that of the Company’s rule which witnessed the rise of the new middle-class. They consisted of Indian Agents and employees of the East India Company and private merchants. They built large fortunes with which they bought considerable landed estates. They were the people who in Bengal largely supplanted the old aristocracy and commercial monopolists...The second part of this period began with the spread of the English education among ordinarily well-to-do and lower-middle-class families, especially after 1870.” B. B. Misra, The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) pp. 343-44. Quoted by Vasudha Dalmia, The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth-century Banaras (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999) 235.

15 In 1776 Philip Francis of the Bengal Council suggested a plan for a ‘rule of property’ for Bengal. According to Francis, ‘if private property be not once for all secured on a permanent footing, the public revenue will sink rapidly with the general produce of the country.’ Barbara Metcalf and Thomas Metcalf, A Concise History of India, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)77.

16 The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol IV, Administrative, 229

17 Barbara Metcalf and Thomas Metcalf, A Concise History of India, 77.

out that nearly one-third of the estates in Bengal changed hands within twenty years of the introduction of BPS. Because of the inherent difficulties involved in the new land system, the "Bengali Zamindars rapidly became a class of rentiers, who, as the rural population rebounded from the period of famine, lived increasingly comfortably from the rents they extracted from their tenants." With these changes in the traditional occupational patterns, "a growing number of upper class Bengalis felt squeezed out of the confines of their traditional ways. They saw hope for the future in an alternative life-style: not in commerce which was largely in non-Bengali hands, but in professional and semi-professional jobs in the British orbit."

2.2 Bengal: Education and Class Formation

The second important factor in the formation of social stratification is the spread of English education. The Anglicist faction led by Lord Macaulay had succeeded in establishing English education system by the third decade of the nineteenth century. As P. Varma points out, the 'creation of a native elite in its own image was the most spectacular and enduring achievement of British colonialism in India.' Unlike its colonial counterparts like the French and the Dutch, the British followed a liberal policy of employing English-educated Indians in the colonial administration. Indeed, as a policy the British did not allow Indians to occupy the top posts in colonial administration. But there were lots of second-tier and third-tier jobs available for the Indians. It is not out of generosity, but rather out of necessity that the colonial government employed Indians. By the nineteenth century the colonial administration had expanded considerably and the complex machinery of administration could not have been managed by the colonial masters alone in the nineteenth century. English educated Indian elites were the main beneficiaries of the expanding colonial administration.

19 Barbara Metcalf and Thomas Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 77-78.
22 P. K. Varma writes: "If it was essential to have knowledge of Persian to get a job in the administration of the Mughal and princely courts, now it was necessary to know English to be employed by the Angrezi Sarkar. English was also a passport to enter the legal profession which offered promising opportunities to young men in the traditional service communities. Earlier the judiciary was dominated by British barristers; but soon a second tier of Indian lawyers, called pleaders or vakils, emerged, many of whom found both money and recognition by mastering the judicial intricacies of Privy Council pronouncements." Pavan K. Varma, *The Great Indian Middleclass*, 3-4.
Large sections of population in British India had remained non-literate mainly because of the conscious colonial policy of neglecting primary education in the vernaculars in preference for higher education in English. Indeed, compared to the large number of these non-literate populations, the number of educated bhadralok ‘baboos’ was small. Though small in number, the bhadralok ‘baboos’ were still a sufficiently noticeable feature in the colonial landscape about whom Bankim Chandra Chatterji wrote in 1873:

The baboos will be indefatigable in talk, experts in a particular foreign language, and hostile to their mother tongue... Some highly intelligent baboos will be born who will be unable to converse in their mother tongue... Like Vishnu they will have ten incarnations, namely clerk, teacher, Brahma, accountant, doctor, lawyer, magistrate, landlord, editor and unemployed... Baboos will consume water at home, alcohol at friends’, abuses at the prostitutes’ and humiliation at the employers.23

It is important to note the social formation and the Western influences surrounding Bhavani’s childhood. Later in life he would speak passionately against Western influences and the need to counter such influences. He was deeply entrenched in the caste-class formation which constituted the bhadralok, making him an ardent supporter of the status quo and the Hindu caste system later in his life.

3. Bhavani’s Search for Identity
All along his life Brahmabandhab Upadhyay had been an idealist and this characteristic can be seen right from his youth. This was also a period in which he engaged in constant search for identity and meaning. His search for an ideal to which he could commit himself unambiguously went through several phases. Upadhyay’s quest for self-definition is firmly embedded in the shifting terrains of the social, cultural and political contexts of the nineteenth century Bengal.

3.1 In Search of Patriotic Ideals
Bhavani completed his schooling at the age of fifteen and was admitted to the Hooghly Moshin College in 1876. According to his autobiographical account written many years later, this phase of Bhavani’s life was marked by a sense of restless search for some concrete and worthwhile ideal to commit his life to. Already at this point in time Bhavani’s ideals and values were being shaped.24 In 1877, when he was sixteen, Bhavani had tried to serve as a

23 Quoted by Pavan K. Varma, The Great Indian Middleclass, 4-5.
24 Animananda writes: “It was at Chinsura that Upadhyayji and his companions showed of what stuff they were made. A number of Armenians were in the habit of harassing Hindu women who used to go to the Hooghly to
soldier in the Zulu War. It needs to be noted that the nineteenth century is characterized by nationalist sentiments in many parts of the world. Fascinated by the atmosphere of patriotic fervour, Bhavani, who was deeply moved by the speeches of Surendranath Banerjea, wanted to dedicate his life for the nationalist cause. Bhavani wanted to do something for the country but at this point he wasn’t sure what he ought to do; he did not agree with Surendranath. Bhavani describes his state of mind: “I was then seventeen years old. Even at that tender age I felt restless, and I began to think that there was no prospect whatsoever of delivering India with Surenbabu. But if a youngster like me complained that he didn’t agree with Surenbabu, people would dismiss him as precocious.”

After a year in college Bhavani decided to give up studies and join the army of Gwalior Maharaja in order to learn martial arts. Along with three friends Bhavani set off to Gwalior with ten rupees in his pocket. They managed to reach Etawah in western Uttar Pradesh by train. Because of the financial constraints they walked the remaining 72 miles to reach Gwalior. They were soon found by their family members and brought back to Calcutta. Now Bhavani was shifted to another college, Vidyasagar College where Surendranath Banerjea taught English. Bhavani was not much bothered about his academic pursuits as his mind was firmly set on the new found Ksatriya ideal of learning martial arts apparently to drive away the foreigners. So he made a second attempt to reach Gwalior - this time alone with thirty rupees in his pocket. It was during this trip that Bhavani broke his resolution and ate meat at the home of a Bengali family. As to the trip to Gwalior, Bhavani’s search for someone who bathe. They were repeatedly remonstrated for their conduct, but it was of no use. So Upadhyayji and his band were forced to give them a severe lathering, for which they were hauled before the court, but the case eventually ended up in a compromise. Animananda, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmbandhab: A Story of his Life*, Part-I, (Calcutta, 1908) 5.

25 Animananda informs us that Bhavani ‘had sent in his application but his step-uncle, Nava Gopal Banerji, who worked in the Commissary office, refused the application on the ground of being a minor.’ Animananda, *The Blade*, 14.

26 Evidences suggest that he was both attracted and repelled by Surendranath and his movement: “If I didn’t hear a lecture, my heart would sink. But after I had heard one, when the clapping was done and I was returning home, my heart felt as if empty-something was wanting.” B. Upadhyay, “My Deliverance of India,” *Swaraj* 26 May and 2 June 1907. J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, *TWBU-II*, 456.


28 Upadhyay expresses the conflict between the prospect of breaking his vow and the Ksatriya ideal of wanting to belong to the martial race: ‘Mutton was cooked for the evening meal. By then it was about five years since I had given up eating meat and fish; how could I eat the mutton? On the other hand, I was ashamed to say that I wouldn’t eat it. Here I was, going to study war and yet not eating meat- the two don’t go together. So, quite ashamed I consumed the whole portion - and asked for more! In the process the old taste for meat returned; it
would teach him warfare ended up in disappointment. In Gwalior he met an elderly army
general of the Scindia and expressed his desire. The army general explained to Bhavani the
dismal state of affairs in British protectorates and said that he was called general but in reality
he did not have any powers at all. After hearing this story Bhavani realized how the Scindia
of Gwalior had become an ineffective vassal of British. Greatly disappointed Bhavani gave
up the idea of enlisting in Scindia’s army and returned to Calcutta.

3.2 In Search of Religious Ideals
After returning from Gwalior in 1879 Bhavani taught for about a year in the Free Church
Institution in Calcutta. In his free time Bhavani took an interest in Bengali and Sanskrit
literature; he also tried to learn Hindi and French. According to Animananda, this was a
‘period of blind groping’ in Bhavani’s life. At this stage we find Bhavani wanting to
commit himself to some ideals which he himself was not quite sure of, but engaged in the
process of an earnest search. Though he was disillusioned with the Kshatriya ideal, the ideal
of celibacy or brahmacharya still fascinated him. He was trying to find some definite
direction in his life and the result was far from satisfying. Restless as he was, Bhavani visited
some monasteries and hermitages in northern and central India. As Lipner notes Bhavani
“was changing gear, not direction.” However, at last the direction was changed when
Bhavani came into contact with Brahmoism. This change of direction is important because it
was through Brahmoism that Bhavani came to a deeper understanding of Jesus Christ.

