

M.N. ROY

PHILOSOPHER REVOLUTIONARY

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Chinese Source Materials on M.N. Roy: a Report

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Although Roy's Report on China *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii International* was officially published from Moscow in 1929 and his monumental work *Revolution and Counterrevolution in China* was recognised to be a classic almost immediately on its publication in Germany in 1930, to the end of Roy's days the communists in India carried on a malicious campaign which claimed that Roy was personally responsible for the failure of the Chinese communists in 1927. In the eighties I checked up with the First Deputy Director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow who confirmed in writing that there was not one official document in the Comintern Archives which criticized Roy personally on account of the failure of the Chinese Mission. For Roy and China see *Selected Works of M.N. Roy* vol. II, pp 565-698.

In recent years there is a growing interest among Chinese scholars in Roy's role in China. Roy had been to China twice, in 1915-16 and in 1927, and he knew personally many of the makers of modern China. He wrote extensively on China, and was recognised by the Comintern as a China expert. However, until recently not much was known about material in Chinese on Roy. Madame Huang I-Shu, who teaches in the department of Chinese Studies, University of Delhi, published her valuable report which is reproduced here in full, in *China Report* vol. 24 No. 1, New Delhi. The same issue contained other informative and appreciative articles by Professors Tan Chung, Chen Fengjun, Zhang Guangyu and Feng Chongyi. The new findings indicate that Roy's impact on China was much deeper and more far-reaching than was recognized by earlier writers. SNR

M.N. Roy played an important role in the Chinese revolution.

He was sent to China by the Communist International as its chief representative to guide the proceedings of the revolution at a time widely known as a 'period of great revolution', or a 'period of the first internal revolutionary war'. The corpus of Chinese source materials on Roy seems to be scattered and buried deep in modern history. The materials can be divided into two categories from the perspectives of both time and space. Timewise, there are sources left behind by men who were contemporaneous and worked with Roy in China and those of contemporary scholars' critical assessments of today. Spacewise, there are source materials drawn from both sides of the Taiwan Straits. Roy was associated with the united national revolutionary movement too. Hence he belongs to the history of both the Chinese Communist party (CCP) and the Kuomintang. Sourcewise, there are two categories of materials on Roy. There are materials originating in Chinese and also those translated into Chinese from other languages. In this essay, I shall try to give as detailed an introduction to these materials as space and time permit so that future researchers may have some use for it.

One more point before introducing the materials. There have been tremendous changes in the Chinese political scene since Roy's involvement in it. The changes involve general perspectives in official circles (both Beijing and Taipeh), research mood, and respect for historicity. What have been regarded as 'forbidden areas' (both in Mainland China and Taiwan) are being gradually opened up and the process continues. Therefore, we should not take a static view of our source materials on Roy. In fact, there is an on-going process of enrichment of data and an enlargement of the brigade of researchers devoting time to the study of Roy and the Comintern.

Biographies of Roy

There are two biographies of Roy written in Chinese language. The first is by Xiang Qing, professor of Politics in Peking University, which forms a part of his book *Gongchanguoji Yu Zhongguo geming guanxi lunwen ji* (A Collection of Articles on the Relations Between the Comintern and the Chinese Revolution), published in

Shanghai in 1985. In this biography Xiang Qing has given a brief life-sketch of Roy from his birth till his death while focusing on his six months' hectic activities in China, from February to August 1927. Besides Roy's China mission, his other political activities are also mentioned in a business like manner.¹

The second biography of Roy is provided by Professor Yunyuan Yang, a Chinese scholar settled in the USA, and is titled 'M.N. Lyoyi yu Wuhan Zhengquan' (M.N. Roy and the Wuhan Regime) published in *Zhuanji Wenxue*, (Biographical Literature), Taiwan, Vol. XI, No. 4, 1966. Yang has not only described Roy's important political activities in China, but has also given an account of Roy's earlier adventures in the American continent, his special role in the Indian Communist movement, and the development of his philosophy of Radical Humanism in the last phase of his life. Yang's biography also contains some anecdotes of Roy which are rarely recounted elsewhere, such as Roy's marriage with the American girl, Evelyn, in 1915 and their separation in 1925 just when Roy became a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Yang has also covered quite extensively Roy's political activities in India after 1930.²

