

Mrs. Ellen Roy

A LIFE DEDICATED TO NEW HUMANISM MOVEMENT

BY

Jawaharlal Jasthi

FOREWORD

Ellen Roy was born on 15th August 1904 and she died at the age of 56 on 13th December 1960. She came to India at a young age of 33. A woman whose canvas of existence was larger than the sailcloth of this universe wrapped it entirely around a person called M.N. Roy for more than half of the living years of her life. Even after his death she continued to remain in his surroundings till she met with such a gruesome end which of all people she did not deserve. A lover of humanity was killed by a person whose education and future career she was so keenly taking care of. Yes Ralph Waldo Emerson was so tight when he wrote that the years teach much the days never know!

What was in Roy that attracted Ellen to wait for him for a good six years of her youth till she left Europe to join him in India in 1936 even though she had a wide range of intellectuals, activists and artists around her to choose from as her life partner in Europe itself? They all say it was Roy's charisma that pulled her to him but I argue it was her own reflection in him that drew her towards him. She saw in him the echoes of her own dreams, her own vision and purpose of life as well as her own shattering of hopes and disillusionment with the communist endeavor of delivering relief to the pains and injuries of the poor, the weak and the downtrodden all around the world. He belonged to a country that suffered and she belonged to a continent that gave the pain. They together saw in communism the hope to remove the distress; both worked in it and with it but both realized that the methods as well as the resources were actually counterproductive to the cause, giving greater sorrow to the suffering humanity!

They both wanted to find a new solution to the problem. He came back to India with lots of hope and positivity to put his view points to practice in a new way. She followed him here to see their joint vision taking shape. He spoke well she wrote well! He had been a part of making the communist history of the world. She was a part of it too in her own way simultaneously working as its biographer as well. He was in his land more at home with the things around. She was in his land more dependent upon his insights and perceptions.

He gave logical conclusions to his beliefs to the people who came to listen to his views. She became the catalyst to collect and grow this list of individuals to whom this analysis mattered. Those who went to meet him and be with him came back with an impression that he was too towering to be approached. Had Ellen not been there with him to make his efforts more earthly and benevolent a lot many would have been forced to alienate themselves from his mission. She brought his sublime persona within reach to all his admirers and enquirers.

He elucidated his philosophy in words she illuminated it in practice. He spoke for them; she wrote for them. She jotted down even his mumblings and mutterings and articulated them into comprehensible readings. She could do so because of her voracious reading background, her large multilingual vocabulary and her grip over the philosophical developments around the world. He envisaged a gurukul of learning around him, she gave her all to make and evolving of this gurukul named Indian Renaissance Institute and kept working for its progress till she lived even after he had left this world.

She could give her best and make all this possible only because she herself was burning with the zeal and passion of making this world a beautiful, humane community of spiritually free men and women endowed with a scientific spirit and rational culture; beyond the barriers of cast, class, creed and sex and national geographical distinctions with equality in opportunities of defining and designing their lives. She came to India with a confirmed confidence that M.N.Roy would help her make this effort to realise her dream as he too had the same obsession and ardour right from his childhood which made him travel around the world in search of means and resources to fulfill it.

How much they together could or could not succeed is a matter of introspection and analysis for the followers who, I think, should be made responsible for the consequences and for not taking the banner forward to the extent it was expected. They did their utmost. We lagged behind.

I congratulate Sri Jawaharlal Jasthi for finding it necessary to reminisce on Ellen Roy's significance today, by bringing out her biography when the Indian Renaissance institute is remembering M.N.Roy during his 125th birth anniversary year. It is very necessary and important lest we overlook the fact that she was equally indispensable for the building up of the Indian Radical Humanist Movement.

Rekha Saraswat

26 – 02 – 2013

Meerut

Editor, Radical Humanist

MY SUBMISSION

Rationalism and New Humanism are just movements and not political parties. Whatever be the reason, movements lack the attraction that the parties have. The literature about any movement grows around the philosophy of the movement and around the life of the person who happened to propound the philosophy. The followers of the movement necessarily depend on the life of the person to propagate the ideology. There is the danger of it developing into hero worship. There are very few of the pioneers who discouraged such exaltation.

In the movement of New Humanism we have plenty of literature in all Indian languages. Particularly the fecundity of Roy's mind was unparalleled and he produced a vast literature that helped to understand him and his philosophy. His writings earned great respect in philosophical circles. There have been books on the life of Roy in almost all the Indian languages. Out of them, the one "M.N.Roy – his life and philosophy" written by late Koganti Radhakrishna Murty in Telugu is claimed as an outstanding work for the detailed treatment referring to the vast experiences of Roy in various stages and the development of his philosophy. It was actually written in 1983 and it is reprinted by his family members recently. It is a matter of great regret that even that book does not refer to his wife Ellen. It is the same even with English literature. Except the souvenir published after her death "Universe as Her Village" there is no other work about her life or personality. Many of the close followers of the movement admitted they have not much knowledge of her. The level of ignorance about her is pathetic, to say the least. One cannot claim to have known Roy without knowing about her. It is not merely because she happens to be his wife. It is because she is more than a wife to him and to the movement of New Humanism. In India it is usually considered incivility to talk of the wife of a famous man. Perhaps that is why she was left alone. But she was not a woman in Indian tradition. She had an identity and individuality of her own. Her ideals coincided with those of Roy. That was why she became his wife. As Mrs.Rekha Saraswat has stated, because she found her own reflection in him, she got her own life merged with his.

The traditional wives in India do not have any ideology of their own except in very few cases. While serving her husband in the traditional Indian capacity, Ellen served him in many other capacities. She was the reason for all of us to come to know of Roy and his philosophy. She made him stand before us as an ideal philosopher.

There are many foreigners who happened to come and settle in India either because they were attracted by the philosophy of an individual or because of their appreciation of Indian culture. J.B.S.Haldane, Anne Beasant came like that. Sister Nivedita who came to India under the influence of Vivekananda, Meera Behn who came under the influence of Gandhi, the French lady who came to the Aurobindo Ashram and settled as "The Mother" are examples of this category. The way they lived their lives after coming to India are worth emulating because they lived true to their beliefs and convictions. They were true to themselves showing a high level of intellectual integrity. Ellen too belonged to that genus in respect of integrity in spite of her philosophy being completely different from theirs. If we consider Indian tradition more important, she complied with it far better than most of the Indian wives themselves. Even after

the death of her husband she carried the torch lighted by him as she felt it her life. She was not willing to forget him. She got a memorial built for him with remnants of his bones hidden inside. She expressed her desire that even after her death, her remnants also shall be laid along with his bones and the memorial rebuilt on them. She grew so sentimental in spite of being a confirmed materialist. Her identity with him was complete, both physical and intellectual. Don't we find a place for such sentiment in the life of pure materialists? Is it not by declaring that ideas have their own momentum that New Humanism differed from Marxism?

While serving her husband in any capacity, she was conscious that she was serving the movement also simultaneously. For the followers of the movement, it would be an inexcusable failure if they don't acknowledge her services. If she were just a traditional wife without any concern for his philosophy and values, it would have been different. But she became his wife because of her commitment to the same values and philosophy as he had. Her services in defining the philosophy of Roy and building the movement of New Humanism are unparalleled. When we look at the life of Roy we do not fail to see that his life was completely dominated and filled by his philosophy. There was no place for anything else in his life. But Ellen was not like that. She had a full life. She had varied interests in life like nature, music, art, culture, handicrafts, languages and women's movements. She lived a life of high ideals. But economically, she was always at a low level. It was always a drag on her spirits and a limitation on her activities. Living on bare minimums was her habit. She was never dissatisfied because of it. Just because she used to smoke, one should not conclude she lived a comfortable or luxurious life.

After the death of Roy she rededicated herself to the service of his ideals by encouraging the movement and bringing out his works. To pay homage to such a person indicates our culture and values. That is the main purpose of this brief compilation. It is more painful that such a noble life had to meet with such a meaningless and gruesome death in the hands of aimless urchins in this country.

This was originally written in Telugu with encouragement from friends like Somayya, Venkatadri and Veeranna. Finding the lack of any publication on her specially, I felt it better to bring it in English as well. The foreword from Smt. Rekha Saraswat, editor of Radical Humanist, is adding value to the compilation. I hope it will be appreciated by all.

J.L.Jawahar

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1. HER BACKGROUND

Oscar Gottschalk, the father of Ellen, was born in 1863 in the German city of Essex. That is, by birth, he was a German. He was the tenth of eleven children. It was a middle class family. In search of a living he arrived in America in 1881, that is, at the age of 18 years. How he spent his days there was not clear. But he got his American citizenship in 1886 five years after his arrival there, which was according to the law there. It made all his progeny also Americans. Along with English, he also learnt German and French languages. German was his language for eighteen years after his birth. He was naturally well versed in it. Because of his knowledge of different languages, he got a job in the consulate branch of the Foreign Affairs Department of America. He was sent to Paris in 1890 as a representative of the country in the Consulate. His ambition to learn languages was such that he tried to learn Greek and Latin even after he retired.

He married Edele Frizler in 1903, in his 40th year. She was born in Germany in 1877. She too came from a middle class family, third of four daughters. She was tall and beautiful. But her health was always delicate because of which she looked weak. She was an expert in playing piano and also used to sing well.

Ellen was their first child, born in Paris on 14th August 1904. She inherited her taste for music from her mother along with the taste for languages from her father. Oscar was transferred to Cologne in Germany in 1906 and the family shifted there with him. After Ellen they had a son Robert born on 26th April 1906 and a daughter Louise on 29th June, 1910. The family took time to acquire a house of their own. It was located near the Rhine River, in a middle class neighborhood. There was an elevation on his job and a consequent improvement in his social status. They could engage servants for domestic work. The house was always busy with friends and relatives visiting them. Oscar was officious in his dealings with others. His wife Edel was younger to him by 14 years. She was sensitive and vulnerable because of her poor health and her husband, instead of being sympathetic used to be harsh and dictating in the name of discipline and orderliness. He used to dominate over all the others in the family. His presence itself was having a domineering effect in the house. It has gone to such an extent that the children used to believe that his behavior was responsible to some extent for the poor health of their mother. This naturally resulted in an sober and unhealthy mood prevailing in the family. (Every unhappy family is so in its own way!) The depressive mood had its effect on the children inevitably.

When the First World War started in 1914 Ellen was aged ten years. Oscar was not happy with the attitude of Germans in the war. He did not like the Kaiser and it made Ellen happy for that. But they were living in Germany among Germans. Naturally any criticism of Germans was not appreciated by the local people. The fact that Ellen was an American was obvious in her class by virtue of her fluency in English and French.

In 1917 America entered the war against Germany. All the Americans in Germany were arrested and herded together to Switzerland. They were loaded in trucks and drove away in closed containers 'like animals', Ellen felt. It included all the non-German employees as well including Oscar himself. But his family was allowed to stay in Germany with one condition – that his wife

shall report every day to the local police station. It had a deep impression on Ellen. It made her more bitter that her mother in poor health had to visit the police station every day in addition to her family responsibilities.

