

M.N. ROY

PHILOSOPHER REVOLUTIONARY

EDITED BY :

SIBNARAYAN RAY



M.N. Roy (1887 - 1954), an outstanding revolutionary personality of the twentieth Century, joined the underground nationalist movement in Bengal in 1905, tried unsuccessfully to organize an armed uprising against British rule in 1915, escaped abroad, travelled through Indonesia, Japan, Korea, China and the United States, founded the Communist Party of Mexico in 1919, was invited by Lenin to Moscow where he soon became a member of the Executive of the Communist International, established in Tashkent the emigre Communist Party of India (1920), was sent to China (1927) to guide the Chinese Communist Party, and eventually broke with the Comintern in 1929 by openly opposing its extremist strategy adopted at the Sixth Congress.

On his return to India Roy was arrested and spent six years in jail during which he wrote his nine manuscript volumes of "Prison Notes". In the following years he moved beyond the ideologies of nationalism and Communism, and between 1946 and 1948 formulated his alternative philosophy of radical humanism.

Besides taking an active and leading part in revolutionary movements in India, Mexico, Soviet Union, Germany, Middle East and China, Roy was also a highly original thinker and prolific writer whose works run to more than a hundred titles and cover history, philosophy, sociology and political economy. Among his major works are *India and Transition*, *Revolutionary and Counter-revolution in China*, *Materialism*, *Memoirs*, and *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*. His *Selected Works*, in six volumes, also edited by Professor Sibanarayan Ray, are being published by Oxford University Press. Three volumes have already been published, and the fourth volume is being made ready for early publication.

The present volume is a carefully edited selection of primary source material and essays which is intended to provide readers with a fairly comprehensive introduction to the life and thinking of M.N. Roy in its several phases, and is expected to prove an indispensable handbook to students of revolutionary movements in our times.

M.N. ROY

Philosopher-Revolutionary

Edited by
SIBNARAYAN RAY



AJANTA

ISBN 81-202-0412-3

Ist Published 1995

By

AJANTA PUBLICATIONS

P.Box 2192, Malka Ganj, Delhi-110007

A Publishing Unit of

AJANTA BOOKS INTERNATIONAL

1-UB, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar,

Delhi-110007 (India)

© S.N. Ray. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without prior permission of the editor and publisher.

Laser Typeset at:

PRINTLINE

12-H, New Daryaganj Road, New Delhi-110002

Contents

Preface to the Third Edition	i
An Autobiographical Statement (1952) <i>M.N. Roy</i>	1
M.N. Roy's Birthdate <i>Sushil Bhadra</i>	3
History Sheet of Narendra Nath Bhattacharji (1907-12) <i>L.N. Bird</i>	5
My Recollections of Young Naren (1955) <i>Saralabala Sarkar</i>	19
C.A. Martin and the Batavia Plot (1915) <i>James Campbell Ker</i>	25
Hunger and Revolution in India (1919) <i>M.N. Roy</i>	32
An Indian Communist Manifesto (1920) <i>M.N. Roy</i>	38
Original Draft of 'Supplementary Theses on the National and Colonial Question' (1920) <i>M.N. Roy</i>	43
M.N. Roy and the Revolution in Asia <i>Robert C. North</i>	50
The 1927 Comintern Failure in China and M.N. Roy <i>John P. Haithcox</i>	63
Chinese Source Materials on M.N. Roy: A Report <i>Huang I-Shu</i>	81

M.N. ROY : PHILOSOPHER-REVOLUTIONARY

The Crisis in the Communist international: The Question of Leadership (1929)	111
<i>M.N. Roy</i>	
Recollections of M.N. Roy in Opposition (1929-31)	121
<i>Sunder Kabadi</i>	
The Roy Group in Bombay (1930-31)	129
<i>V.B. Karnik</i>	
<i>I Accuse</i> (1931)	142
<i>M.N. Roy</i>	
M. N. Roy V. Emperor: Judgement (1933)	163
<i>J. Thom</i>	
The Political Philosophy of M.N. Roy	174
<i>Stanley Maron</i>	
Principles of Radical Democracy: 22 Theses (1946-48)	186
<i>M.N. Roy and Others</i>	
Homage to M.N. Roy	194
<i>Sudhindranath Datta</i>	
Sudhin Datta and M.N. Roy	197
<i>Ellen Roy</i>	
A Materialist on Fire	202
<i>H.J. Blackham</i>	
First Philosopher of Modern India	206
<i>Tarkateerth Laxman Shastri Joshi</i>	
Platonism, Marxism and Roy's Philosophy	208
<i>Philip Spratt</i>	
Prophet of a New Order	217
<i>V.M. Tarkunde</i>	
A Rationalist Libertarian	224
<i>Amlan Datta</i>	
Roy's Ideas on Freedom and Economic Development	228
<i>G.D. Parikh</i>	

CONTENTS

Gandhi and Roy: The Interaction of Ideologies in India <i>Dennis Dalton</i>	235
Tagore, Gandhi and Roy: Three Twentieth Century Utopians <i>Sibnarayan Ray</i>	251
M.N. Roy: A Biographical Chronology <i>Sibnarayan Ray</i>	264

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Ethics and politics

Guided by the dictum of ancient wisdom, that man is the measure of everything, the philosophy for the future should proclaim that the merit of any pattern of social organization or political institution is to be judged by the measure of freedom it gives to the individual.

Dictatorship of any form, however plausible may be the pretext for it, is excluded by this perspective of social evolution. Politics cannot be divorced from ethics without jeopardizing the cherished ideal of freedom. It is a fallacy to hold that the end justifies the means. The truth is that immoral means necessarily corrupt the end. This is an empirical truth.

Preface to the Third Edition

The first edition of this book was published on the occasion of the fifth death anniversary (1959) of the celebrated philosopher-revolutionary Manabendra Nath Roy. It consisted mainly of contributions from Roy's colleagues and associates which had been published in *The Radical Humanist* weekly of which at that time I was joint editor with Ellen Roy. The volume, edited by me, also included Roy's brief autobiographical statement, a list of his published writings, the text of the memorial address given in London by H.J. Blackham, General Secretary of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, and a brief biographical note on Roy prepared by me on the basis of the primary sources collected at the M.N. Roy Archives of the Indian Renaissance Institute, Dehradun.

The edition sold out quickly. But the death of Ellen Roy in tragic circumstances in 1960 and my stay abroad during the sixties and seventies prevented the preparation and publication of a new edition. On my return to India in the early eighties I found that there was an appreciably growing interest in Roy and his ideas. In the postgraduate courses on modern Indian political thought and movements in a number of universities Roy was included as a seminal thinker and political personality. At the same time young men and women, increasingly disillusioned with Marxism, were looking for an alternative philosophy of man which would be committed to the ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity and social justice but would not compromise those ideals by adopting corrupt means and immoral practices. The variety of humanism developed by Roy in the forties would have much to recommend itself to these young idealists just as his extraordinary career as a revolutionary would be a great source of inspiration to them.

But much of Roy's writings was not easily available, and the details of his life as a revolutionary were to a large extent buried in archives. A project was drawn up to prepare and publish the *Selected Works of M.N. Roy* in an authoritative edition of six volumes and I was entrusted with the sole responsibility of editing these volumes. But prior to undertaking that arduous task I decided to bring out a revised and enlarged new edition of the 1959 book. The first edition had run to 72 page in print. The second edition which included much new material collected in the course of my researches in India and abroad grew into 248 pages in print and was published in 1984.

Since the publication of that edition the first three volumes of the *Selected Works of M.N. Roy*, edited by me, have been published by Oxford University Press. I am currently working on the remaining volumes but my failing health makes it uncertain if I would be able to complete the project. The published OUP volumes are quite large, and by Indian standards rather expensive. They contain large bodies of rare source material traced by me in various archives in Mexico, Moscow, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Paris, Zurich, Beijing, Delhi, Calcutta, Stanford, New York and other places. Meantime the need for a handbook on Roy is widely felt, and I am persuaded that a revised third edition is now urgently called for. Great changes have taken place recently in the course of world history. Bolshevism (or Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism) stands thoroughly exposed; the Soviet Union has disintegrated and disappeared as a political entity; the cold war is over; the remaining super-power, the United States, is passing through a severe economic crisis. More important, the future of mankind, and indeed of life itself, is globally threatened today by environmental pollution and ecological disorder brought about by man's inordinate greed and other irrational drives and by uncontrolled concentration and abuse of power. It seems that the significance of Roy as a humanist thinker of vast experience who offered a philosophy of sane society which gave priority to reason and freedom, individuality and cooperation, cultural renaissance and politico-economic decentralization, creativity and morality, has grown considerably in the contemporary context.

In this third edition I have again made some additions and alterations. Two short pieces (by Amarendranath Chattopadhyay and Bertram Wolfe) and the the checklist of books have been left out; a few of the pieces newly included in the second edition have been somewhat shortened with three dots (...) indicating places where I have made the deletions; three new contributions have been added. I have restored in the second part of the present preface my original homage to Roy which had formed part of the first edition but which I excluded from the second edition from considerations of space. I hope this compilation will prove to be truly useful to students of politics, revolutionary ideas and movements and modern Indian history. I also hope that it will stimulate in the reader the desire to know more about M.N. Roy, his life, ideas and writings. For such a reader I would suggest the following short list of books which are currently available in India:

M.N. Roy, *Selected Works*, Volumes I, II & III (ed. S.N. Ray).
OUP

M.N. Roy, *Revolution and Counterrevolution in China*, Ajanta,
Delhi

M.N. Roy, *New Humanism*, Ajanta, Delhi

M.N. Roy, *Memoirs*. Ajanta, Delhi

M.N. Roy, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*, Ajanta, Delhi

Ellen Roy and S.N. Ray, *In Man's Own Image*, Renaissance
Publishers, Calcutta

S.N. Ray (ed), *For a Revolution from below*, Minerva, Calcutta

V.B. Karnik, *M.N. Roy, political biography*, Navjagriti,
Bombay

G.D. Parikh (ed), *Essence of Royism*, Navjagriti, Bombay

V.M. Tarkunde, *For Freedom*, VMT Felicitation Committee,
New Delhi

II

As a thinker, M.N. Roy, I believe, had his peers, if not in the East, certainly in the West. But in the wealth of experience which went to the shaping of his thoughts, he was altogether unique and had none to compare either in the past or in the present. Compared to him, the lives of other thinkers, noble as they are, appear to have a somewhat parochial context. Their experience hardly reached beyond the boundaries of their own people and culture. Roy, on the other hand, was a real cosmopolitan. His early boyhood and youth were spent mostly in India, with occasional trips to some of the south East Asian countries. Then he went to America and lived for several years in Mexico. From there he was called to Russia by Lenin, and during the next ten years, as a member of the Presidium of the Communist International and as the Head of its Eastern department, he lived and worked not only in Russia, but in the various countries of Europe, of the Middle East and of Central and East Asia. In the early thirties, he returned to India and the remaining years of his life he lived and worked in this country, the first six years being spent in prison. Thus except for Africa and Australia, his odyssey took him to all the other three continents and gave to his experience a universality, which is unexampled among thinkers and revolutionaries.

And he went to these countries not as a tourist or research scholar travelling on some grant, but as an active participant in the struggle of the people of those countries for freedom and justice. Even when he had no passport or *de jure* citizenship, he was one of them, not a visitor, but one who was, in the words made famous since by Sartre, committed, involved or engaged. Thus his experiences were not skimmed from life's surface; they were born of active participation. And what range and variety they had! Not only was his experience geographically various; it also varied widely in content and quality. I consider it to be an irreparable loss that he had no time to complete his *Memoirs*; he barely covered a small segment. Even with the best qualifications--industry, understanding, devotion--a biographer, assuming he will have the resources, will find one life time hardly

enough to reconstruct that unique career. From a Bengali village boy born and brought up in an orthodox Brahmin family, he grew to be the arch-iconoclast of his age; from a youthful St. Francis whose chief pleasure lay in nursing the sick and courting every discomfort to help the stricken, he became one of the leaders of the most daring group of political anarchists in this country, excelling others in deadly marksmanship, cool courage and conspiratorial talents. He had hardly any schooling in his boyhood; yet by virtue of his outstanding publications like *India in Transition*, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China*, and *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* he came to be recognised even by his critics as one of the first scholars of his age. From an ascetic he became an epicurean; from a nationalist a cosmopolitan; from a Communist a humanist. And experience was the guide at every stage of his development. And how this Jacob wrestled with his angel! I had the privilege to have some intimate glimpse of the last of the series of epic battles--in 1946-47--when the philosophy of new humanism was evolved as the crowning achievement of his career. My own book *Radicalism*, written during the fortnight I stayed with him after the historic study camp in Dehra Dun in May 1946, gives only a faint intimation of what I myself passed through while witnessing the drama of a great man creating himself anew.

In a less integrated man than Roy, such tumultuous variety of experience would have resulted either in confusion or in stricken silence. But in him they were digested into the material of a growing personality and philosophy of life. The dynamic unity in Roy's life and thought was grounded, so atleast it seems to me, in two basic qualities, which were not unique since they are the universal qualities of the human species, but which, since his early boyhood, were more articulate in him than in most other people, including some of the tallest figures in history. One of these qualities was his instinctive urge for freedom, and the other was his equally instinctive passion for truth. Seen from this angle, his life is a marvellous testimony to the authenticity of his philosophy of radical humanism. For, according to this philosophy man is the maker of his destiny and he is so because of his urge for freedom and quest of truth. This philosophy has been

expounded in his monograph *New Humanism*, and at greater length in what I consider to be his magnum opus, *Reason, Romanticism & Revolution*. His own life was the finest embodiment of the quintessence of his philosophy.

These two qualities then gave to his vast experience the unity of meaning and direction. "I am not an academic philosopher," he wrote to me in 1947 when we were carrying a long and arduous discussion over the significance of certain parts of the 22 theses on New Humanism. "I deduce my conclusions not from books but from experience.....Ever since boyhood I have fought against injustice and for freedom. When I realised that God presented the greatest obstacle in the path of human freedom, I rejected God and since then I have fought against those who claim to derive their authority from God. It was not an easy thing to do, for I was the son of a Brahmin and was brought up in orthodox Hindu tradition." This urge for freedom allowed him no rest in life. It made him an anarchist before he had passed his boyhood; later on when experience taught him the limitations of revolutionary nationalism, it made him a communist because he saw in communism a superior perspective of human freedom; and when finally even communism proved to be an illusion, he did not, like most other ex-communists, seek escape in cynicism and despair, but moved ahead to reconstruct his experience into a philosophy of freedom, more comprehensive and suited to the needs of our time than any he had known before. And at every stage, he put his premises to the prolonged test of practice -- never shirking to pay the price that the test demanded in terms of personal suffering and risk to life, unpopularity or persecution -- before either accepting or rejecting them as valid to his pursuit.

The urge for human freedom thus provided the vital element which organised the vast and varied materials of his experience into a gradually evolving and increasingly significant whole. But the urge itself would not have been enough to achieve this integration and growth were it not complemented by his equally deep-grained devotion to truth. It was this quest for truth which made him realise quite early in life that wisdom was not the monopoly of any individual, sect or organisation, that one's

mind must be open and willing to learn from any source, that no authority, however powerful, popular or ancient, was above the scrutiny of reason. He once told us, and I believe has himself recorded it in one of his essays, how in the early period of his anarchist apprenticeship he was curious to know the men and ideas of both the rival anarchist conspiratorial organisations of Bengal, how this made him suspect to some of his comrades in the organisation to which he belonged, and how Jatin Mukherji, the leader of this organisation, rebuked the critics and fully commended his attitude. To the end of his days he never found another who was his nearer kin in spirit than Jatinda. Later on when he went to Russia and became one of the youngest leaders of the Communist International this regard for truth made it impossible for him to accept Lenin's theory about the nature and role of the colonial bourgeoisie. Lenin was then at the height of his glory and power; his authority was unassailable. That however did not daunt this youth. When he saw that Lenin's theory did not tally with the facts that he knew, he frankly expressed his disagreement, and when called upon to do so, he developed and submitted his alternative theory which was based on a more intimate and comprehensive knowledge of the reality in the colonies. Fortunately for him, Lenin proved to be accommodating and even paid to this heretic the singular compliment of recommending his alternative thesis as supplementary to his own. The impression that he made at that time has been recorded by Franz Borkenau in his book on the Communist International.

But he did not have the same good fortune everytime. In the late twenties when he raised his voice against the fatal policy of the Comintern towards rising fascism, he found himself isolated, maligned and threatened with persecution by the unscrupulous, intolerant and revengeful group of people who had by then come to control the organisation under Stalin's leadership. He knew that his career was at stake and even his life would not be safe any more. But to him truth was more important than career, and neither the lure of power nor the threat of ruin could silence him. Rejecting openly the extremist line adopted at the Sixth World Congress he broke with the Comintern, and although later on the organisation recognised its deadly error after

having lost Germany to Hitler, it never forgave him his foresight and courage of conviction. The same story was repeated when he came out of jail and joined the Congress. He refused to make any compromise with the medieval obscurantism of the Mahatma, with the hypocrisy of his political disciples, or with the deep-seated prejudices of the people. "Lie-hunting is my profession", he wrote in his Prison Diary, "this is a thankless job." The job was indeed thankless. When finally in 1948, the same unrelenting truthfulness led him to recommend disbanding the Radical Democratic Party as an unsuitable means to the task of a humanist renaissance, few among his own colleagues appreciated the wisdom of that decision. He loved his colleagues and it deeply hurt him to see them hurt. But love, any more than fear or ambition, could not deflect him from the pursuit of truth.

It seems to me therefore that Roy was essentially a humanist from the earliest period of his life of which we have any record to the end of his days, and the philosophy which he evolved during the last few years was the culmination of his life-long pursuit. There are critics who find in this philosophy too much idealism, too much faith in man's power to create himself anew. They feel that Roy did not give sufficient importance to the restrictive power of circumstances or to the limitations of human nature. Without dismissing such criticism, it has nevertheless to be noted that Roy knew these limitations well enough, and not from books or hearsay either, but from costly first-hand experience. But his faith in human nature remained undiminished; in fact, it became more deep-rooted with years. I feel that this faith sprang in the first instance from his own nature and was deepened later on by his knowledge of men and study of books. His scholarship was nearly as vast as his experience, and it is fatuous to think that the man who knew his Machiavelli and Hobbes as thoroughly as he knew the French Radicals and the English Utilitarians, who was a witness to the debacle of the Weimer Republic and had taken as intimate a part in the framing and execution of Comintern policies as any one had ever done, was ignorant of human frailty or of the terrible odds in the way of human freedom. Like Terence, but with far greater authenticity, he could say, "I am a man, therefore nothing that is human is alien to me". And then with

Vico he would assert that man was the root of mankind and that the urge for freedom and quest for truth were ingrained in human nature.