Bhavani’s search for meaning is also linked to the ideal of celibacy and asceticism. As
Animananda informs us Bhavani was an admirer of Bankim Chandra Chatterji who had
considerable influence over the Bengali youth. As Raychaudhuri has pointed out, “Bankim in
his Anandamath had conjured up a story of patriots living as ascetics to liberate the

29 The elderly general then explained to Bhavani the circumstances which led to the loss of power. Once, during
a mock military exercise the maharaja and the general were heading two opposing forces. The exercises were
watched by some English guests. The maharaja felt hungry and wanted mid-day meal to be brought to him.
The general refused to allow passage for maharaja’s meal since they were right in the middle of a military
exercise. Maharaja, who had very clear priorities, immediately conceded defeat and called off the exercise.
But the maharaja also made known his displeasure about the general by relieving him of effective command of
the army. See, B. Upadhyay, “My Deliverance of India,” Swaraj 26 May and 2 June 1907. J. Lipner and
G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, 463-64.

30 Animananda, The Blade, 23.

Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, xxvi.
motherland...This fictional account provided role for the early revolutionaries like Brahmobandhab. Though brahmacharya is a part of Hindu tradition, in the nineteenth century Bengal the ideal of celibacy had acquired an added meaning. As Tapan Raychaudhuri points out "the nineteenth century Bengali discourse on national reconstruction based on the reconstructed individual, standing strong and pure, ready like a sharpened sword to serve the nation, emphasized celibacy as a value in itself and as means towards achievement of spiritual, moral and physical strength." Bhavani’s quest for meaning and ideals also reflects this concern.

3.3 Bhavani as a Brahmo
Bhavani was about twenty years by now. It was around this time he became a friend of Narendranath Datta (1863-1902) who came to be known as Swami Vivekananda. By the end of 1881 Bhavani had become a follower of Keshabchandra Sen (1838-1884). Initiated into the Brahmo Samaj by Devendranath Tagore (1817-1905), Keshabchandra Sen’s immense enthusiasm and vitality proved a mixed blessing for the Samaj. In 1859 Sen was made the joint secretary of the Samaj. Sen began two journals, i.e., the Indian Mirror and Dharmatattva to propagate the message of Brahmo Samaj. It was because of Sen’s efforts, which included lecture tours through Bombay, Pune and Madras, that the Brahmo Samaj became a nationwide movement. But the Brahmo Samaj eventually fragmented into two separate entities: the Adi Brahmo Samaj led by Devendranath Tagore and the Brahmo Samaj of India founded by Sen. The Keshab faction broke away from Devendranath’s Brahmo Samaj in 1866 because the Samaj was not progressive enough for Keshabchandra Sen and his followers.


34 According to Animananda, both Bhavani and Narendranath would often go for “picnics and festivals in a suburban garden called the 'Hermitage.' Here they would have musical fiestas and animated discussions on... things religious and social, political and philosophical.” Animananda, The Blade, 26.


After his return from England in 1870, Sen sought to create a synthesis between Hinduism and Christianity. For Sen Christ was an Asiatic and he made a distinction between the person of Christ and Western categories by which Christ was introduced to India. Sen stated in the same lecture: "Recall to your minds, gentlemen, the true Asiatic Christ, divested of all Western appendages, carrying on the work of redemption among his own people." Indeed, Upadhyay was influenced by this distinction and later in life he would explore further the implications of this distinction in his own Hindu-Christian synthesis. Sen wanted to establish a new church in India. He wrote about the type of church he wanted to establish: "[T]he future church of India must be thoroughly national; it must be an essentially Indian Church." Sen delineated his grand vision of the new church which is both universal and particular. In 1879 Sen created a new Church which he called the Church of the New Dispensation (CND). For Sen the CND which he created was the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy and the harmonization of all scriptures and all religions. Its uniqueness for Sen lay in its adherence to direct worship without any mediator between human beings and God. Sen who wanted to run his Brahmo Samaj of India along democratic lines was becoming

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37 In a lecture Sen stated: "I rejoice, yea, I am proud that I am Asiatic. And was not Jesus Christ Asiatic? (Deafening applause). Yes, and his disciples were Asians, and all the agencies primarily employed for the propagation of the gospel were Asiatic. In fact, Christianity was founded and developed by Asians, and in Asia." *Kesub Chunder Sen's lectures in India* (London: Cassel, 1901) pp. 33-34. Cf. Glyn Richards, ed., "Kesub Chunder Sen," *A Source-Book of Modern Hinduism*, 40.


40 According to this vision, 'all mankind will unite in a universal church; at the same time, it will be adapted to the peculiar circumstances of each nation, and assume a national form... India has religious traditions and associations, tastes and customs, peculiarly sacred and dear to her, just as every other country has, and it is idle to expect that she will forgo these;... In common with all other nations and communities, we shall embrace theistic worship, creed, and gospel of the future church - we shall acknowledge and adore the Holy One, accept the love and service of God and man as our creed...But we shall do all this in a strictly national and Indian style.' *Kesub Chunder Sen's lectures in India* (London: Cassel, 1901) pp. 158-59. Cf. Glyn Richards, ed., "Kesub Chunder Sen," *A Source-Book of Modern Hinduism*, 42.

41 Sen clarifies the nature of his new church in the following way: "Is this new gospel a Dispensation, or is it simply a new system of religion, which human understanding has evolved? I say it stands upon the same level with the Jewish dispensation, the Christian dispensation, and the Vaishnava dispensation through Chaitanya. It is a divine Dispensation, fully entitled to a place among the various dispensations and revelations of the world." *Kesub Chunder Sen's lectures in India* (London: Cassel, 1901) pp. 447-48. Cf. Glyn Richards, ed., "Kesub Chunder Sen," *A Source-Book of Modern Hinduism*, 42.
more and more autocratic in the running of the society which eventually led to the split in the Samaj.\footnote{Sen claimed special sort of revelations to justify his actions and manner of functioning. Meanwhile dissatisfaction was growing regarding Sen’s ways of functioning among his followers. A further split occurred in the Samaj as a result of the marriage of his daughter before the prescribed age to the Maharaja of Kuch Bihar. Sen claimed that the marriage was in accordance with god’s will. But his disenchanted followers objected to Sen’s inspirational claims and in 1878 founded the Sadaran Brahmo Samaj making it the third faction of the Brahmo movement. Glyn Richards, ed., “Kesub Chunder Sen,” A Source-Book of Modern Hinduism, 37.}

It was with this newly founded egalitarian and reformist Sadaran Brahmo Samaj that Bhavani was first acquainted when he was in Calcutta. He was around twenty years at this time.\footnote{As Lipner notes the boundaries between the three Samaj factions were not watertight and for a year or two Bhavani moved freely across these different groups. By 1882 Bhavani had come under Keshab’s influence and joined his group, i.e., the Brahmo Samaj of India. J. Lipner, “Brahmabandhab Upadhyay 1861-1907: A Résumé of his Life and Thought,” J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, xxix.}

During this time Bhavani was introduced to the mystic Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Although he was fascinated by Ramakrishna, Bhavani remained Sen’s disciple. It was at this point in his life when he was involved in the Brahmo movement that Bhavani began to be attracted to the person of Christ and Christianity. Bhavani had joined the CND in January 1887 and taken an active part in the activities of the church. However, after Keshab’s death in 1884 the CND was in disarray.\footnote{Upadhyay wrote to Sadhu Hiranand in 1884 that “[o]ur Church (founded by Keshab) is being torn into shreds.” Upadhyay’s Letter to Sadhu Hiranand, Calcutta, 7 July 1884. J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-II, 465.} Keshab’s place was taken up by Pratapchandra Majumdar whose work The Oriental Christ (1883) had considerable influence on Bhavani.

In 1888 Hiranand, a young Sindhi student, asked Bhavanicharan to help him in the school named The Union Academy which he had started in Hyderabad (Sindh). Bhavanicharan agreed and joined the school as a Sanskrit teacher.\footnote{He was very popular with his students. According to Animananda, Bhavanicharan “had become the idol of the boys. He would fly kites with them, play cricket, teach them gymnastics or football and swimming.” Animananda, The Blade, 32-33.} He was a friend as well as a teacher to the students. During his stay in Sindh Bhavanicharan worked as a Brahmo missionary and even officiated at a Brahmo wedding.\footnote{Animananda explains the context: “The son of a leading Brahmo in Sindh was to be married, and Bhavanicharan being a Brahman by birth and a Brahmo by religious persuasion was asked to officiate on the occasion. He recited the marriage ritual in Sanskrit, and then it was translated into the vernacular and its significance explained to the couple.” Animananda, Swami Upadhyay Brahmbandhab: A Story of His Life, Part I, 12.} He seems to have adapted himself to the local
community well. According to Animananda, Bhavanicharan "became a Sindhi among Sindhis."^47

3.4 Bhavani as a Catholic
Bhavanicharan had gone to Multan some four hundred miles away from Hyderabad to take care of his father Debicharan, who was sick. One night while looking after his sick father Bhavanicharan happened to see Joseph Faa di Bruno's *Catholic Belief* on the book shelf and began reading it. Finding it very interesting, he took the book along when he returned to Sindh after his father's death. As a Brahmo, Bhavanicharan was already attracted to the person of Christ; now Bruno's book gave him some amount of clarity about a religious tradition (Catholicism) which he found fascinating.

As a Brahmo, Bhavanicharan was trying to clarify the role and nature of Jesus Christ during his stay in Sindh.^48 Was Jesus just an ideal man as Keshab and Pratapchandra had projected or is Christ the Son of God? According to Animananda, Bhavanicharan "began to suspect that Christ's claim to be the Son of God might mean something quite different from what Keshab and Mozumdar understood."^49 In December 1889 Bhavani gave a lecture on 'Christ's Claim to Attention' in the hall of the Church of England mission. The objective of the lecture was to show that Christ fulfilled the universal desire of the Hindus who had been looking forward to a sinless Guru or a 'Sat Guru.'^50 Bhavani's Brahmo friends in Sindh maintained that Christ was not divine but like other heroes had been deified by his disciples and followers. Bhavanicharan maintained that Jesus is adored as the Son of God and this Sonship


^48 *Animananda* writes: "The constant object of his study was the personality of Christ. Who was he? He denounced sin, but was free from sin. This struck Bhavani as the distinguishing mark which put Christ in a class above all other great teachers and saints." *Animananda, The Blade*, 34-35.