Away from the city of Cologne there was a big ordnance factory wherein thousands of people used to work. Many of them passed daily their house watched by Ellen both morning and evening. She noticed a peculiar anomaly in their appearance. All of them looked green, top to bottom, including their hair. They looked the same while going to work and also while returning from work. It meant it was not a colour that could be washed off. They lost their natural appearance. What they would be doing in the factory was beyond comprehension of Ellen. But it shocked her. How could they look after their children in the house? How do the children feel?

One morning there was a bright flash immediately followed by a deafening sound. The ordnance factory exploded. Thousands of men and women working there were burnt alive. It made Ellen hate war in addition to Germans who were held responsible for the war. She was witness for many more atrocities that were committed in the name of war. Her sympathy to the victims took roots and provoked her to seek freedom and justice to them. It drove her to the lap of communism.

Even while the war was going on there was no hindrance for the education in the school. Ellen could play the piano well and also add her sweet tone with songs to the tunes. She used to give concerts in the school to which her mother brother and sister also attended. They were feeling proud of her. Along with her studies in the school, Ellen was fond of reading. She was a voracious reader and her two eyes were not able to meet her demand. She had to get two more eyes added to her natural eyes and the spectacle has become an addition to her beautiful face since then. She had particular interest in geology and collected many fossils out of curiosity. She was appreciative of the intelligence and active nature of German students. But she was sorry when she came to know most of them were assisting war effort.

When the war came to an end Oscar was allowed to come back and join his family. But his presence brought more of agony than ecstasy. There was no letup in his officious attitude. His wife Edel died in 1920 at her age of 43. Oscar was aged 57 at that time. It was a testing time for Ellen as she was sensitive to the atmosphere prevailing in the house. Her sister was still a child and her brother was a soft person and could not be expected to withstand the onslaught of their father. The gap between the father and the children was widening day-by-day. In 1921 Oscar married again. But the second wife could not stand his behavior and left him by divorce. Ellen took upon herself the responsibility of protecting her siblings from their father. Very often it led to arguments with her father and at times he used to slap her in anger. Even Louise in spite of being so young used to try to intervene to protect her sister. It forced Ellen to a deep contemplation. How long is it to be tolerated? Where is the end for all this? She did not like to save herself by running away from the house. What will happen to the brother and sister? But the same situation was continuing and she again started thinking. Her presence was not able to

improve the situation and she could not protect them by staying there. She felt it would be better if she saves herself so that she would be able to come to the rescue of the siblings later. But how to live after leaving the house? Once on the road you have to live on your own. How is it possible? It made her hesitate for some time. But repeated experiences pushed her to the brink and she took courage to leave the house. That she did at the age of 19 years in 1923.

From that day onwards she was living on her own. She was keeping contact with her brother and sister but did not step into the house. She had to face many bitter experiences and she knew nobody was responsible for it. She invited it all by herself and never tried to put the blame on anybody else, not even on her father. She won over logical bitterness and kept her humane attitude. She was always willing to help others to the extent she could even when she herself was in need of help. She kept aside all her interests in music and studies and tried to get a living. She did any work that came her way – as a secretary, typist or translator and side by side as a writer in her own right. She identified the need to learn stenography as it has more opportunities for work and learnt it completely by herself in her own way. While doing so she devised some of the notations which were not in the original and so her shorthand could not be easily translated by others. But it improved her job opportunities.

She reached Berlin and was attracted to leftist circles. But she had to get her permit to stay in Germany. Even if her father was born in Germany he holds the American passport as an American citizen. She too was considered an American. A permit was necessary to stay in Germany. It could be obtained only by producing a passport. The American passport had to be renewed and kept alive. She had to go to the American Consulate for the purpose. She continued with her association with leftist circles and was actively involved in their activities. She was closely associated with the International League Against Compulsory Motherhood, Theatre of the Masses and Peasant International. In the year 1926 M.N.Roy and Katayama inaugurated the Agricultural Research Institute in Moscow. Ellen attended the function in her capacity as European Secretary for the Institute. She was also running the Journal of the Institute from Berlin for some time. She used to call it “The green International with a Red Tinge”. She was no doubt a convinced radical leftist and wanted to be more actively involved in their movements. She became more relevant to the leftist movements. But what she was doing did not satisfy her zeal. She was doing it as there was nothing better to do at that time. The international outlook and sympathy for the downtrodden were rooted deep in her. She was anxious to do something more constructive and more directly beneficial in that direction. She was anxious to get recognized as a member of the communist party then. With her broader outlook, friendly manners and knowledge of different languages she was able to serve the party in different ways. But she did not extend her membership in the party after the Comintern meeting in 1928. Whether it was inadvertent or deliberate was not clear. But there was no indication that she broke away from the party. She was perhaps concentrating more on practical work rather than on formalities of membership. The atmosphere in the party at that time was riddled by groups. Consequently, some of the members started alleging that she affiliated herself with Trotsky group, which was

detested by the official group. There were no indications to that effect. But there were indications that she was deeply involved in party work in spite of not renewing her membership. Even the Soviet officials opined that she helped a lot in maintaining cordial relations between France and Russia. Ellen was hearing the name of M.N.Roy in the leftist circles since 1926. But she could meet him personally only in 1928.

Before coming in contact with Ellen Roy was married to Evelyn Trent. She was his first wife. She used to write under the pseudonym “SantiDevi” and also made some publications in association with Roy. She was also running the Vanguard journal for some time. She was with him from 1917 to 1926. Then she left him and settled in America.

After that Louise Geisler, who was working with Comintern was closely moving with Roy. There were differences between Roy and Stalin and efforts were being made to make Roy responsible for the failure of the fifth Comintern. Precisely at that time the health of Roy was so bad that he was almost bedridden. At that juncture, Louise took the initiative and succeeded in moving Roy away from Russia with the help of Borodin and Bukharin. She took him to Berlin and got him admitted in a hospital and served him all the time he was in the hospital. It was no doubt a critical stage in the life of Roy. But for her help Roy might not have been saved from the ravages of the party groups as prevailing at that time. Geisler stayed with Roy in an apartment after coming out of the hospital in 1929. Her sister Ewa was a close friend of A.C.N.Nambiar who was acquainted with Roy. Geisler left Roy only after his health was stabilized.

It was at that time, while Roy was under the care of Louise Geisler, that Ellen met Roy personally for the first time. The English version of his book “Revolution and Counter Revolution in China” was smuggled out of Berlin by Ellen. Since then Ellen was staying close to Roy. But Roy was able to express his love for her only in 1930 and the two started living together since then. The idea of marriage was there. But at the same time Roy was entertaining the idea of moving to India. The idea of marriage was pushed to the background. Roy was adamant on returning to India in spite of advice from all his friends and well-wishers that it would be dangerous for him to go to the place ruled by the British. There were many allegations against him there waiting for him. When Roy started his fateful journey to India on 24 November 1930 Ellen stayed back in Berlin looking forward for the day to join him again. She was keeping a watch on the developments in India. Roy was arrested in India on 21 July 1931 and after a mock trial he was sentenced for twelve years in jail. It was a heart rending news. But Ellen did not lose heart. She moved heaven and earth to get him released early from prison. Roy and Ellen were in regular contact through letters. The letters written by Roy were available. But those written by Ellen were not available. He used to advise her not to wait for him all the years and get settled and enjoy life. But she was not thinking on those lines. When his punishment was reduced to six years it was a good news comparatively but Ellen was encouraged to redouble her efforts to get him back. She was keeping Roy informed of the developments in Europe and sending him the papers and journals to keep him in good mood. She had to meet many people, whoever was known to her, to get him released early. She had to earn her living also

simultaneously. What she could earn was not adequate to her own minimum requirements. She did odd jobs. Studied psychological treatises of Freud and Jung and translated them into English. She attempted a reconciliation between Marx and Freud. She earned the confidence and friendship of many of the activists and artists and writers.

Germany was in a chaotic state in 1932. Socialists and communists have become enemies of the public. At that time Ellen received a message from her estranged father after a long time. He knows that his daughter had leftist ideas and so he was afraid that she may fall into some trouble in view of the inimical public opinion prevailing. He earnestly advised her to keep away from trouble and keep herself safe, if necessary by going to any other safe place. The adverse image of her father that she kept hidden all these days within herself was melted under the warmth of his paternal feelings for her. She ran to him and the two were reunited happily.

In the elections held in March, 1933 Nazis won and Hitler came to power. Communist party was banned and the properties of communists were being confiscated. When Ellen tried to reach her home one day she found from far that her house was surrounded by Nazis. She went to friends and stayed with them for some time. When one of her friends tried to enter the house to retrieve her belongings he was arrested. She realized that she could no longer stay in Germany. All these days even if she was out of her family they too were in Germany. She used to keep contact with her sister and brother. If she leaves Germany it would be difficult to maintain the contact. But it was becoming more difficult to get visa to stay there any longer. After the First World War the conditions in Germany were deteriorating fast. Many movements and institutions came up to serve the country. The youth was at a loss to know whither to go. It was at that juncture that Hitler snatched power by winning the election. Those who were communists and leftists till then started to welcome his arrival on the scene. She decided to leave Germany and go to Paris. The only property that she had with her at that time was her American passport, French visa that had to be extended every month and the smuggled copy of the “Revolution and Counter Revolution in China” by Roy.

By the time she reached Paris the city was full of refugees from Germany. Ellen had no money to survive. One of her brother's friends was studying in Paris. She spent some time with her. It also served as an address to receive correspondence from Roy in India. But her stay was obviously illegal. Even in such adverse condition she did not lose heart and her confidence. After all, that was her only property – confidence. Wherever she went she could meet friends and acquaintances who were willing to help her. With the help of one of them she met Prof. Rudolf Older who admitted her as his research assistant. While helping him in his research, she also helped him in writing his books on the Nazi atrocities.

Having come to know of reduction of punishment for Roy to six years she was more optimistic and renewed her efforts to get him out early. She wrote to everybody who knows Roy for help to get his punishment cancelled – Einstein, Roma Rolla, Cripps, Malraux and others. She wrote to all her acquaintances in America, Britain and Holland. She sent messages through mediators.

While doing all this and earning her living she was also involved in reconciling between the various groups in the party as the groups would only weaken the party. Jaquez Eduroith was a prominent figure in the French communist party. He was banned from the party. His crime was that he advised to join hands with socialists to advance the movement. It was not to the liking of the other group that was controlling the party. He was branded Trotskyist and banned from the party. Roy felt it was unjust and also detrimental to party interests. He advised Ellen to meet him personally and reconcile the differences. She met him but it was too late as the parties moved far away from each other. Roy was sorry for the party was losing its activists like this.