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Decentralization and a pluralist society

One need not go to people only to catch their votes; to help them cast their votes intelligently would be an immensely more important work. The electorate should be asked to examine the programmes of all the parties, to see if the promises can be fulfilled or, if fulfilled, will really improve matters. As the electorate gradually become critical and discriminating, the time will come when the voters of a locality will tell candidates of all parties to leave them alone; amongst themselves they will find men in whom they can have confidence and who will remain responsible to them between two elections. Once that happens, the end of the party system will begin, and with the parties, the main cause for concentration of power, will disappear. In the process, we shall already have laid down the foundation of a decentralised State of local republics, which combine all functions of the State as they affect the local life...Being thus reared upon a broad foundation of direct democracies, the State will be really democratic. Thus, a pluralist modern society can be built up, at the same time doing away with centralisation of power in politics and economics.

An Autobiographical Statement

M. N. Roy

This Statement was prepared by M. N. Roy in 1952 while applying for a visa for the United States in connection with his proposed visit to that country. SNR

I was born as Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, and adopted the name of M. N. Roy while in the United States of America, and have no other aliases. Identifying data: Height 6 ft. 2 inches.

The name of my father was Dinabandhu Bhattacharya; my mother's name was Basanta Kumari.

I entered the United States as Martin; I came by sea and landed in San Francisco. I remember neither Martin's first name, nor the date when I landed, but it was in spring 1916.

I left the United States in summer 1917, but do not remember the exact date either. I left by train for Mexico, as M. N. Roy.

Until the age of 16, I lived first in the village Arbalia, and from school-going age in the village Kodalia, both in the District 24 Parganas, Bengal.

After I left India early in 1915, I spent over a year travelling through South-East Asia—Indonesia, China, Japan, Philippines, until I came to America, where I spent just about a year. Thereafter, I lived for two and a half years in Mexico; then in Russia from 1919 until 1928, in which year I broke with the Communist International.

Thereafter I lived for two and a half years in Germany, and left at the end of 1930 for India, where I spent six years in jail under the charge of "Conspiring to deprive the King of his sovereignty in India". On coming out of jail at the end of 1936, I lived in Bombay for one and a half year, and since May 1938 at my present residence, 13, Mohini Road, Dehradun, U.P.

As regards party affiliations, in 1918, I founded the Communist Party of Mexico and from 1919 was a member of the Communist International. I never belonged to any other organisation abroad. I was elected a member of the Presidium and of the Secretariat of the Communist International, in charge of organising the communist movement in Asia and of the training and education of Asiatic Communists in the Eastern University of Moscow. Apart from these services, I had no contributions like money or things of value to make.

In 1928, I severed my relations with the Communist International for reasons of disagreement regarding both the theory and practice of Communism.

After my release from jail in India, I joined the Indian National Congress, and was a member of its All-India Committee until the war, when I severed my relations with the Congress because of disagreement on the question of co-operation with the war efforts, as my advocating support to the war was incompatible with the Congress policy of anti-war activities.

I thereupon founded, together with other Congressmen who agreed with my ideas and policy, the Radical Democratic Party of India in 1940, which was dissolved in 1948, when it appeared that party politics was incompatible with the philosophy of Radical Humanism, to which I and my co-workers subscribe.

Since then I have belonged to no political organisation, occupying myself with philosophical and historical writing, as Founder-Director of the Indian Renaissance Institute, Dehradun, which is a cultural-educational organisation founded with the object of re-educating the educators and young intellectuals of India in the spirit and with the ideas of Radical (or Integral) Humanism.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Lie-hunting

Lie-hunting is my profession. This is a thankless job. But someone must tell the truth, if it is not to remain an empty concept. I have been lie-hunting ever since I learned to think for myself—to distinguish facts from fictions. It has not won me popularity.

M. N. Roy's Birthdate

Sushil Bhadra

At M. N. Roy's death it was not definitely known what was the date and year of his birth. It was believed that he was born in February-March and that the year might have been 1893. However, sometime after his death, among the family papers was found a diary maintained by Roy's father, Dinabandhu. It contained in his own hand-writing records of important events in the family. In this diary was an entry which in translation reads as follows:

"By that wife* second son with *rashi* name** Sreeman Girindranath Bhattacharya, who would be publicly called Sreeman Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, was born at the Arbalia house on Monday, 8 Chaitra, 1293 at 1.30 p.m.; major lunar *Phalgun*, minor lunar *Chaitra*; *Krishnapaksha*, *Dwadashi*, *Dhanishtha Nakshatra*, *Kumbha Rashi*."

After a good deal of inquiry a consolidated almanac titled *Puratan Panjika* Part II covering the Bengali years 1282—1311, calculated by Pandit Sreechandra Vidyavidhi of Bally and published by the Bangabasi Publishing House was traced. On pages 1704 and 1705 respectively entries were found which in translation read as follows:

"8 Chaitra, English 21 March, Monday, *Dwadashi* 23/4 *Dhanishtha Nakshatra* 44/8 *Siddhayoga* 1938", and

* that wife — Second wife.

** *rashi* name — This is determined by the astronomical constellation supposed to govern at the moment of birth; it is not used for social identification of the newborn.

"Sakabda 1808, 1293 Bengali Sambat, 1887 A.D." Thus it was established that M. N. Roy was born at Arbalia on 21 March, 1887 at 1-30 p.m.

The date of Roy's birth given in Samaren Roy's *The Restless Brahmin*, 1970, p. 18, and repeated by V.B. Karnik, *M. N. Roy: Political Biography*, 1978, p. 627, namely 22nd February, is wrong.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Culture: sum total of human achievements

All cultural values have intrinsic historical significance and, therefore, transcend time and space. Yet they may all be utilised by any particular class for selfish purposes. Take for instance the old scriptures. There are two things in them; form and content. The form is the poetry, literature — the language which has an abiding artistic value; it can be characterised as imperishable. Then, there is the content of a certain system of ideas. One can read the hymns of the Rigveda and enjoy the beauty of poetry without taking seriously the content of quaint ideas. The latter was created as the ideology of a particular class, and as such it had only a passing, temporary, social significance. At the same time, another value was created which transcends all limits of time and space, and which goes into the accumulated treasure of human culture. Yet, that also was created by a particular class. It would be foolish to throw away, or even under-estimate it, as the product of the priestly class culture. In so far as it is culture, it transcends the limits of social space and time.

That being the case, empires rose and fell, revolutions occurred and became antiquated, one class came forward while another receded in the background; but the march of progress continued through the ages, successively, through the instrumentality of the priesthood, the early traders, the monks, the merchant class, the manufacturers, in different periods of history. Thus humanity as a whole laid down brick after brick and raised the magnificent structure of human culture. That is the sum total of human achievements.

History Sheet No. (687)
of
Narendra Nath Bhattacharji
(No. 1)

L.N. Bird

Naren Bhattacharya or M. N. Roy was drawn into the revolutionary nationalist movement probably as early as 1902, but he became a prominent figure in the underground organisations from 1907. The History Sheet which follows was prepared by L.N. Bird, Special Assistant, Intelligence Branch, C.I.D. in 1912. It is believed that 'Mayer Dak' or 'The Mother's Call' was written by Naren. If so, this would be his earliest writing to have been traced so far. The English version included here was prepared by the police and submitted as an exhibit at his trial. SNR

Bengal File No. 324 of 1909

Narendra Nath Bhattacharji is the son of the late Pandit Dinabandhu Bhattacharji, of Kotalia, police-station Sonarpur, 24 Parganas. The father was originally a resident of Khepoot, pargana Mondalghat, district Midnapur, where his ancestors were the *sebaits* of the temple of *Kali*. Dinabandhu, however, abandoned his family hearth and migrated to Arbelia, police-station Bhaduria, 24 Parganas, consequent on his appointment as Head Pandit of the school at that place. Later on he moved to Kotalia, police-station Sonarpur, in the same district, where he started a money-lending business.

Narendra, who is the second son of his father, was born in the year 1888, and is described as follows:— medium complex-

ion; medium build; tall stature; slight moustache, but no beard; large eyes; large feet; takes long stride when walking; stands upright; when he talks his upper set of teeth are visible; height about 5 feet 8 inches.

Narendra was educated upto the Entrance Class in the Hari-
navi School. He then joined the Calcutta National College, and
after matriculating, his educational career came to a close. Dur-
ing his education at the National College he was said to have
lived with Aravinda Ghosh, but on the latter's arrest in 1908,
Narendra left for Murshidabad.

The following is a list of his relations:

Brother—Shustul Chandra Bhattacharji, a booking clerk in
the Bengal Nagpur Railway, stationed at Puri.

Uncle—Nuni Chandra Bhattacharji, of No. 10, Shampukur
Lane, Calcutta.

Brother-in-law—Hari Das Bhattacharji, employed in Messrs.
Basu & Co.'s dispensary at No. 204 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.

Cousin—Abinash Chandra Bhattacharji, of Arbelia, police-
station Bhaduria. Was a member of the Maniktolla gang, and
convicted and sentenced to 7 years' transportation on the 23rd
November in connection with the Alipur bomb case.

Narendra does not appear to own any landed property in his
native village. He is dependent on the income derived from a
small refreshment stall at No. 13 Clive Street, which is jointly
owned by him and Tincourie Das. He usually resides at No. 135,
Amherst Street, Calcutta.

Narendra's associates were:

Bhusan Chandra Mitra, of Harinavi, police-station Sonarpur,
24 Parganas. Bhusan Chandra was mentioned by an informer as
being a member of the secret society. Was sent up for trial in the
Howrah gang case, but acquitted.

Nripendra Nath Basu of Chingripota, police-station Sonar-
pur, 24 Parganas. Was a member of the Calcutta *Anushilan Samiti*
and employed in the Gosaba settlement.

Sailendra Nath Basu, of Chingripota, police-station Sonarpur, 24 Parganas. Was suspected in the Chingripota dakaiti.

Tincourie Das, of Mojilpur, police-station Jaynagar, 24 Parganas, suspected in the Netra dakaiti. Implicated by an informer as being a member of the revolutionary party. Was sent up for trial in the Howrah gang case, but acquitted.

Narendra appears to have become imbued with nationalistic tendencies when he became a student in the Calcutta National College under the sway of Prabash Chandra De, of Berhampur, Murshidabad. Prabash was a well-known seditionist, and was mentioned by the approvers in the Alipur bomb conspiracy and Howrah gang case, as being a member of the secret society which had organised violent crime in Eastern and Western Bengal. The Chingripota dakaiti, in which Narendra was an accused, and when he first claimed the attention of the police, was reported to have been organized and carried out by this society.

He was also a member of the *Attyonnatti Samiti*, of Calcutta, and the *Jugantar* gang. The *Attyonnatti Samiti*, when first started, had for its object the development of physical culture, but later on, deteriorated into a political organization. It had for its members, among others, Indra Nath Nandi, who was a member of the *Jugantar* and Maniktolla gangs, and Prabash Chandra De mentioned above. The *Jugantar* gang was composed of a body of the most daring revolutionists, whose object was to organize bands for the commission of dakaities for the purpose of supplying funds for the revolutionary movement. Many of its members were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for the dissemination of sedition, etc.

Bengal File No. IV. 1222

The Calcutta *Anushilan Samiti*, of which Narendra was a member, posed as a benevolent institution, and consequently the misdeeds committed by its members, for a time, were effectively covered by the cloak of charity, benevolence, famine-relief, nursing the sick, aid to the bereaved at funerals and help to pilgrims at all large gatherings. It was founded by Satish Chandra Basu, of No. 91, Bechu Chatarji's Street, Calcutta, who

was said to have been also the Secretary, and to have done a great deal in procuring and distributing fire-arms to the members of the society. The proceeds of the Chingripota dakaiti were said to have been made over to him, and he was described by all his acquaintances, who made statements to the police, to be a dangerous character. The *Samiti* was proclaimed on the 12th October 1909 as an unlawful association.

Narendra is well known to Inspector Narendra Kumar Mallik, Sub-Inspector Birendra Nath Mukherji and Head Constable Satish Chandra Ray Chaudhuri.

Recently he was reported to be active again, planning dakaities, etc. In August 1912, the Superintendent of Police, 24 Parganas, wrote as follows regarding him: "In view of the recent information against him, he should be classed as dangerous."

The following are the events in which he is known to have participated:

1907

Bengal File No. 205 of 1907

In December when Inspector Todd visited Kodalia Bazar in connection with enquiries into the Chingripota dakaiti, Babus Haran and Upendra Chandra Chol, cloth merchants, complained that four or five days before the *pujas* they were threatened by Hari Chandra and Narendra Bhattacharji and warned not to sell foreign cloth. Their stock of foreign goods was overhauled and stamped with a rubber seal bearing the inscription of Chingripota Railway station, as a check to prevent further importation.

On the 6th December, a gang of dakaitis entered the Chingripota Railway station in the 24 Parganas, and threatened the railway staff with violence if all the cash was not delivered up. They seriously wounded the watchman and decamped with Rs. 665 from the safe.

Rajendra Lall Halder, the booking clerk, recognised Narendra Nath Bhattacharji as one of the dakaitis, who said that Naren-

dra had a *lathi* in his hand and that his face was muffled and smeared with paint.

The station-master also stated that Narendra Bhattacharji and Sailendra Basu had been in the booking office during the day when the cash had been entered up. Narendra was arrested on the 9th December at Chingripota Railway station, and when charged with the offences pleaded an *alibi*. In reply to a question he said that he derived his income from services rendered to Mr. A.C. Banarji, Barrister-at-law, and to the staff of the *Jugantar* newspaper. His belongings were searched at the time and the following papers were found:

Bartaman Rananiti, a seditious treatise on modern warfare, by Abinash Bhattacharji, of the Calcutta conspiracy gang.

A sheet of paper with an invocation to "The Mother" (Appendix A).

Narendra's residence, at Kotalia, 24 paraganas, and No. 33, Guru Prasad Chaudhuri's Lane, Calcutta, were searched, but nothing of importance was found.

He was released on substantial bail and on the 14th February 1908, he was discharged under section 209, Criminal Procedure Code, as the evidence on record was insufficient to commit him to the Sessions Court for trial.

1908

Paragraphs 1960 (c), 1151 (f) and 1203 (m) of Bengal Abstract, 1908.

On the 23rd May, Narendra, accompanied by Siddeswar Chattarji and other national volunteers, visited Panchthupi, police-station Barwan, Murshidabad district, and distributed alms to the famine-stricken people during the scarcity. They visited the local high English school, where Siddeswar Chattarji, who was said to be an expert *lathi player*, instructed the boys in the use of *lathis*. They then toured about the neighbouring villages, making enquiries about the sale of indigenous articles.

Bengal File No. 1078.

Ambika Ch. Bhattacharji, of Harinavi, police-station Sonarpur, residing at Benares, stated in his deposition to the Magistrate of Howrah, when called as a witness in the Howrah gang case, that Narendra had visited Benares and had stayed at the house of the Private Secretary to the Maharaja of Gidhaur. Ambika Babu tried to negotiate a marriage between his daughter and Narendra, but failed.

Statement III (c).

The following are extracts from the statements of informers who were members of the Maniktolla gang, incriminating Narendra:

"No. 19-3, Chaku Khansamah's Lane was rented for Aravinda Ghosh's family by his father-in-law, who used to pay the rent. Aravinda's family lived there for a short time and it was before my return 25th November 1907. When I went there I saw the following men: ... Narendra Nath Bhattacharji, who with others committed the dakaiti at Chingripota Railway station. Purna Chandra Sen used to come frequently and Narendra came only 5 or 6 times. One day Narendra proposed to keep the money obtained in the dakaiti with Abinash Bhattacharji, but Abinash did not agree. Abinash told him to go to Satish Basu, of the *Anushilan Samiti*, Calcutta. He did so and kept the money there. Part of this money was expended for his case. Narendra is related to Abinash."

Statement IV (c).

"There were two sections in the *Jugantar* mess at No. 41 Champatolla, one the National College Boarding, and the other the *Jugantar* Mess Boarding. The following boy stayed at the *Jugantar* Boarding: Narendra Bhattacharji."

1909

Bengal File No. 231 of 1909.

Narendra was arrested in connection with the Netra dakaiti on the 31st May, but was discharged on the 4th June as the

complainant failed to identify him.

The Netra dakaiti was committed on the night of the 23rd April 1909. The complainant, Ram Chandra Mitra, reported to the police that his house had been entered by a gang of young men who overpowered him and knocked him down. One of the dakaitis held a revolver to his head and demanded the keys of the safe, which they compelled him to open, and then took away notes, cash and ornaments. They snatched a pair of gold bangles from the person of his wife and also ransacked his brother's house situated next door. Before leaving they informed the complainant that his money was taken to assist them to drive out the English from the country. They said this was the only way they had of raising funds for that purpose, and that when the time came, his money would be returned to him with interest.

Bengal File No. 2070.

In May 1909, an informer stated that Narendra had stayed at the Belur *math* for a time, but left suddenly, stating that he was going home to attend his brother, who was suffering from small-pox. About this time Narendra was found to be associating very much with one Krishna Acharji, a native of Madras, who was a student of the Presidency College and a rabid revolutionist. The acquaintance of Narendra and Krishna began apparently at the Belur *Math*, where they both visited.

Bengal File No. 505 of 1909.

It was reported in July that Narendra, who had a steel trunk shop at No. 12 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta, used to visit daily the Faridpur *Jatiya Bhandar*, which was the rendezvous of a number of suspicious youths from the Dacca and Faridpur districts.

Bengal File No. 109 of 1909.

On the 14th September, Narendra and Bhusan Mitra paid a short visit to Sarada Charan Sen at the house of Colonel Nandi. Sarada Sen was the manager of the seditious *Sandhya* newspaper in 1907. Both Sarada and the proprietor were prosecuted under

section 124A, Indian Penal Code, but the prosecution was withdrawn as they apologised.

1910

Bengal File No. 1078.