^49 *Animananda, The Blade*, 35.

^50 *Animananda* writes on the logic of Christ as the Sat Guru expressed by Bhavanicharan in the same lecture: Saints all over the world, he [Bhavani] said, have proclaimed themselves sinners. Sri Chaitanya Dev of Bengal is a striking illustration of this. Chaitanya was a marvel of divine love, a man of exalted character; but he would weep bitterly when he spoke of his sinfulness. Christ was altogether different. "Which one among you can convict me of sin?" he [Christ] said; and on another occasion he had proved that he could forgive sin. *Animananda, The Blade*, 35. According to *Animananda*, Mr. Gurbamal Janhversing, a fellow Brahmo, took exception to the thesis of Bhavanicharan. Did not Christ, in his own prayer ask forgiveness of sins? "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." Bhavani promptly pointed out that the gospels nowhere said that Christ prayed in that way. He only told his disciples: 'Pray like this.' *Ibid.*, 35.
has been eternally communicated to Him by the Father. Christ's position therefore is unique. In December 1890 Bhavanicharan had defended the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ:

To say that the idea of Sonship is a later invention or interpolation is as improbable as to say that the character of Hamlet is later invention or interpolation in the play. One may believe or not believe that Christ is the Son of God, but there is not the least shadow of doubt that Christ claimed to be the Son of God. One can question the reality of this claim but the fact of His claiming to be the Son of God is unquestionable.

At this point in time, Mr. Joseph Redman, a C. M. S. Missionary had invited nearly thirty young men of Hyderabad to attend Bible classes. Bhavanicharan joined the bible classes once a week. Through the conversation with Mr. Heaton, Bhavanicharan became convinced that Christ was the Co-Eternal Son of the Father. The new orientation and views of Bhavanicharan created an alarm among the authorities of the Union Academy. In May 1890 Bhavanicharan sent his resignation. In the same month Bhavanicharan decided to become a Christian.

His friends tried to dissuade him from becoming a Christian but Bhavanicharan had made up his mind. Hiranand, who had some information about Bhavani's inclinations and new orientation towards Christianity, sent a telegram to his elder brother Haricharan Banerji about his intentions. Hiranand asked Haricharan to dissuade him from his move towards Christianity. After resigning from The Union Academy Bhavanicharan began a monthly

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51 Animananda, The Blade, 40.
52 Quoted in Animananda, The Blade, 40-41.
53 Diwan Dayaram Gidumal, the biographer of Sadhu Hiranand, describes the event in the following manner: "In May 1890, the Academy passed through a crisis. The Sanskrit teacher, Mr. Banerji [Bhavanicharan], beloved for his virtues by his pupils and colleagues and believed to be a bhagavat by the brahmins of Hyderabad, announced at the end of the month that he had become a convert to Christianity and wanted to give up all secular work in order to work for that religion. Animananda, The Blade, 36. Also in Animananda, Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhab: A Story of His Life, Part II, 12-13.
54 Bhavani's brother wrote the following letter to Hiranand on 27 May from Calcutta: "My dear Sir, Your telegram reached me like a thunderbolt. I could not decide for two days what I should do; hence the delay in replying. Where is Bhavani now? Kindly tell him not make an unhappy brother more unhappy. Sir, kindly ask him to remember his poor old grandmother who has been shedding tears unremittingly since the death of his father. I cannot leave Calcutta at present. My daughter's marriage takes place very soon... I entreat you to do whatever necessary on my behalf. Ask him not to become a convert to Christian faith at least for some time. He should give an opportunity to me for an interview. What more can I write to you? Though I do not know you personally, I cannot conclude my letter without expressing my sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude to you for the interest you have taken on my behalf. Yours faithfully, Haricharan Banerji. Animananda, The Blade, 37."
journal called *The Harmony* in 1890 to propagate the Christian message.\(^5^5\) It needs to be noted that the notions held by Bhavanicharan about Christ and Christianity were to be rooted in Hindu ethos. Bhavanicharan was already moving closer to Christianity. Because of family pressures and considerations Bhavanicharan decided to delay joining Christianity by a few weeks; but it would appear that he had already made up his mind on this matter. On 26 February 1891 Bhavanicharan was baptized by Mr. Heaton belonging to the Church of England.\(^5^6\) After a few days Bhavanicharan mentioned the fact of his baptism to a Catholic priest.\(^5^7\) It is important to note that Bhavanicharan refused to attend the services in the Church of England after his baptism in Anglicanism.\(^5^8\)

Interestingly, six months after his baptism in the Church of England, Bhavanicharan became a Catholic. Two years of study, reflection and prayer had convinced him the need to join the Catholic Church. In July or August 1891 Fr. Theophilus Perrig, S. J., began to instruct Bhavanicharan in view of baptism.\(^5^9\) On 1 September 1891 Bhavanicharan was baptized by Fr. Bruder, S. J., at Karachi.\(^6^0\) Bhavanicharan chose for his patron, St. Theophilus whom he called Brahmbandhab or ‘friend of God.’\(^6^1\) Inspired by Bhavani’s conviction and commitment a number of Sindhi youths like Rewachand (future Animananda) became Catholics. Two teachers of The Union Academy also followed the path of Bhavanicharan

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\(^{55}\) The editorial of the first issue of *The Harmony* delineates some of the objectives of the journal: (1) to expound Hindu and Christian doctrines (2) to reconcile and harmonise pure Hinduism and pure Christianity. (3) To preach Christ as the Eternal Son of God, as the Logos in all prophets and saints before and after His incarnation and the incarnate perfect righteousness by whose obedience man is made righteous. Bhavani Banerji, “Editorial,” *Harmony*, mid-1890,” J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, *TWBU-l*, 1.


\(^{57}\) The old priest grew pale and asked Bhavanicharan: ‘what have you done, young man?’ Animananda informs us Bhavanicharan’s answer to the Catholic priest: “Bhavani Charan replied, he was convinced of the Divinity of Christ and of the necessity of baptism, he was bound to be faithful to the light, so far he vouchsafed to him; but with regard to the question of the Church of Christ he had not made up his mind.” Animananda, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmbandhab: A Story of His Life*, Part I, 13-14.

\(^{58}\) Animananda reports: “When asked by a C.M.S. clergyman to attend the church services, he declined to do so, on the ground that he did not belong to the Church of England. He was bound to follow the light where it had brought him, but beyond that he could not go. He could not identify himself with any church.” Animananda, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmbandhab: A Story of His Life*, Part I, 14.

\(^{59}\) Animananda, *The Blade*, 46.


\(^{61}\) According to Animananda, Bhavanicharan took this name because St. Theophilus is famous in ecclesiastical history as the first to use the word Trinity. It was also the name of the Jesuit priest who prepared Bhavanicharan for baptism. Animananda, *The Blade*, 46; Animananda, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmbandhab: A Story of His Life*, Part I, 15.
which created much alarm in Sindh. Several lectures were given against Christianity by prominent men in Sindh. After becoming a Catholic Bhavanicharan led a devoted life and devotional practices.

4. Upadhyay’s Religious Activism
Soon after their becoming Catholics protests and opposition against Bhavanicharan and his friends followed. They could not pass the streets without being jeered and pelted with stones. Bhavanicharan was vacated from the house by the Hindu house owner. With some difficulty he managed to get another house belonging to a Muslim. Young men were prevented from meeting Bhavanicharan and ‘anyone found in his company was suspected and persecuted for being a Christian.” According to Animananda, to counter Bhavanicharan’s influence, help was sought from outside Sindh. Brahmo missionaries were invited from Bengal, the Arya Samaj preachers from Punjab, and Theosophists from England to oppose Bhavanicharan. After his baptism in the Catholic faith Bhavanicharan taught mathematics in St. Patrick’s High School, Karachi for two hours a day to the boys of first and second classes. The reason for taking up this job was to help procure dowry for his eldest brother’s daughter, Sarojini. The teaching at St. Patrick’s continued only for a short time.

4.1 Upadhyay’s Journalistic Engagement
Soon after his conversion to Catholicism, Bhavan engaged in vigorous religious activism with Hyderabad (Sindh) as base. His chief concern was to win over India to the Catholic Church which is the custodian of truth revealed by God. Bhavani lectured and wrote on various issues which he thought were inimical to Catholic faith. As Animananda notes, “[t]he doctrines that are eating into the vitals of the nation are Vedantic pantheism, transmigration, anthropomorphism, gross idolatry, the worship of Sree Krishna, etc he declares them all a

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63 Animananda writes: “Early in the morning after consecrating himself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary he would go to the Church to hear Mass. At the door of the Church he would make a genuflexion as Hindus do in their temples- cross himself with holy water and kneel down to pray. He believed with conviction and intensity... that in the Sacrifice of the Holy mass, the Sacrifice of Calvary is being repeated in an unbloody manner...” Animananda, *The Blade*, 47.


67 According to Animananda, Bhavani used to say: “Ever since I became a Catholic, my one object has been to bring India to the Faith.” Animananda, *The Blade*, 50.
war to the knife." For Bhavani the above mentioned issues are incompatible with true faith; but later in life Upadhyay would modify his position on Vedantism and on Krishna. At this point of his life Bhavani is a staunch defender of Catholicism; he combats all beliefs which he thinks are not compatible with Catholic faith.