There are some brief sketches of Roy in *Jindai laihua waiguo renmin cidian* (The Dictionary of the Names of Foreigners Who Came to China in Modern Times), compiled by the Institute of Modern History of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,³ in *Guoji gongyun shishi renwu lu* (Who's Who in the History of the Communist International Movement),⁴ and in *Zhonggong dangshi shijian minci renwu* (Names of Events and Personalities in the History of CCP)⁵ where Roy is introduced in a general way, and lastly in *Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan* (Who's Who in the History of the CCP), where Roy is introduced in the entry on Cai Hesen.⁶ All these Chinese language materials except Yang's article, were published in mainland China in the 1980s. Mainland Chinese publications prior to this have omitted information about Roy's life. For *Cihai*, the popular and comprehensive encyclopaedia published in 1979, Roy, Borodin and Maring who had played important roles in the early period of the Chinese revolution never existed. The explanation for this omission is provided by Xiang

Qing in his article on the Communist International and the Chinese Revolution:

For a long time, whenever we criticised the erroneous line of our Party, we were not allowed to involve the Comintern. As a matter of fact, we could not do any study on the question of the Comintern vis-a-vis the Chinese revolution. In the sixties, when this difficulty no longer existed, when this topic should have been taken up for earnest research, Lin Biao and the Gang of Four restricted the areas of research, one of which was the topic about the Comintern and the Chinese revolution. This has resulted in the almost total blackout of the topic in the social science studies.⁷

Welcome to Roy

As the leader of a Comintern delegation sent by Stalin to China to guide the Chinese revolution, Roy was naturally looked upon with high expectations. The Hankou edition of *Minguo Ribao* (National Daily), the Kuomintang mouthpiece, carried on the first page of its issue on 6 April 1927 a report of the rousing welcome accorded to Roy when he reached Changsha on his way from Guangzhou to Wuhan. Speaking on the occasion welcoming Roy were Cai Hesen, member of the Politburo of the CCP and a close friend of Mao Zedong, and Guo Liang, also a fellow student of Mao Zedong. And then the President of the Hunan Trade Union, Tan Pingshan, the Chinese representative in the Comintern who had accompanied Roy to China from Moscow, also spoke to welcome Roy. Roy made a short but passionate speech which was briefly reported in the paper. He praised the Chinese people for their brave struggle against imperialism.

From the Kuomintang sources published in Taiwan, there is a report of the proceedings of the warm welcome accorded to Roy by the Kuomintang headquarters at Wuhan on 8 April 1927. The leader of the Kuomintang Left in Wuhan was Wang Jingwei, who was on his way back from Europe via Shanghai. The welcome banquet was presided over by Wang's second-in-command, Xu Qian, who also made a passionate speech. Xu Qian made an assessment of the uneasy situation facing the national revolution in China and expressed great expectations from the presence of

Roy on the scene as representative of the Comintern. To Xu's long speech, Roy made a short reply. I have translated both the speeches in full and appended them to this report for convenient reference by interested scholars.

I have translated the two speeches in full (in the case of Roy's speech, it is retranslated English-to-Chinese-to-English) because these are two important documents relating to Roy's China mission preserved by the Chinese archives which have not been available, not even known, to the chroniclers of Roy outside. Yet, it was Xu Qian's long speech which throws new light on the celebrated (or notorious) Roy-Wang Jingwei honeymoon. Xu Qian was known as Wang's right hand man. His language and tone were those of Wang Jingwei. We can see certain uneasiness between the lines and the tongue-in-cheek kind of bravado when Xu talked about the Kuomintang and communism, and the Kuomintang vis-a-vis the Comintern. But the speech reminds us that at an official level the entire Kuomintang united front was under the guidance of the Comintern, hence Roy was treated as a kind of boss, or the boss's agent from Moscow. Xu Qian had to pay lip service to Kuomintang's allegiance to the Comintern and put up the show of enthusiastic adherence to the three hallowed policies left behind by Sun Yat-sen. However, one must not dismiss Xu Qian's delicate welcome to Roy as 100 per cent hypocrisy. By all signs it was a candid speech spoken from the heart. More significant were the applauses to his speech which indicated the general mood of the banquet. It was also genuinely reflected in Xu Qian's speech that he was unmistakably anti-Chiang Kai-shek, and that the Kuomintang headquarters in Wuhan were opposed to Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal of the revolutionary cause. Maybe Xu Qian was the driving spirit behind this anti-Chiang mood. From another Chinese source I have discovered that Xu Qian was treated as a 'communist' and was 'expelled' from the Kuomintang by the Nanjing government along with a long list of CCP leaders including Borodin in a notification dated only 1927.⁸