On the 20th January, Narendra's house was searched, as an approver in the Howrah gang case stated that he belonged to the secret society. The following papers were found: photograph of Arabinda Ghosh, 14 copies of the *Dharma* magazine and 19 copies of the *Karmajogin*. In March and May 1910, the Bengal Government sanctioned the prosecution of Narendra and 15 others under sections 121, 121A, 122, 123 and 124, Indian Penal Code, for various revolutionary actions on different dates in connection with the Howrah gang case.

1911

Bengal File No. 820 (d) of 1911.

On the 19th April, Narendra was acquitted by the High Court. A copy of the judgement is at Appendix B.

On his release from custody Narendra returned to Kodalia, 24 Parganas.

During the months May-September reports concerning Narendra were devoted to an itinerary of his movements between Calcutta, Kodalia and Gosaba, in which there was nothing suspicious.

Paragraphs 4903, 4904 and 4983 of Bengal

Abstract, 1911.

In September, after a visit to Gaya, he paid a religious pilgrimage to Benares for the purpose of bathing in the Ganges, and after leaving there he returned to Mojilpur in the 24 Parganas, where he met Rajani Bhattacharji and Tincourie Das, acquitted accused in the Howrah gang case.

1912

Bengal File No. 820 (b) of 1912

On the 9th February, an informer stated that Narendra and Tincourie Das, who were joint proprietors of a refreshment shop at No. 13 Clive Street, were planning to commit a dakaiti at Chingripota. They were accordingly closely watched, with the result that the projected dakaiti did not take place.

Bengal File No. 845 (e) of 1912

In April Narendra paid a short visit to Narayanganj, returning to Calcutta on the conclusion of his business.

Paragraph 3716 of Bengal Abstract 1912

In October he was reported to be staying at No. 91, Mukhtaram Babu's Street, Calcutta.

L. N. BIRD

Special Assistant, Intelligence Branch, C.I.D.
(Completed upto the end of November 1912.)

Appendix A.

Translation of Exhibit 37.

Exhibit 37.

(Sd.) H.P. Duval.

5.5.1910.

The Mother's Call

A time of very great difficulty has come. The fire of discontent is blazing furiously throughout India. The holy land extending from Burma to the Punjab and from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas has now been turned into a stage for the devil dance of infernal spirits. Instead of the sweet chanting of the Vedas issuing out of the throats of holy Brahmans, the loud wails of the famine-stricken have filled the land of India. Instead of the triumphant shouts of victorious warriors, the shrieks of wretches

suffering all their lives from diseases have filled this land of heroes. Mother India, (though) producing gems, is today full of cremation grounds; therefore the unearthly and frightful screams of devils frequenting cremation grounds have terrified and filled with consternation even the heroic children of the mother of heroes, and this abode of the Aryans, this land of the gods, is today infested by people professing alien religions. Brother Indians, how much longer will you endure all these fiendish oppressions in silence? The cow (revered as) mother, which deserves to be worshipped even by the gods, is being slaughtered in our motherland. How much longer will you endure this oppression indifferently? The lustre of female chastity which illumines the Indian firmament even today, that invaluable gem of the chastity of Indian women, is being ruthlessly looted everywhere. Does it look well on our part to sit idle any longer? The holy shrines are being desecrated by the brutal oppression of the robbers. Brothers, how long will you look (listlessly) at the distressed condition of our countrymen? How long will you silently listen to the calumnies against religion? How long will you overlook the calumnies against religion and the breaking of images, and lie down on the bed of pleasure? There is neither food nor clothing, nor religion nor *Karma* (virtuous deeds) in the country; everything has disappeared one after another, and is going to disappear every day. O sons of India, does it become you to remain idle any longer? Even a wild beast when bound with chains moves its head; even a caged bird tries to break open its cage by striking with its beak. Are we alone to remain inert under the selfsame bondage without making any exertion, without offering any opposition? Are we so despicable in the world that we shall silently bear the burden of oppression by others which even beasts and birds cannot tolerate? We are sons of Aryans; we may be *din* (indigent), but *hin* (despicable) we are not. Remember the deeds of the Aryans; do not forget that the blood of the world-renowned Aryans runs in every vein in our bodies. No more be under a spell; rise with heroic pride; pay off the debts you owe to the mother; lighten the load of sorrow of the mother oppressed by others. Listen, listen, with your ears pointed towards the sky,

a sound is issuing, extending to the confines of the horizon, viz., "Rise up, awake, and having obtained the blessings, be enlightened."

Most people have been pained at the present deplorable condition of the country. Sounds of piteous cries are arising out of the inmost depths of the hearts of many high-souled patriotic personages. But is there any longer time for weeping? We have passed many days in weeping; we have found and learnt that weeping is of little avail. Why, then, shall we waste time by indulging in continuous weeping? Brothers, arduous duties await you; strengthen your minds; let enthusiasm animate your hearts, and advance in the path of duty with an intrepid spirit. India is the land of *Karma*, none but a *Karmajogi* has a place in India. Remember always that—

"We have come to perform *Karma*,
And *Karma* is the characteristic of a living being."

It will not do to give way under oppression and persecution. Hundreds of obstacles, mishaps, victories and defeats, honour and humiliation must be received on your bared bosoms. Unless the insult to the gods and goddesses be witnessed, the sleeping Hindu heart will not be aroused, religion will not accumulate in lives devoid of religion, and high sentiments will not arise in our poor souls. Strength will not come to the hearts of Hindus except with the piteous cries of chaste women. The fire of revenge will not be kindled in the hearts of religious Hindus unless they witness the slaughter of cows. This is why these strange doings of the mother are manifest. A new life cannot be obtained by a subject people unless oppression reaches its highest limit in a subject country. It is for this that these strange acts of the mother are seen. Brothers, oppression has attained its full measures in India—all people from the child to the old man and the woman (irrespective of age and sex) are being equally oppressed; oppression has reached its furthest limit. The destruction of the oppressor is inevitable. Every person in whose body even a drop of Hindu blood flows will be excited and will stake his life to avenge the oppression. On the heart of every one of them will be

inscribed the plight of the oppressed motherland in letters of fire. Therefore, I say again, brothers, there is no time to weep, there is no time to ponder, there is no time to understand. Advance; with a fixed determination let us go forward in the path by following which any arduous task which may have to be performed for removing the mother's distress may be accomplished. But the duty is extremely difficult; to advance along the path of this stern duty one must lose sight of his personality; self-interest must first be sacrificed at the safety-giving feet of the mother and then initiation to the work should be received. You should consider every work of yours to be the mother's work, and every work of the mother to be your duty. Whoever may be initiated, in the mother's *mantra*, shall have no mother, no father, no sister, no brother, no wife, no son; whoever may be a follower of the holy *mantra* of the mother shall be his mother, his father, his sister, his brother, his wife, his son or his friend; such a person is his only relation in the world; and there is no other. Come with all speed, you, who are sons of India, you who are high-souled, whose souls have wept for removing the mother's sorrows, wherever you may be. A gigantic field of work lies before you; the work will not be completed even if the whole life be spent in doing it. Come all to join the mother's work; you who will undertake the work with your whole soul, losing sight of your personality, forgetting self-interest, jealousy and envy, come with all speed. Look, yonder is the mother who tramples upon the enemy, who dispels the fear of the enemy, who destroys all ills, standing with a charming form and smiling. What other fear is there, then? You are sons of the mother, engaged in doing the mother's work. Who is so powerful in the world as to disturb you in your work? Forward, advance, advance fearlessly and with an unhesitating mind. On our heads lie the safety-giving feet of *Abhaya* (Durga), whom need we fear? Behold, with the banner of victory in her hand, the mother is waiting for us! Brethern cry *Bande Mataram* thereby resounding the earth and the skies and making the hearts of the enemy tremble.

Translated by me.
(Sd.) Sarat Chandra Sen

Appendix B

Extract from High Court Judgment in Howrah gang case.

Noren Bhattacharji is the other member of the Chingripota group. He too was suspected of being concerned in the Chingripota dakaiti, but was discharged. He was a party also to the cloth stamping incident, and, however reprehensible it may have been, it cannot be seriously regarded as proof of the conspiracy charged in this case, and, indeed, it has not been so treated before us. Lalit, it is true, now speaks of Noren Bhattacharji as a member of the conspiracy, but he so implicated him in general terms. Before us he has named him as one of those implicated in the Netra dakaiti, and he says it was at the Netra dakaiti he first saw Noren Bhattacharji, and came to know that he was a member of the society. Lalit, however, made no mention of Noren in his confession as a party to the Netra dakaiti. He first introduced his name in this connection before the verifying Magistrate on the 13th of December. He, however, failed to identify him when he was taken to the Alipur Central Jail for that purpose by Mr. Sati Prasad Ganguli, and he similarly failed before Mr. Duvay on the 9th of April 1910. His evidence before the committing magistrate on the 11th April when Noren was shown to him: "Now too I am uncertain if this man was at the dakaiti. A Norendra Nath Bhattacharji, of Chingripota, was I heard there." And so we find that Lalit's statement that Noren was at Netra comes to nothing, and as it is on Noren's alleged presence there that he professes to base his knowledge of his being a member of the conspiracy, this imputation too falls to the ground. I need only add that there is absolutely no corroboration of Lalit's evidence against Noren. Noren Bhattacharji's visit to Benares is not treated by the prosecution as evidence against him; apparently it merely had to do with a possible treaty for marriage. On the search of Noren's house nothing incriminating was found, but on the occasion of his arrest in connection with the Chingripota dakaiti, a copy of the *Bartaman Rananiti* was found on him, as also a manuscript headed "the Mother's Call." The *Bartaman Rananiti* was a very recent publication at that time, and was, apparently, in great demand, so that mere possession of this book would obviously in

no way establish membership of the conspiracy with which we are concerned. Nor would this membership be established by possession of the unpublished manuscript, which is not shown or even suggested to be in Noren's handwriting. The result then is that in my opinion the case against Noren Bhattacharji fails.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

The spirit of Freedom and Revolt

When, as a schoolboy of fourteen, I began my political life, which may end in nothing, I wanted to be free. Independence, complete and absolute, is a new-fangled idea. The old-fashioned revolutionaries thought in terms of freedom. In those days, we had not read Marx. We did not know about the existence of the proletariat. Still, many spent their lives in jail and went to the gallows. There was no proletariat to propel them. They were not conscious of class struggle. They did not have the dream of Communism. But they had the human urge to revolt against the intolerable conditions of life. They did not know exactly how those conditions could be changed. But they tried to change them, anyhow. I began my political life with that spirit, and I still draw my inspiration rather from that spirit than from the three Volumes of *Capital* or three hundred volumes by Marx.

My Recollections of Young Naren

Saralabala Sarkar

Saralabala Sarkar (1875-1961) came from a very distinguished Bengali Hindu family. The Autobiography (in Bengali) of her grandmother Rasasundari was probably the first work of its kind to be written by a Hindu woman; her uncles were the well-known journalists Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh who founded and edited the Amritabazar Patrika. Saralabala had close association with the leaders of the revolutionary underground in Bengal like Aurobindo, Barin and Jatin, and she was like a second mother to Naren and Suresh Majumdar. Suresh Majumdar later became one of the founders of the Ananda Bazar Patrika.

The original text of the article which is published here was written in Bengali and published in the Weekly Desh, 29 January, 1955. It has been translated for this symposium by Sushil Bhadra, and slightly abbreviated. SNR.

The first glimpse I had of Manabendranath Roy was on the railway platform at Changripota station, where he came to receive his elder sister, who travelled from Calcutta. I, too, was travelling by the same train, with Baruipur as my destination. Naren's sister and I made each other's acquaintance on the train itself.

'Naren' was Manabendranath's original name. It so turned out later that he became like a son to me, and it was by the name 'Naren' that I always called him. In this note, too, I shall refer to him as 'Naren'.

On that first day, I learnt from Naren's sister that one of her brothers would attend the station to take her home. She had a lot

to tell me about this brother of hers: "My brother is extremely whimsical, but an earnest patriot. For a period, say, of three days at a stretch, his whereabouts would remain unknown. He would then appear only to rush to the field, where he would plough the land, hand in hand with the peasants. He is very shy, and equally obstinate". The way she went on talking convinced me that she loved her brother dearly. She must have realised, of course, that I was an eager listener.

"There stands my brother", she pointed out, when the train came to a halt at Changripota. Dark, tall, exquisitely handsome, the boy was sixteen or seventeen years old. His looks pleased me.

Quite some time passed before I would hear again of Naren. Suresh wrote to me about him. Suresh, nicknamed Paran, stayed with my father the late Kishorilal Sarkar, since the death of his own father. He was involved in revolutionary activities; but except for me, no one in the house was aware of this fact. On many occasions he would come back late in the night; I sat at the window and waited for him; some of the nights I had to remain awake throughout, as he did not return at all.

The murder of the detective Shamsui Alam was followed by many arrests. Suresh also was taken into custody from my father's house, and kept there for nearly eighteen months. While in jail, he developed friendship with Naren.

In the meantime, *Prabaha*, a book of poems composed by me, was published. From jail Paran asked for a copy. In a small note he mentioned his friendship with Naren, and explained that it was really Naren who wanted to read the book.

There was, however, a difficulty. *Itihas* (history), a poem included in the book, was possibly seditious in nature. I therefore did not send the book at first, but subsequently yielded to their persistence.

I was at Arambagh when Suresh was released; my brother was Medical Officer there. On the very day of his release Suresh started for Arambagh, and walked all the way from Champadanga station. He brought me a letter from Naren. The whole sheet was filled up with inscriptions of one and the same word —

'ma', 'ma', 'ma'; the signature appended at the bottom read: 'Your son Naren'.

'He is eager to do you *Pranam*', concluded Suresh, after giving me a long report on Naren.

Father was a legal practitioner of standing; his life-style, however, was simple. He lived at 121, Cornwallis Street, and quite a few boys pursued their studies from the shelter of his house. The outer room, which served also as the sitting room, was furnished with a pair of bedsteads placed together, covered with a *sataranchi* and a bed-sheet. Father's clients used to sit there when they came to consult him. The boys slept there at night.

One day father summoned me to this room. There sat Naren, his legs dangling by the side of a bedstead. "Paran's friend is here to see you", said father; "bring him some food if possible."

Naren seemed to be overwhelmed by shyness. He would not even raise his face. Part of the shyness, however, left him gradually after our conversation began.

My brother, Dr. Sarasilal Sarkar, had been in the meantime transferred to Uluberia. During one of my visits there I fell terribly ill. Naren frequently visited the place, thus becoming quite intimate with brother.

Brother had always been fond of revolutionaries. As a matter of fact, his own mental orientation was revolutionary in nature. Naren's company made him happy, and he started discussing how a commune could be built up for the boys to live in. He came to learn of one Mr. Home, who had been engaged in growing sugar-cane on a large expanse of land near Baripada, capital of Mayurbhanj. Desirous of returning to England, Home wanted to sell the land off before leaving. Brother sent Naren to start negotiations with Home. Naren made several trips, and warm relations grew up between him and the sahib. But the land, however, could not be purchased, owing to objections from Mayurbhanj State authorities.

Naren possessed an excellent quality: he could with ease win the hearts of men and women. Frequent visits to Uluberia, and

his sojourns there, endeared him to all members of the family. Brother loved him take a younger brother. When his second son Kanai fell ill, and had to be sent to Ghatshila, brother proposed that Naren should accompany Kanai; and Naren ungrudgingly agreed.

Kanai's mother was unable to leave for Ghatshila. I went with him in her stead. At the time, however, I myself was a heart patient. With us went a lady, Giribala Didi. Naren was our guardian.

We were at Ghatshila for some six months. The way Naren attended to my needs during those days is beyond description. He would raise water from the well to bathe me; he would allow no servant to raise the water. Forbidding him in this matter was simply out of question, as this would deeply hurt his sentiments. This excess of sentimentality was not to my liking. I asked Jatinda (the late Jatindranath Mukherji) in a letter: "Will Naren, your iron boy, turn into butter in my association?" "Never", *dada* wrote back, "would that be possible; iron will rather be transformed into steel".

Naren had literary capabilities. Many a well-composed article authored by him appeared in issue after issue of *Mukti Kon Pathey*, a periodical brought out by revolutionaries. He told me many events in his life. Once he described how the Magistrate of Dacca was shot at. All the anecdotes he told were about revolutionary activities.

He talked also about his childhood—about his elder brother Sushil, his elder sister, his younger brother Khokon. Their memory was permanently imprinted in his mind. With particular enthusiasm he would describe how crops were abundant in places like Changripota and Sonarpur, but out of the villagers' reach because the whole produce was exported to Calcutta. The *litchis* grown in the area were of excellent quality, but the villagers, again, had no opportunity to taste them. Once, therefore, he, with a band of friends, stole the *litchis* and distributed them in bunches to every household in the village. The villagers consumed the fruit with no feeling of remorse. The uniqueness of his character lay, on the one hand, in his courage and initiative, and

on the other hand in his childlike simplicity.

On our return to Calcutta we lived in a house in Nikisipara. There, too, Naren's visits were regular. But his face, hitherto full always of smiles, was now gloomy and thoughtful, in the manner of the sky just before a storm.

The storm, indeed, did break out, a short while later. Naren was arrested in connection with the Garden Reach dacoity. Getting himself house-interned on the pretext of contacting small-pox, Naren utilised the situation as an opportunity for escape. Earlier, when I had been to Puri for some time, he would occasionally come there. Jatin Babu and his followers were then at Balasore, and Naren, too, was presumably staying there.

Then happened the grim tragedy at Balasore, and all tracks of Naren were lost. He is supposed secretly to have attended the Karachi Congress. He was arrested and jailed very soon after the Congress.

His wife Ellen accompanied him when he was back in Calcutta after his release from prison. They stayed at the first floor of the building that housed Gouranga Press. Every day he came with Ellen and had dinner at our house on Radhakanta Jew Street. One day he said that Mahatmaji was desirous of having him (Naren) in his (the Mahatma's) fold. Once he also called at Lady Abala Bose's house at the latter's invitation.

The whole life of Manabendranath was as if a whirlwind. The whirlwind came to a stop, all of a sudden, one day at Dehra Doon. In his life was combined the life of a revolutionary with that of a loving humane person.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Radical Humanism

Any effort for a reorganisation of society must begin from the unit of society—from the root, so to say. Such an effort to

develop a new philosophy of revolution, on the basis of the entire stock of human heritage, and then to elaborate the theory and formulate the principles of the practice of political action and economic reconstruction, therefore, can be called Radicalism.