In 1893 Bhavanicharan adopted the name Brahmabandhab Upadhyay while he was in Karachi. An important development during this period is the beginning of the Catholic journal *Sophia* which Bhavani started in 1894. Animananda informs us that when Bhavani proposed the idea of starting the journal *Sophia* to Fr. Bruder, the parish priest of Karachi, he smiled at it. A determined Bhavani went all the way to Bombay and submitted his plan to Fr. Jurgens, the superior of the Jesuits of the Bombay Mission who agreed to help him. Thus, with the support of Fr. Jurgens Bhavani began the monthly journal *Sophia* in January 1894 with Karachi as his editorial base.

By the time Bhavanicharan entered the field of journalism the Indian Press was already a century old. Among Bengali papers one of the first one to engage in political matters was the *Somaprakasa* (started in 1858) under the editorship of Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan. A monthly edited by Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, the *Sikshadarpana O Sambadasara* (1864) focused on educational as well as political topics. The *Sikshadarpana O Sambadasara* was the first journal to highlight the animosity between the British and the Indians and coined the

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69 He clarified his life style and his new name in *Sophia*: "I have adopted the life of a Bhikshu (mendicant) sannyasi. The practice prevalent in our country is to adopt a new name along with the adoption of a religious life. Accordingly I have adopted a new name. My family surname is Vandya (praised) Upadhyaya (teacher, lit. sub teacher), and my baptismal name is Brahmabandhu (Theophilus). I have abandoned the first portion or my family name, because I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrows, the *Despised* Man. So my new name is Upadhyaya Brahmabandhu. I hereby declare that, henceforward, I shall be known and addressed as Upadhyaya Brahmabandhu, or in short, Upadhyayji, and not Banerji, which is an English corruption of the first portion of my family surname, Vandya-ji." B. C. Banerji, "A Declaration," *Sophia* (Monthly) December, 1894. J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sau, *TWBU-II*, 449. Also see, Animananda, *Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhab: A Story of His Life, Part-I*, 17-18.


71 The founding of Indian Press is usually associated with the launch of James Augustus Hickey's *Bengal Gazette* on January 29, 1780 which described itself as 'a Weekly Political and Commercial Paper Open to all parties, but influenced by None.' N. Ram, “Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,” *The Hindu* 13 September, 2003, special supplement: 1; see also, Rangaswami Parthasarathy, *Journalism in India: From the earliest times to the present day* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1995) 1-30; R. C. Majumdar, *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Part II, 223.
term \textit{jati-vairita} to denote it.\textsuperscript{72} This point is important to note because prominent nationalist Bankimchandra would develop this idea through his writings to rouse nationalist feelings through a monthly called \textit{Bangadarsana} (1873). Bankimchandra edited \textit{Bangadarsana} and Upadhyay contributed several articles to it. Indian Press did foster the emergence of muscular nationalism towards the end of the nineteenth century. Upadhyay would engage in vitriolic attack on the British in his journals at a later stage.

Bhavani was not entirely new to journalism when he started \textit{Sophia}. As we had noted before he had some experience in journalism during his Brahmo phase.\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Sophia} played an important role in his religious activism in the sense that this journal became a springboard for Bhavanicharan to express his views on a number of religious issues. He used the journal to defend Catholicism as well as to attack a number of religious groups. \textit{Sophia} continued for a little over five years, i.e., from January 1894 till March 1899, faithful to the objectives enunciated in the first issue. During this period we do not see Bhavanicharan expressing political opinion too often. Indeed he comments on social issues in the pages of \textit{Sophia}. Fr. Hegglin S. J., who became Bhavanicharan’s collaborator, wrote ‘illuminating articles for \textit{Sophia} and delivered lectures in the \textit{Sophia} office on the transmigration of souls, Man’s relation to God, Primitive Common Traditions, etc., which were all published in the \textit{Sophia}.'\textsuperscript{74} As Animananda notes, \textit{Sophia} ‘offers a trustworthy mirror of Bhavani’s thoughts, preoccupations and struggles.’\textsuperscript{75} The multiple objectives of \textit{Sophia} were enunciated in the very first issue.\textsuperscript{76}

Bhavani began and edited eight journals and dailies and his articles in these and other print media reflect the development of his thought. The journals and dailies started and edited by

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{72} R. C. Majumdar, \textit{British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance}, Part II, 243.
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{73} It may be recalled that Bhavanicharan began editing the journal \textit{The Harmony} in 1890 before his baptism in the Catholic Church.
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\textsuperscript{74} Animananda, \textit{The Blade}, 56.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{75} Animananda, \textit{The Blade}, 56.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{76} These objectives were: “(1) To solve the fundamental problem- what is the end of man and how to attain it. (2) To represent faithfully to the Indian public the essential teachings of the Vedas, Upanishads, Darsanans, Samhitas and Puranas. (3) To expound the doctrines of the Catholic Church founded by Jesus Christ. (4) To facilitate the comparative study of different religions- especially, the ancient religious systems of India, modern Theism, and the Christian and Catholic religion- by setting forth their distinctive features in a popular way, and thus to help the seekers after truth to arrive at the true knowledge of the True Religion. (5) To discuss social and moral questions affecting the well-being of Indians.” B. C. Banerji (Bhavanicharan), “Objects,” \textit{Sophia} – Monthly (January 1894).
\end{quote}
Upadhyay are: (1) Harmony (began in 1890); (2) Sophia-monthly (1894); (3) Jote (1896); (4) Sophia-weekly (16 June, 1900); (5) Twentieth Century (January, 1901); (6) Sandhya (1904); (7) Karali and (8) Svaraj (1907). Some of these journals like Sophia (Monthly) and Sophia (Weekly) were censored by the Catholic hierarchy. These journals remain the main source of information regarding the development of Bhavani’s religious and social thought.

4.2 Catholic Apologist
By 1894 Upadhyay gave up all secular work and became a sannyasi. He put on the garic garb of a Hindu Bhikshu and lived on alms. According to Animananda, Upadhyay would shut himself up in a small room and there discipline his body with a whip. The period of Upadhyay’s religious activism spans the years 1892-1898. His religious activism takes various forms: lectures, articles, tracts and personal correspondences reveal various aspects of Upadhyay’s religious stance and perspectives. During this period Upadhyay wrote polemic articles against various religious groups in Sophia. From his writings we can identify at least five main target groups against which he wrote in various journals and these can be grouped as follows: (1) Protestantism and (2) Hinduism. Within Hinduism Upadhyay targets two broad categories (a) Neo-Hinduism and (b) Traditional Hinduism. Neo-Hinduism here refers to various reformist or reviveralist groups within Hinduism such as (i) Theosophy (ii) Brahmoism and (iii) Arya Samaj against which Upadhyay wrote. Upadhyay wrote against certain aspects of traditional Hinduism such as (i) Advaita Vedanta, (ii) doctrine of karma, (iii) rebirth and (iv) what he termed as Hindu ‘polytheism.’ In the articles dealing with Protestants, the Arya Samaj and the Theosophy we find Upadhyay’s style more aggressive.

4.3 Upadhyay’s Hindu-Catholicism
After becoming a Catholic Bhavanicharan continued his study of Catholic doctrines and familiarized himself with prominent thinkers like Newman and Manning. The manuals of Catholic Philosophy published by the English Jesuits in the Stonyhurst Series were very influential in clarifying Bhavani’s own understanding of Catholicism. Upadhyay used two broad forms of philosophical-theological systems to articulate his catholic faith or Hindu-

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79 As Lipner notes, Upadhyay’s “Christian apologetic had no particular focus. It was targeted on any opponent that came in his sights, including Protestant Christianity and its missionaries.” J. Lipner, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary, 101.
Catholic faith. The first of these categories used by Upadhyay was Thomism which had become the dominant form of philosophical-theological framework within Catholicism by the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The second category used by Upadhyay to enunciate his Hindu-Catholic faith was the Advaita philosophy of Sankara. But Upadhyay began using the Advaita categories only after 1897.

By the end of 1897 Upadhyay's activities were shifted to Bengal. On 28 February he was joined by Animananda from Sindh and went about singing hymns in Bengali and Sanskrit and receiving alms. Making Christianity more intelligible in India was one of the major concerns of Upadhyay after his conversion to Catholicism. Two important developments in Upadhyay’s thinking need to be noted here. The first one is his gradual efforts ‘to baptize the truths of Hindu philosophy and build them up as stepping stones to the Catholic faith.’ Through various articles in Sophia Upadhyay tried to explore the possibilities of using Vedantic categories to expound Christian truths. It is this effort which eventually led to the conflicts between Upadhyay and the Papal Delegate. The second major development during this period was Upadhyay’s vision of establishing a Catholic Ashram. According to him the best way of presenting the mysteries of the Catholic faith was through the framework of Ashram ideal which ought to be conducted on strictly Hindu lines.

At this point there were some noteworthy developments taking place which were to have important implications for Upadhyay. First and foremost of these developments was the appointment of Monsignor L. M. Zaleski as the Apostolic Delegate or Papal Representative in India. Zaleski, a Lithuanian, was not appreciative of Indian culture. He did not know Hindu religious beliefs and practices. Zaleski wrote that “Heathenism in India, under whatever form it appears: Hinduism, Buddhism, or the indefinite worship of the aborigenous...

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82 His envisaged two types of Sannyasis for this purpose, namely, contemplative and itinerant. The Parivrajikas or the itinerant monks should be competent in the Vedanta philosophy as well as in the Thomistic philosophy. In the initial stage Upadhyay received support from some bishops and priests.
83 His letter to the missionaries reflects the type of ideas held by Zaleski: ‘Christianity alone can bring civilization. Heathenism, whatever form it assumes, may sometimes take an exterior appearance of civilization, but always leaves the soul of the people plunged in barbarity and superstition. There is no civilization outside Christianity. Christianity made Europe the leading continent of the world, and Christianity alone has in itself the power to civilize other countries. Therefore, I say, the progress of the Catholic Faith in India, is the progress of India.’ Zaleski, Epistolae ad Missionarios, Part II, Letter 23 II, November 22, 1904, pp. 123-4. J. Lipner, Brahmadandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary, 213.
tribes, is nothing but demonolatory mixed with fetishism."\textsuperscript{84} In Zaleski’s way of thinking, which represented the common way of thinking within Roman Catholicism more or less till the mid-twentieth century, the Church was equated with Europe.\textsuperscript{85} Within such framework of thinking Europe was the model of the Church which needed to be planted in other parts of the world.