Cai Hesen's Critique

Of all the Chinese materials concerning Roy's mission in China the report of the CCP veteran, Cai Hesen (Tsai Ho-sen) on 'Dangde

jihuizhuyi' (the Opportunism of the Party) has the highest historical value. The report was originally a speech delivered by Cai as the Party Secretary of the North China Bureau to the revolutionary activists of Zhili (now Hebei) province in September 1927 barely a month after Roy's exit from the Chinese scene. The speech was written down from memory by Cai and published in 1928 for internal circulation in the Party. The Kuomintang government intercepted a partially damaged copy of it and included it in a volume entitled *Moupan dang guode chise dang 'an* (Archives of the Red's Conspiracy and Betrayal of the Party and the Nation) compiled by Li Minhun in July 1928 itself, indicating that the Kuomintang authorities laid their hands on it as soon as it was circulated among the CCP members. Interestingly, the Russians also published the report in the first issue of *Problemy Kitaia* (China Problem) in 1929. It seems that the Russians had got hold of it from Kuomintang China almost as soon as it had appeared.

Cai Hesen's report based on the version of the *Archives of the Reds* was carried in full in a Kuomintang publication entitled *Gongfei huoguo shiliao huibian* (Compilation of Historical Data on the Disaster to the Nation by the Communist Bandits), volume one, published in 1961 in Taipeh as an annexure to the documents commemorating the golden jubilee of the Republic of China. The volume numbered 000100 was originally marked 'Jijimi' (top secret), but was later declassified for public circulation. Meanwhile, the People's Publishing House, Beijing, published in 1980 twelve articles of Cai Hesen including 'The Opportunism of the Party'. The Beijing version of this article is based on the version published in the second issue of *Shunzhi tongxun* (News from Shuntian and Zhili). The original issue was a damaged one which must be an inner Party publication of the CCP. It is almost certain that both the 1928 Kuomintang version and the 1980 Beijing version are from the same source, that is, a mouthpiece of the North China Bureau of the CCP. But the Beijing version is the least impaired and hence the most valuable as a source material on Roy.

The importance of Cai Hesen's report on 'Opportunism' for the study of Roy's China mission lies in its detailed account of what Roy had said and done during his sojourn in Wuhan. As Cai Hesen

was a member of the Politburo of the CCP, he had easy access to Roy. The report which was intended to be a post-mortem of the activities of the CCP leadership during the Wuhan period, turned out to be a first-hand account by Cai of Roy's contributions to the Chinese revolution, his implementation of the Comintern directives, his strategic thinking in tackling the crisis of the CCP united front with the Kuomintang Left, and his differences with the other representative of the Comintern, Borodin, who was senior and more influential than Roy.

Roy in the Guide Weekly

Cai Hesen was also editor of the Party Journal *Xiangdao zhoubao* (The Guide Weekly) which carried four articles by Roy. The first was a statement issued by Roy on behalf of the Comintern delegation in China on 22 April 1927 entitled *Disanguoji daibiaotuan wei diguozhuyi weihe Wuhan ji Jiang Jieshi beipan xuanyan* (Statement of the Comintern Delegation on the Imperialist Intimidation against Wuhan and the Betrayal of Chiang Kai-shek).⁹ This statement reveals Roy's statesmanship in dealing with Chiang Kai-shek's attempts to split the revolutionary camp in April 1927. For his part, Chiang had tried his utmost to neutralise the Comintern delegation led by Roy while taking ruthless action to suppress the workers' forces in Shanghai and declaring his independence from the leadership of the Kuomintang centre in Wuhan. In his statement, Roy mentioned Chiang's invitation to the Comintern delegation to visit Nanjing. He first accepted the invitation but cancelled the trip when news reached him on the very day of his departure that Chiang Kai-shek had called a separate meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang in Nanjing. Roy immediately sent a telegram to Chiang asking him to stop the separate meeting and come to Wuhan to sort out the differences in the legitimate conference of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang in Wuhan. Responding to Roy's telegram, Chiang Kai-shek despatched a tele-reply on 22 April 1927 putting the blame for the Nanjing-Wuhan split on the people controlling power in Wuhan, and regretting that Roy had taken a partial stand and listened only to the Wuhan side.¹⁰ Incidentally, Roy's statement carried by *The Guide Weekly* was issued on the same day that