Radicalism thinks in terms neither of nation nor of class; its concern is man; it conceives freedom as freedom of the individual. Therefore, it can also be called New Humanism, new, because it is Humanism enriched, reinforced and elaborated by scientific knowledge and social experience gained during the centuries of modern civilisation.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Religion, Science and Humanism

The scientific mode of thought, having driven religion from pillar to post, over a period of several centuries, is meeting the final assault of the vanquished adversary. The sophisticated philosophies waging war against Materialism with "scientific" weapons are all in the last analysis rationalised religion. Denying the possibility of man ever knowing anything, they preach a neomysticism and revive the telcological view of life, which is the expression of man's loss of faith in himself. That is the central feature of the crisis of our time. To come out of it, mankind must have a philosophy which places man in the centre of the Universe, as the maker of his destiny, and celebrate the final triumph of science over religion.

C.A. Martin and The Batavia Plot (1915)

James Campbell Ker

Underground revolutionary movements in Bengal were reorganised shortly before the first world war under the leadership of Jatindra Nath Mukherjee. His chief lieutenant was Naren Bhattacharya. Shortly after the outbreak of the war plans were made to obtain shiploads of arms and ammunition from Germany and to attempt an insurrection against British rule. But the promised arms were not received, the plans were discovered and the attempt crushed by the British. Naren, who had been sent to Batavia under the name 'C.A. Martin' to negotiate with the Germans, continued the search for arms in Japan, China, Korea and the Philippines, eventually landing in the United States in 1916.

J.C. Ker (1878-1961) was Personal Assistant to the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Government of India, from 1907 to 1913, and from 1914 to 1917 on special duty at the Army Headquarters to prepare a detailed study of the Indian revolutionary movements. He wrote the 'Secret and Confidential' report "Political Trouble in India 1907-17", which formed the source book of the Sedition Committee Report 1918. In 1973 'Political Trouble' was made available to the general public for the first time: the excerpted pages are from pp. 252-259. SNR

One of the leading members of the gang with which these persons were more or less connected was a notoriously desperate character named Jotindra Nath Mukherji, then about 29 years of age, belonging to Kushtea in the Nadia District of Bengal. The importance of what may be called Jotin's gang was that they had carried out in August, 1914, the very successful coup which placed them in possession of 50 Mauser pistols and 46,000

rounds of ammunition belonging to Messrs. Rodda & Co., of Calcutta, and that in most of the subsequent political outrages in Bengal these Mauser pistols were used. Jotin Mukherji himself was once a shorthand clerk in the office of the Financial Secretary to the Government of Bengal, and had come to notice as a dangerous character long before these enquiries into the German plot were set on foot. Birendra Nath Dutt Gupta, the young Bengali who murdered Deputy Superintendent Shamsul Alam in the High Court of Calcutta on 24th January, 1910, afterwards stated that he was instigated by Jotin to commit the crime, and even before that he had been mentioned by a prisoner in the Maniktolla bomb conspiracy as one of the principal leaders of their movement at his home in Kushtea.

It was not surprising to find that a gang which had so boldly expropriated a consignment of Mauser pistols, and used them so freely, should be concerned in the German plot to import arms, and this line was followed up. It was established, as the result of a long and interesting investigation, that offers of German help were brought to the Bengal revolutionaries in March, 1915, by Jitendra Nath Lahiri, a Bengali student of Berkeley, California, who had just spent two months in Germany, and that they were invited to send an agent to Batavia to cooperate. The agent chosen was Norendra Nath Bhattacharji, a Bengali Brahmin of Chingripota in the 24 Parganas District of Bengal; this village was already celebrated as the scene of the first political dacoity in Bengal, committed on 6th December, 1907, by a band of young Bengalis who assaulted the stationmaster and robbed his safe of over six hundred rupees. Norendra Nath Bhattacharji, then a youth of 19, was suspected at the time of having a hand in this, and he was afterwards named by an informer as a member of a revolutionary society and prosecuted in the Howrah gang case but acquitted. The manager of Harry and Sons and his brother also came from the village of Chingripota, as well as his assistant Shyam Sundar Bose and his brother Saileswar Bose whose part in the plot will presently appear.

Norendra Nath Bhattacharji left India in April, 1915, and proceeded to Batavia; here he met the two Helfferichs and the German Consul, and arranged, amongst other things for money

to be sent to India. He adopted the name of C.A. Martin, and cabled in this name to Harry and Sons of Calcutta, giving the Batavia party this and one or two other addresses to use in subsequent communications. The remittances sent from Batavia were afterwards traced, and out of Rs. 43,000 which are known to have been sent to Calcutta the local revolutionaries drew out Rs. 33, 000; the remaining Rs. 10,000 were stopped in the bank. Noren Bhattacharji, *alias* Martin, returned to India in June, arriving probably at Negapatam on the 14th; next day he was in Madras, and there he attempted to cash the first Batavia remittance which he had brought with him, a bank draft in favour of C.A. Martin or bearer. As the bank to which he applied had not received the necessary advices from Batavia, payment was refused; the draft was afterwards cashed in Calcutta by Amarendra Chatterji of the *Sramajibi Samabaya*. The remittances of German money from Java were arranged by Abdus Salam, a Kashmiri Mahomedan residing in Batavia, who forwarded them through a firm of Sindi merchants trading widely in the Far East named Chotirmull and Co. Abdus Salam was in the plot, and as he was found to be disseminating seditious literature he was afterwards interned by the Government of the Dutch East Indies; the Sindi firm apparently made the remittances in the ordinary course of business, and there was nothing to show that it was in any way implicated.

Martin was evidently anxious to get away from Madras, and on the same day he sent the following telegram to Jadu Gopal Mukherji in Calcutta: "Arrived here starting to-night for Balasore expect to meet someone there". The discovery, some weeks later, that this telegram had been sent led to enquiries at Balasore, and it was found that Saileswar Bose, brother of Shyam Sundar Bose of Harry and Sons, had set up here in April, 1915, a business called the "Universal Emporium" which ostensibly consisted of the repair of bicycles and the sale of gramophones and records. Saileswar Bose was not able to explain some of the papers which were found in his shop, nor to disclose the source of the capital which enabled him to start this concern, and it was found by enquiries elsewhere that C.A. Martin had been to Balasore and stayed a night in the dak-bungalow (travellers' resthouse) and

that he had been taken away from there by Saileswar Bose on the 17th of June and had not re-appeared.

Saileswar's rather mysterious doings in Balasore had attracted attention, and it had been noticed that he visited a remote village in Mayurbhanj State called Kabtipada, some 22 miles west of Balasore and right away in the jungle. This was a curious place for a Bengali of his class to go to without any apparent object, and accordingly on 6th September, 1915, the District Magistrate of Balasore, accompanied by several police officers engaged in the enquiry, went to Kabtipada and learned that several Bengalis were living in a house in the jungle about a mile and a half away. Next morning, after the necessary sanction had been obtained from the Sub-Divisional Officer of Udala, they searched this house and found that the Bengalis had gone. They had, however, left behind some interesting documents, among which were a map of the Sundarbans and a cutting from a Penang paper about the *Maverick** and it was clear that they had firearms in their possession as a tree in the compound showed marks of bullets.

Arrangements were made to watch the roads and prevent the Bengalis from escaping, and on the 9th of September the Magistrate of Balasore received information that they had been located and had shot one villager dead and wounded another. The Magistrate with a Sergeant of the Proof Department and a party of armed police went to the spot in motor cars and found that the Bengalis had taken refuge in a small island of jungle in the middle of a rice field. As they approached in extended order the Bengalis opened fire with Mauser pistols, fortunately without effect. Their fire was returned, and after some 20 minutes two Bengalis came out of the bushes and held up their hands in token of surrender. The police party then advanced across the mud and water and found that the gang consisted of five Bengalis of whom one was dead and two were seriously wounded. The dead

* *S. S. Maverick* "was intended to bring arms from the West Coast of Mexico to Java to be afterwards conveyed to India. The *Maverick* was to meet a schooner called the *Annie Larsen* which was to bring the cargo of arms to be transhipped to the *Maverick*. However, the *Annie Larsen* failed to meet the *Maverick* which, on its arrival at Java, was taken charge of by the Dutch naval authorities. She was searched and found to be empty." SNR

man proved to be Jotindra Nath Mukherji, the important leader who has been already mentioned. ...They clearly belonged to the group which armed themselves by the daring robbery in Calcutta, seeing that of the four Mauser pistols found in their possession three were proved by their numbers to belong to the Rodda consignment. The newspaper cutting found in their house indicated some interest in the German scheme, and the map of the Sundarbans area was further evidence in the same direction as it was known from other sources of information that one of the places where a landing was contemplated, according to the German scheme, was somewhere in that neighbourhood.

It is necessary now to return to the adventures of Noren Bhattacharji *alias* C.A. Martin whom we last saw leaving the travellers' rest-house at Balasore with Saileswar Bose; there is no evidence that he met Jotin Mukherji on this occasion but there is no doubt that that was the object of his visit to Balasore. He then went on to Calcutta, and here he got into touch with Kumod Nath Mukherji, who was a Bengali who had been living since March, 1912, in Bangkok, Siam, where he practised as a lawyer. Here in April, 1914, he met Bholanath Chatterji, and learned that the latter was mixed up in some revolutionary society in Calcutta. In June, 1915, Kumod was approached by members of the *Ghadr* party in Bangkok to take money and a message to Calcutta. He reached Calcutta on the 3rd of July, 1915, and according to his instructions went to see Dr. Mukherji, of 62, Beniatola Street, at whose house he eventually met Bholanath Chatterji and delivered his message. In Calcutta he was introduced by Bholanath Chatterji to a "leader" whose name was withheld. This man asked Mukherji to go to Batavia, on his way back to Bangkok, and deliver to a German named Helfferich a message explaining the wants of the Indian party in the way of rifles and trained German help. K.N. Mukherji left India *via* Madras on 24th July, 1915, and carried out his mission; his railway ticket from Calcutta was paid for out of a hundred rupee note which was afterwards ascertained to be one of the notes paid to Amarendra Chatterji when he cashed the Batavia draft in favour of C.A. Martin. Kumod Nath Mukherji was a very half-hearted conspirator, and when he was asked to go back to Calcutta with a mes-

sage and a remittance from Batavia he declined the offer and started off home to Bangkok. Before leaving Batavia, however, he met the "leader" to whom he had been introduced in Calcutta and found that he was known to the local group as C.A. Martin.

C.A. Martin, then, was evidently in Calcutta in July, 1915. When the searches and arrests of August 7 took place the plans of the conspirators were badly upset. It now became necessary to discuss fresh plans with the Germans, and with this object Noren Bhattacharji, *alias* Martin, set out again for Batavia, accompanied by a friend belonging to the same village of Chingripota named Phanindra Nath Chakravarti... Martin and Phanindra started together from Calcutta about the end of August, 1915. They stopped a day at Cuttack, where they changed into European clothes and Phanindra was given by his friend the name of W.A. Payne, and sailed from Madras a few days later. Proceeding by Penang and Deli (Sumatra) they arrived at Batavia, and next day they went to Helfferich's house and met one of the Helfferichs and the German Consul.

The latter listened to Martin's message, but he was becoming disillusioned on the subject of Indian conspiracies...Martin had three or four meetings with the Germans, but his friends gathered from his conversation that he was making no progress and that the Germans had no men to send and were unwilling to risk a ship; he accordingly abandoned the Batavian scheme, and eventually succeeded in reaching Shanghai.

In June, 1916, he arrived in San Francisco; the local *Daily News*, published in that city on June 15th, contained the following paragraph:

"When the *Nippon Maru* touched port to-day from Hong-kong it carried a man of mystery. He is Chas A. Martin, who despite his name is a Hindu and a high-caste Brahmin. Martin declared that he boarded the boat at a French-Indian port and that he is *en route* to Paris to study. Passengers, however, declared that he did not board the ship at such a point, and believe him to be either a revolutionary leader or an emissary of the British Government."

The address he gave to the agents of the line by which he travelled was 1901, Baker Street, San Francisco, one of the addresses used by Ram Chandra Peshawari from which it was evident that he was going to join the headquarters of the *Ghadr* party. His friend Payne was not so fortunate. He was sent off by Martin, before the latter left Batavia, to Shanghai with a message for the German Consul, but in November, 1915, shortly after his arrival, he was found there in a destitute condition and sent in British custody to Singapore.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Who is a revolutionary

What is a revolution? And who is a revolutionary? A revolutionary is one who has got the idea that the world can be remade, made better than it is today; that it was not created by a supernatural power, and therefore could be remade by human efforts. A revolutionary further starts with the knowledge that the world has been remade time and again, and that the process of remaking the world takes place of necessity. Those Indians who have felt the necessity of remaking our country, and are convinced that the people of India have the power to do so, are revolutionaries. One cannot be a revolutionary, without possessing scientific knowledge. One must have the conviction that not only human beings can remake the world, can make and unmake gods, but ever since the birth of the race have been doing that. Human nature is to set up gods, topple them down, and set up new ones.

Hunger and Revolution in India (1919)

M.N. Roy

After a short period in the United States M.N. Roy escaped to Mexico in 1917 where besides working for India's freedom he also became actively involved in the Mexican struggle for social and political liberation. He published several books and pamphlets in Spanish, contributed to Mexican journals, organised the first national conference of the Mexican Socialist Party, and formed the Communist Party of Mexico (1919). He also met Michael Borodin of the Communist International, and at the invitation of Lenin went to Moscow where he played an important role in the Second Congress of the Comintern in July-August 1920.

The article reproduced here was originally published in "Gale's Magazine", Mexico, Vol. III No. 1, August 1919, pp 9 and 25. Lynn Gale was an American 'slacker' who had escaped from New York to Mexico in 1918 and had started a journal named after himself. SNR.

The absolute control of the means of communication by Governments of the victorious powers has prevented the general public from knowing anything which might prove disagreeable for those powerful nations which hold undisputed sway over the earth and the millions of human beings that inhabit it.

Because England has captured every route by which news could filter out of India, the world knows only what England wishes of the present condition of the Indian people. As a result of this policy, in force even before the War, there was a prevalent belief among the people of the western hemisphere that the benevolent (?) administration of India by the English had

resulted in all the fruits of peace and prosperity for that remote nation. Imperialistic propagandists have been telling the general public for the past 50 years that before the advent of the British the Indian people had never enjoyed these blessings, and that under their amiable protection, 350 million Indians live in contentment and happiness. But the [epoch] has come in which world events move so swiftly that even the stifled voice of India's starving millions reaches the remotest corners of the earth. The barbarous crimes committed by the English in India for more than a century and a half have reached their climax, and even the all-powerful hand of "perfidious Albion" finds itself unable to keep the world any longer in ignorance of the [crying] reality.

At the present moment, India is stricken by famine such as was never known before, even in her long and [dark] history of famines under British rule. The causes of this terrible epidemic are the economic exhaustion of the people and the exportation of all foodstuffs to feed the allied armies during the four years of the war.

To the mingled cries of the dying masses, the British Government has responded with bombs and bayonet, and passage of even stricter and more repressive laws to prevent the voice of an oppressed people reaching the [outside] world, in its appeal for help. The few notices published in the American and Canadian press testify that conditions in India have acquired alarmingly critical proportions. The whole country is in a state of rebellion, and the British Government is using all of its powers to suppress the uprising of a people that has been crushed beneath a tyranny without precedent in the annals of the civilised world. Early in April, the revolution burst forth spontaneously in the four greatest provinces of the Indian Empire, in Bengal, Bombay, the Punjab and the United Provinces, which together form almost two-thirds of the country. Hundreds of lives have been lost on both sides—that of the Government as well as that of the Revolutionists. The ancient city of Amritsar was one of the places where the fighting first began; it was besieged by British troops which bombarded the entire population from air-planes, killing hundreds of innocent people, and totally destroying the great

Temple of God, sacred to the Sikhs and a marvellous architectural monument.

In all parts of the country English banks were sacked by the revolutionists. The northern part of Calcutta, the first metropolis of India, was in their control for four [days]. The principal industrial and commercial cities, such as Bombay, Ahmedabad, Lahore, Delhi, the seat of the Viceroy, Allahabad, Gujranwala, etc. were converted into battle-grounds between the totally disarmed people on one hand, and on the other the military forces of the government, completely equipped with machine-guns, armoured cars and aeroplanes from which bombs were thrown upon the masses of helpless men, women and children.

All the different elements which form the Indian nation, the Hindus, Sikhs, Mohammedans, and other great communities have united themselves in determined opposition to the British tyranny which has subjected the entire people to a veritable reign of terror with its recent repressive legislation and merciless enforcement of martial law. The repressive measures, known as the Rowlatt Acts, were passed three months ago in face of the unanimous opposition of the Indian people. By these acts, liberty of press, of speech and of platform and meeting are absolutely destroyed. The purpose of the Rowlatt Acts, frankly admitted, is to kill the revolutionary spirit awake in the people. According to the very confession of the British Government, the Indian people are striving for liberty, and the only thing which makes them submit to foreign yoke is the brute force of the oppressors.

For four years India has agonized thru one of the worst famines known in history. Now that the war is over, and everyone seeks to improve the condition of the devastated countries of Europe, conditions in India have become worse. Even the Christian missionaries who constitute the most sworn and vociferous defenders of British Imperialism in India, have united in demanding that the poor infidels must be given food before they can be saved for Christ. A press correspondent of the *Globe*, Toronto, Canada, writes the following:

"India is in the deadly grip of plague and famine. In the Central and Northern provinces, death stalks thru the land, tak-

ing a toll that makes the great war casualty list sink into insignificance. To date, the estimated number of dead from plague and famine in THE PAST YEAR is over 32,000,000 people. The poor have eaten all their food and the physical condition of thousands upon thousands is such that they are too weak even to carry their water-jars. Some conception of the awful death-toll may be gathered from the following comparison: If coffins for the 30,000,000 British Indian subjects who have died during the last year thru plague and famine were placed head to feet they would reach a distance equal to one and one-third times around the equator. Words fail to portray the ghastliness of the stupendous tragedy and photographs are too gruesome to publish".

The *London Times* admits "India has been swept bare of food-stuffs to meet the exigencies of the war." According to government statistics, exports of cereals in 1917-18 rose to 5,400,000 tons valued at \$180,000,000. For the same year, wheat to the amount of 1,500,000 tons was exported. In 1919 "India's contribution of food-stuffs was maintained at an even higher level than in 1917-18." During all of this period the country was ravaged by famine and epidemics incident to famine.