\subsection*{4.4 Ecclesiastical Censure}

Already in 1898 Fr. Hegglin S. J., noted in his diary that Upadhyay’s daring, independent procedure ‘caused anxiety to his superiors.’\textsuperscript{186} Moreover, Zaleski was not sympathetic towards Upadhyay’s ideas of Hindu-Catholicism. Ecclesiastical approval was needed for the foundation of the Ashram which Upadhyay wanted to establish and Zaleski, the highest Church authority in India, was not in favour of such an idea. Upadhyay, who did not have any formal training in theology, seems to have ventured into sensitive areas of socio-religious issues by expressing his personal opinion on a variety of themes and topics. In a letter written on February 17, 1899 Upadhyay informed the bishop of Jabalpore: “In “Sophia” I shall no more write anything about the monastery without consulting your Lordship. Now everything concerning it will be attributed to your Lordship, therefore nothing should be published without your approval.”\textsuperscript{87}

As Animananda points out Upadhyay’s own temperament seems to have acted as impediment to the goals he was pursuing. Upadhyay’s conduct had been severely criticized even by his friends and well wishers. According to Khemchand, Upadhyay’s “troubles and failures were due to his impatient impetuosity and his fickleness more than to anything else.”\textsuperscript{88} There seems to have prevailed uncertainty regarding the implementation of Upadhyay’s Ashram project. At this point there were rumours that the bishop of Nagpur had withdrawn his support to Upadhyay’s project.


\textsuperscript{85} Roman Catholic historical writer and critic Joseph Hilaire Pierre Belloc’s (1870-1953), statement reflects such Eurocentrism: “Church is Europe: and Europe is the Church.” Hilaire Belloc, \textit{Europe and the Faith} (London: Constable and Co. LTD, 1924) 6.

\textsuperscript{86} Animananda, \textit{The Blade}, 80.

\textsuperscript{87} From the Archives of the Parish House, Pachmarhi, Madhya Pradesh. C.f. J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU-W}, 479.

\textsuperscript{88} Khemchand’s letter to Fr. Vath. Quoted by Animananda, \textit{The Blade}, 81.
Upadhyay left Sindh in early 1900 and permanently settled in Calcutta which was the nerve-center of emerging nationalist movement. He stayed in a rented house in Brenton Street with some Brahmacharis. By April Khemchand and his little daughter Agnes joined Upadhyay. A bigger house was rented at No. 1 Gour Mohan Mukherjee Street. Animananda informs us that very little is known of Upadhyay's activities during the first months of his stay in Calcutta.\textsuperscript{89} However, a later pen-sketch by Agnes does give us a glimpse to those first few months in Calcutta. Agnes, who used to help in folding and packing \textit{Sophia} informs us that Upadhyay used to sit on a tiger skin on the floor and seldom sat on a chair or at a table. In a letter written in 1945 Agnes recalls:

He [Upadhyay] even then would talk of his intense desire to make Christ known and loved by India, and wished all Western forms to be replaced by Eastern forms. He chafed at the Westernization of Christianity and the adopting of Western ways by Indian Christians. He used to say that there would be Indian Catholic Priests and Brothers not wearing hats and cassocks, but the saffron robe of renunciation of the Indian Sadhu.\textsuperscript{90}

Upadhyay started a new journal called \textit{Sophia} (weekly) on 16 June, 1900. This new journal dealt with general politics, literature, sociology and comparative theology. As far as the contents were concerned, the new weekly devoted more than half the space for religious and social topics. In September issue of \textit{Sophia} Upadhyay clarified the objectives of the new weekly:

Our objective is to faithfully represent, in a popular way, the different systems of religion, especially Hinduism in its Vedantic aspect and the religion of Christ. The projectors of the new series of \textit{Sophia} are convinced that the Vedanta had been seriously misunderstood. Strange doctrines have been foisted upon it by European savants and their Europeanised Indian followers who interpret the Vedanta philosophy in a way which is neither primitive nor traditional.\textsuperscript{91}

In a letter written to the Archbishop of Madras Colgan on September 20, 1900 Zaleski warned Catholics against reading the new journal \textit{Sophia}. The letter was written in the context of the re-appearance of the periodical \textit{Sophia} as a weekly. In that letter Apostolic

\textsuperscript{89} Animananda, \textit{The Blade}, 86.

\textsuperscript{90} Letter written by Agnes Khemchand to Fr. Turmes, S. J., on 8\textsuperscript{th} March 1945. Source: \textit{Varia} on Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, Goethals Indian Library and Research Society Archives.

Delegate Zaleski observed that the periodical Sophia began as a Catholic publication and he wanted to avoid confusion by clarifying certain points. Zaleski noted that "[t]he owner of the present weekly "Sophia" is not a Catholic, all his collaborators are non-Catholics. The paper has no connection whatever with the Catholic ecclesiastical authorities, and the Catholic collaborators have, a few weeks ago, severed their connection with it." He further stated that 'in the thirteen numbers which have already appeared, the new Sophia handles ex-professo the most difficult questions of philosophy and theology.' He further noted that one of the objectives of Sophia, which is to present comparative theology and the religion of Christ in a popular way, 'is in itself a difficult and arduous task, which requires great learning and a deep knowledge of theology.'

Zaleski concluded the letter as follows: "I deem it therefore necessary to warn the Catholics of my Delegation against associating and reading the said periodical Sophia." Soon Bombay Catholic Examiner carried the following warning: "No Catholic of our Delegation is allowed to subscribe to or read the periodical Sophia without special permission of Bishop or Ordinary." According to Animananda, Upadhyay tried to argue out his case and he was willing to submit his writings to a previous censorship. Moreover, Upadhyay asked that errors be pointed out to him. The fate of Sophia (weekly) was sealed by 8 December 1900.

Perhaps Upadhyay thought of making a trip to Rome with a view of appealing to the pope regarding his project. A Catholic from Mysore paid for Upadhyay's expenses. However, before the journey he became sick and abandoned the trip. As his plans were not materializing, Upadhyay went back to Jabalpore and officially closed down the Ashram. In 1901 he started a school in Calcutta, to be run on 'Aryan' lines. During this period we see Upadhyay's friendship and close collaboration with Rabindranath Tagore. Upadhyay was involved for a brief period in the establishment of Shantiniketan, the brain child of Tagore.

Upadhyay undertook a trip to England in 1902-3 to lecture on Hindu philosophy. As Animananda reports, one of the reasons for undertaking the trip seems to be the continuation

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92 Quoted by Animananda, The Blade, 91.
94 Animananda, The Blade, 92-93.
95 Animananda, The Black, 81.
of Vivekananda’s work, who had died on 4 July, 1902: “Hearing of the death of Vivekananda in Howrah Station I determined there and then to go to England and to continue his mission.” The overall thrust of Upadhyay’s trip confirms such a motive which is reflected in his belief that ‘India will conquer the world,’ a theme consistently repeated by Vivekananda: “It is my belief that India will conquer the world through the power of knowledge. I want us to avenge our defeat by first conquering the sovereign Englishman by the disciplined path of knowledge (jnanayoga).” Upadhyay seems to have suffered a great deal due to lack of financial support during his stay in England. As his own letters reveal, Upadhyay also experienced the effects of racism during his stay in England. He gave some lectures in London and discussed about setting up a faculty of Hindu philosophy in England which did not proceed beyond the planning stage. Upadhyay disliked what he believed to be Western cultural traits, namely, its competitiveness, consumerism and materialism. Upadhyay returned to India in 1903 as a disappointed man and as a bitter critic of the British.

5. Nationalist Phase of Upadhyay
Along with the spread of educational institutions social reform movements of the nineteenth century paved the way, in an embryonic form, to the growth of self esteem among the Bengali middle class and intelligentsia. That class confidence and self-esteem were reflected in the Ilbert Bill agitation of 1883. There were a number of cases where manslaughter of Indians was alleged against British soldiers and civilians. These cases were often treated by Courts in a manner suggesting the half-conscious recognition that an Indian life was not as valuable as that of a European. Moreover, Europeans had enjoyed judicial privileges, including their right to choose not to be tried before Indian justices. Ilbert proposed to end that immunity in the form of a Bill. This proposal created an inevitable uproar among Europeans. Defense associations were organized throughout British India, with funds to publicize opposition to the measure. The European opposition to the Bill duly produced a counter movement by Indians in support of Ilbert’s legislation. The Ilbert Bill agitation had

96 Quoted by Animananda, The Blade, 108.
99 Because of the European opposition the government substituted a weaker enactment that specified that some Europeans’ cases might be heard by Indian judges, and allowed the defendant to insist on a jury trial, where half the jurors were Europeans. See, Burton Stein, A History of India (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998) 272-73.
awakened a measure of self-esteem as well of ‘legitimate rights’ at least among the middle-class Indians. Nationalist consciousness at this point was indeed in an embryonic form and right up to 1880s and even beyond the middle-class and the intelligentsia had come to accept the colonial rule as a ‘matter of fact’ political reality. But the situation would change drastically with the proposed partition of Bengal.