One advantage of Paris is that the social life there was not affected by its politics. That is its culture. Among the friends of Ellen there were writers like Malraux and Koestler, artists like Paul Robson. Their political affiliations might be different, but it would not affect their friendship. Ellen established contact with Royists in Bombay in 1934. Even when Roy was abroad for a long time after he left India, there were people who were watching his movements and hailed him as a revolutionary leader of leftist forces. They did not hesitate to call themselves Royists. When Roy returned to Bombay, they helped him settle in secret places far from the preying eyes of the colonial government. But he was betrayed within one year and he was arrested and tried. While he was in jail they gave him moral support just as Ellen was giving from Paris. She visited England, met with Cripps and McMillan and demanded for release of Roy immediately. They did not refuse, but did not act also. She returned to France. One of the close friends of Roy among the top leaders of the party Ville Munsterberg offered her an opportunity to work as a journalist that became a regular source for her income. He too used to express his disappointment with the party leadership. He differed from the party leadership on some occasions earlier. In 1940 he died in suspicious circumstances. Some blamed the Russian agents for it. Some attributed it to suicide. But why should he commit suicide? Nothing was clear. That was the difficulty with communist dictatorship.

In 1936 Ellen established an organization in Berlin to help the writers that come from Germany. She could get full cooperation from Ville for the effort. There was no official objection for the stay of Ellen in Paris because of her role in maintaining friendly relations between Russia and France. When Nehru visited Europe, he met with Ellen and also carried a message from her to Roy. Nehru was also a member on the committee formed to defend Roy.

Whenever Roy felt depressed in the jail Ellen used to encourage him saying that they would establish a research and publishing organization in India after he comes out. True to what she said she did it after she came to India. His magnum opus "The Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science" was the crux of his letters he wrote from prison. It was with her help that Roy was able to give it the shape of a book and got published.

The day that Ellen was waiting for has arrived on 20 november1936 when Roy came out of the prison in India. She could not wait for her journey to come to India after that to meet him. But things do not move as fast as we wish. Her passport had to be extended. When she approached

the American Consul, they offered a free advice (instructions in disguise) to go to America. She agreed to go to America but only after seeing the Eastern countries once before settling there in America. Somehow the authorities were convinced of her sincerity and extended her passport for one year. She needed the permission from British authorities as India was under their rule. She did not feel much resistance there. As a result Ellen stepped on the Indian soil on 4 march 1937. Roy and his friends were there in attendance to receive her at the harbor. On 10 March, 1937 they were married under the Special Marriages Act in the office of the Registrar of Marriages in Bombay. Ms.Ellen Gottschalk got metamorphosed into Mrs. Ellen Roy. The Mayor of Bombay Jamnadas Mehta Bombay Congress President K.F.Nariman and Abdul Rahim Mitta were witnesses to the marriage.

She did not lose time to start her work in India. The weekly “Independent India” was started from 4 April, 1937 itself. Ellen put into it all that she brought with her while coming to India. She was not having any other thoughts for her future. “This is our child” she declared with full satisfaction. The same child is now running under a different name as Radical Humanist with effect from 1949. The monthly journal Marxian Way was the other child of the new couple. It is now running as Humanist Way. The property that constitutes the 13 Mohini Road in Dehradun was acquired by friends and followers and registered as Indian Renaissance Institute. That has become the center for the renaissance movement in India and also the residence for the new couple. It is also called the Roshan Bagh by the local people.

2. HER DAILY CHORE IN INDIA

Number 13 is a dreaded number for occult believers not only of Hindus and Indians but of all religions and countries – both East and West. We don't know whether the house No.13 on Mohini Road in Dehradun was chosen by them or it was the only premises available. But the Roy couple was not in a position to choose. They had to take whatever was made available to them by the well-wishers who were equally skeptical. It was their residence as well as the center for all the intellectual activity of renaissance movement. For Ellen it was a sacred place and she felt it her duty to keep it clean and safe. The place occupied by wild growth all the time was in no time converted into a beautiful garden. Ellen was very proud of the flowers and fruits grown in the garden. She used to write about it even to her sister in Germany in order to convince her that she is happy in India with all comforts. But the sister was not so naïve as to believe it. Ellen did not have even a friz in the house at that time. While coming to India she brought with her some books a type machine and a few music records. They were her intimate companions to spend time, if she had time.

As a housewife she took stock of the financial position of the house. They were able to spend time without want depending on the arrangements made by the followers of Roy. She did not expect more than that. She never tasted any luxury in her life. Unfortunately that was how she spent all her life, even after marriage. In addition to making the garden decorative to her taste, she found it necessary to make it utilitarian by growing vegetables. She prepared compost also to feed the plants. No doubt, there were domestic servants. But as a matter of principle, she used to engage herself with some work or other. She took care to provide for all the household and visitors. It was her abode.

Immediately after leaving the bed every morning, she attends to the plants first. She waters them plucks the dead leaves and moves them to expose to the sun. Then she enters the kitchen, cleans it up and starts making tea by the time others wake up. She used to write letters to her brother and sister within that time. They were the only personal matters for her. After all the time is meant for her husband and for the movement. The mail used to arrive early in the morning along with newspapers and magazines. At that time the radical humanist was being published from Calcutta. Every day the matter was required to be sent to Roy for his approval. It passes to him after her perusal. By that time many of their friends used to arrive and start discussions on current affairs. Only after they leave Roy commences his work. Whatever he wrote in the preceding night – essays and book parts – he used to entrust to Ellen. It was her responsibility to go through them, make corrections and additions wherever required and give them a shape to be recorded. The articles written had to be sent to relevant papers and book forms secured for printing later. Whenever Roy makes a speech anywhere Ellen used to be by his side making a shorthand of it. Whenever she finds time later she makes a fair copy of the same give it the shape of an edited essay and preserve it.

Roy was an impressive personality to look at, with his height of six feet and four inches, bright eyes and smiling lips. Unfortunately, his health was never so impressive. While it was damaged for the first time when he was in Russia (and saved by Louise Griesler), his stay in the Indian

jails for six years also had its toll. It would not be reasonable to expect it to be otherwise after the jail term for such a long time. His ill health happened to be the heaviest burden on Ellen. His heart was weak. Enlargement of heart was one of the ailments suffered by him in Russia rendering him immovable. It would have been a serious threat but for the timely help of Ms. Griesler. He had asthma. Because of the allergy some things were forbidden for him. His mind was active, but there was nervous weakness. He could not stand on his legs for a long time continuously. He grows impatient and gets irritated easily. In his ambition to get his ideas through, he used to react violently for any criticism. Ellen took upon herself the responsibility to cover up all his deficiencies from his friends and acquaintances and visitors and save his image. His imperfections and inconsistencies were successfully covered up by her and presented to the public as a respectable philosopher. But for Ellen Roy might have lost many of his followers and admirers.

Dr. Durgaprasad used to keep a watch on his health almost on a daily basis. It was Ellen's responsibility to ensure that Roy follows the prescriptions of the doctor and give him the medicines at prescribed time in proper doses. After this compulsory schedule is completed, if there is any time available, Ellen takes up the shorthand notes of his lectures for typing. It would not be an exaggeration if we say that the writings of Roy were brought to light by Ellen single handed.

Like all housewives she used to bargain with vegetable vendors and shopkeepers. She learnt Hindi to the extent necessary for the purpose. She could manage with her English in conversations with the friends and visitors as they were all educated persons. She had to speak to the relatives of Roy in Bengali. Even if she tried to learn the dialect, she could not manage it well and hesitated to speak it. The ambition to learn more languages died down over the years. She was feeling short of time even to do things essential at the time. Naturally, learning new languages did not get priority.

She choose a particular schedule to feed the household. After tea in the morning, there was lunch at ten in the morning itself. There was nothing in the noon. Biscuits and tea were given at about four in the evening with a sumptuous dinner early in the night. As people were accustomed to lunch in the noon, there were occasions when the guests were disappointed on their first visit. There were many cats loitering in the house. She used to feed them as well. They were the friends of Roy while he was in the prison and he continued the friendship even after coming out. In fact those who suffer with asthma are forbidden any contact with cats.

Some of the followers of Roy used to spend fixed amounts of money every year to the Renaissance Institute. Some used to contribute as and when they feel it convenient. Ellen used to convey thanks to each of them. They used to get some remuneration for their writings published in journals, but it was never of any significant amount and they could not count on it for any purpose. Even now freelance journalism is in the same stage in India. Occasionally she found it necessary to send SOS messages seeking assistance to make both ends meet.

Like any other woman she too was fond of decoration and jewels. The chain that adorned her neck was made of beads of colored glass. The other jewels found with her were a watch and ear pendants made of silver studded with pearls. She never had any costly jewels for herself.

Sometimes in the afternoons Roy used to dictate his essays which Ellen records in shorthand. Roy goes to rest after that and Ellen starts her work to make fair of those lectures. She could find time for her own preferences after that for writings, readings and guidance to the Radical Humanist journal. Shopping cannot be avoided if you have to run a household. Whenever she finds the need friends used to send their car with driver to enable her go shopping. Later there was a driver engaged at the Institute also.

Roy used to narrate his experiences casually during conversations with his friends while taking tea. Even that was recorded by Ellen. Sometimes some of the friends coming for a chat used to bring food for the household reducing the work for Ellen. Along with friends, critics also used to visit the Institute for fruitful discussions with him. Roy used to wait for such opportunities eagerly. After all, it is by such discussions that he would be able to spread his ideas. One difficulty with Roy was his nervous weakness. It makes him lose his temper too easily. When he feels that the other party is not willing to see the reason as he expects, he used to get annoyed. The discussion then takes unexpected lines. In such situations Ellen tries to divert the attention of the participants to something else thereby cooling the situation. She consciously tries to ensure that the visitors who participate in the discussions are not offended or disappointed in any way. It was her self-assumed responsibility to ensure that the estimate of Roy was not belittled in any way. She took care of him and his ideas as well.

3. THE IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENED

The father of Ellen was a German by birth. But he acquired American citizenship and settled in America. Her mother was a German. She herself was born in Paris while her father was working there. She had her elementary education there. Because of the transfer of her father, her subsequent education was in Germany. According to law and according to her passport, she was an American. But she never stepped on to that continent, except once in 1955 after the death of her Indian husband Roy. Wherever she went she was considered a foreigner. In her view all the countries are her countries equally.

When she was studying in Germany, there were Germans and Americans among her friends. Naturally the German culture was more obvious. She noticed some difference in the values prevailing there from what she absorbed through her experiences. When America entered the First World War all the American citizens were herded to Switzerland. She felt offended that they were not treated with dignity. (But later at the time of Second World War, America also did the same with Japanese). She never had to face any adversity in her school by virtue of being an American. In spite of her special talents, her friends never treated her differently.

There were competitions conducted in the school during the war time. The competitions were intended to train the students to show respect to the soldiers and offer them gifts. Songs were written to that effect. Ellen too wrote some songs that earned prizes. Her drawings merited a special show. That was amazing to some of her friends since the war was against America to which she belongs. By that time Ellen was not aware of what the war was. Her mother was a German. She too detested war not because it was against France or America. For her war itself was an undesirable venture. Ellen too used to feel something bad about it.