Despite the fact that many notices have found their way into the press of the United States, of famine conditions in India, the people there up to the present moment have contributed very little to alleviate the terrible conditions, brot (brought) on by enforced contributions to the "war of liberty." In the latter part of May a few Canadian newspapers issued an appeal for funds to succor the dying millions in India, but this appeal was immediately suppressed by order of the Government, which has since allowed no news to be printed about India.

India, the land of proverbial riches and opulence, fell under a curse when the voracious European exploiters came to her coasts in search of gain. Since the days of the East India Company down to the present moment, the Indian people have suffered from chronic famines, malnutrition and endemic diseases which are the inevitable results of such a condition. By nature, education and centuries of culture, the Indians as a race are peaceable, and averse to shedding blood. English capitalists,

taking advantage of this wellknown characteristic, initiated a kind of exploitation, merciless, cruel and efficient, which is calculated to annihilate the entire Indian people. *A system which succeeds in killing 32,000,000 human beings in a single year, speaks for itself without the need of additional damning facts.* The people which rebel against further subjection to such a government should receive at least the moral support of the whole world.

English Imperialism is determined to suppress the just aspirations of the Indian people at whatever cost; without shame or compunction, it is employing all the weapons of modern warfare against a people completely disarmed for 50 years. To maintain the Indian people in their present condition of hopeless slavery is a vital necessity for the future existence of the English capitalistic system; what the capitalists lose in their struggle with the British workers, they will more than recover by their ruthless exploitation of the helpless and miserable Indian laborers. Consequently, notwithstanding the fact that the English proletarian may gain something as a result of the war, he will never be able to overthrow his capitalistic oppressors so long as the workers of India are theirs to exploit at pleasure. Unfortunately, this manifest fact is little considered or recognized by the English Labor Party, which in regard to its own affairs is extremely liberal, but which as regards British Imperialism in India never goes farther than to recommend a more generous policy in the administration of that country. Apparently, the English Labor party cannot conceive the idea that England has no right whatever, either moral or political, to impose itself upon the Indians, however liberal its rule. Accepting Imperialism as right and necessary for the welfare and greatness of England, they prove themselves just as much Imperialists as their masters. They, and the rest of the world have still to learn that *the struggle for Indian independence is not a local affair, having for its end and purpose the creation of another egoistic nationalism; the liberty of the Indian people is a factor in world politics, for India is the keystone of British Imperialism which constitutes the greatest and most powerful enemy of the Social and Economic Revolution that exists today.* For such time as English capital retains in absolute possession all the immense natural resources of India, with unlimited right to exploit its man power, just so long

will it continue entrenched in its power too firmly to be overthrown by the English proletariat.

And English capital is more than mere English capital—it represents at once the epitome and bulwark of the capitalistic system thruout the world. Seen in this light, it becomes self-evident that the liberation of India is more than a mere act of abstract justice; it signifies a long step towards the redemption of the world from the jaws of the capitalistic system. It is for this reason that no nation, no people or group of people, can afford to remain indifferent to the fate of India, to its cause of liberty, or to the suffering and struggle of those millions of Indians who today plead for the moral and material support of humanity.

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Freedom and Knowledge

The quest for freedom can be referred back to man's struggle for existence. It accounts for the triumph of man over nature in course of his efforts to satisfy his biological needs. It provides the basis for his constant search for knowledge, which enables him to be progressively free from the tyranny of natural phenomena and physical and social environments. The quest for freedom, therefore, is a continuation of the biological struggle for existence. In modern society, an individual, to be free, must not only be able to enjoy economic sufficiency and security, but live in a psychological atmosphere free from cultural regimentation and helpful to the development of his intellectual and other human potentialities. Progressive attainment of freedom in this wide sense by the individuals composing society should provide the criterion for judging the merits of social organisation.

An Indian Communist Manifesto

M.N. Roy

Early in 1920 Roy reached Berlin on his way to Moscow. Here he quickly developed close friendship with the Spartacist leaders of the German Communist Party and became acquainted with the ideas and writings of Rosa Luxemburg. Before proceeding to Moscow he wrote 'An Indian Communist Manifesto', which was published in the 'Glasgow Socialist'. It anticipated the position which he was to take at the Second Congress. The text reproduced here is that of a summary of the article, included in the Weekly Report of the Director, Central Intelligence, Simla, 2 August, 1920. Although Abani Mukherjee and Santi Devi (Roy's wife Evelyn Trent) were included as co-signatories, intelligence reports and corroborative evidence leave no doubt that the Manifesto was drafted solely and entirely by M.N. Roy. SNR

The time has come for the Indian revolutionists to make a statement of their principles in order to interest the European and American proletariat in the struggle of the Indian masses, which is rapidly becoming a fight for economic and social emancipation and the abolition of class rule. The appeal is made to the British proletariat because of their relation to revolutionary movements in countries dominated by British imperialism.

The nationalist movement in India has failed to appeal to the masses, because it strives for a bourgeois democracy and cannot say how the masses will be benefited by independent national existence. The emancipation of the working class lies in the social revolution and the foundation of a communist state. Therefore the growing spirit of rebellion in the masses must be organised on the basis of class struggle in close co-operation with the world proletarian movements.

But because British domination deprives Indians of the elementary rights indispensable for the organisation of such a struggle, the revolutionary movement must emphasise in its programme the political liberation of the country. This does not make its final goal a bourgeois democracy under which the native privileged class would rule and exploit the native workers in place of British bureaucrats and capitalists. All that the world is allowed to know of the Indian revolutionary movement is the agitation for political autonomy. This has naturally failed to enlist the sympathy of the working class in any country, which must always be indifferent to purely nationalist aspirations.

The idea of class-conscious rebellion against capitalistic exploitation has been gaining ground in India, immensely stimulated by the war. The quickened industrial life, the rise in the cost of living, the employment of Indian troops overseas and the echoes of the Russian revolution have fanned the discontent always existing in the masses. The nationalist revolutionary movement, recruited from educated youths of the middle classes, tried to turn the discontent to an armed uprising against foreign rule. Since the beginning of the present century, terrorism, local insurrections, conspiracies and attempts to revolt have become more and more frequent until at last practically the whole country came under martial law. These activities did not inspire the masses with lasting enthusiasm: the leaders failed to prescribe remedies for the social and economic evils from which the workers suffer. But dynamic economic forces, which are destined to cause a proletarian revolt in every country, have grown acute in India and hence the spirit of rebellion has grown more and more manifest among the people who were not moved by the nationalist doctrines preached by the revolutionaries. Today there are two tendencies in the Indian movement, distinct in principles and aims. The nationalists advocate an autonomous India and incite the masses to overthrow the foreign exploiter upon a vague democratic programme or no programme at all. The real revolutionary movement stands for the economic emancipation of the workers and rests on the growing strength of a class-conscious industrial proletariat and landless peasantry. This latter movement is too big for the bourgeois leaders and can

only be satisfied with the social revolution. This manifesto is issued for those who fill the ranks of the second movement. We want the world to know that nationalism is confined to the bourgeois, but the masses are awakening to the call of the social revolution.

The growth of class-consciousness in the Indian proletariat was unknown to the outer world until last year, when one of the most powerful and best organised strikes in history was declared by the Indian revolutionaries. Though the nationalists used it as a weapon against political oppression, it was really the spontaneous rebellion of the proletariat against unbearable economic exploitation. As the workers of the cotton mills owned by native capitalists were the first to walk out it cannot be maintained that the strike was nothing more than a nationalist demonstration.

It is known in England how this revolt of the famished workers was crushed by British imperialism. But the British working class were misled into believing that it was merely a nationalist demonstration and therefore abstained from taking definite action according to the principles of class solidarity. A simultaneous general strike would have dealt a vital blow to imperialistic capitalism at home and abroad, but the British proletariat failed to rise to the occasion.

The only step taken was very weak and of a petty bourgeois nature—the protest against the manner of crushing the revolt signed by Smillie, Williams, Lansbury and Thomas. This was not the voice of the revolutionary proletariat raised to defend class interest.

The bourgeois nationalist movement cannot be significant to the world proletarian struggle or to the British working class, which is learning the worthlessness of mere political independence and sham representative government under capitalism. But the Indian proletarian movement is of vital interest. The tremendous strength which imperialistic capitalism derives from extensive colonial possessions rich in natural resources and cheap human labour must no longer be ignored. So long as India and other subject countries remain helpless victims of capitalist exploitation and the British capitalist is sure of his absolute mastery

over millions and millions of human beasts of burden, he will be able to concede the demands of British trade unionists and delay the proletarian revolution which will overthrow him. In order to destroy it completely world capitalism must be attacked simultaneously on every front. The British proletariat cannot march towards final victory unless he takes his comrades in the colonies along with him to fight the common enemy.

The loss of the colonies might alarm orthodox trade union psychology with the threat of unemployment, but a class-conscious revolutionary proletariat, aiming at the total destruction of capitalist ownership and the establishment of a communist state, cannot but welcome such a collapse of the present system since it would lead to the economic bankruptcy of capitalism—a condition necessary for its final overthrow.

To all possible misgivings of British comrades we declare that our aim is to prevent the establishment of a bourgeois nationalist government which would be another bulwark of capitalism. We wish to organise the growing rebelliousness of the Indian masses on the principles of the class struggle, so that when the revolution comes it will be social revolution. The idea of the proletarian revolution distinct from nationalism has come to India and is showing itself in unprecedented strikes. It is primitive and not clearly class-conscious so that it sometimes is the victim of nationalist ideas. But those in the van see the goal of the struggle and reject the idea of uniting the whole country under nationalism for the sole purpose of expelling the foreigner, because they realise that the native princes, landholders, factory owners, moneylenders, who would control the government, would not be less oppressive than the foreigner. "Land to the toiler" will be our most powerful slogan, because India is an agricultural country and the majority of the population belongs to the landless peasantry. Our programme also calls for the organisation of the Indian proletariat on the basis of the class struggle for the foundation of a communist state, based during the transition period on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We call upon the workers of all countries especially Great Britain to help us to realise our programme. The proletarian

struggle in India as well as in other dependencies of Great Britain should be considered as vital factors in the international proletarian movement. Self-determination for India merely encourages the idea of bourgeois nationalism. Denounce the masked imperialists who claim it and who disgrace your name (of British workers). The fact that India is ruled by the mightiest imperialism known to history makes any kind of revolutionary organisation among the working class almost impossible. The first step towards the social revolution must be to create a situation favourable for organising the masses for the final struggle. Such a situation can be created only by the overthrow or at least the weakening of the foreign imperialism which maintains itself by military power.

Cease to fall victims to the imperialist cry that the masses of the East are backward races and must go through the hell fires of capitalistic exploitation from which you are struggling to escape. We appeal to you to recognise the Indian revolutionary movement as a vital part of the world proletarian struggle against capitalism. Help us to raise the banner of the social revolution in India and to free ourselves from capitalistic imperialism that we may help you in the final struggle for the realisation of the universal communist state.

Mananbendra Nath Roy
Abani Mukherji
Santi Devi

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Materialism and Spirituality

Materialism does not preclude the appreciation of what is called the higher aspects of human life. It only maintains that all the so-called spiritual aspects of man's life do not transcend this world, but are inherent in man as a biological being. In proportion as man develops intellectually, his knowledge broadens, the higher values inherent in man, the capacity of taking interest in other things than the physical existence, the cultivation of finer sentiments, arts, science, etc. become more and more possible.

Original Draft of 'Supplementary Theses on the National and Colonial Question' (1920)

M.N. Roy

The Second Congress of the Comintern (19 July to 7 August 1920) adopted Lenin's Theses on the National and Colonial Question and Roy's Supplementary Theses on the same, with some amendments in both. We reproduce here the original draft since it reflects much more clearly Roy's view at this time than the amended text.

Three main points made in the Supplementary Theses were: (a) that the maintenance of European capitalism depended on colonial possessions and consequently a revolution in Europe depended on the course of the revolution in Asia bringing about the break-up of the colonial empires; (b) that in the colonies there were two movements, one bourgeois democratic and limited to the small middle class, and the other a mass movement which represented the exploited majority for whom social and economic revolution would alone give content to political independence; and (c) that the Comintern should support revolutionary mass movements in the colonies and establish relations with the movements, wherever possible, through socialist and communist parties which either already existed in the colonies, or would have to be organised.

After discussions with Lenin and in the Colonial Commission both Lenin's and Roy's drafts were amended and adopted. In Lenin's report on the Colonial Commission's work to the Plenary Session of the Congress he mentioned differences but pointed out that "we have arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national-revolutionary movement rather than that of the bourgeois democratic movement.

There has been a certain rapprochement between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonies, so that very often—perhaps even in most cases—the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, while it does support the national movement, is in full accord with the imperialist bourgeoisie, i.e., joins forces with it against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes. This was irrefutably proved in the Commission and we decided that the only correct attitude was to take this distinction into account and, in nearly all cases, substitute the term 'national-revolutionary' for the term 'bourgeois-democratic'" (Lenin, 'Selected Works', Vol. 10).

Since Lenin fully recognised this distinction which had been stressed by Roy, he not only amended his own Draft, but commended Roy's Supplementary Theses in the amended form to be adopted by the Congress. In 1922 in appreciation of both his theoretical work (*India in Transition*, first published in Russia in 1921, then in English and German in 1922) and his organisational accomplishments Roy was elected a Candidate member of the Comintern Executive Committee. In 1924 at the Fifth Congress he was elected a full member of the Executive and its Presidium and in 1925 in addition to these two positions he was also elected a member of the Secretariat and the Orgbureau, the four highest bodies in the Comintern (Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, Vol. 2, 1922-28, London 1971; pp 572-74). At the Fifth Congress, there was some difference between Manuisky and Roy over the National and Colonial Question but when a draft resolution of which Roy was critical was given to Stalin for his view he wrote back to Manuisky on July 31st 1924: "You mention differences with Roy who underscores the social aspect of the struggle in the colonies...I shall say that there are certain places in the resolution of the Congress which I do not agree with precisely from the standpoint of the social aspect" (R.A. Ulyanovsky ed. *The Comintern and the East*, 1979; p 169). The resolution was not endorsed by the Fifth Congress. So it was not Roy alone but Stalin too at this stage who stressed the 'social aspect' of movements in the colonies.

However, in the 'Documents of the History of the C.P.I., Volume I, edited officially on behalf of the C.P.I. by G. Adhikari, and published by People's Publishing House, 1971, Roy had been attacked throughout editorially for his so-called 'sectarian position'; ironically, most of the documents included in the volume were lifted from Roy's writings

between 1920 and 1922. Moscow published a two-volume Symposium edited by R.A. Ulyanovsky ('The Comintern and the East', 1978 and 'A Critique of the Critique', 1981) in which Roy's position during the twenties was repeatedly criticised by different communist contributors and quite often deliberately distorted. Roy's 'left sectarianism' was supposed to be at the root of the Maoist 'deviation' of China. Roy's original draft of his Supplementary Theses should be of interest not only to students of radicalism in India, but also generally to Marxists and other 'revolution-oriented' groups and persons who are disillusioned with the 'tailism' and 'doubletalk' of the Indian Communists. SNR

1. To determine the relation of the Communist International to the revolutionary movements in the countries dominated by capitalistic imperialism is one of the most important questions before the Second Congress of the Third International. The history of the world revolution has come to a period when a proper understanding of this relation is indispensable; the great European war and its results have shown clearly that the masses of the non-European subjected countries are inseparably connected with the proletarian movement in Europe, as a consequence of the centralised world capitalism.

2. The fountainhead from which European capitalism draws its main strength is no longer to be found in the industrial countries of Europe, but in the colonial possessions and dependencies. Without the control of the extensive markets and vast fields of exploitation in the colonies, the capitalist powers of Europe cannot maintain their existence even for a short time. England, the stronghold of imperialism, has been suffering from overproduction since more than a century ago. But for the extensive colonial possessions acquired for selling her surplus products and as a source of raw materials for her ever growing industries, the capitalist structure of England would have crushed under its own weight long ago. By enslaving the hundreds of millions of inhabitants of Asia and Africa, English imperialism succeeded so far in keeping the British proletariat under the domination of the bourgeoisie.

3. Superprofit gained in the colonies is the mainstay of modern capitalism and so long as it is not deprived of this source

of superprofit, it will not be easy for the European working class to overthrow the capitalist order. Thanks to the possibility of intensive and extensive exploitation of human labour and natural resources in the colonies, the capitalist nations of Europe are trying, not without success, to recuperate their present bankruptcy. By exploiting the masses in the colonies, European imperialism will be in a position to give concession after concession to the proletariat at home. It will not hesitate to go to the extent of sacrificing the entire surplus value in the home country so long as it continues in the position to gain its huge superprofits in the colonies.

4. Without the breaking up of the colonial empire, the overthrow of the capitalist system in Europe does not appear possible. Consequently, the Communist International must widen the sphere of its activities. It must establish relations with those revolutionary forces that are working for the overthrow of imperialism in the countries subjected politically and economically.

5. Such relation of the Communist International with the revolutionary movement in the subject countries is not tantamount to the former's upholding the doctrine of nationalism. The Communist International is the concentrated will of the world revolutionary proletariat. Its mission is to organise the working class of the whole world for the overthrow of the capitalist order and the establishment of communism. The Third International is a fighting body which has outgrown the realm of pure doctrinairism.

Dominated as it was by a group of politicians, permeated with bourgeois culture, the Second International failed to appreciate the importance of the colonial question. For them the world did not exist outside of Europe.

They could not see the necessity of co-ordinating the revolutionary movement in Europe with those in the non-European countries. Instead of giving moral and material help to the revolutionary movements in the colonies, the members of the Second International themselves became imperialists.

6. Foreign imperialism imposed on the eastern peoples pre-

vented them from developing socially and economically side by side with their fellows in Europe and America. Owing to the imperialistic policy of preventing industrial development of the colonies, a proletarian class in the strict sense of the term could not come into existence until recently. The indigenous craft industries were destroyed to make room for the products of the centralised industries in the imperialistic countries; consequently a big majority of the population was driven to the land to produce foodgrains and raw materials for export to foreign lands. On the other hand, there followed a rapid concentration of land, the proprietary right of which was vested in the state thus creating a huge landless peasantry. The great bulk of the population was kept in a state of illiteracy. As a result of this policy, the spirit of revolt latent in every subject people found its expression only through the small, educated middle class.

