

PhD. THESIS SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

NAME: SUCHARITA SEN

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: DR. RIZWAN QAISER

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND CULTURE, (FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGES), JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA

THESIS TITLE: The Politics of Partition in Bengal: Muslim Intellectual History in Colonial Bengal

Student ID: 20158726

My thesis explores the philosophical and political roots of the United Bengal movement of 1947 that emerged as a final bid to keep the province united by resisting partition. One of its architects AbulHashim, who was general secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League (BPML) in the years leading up to partition, articulated the need to reimagine Hindu-Muslim identities in the province, not as binaries but as parts of a larger socio-cultural fabric that lends to a new narrative on *aesthetic* rather than ethnic nationalism. What Hashim offers, I argue, through his writings and his political contributions, transcends the dichotomous framework of modernity in significant ways. It shows the possibility of finding civic/universal values and principles within the folds of ethnicity and religion tied through certain narrative commonalities and therefore in some ways providing alternative solutions to this old debate between civic and ethnic trajectories of nationalism. My thesis examines how Hashim's work signals the existence of a unique nature of identity construction in Bengal that keenly focused on common language, common culture and in its own limited way, a common ideology. To bring back a term used earlier- a common *aesthetic identity* for the people of Bengal. Collaborations between the Bengal Provincial Muslim League and the Bengal Congress surfaced twice in the span of seven years prior to partition (1940-47). The findings in my thesis show how the United Bengal movement found its place within a series of challenges that were directed at the becoming of India and even Pakistan as they negotiated their way through their respective nationalisms. The scope of a third alternative, moving away from the civic- ethnic dichotomy, with the possibility of finding sources of civic identities and universal rights of man within the fold of ethnic roots and affiliations, remains a central theme in the thesis.