After the First World War Germany introduced some reforms in their education system. Student associations were formed in classes. Ellen used to participate actively in it. She used to argue that science must be given prominent place in the syllabus as against religious matters. People with such ideas were derided as communists and called “commus”. Ellen knew that the derisive word refers to communists, but she did not know what communism was. When she was herself blamed as a communist, she decided to know what it means. She made a deep study of it. Instead of repulsion she got attracted to it. The ideas of international outlook ignoring the borders of countries impressed her very much. In addition, she also fell for the demand for equality and antireligious teachings of communism. It has become her ideal.

Later when she left the safety of her house on differences with her father, she felt the need to erase the borders between countries at every step. At every stage police asked her for her passport and visa to stay in Germany which were not required when she stayed with her family. When she approached the American Consulate for extension of her passport they asked her why she was staying in Germany and why she did not go back to her native America. When she asked the German authorities for a visa to stay in Germany, they asked her why she wants to stay in Germany. She had to give answers as they required. Strictly speaking, she has no work anywhere and has no country of her own. It was enough for her if she is allowed to stay where she was and

allowed to have her own way of life. She spent her time in self-education, in odd jobs and with friends. If anybody asked her to which country she belonged, she had to think about it. Is it necessary that everybody should belong to some country? One of the developments in Germany was gradual decline in international outlook and preponderance of nationalism. A sort of antagonism developed against foreigners. An international conference was held on behalf of Green International Peasants. It was permitted by the government. Even then, the police invaded the premises when the conference was going on and snatched the passports of all those who were present there. Ellen too lost her passport then. She found a man sitting in a corner. She expected him to be in the same condition as herself. She just enquired whether the police took his passport also. He immediately took out his passport, tore it to pieces and tried to chew it. It was his passport of Poland which was an enemy country for Germany. It might have been trouble for him if he was caught with it. Somehow he escaped. But when she enquired about it, he felt that she might be an agent of the government and tried to destroy the evidence against himself. (It reminds one about the joke on Stalin regime. When a group of persons were chatting, a man appeared and asked whether they like Stalin. One of them took him aside and whispered in his ears that he loves Stalin very much. What does it indicate?)

After some time police returned the passport of Ellen. But she could not get a visa to stay in Germany. Even without that she stayed there for about three years. After Hitler came to power there was deterioration in the situation. Instead of asking 'why you are here?' they were asking 'why don't you go away?' When she made an application for visa, it attracted vigil over her and her residence. The other people residing in the complex also suffered. It has become a ghost house. Ellen felt confident that no one would dare to enter the house and her belongings would be safe there.

It took a long time for her to get the passport extended. Meanwhile it has become a problem to escape from the German police. She decided to go to France. There was a French Consulate in Berlin. If you want to get a visa to enter France, you have to give your passport there. It takes time – a long time – to know the fate of the request. Meanwhile you have to stay without a passport even and could be arrested. If you want a visa for a short period, it would be easy. But Ellen needs it for a long stay. It takes a long time to process it. A fee also was payable on the application. But she was anxious to leave Germany at the earliest. If you just enter into France, you can think of the consequences later, she thought. After all, it was the country that she was born in. Thus after the passport was extended, she entered France and went to Paris. She tried to regularize her stay there and settle in some job. When she approached the police department, she found it a hell. It was crowded with Jews who left Germany and anxious to get permission to stay in France. Nobody was sure whether he gets it or not and if he gets it when it would be. She noticed that there were unusually frequent shake hands and realized there was some significance in each of them. Immediately after the shake hand the person was getting the visa. Nobody was willing to leave France. She stayed in Paris for two years without residence permit. Then she received a notice demanding she leave the country. She pocketed the notice and spent another

two years. Meanwhile there was an agreement between France and Russia. The concerned Russian officers know her while she was in Berlin. They felt it better to have her services to strengthen the relations between the two countries. Official arrangements were made for her stay in France.

All this experience left an indelible impression on Ellen. Why are these borders between the countries? What is this drama of passports and visas? Why should anybody give permission to anybody to stay anywhere? She recalled of what she knew about the communist philosophy. It brought her nearer to that party. She remembered many of her friends do not have a passport or visa. She decided to help them. It was just in her nature. Even when she was staying against law, she was able to get her food somehow and she never starved for want of food. It was because of her friends and she could not afford to ignore them now. While doing her odd jobs she was helpful to prof. Rudolf Older in finalizing his books “Brown Book Against Nazism” and “White Book of Pogroms in Germany” These books were published later by the League of Nations. A ship carrying children was drowned by the Germans. Prof. Older also was drowned along with the children.

She used to cook in the old age homes. Many of her friends used to gather in her room every day. They consist of workers, poets and writers, all anti-Nazis. The food she had she shared with all the others.

Some people were jealous as she had an American passport as it carries some privileges with it. But she did not have any use of those privileges as she never availed of it. When she approached the American Consul for extension of passport, the officer there asked her “Why don’t you go to America?” “Is there a dearth of unemployed people there?” she asked her “Here I am filling my belly somehow. What shall I do going there?” Her passport was extended.

Before coming to India she went to the American Consulate for extension of passport. The lady officer there asked her why she wants it. She replied “I want to go to India and get married there”. The officer then told her that she will never get her passport extended on that ground because American citizens are not allowed to marry Hindus. She advised Ellen to give some other cause. Then Ellen told her that she wants extension of visa as she wants to visit Eastern countries before settling in America. Extension was granted. After coming to India and got married, she got a fourth country which she could claim her own. There was no more need for passports and visas. Even if she looked foreigner, she believed India was her country. “I am just like you. If I am imprisoned, no consul would come to my rescue. I am not thinking of any other home for me” she declared. After that somebody stole her hand bag containing her passport. With that she lost the umbilical cord with America. Even then America considered her an American citizen till her death.

A police officer in India approached her telling her to get registered as a foreigner. She told him she has no papers proving that she is a foreigner. If at all she has to be considered a foreigner she

would be an American and as it is a friendly country, it would not be necessary to get registered. The officer felt satisfied and left. That was how she loved India. In return, what did India give her?

By December, 1944 France was free from German occupation. Both were her countries in one sense. That is, for her, one native country got relieved from another native country. If the native country Germany has to get freedom, it has to be defeated in the war by another native country. Then what is the meaning of countries and borders? Ellen had a wish that someday she will have an opportunity to visit all her native countries and renew her acquaintances. It was one of her unfulfilled ambitions.

4. HER INDIVIDUALITY

Every person has a personality. It is manifest in his or her appearance and demeanor which helps in identification of the person. In addition to that certain persons have an individuality of their own. It is manifest in the values they cherish and the ideals they uphold and the purpose they choose for their life to make it meaningful. Viewed from that angle, Ellen Roy could be seen as an individual with high values and noble ideals.

As a housewife she made all her people happy – those who were part of the house and those who visited the house. She made them feel they belong to one family – the family of ideals. While looking after the members of the household, she also took care of the cats roaming in the house. Being a revolutionary in her ideals, in her personal conduct she was kind and gentle and liberal in her approach to others. Even at the pitch of arguments she managed to ensure that no feathers are roughened.

Her association with Roy did not start with a love at first sight. Even before she met Roy in person she was hearing of him in the leftist movements. She was impressed by his activities and dedication to ideals. She realized that there is some similarity between the ideals and values cherished by both of them. As Rocha Sara swat said, she found her reflection in him. That is what brought them together and kept them working to the end. She served Roy not because she was his wife. She became his wife because she recognized him as an individual worth supporting and emulating. She was an idealist and chose it as the purpose of her life to propagate those ideals. That is the basic difference between Ellen and other faithful wives. When this difference is recognized, we cannot afford to compare Ellen with traditionally faithful wives. Every great man had a wife who served him faithfully. But those wives had nothing to do with the ideology or politics of their husbands. That is because they do not have any ideology of their own. It is not that we deprecate or underestimate their contribution. That is their way of life. They feel satisfied that they are doing their duty as a wife. But Ellen was something more than a wife to Roy. She stood by him as an anchor and points man. She never craved for wealth or luxury. She never found fault with him for not providing her with luxury. She chose Roy as the man who could stand for her ideas and ideals. She worshipped him as a reflection of her own individuality. She did everything to enthrone the individuality and image of Roy without any reservation even to sacrifice her own identity and image. That is why we find it necessary to bring out her identity and individuality for realistic estimation and appreciation.

Richard Park, the President of the Association of Asian Studies was a close friend of Roy. He was there with Roy when he was in Mussorie in his last days. Once Park was travelling from Delhi to Mussorie. Agehananda Bharati was also with him. On the way to Mussorie he wanted to meet Roy in Dehradun. He had an impression that Roy does not like the saints and ochre robes. So he stopped his car at the entrance to the compound and told Agehananda to stay in the car while he would have a short talk with Roy and come back in a few minutes. But after a short time Roy came out with Park to the car and invited him respectfully to his abode and took him inside. Having entered into conversation with Roy Agehananda Bharati stayed with him for two days continuously and derived immense pleasure of the meeting. Agehananda Bharati was a

professor in the Syracuse University. In spite of being in a place of educational center, he could not get to know of any person with whom he could have meaningful discussion on philosophical matters. He found such a person in Roy and felt enriched with his discussions for over two days. After that Agehananda used to meet with Roy frequently. He dedicated his research work “Great Traditions and Little Traditions – Indological Studies in Cultural Anthropology” to Roy. Such was the affection he developed for Roy. During all his meetings Ellen did not try to impose herself on those deliberations. Thus Agehananda could not have an opportunity to know her closely. But he came to know of her better later and regretted that he should have included her name as well in the dedication of his book. Such was the self-negligence of Ellen. She did not crave for the lime light. Even those who were close to Roy failed to appreciate her contributions and recognize her individuality. “Ellen is an individual of renaissance” proclaimed Agehananda Bharati.

Ellen had great regard for the philosophy of Karl Popper.

Once an intellectual takes a stand on a subject, he usually tries to stick to it at any cost and refuses to see the other side of it. That is one of the drawbacks of intellectual pursuits. But Ellen was not like that. She was always willing to reconsider her opinions. She happened to write some articles in the Radical Humanist supporting cooperative agriculture. Later when A.B.Shah met her he brought to her notice some of the research articles published by one Mr.Deshpande in Marathi language. He pointed out with examples that productivity in community agriculture is always far below than in other forms of agriculture. In the light of those research results she agreed to change her opinion about farming.

In the light of her personal experience and understanding of the European situation, she explained the political forces playing in Europe before the commencement of Second World War. Every leader warns that the coming war will destroy civilization. But every country was actually involved in preparations for war. That was the same with all the leaders and countries. Everybody knows that war is equal to a mass suicide. There will be no winners. All are losers only. Even then nobody tries to prevent war. Everybody says it is inevitable. That is the dichotomy between the personal opinions and practical acts of the leaders. Everybody declares that it is a crime to use poison gases even in war. But nobody believes others and earnestly prepares in making gas masks. There will be many agreements between the leaders but none of them will be honored finally. Everybody manufactures weapons of mass destruction and proclaims it is only for self-protection. Preposterous!