The foreign domination has obstructed the free development of the social forces—therefore its overthrow is the first step towards the revolution in the colonies. So, to help overthrow the foreign rule in the colonies is not to endorse the nationalist aspirations of the native bourgeoisie but to open up the way to the smothered proletariat there.

7. The revolutionary movements in the colonies are essentially an economic struggle. The bourgeois democratic nationalist movements are limited to the small middle class which does not reflect the aspirations of the masses. Without the active support of the masses, the national freedom of the colonies will never be attained. But in many countries, especially in India, the masses are not with the bourgeois nationalist leaders—they are moving towards revolution independently of the bourgeois nationalist movement. There are to be found in the dependent countries two distinct movements which every day grow farther and farther apart from each other. One is the bourgeois democratic nationalist movement, with a programme of political independence and the other is the mass action of the ignorant and poor peasants and workers. The former endeavour to control the latter and often succeed to a certain extent, but it would be a mistake to assume that the bourgeois nationalist movement expresses the

sentiments and aspirations of the general population. For the overthrow of foreign imperialism, the first step towards revolution in the colonies, the cooperation of the bourgeois nationalist elements may be useful. But the Communist International must not find in them the media through which the revolutionary movement in the colonies should be helped. The mass movements in the colonies are growing independently of the nationalist movements. The masses distrust the political leaders who always lead them astray and prevent them from revolutionary action.

8. The real strength of the liberation movement in the colonies is no longer confined to the narrow circle of bourgeois democratic nationalists. In most of the colonies there already exist organised socialist or communist parties, in close relation to the mass movement. The relation of the Communist International with the revolutionary movement in the colonies should be through the medium of these parties or groups, because they are the vanguard of the working class in their respective countries. They may not be very big today, but they reflect the desire of the masses and the masses will follow them to the revolution. The communist parties of the different imperialistic countries must work in conjunction with these proletarian parties of the colonies and through them give, all the moral and material support to the revolutionary movements in general.

9. The supposition that, owing to the economic and industrial backwardness, the peoples in the colonies are bound to go through the stage of bourgeois democracy is wrong. The events and conditions in many of the colonies do not corroborate such a supposition. It is true that the revolution in the colonies is not going to be a communist revolution in its first stages. But if from the beginning the lead of the revolution is in the hands of a communist vanguard, the revolutionary masses would not be led astray but would go straight ahead through the successive periods of development of revolutionary experience. Indeed, it would be very difficult in many of the oriental countries to solve the agrarian problem along pure communist principles. In its first stages, the revolution in the colonies must be carried on with

a programme in which will be included many petty bourgeois reform clauses—for instance, division of land, etc. But from this it does not necessarily follow that the leadership of the revolution will have to be surrendered to the bourgeois democrats.

10. The bourgeois national democrats in the colonies strive for the establishment of a free national state, whereas the masses of workers and poor peasants are revolting, even though in many cases unconsciously, against the system which permits such brutal exploitation. Consequently, in the colonies, we have two contradictory forces; they cannot develop together. To support the colonial bourgeois democratic movements would amount to helping the growth of the national spirit which will surely obstruct the awakening of class consciousness in the masses; whereas to encourage and support the revolutionary mass action through the medium of a communist party of the proletarians will bring the real revolutionary forces to action which will not only overthrow the foreign imperialism, but lead progressively to the development of Soviet power, thus preventing the rise of a native capitalism in place of the vanquished foreign capitalism, to further oppress and exploit the people.

11. To initiate at as early a stage as possible the class struggle in the colonies means to awaken the people to the danger of a transplanted European capitalism which, overthrown in Europe, may seek refuge in Asia, and to defeat such an eventuality before its beginning.

M.N. ROY
India

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Humanism and Materialism

The supreme importance of man results from the fact that in him the physical process of becoming has reached the highest pitch so far. Humanism thus ceases to be a mystic and poetic view of life. Harmonised with humanism, materialist philosophy can have an ethics whose values require no other sanction than man's innate rationality.

M.N. Roy and The Revolution in Asia

Robert C. North

Professor Emeritus Robert C. North of Stanford University has written extensively on Communism, Russia and China. His many scholarly publications include: 'The Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Elites'; 'Moscow and the Chinese Communists'; and with Xenia J. Eudin, 'Soviet Russia and the East 1920-1927' and 'M.N. Roy's Mission to China'.

The article reproduced here was originally published in 'Soviet Survey' No. 32, April-June, 1960. SNR

This was the summer of 1920, and revolutionaries from all over the world had begun to converge on Petrograd for the opening of the Second Congress of the Communist International. The famous old Smolny Institute, formerly a school for daughters of the nobility, now held the offices of various commissars, and it was there that leading Russian Bolsheviks welcomed the delegates. As soon as the ceremony was over, a great crowd marched in process to the Uritsky Theater, where only delegates and spectators with special tickets were granted admittance. Despite precautions, the place was packed with people sitting on the floor and jamming every corner and passageway.

There, near the front, sat a tall, brown-skinned delegate, M.N. Roy, from India. Represented also were China, Korea, Turkey, Persia, the Dutch East Indies and more than thirty other states and dependencies. Throughout 1918 and 1919 Russian Communist leaders had expected post-war unrest in central Europe to explode into a general revolution, but in Germany,

Hungary and Austria newly-formed workers' and soldiers' soviets had met early defeat. By the opening of the Second Congress the Bolsheviks were looking hopefully towards possibilities for revolution in other quarters.

Lenin himself now mounted the rostrum to analyse the international situation. By 1914, he said, more than 600 million people had fallen subject to colonial rule, while another 400 million in Persia, Turkey and China had been reduced to semicolonial status. Indeed, the Great War, according to Lenin, had grown directly out of this division of the world among the imperialist powers, who had come to blows over which of the two great groups was to enjoy the right of robbing, exploiting, and crushing the rest of the world.

During subsequent sessions of the Congress, which were held in Moscow, the delegates discussed at considerable length the political strategy and tactics which Communists ought to follow in the encouragement of revolution in the colonial and dependent—as distinct from the western capitalist—nations. The outcome of these discussions was the adoption of the 'Theses on the National and Colonial Questions', which presented Lenin's views modified by proposals introduced by M.N. Roy in his 'Supplementary Theses'.

According to Lenin, the Communist International 'must be ready to establish temporary relationships and even alliances with the bourgeois democracy of the colonies and backward countries. It must not, however, amalgamate with it.' In contrast, while Roy agreed that 'it would be profitable to make use of the co-operation of the bourgeois national-revolutionary elements', he insisted that the Communist International and its constituent parties must struggle against any bourgeois control over the workers and peasants and must make every effort to develop the class consciousness of the working masses.

The difference between the two points of view was only a matter of emphasis, but it was sufficient to confuse the issue in Communist minds and to hamper the Comintern in seeking to exploit the revolutions of Asia.

At the time of the Second Congress M.N. Roy was barely thirty-three years old, but he had already served more than fifteen years as an anti-British revolutionary. He had been still in his teens when British intelligence agents first took note of his activities, and police from India and Southeast Asia all the way to China, Japan, and the United States were familiar with his movements. Prior to his arrival in Moscow, he had been operating in Berlin—and before that in Mexico City where Borodin, the Comintern agent, had won him over to Communism. Now the new convert stood face to face with Lenin and boldly challenged the views of Bolshevism's most seasoned strategist and theoretician. 'Two distinct movements which grow farther apart each day,' Roy declared, 'are to be found in the dependent countries. One is the bourgeois democratic movement, with a programme of political independence under the bourgeois order. The other is the mass struggle of the poor and ignorant peasants and workers for their liberation from the various forms of exploitation.'

In order to overthrow foreign capitalism, he argued, it would be profitable to make use of the co-operation of the bourgeois nationalist elements—but only in the initial stages and with circumspection. The foremost task was to form Communist parties in the dependent areas which would organize the peasants and workers and lead them to revolution and to the establishment of soviet republics.

Beyond this, Roy contended also that the revolutionary movement in Europe was absolutely dependent upon the course of the revolution in Asia. Super-profits extracted from the colonies were the mainstay of modern capitalism. 'Without control of the extensive markets and vast areas for exploitation in the colonies,' he told the Second Congress, 'the capitalist powers of Europe would not be able to exist even for a short time.'

Lenin took strong exception to parts of Roy's thesis. Drawing on his own experience, he reminded the delegates that the Russian Bolsheviks had supported liberal liberation movements against tsarism. Similarly, the Indian Communists were 'in duty bound' to support 'bourgeois liberation movements' without in any sense merging with them. Roy, moreover, had gone too far in

declaring that the destiny of revolutionary forces in the West would depend decisively upon the strength of the mass revolutionary movement in Asia.

After considerable debate the Second Congress sought to resolve the argument by approving both theses. While collaborating with middle-class nationalists in the colonies and semi-colonies, Communist leaders were expected to make every effort to arouse and organize the working masses and to penetrate and gain leadership over existing revolutionary movements.

Over the ensuing half-dozen years, with headquarters first in Berlin and later in Paris, Roy developed his concepts for revolution in the colonies and semi-colonies around four central themes: (1) the absolute necessity for ensuring that leadership for each stage of the revolution should rest at all times with a Communist vanguard; (2) the usefulness of limited, tactical, and strictly controlled Communist co-operation with essentially hostile bourgeois democratic revolutionaries during early stages; (3) recognition of the wavering tendencies of the petty-bourgeoisie who, as an exploited class in the colonies and semi-colonies, shared with the peasantry and the proletariat certain interests which they did not at first perceive—but which, under Communist leadership, they could be brought to see; and (4) the necessity, during the initial revolutionary stages, of a Communist-led non-capitalist programme of development encompassing many 'petty-bourgeois capitalist reforms' such as the nationalization of transport and public utilities, the division of land among the peasants, and so forth.

In seeking to implement these concepts over the years, however, the Bengali revolutionary—through the lessons of experience and the irresistible pressure of his own reasoning—gradually worked his way out of Bolshevik doctrine and spent the latter part of his life searching for other explanations of Asia's crises and other solutions for Asia's problems.

Undoubtedly it was Roy's Indian background and his assessment of the independence movement in India that shaped his concepts of Asian class struggle. An important basis for his distrust of the bourgeoisie, for example, seems to have emerged

from his perception of a significant shift in British policies—and his perception, also, of how the Indian bourgeoisie had responded to this shift.

Great Britain, unable to keep Indian markets supplied with manufactured goods during World War I, had reversed its traditional policy of keeping India industrially backward, thus bringing the Indian bourgeoisie 'into its confidence', and presenting Indian capital with a free field of development. The British Government in 1916 had even gone to the length of appointing an Indian Industrial Commission in order to encourage industry in the country, and in consequence, by war's end, the Indian capitalist class had achieved such an economic security that the Government could no longer ignore bourgeois political demands, and in due course these were largely met by the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. 'The object behind this remarkable change of policy on the part of British imperialism', Roy asserted, 'was to split the revolutionary movement by making it clear to the bourgeoisie that it was no longer impossible for it to realize its ambitions under British rule.'

This turn of policy did not ensure that the bourgeoisie would be won over. On the contrary, 'The more the British Government makes concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie,' Roy maintained, 'the more ambitious the latter becomes. It knows quite well that it is necessary to make compromises with the Imperial capital, till the time comes when it will be in a position to contend openly for the right of monopoly of exploitation with the foreigner. But it also knows that British imperialism cannot be overthrown without the help of the masses.'

The bourgeoisie would deliberately deceive the masses, Roy believed, in order to capture their support and secure aggrandisement, and would seek to draw them into the National Congress. Still unaware of their own purposes, the masses would follow, for a time, but would not remain forever a reliable force behind the political manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie. 'The overthrow of the British rule will be achieved by the joint action of the bourgeoisie and the masses', asserted Roy, thus revealing his position as only a hairsbreadth—a crucial hairsbreadth—from

Lenin's 'but how this joint action can be consummated still remains a question. It will be easier to solve this problem when the condition of the masses is analysed, in order to understand what a great gulf divides these two revolutionary factors.' In the long run the divorce of the masses from bourgeois leadership was inevitable; bourgeois nationalism would end in a compromise with Imperial supremacy, and the liberation of India would be left to the political movement of the workers and peasants—'consciously organized and fighting on the ground of class-struggle.'

Between 1922 and the convening of the Sixth Congress in 1928 Roy from time to time revised his assessments of bourgeois relationships with the British and with the Indian masses, but the main line of his argument did not change. Paradoxically the logic of it eventually drove him from the Communist movement.

At the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922, for example, Roy maintained that financial dislocations in Europe were forcing imperialism to look for new markets by which the equilibrium of world capitalism could be re-established. Western European capitalists hoped to achieve this new economic balance by promoting industrialization in countries like India and China.

In the beginning, Roy conceded, the various revolutionary upheavals in Asian countries had been a spontaneous reaction to intensified economic exploitation by Western imperialists. Now the national bourgeoisie, however, with increased industrialization and opportunities for profit, was withdrawing its support from national revolutionary movements and seeking imperialist protection. As a consequence, Roy declared,

'The national revolutionary movement in these countries ...is not going to be successful under the leadership of the bourgeoisie...It is only under the leadership of a political party representing the workers and peasants that the national revolutionary struggle can come to final victory in these countries.'

The Fourth Congress supported Roy's analysis:

'The dominant classes in the colonies and the semi-colonial

countries are unable and unwilling to lead struggle against imperialism as this struggle is converted into a revolutionary mass movement.'

Yet the contradiction, so evident at the Second Congress, still plagued the Comintern. For the Fourth Congress, while upholding Roy's argument, was at the same time making plans for tactical co-operation in China with Sun Yat-sen's middle-class Kuomintang. How could these two antagonistic attitudes be reconciled? And how was a Communist tactician to foresee the precise moment when the essentially hostile national bourgeoisie would expend the last of its revolutionary potentialities and go over to the reaction?

Addressing the Fifth Congress in 1924, Roy asserted that in India, where national capitalism was growing rapidly, the national bourgeoisie had already been won over to support the Empire. 'Because the Indian bourgeoisie knows better than anybody else that the discontent of the masses is economic and not nationalist', he said, 'the exploiting class in India demands protection from the exploited. Indian capitalism is running straight into the arms of British imperialism, and the same tendency will soon be seen in other countries.'

By 1926 Roy was convinced that bourgeois nationalism had ended in a complete compromise with imperialism in India. The deepening schism between the national bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie had split the Swaraj, or Home Rule party, which previously had served as a bridge between the constitutionalism of the big bourgeoisie and the revolutionary inclinations of the petty-bourgeoisie. 'The split in the Swaraj Party', he declared, 'means the burning of that bridge.' The last obstacle to an agreeable compromise between British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie had been successfully removed. The British policy of industrialization was allowing Indian capitalism to grow—within certain limits:

How then, in view of his distrust of the nationalist bourgeoisie, did Roy conceive that the revolutionary movement could be furthered in India?

In 1923, when he was operating in Berlin, Roy had written to comrades in India about forming a 'party of workers and peasants', and later he developed this scheme to encompass the establishment of a nationalist People's Party, which would attract members from a broader class base, but would contain a 'Communist Party inside it.' Similarly, in a letter written towards the end of November 1926, the Foreign Bureau of the Indian Communist Party, of which Roy was a member, recommended the organization of an illegal Communist faction inside a legal Workers and Peasants Party. According to Roy's plan the Workers and Peasants Party would include left-wing elements of the petty-bourgeoisie—always, in Communist theory, a vacillating class—which had rejected nationalist bourgeois leadership; the object was 'gradually to develop the W. and P.P. into the real Communist Party by means of ideological education and political training connected with action'. The Workers and Peasants Party, in due course, would enter a more broadly based nationalist People's Party.

If Roy had remained in his European headquarters, or in Moscow, or if he had returned to India at this juncture, the whole course of events might have taken a different turn; but towards the end of 1926 he was sent by Stalin to China, where the Comintern was confronted by extraordinary difficulties in maintaining its alliance with the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang.

Roy was to help straighten matters out. After reaching Vladivostok via the Trans-Siberian Railway, he boarded a special Soviet ship which by-passed Shanghai—where he was wanted by the British police—and took him directly to Canton. There an aeroplane had been assigned him for the trip to Hankow, where the Kuomintang government and Borodin's mission had their headquarters, but the motor had broken down and the journey had to be made overland by train and palanquin.

Roy had first seen China in 1916 when, on the advice of Sun Yat-sen, he had conferred with the German ambassador about the purchase of arms for an uprising in India. Now China itself was in the grip of armed revolution, and as the bearers carried him through one small village after another he saw peasant

soldiers hanging from the trees, the consequence of their participation in the struggle.

By the time Roy and his party reached Hankow Chiang Kai-shek was already on his way over 'to the camp of the imperialists', and only the left wing—the *petty-bourgeois* left wing—of the Kuomintang remained in alliance with the Comintern.

At this juncture Roy's third central concept—his assumption that the petty-bourgeoisie, as an exploited class, could be brought to recognize their common interests with the peasantry and the proletariat—led him and the whole Chinese Communist movement into serious difficulties.

Borodin and other Comintern representatives in China, Roy felt, had grievously overestimated the big bourgeoisie associated with Chiang Kai-shek and had underestimated the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, small merchants, and professional people. The crucial task was to mould the left-wing Kuomintang government, now established in Wuhan, into a revolutionary democratic anti-imperialist regime based on a bloc of three classes—the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasantry, and the proletariat—under 'proletarian hegemony'.

It was Roy's belief that such a three-bloc revolutionary regime in China—by agrarian reform, and the nationalization of heavy industry, transport and public utilities under Communist supervision—could initiate a phase of non-capitalist development which would telescope the dialectical process and prepare the way for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for socialism. During this period of non-capitalist development, he maintained, the state would continue to uphold private property to an extent sufficient to support the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasantry, and also certain 'capitalist methods' of organization and production, but would not permit capitalist exploitation of people. Thus the possibilities for limited capitalist development would be maintained for a time, and the class struggle would continue under the vigilant hegemony of the proletariat. The opposing bloc of foreign imperialists, Chinese militarists, Chinese big bourgeoisie and Chinese feudal remnants would provide the threat which would give the revolutionary coalition cohesive force and thus

hold the 'block of three classes' together.