5.1 Political Context

Colonial administration had regarded Bengal as too large and unwieldy a province to govern effectively. During the closing decades of the nineteenth century, Bengal extended over 189,000 sq. Miles, and it was the most populous province in British India with a population of nearly 78 million and revenue of eleven crores. There were various administrative proposals to reduce the size of Bengal. Already in 1891 the colonial administration had considered the restructuring of Bengal. In 1896 Sir William Ward, the Chief Commissioner of Assam suggested that along with Chittagong Division the two districts of Dacca and Mymensingh should be transferred to Assam. This proposal was strongly opposed by the Bengali public. H. H. Risley, Secretary to the Government of India (Home Department), brought out a new proposal with a view of reducing the administrative burden of Bengal in 1903. The publication of this proposed scheme raised protests in Bengal.

There were certain political dimensions to the proposed partition of Bengal. Lord Curzon, who was apprehensive about the Bengali national aspirations, thought that a divided Bengal

100 Burton Stein notes the ideological significance of the Ilbert agitation in the following manner: “The Anglo-Indian position was that the Raj was built upon the un-challengeable superiority of Europeans and that to suggest the equality of Indian ability and character, as Ilbert did, must diminish ‘European character’ and with British security and power. This open manifestation of social Darwinism signaled to educated Indians that a new and difficult era was at hand.” Burton Stein, A History of India, 273.

101 Tapan Raychaudhuri, Europe Reconsidered: Perceptions of the West in Nineteenth Century Bengal, 2.


104 In that year an official conference that discussed security questions of the North-Eastern Frontier proposed the transfer of the Lushai Hills and Chittagong Division from Bengal to Assam. R. C. Majumdar, ed., Struggle for Freedom, 17.

105 The proposed territorial readjustment of H. H. Risley had the following objectives: (1) to bring all the Oriya-speaking people outside the territorial limits of Orissa, under the administration of Bengal. (2) to separate the Chittagong Division and the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh from Bengal and incorporate them with Assam, and to transfer portions of Chota Nagpur to the Central Provinces. See, R. C. Majumdar, ed., Struggle for Freedom, 18.
was better than an undivided Bengal. Moreover, in 1904 Curzon promised the Muslims of Dacca that the proposed partition would create a Muslim unity unknown since Mughal times. There are evidences which suggest that the colonial administration wanted to create a Mohammedan bloc against the Hindus along communal lines. From the time of Risley’s proposal for the division of Bengal in 1903 the colonial government kept a studied silence over the matter for nearly two years. Lord Curzon did not take any meaningful steps in consulting the Bengali public regarding the proposed partition. By July 1905 protestors against the proposed partition had drawn up a memorial signed by nearly 60000 people. The scheme of partition of Bengal was made public in the form of a Government Resolution, dated 19 July.

As the sentiments against partition were crystallizing in the form of a popular movement, leaders sought ways and means of challenging the colonial powers without directly violating the law. Boycotting British goods, a strategy which had been adopted by the Irish against the

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106 Lord Curzon wrote on 17 February, 1904 to Brodrick: “The Bengalis, who like to think themselves a nation, and who dream of a future, when the English will have been turned out, and a Bengali Babu will be installed in Government House, Calcutta, of course, bitterly resent any disruption that will be likely to interfere with the realization of this dream. If we are weak enough to yield to their clamour now, we shall not be able to dismember or reduce Bengal again; and you will be cementing and solidifying, on the eastern flank of India, a force almost formidable, and certain to be a source of increasing trouble in the future.” Curzon Papers- Private Correspondence of the Viceroy with the Secretary of the State. Quoted by R. C. Majumdar, ed., Struggle for Freedom, 22.

107 Lord Curzon said in a speech given at Dacca on 18 February, 1904 that the proposed scheme of partition would “invest the Mohammadans of East Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Musalman Viceroy and kings, and which would go far to revive the traditions which the historical students assure us once attached to the kingdom of Eastern Bengal.” Quoted by R. C. Majumdar, ed., Struggle for Freedom, 24. See also, Burton Stein, A History of India (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998) 290.

108 For instance H. H. Risley wrote on 13 September, 1904: “The boundary suggested would bring within the Eastern Prince the bulk of the characteristic Muhammadans of Bengal who form 78 per cent of the population of Rajshahi, 50 percent in Dinajpur, and 48 per cent in Malda, not only would it give Dacca a central position in relation to the rest of the new Province, but it would tend, in course of time, to confer on that city the special character of provincial capital, where Muhamadan interests would be strongly represented, if not predominant.” Quoted by R. C. Majumdar, ed., Struggle for Freedom, 24.

109 The scheme was summed up in Para 7 of the Resolution as follows: “The effect of the proposals thus agreed upon, and about to be introduced, will be as follows: A new province will be created, with the status of a Lieutenant-Governorship, consisting of the Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi Divisions of Bengal, the district of Malda, the State of Hill Tipperah, and the present Chief Commissionership of Assam. Darjeeling will remain with Bengal. In order to maintain associations which are highly valued in both areas, the province will be entitled Eastern Bengal and Assam. Its capital will be at Dacca with subsidiary headquarters at Cittagong. It will comprise an area of 106,540 sq miles and a population of 31 millions, of whom 18 million are Muhammadans and 12 millions Hindus...The existing province of Bengal, diminished by the surrender of large territories on the east and of the five Hindu states of Chota Nagpur, but increased by the acquisition of Sambalpur and the five Uriya States before mentioned, will consist of 141,580 square miles with a population of 54 millions of which 42 millions are Hindus and 9 millions Muhammadans.” Quoted by R. C. Majumdar, ed., Struggle for Freedom, 20.
British, found resonance among the Bengali nationalists. As a pressure tactic, the boycott of British goods was suggested for the first time in the Sanjivani, a Bengali weekly in Calcutta, on 13 July 1905. This suggestion was adopted at a public meeting at Bagerhat, on July 16 and soon the idea of boycott of British goods caught popular imagination. In towns and villages public meetings were held and endorsed the boycott proposal.

However, the original notion of boycott evolved into different forms: On the one hand, the original idea of economic boycott receded into the background and began to crystallize in the form of non-cooperation against the British. On the other hand, the notion of Swadeshi assumed a new form and now it began to mean attachment to everything Indian. “Reject all that is foreign; accept all that is indigenous,” was the slogan of the day. The repressive policy of the colonial administration towards the agitation against partition added new impetus. In Barisal, an effigy of Lord Curzon was burnt and mock Sradh ceremony performed. The agitation, which assumed the form of a popular movement, resulted in an increasingly hostile and aggressive attitude against colonial rule.

During the agitation, the cry of Vande Mataram was adopted as the war cry of protest. The song Vande Mataram, composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee sometime in the early 1870s, had attained mass popularity in 1905. Vande Mataram, which was to receive intense communal connotations soon, had been sung at the congress meeting in 1896 and other public functions. Rabindranath Tagore had played an important role in popularizing

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10. The ideas of economic boycott had been prevalent in India before 1905. In 1874 boycott was advocated for reviving Indian industries which had been negatively affected by the British commercial policy in India. Boycott of Manchester cloth was advocated in 1875, 1876 and in 1878 to protect Bombay cloth mills. During the Ilbert Bill agitation (1883-84), the boycott of British goods was preached. And again, in 1891, during the ‘Age of Consent Bill,’ boycott of British goods was used as a pressure tactic. However, these calls for boycott were isolated and did not take any decisive turn. See, R. C. Majumdar, ed., Struggle for Freedom, 27.

11. The concept of boycott had two distinct objectives: (a) The first was to bring pressure upon the British public by the pecuniary loss they would suffer by the boycott of British goods. (b) Secondly, it was regarded as essential for the revival of indigenous (swadeshi) industry which could not grow in the face of free competition with foreign countries like Britain which had highly developed industrial base. R. C. Majumdar, ed., Struggle for Freedom, 33.


13. This song was translated into Tamil by poet Subramanya Bharati in 1905. It had become available in Marathi (1897), Kannada (1897), Gujarati (1901), Telugu (1907), and Malayalam (1909). Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, Vande Mataram: The Biography of a Song (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003) 19.

14. The tune to song was set by Rabindranath Tagore, who wrote in a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru: ‘The privilege of originally setting its (Vande Mataram’s) first stanza to the tune was mine when the author (Bankim) was
the song during the agitation against Bengal partition. Though written in the early 1870s, the original version which was in form of a lyrical hymn or \textit{vandana}, remained unpublished till 1881. But in 1881, Bankim included the song in the novel \textit{Anandamath}, which had been set within the context of militant Hindu campaigns against the Muslims. During the 1905 Swadeshi agitation \textit{Vande Mataram} transformed itself into a political slogan. It needs to be noted that this song would get communal overtones in later years.

5.2 Upadhyay as Radical Nationalist

In 1904 Upadhyay started a newspaper called the \textit{Sandhya}. When Bengal was divided in 1905, \textit{Sandhya} took up the nationalist cause; the paper was at the forefront of the struggle against Bengal partition. Within the nationalistic framework \textit{Sandhya} began championing the idea of violent resistance against the British rule. As far as Upadhyay is concerned traditional Hinduism is the only hope for the Hindu: “The self-same Veda, the Vedanta, the Brahmans, the Varna Dharma stand as a rock of hope for a Hindu. There is no other way.” Upadhyay enunciates the objective of \textit{Sandhya} in the following way: “The object of the publication of the Daily Sandhya in this fifth Sandhya of Kali is nothing more than to bring home to the mind of our countrymen the truth of this only way.”

By this Upadhyay was firmly aligning himself with his contemporary 'Hindu' nationalists who had already begun to establish a new political tradition in India. With the publication of daily paper \textit{Sandhya} Upadhyay become very much of anti-British. But at this point, i.e., in 1904 Upadhyay was not thinking in terms of political independence of India from the British. But the turning point in Upadhyay's political thinking occurs with the proposal of Bengal partition in 1905.