Ellen found fault with Britain and France as they remained mere spectators while Germany was occupying European countries one by one. Everybody felt the same after the event. They opposed the formation of Customs Union to keep Austria free from occupation. But when actually the occupation started, they remained mute spectators.

Imperialism gave birth to fascism. But it grew to a stage where it has become a threat to imperialism itself. Britain stepped aside to escape the fate. Ellen declared that both are of the same blood. That was how Hitler was able to occupy even Czechoslovakia. In his first attempt he stepped back in view of his precarious financial conditions. Everybody in Europe misinterpreted it as due to opposition in Europe. Hitler was never daunted by opposing forces. He made proper arrangements in his second attempt and sent his forces to the border and encouraged the German residents in Czechoslovakia to revolt. None of the European countries offered support to Czechoslovakia. The best industrial part of the country fell for Hitler. What all he wanted was the immovable property lying there and he got it. Ellen prophesied that Hitler would try to occupy the colonies of Spain, Portugal and France after he finishes with Austria and Czechoslovakia. She also said that Hitler would try later to take over that part of Soviet land where Germans are living, but he would not succeed in that effort she said. She has also explained that the efforts of Hitler, in spite of being branded as fascist by the imperialists, were really the onslaught of imperialism on the forces that stand by the poor and backward countries. It indicated her deep understanding of the forces that were playing in the international field and how the countries behave different from what their leaders proclaim.

After the propagation of her ideals, the one aspect that was dear to her heart was “nature”. That is what we are now calling environment and claim to protect. She tried to stay near to the nature as part of it. The vast open area around her residence gave her an opportunity to ventilate her preference to nature and respect for it. She created a nature there according to her vision. She procured different varieties of plants and trees and planted them in her garden. Every season has its flowers there in that garden. Plants that were not available there were obtained by her and nourished carefully. Some of the plants and trees found in her garden were not to be found anywhere else except in the Forest Research Center in Dehradun. That shows the sincerity of her efforts and love for nature. Her garden got recognition as the best in Dehradun many times in competitions. She got prizes in almost every flower exhibition held there. When she visited America for the first and last time, she brought back some rare plants and seeds with her. She was obliged to keep them in quarantine for some time according to the law in force.

She was so confident of her horticultural skills that she declared she would be serving as horticulturist for the Government of India if need be, that is, if she has nothing better to do. Once while she was talking to her friends in the house there was a sudden torrent of rain and in a few minutes the rivulets were full with water flowing. She said anxiously “Don’t you hear the noise of the water in the rivulet? Let us go and enjoy it” and led them to the rivulet near her house. There would be no water there except when there was a heavy rain. She would be waiting for it. The rapid flow of water with its whirls and musical sounds is the face of real nature appreciated by her so deeply. It is that never fading novelty that proves life – both in nature and the individual.

In her garden there is a peculiar orange tree. It does not grow like other orange trees nor was it a bonsai. Its fruits are as small as limes but yield a sweet juice. She used to make a special drink

out of it. She claims to have brewed it all by herself. But 'brew' is the term associated with alcoholic liquors normally. That was why one of her guests Said Ayub declined to taste it. He said it was the only dictate of Sharia that he wants to follow – not to take liquors. Ellen assured him that it was not alcoholic in any sense and even children taste it with satisfaction. After persuasion he was convinced and tried to taste it. But his body revolted immediately and he put it down. Ellen was so much upset and felt sorry for persuading him to break his oaths. Her friends include such variety of people. Every one of them gets the same cordial treatment.

Cactus is a xerophyte with thorns. But it bears beautiful flowers. A variety of it is such that it flowers only in the night. It starts blooming at dusk and continues until midnight when it opens completely. Ellen used to get her friends gather around it by that time every year and enjoy the scene minute by minute. She becomes a child at that time. It enables her to enjoy more. Every time it was a surprise for her as if it was the first time she was seeing it. She took photos of it at different stages and decorated in her room and also shared with her friends. She got the plant as a gift from one of her friends in Hawaii. Grafts of it were distributed to some of her friends. It would be a day of festival at 13 Mohini Road whenever the tree blooms.

She had a place for everybody in her heart. And also in her mind. When she went to America in 1955 after the death of her husband, she met with Evelyn Trent, the first wife of Roy. They had friendly chat and Ellen asked her to keep writing for the Radical Humanist. She could not get and no regrets for it. She claimed that she could earn her tour expenses by her lectures there. It is the usual arrangement by the friends there.

She requested the Rockefeller Foundation for financial support for publication of the works of Roy. They expressed their inability to undertake such a heavy project. Asia Foundation granted 3,000 dollars. Prime Minister Nehru arranged for an annual grant of Rs.6,000 for three years. She accepted with all humility all the contributions and carried on her burden without complaints. She did not seek any recognition for her own invaluable contribution. She did it for her own satisfaction. She derived satisfaction in working under the banyan tree that was Roy. After his death the shade has gone revealing her individuality and demanded recognition on her own. There were no successors to Roy except his wife Ellen. There are many followers. But the responsibilities of a successor are different. There was no other person with the required philosophical commitment and identity to do the work. While every other follower had his or her own life, Ellen had her responsibilities alone as her life. For all the followers and admirers his New Humanism was just a political philosophy. For Ellen it was her breath and purpose of life.

It was but natural that the responsibility fell on the shoulders of Ellen after the death of her husband. She proved she had the will and capacity to discharge the responsibility. She strived hard to uphold the torch lit by Roy. She stood at the central point for the movement. She used to remind the followers of their responsibility to the movement. She knows that people in cultural revolution will always face resistance and criticism. That was why she did not seek public

support on scale obtained by political leaders. She counted on the active support of the few people who were convinced of the philosophy and became his followers.

After the death of Roy many of their friends visited her offering condolences. One of the friends raised a very sensitive and personal question which stirred the inner depths of the person. He asked “Why didn’t you have children?” She was stunned for a minute and recollected herself. “Roy used to discourage it always” was her meek reply. Why so? He used to point to the children of other celebrities and prominent persons who have become parasites and worthless by themselves. He was afraid, if he gets children they would be like that and he did not like it. On the face of it, it was ridiculous. Why should anybody think so bad of his offspring? Just because others happened to be worthless, can you avoid having children? It was preposterous. But Roy did not agree. In her explanation there was a flood of sorrow hidden. She could not hide her disappointment and helplessness. She bore with it all these years without any external indication. Manavendra Nath Roy might have been a great intellectual and a philosopher. But in this regard he stands with a burden of great blunder in his life. She dedicated herself to him in every respect heart and soul. She did not ask him for any physical comforts. It was perhaps the only wish she has expressed, the most natural desire that could be fulfilled only by him legitimately. The rejection of such a wish by him has to be called the most cruel on his part. No argument could justify him. The philosopher who declared man as archetype of society could not be expected to be so timid. Why was he afraid of his responsibilities as a man and as a husband? Why was he afraid of becoming a father? How could such a coward become a materialist philosopher? In spite of being a great intellectual, Roy failed to live a full life as an individual and on his way rendered the life of his beloved wife also unfulfilled. This matter must have come for discussion between them more than once as her reply indicated. But Ellen did not insist on it as vehemently as he rejected it. Why did she submit herself to that extent? What would have happened if she were equally adamant? After all, it was the natural wish of any woman. One can make any number of arguments on it. All of it would be only post facto regrets. It was the past. Now Ellen remains alone, rejected and dejected as well. Still she bears his torch faithfully.

5. ON EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

After settling in India, Ellen also became a part of the Indian society, willingly so to say. She understood the place of women in the society here in contrast to what she saw in the West. She mingled freely with the local women and was also in contact with some of the activists in the feminist movement. She was invited to address the women in the All India Women's Study Circle organized in Dehradun in 1943. By birth Ellen was not an Indian. According to her own experiences, she did not belong to any particular country. In one sense she was a citizen of the world. Naturally her opinions and ideas in regard to women were not confined to any particular country or region. Even then, she applied her experiences to what she observed in Indian society after analyzing the circumstances here.

The Center was filled with educated and progressive women of the society at that time. The main question raised by Ellen in the course of her lecture was whether intelligence could be different for men and women. When both men and women are equally intelligible, where is the need to organize this meeting particularly for women, she asked. In her opinion the only fundamental differences between men and women are only physical and caused because of the women's responsibility to bear children. It is the main intention of all movements of women to acquire equal rights with men in all other respects. Biologically speaking it is the most reasonable demand, she said. In spite of any differences in the bodies consequent to the procreative responsibilities, there is practically no difference between men and women, particularly in their mental capacities. When necessary even women were doing physical work on par with men. They could acquire any skills. But historically the mental and physical capacities of women are being underestimated. That necessitates the movements like this.

At any time the place of women in the society depends on the social system prevailing at that time. Because of that it is not possible to improve the position of women without reference to the other aspects of the society. Time is past for such movements that were tackling the problem with such a narrow outlook. When the question of human rights were raised at the time of French Revolution, the rights of women also were part of it. At the present juncture we don't find anybody who denies equality of men and women. In spite of political backwardness of this country the women here are enjoying better status than what our grandmothers enjoyed in Europe. But the anachronistic traditions and habits are instrumental in suppressing the women. The present responsibility is to search for a way out of these traditions and habits.

The problem of women in India is linked to the problems of society in general. If we want to spread the rights that are now available, we have to take the entire society into consideration without restricting to women alone. The reason for neglecting women's education is the failure to implement the compulsory education and the refusal of governments to recognize it as one of their primary responsibilities. Because of that failure not only women but everybody in the society is deprived of some advantage. Thus it turned out to be a political problem.

The traditional joint family also has become a hindrance to women's education and advancement. In fact, this joint family is a remnant of the feudal society. Because of it, along with women, even other members of society are suffering. Women had no relief from domestic responsibilities and had no time to think of other aspects of life. Poverty and ignorance are the main causes of it. This also is a problem troubling the entire society. It means that all the restrictions, disabilities and troubles are being experienced by everybody in the Indian society – men, women, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. To solve this problem it is not enough to limit our efforts to emancipation of women only. We have to strive hard to solve the social, political and economic conditions now prevailing in the society.

