

PROFESSOR ENAYETUR RAHIM

(B.1938- D. 2003)

Enayetur Rahim, who was a specialist on the modern history of Bengal, was born in Burdwan district, West Bengal on 8th July 1938. He graduated from Rajshahi University in 1957 and passed his M.A. in Islamic History and Culture in 1959. Shortly after his Master's degree, he was employed as a teacher of Islamic history at Rajshahi Government College. When he came to know that one of his Professors, M. Shamsuddin Miah intended to go to Calcutta University for research in 'Abbasid history, Enayet offered to help him by arranging board and lodging for him in the house of his uncle, who was a Magistrate in Calcutta.

Professor Muhammad Abdul Bari recruited Enayetur Rahim as a Lecturer in the Department of Islamic History and Culture in Rajshahi University. Thus, he became one of my teachers during my B.A. Honours studies in Rajshahi University, where he taught Indian History of the Mughal period (1526-1765). It was during the course of my student life that he left our Department on a Fulbright scholarship to study at Pennsylvania University, where in 1966, he received another M.A. degree in history. It was during his sojourn in the States that Enayetur Rahim and Joyce Landon met. They married on 22 August 1965. Before I received my Master's degree, he returned from United States to Rajshahi University.

In 1967, when I was awarded the Merit Scholarship by the Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan to go abroad for higher studies, I applied to several British Universities. One day, while some senior Professors, such as Muhammad Abdul Bari and A.B.M. Husain, were temporarily absent from the Department, I met Enayet and asked him whether he could write a Testimonial for me to be sent with my application for admission abroad. Enayetur Rahim, who was courteous and ever ready to help, duly wrote a letter of introduction to explain my qualifications and suitability for admission into a British University. Subsequently, when senior Professors, like the Head of the Department of Islamic History, Professor Dr. Abdul Bari and Musharaf Husain, came to know about my receiving a testimonial from Enayetur Rahim, both of them also wrote testimonials. It was Enayetur Rahim's willingness to support his students that impressed me most.

After his return from the United States in 1966, I saw him with his American wife, Joyce, only once. In fact, around 1970, he left Rajshahi University for Georgetown University, which awarded him Ph.D. degree in 1973. After gaining his doctoral certificate he taught at various American Universities, including University of Minnesota, where Professor Dr. T.B. Irving (Hajj Ta'lim Ali) had founded the Department of Middle Eastern Studies. He was then invited to join the Department of Bengal Studies at Georgetown University, where he worked until his death in May, 2003. During his teaching at Georgetown University, Dr. Enayetur Rahim co-authored a book with Henry Schwarz entitled *Contributions to Bengal Studies: an interdisciplinary and international approach*, Washington, D.C., 1998.

Enayetur Rahim was in Washington, D.C. when Pakistan descended into a civil war in 1971. As a result of this conflict, East Pakistan ceased to be and Bangladesh was born as a new nation-state. It was during this political crisis that Enayetur Rahim was briefly involved in politics and in

1971/2 and became the President of the United States Unit of Awami League. In recognition of his service to the cause of Bangladesh, he was elected to the Bangabandhu chair at Dacca University 2000-2001. During his stay in Dacca he and his wife, Joyce Rahim co-authored a number of books, such as (i) *Bengal Politics: Documents of the Raj*, vol.1(1936-39) edited by Enayetur Rahim and Joyce L. Rahim, University Press Ltd. (formerly Oxford University Press),Dacca, 1996;(2) *Bengal Politics : Documents of the Raj* , vol.II,(1940-43), University Press Ltd., Dhaka, February, 1999; (3) *Bengal Politics: Documents of the Raj*, vol.III, (1944-47), University Press Ltd., Dhaka, 2000. These three volumes comprise archival documents, such as the Fortnightly reports of the colonial Governor of Bengal to the Viceroy and Governor-General of India and their replies. These compilations shed light on the changing political and economic realities of Bengal on the eve of the partition of India.

Bangladesh : a select Bibliography of English Language periodical literature, 1971-86, edited by E. Rahim and Joyce Rahim, Published by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dacca, 1988.

The couple's other publications are: *The Bangladesh Liberation War and the Nixon White House 1971*, Pustaka, 2000. *A General Bibliography of Richard Nixon: Scholars' Guide to Washington, D.C. for South Asian Studies*, (Published by Smithsonian Institute, Washington,D.C.) *Smithsonian Focus on India: a general guide to the Institute's resources*, by Enayetur Rahim, first edition, Smithsonian Institute, 1988. Besides these books, Enayetur Rahim contributed two important chapters to books edited by other scholars. 'Bengali Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalism : the Jama'at-i Islami in Bangladesh " in *Understanding the Bengal Muslims : interpretive Essays* edited by Rafiuddin Ahmed, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001; and 'A.K. Fazlul Huq' co-authored by Enayetur Rahim and Amelendu De, in *Banglapedia* .

In April 2003 Professor Enayetur Rahim and his wife, Joyce attended the *36th International Bengal Studies Conference* at Irving in Texas. He was given a standing ovation by the participants of the conference. This was one of his last public engagements, before he passed away on 31 May, 2003 in Washington, D.C. He was buried at Arundel Cemetery in Kennebunkport, Maine, USA. President George Bush (Senior) lives in Kennebunkport. His gravestone bears a simple epitaph '**Enayetur Rahim 1938-2003: Husband of Joyce Landon**' .

A 'Condolence Meeting- Remembrance of a valiant Freedom-fighter Dr. Enayetur Rahim" was held in Washington, D.C., on June 4, 2003 at Capitol Grill and Buffa at Jefferson Davis Highway at Woodbridge Virginia- 22191. Among those who attended Enayet's condolence meeting were Joyce Rahim, Rick and Ziya, the sons of the deceased, Shamim Chowdhury and also a former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, who was on a private tour of Washington, D. C.

Mrs. Joyce Enayetur Rahim also passed away on 14th January 2010.

(by PROFESSOR Dr MUHAMMAD ABDUL JABBAR BEG (M.A. RAJSHAHI, PH.D. CAMBRIDGE)