The chief obstacle to this policy was the fact that the Chinese Communist Party, having no army of its own, was dependent upon Kuomintang forces which had been armed and to a considerable degree trained by the Russians, but which remained under the command of 'unreliable' generals; most of the officers were regarded by the Communists as feudal militarists, or allies of the big bourgeoisie. The problem was how to achieve Communist control over these armies.

Borodin's inclination had been to preserve relations with the generals at almost any cost, and it was this policy which had induced him to cling to Chiang Kai-shek almost to the moment of the latter's *coup* against the Communists. Now Roy urged the proclamation of a radical agrarian programme and the encouragement of peasant revolution in the countryside as a means of winning the rank and file of the Kuomintang armies—most of them landless peasants—away from the 'militarists' and over to Communism. Only an agrarian revolution, he believed, would turn the trick, and that meant nationalization of the land, confiscation of large estates, and the promise of distribution among the poor peasantry.

It was Roy's estimate of the petty-bourgeoisie that turned out to be the fatal flaw in his reasoning. Perceiving that the members of this class were almost universally 'exploited' by the big bourgeoisie, and that many of the small merchants depended upon the peasantry for produce and markets, he assumed that the leaders of the Kuomintang left wing would be compelled to acquiesce in an agrarian revolution.

Events soon revealed, however, that these leaders were no more enthusiastic about peasant revolution or 'proletarian hegemony' than Chiang Kai-shek had been. Most of the Kuomintang political leaders and army officers were landholders and had no disposition towards insurrection in the countryside. Indeed, it was no small task to arouse enthusiasm for agrarian reform and the arming of poor peasants even among the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party at that time. Within the course of a few weeks—and long before the Communists had made any

progress in weaning the rank-and-file soldiery from their officers—the Left Kuomintang government at Wuhan turned against the Chinese Communists and sent Roy, Borodin, and the Russian military advisers packing back to Moscow.

For the return journey the Comintern assigned Roy three large touring cars driven by GPU men and fitted with auxiliary springs and extra petrol tins lashed to the running boards. The cavalcade proceeded north-west across the Mongolian deserts to Urga and thence to the Soviet Union.

Roy had failed abysmally—as had the entire Communist leadership from Stalin down—but he did not leave China without grasping a number of realities which changed the whole subsequent course of his life.

The threat to Communist-led revolutions in Asia, he had written soon after his arrival in Canton, did not reside in the gunboats and artillery of the imperialists and their warlord allies. The greatest challenge to Communism arose from the new American tendency—not unlike the new policies he had observed the British formulating for India—to undercut the revolution with good works. The United States, pursuing a policy of 'liberal imperialism', could re-channel the whole Chinese revolution—a feat that the old-style imperialist could never accomplish.

The usual imperialist tendency, he argued, was to suppress the nationalist revolutionary movement by force and to bolster up the old regime of reactionaries and militarists. Such a policy, however, would only accelerate the development of the revolution. On the other hand, if industrialization could be accomplished in China and other colonial and semi-colonial countries by capital exported from the United States and other imperialist powers, it would 'mark a big step forward in the stabilization of world capitalism'. Already there were indications that the United States might follow such a policy of peaceful penetration and so kill with kindness the violent revolution, otherwise inevitable, that would bring victory for Communism in China. So clear was his perception of this possibility that in later years Roy could not comprehend what he considered to be the blindness

and obtuseness of American policies towards the Chinese revolution.

Parallel developments, Roy thought, were taking place in India. In September 1927, shortly after his arrival in Moscow from China, he prepared a draft resolution on the Indian question. 'Imperialism', he wrote, 'must proceed very cautiously in this new path which is as likely to lead it out of the postwar crisis as to destruction. The implication of the new policy is the gradual "de-colonization" of India, which will be allowed eventually to evolve out of the state of "dependency" to "Dominion Status"'. The Indian bourgeoisie, instead of being kept down as a potential rival, will be granted partnership in the economic development of the country under the hegemony of Imperialist finance. From a backward agricultural colonial possession, India will become a modern industrial country, a member of "the British Commonwealth of free nations". India is in a process of "de-colonization" insofar as the policy, forced upon Imperialism by the post-war crisis of capitalism, abolishes the old, antiquated forms and methods of colonial exploitation in favour of new forms and new methods'.

These new and highly unorthodox concepts did not go unnoticed in Moscow. Stalin and his colleagues, indeed, needed a scapegoat for their China debacle, and now Roy's theory of decolonization gave them one. There were opening attacks by Eugène Varga, and then, at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, in mid-1928, Otto Kuusinen closed in. He began by quoting Roy at the Second Congress against Roy upon his return from China.

'Foreign imperialism, which has been forced on the Eastern people', Roy had declared in 1920, 'has unquestionably impeded their social and economic development and has deprived them of the possibility of reaching the stage of development which has been reached in Europe and America. Owing to the imperialist policy which endeavours to retard industrial development in the colonies, the native proletariat has, in fact, begun only lately to exist.'

'But Comrade Roy holds different views now', Kuusinen

asserted, and he quoted the paragraph of the draft resolution on India that dealt with dominion status. 'Thus Comrade Roy sees that the decolonization policy of British imperialism would lead to the weaking and dissolution of the British Empire'.

In terms of the dialectics of history it was out of the question for the British Empire to dissolve except as the outcome of bitter struggle, and Kuusinen's charge was a serious one. Far more important, however, was the fact that Stalin had to place upon one scapegoat or another the responsibility for his humiliating failure in China. Where could he find a better candidate than this comrade who seemed to have denied the reactionary role of imperialism and the inevitability of struggle?

Expelled from the Comintern, Roy returned to India, where he spent six years in jail for his revolutionary activities. Deprived of ideological reading matter during his imprisonment, he turned to the physical and social sciences for clues to the patterns and motivations of political and social behaviour. In the years following his release he moved steadily from materialism to humanism and became a philosopher rather than a political leader.

For Roy the revolutionist, this compulsion constantly to search for the truth and constantly to adjust his convictions thereto was a tragic weakness. For Roy the philosopher, on the other hand, it was his greatest strength.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Tagore on Nationalism

Indian Nationalists conveniently forget that Tagore characterised their cult as "organized selfishness." It may be fondly believed by them that the anathema was hurled only at the Nationalism of the materialistic Western peoples. But cultural nationalism is a humbug.

The 1927 Comintern Failure in China and M.N. Roy

John P. Haithcox

A member of the Presidium and Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and Joint Secretary of the Comintern's China Commission, M.N. Roy was sent to China immediately after the Seventh Extraordinary Plenum of the ECCI in December 1926 to implement its Theses on China. He went by way of Vladivostok and Canton, tried to persuade the Chinese Communist leadership and the Left Kuomintang to undertake a programme of agrarian revolution, failed, and then returned from Hankow, crossed the Mongolian deserts, and reached the Soviet Union by way of Urga in the fall of 1927.

After his return Roy submitted a report with supportive documents which was published in Russian from Moscow in 1929. In 1963 an English translation of this book with a very scholarly introduction by Robert C. North and Xenia Eudin was published under the title M.N. Roy's Mission to China. Roy's own account is to be found in his book Revolution and Counterrevolution in China.

In the article reproduced here Prof. John P. Haithcox has examined the Chinese debacle of 1927 in the light of contemporary records and documents and given his own view of Roy's role in China. The original article has been slightly shortened (full text in the 'Radical Humanist', 25 January 1966); 76 bibliographic footnotes have been reduced to 17. Professor Haithcox's book 'Communism and Nationalism in India: M.N. Roy and Comintern Policy 1920-1939', Princeton, 1971, is one of the most competent studies on the subject. SNR

The Seventh Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), which was held between November

22 and December 16, 1926, principally to consider the Chinese question, met at a crucial period in the history of the Chinese Communist movement. During the previous summer, Chiang Kai-shek had launched his famous Northern Expedition against northern militarists and the legal government in Peking. His Communist allies had participated by arousing peasant discontent behind enemy lines and by infiltration of northern armies. It was now feared that the Communists might soon become the victims of their own success. Chiang had already given evidence of his displeasure of Communist activities. In March he had staged a "coup" against his Russian advisers and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), but a reconciliation had been effected. In October Stalin had telegraphed instructions to the CCP directing them to restrain the peasant movement in order to avoid antagonizing the officer corps of the Kuomintang army, which was largely recruited from the landholding class.

A great deal of scholarly effort has been expended in seeking an explanation for the causes of the Communist failure in China during 1927. Much of the confusion surrounding these events can be surmounted if it is remembered that the Comintern's immediate aim in China at the period was the elimination of imperialist influence and not the promotion of socio-economic change. Communist strategy in China was promulgated from the point of view of the Comintern's world-wide struggle against imperialist powers. The Seventh Plenum resolved that 'the Chinese revolution—by the mere fact of its anti-imperialist character—is an inseparable part of the international revolution.'¹ In the Comintern's view, the northern militarists were the pawns of the great powers in China. Consequently the victories of the Kuomintang and the Canton Government were interpreted as contributing to the reduction of imperialist influence. The northern advance of the Nationalist Army served to undermine imperialist domination. This conviction was incorporated within the resolution which stated that 'the Canton Government is revolutionary primarily because it is anti-imperialist... The Chinese Revolution and the government created by it must strike at the root of imperialist power in China.'

However it was recognized that the imperialist interests in

China were inextricably bound up with the interests of landlords and militarists. It was impossible to strike against one without striking against all three. The resolution gave expression to this point of view :

‘The power of Chinese militarism lies in its support by foreign imperialism on the one hand, and native landowners, on the other hand...Overthrowing the imperialists, abolishing all survivals of the old feudal relations, national liberation, the revolutionary reforms of internal and social relations—these tasks are organically connected with each other and represent the one task of the Chinese revolution.’

Since it would be self-defeating for the CCP to announce itself as the implacable enemy of all three forces simultaneously, it became necessary to make compromises in order to enlist the support, or at least to neutralize, a segment of the landholding and military classes in the interest of struggle against imperialist forces. Stalin justified this policy, which took the concrete form of restraining the peasant movement in order to maintain the CCP’s alliance with the Kuomintang, on the grounds that truly radical land reform in China must await, in any event, the final elimination of imperialist forces. ‘Imperialism’, according to Stalin, was ‘the force in China that supports...the feudal survivals...The feudal survivals in China cannot be smashed and abolished without waging a determined struggle against imperialism.’

The resolution of the Seventh Plenum reflected Stalin’s bias in favour of the ‘anti-imperialist’ aspect of the Chinese civil war. The policy of maintaining the alliance with the Kuomintang was reconfirmed. Though the resolution expressed, in general terms, the necessity of a ‘radical agrarian program’, it proposed what is commonly regarded as a modified agrarian program. The resolution did not call for nationalization of land but for reduction of land rents and the granting of perpetual leases to tenant farmers on the land they cultivated. It did not call for wholesale confiscation of landlord’s property, but only of land belonging to the Church or to those militarists and landlords who were waging war against the Kuomintang. Instead of peasant soviets it proposed the creation of peasant committees.

At the conclusion of the Seventh Plenum, M.N. Roy, who was then a member of the Presidium and the Political Secretariat of the ECCI and the Agrarian Commission as well as Joint Secretary of the Comintern's Chinese Commission, was dispatched to China to help implement its proposals, in whose formulation he had shared.² But shortly after his arrival in China, the situation with respect to which the China resolution had been formulated altered drastically. A few weeks after Nationalist forces had captured Shanghai from the militarist Sun Ch'uanfang, Chiang Kai-shek, on April 12, 1927, initiated a *coup d'etat* against his Communist allies in the city. At the same time, he called a meeting of his supporters in the Central Committee of the Kuomintang for Nanking, thus signalling a break with Chairman Wang Ching-wei and the left-wing of the Kuomintang in Wuhan and its Communist supporters.³

In May, 1927, the Eighth Plenum of the ECCI was convened to reconsider the China policy in the light of recent developments. Chiang's *coup d'etat*, the formation of the Nanking Government, and the secession of the 'Right Wing' of the Kuomintang were interpreted as the inevitable desertion of 'the united national revolutionary front by the bourgeoisie', as a result of which the revolution had advanced to a 'higher stage of development'.⁴ The CCP was advised to preserve its alliance with the Hankow Government and the Left Kuomintang, which was characterized as 'a revolutionary bloc of the urban and rural petty-bourgeois masses with the proletariat.' Moreover, by remaining within the Left Kuomintang, the CCP retained the possibility of branding Chiang a traitor to the national anti-imperialist cause. The Comintern held out the hope that the CCP could secure the hegemony of the Left Kuomintang, provided the party could entrench itself among the peasantry by pursuing a more radical agrarian program in the territories of the Hankow regime. The program envisioned included: 'The abolition of rent paid to the rich, the redistribution of land...radical reduction of taxation...[and] the mass arming of the workers and peasants.'

However, the CCP was forbidden from advancing the slogan of soviets—a policy advocated by Trotsky. Such a move, it was held, would lead to a break with the Left Kuomintang. What was

required for the present was strengthening of the peasant committees and peasant leagues and the constitution of peasant armed units—those organizations which would form the soviets of the future. Supporters of the resolution acknowledged the possibility of 'treachery' on the part of the Wuhan generals, but did not think that this justified a policy of abandoning the Left Kuomintang—a specifically Chinese mass organization.' The military, together with the petty-bourgeoisie, they felt, could be appeased 'by guaranteeing...the security of their property and of the land belonging to the soldiers of the national army.'

The Eighth Plenum urged the Communists to preserve their alliance with the Left Kuomintang and at the same time to pursue a more radical agrarian program. But in the meantime a situation was developing in China which would soon make this advice impractical. On April 12, the Wuhan Government had decided to support General Tang Sheng-chih's plan to launch a second Northern Expedition. Borodin was in favor of supporting the expedition in the interest of preserving the alliance with the nationalist organization, even though this would necessitate restricting the peasant agitation in the interest of united support to the nationalist army.

Roy disagreed with Borodin. Rather than restrain the peasant movement, he wanted to intensify it in the area under the control of the Wuhan Government. The dispute stemmed, in part, from contrasting assessments of the class structure of the Left Kuomintang. Borodin's evaluation coincided with the official viewpoint as expressed by the Eighth Plenum, namely, that the Left Kuomintang was a party of the petty-bourgeoisie, proletariat, and peasantry. Roy, however, felt that the Kuomintang had been split vertically along the lines of factional interest rather than horizontally along class lines. He could see little difference in social composition between the Wuhan group, which he considered to be under the virtual leadership of the "feudal general" Tang Sheng-chih and its "rival faction" led by Chiang Kai-shek. The leadership of both wings, in his estimation, was composed of bourgeois and feudal elements, whereas the bulk of their respective memberships were recruited from the oppressed classes. Intensification of the

agrarian revolution, he argued, would force the resignation of the more reactionary of the present leaders in Wuhan and smooth the way to the goal of capturing the nationalist organization.

At first, the majority of the central committee of the CCP sided with Roy. This body resolved that "military operations aimed at territorial expansion to the north must be preceded by a consolidation of the base of the revolution in those regions which are already under the control of the Kuomintang...in accordance with the suggestions made in Comrade Roy's speech."⁵ But two days later the resolution was retracted and assurances of immediate support were extended to the Wuhan Government's military expedition. The conflict between Roy and Borodin over revolutionary tactics was again in evidence during the proceedings of the Fifth Congress of the CCP, which commenced on April 27, 1927. The resolution which was framed on the proletarian situation reflects an effort to compromise their differences. It held that "the rapid territorial expansion of the revolution must be accompanied by intensification of the revolutionary base in territories under Nationalist occupation...If radical agrarian reform...is postponed until the final conclusion of the Northern Expedition, the bourgeoisie, screening behind a false banner of nationalism, will consolidate its power in the occupied regions... Without underestimating in the least the necessity of the further territorial expansion of the revolution...the Fifth Congress at the same time sets before the Communist Party as its principal task in the immediate future the ruthless struggle against the reaction in those provinces where the revolution has been partially achieved, namely, in Kwangtung, Fukien, Chekiang, Kiangsi, Hunan, Hupeh and Kwangsi."⁶

Events were soon to prove the impossibility of supporting Wuhan's military ventures and simultaneously seeking to create a mass base through peasant agitation. A few weeks after the Congress adjourned, a Wuhan general staged a *coup d'etat* at Changsha, replaced the Hunan provincial government, and suppressed local Communist organization. A counter-offensive organized by local Communists was called off in favor of a personal investigation of the affair promised by the commander-in-chief of the Wuhan forces, Tang Sheng-chih.

Roy had called for a test of strength between the armed peasantry and the military forces at Changsha and disapproved of Borodin's efforts to secure a "legal" settlement of the issue. Rather than capitulate to the wishes of the Central Committee of the Left Kuomintang, he felt it was now time for a confrontation. Roy referred the dispute to Moscow. Stalin's telegraphed reply arrived in Hankow on June 1. Like the resolution of the Fifth Congress of the CCP, it tried to reconcile the differences between the points of view represented by Roy and Borodin respectively. The Chinese Communists were advised simultaneously to support Tang's military expedition and to develop the revolution in the territories of the Wuhan Government.⁷ Both Roy and Borodin felt that this was impossible.

At this point, it is instructive to note the Comintern's general assessment, which gradually emerged from the debates within the organization on the national and colonial question, of the relative revolutionary potential of the various non-proletarian classes in dependent areas—feudal remnants and militarists, compradores, national bourgeoisie, and petty-bourgeoisie. Compradores comprise that segment of the native bourgeoisie whose economic interests are closely interwoven with those of the foreign rulers; e.g., wholesalers and bankers acting as a medium of foreign trade. They, together with the members of the first category, were considered to be unredeemable reactionaries. The national bourgeoisie were regarded as potential allies under certain conditions. The petty-bourgeoisie was a broad category which referred to several groups: (1) artisans, small traders, and poor intellectuals; (2) "servants of the capitalist system;" and (3) small owners of private property. Peasant proprietors were included in the latter group and in a sense the whole peasant class, inasmuch as they aspired to hold land. It was felt that although the petty-bourgeoisie tended toward conservatism, the class could be induced to support at least the initial minimal demands of the Communists, if given a sufficiently firm lead. Assuming the validity of these Marxian categories, it can be seen that should feudal and comprador elements gain a predominant influence over a nationalist movement, any attempt to "develop" it in the direction of Communist revolution—which would necessitate, in a non-industrial society

at least a minimal response to the more immediate demands of the peasantry for land and relief from the exactions of landlord and usurer—would inevitably be frustrated. This is what happened in China in the 1920's.