Because it is the problem that is troubling the entire country, it cannot be expected to be solved by somebody else. Half the society consists of women. When they want equality with men we cannot put the entire responsibility for it on men alone. Those activists who want to improve the conditions of women have to participate in the movements to change the society at large. They must take responsibility for it. Then only they will be able to realise the dream of equal rights and equal opportunities. The world has not yet realized the ideals of the days of French Revolution. When those ideals are accepted universally, women also will get equality and respect on par with men. All the responsibilities of men and all the domestic responsibilities of women are not equal to the responsibilities towards children. The social serfdom does not affect men as much as it affects women. Because of that women entered very late in political movements. Women suffered despair as they did not find a way to realise their higher ideals and aspirations. It affected their self-confidence. The feeling of inferiority caught hold of them. In that situation they tried to grab the minimum opportunities that were available and used it for revolt imitating men. That is not so respectable an attitude. Women have the opportunity to present themselves as different from men and more respectable than men. Women have the capacity to clear the political stage. It is not necessary to wear pants only to be a good speaker and effective orator. To propagate an idea it is not necessary to resort to blame and abuse. It is not necessary to roll in dirt to practice an ideal. There are many things that women can do better than men. For that purpose we have to discard the feeling of inferiority that we have inherited from our grandmothers. There is no use of struggling with our femininity all the twentyfour hours. It will not help us to participate in social life. When you look at the history of women's movements you will find times of valour and failures. Many of the great women will stand before us. But none of them were confined only to women's problems. They have been great because they have given solutions to human problems. Radical changes in society are bound to come. But we should not wait for it to come. We can establish the place of women in the society by participating in social movements and proving that we too can achieve progress. The injustices in society cannot be changed overnight. You have to influence others by your conduct and individual culture. Those who know you and acquainted with you must be tempted to emulate you. They must be made to crave to adopt your ideals and values in life.

The main purpose of today's meeting is to decide on what women should do, how they should think and act in the present day society. My only answer to that is that we should rise as political powers. We have to help progress in the society. We have to pass on a better society to our children. But remember, we have to do it not merely as women, but as responsible citizens of the society. Instead of being witnesses to the movements, we shall run the movements. Such a movement is historical necessity and it is bound to succeed.

That was the opinion of Ellen Roy regarding the place and responsibilities of women in our society. Even leading a movement itself was a walk on razor's edge in those days. Whatever you write in support of women was not appreciated. Particularly any discussion of problems like birth control was also anathema. It was used as an excuse to keep women in bondage. In 1947 Ellen wrote an essay advocating birth control. It was translated into Telugu language and published by late Alapati Ravindranath in one of his monthly journals titled "Jyothi" from Tenali in Andhra. A great savior of society went to court alleging that it was obscene and it was a crime to publish it. It was a herculean task for a reformer like Ravindranath to come clear of it. That were the conditions prevailing in 1948 in Andhra. Later journals for sex education were also published from Tenali. It was a different story. The pity is that the so-called progressive society of America is still reeling under the same illusion as India suffered in 1948.

In her message to the women's movement Ellen demonstrated how she was herself bound by the ideals in which she believed. She conducted the Humanist Movement with the same spirit. It showed her clear understanding of social problems. She never conceded a place for narrow outlook. That was how she dedicated herself to the New Humanist Movement.

6. THE WIFE WHO DEDICATED HER LIFE

When Roy decided to return to India in 1930, none of his friends appreciated his decision. Every one of them tried desperately to prevent him as they were aware of the consequences of his decision. He was sure to be arrested and imprisoned by the colonial government. Why to step into the tiger's mouth knowingly? But Roy was adamant on his decision. He defied all the advices of his friends. But in his heart, Roy was conscious that he is doing something against the sincere advice of his friends and well-wishers. On the day he was scheduled to board the ship he again sent a message to his friends that he was prepared to cancel his visit if his friends want so. But there was no response from them until the ship left with him on board. Ellen was by his side and she did not take on herself to dissuade him. When the ship was on the open sea the message came from his friends that they want him to stay back. But it was too late and he continued his fateful journey to India.

Roy was arrested in India on 21 July, 1931. From that date until he was released on 20 November, 1936 he was in the jails in India. Till then Ellen was waiting for the news in Berlin all the six years. It was unusual for a girl of that age in Europe to wait for a loved one for such a long time. It would be possible only when there is something more than love in the traditional sense. There was a commitment on her part involving her ideals and values that she wanted to realise in her life. She felt it necessary to have his association to achieve that. In his letters from jail Roy used to advise her strongly that it would be unwise for her to wait for him for such a long time and not to waste her valuable life for him. But she did not give up even when she was told that he would be imprisoned for a long period of twelve years. Later the punishment was reduced to six years to cut short the ordeal. We should not strike off as just 'love' for the man. It was no doubt 'love' but also something more than that, something higher as well. It was not just a matter of personal attraction. It was the decision based on identity of ideals and values. Purpose for life originated with Homo sapiens in the universe and it is the purpose that guides human life. When the purpose is intertwined with that of another, the association becomes inevitable and inseparable. From the beginning she was an idealist. It was a habit for her to live in the way she believed in. Intention to realise her values always guided her life and she did not step back even in dire situations. The presence of personal attraction could not be denied. But identity of purpose made the attraction stronger. Both of them were confirmed communists at one stage, but catapulted out later after some bitter experiences.

The fact that it was not just accidental for Roy to come out of the suffocating grip of communism was proved by his letter addressed to Stalin later. In that letter he lamented that he could not reconcile to the fact that culture, credibility and truthfulness had no place in Bolshevism. Because of that he bade good bye to the party itself. It might be because of the persons in authority rather than due to any deficiency in its philosophy itself. But he was disillusioned by the philosophy that could give rise to such ruthless leadership and stepped out without losing any more time. He could not fit himself into any other political mould as nothing came nearer to his outlook. After seeing that letter Ellen started almost worshipping Roy. She knows that if only he

were prepared to accept the party line, he would have been occupying exalted positions in the party hierarchy. But he discarded it so easily in order to stick to his own convictions and philosophy. That showed his individuality. It was also true that he could not achieve anything on par with other politicians. Neither Roy nor Ellen regretted it in their lives. Coming to know of him and getting acquainted with him, Ellen felt that what she was searching for in life was before her. She felt that life with him would take her to realise her goal in life. That identity of outlook has become the inseparable bondage between them. There would be no place for differences and dissatisfactions when the experiences and ideologies of the two are the same. In order to give shape to her ideas she felt it desirable to associate herself with this man in her life. She merged herself into her personality. She did not seek a separate identity and recognition for herself. It was not necessary, she felt. She believed it would be easier for her to reach her goal if she travels with him. That belief guided and dictated her life to the end.

Before developing that sense of dedication, Ellen never thought that her life will one day move around a particular individual. She had a very strong individuality of her own. When she was not happy with the behavior of her father, she dared to come out of the house and stood on the road without anything to eat. She tasted troubles, insults and privations in her life and never blamed anybody for it. At every stage she could uphold her independence and dignity. Such a person was now dedicating herself to another man and prepared to forget herself in living with him. It was something higher than the so-called love. It would not be possible unless there is complete identity of values and purposes in life. That was what changed her life.

She never claimed herself as belonging to any particular country or religion. In spite of having advantage of American citizenship, she never stepped into that country until 1955, after the death of her husband. She came to India as a citizen of the world. Arriving in India on 4 March, 1937 was a milestone in her life. She used to celebrate the day every year as if it was her birth day. She spent her life like that for 16 years. The couple used to go around the country to escape the winter of Dehradun, giving lectures and propagating their views and philosophy. They inevitably return to Roshan Bagh and invite their friends to spend happy time. As long as she lived with Roy she did not entertain any other ambition in life. She had no time to think of it as she was immersed in her self-assumed responsibilities. She found a meaning for her life in living with him and for him, which was as much a life for her own ideals. She derived satisfaction of having a complete life.

She might have spent the six years in Berlin waiting for his release thinking of a life like this. It does not mean that she had no problems in her life in India. They had to encounter many adversities in living a life as expected and in getting their philosophy accepted. There are people who adored Roy as an ideal person. Similarly there were people who condemned him and also resorted to false propaganda against him. Particularly the fact that they once belonged to the higher echelons of the communist party and later discarded the same was not palatable to those who continued to be communists. When you have a new philosophy and want it to be accepted by the people, resistance is but natural. Even then, unreasonable criticism and personal attacks

were not anticipated as much as they had to encounter. With all his devotion to his ideals, he used to become impatient and irritable. Ellen was not like that. She was patient to critics and pragmatic in her approach. She used to analyse any situation and react constructively. When she came to India they did not have a real house to lead a married life. A space of two rooms was arranged by the friends in Bombay, which itself was costly for their limited resources. Out of that accommodation, they allotted one room to “Independent India” their first child as they claimed it. The remaining one room contained all their life. Everything had to be dumped on the table – all the papers, books and clothing. Even to shave or to take food, the papers had to be sorted to make room for the service. Such privations were not new to Ellen. The only regret is that it could not be avoided even after coming to India and married Roy. She was so practical in life that she could save something from her hand to mouth sustenance in Berlin. All those savings were spent to start Independent India as promised by her while he was in prison.

Within a few days after that they had to go on tour of the Madras state, as it was then. Having propagation of their philosophy as the only purpose of their lives, they could not afford to forego such opportunities. But even his close friends could not know that Roy fell seriously ill during that journey. Ellen managed it that way. From then onwards Roy was striving hard to live for his ideals in spite of non-cooperation of his body. His conviction and optimism helped him live that long. He was forced to depend on Ellen for everything later on. Ellen sensed of his ill health immediately after arriving in India. Prison life of six years had its effect. Body has gone out of control creating radical problems to the leader of Radical Humanism. While walking, he used to tremble even by the ringing of a cycle bell behind him. They were all part of his struggle to come to public life from isolated life in prison. In one of his journeys through Andhra area he was seriously ill and doctors warned him not to undertake any long journeys thereafter. But they knew that it could not be followed as regular visits were necessary to keep contact with intellectuals throughout the country and to encourage them. They used to visit even the villages in the corner where there were not even road facilities. Leave alone medical requirements, even proper food was a luxury in some villages. Those who took upon themselves the responsibility of the visits and facilities were not aware of his delicate health as Ellen never allowed it become a public knowledge. She took all the burden to look after him on herself exclusively. After one of his journeys he was forced to stay inside in Bombay for two months with great difficulty. Ellen took care to ensure that the lectures and tours arranged were not cancelled or postponed as far as possible. In spite of that there were such occasions. He used to accept whatever was offered to him as food, even if it was not conducive to his health. It necessarily had its effects that troubled him later. Even after they shifted to Dehradun the health was the same. Friends used to come and drag him into serious discussions as they were not aware of his delicate health. During discussions he used to have drinks along with other friends. To reduce the consumption, Ellen used to empty the glass without his knowledge. Roy did not relish if he was reminded of time or excess of drinks. Ellen had to resort to some indirect methods for it.

While they were optimistic that his health was getting stabilized, he had developed allergy and had asthma. Then it was that Ellen felt somewhat discouraged. It used to attack in waves and troubled him for days together. It was seasonal every year. Ellen took round the clock care of him. Roy used to joke that the doctor was treating him under the supervision of Ellen. It was true to some extent. It was due to the care of the doctor and Ellen that it was controlled and in his final days he was stated to be free from it.