Chiang sent him the telegram. In this statement, Roy also denounced Chiang as the 'traitor of the nation'. He observed:

When we announce that Chiang Kai-shek is becoming the instrument of imperialism, the executioner of the workers and peasants and the traitor of the nation, we request the people of China to pay attention to the following fact, viz., the betrayal is not merely the act of one or several individuals but the departure of the whole social class from the national revolution, and its turning to the opposition of the revolution.¹¹

Roy further analysed that the 'feudal-bourgeoisie' was the natural habitat of 'Chiang Kai-shek-ism' (*Jiang Jieshi zhuyi*) and appealed to the revolutionary forces to attack not only the base of Chiang Kai-shek in Nanjing and Shanghai, but also its forces in every town and village.¹² This essay is collected in North's book as Document No. 8.

The second article of Roy was on the significance of the Fifth Congress which was later published in *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. XVII, No. 41, 14 July 1927 and carried by North in his book as Document 19 (pp. 279-282). However, on closer examination the earliest version of it carried by *Xiangdao* was quite different from the later internationally known version. For instance, in the *Xiangdao* version, Roy wrote that the Fifth Congress had pointed out that:

the proletariat is the backbone of the revolution... As the revolution today is built on the united base of several classes, the proletariat cannot singly lead the revolution. Nevertheless, the proletariat is the only power (*weiyide shili*). It alone can guarantee the progress of revolution, preventing it from vacillation or going astray. Therefore, the proletariat is not the only *leadership* (sic) of the revolution, but it holds *hegemony* (sic) in the revolutionary struggle.¹³

The two English words in italics are not my translation. They appear in the Chinese text in the *Xiangdao* version. These sentences which represent a certain perspective are omitted in the other version. Here two questions arise. First, Roy said that this perspective, viz., that the proletariat was the 'only power' within the forces

of the national revolution which could guarantee progress and success and the proletariat must exercise 'hegemony' within the national revolution, had emerged in the Fifth Congress as a consensus. Why was it then erased from the other version in the *International Press Correspondence*, which should have faithfully reflected the views of the Fifth Congress? Was it done by Roy himself, or by the Comintern bosses with or without Roy's consent? These are puzzling questions which need to be researched.

Roy's third piece entitled 'Geming yu fangeming' (Revolution and Counter-revolution) marked the beginning of a deeper concern and eventually became the title of Roy's defence of his China mission before the Comintern in 1929, and finally resulted in his major book *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China*. In his essay Roy observed that 'The Development of revolution often leads to the combination of counter-revolutionary forces. The reactionary social elements would, of course, counter-attack as the revolutionary movement threatens their regime and special powers. The first task of the revolution is to repulse this counterattack.' He said, 'The Chinese revolution has entered a new phase. The national revolution in this phase has evidently been transformed into the land revolution...' 'The anti-imperialist struggle is not an abstract concept. The Chinese nation is fighting against imperialism because it hampers the economic development of China. The feudal system represents a stage of economic backwardness. Hence, the anti-imperialist struggle cannot be separated from the destruction of the feudal forces.'¹⁴ This article appears as Document No. 25 in North's book.

The fourth article of Roy was on the repression of Egypt by the British imperialists. It continued in three issues, i.e., No. 105 (7 March 1925), No. 106 (14 March 1925) and No. 111 (19 April 1925). The long interval between the appearance of the second and third instalments of the article was due to the death of Dr. Sun Yat-sen on 12 March 1925. *The Guide Weekly* devoted its issue No. 107 (21 March 1925) to Sun Yat-sen, and the subsequent three issues were too crowded by commemorative articles on Sun to accommodate the remaining part of Roy's article.

Readers of *The Guide Weekly* had been familiar with the name

of Roy even earlier as issue No. 80 of the journal (27 August 1924) had published the Chinese version of Roy's letter to the British Prime Minister, McDonald, dated, Switzerland, 20th February 1924. The issue also published a note by Roy written on 20 April 1924 explaining why he made public this private letter.¹⁵ It is evident that Cai Hesen and his colleagues who were running the Party journal had taken an interest in Roy three years before the latter's arrival in China.