During the \textit{Swadeshi} movement Upadhyay's political views in \textit{Sandhya} became more and more radical. \textit{Sandhya}'s attacks were mainly directed against the Moderates and the policy of government officials. The moderates in the Indian National Congress (INC) relied on

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\cite{Bipin Vihari Das Gupta, "The Svadeshi Movement," Animananda, \textit{The Blade}, 142.}
speeches, petitions and deputations to promote its aims. However, with the partition of Bengal the extremist wing in INC had become vociferous in its opposition to the British Government. The split between Moderates and Extremists took place when younger congressmen, impatient with the established leader's slow pace and autocratic ways, broke off and formed a new party.\(^{118}\) Tilak was very critical of moderate leaders of INC such as Dadabhai Naoroji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale.\(^{119}\) Before the outbreak of the Swadeshi Movement (August 7, 1905), Bipin Chandra Pal and Upadhyay, who were "men of culture and influence had done much to awaken Bengal and to initiate new lines of policy for the people. Both of them were the up-holders of the cult of radicalism and stern haters of the old Congress policy of prayers and petitions."\(^{120}\)

Upadhyay, who had no patience with the moderate nationalists, expressed his views about them in \textit{Sandhya}: "There are now two parties; those who beg for favours and those who stand on their own legs. The former are like cats and dogs. They are happy at the crumbs that fall from their Master's tables."\(^{121}\) He was particularly critical of moderate leaders like Naoroji and distinguished the notion of swaraj of Naoroji and of Shivaji: "Swaraj as defined by Dadabhai Naoroji is a 'Belati stink.' There is a world of difference between it and Maharaja Shivaji's conception of Svaraj."\(^{122}\) Young followers of the Swadeshi Movement wanted to march forward and they soon rallied around new leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay and Satish Chandra Mukherjee.\(^{123}\) With the partition of Bengal

\(^{118}\) Peter Hees summarizes the perspectives which divided the Moderates and the Extremists in the following way: "In sum, the Extremists aspired for political, economic and cultural independence, the Moderates for an amelioration of India's status as a colonial possession." Peter Hees, \textit{Nationalism, Terrorism, Communalism: Essays in Modern History} (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000) 3.

\(^{119}\) Tilak wrote in 1907 about the leaders of the moderate faction of INC: "The venerable leader [Naoroji] who presided over the recent Congress was the first to tell us the drain [of wealth] from the country was ruining it, and if the drain was to continue, there was some great disaster awaiting us. So terribly convinced was he of this that he went over from here to England and spent twenty-five years of his life trying to convince the English people of the injustice that is being done to us...and what is the result? He has come here at the age of eighty-two to tell us that he is bitterly disappointed. Mr. Gokhale, I know, is not disappointed. Mr. Gokhale is not disappointed but is prepared to wait another eighty years till he is disappointed like Mr. Dadabhai." Wm. Theodore de Bary, \textit{Sources of Indian Tradition} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958) pp. 720-21. Quoted by S. R. Ashton, \textit{Colonialism in India} (London: The British Library, 1988) 72.

\(^{120}\) Prof. Haridas Mukherjee and Prof. Uma Mukherjee, \textit{India's Fight for Freedom or the Swadeshi Movement, 1905-1906} (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1958) 154.


\(^{123}\) Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, \textit{India's Fight for Freedom or the Swadeshi Movement, 1905-1906}, 138.
Sandhya which was at the forefront of Swadeshi movement became increasingly supportive of the idea of violent resistance to British rule. It is not entirely surprising to find Sandhya being categorized as ‘extremist’ newspaper and as ‘organ of the Extremist party’ by historians. As Haridas and Uma point out, Upadhyay was one of the extremist leaders who contributed to a new political consciousness in Bengal:

Brahmabandhab Upadhyay was another extremist leader. He came back from Europe as a hater of everything European and became a staunch nationalist. He founded his Sandhya which was an evening Bengali daily in which he made systematically bitter attacks on European or Anglo-Indian modes of thought and culture. He wanted to remove the fear-complex and the inferiority-complex from our mind in relation to the Europeans and the Anglo-Indians. His language was flaming and his sarcastic comments on the ‘Feringhis’ were bitter and pungent. Before the middle of 1906, the Sandhya remained the only daily organ of the new school of Bengal politics. Thanks to Brahmabandhab, the doctrine of new nationalism was carried to the doors of thousands of our countrymen by means of systematic propagandism.

The ‘new school’ of Bengal politics just quoted above denotes the radical and extremist nationalist perspective ushered in by the partition of Bengal. Bipinchandra and Brahmabandhab became the early exponents of a radical ideology and thorough-going Nationalism at the beginning of the twentieth century and were jointly responsible for fostering a radical outlook in politics. But before the Swadeshi movement only very few Indian nationalists advocated radicalism and violence as a political means to fight against British colonialism.

However, it must be noted that violent resistance to colonial rule was advocated by several groups both in India and abroad already in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. In India, the extremist movements were chiefly centered in Maharashtra and in Bengal. In India, radical movement received the impetus with the hanging of Chapecakar brothers by the colonial government. Chapecakar brothers - Damodar and Balkrishna - had murdered two British

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125 Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, India’s Fight for Freedom or the Swadeshi Movement, 1905-1906, 154-55.

126 Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, India’s Fight for Freedom or the Swadeshi Movement, 1905-1906, 155.
officers on 22 June, 1897 who seem to have committed atrocities against Indians. In Maharashtra Chapekar brothers were seen as defenders of Indian honour against colonial atrocities. By 1900 a revolutionary movement began to take shape in Bengal. Under the leadership of P. Mitra, a revolutionary secret society known as the ‘Anusilan Samiti’ was organized in Calcutta. With the partition of Bengal some of the radical nationalists went beyond the method of boycott and resorted to revolutionary violence and terrorism.

Abroad, radical Indian nationalists organized themselves into revolutionary cells in places like London, Paris and U.S.A. Shyamji Krishna Varma (1857-1930) who became one of the foremost leaders of the Indian revolutionary movement, was born in Mandvi in the Kutchch state (in present Gujarat) and carried on a vigorous propaganda for India's freedom from London, Paris and Geneva between 1905 and 1914. He advocated the establishment of an absolutely free and independent form of National Government. Shyamji left London and went to Paris as the British government was thinking of taking action against him. The Paris Indian Society was established in 1905 by S. R. Rana (1878-1957) and worked to propagate Indian cause abroad. Rana and Madame Cama (1861-1936) established close contacts with the members of the Socialist Party and attended the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart in Germany. The Indian radicals were in close contact with the Russian revolutionaries in exile in Paris. In U.S.A., Barkattullah and S. L. Joshi started the ‘Pan-Aryan Association’ with the help of the American-Irish nationalists in 1906.

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127 The murder was committed by Chapekar brothers as a revenge for the atrocities perpetrated by the British army men who were employed in enforcing preventive measures against the plague epidemic in Poona city. For the details of the incident, see, R. C. Majumdar, ed., British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, 590-592.

128 Young students who composed the Anusilan Samiti were trained in military drill, sword and lathi-play, boxing, and wrestling. The members were also given moral and patriotic training through weekly classes. Anusilan Samiti members practiced worship of arms in place of the images of goddess Durga. R. C. Majumdar, ed., British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, 593.


131 Tilak Raj Sareen, Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad 1905-1921, 38.

132 These Russian exiles taught Indian radicals the art of making and using explosives. The idea behind training young Indians in the art of explosives was to send them back to India to assist the home based secret societies who wished to overthrow the British government by violent means. After the training in bomb-making and in the use of arms and ammunitions the first group of three students - Hem Chandra Das, P. M. Bapat and Mirza Abbas - were sent back to India in 1907. Hem Chandra Das became a bomb expert of the Bengal revolutionary
It is against such politically charged atmosphere that Upadhyay joined the Swadeshi movement along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh. If the Moderates had their leaders in Bhupendra Nath Bose and Surendranath Banerjea, the Extremists had their leaders in Bipin Chandra Pal, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay and Aurobindo Ghose. These extremist leaders ‘were rising into prominence by March 1906.’ As Peter Hees points out, two Extremist newspapers of Calcutta, Sandhya and Jugantar began to write about the need for political independence. As the Sedition Committee Report notes, the Sandhya proclaimed, “We want complete independence.” According to Animananda, Upadhyay “was the first man in our political history to suggest complete Independence for India.” Upadhyay took part in the Barisal anti-partition agitation in 1906. On the basis of the above evidences, it seems reasonable to suggest that in the perception of the public Upadhyay was seen as a nationalist as well as a radical leader.

Upadhyay came to the attention of British authorities because of the politically provocative articles which he wrote in the pages of Sandhya. After the Barisal meeting (mid-April, 1906) ended up in police atrocities, extremist papers like Sandhya and Jugantar preached the ‘cult of blood and fire.’ Sandhya, which had a circulation of 12,000 copies, became instrumental in the Maniktala Secret Society. Their activities led to the conviction of several members of the Maniktala Secret Society. T. R. Sareen, Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad 1905-1921, 41.

With the support of the Irish nationalists this association began their anti-British propaganda in America. In addition to these activities, Madame Cama gave a series of lectures in the U.S. with a view of exposing British colonial oppression in India. Cf., Tilak Raj Sareen, Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad 1905-1921, 54-56.

Prof. Haridas Mukherjee and Prof. Uma Mukherjee, India’s Fight for Freedom or the Swadeshi Movement, 1905-1906, 139-140.


Prof. Haridas Mukherjee and Prof. Uma Mukherjee, India’s Fight for Freedom or the Swadeshi Movement, 1905-1906, 156-167.