7. FINAL DEPRIVATION

As usual Roys went to Mussourie to spend the summer in 1952. Mr.Tarkunde and Mr.Richard Park also were there at that time. After a few days Tarkunde returned to Delhi. It was a habit to have an evening walk over the hilly terrain among the wild growth. After the walk the couple was returning to their camp on the evening of 11 June, 1952. It was an untamed area and all the stones were spread haphazardly on the path. By the side of the walk way was a valley about fifty feet below. While walking that terrain Roy happened to step on a stone on the edge and it rolled down immediately. Roy lost balance and he too fell down the valley to the depth of fifty feet. Ellen was shocked and cried allowed running down to the valley where he was lying motionless. Hearing her cry the other revelers and those who were staying there gathered around the body of Roy at the bottom of the valley. There was no motion in him. Ellen was afraid of the worst. People there sprinkled water on his face and there was a some motion on his face. Ellen got her hopes revived. He was shifted to the camp with the help of others. There were facilities for first aid but no other facilities for any treatment. He was in senses feeling the severe pain, but he could not make any move as it would only enhance his pain. There was no way of knowing the nature of damage suffered by him. With great difficulty and care he was shifted to his residence in Dehradun from Mussourie. On 20th June, ten days after the fall an X-ray equipment was brought to his bedside. The examination revealed that his right leg was broken and four ribs were also broken. It was only then that the seriousness of the damage could be understood. Even a bandage to the affected parts was not possible until ten days after the examination, that is twenty days after the fall. In addition to the breakage of bones the inner parts also were affected due to fall over fifty feet. Naturally it fell on Ellen to keep a round the clock vigil over him. The doctor friends took care of him . The wife and sister of Mr.Tarkunde and Mrs.Indu Parikh gave company to Ellen for some days. They advised her to arrange for a nurse to share her burden to some extent and also to have professional attendance on the patient. A nurse was arranged and the doctors were watching his condition regularly by rotation and with mutual consultation.

Before the accident happened there was a proposal to visit America. They had plans to address universities and also to seek financial support to get his works printed. She planned to spend some happy time with her brother and sister. Harvard University offered to accommodate her in their Russian Research Center. California University in Stanford also invited her. There were offers from Hoover Library. There was possibility of visiting Yugoslavia on invitation from Tito himself. All those plans were shattered. There was no hurry for it. All those possibilities encouraged Ellen and gave confidence that she will be abler to get effective treatment for her illustrious husband. But now the need for an effective treatment was sincerely felt. It involved long procedures like getting visas and making travel arrangements. Doctors ruled out journey by plane. They had necessarily to go by ship only. The journey expected for 1953 could not take place as the required visa was not obtained from the American authorities. Ellen thought of leaving before the onset of the cold season, that is, in October itself. When her brother and sister came to know of it they told her to bring him to the States for better treatment. It could be

possible only if she could take him there. There was no justification for such delay on the part of American authorities to issue the necessary papers. Deliberate delay could not be ruled out in view of leftist leanings of Roys.

The time for booking space for next year in the ships was also over. Even then she was confident, if only the visa was received, she could buy accommodation with the help of Nehru. But there was no visa.

During that period there was a bit improvement in the sense that was feeling the pain bearable and was in the bed somewhat more comfortably. It made Ellen happy and more optimistic. But the optimism was short lived as he had a stroke of paralysis. It has aggravated the helpless situation for Ellen. Her house has become a hospital and the room a medical shop. In spite of all her care and of doctors, the paralysis was followed by a heart attack on 24 January, 1954 and he breathed his last on that night. An era in the ideological revolution came to an end. The unipillared edifice of Ellen came down crashing as the only pillar broke down.

It was a disaster to the movement of New Humanism. But the damage suffered by Ellen was more personal and more severe. Within a short time she gathered herself with a heroic effort. She realized she had to stand by herself and also for the movement. She took care to see that the followers were not discouraged and get scattered from the path of the movement. She took charge of both the movement and the journal. She looked composed, but within her the heart was like an ocean suffering a tsunami. She built her life around the pillar. Now the pillar is collapsed. Now she was left alone. She was reminded of her brother and sister. When she called them to convey the news they told her again to come over to them. She wanted to go but not to settle there under their solace, but to renew her contacts in the Western world. She did not know when she would be able to take the journey.

Meanwhile she could not afford to sit idle shedding tears over her loss. She wanted to prove that she is a wife worth of Roy. The only way for it was to ensure that the movement of New Humanism started by him goes on without losing momentum. She wrote back to all the friends who sent condolence messages reminding them of their responsibility to the movement which has increased because of his absence. Roy's lectures and writings were lying there in heaps to be sorted, edited and printed. She was on that work all those days in addition to her regular day-to-day duties. Still there was a lot more to do. She took all that responsibility on herself. She became the center for the movement. She assumed full responsibility for the journal along with Mr. Sib Narayan Ray. She has activated many of the followers in the movement.

It was hard for her to forget Roy for whom she dedicated her entire life. To forget, she took upon herself more and more work. Even then the loss continued to haunt her. She brought the bones of Roy after his cremation and built a memorial in her garden. She used to sit alone by its side in the darkness and shed tears. She has grown so sentimental. She tried to keep up his memory by spreading his suit on the bed by her side. There was nobody else to hear her silent cry.

8. DEATH IS CERTAIN

Whatever is born is certain to die. That is the law of nature. Death will not leave anybody – great and little, big and small, young and old. On 13 December, 1960 Ellen attended as the chief guest in the celebrations establishment day of a school in Dehradun. That evening she entertained her friend Banshi Rani and dined with her in her house. With them was a German guest Otto Joseph. Sometime after dinner Joseph retired to the guest room. Banshi Rani was with Ellen upto 11 in the night. After seeing her off Ellen came back to her drawing room and bolted it from inside.

The day 14 December, 1960 broke out as usual, like any other day. But Ellen, who used to wake up before dawn and before all others in the house, did not wake up. The servant maid who came to clean the premises had just a wave of thought why Ellen did not wake up that day. She started sweeping the premises. When she approached the door of the drawing room she found a patch of black on the floor. She just had some suspicion as to what it could be. When the idea came to her mind that it could be blood she trembled with fear and cried aloud calling for help. She ran to the house of the cook who was staying a few yards away in the compound. The cook Parson Lal came and verified the black patch. He too could not decide what it could be. But he had strong doubt that it could be blood. He tried to push the door open. But it was bolted from inside. He called out for Ellen. There was no response. They suspected something seriously wrong and went to the house of D.D. Sanyal, a retired army officer, across the road. Sanyal rang up the police and followed them to the house. The servant maid sent messages to some of the friends of Ellen. Banshi Rani, Sangeet Kaur and Manjari reached the house without delay. They were deliberating as to what could have happened. Banshi Rani was particularly upset as she was with Ellen late in the night and nothing should have happened to her. Meanwhile another friend Uttam Singh also joined them.

The guest room was by the side of the drawing room and it opens to the other side of the house. The door of the room was open and the guest in the room was not there. They entered the drawing room through that room. They found the body of Ellen lying in a pool of blood. The sight shocked them. The door was bolted from inside. The head of the body was towards the door. The table cloth was wrapped around her head. It was also puffed into her mouth and covered her eyes. There was blood everywhere in the room – on the cloths, the carpet, furniture and frames hanging on the wall. It was obvious that blood was splattered all over the room with force. There were indications of a hard hit on the head that caused the splatter of blood. In spite of the ghastly scene Uttam Singh did not lose hope. She tried to test the pulse. But there was nothing like that. The body was cold. All were silent in their own thoughts. They know that they should not disturb the room until the police arrive. They have their own way of investigation into crimes.

When the news spread out people known and unknown started to gather at the house. Police came and cordoned off the house. There were foot prints in blood on the carpet. The body of

Ellen was in normal dress indicating that she was not yet ready for bed when the crime happened. Her hair was clustered and dried in blood. After verifying the room, police concluded that the culprit entered the house through the bath room. The light there was still on. The body was sent for postmortem. There were no relatives. Friends were thinking of cremating her by the evening as the tradition goes. But they know she was a citizen of America even if she never claimed it. Citizenship is not a thing to be disowned. They felt it better to wait for the consent of the Consul. After the consent of the Consul was obtained the obsequies were performed next day. Cremation was against the Christian traditions. But she never claimed to be a Christian and Roy was also cremated according to Hindu procedures. There was a memorial on the bones of Roy. A similar memorial was built on her bones also.

Condolence messages started pouring in. But who was there to receive them? To whom were they addressed? Nevertheless they came in floods. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Republic expressed his shock to hear the news of Ellen's death. He sanctioned a pension of two hundred rupees per month for her. Intelligence officers came from the state and central government and verified the scene of murder. Photos were taken of everything that was in the room and sent to forensic test. There was a stick of about three feet in length. Ellen used to take it with her whenever she had to go out in the night. Under the carpet they found a piece of iron shaft one foot long stained in blood. All those things were sent for forensic examination.

The forensic report confirmed that Ellen died because of losing blood due to hard blows on her head. She was hit five times on the head. The cranium broke at two places. Four of the ribs were also broken. The iron piece with which she was beaten was used earlier to crush coal, perhaps in a kitchen. It means it was brought from a house, might be belonging to the culprit as such a weapon was not in use in the house of the victim. There was her hair also sticking on that rod. The coloured threads of the carpet were found on the gown worn by the victim. In spite of all these clues, they could not form any idea of the culprit. The German guest Otto Joseph who was there in the house for the last one week was not found and his whereabouts were not known. Ellen had a long history of political activity in Germany. It led to suspicion that it might be a political murder by no other person than the guest. Like all other intellectuals, Ellen too was a communist for a long time initially. She happened to come out due to differences with Bolsheviks. Most of the communists believed that she had truck with Trotsky. Like that of Trotsky, the death of Ellen was also brutal. It caused doubts that it could be the political murder.

Before her death there were fire accidents in the office of Survey of India in Dehradun. Nobody could find any clue for them. The maps showing the boundaries between India and China were burnt in those fire accidents. Earlier to that there were discussions between the two governments regarding the border without any conclusion. In her essays Ellen severely criticised the expansionist plans of China and expressed her doubts that the spies of China could be behind the fire accidents. She was trying to meet the Prime Minister in that connection. Could it be possible that the murder was an attempt to forestall that effort? These were all just surmises and nothing

could be proved conclusively. Prof. Agehananda Bharati stated that if such an offence occurred in a country like America, nobody would believe it was not a political murder.

One month before that, in the month of May there was a theft in the Renaissance Institute. Some papers were lost but nothing of any significance was missing. It was conveniently ignored. The investigators tried to build up how the murder could have happened. Based on the foot prints found on the inside and outside of the window leading to the bathroom, it was decided that the culprit entered and left through that window. He might be hiding behind the curtains in the drawing room and pounced on her after the guests left. He hit her on the head with the iron rod and silenced her by thrusting the cloth into her mouth. She was attacked even before she closed the door of drawing room so that she fell down with her head outside the doorway. The body was pulled inside and the door bolted by the culprit and not by the victim.