Roy considered Wang Ching-wei "the leader of petty-bourgeois radicalism." Stalin's famous telegram had concluded that "if the Kuomintangists do not learn to be revolutionary Jacobins they will be lost...to the revolution." Acting in this spirit with the purpose of detaching Wang from the influence of the feudal military aristocracy, Roy showed him the telegram,⁸ which supported an intensification of the agrarian revolution through the seizure of land and the formation of a workers' and peasants' army. Roy had felt that Wang's position did not depend entirely on the good will of the military but was based on his popularity as "the chosen successor of Sun Yat-sen." He concluded that Wang could be persuaded to support a radical agrarian policy, for it would offer him an opportunity of reestablishing his leadership in the Wuhan Government. But the telegram had the effect of forcing Wang to the right. Roy had seriously miscalculated. A reunification of the Wuhan and Nanking forces was effected on the basis of the expulsion of the CCP. In July, the Chinese Communists were purged from the government and the army, and their Russian advisers, including Roy and Borodin, returned to Moscow.

It is a sterile exercise to attempt to apportion blame for the Communist debacle in China. Although, in the context of conflicting advice, neither Borodin's anti-imperialist orientation nor Roy's radicalization program was given an adequate trial, it is fairly certain that neither approach would have facilitated Communist assumption of power under the conditions then existing in China. The Comintern's China policy faltered in the late 1920's not because of Roy's and Borodin's failure to compromise their differences but because of the conditions which made compromise impossible. Under the conditions then prevailing in China, the nationalist anti-imperialist cause was irreconcilable with the interests of the local class struggle.

Roy was the doyen of the Indian Communists. From 1920 until 1929 he was in charge of the direction of Communist affairs in the

Indian sub-continent, and it was due to his inspiration and efforts that the Communist Party of India (CPI) was founded. In his writings Roy always distinguished the Kuomintang and the situation in China from the Indian National Congress and the configuration of class forces in India. As early as the Second Comintern Congress in 1920, he had helped to formulate a distinction between different kinds of "bourgeois-democratic liberation movements"—between those of a truly revolutionary and those of a merely reformist character—based on differences in the structure of class forces prevailing in various areas. This early conference concluded that Communists were to support "bourgeois liberation movements" only when their spokesmen "do not hinder us in training and organizing the peasants and the broad masses of the exploited in a revolutionary spirit."

The policy of supporting anti-imperialist struggles was to be followed only when it facilitated the development of the indigenous class struggle within the colonies. But the later preoccupation of the Comintern leadership with the anti-imperialist aspects of the Chinese struggle caused it to place an undue importance on maintaining the alliance with the Left Kuomintang, to the detriment of the class struggle. This was the basis of Roy's charge, that the Chinese debacle resulted from making a fetish of the alliance with the Left Kuomintang. He felt that one of the main objects of the alliance of Communists with nationalist forces—to force the pace of revolution in the colonies by acting as a spur to the petty-bourgeoisie—had been lost sight of. "Petty-bourgeois radicalism," he argued, "develops into revolutionary Jacobinism only under the pressure of the working class. It was the insurrection of the Parisian proletariat that forced the Jacobins to liberate the revolution from the influence of Girondism which had defended the monarchy and feudal aristocracy."

Roy did not see in the China episode any cause to abandon the Leninist principle of utilizing those nationalist movements of truly revolutionary potential. In the early stages of his Comintern career, Roy had been highly suspicious of the "reliability" of the leadership of the Indian nationalist movement. But as the Indian National Congress began to assume an increasingly mass nationalist

character and to generate a number of leaders sympathetic to socio-economic reform, his views with respect to the revolutionary potential of the Congress underwent a transformation.

As early as 1922, Roy had advocated the formation of a People's Party for India. The necessity for the creation of a Workers' and Peasants' Party which would provide a legal cover and a popular platform around which nationalist Indians could rally was his main theme at the Fifth Comintern Congress in 1924.⁹ A few years later, this theme was elaborated in his book, *The Future of Indian Politics*. Roy originally conceived of such a three-class party—composed of the proletariat, peasantry, and petty-bourgeoisie—as an alternative to the Congress. But by late 1926 he began to view it as a medium for penetrating the Congress Party. Shortly before his departure for China, he advocated a policy of capturing "the petty-bourgeois radical elements inside the [Indian] nationalist movement" by fusing them with the proletariat and peasantry into a "united fighting front", which was to take the organizational form of a Workers' and Peasants' Party.

Roy argued that Indian Communists could influence the Congress left-wing only through such a multi-class party. The petty-bourgeois nationalists, he felt, would never accept an openly Communist platform.¹⁰ It can be seen that the attempt to maintain an alliance with the Left Kuomintang in China parallels Roy's plan to establish a working relationship with the Congress left-wing. Both plans necessitated the holding in abeyance of the more radical Communist objectives.

In pursuance of this policy, a Workers' and Peasants' party was established in Bengal in 1926. By 1928 other parties had been formed in Bombay and the Punjab and plans for an All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party were being formulated. These bodies quickly achieved a large measure of influence within the Indian labor movement. At a conference in Bombay in May, 1927, representatives of these groups resolved to form within the Congress a "strong Left Wing," which would cooperate with "radical nationalists" to radicalize the Congress program. But when the Comintern changed course the following year, the Workers' and Peasants' Party abandoned this prospect and declared that the party could

have no intention of capturing the Congress. Party members were forbidden to accept office within the Congress except with special permission. A short time later, in response to Comintern directives, the party was disbanded, just when it was making impressive headway, especially in the labor movement.

On his return from China and in the months immediately preceding the Sixth World Congress, Roy continued to support a three-class united front policy for India, the experience of the CCP notwithstanding. With enthusiasm he wrote of a "left-ward swing" of the Indian Trade Union Congress, which he credited to the efforts of the newly formed Workers' and Peasants' Party, and even suggested that the party had played a large role in the passage of the resolution of the Madras session of the Congress Party, which for the first time had declared the goal of complete independence. He contrasted the alleged accomplishments of the Workers' and Peasants' Party with the activities of the CPI, which, he held, had been hampered by "imperialist terror" and the "hostility of the national bourgeoisie."¹¹

There was good reason for cautious optimism on Roy's part. A sizable sector sympathetic toward the idea of radical socioeconomic reform was clearly discernible within the Congress by 1927. Its spokesman was Jawaharlal Nehru. In February of that year, Nehru travelled to Brussels to attend the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities as the Indian National Congress's sole delegate. It was here that the League Against Imperialism was founded. This organization was the inspiration of the German Comintern agent, Willi Muenzenberg, the patron saint of the "fellow traveler." Nehru played a prominent role in the proceedings of the Brussels Conference and was elected a member of the Organizing Committee of the League. Later he served on its nine-man Executive Committee. Although not well versed in Marxist literature, it was at this juncture in his career that Nehru began to make extensive use of radical socialist phrases. Nehru drafted the Conference's resolution on India, which expressed the hope that "the Indian national movement" would "base its programme on the full emancipation of the peasants and workers of India, without which there can be no real freedom."

In November, 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru and his father, Motilal, journeyed to Moscow, on the invitation of the Society for Cultural Relations to Foreign Countries, to attend the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution. This brief four-day visit made a deep impression on the younger Nehru. On his return to India, a series of his 'random sketches and impressions' appeared in the Indian press. These were later published in book form under the title *Soviet Russia*. Shortly after returning to India, Nehru attended the annual congress session in Madras, at which he sponsored a number of fairly radical resolutions. The most important and far-reaching of these was a resolution on the political objective which committed the Congress for the first time to the goal of complete national independence.

Although the resolutions themselves represented a radical departure from previous Congress policy, Nehru was under no illusion that their adoption actually represented a change of direction on the part of the majority of the Congress delegates. Gandhi did not participate in the deliberations of the Madras session, but he later vehemently opposed the independence resolution. The opposition of Gandhi and the conservative Old Guard was soon to render the resolution meaningless.

Nevertheless, the radicalization of Indian politics proceeded apace during the course of 1928. A group of radical Congressmen under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and S. Srinivasa Iyengar formed the Independence for India League. The League was to function within the Congress to press for the reinstatement of the goal of complete independence. When the Congress in December, 1929, adopted the goal of complete independence, the League died along with its *raison d'être*.

But the Comintern, under the influence of Stalin, did not make as sharp a distinction between the situation in China and in India as Roy would have preferred. Overtly Stalin defended his China policy against the charges of Trotsky and his allies that the Wuhan defection was the result of a mistaken direction. He placed the blame for the turn of events in China entirely on the shoulders of the Chinese Communists for failing to implement the Comintern's directives urging them to promote agrarian revolution. Neverthe-

less, the turn of events in China must have raised doubts in Stalin's mind about his policies there. Although the reason for the Comintern's turn to the left in the late 1920's are complex, it is generally felt that two events played a leading role—the failure of the Anglo-Russian trade-union unity committee in June, 1927, and the turn of events in China. Of these, the latter was far more decisive. The draft program of the ECCI—which was adopted in May, 1928, and which was to serve as the basis for discussion for the Sixth World Congress—reflected a marked change of attitude toward bourgeois nationalism. With respect to the Indian situation, even the 'petty-bourgeois left-wing' of the Indian National Congress, which was soon to assume the organizational form of the Independence for India League, was regarded with suspicion. It was argued that:

'Organizationally unseparated from the bourgeois political parties and politically led by them, the Nationalist left-wing...has evolved into an instrument, in the hands of the bourgeoisie, for the penetration and vicarious leadership of the broad working masses.'¹²

Consequently, the ECCI considered the organization of a broad-based Workers' and Peasants' Party "inadvisable."

Kuusinen, in presenting the ECCI draft program to the Congress delegates, developed this position further. He argued that such multi-class parties, with their large petty-bourgeois component, might actually serve as a barrier rather than as a channel of communication between the Communists and the underprivileged classes. He held that

'it would be an easy matter for the labour and peasant parties to transform themselves into petty-bourgeois parties...thereby failing to help them come in contact with the masses...We are for a bloc with the peasantry, but we will have nothing to do with a fusion of various classes.'

The 'Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies' adopted by the Sixth World Congress reveals the extent of the influence of the China episode on the Comintern's colonial policy and more specifically on its attitude toward the Indian National Congress. In a review of the Comintern's

experience in China, it was observed that the alliance of the Chinese Communists with the petty-bourgeois elements of the Left Kuomintang had served more to screen the counter-revolutionary activities of the Left Kuomintang leadership than to advance the Communist cause. If alliance with the petty-bourgeoisie had led the Chinese Communists astray, it was argued, how much greater was the danger in India, where proletarian class-consciousness was even less developed due to the infancy of Indian industry, the rapid turnover of her labour force, the high rate of illiteracy, and the prevalence of religious and caste prejudices. Consequently, Communist groups in colonial areas were instructed to abandon all forms of alliance with nationalist petty-bourgeoisie:

'It is absolutely essential that the Communist Parties...should from the very beginning demarcate themselves in the most clearcut fashion, both politically and organizationally, from all the petty-bourgeois groups and parties.'¹³

But the Sixth Congress, perhaps reflecting the fact that Stalin had not yet consolidated his power, failed to outline a consistently 'hard-left' position. In certain respects, the situation in India was distinguished from that which prevailed in China. In the latter country, it was held, the national bourgeoisie had already joined the camp of counter-revolution whereas 'in India and Egypt, we still observe...the typical bourgeois-nationalist movement—an opportunist movement, subject to great vacillation, balancing between imperialism and revolution.' Accordingly the thesis warned:

'It would be a completely mistaken application, if at the present time in India and Egypt, etc., we were to formulate the immediate tasks, slogans, and tactical methods in exactly the same form as took place in China, for example, in the Wuhan period, or in the form in which it is necessary to formulate them there at the present time.'

Its unconciliatory attitude towards the left-wing of the Congress notwithstanding, the resolution did allow for 'temporary agreements' with nationalist organizations, provided they did not hinder in any way the activities of Communist parties. Such activities were defined to include the exposure of the essentially

reactionary nature of the national bourgeoisie. The Indian Communists were directed 'mercilessly to expose...their halfheartedness and vacillation in the national struggle [and]...their reactionary resistance to the class demands of the proletariat and peasantry.'

The heavy stress placed on the necessity to expose nationalist leaders largely negated the warning contained in the selfsame resolution against an underestimation of the influence of 'bourgeois-national-reformists' over the Indian population. Such an attitude, it was held, could lead to a 'sectarian policy and to the isolation of the Communists from the toiling masses.' In subsequent correspondence with the CPI, the ECCI directed the Indian communists to eschew alliances with the newly formed Independence for India League on the ground that the greatest danger to the Communist movement stemmed not from bourgeois-nationalism as such but from 'the organization and groups of 'prominent' petty-bourgeois intellectuals actually influenced by the former, the 'Independence League.'¹⁴

In opposition to the new policy of the Comintern, Roy continued to campaign for the retention of a three-class united front policy for India. The formation of the Independence for India League was to Roy further evidence of the correctness of his views. In the same month ECCI directive was being transmitted to India, Roy, in the pages of the *International Press Correspondence*, was campaigning for a 'fighting alliance' of the proletariat and peasantry with the League.¹⁵ He wrote optimistically of 'a process of class differentiation inside the nationalist ranks, and a resulting radicalization of the nationalist movement.' He reported that the nationalist movement had now split into two distinct factions. One faction, led by Jawaharlal's father, Motilal Nehru, had called for the adoption of the constitution drafted by an All-Parties Conference, which had advocated dominion status within the British Empire. The other faction, according to Roy, was represented by Jawaharlal Nehru's Independence for India League, a bourgeois left-wing within the Congress which had recently demanded complete independence. Roy argued that the action of the 'big bourgeoisie' in calling for self-government within the Empire in defiance of the Independence Resolution adopted at Madras had 'sharpened the

conflict' within the Congress Party. He reported that 'the left-wing, for the first time in the history of the National Congress, [had] openly criticized the action of the party leaders'. He warned, however, that the left nationalists would not persevere in their demand unless supported by the 'more revolutionary' proletariat and peasantry.

By the time of the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI (July 3-19, 1929), Stalin had further consolidated his position and the Comintern adopted an unambiguously 'ultra-left' position. Even the policy of tactical agreements with Indian nationalists, which the Sixth Congress had permitted, was abandoned in favour of a policy of 'ruthless struggle against the Indian bourgeoisie.'¹⁶ The Plenum directed the CPI to sever all connections with the nationalist movement and to attack all sections of the Congress Party, including leaders of the left-wing such as Jawaharlal Nehru.

Thus, after years of warning the Comintern against the dangers of alliances with anti-imperialist nationalists, Roy found himself in the position of opposing 'left-sectarianism.' Roy later contended that the Comintern policy formulated in 1928-29 had alienated the petty-bourgeoisie just when they, in the form of the Independence for Indian League, were coming toward the working class. He felt that if the three-class united front strategy had not been abandoned, the League could have been 'transformed...into a powerful weapon to develop the revolution.'

As a result of the new directives, the CPI isolated itself from the anti-colonial movement. The lesson of China had not been grasped. Seeking to dissuade Indian Communists from following Stalin's directives, Roy, after his expulsion from the Comintern, condemned the attempt to swim against the nationalist tide as suicidal. 'In India', he wrote, 'the way to Communism lies through the National Revolution', rather than in opposition to it.¹⁷ The fortunes of the CPI markedly declined until Stalin's 'hard left' policy was abandoned in the mid-1930s.

NOTES

1. Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin, *M.N. Roy's Mission to China: The Communist-Kuomintang split of 1927* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963; p. 132).
2. "Seventh Meeting of the Enlarged ECCI", *Inprecor*, VI, 83 (1926). 1432. See also Roy, 'Discussion of the Report on the Situation in China', *Inprecor*, VI 91 (1926). 1603-1604.
3. C. Martin Wilbur and Julie Lien-ying How (eds.), *Documents on Communism: Nationalism and Soviet Advisers in China, 1918-1927. Paper Seized in the 1927 Peking Raid* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 381. The left Kuomintang was organized in December, 1926.
4. 'Resolution on the Chinese Question' (VIII Plenum of ECCI, May 18-30, 1927), *Inprecor*, VII, 35 (1927), 737-741.
5. Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Hankow, April 16, 1927, as translated in North and Eudin, pp. 176-177.
6. 'Theses on the Political Situation and the Tasks of the Chinese Communist Party' (adopted by the Fifth Congress of CCP, May 9, 1927); North and Eudin, pp. 243-253.
7. For the telegram, see North and Eudin, pp. 106-107.
8. For an account of this incident, see Tang Leang-li, *The Inner History of the Chinese Revolution*, Stanford University Press, 1953, pp. 107-108.
9. 'Debate on the National Question—Roy' (20th Session, July 1, 1924), *Inprecor*, IV, 50 (1925), 518-519.
10. Roy, 'Assembly Letter' dated Dec. 30, 1927.
11. Roy, 'Imperialism and Indian Nationalism', *Inprecor*, VIII, 1, (1928), 1-3.
12. 'Draft Programme of the Communist International' (adopted by the Programme Commission of the ECCI, May 25, 1928), *Inprecor*, VIII, 30 (1928), 540-559.
13. *Inprecor*, VIII, 88 (1928); 1665-70.
14. Letter from ECCI dated Dec. 2, 1928.
15. Roy, 'The National Congress', *Inprecor*, VII, 91 (1928). 1732-33.

16. Lozovsky, 'Continuation of the Discussion on the Reports of Comrades Kuusinen and Manuilsky', *Inprecor*, IX, 48 (1929), 1937-39.
17. Roy's 'Manifesto to the CPI', July 1930.

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Antifascism and a free society

We stand for a thorough reconstruction of the national life. Our political objective is the establishment of democratic freedom which will mean effective political power for the people. We strive not only for national freedom, but also for the social emancipation of the toiling masses. Our task is to spread enlightenment which will dispel obscurantism in the political and the spiritual life of the country. We advocate modernism in every walk of life against revivalism. We want the disinherited to come to their own and enjoy the richness and fulness of life on this earth. We want man to be the master of the world and the maker of his destiny.

This is why we radicals favour India's active participation in the war against Fascism. Fascism stands for the destruction of the political, social and cultural ideals of democracy... The war against Fascism can be won only by rousing in the people their urge for a freer and fuller life. The supreme task of our movement is to develop that urge, and thus while defeating Fascism, to lay securely the foundations of a free society which is not only free of foreign rule, but also free of native tyranny, exploitation and injustice.