Wang Jingwei's Accounts

Wang Jingwei was the key figure with whom Roy had to deal in steering the communist movement ahead. There was the wellknown episode of Roy revealing a secret despatch from Moscow to Wang which proved to be the Waterloo for both Roy and Borodin. So far opinions have tended to put the blame on Roy than on Borodin. This way of apportioning the responsibility is influenced by the accounts of Cai Hesen and Wang Jingwei.

Cai Hesen's account is found in his essay an 'Opportunism' which severely censures Roy:

Roy also committed grave mistakes, being a victim of the 'Wang Jingwei poison'. He was still dreaming of using Wang Jingwei, this concubine (figuratively) of Tang Shengzhi, as the 'centre' of the Left to expand the armed forces of the Left. He even handed the telegram from the International on a platter and revealed all the secrets to him. The main points of the telegram are : (1) peasants to confiscate lands on their own initiative, (2) to arm fifty thousand communists, (3) to overthrow the reactionary Kuomintang centre, (4) to organise revolutionary courts to punish all counter-revolutionaries. How can this telegram be revealed to this well known traitor? After Wang Jingwei learnt about the telegram he thanked Roy and ran to Tang Shengzhi and his generals, and played it up, crying that the Third International and the CCP were to finish off Kuomintang and all its troops and carry out communist revolution. Against this grave error the Politburo unanimously opposed Roy, while Borodin having probably also telegraphed the International, was recalled by it.¹⁶

Wang Jingwei is on record to have given a detailed account of the episode on two occasions. The first occasion was the 20th enlarged plenary session of the Standing Committee of the Kuomintang Centre in Wuhan on 15th July 1927 in which Wang Jingwei said:

On the 5th last month, on the eve of the departure of the presidium of the Political Committee to Zhengzhou, Comrade Roy, the Honorary President of the (Kuomintang) centre and a member of the Central Committee of the Third International, asked me for a conversation. He showed me a telegram sent to him and Borodin from the head of the Third International, Stalin. After reading it I felt the matter very important and wished to show it to the members of the Presidium of the Political Committee. Only two of the members, Comrade Tan Pingshan and Comrade Song Ziwen, did not read it then. But Comrade Song read it a few days ago... We can see that there are five items in the telegram all of which are terrible in nature... Any one item of the five being implemented would be the undoing of the Kuomintang! When we first accepted the CP comrades into our party we never imagined that things would develop in this way! As the Presidium was going to Zhengzhou the next day, we had to wait for its return from Zhengzhou. Comrade Borodin has been our advisor. He has never showed the telegram to the Presidium. After some days, Roy came again to say that he was soon leaving. Asked why, he said that Comrade Borodin and the comrades of the CP were opposed to his showing the telegram to the Presidium of the Political Committee, hence he could not but depart. He also observed that he had been pained by his experience of six months. When a revolutionary party co-existed with another revolutionary party, there should be openness, keeping things above board. Whatever could be done should be pursued with united effort. Whatever could not be done can be argued out even to the extent of parting company. But the comrades of the CP never opened up, playing hide and seek with the Kuomintang Left. Carrying on in this manner, the Kuomintang, the CP, the national revolution, all would fail. He said he would report this when he returned to Moscow. I advised him not to depart,

otherwise the breakup would occur. He advised us to abide by the telegram lest both the Kuomintang and CP would be undone. I then told him that none of the five items could be implemented and we could not sacrifice the Kuomintang. He said he had no right to speak and advised me to continue talks with Comrade Borodin. I said when Comrade Borodin did not talk to us what could be talked about? He also mentioned a political thesis of Moscow and asked whether I had seen it. I hadn't. After some days Comrade Chen Youren told us by quoting Borodin that Roy was driven out of China, that there had been so many telegrams from Moscow and those which they considered impossible to implement would not be shown to us. This might have brought consolation to us, but, in fact, what they have been doing has been reported neither to the Political Committee, nor to the Military Committee. A few days later, Roy sent across the Thesis. Meanwhile Comrade Borodin also telephoned to say that the Thesis was that of Comrade Roy himself. However, this telegram was sent by the Honorary President of the Centre of our party and member of the Central Committee of the Third International. How could it be regarded as fabricated? Moreover, the comrades of the CP had already been discussing it. Only the comrades of the Kuomintang were kept in the dark...¹⁷