There were two types of footprints on the carpet indication two people might have been involved in the crime. But the investigator's report was silent on that. They stuck to the position that there was only one person involved in it. The culprit tore open the curtain cloth and used it to wipe off the blood from his body. He lit it on fire and threw it on the sofa but it was not burnt completely. He scattered the things in the drawing room and dining room and washed hands with soap in the bath room. There were blood stains in the bath room on the wash basin, on the floor and on tissue paper. There were finger prints on the mirror. There were indications that the mirror was rearranged to make it convenient for a shorter person to have a look. Like Roy, Ellen was also a comparatively tall person. The culprit must have been a shorter person, they concluded. The culprit opened all the boxes and bags and scattered all the contents. He did not even try to open the Almira containing the books and papers and files. He took the cash and the jewels from the handbag, opened the door at the back of the drawing room and exited. That was how they built up the scene of crime. Obviously, it was not a sincere effort. They only tried to build a credible story to wash off their hands. Most of the findings were contradicted by the culprit in his confession statement later. They could not find any clue regarding the identity of the culprit except that he must be a person short in stature. As they did not go for the papers, any political motive was ruled out. If it was only for cash and jewelry, there was nobody who could give an idea of how much was stolen. She was not used to keep heavy cash with her.

Police interrogated about fifty persons who frequented the place while Ellen was alive. Otto Joseph returned and explained his absence. On the early morning of 14 December, he left for Hardwar according to his predetermined schedule. Until he returned he was not aware of what happened to Ellen. Naturally he too was shocked at the ghastly murder.

Even after a month police could not find even a suspect. Then, a constable gave them some clue based on which they arrested a boy named Basant Kumar Kapoor on 30 January, 1961. He was a boy of 17 years, failed his matriculation in 1959, left his studies and whiling his time. They took him to police station applied their usual technics to extract confession. He took the police to his house and handed over the articles which he procured from Roshan Bagh after the crime. There

were cloths, silver pendants studded with pearls and chains of black beads. The police were surprised to see there one person by name Ram Prasad who worked as driver with Roshan Bagh for some time. But they did not think it necessary to question him in any way proving insincere, if not negligent, investigation. He was the maternal grandfather of Basant Kumar Kapoor, the suspect.

On 7 February, 1961 Kapoor was presented before the magistrate before whom he gave a lengthy statement of confession that took many days to record. There were blood stains on all the things recovered from him. The coloured threads that were found on the gown worn by the victim were found also on the pant and coat surrendered by him to the police. He also admitted that his friend Suresh Chandra Khatri was also with him in the crime. In fact it was committed to help him. When the police started searching for Khatri it was found that he escaped to Nepal. Police went to Khatmandu with the approval of foreign ministry and arrested him in the bus stand in Khatmandu with the help of local police and Indian authorities. He handed over the rolled gold watch, with its chain, to the police. It was later confirmed it belonged to Ellen. Acquaintances of Ellen also confirmed that the pendants, jewels belonged to Ellen.

The charge sheet was filed in May,1961.

It was clear there were no politics in this crime. Even then people were anxious to see the boy who committed this ghastly murder of a noble lady of the locality. His statement revealed many surprises. Kapoor and Suresh were friends since their school days. Even after Kapoor discontinued his studies, Suresh was continuing with his education. But he failed to pay the fee to school as he misused the funds and so evading the school for some time. The fee due was Rs. 24.37 The day before the crime they took a cycle on rent and returned it the next day. They ate well in a hotel and went to another hotel to book a room on false names. After just two hours they vacated the room. They enjoyed cinemas and friends. Next day, on 15 December,1960, Suresh went to Rishikesh and boasted to his friends that he would be going to Nepal and start living by himself. In support of it he displayed a wrist watch, necklace, pendants and ring saying that he brought them from house to be sold and encashed. His friends did not believe the story and tried to dissuade him from going to Nepal. He came back to Dehradun with his friend and met Kapoor there. Suresh returned all the things to Kapoor retaining only the watch and ring with him. They had tea in a hotel. Kapoor purchased goods worth Rs.12 and gave them to Suresh along with Rs.13 in cash. Suresh reached Nepal through Lucknow and Gorakhpur along with a friend. Both of them settled with some work in a hotel in Khatmandu. After a month his friend returned to India but Suresh continued his stay there until he lost his job. Even then he did not think of returning to India.

Basant Kumar Kapoor used to visit Roshan Bagh frequently with his maternal grandfather as he was working as a driver there on and off. He knows the situation in the house. He knows that Ellen was staying there alone. Five days before the murder Suresh told him about his plight that he failed to pay the school fee and so he was evading the school. He said that if he could adjust

just Rs.30 he would be able to pay the fee and resume going to school. But Kapoor himself a boy and could not adjust that amount. Suresh had an idea of stealing from somewhere and suggested as target an old woman living in his native village. But Kapoor was not willing to go that far. He suggested Roshan Bagh as the target. He told Suresh that the lady was staying alone there and visitors were also rare. He knows the details of the and it would not be difficult to enter. He also expressed an apprehension that if they steal from there his grandfather might come to trouble. But Suresh, being the one in need, did not like to lose the opportunity. He prevailed on Kapoor and made him agree.

While going on the venture Suresh picked up the iron rod used to break coal in the house of Kapoor. He said it would be useful to break open the locks and also to silence the woman of necessary. They reached Roshan Bagh on the cycle in the night. They left the cycle and shoes in a bush and entered the premises. They peeped through the window and saw the three – Ellen, Bansi Rani and Joseph – sitting for dinner. Kapoor entered through the bathroom window but could not open the door to let Suresh inside. Then Suresh also entered through the window and tried, but could not succeed. So both of them went out again through the window. After finishing dinner the three of them sat for a chat and after some time Joseph retired to his room. Bani Rani stayed for some more time and then she left. After seeing her off Ellen came back and entered the drawing room and bolted the door from inside. Then she retired to the reading room. The two culprits could not open any door to enter and hatched a plan. They approached the door of drawing room and called aloud “Telegram”. Ellen came and opened the door. Immediately Suresh hit hard on her head with the iron rod in hand. She fell down and tried to rise. He hit her again and she could not move further. They dragged her into the room and left her body on the carpet. They bolted the door from inside and started searching the house. They heard some moaning sound from her. Suresh came to her, picked up the stool and hit her repeatedly to silence her. He was not satisfied and kicked her in the stomach. They wrapped the table cloth around her head and thrust it into her mouth covering the eyes as well. She was dead.

They searched all the rooms leisurely and grabbed all the cash and jewels. They relieved her of the watch. They washed their hands in the bath room Suresh picked up the whisky bottle from the friz and was prepared with two glasses. But Kapoor objected to it and kept the bottle again in the friz. Then Suresh took up the curtain cloth, lit it and threw it on the sofa. It did not burn completely. Having accepted his crime in such detail before the magistrate, Kapoor turned hostile at the time of hearing. He said that he was compelled to give the statement under pressure from the police. He told that he was tempted with an offer to be considered an approver and not as an offender. All these things were beyond the comprehension of the boy and it was obvious that he was trained by a lawyer. Suresh admitted that it was true that he failed to pay the fee and stopped going to school. All the other part of the statement was false, he said. He did not go to Nepal to run away from anybody but went there for studies with consent of his parents. He denied having any watch to the police in Khatmandu as he never had any watch.

Added to the confusion, there was a question raised by an advocate in the local newspaper about the watch. He said that the people who came after hearing the news of the murder saw a watch on the wrist of the dead body, which could not be found when the police came. It implies that the culprits did not take the watch. He was called to the court and asked to substantiate his statement. He said that he got the information from an American lady who told him she got the information from Uttam Singh and Bansi Rani who were present at that time. He agreed that he had no knowledge who that lady was. Both Uttam Singh and Bansi Rani denied having met with any woman in that connection and have not seen the watch of the body of Ellen. The allegation made by the lawyer was just ignored and no attempt was made to investigate why the lawyer made such an unfounded statement in the paper.

The District Court gave their final judgment on 19 December, 1961, that was, about one year after the crime was committed. It could be considered comparatively fast. The Judge stated that “The allegations on the defendants are based on indirect evidence. Basant Kumar Kapoor is well acquainted with the layout of the house. The foot prints and finger prints available are proved to be of Basant. The blood stains on the goods taken from his house are proved to be of the victim. The jewels also belonged to the victim. There is no doubt that Suresh Chandra Khatri is his friend. The fact that he fled to Nepal and availability of the victim’s watch with him prove his involvement. There is enough evidence to prove the confessional statement given by Kapoor before the magistrate. There is no possibility of retracting from the same. There is no doubt that this duo resorted to this crime for money and valuables.” He declared the defendants liable to punishment.

The defendants approached the High Court at Allahabad. There was a different interpretation of the evidence and law in that court. They said that the confessional statement given by Kapoor before the magistrate is not credible as he tried to put the entire blame on Suresh, exonerating himself. Except pointing to the house he has not done anything else, he claims. It is not credible. There might be some truth in it; but there is some untruth also mixed with it. It is not known to what extent it is mixed. Because of this, it is not possible to depend on this statement. The allegations are based exclusively on circumstantial evidence. Their friendship is not formed just for the purpose of this crime. The similarities in foot prints could create a doubt, but it could not be the main evidence. It is not beyond reasonable doubt. There is no basis to allege that the jewels available with the defendants belong to the deceased person. It was stated that they found a stick covered with blood by the side of the dead body. But there was no mention of it in the evidences submitted to the court. Prosecution did not say anything about the finger prints. So the defendants had to be given benefit of doubt. They said. The state took the case to the Supreme Court, where the decision of the High Court was upheld.

Usually, it is stated that there will be closure when the culprit is caught and punished. In this case it did not happen. If there are any relatives to the deceased, they would fight for justice and closure. But Ellen had no relatives in India in biological sense. The state tried to do justice. But what is just and reasonable to the layman need not be so for a legal test. It is to be seen whether

the evidence submitted was really unreliable. Did it give scope for different interpretations? Because some evidence is not submitted, can the evidence submitted be discounted? Whatever be the evidence and whatever be the provisions of law, the judge has always an opportunity for discretion. Logically that gives opportunity for different interpretations of law and evidence. The fact that the defendants are juveniles also might earn some sympathy. Whether the defendants are punished or not, the dead person will not come back alive. If we are prepared to think on those lines, the only possibility would be to excuse and then there would be no need of law and courts.

After the death of Roy, Ellen made a will of her own. What were her personal belongings that she could bequeath? Whatever it be, she bestowed all of it on Justice Tarkunde. But there were no witnesses for that document. Thus it was not valid in law. Naturally, in the absence of a will the properties fall on the blood relations. Ellen had a brother and a sister living in America. The rights passed on to them. They, in turn, passed on all those rights to the Indian Renaissance Institute at 13 Mohini Road in Dehradun. Because of their magnanimity, the Institute is thriving as an organization and working.

When we think of what Ellen has given to India and what India gave her in return, our conscience bleeds. Such a gruesome death to such a noble person! Can we reconcile it? Shall we try to forget it and forgive ourselves? Alas! What else could we do?