A meeting was scheduled on 14 April, 1906 at Barisal and Upadhyay took part in the meeting. However, the meeting ended in police lathi-charge. Upadhyay was not hurt in the lathi-charge. The conflict between the people and the administration came to a point of crisis during Barisal meeting. For a detailed account of this incident at Barisal, see, Prof. Haridas Mukherjee and Prof. Uma Mukherjee, India’s Fight for Freedom or the Swadeshi Movement, 1905-1906, 144-145.

Prof. Haridas Mukherjee and Prof. Uma Mukherjee, India’s Fight for Freedom or the Swadeshi Movement, 1905-1906, 166.
in disseminating revolutionary ideas. According to the Sedition Committee Report, Bengali radical youth ‘were acquainted with revolutionary ideas of the Sandhya, the Swaraj and the Jugantar.’ As political extremism started growing, the government resorted to repressive measures especially against the Indian press. As newspapers and journals were becoming politically important in the post-Mutiny period, the print media began to be looked upon by the colonial authorities as a ‘potential for sedition.’ As the Indian press in general and the vernacular press in particular was perceived by the colonial administration as potentially dangerous, there were several regulations which were enacted to control the print media since the Mutiny.

Thus, according to the Vernacular Press Act IX of 1878, (VPA) ‘the printer and publisher of any paper in an Indian language could be called upon to enter into a bond not to publish anything likely to excite feelings of disaffection against the Government or antipathy between persons of different races, castes and religions among Her Majesty’s subjects.’ The VPA stipulated that if a newspaper contravened this regulation, it was first warned of the offence and if the offence was repeated its equipment was liable to be confiscated. Because of the

140 We shall cite a few of Upadhyay’s extremist views here. When the police attacked the locals in Mymensingh in Eastern Bengal Brahmabandhab wrote in Sandhya: ‘What is wanted now is a band of lathials in every town and village. They will wield lathi for lathi when unlawful oppression is committed, either by police or by any other party. The [local] lads must henceforth be taught less of grammar and something of gundainsm. Life and honour come first and your grammar next.’ The call to violence began to appear in Sandhya: “If the Feringhi...forcibly violates our swadeshi and wishes to keep us the sons of slaves, then force will arise in return for force.” From January 1907 onwards Sandhya’s language started becoming more radical and violent: In March Upadhyay had even written a plan for village level organization: “Let lathis, sarkis, daos and a few firearms be kept. In all villages have about six bhadraloks and twenty-five to fifty men of Bagdi or Candal caste” (12/3/07). April issue of Sandhya carried this warning: “Our boys are prepared to yield even their lives for their country.” “Thanas, lathis, fireworks and small bombs will have to be kept” (29/4/07). “No ruler of a country can send its population to jail. It is because you do not understand this that we have to abuse you” (26/8/07). In September he wrote: “When we think of our going to jail, we cannot help laughing outright... revolution is impending and we leap with joy and clap our hands” (4/9/07). In October Upadhyay wrote: “The Mother sent us to make the water muddy and to cause the Firinghi to frisk about. That purpose has been served. Now Sandhya has passed. The night has come. Prepare for the advent of the new” (10/10/07). cf., Animananda, The Blade, 134-135; 138-141.


142 After the Mutiny, “surveillance of vernacular newspapers was increased, with the Reporter on the Native Press making regular weekly extracts from newspaper comments on political, religious and social matters. These extracts were circulated to civil officials and the police. Newspaper surveillance was gradually withdrawn from the Department of Public Instruction, where it had originated, into the realm of political surveillance and counter-intelligence.” C. A. Bayly, Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 340-41.

widespread public opinion against the VPA, it was repealed in 1882 and the administration relied on ordinary law for the control of the Press. Thus, the Indian Penal Code, section 124 (A) as redrafted in 1889 gave the colonial administration the power to imprison anyone who 'attempts to excite disaffection towards Her Majesty or the Government established by law in British India.' From the viewpoint of the colonial administration Upadhyay's *Sandhya* had given sufficient grounds to cause 'disaffection' towards the government. The Newspapers (Incitement to offences) Act authorized the District Magistrate not only to 'extinguish a newspaper', but also to confiscate the printing press where it was printed or intended to be printed, if in his opinion the newspaper contained any incitement to (1) murder, (2) any offence under the Explosive Act, or (3) any acts of violence. With the numerous calls for violence *Sandhya* had come under the surveillance of police department.

At this point Upadhyay seems to have faced the hostility of some Hindu nationalists due to his Christian affiliation, for he was still a practicing Catholic. Perhaps to allay their misgivings a few months before his death Upadhyay performed the rite of penance to become Hindu again. This action of Upadhyay seems to have added some amount of confusion regarding his status as a Catholic.

### 5.3 Arrest, Trial and Death

Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, who was at the forefront of the *Swadeshi* movement was arrested on September 10, 1907 and prosecuted on a charge of sedition. Along with him Sarada Sen, the manager and S. C. Dass, the printer were also arrested and taken to the police thana. Though bail was granted, every morning the accused had to attend the court. The immediate cause of his arrest was in connection with the publication of three articles in journal *Sandhya*, edited by Upadhyay, which were inflammatory from the viewpoint of colonial administration. Upadhyay was charged with sedition because his writings were a great

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145 According to Indian Penal Code, Section 124 A, "Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards Her Majesty or the Government established by law in British India, shall be punished with transportation for life or any shorter term, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine." Cf., R. C. Majumdar, ed., *Struggle for Freedom*, 112.

146 It was under the Newspapers Act (Incitement to offences) Act, "three well-known organs of the Extremist party in Bengal, the *Bande Mataram*, *Sandhya* and *Jugantar* had to cease publication . R. C. Majumdar, ed., *Struggle for Freedom*, 109.
incitement to popular discontent, and created considerable disaffection against the colonial
Government. Upadhyay was aware of popular sentiments against the Government and he
refused to defend himself - the forerunner of what became a regular practice during the days
of Gandhian Non-co-operation. Upadhyay enunciated the philosophy of his non-co-
operation in a written statement submitted to the court on September 23, 1907 which was
read out by his counsel, Cittaranjan Das, on behalf of his client:

I accept the entire responsibility of the publication, management and conduct of the
newspaper Sandhya and I say that I am the writer of the article, Ekhan theke gechi
premer dai which appeared in the Sandhya on the 13th August 1907, being one of the
articles forming the subject matter of this prosecution. But I do not want to take part
in the trial, because I do not believe that, in carrying out my humble share of the God-
appointed mission of Swaraj, I am in any way accountable to the alien people, who
happen to rule over us and whose interest is, and necessarily be, in the way of [i.e.,
opposed to] our true national development.

Upadhyay had also claimed that no foreign court would be able to punish him. Interestingly
enough, this proved to be only too true because he died before the conclusion of the sedition
trial due to complications arising out of hernia operation on 27 October, 1907, at the age of
forty seven. According to Animananda, Upadhyay “made no outward manifestation of his
faith except that now and then he called out “O Thakur” (Lord) which was the designation he
had been using for Christ.”

The news of his death spread fast and crowds began to gather at the Campbell Hospital. Due to the increasing number of people and mounting excitement, hospital authorities decided to remove the body from the hospital premises. Upadhyay’s body was carried from the hospital and was placed on the roadside under a tree while further preparations were made. His friends and relatives carried the body in a flower decked bier towards the Sandhya office, occasionally stopping on the way. Nearly five thousand people had gathered when the funeral process started from the Sandhya office at around 4 p.m. The procession, chanting bande mataram, proceeded to the cremation ground. When the body reached cremation ground, patriotic songs were sung and a number of poignant speeches

147 R. C. Majumdar, ed., Struggle for Freedom, 52.
148 Quoted by Animananda, The Blade, 169. The same statement can be also found in, Julius J. Lipner,
Brahmabandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary, 382. The second part of same quote can
be found also in, P. C. Ray, The Life and Times of C. R. Dass (London, 1927) p. 57. Quoted by R. C.
Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, 52.
149 Animananda, The Blade, 176.
150 B. Animananda, “The Sindh Mission,” in “A Selection of Fifteen Articles by B. Animananda,” pp. 1-18,
here, 11-12. Source: Varia on Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, Goethals Indian Library and Research Society
Archives.
were made. Since Upadhyay had no offspring, the funeral pyre was lit by his nephew, following Hindu custom. Songs continued to be sung and people came up to the pyre to pay homage till well into the night.\textsuperscript{151}

\textbf{Conclusion}

Whether or not Upadhyay's advocacy of violence as a political means can be justified as a 'historical necessity' is an open question. However, Upadhyay's role in evolving the early nationalist response to British colonialism cannot be minimized or denied. In his death Upadhyay, the Indian nationalist, had left behind a complex religious and political legacy. As Lipner has pointed out, Upadhyay embodied a complex and controversial legacy because he had committed himself to two modes of identities, which were alternatively merging and separating: on the one hand, Upadhyay struggled to maintain his socio-religious identity as a Hindu-Catholic \textit{sannyasi}. On the other hand, he also struggled with the identity of a militant Hindu nationalist.\textsuperscript{152} As far as the religious legacy was concerned, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay who wanted to be a Hindu by culture and Christian by faith and tried to synthesize Hinduism and Christianity stood at the crossroads of inter-religious dialogue and encounter. As we shall see, both modes of identities stood interlocked in a continuum in the life of Upadhyay. Politically, Upadhyay, whose nationalism moved more and more towards extremism, was a maverick in his own right. In the subsequent chapters we shall investigate the nuances of that complex heritage embodied in Upadhyay.

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\textsuperscript{151} A detailed account of the last moments of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay and the funeral procession to the cremation ground can be found in Animananda, \textit{The Blade}, 173-178. See also, Julius J. Lipner, \textit{Brahmabandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary}, 386.
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\textsuperscript{152} Julius J. Lipner, \textit{Brahmabandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary}, 344.
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