Two important points emerge from Wang's report. First, Roy was honoured as the Honorary President of the Wuhan Kuomintang, which is a historical fact hardly known outside China. Zhang Guangyu in his article for this special issue mentions that Roy was honoured as Honorary President of the Kuomintang at the Sixth enlarged Plenum of the Standing Committee of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang held on 8th April 1927 specially to welcome Roy. (Article by Zhang Guangyu, Associate Professor in History, Wuhan University, titled "M.N. Roy in Wuhan" in *China Report*, Vol. 24 No. 1 January-March, 1988, pp. 81-97. Prof. Zhang Guangyu has recently sent me two photographs of Roy in China, published in *Pictures of the Northern Expedition, 1927*. SNR.) The proposal for honouring him was mooted by Tan Pingshan who was a communist member of the Kuomintang Central Executive and a minister of the Wuhan government. Zhang's source is the

record of the proceedings of the meeting. The second point emerging from Wang Jingwei's account is that Roy had placed himself at a level in the relationship between the CCP and the Kuomintang which was totally different from the consistent stand of the Comintern and the CCP, viz., to maintain the CCP's independence of action while maintaining the unity of the united front. If Wang and the Kuomintang publication of his report have respected historical truth and if its every word is believable, then Roy was conducting the united front (with the Kuomintang Left) without rigidity and secretiveness. Roy indeed represented a new style in the sphere of the united front.

Wang Jingwei's other account of the telegram episode was delivered at the Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou on 5 November 1927, in which he said:

On 21 May (1927) there were anti-communist incidents in Changsha, Hunan. The Soviet representative Borodin and the CCP fellows demanded that the Kuomintang Centre deal with it stringently. On June 1st, the Soviet (sic) representative Roy suddenly invited me for a conversation. He said: 'There is a resolution which Moscow has sent to me and Borodin. Has Borodin shown it to you'. I said: 'No'. He said: 'I can show it to you'. He then showed to me the resolution one copy of which is in Russian and another in Chinese being translated by them. After reading it I felt that things had developed to a grave stage. I asked: 'Can I keep it?' He hesitated for a while, but said finally: 'I'll send across tonight because a few wordings (in the Chinese translation) have to be revised.' It was sent to me at night. I am giving this resolution to the chairman (of the meeting) for the reference of all of you. The resolution has several points worth noticing.

This being the content of the resolution... it showed that the time of scrambling for the ship, scrambling for the helm had arrived. If the national revolution was to go in the communist direction, the Kuomintang had to be converted into a communist party. Otherwise, the only way out was to destroy the Kuomintang. If the national revolution was to go in the direction of the Three Principles, the communist party had to be

transformed into the Kuomintang. Otherwise the only way was to destroy the communist party.

On 13 June, I returned to Wuhan, the Fourth Army also arrived unit after unit. Then I heard that Roy was about to leave, which puzzled me. Later on I came to know that because of his showing the resolution to me Roy was fiercely criticised by Borodin. According to Roy there was a symbiotic relationship between the Kuomintang Left and the Communists. Lest they be annihilated by the Rightists, the Leftists ought to be informed about the resolution. According to Borodin the Kuomintang Left was different from the communists. They remained Kuomintangists. After seeing the resolution they would inevitably break away from the communists. He blamed Roy for committing the mistake of imprudence. The majority of the CCP sided with Borodin, hence Roy was driven away. After I heard all this I felt even more nervous. From the middle of June I gathered the non-communist comrades of the Kuomintang centre to discuss how to dissociate with the communists on the one hand; while, on the other hand, I gathered the non-communist comrades in the army, announced the resolution among them and asked them to alert the army... When Borodin learnt all this he could not but quit.¹⁸

Roy and Borodin

Both Cai Hesen and Wang Jingwei have provided historical evidence about the serious differences between Roy and Borodin. According to Cai's article, Roy started his tenure as a boss from the Comintern by advocating along with the Chinese communist leader, Qu Quibai, a line based on uniting the 'radical left' of the Kuomintang as the focal point in opposition to the suggestion of Cai Hesen and Li Lisan to take an independent military stand. But, in the face of increasing counter-revolutionary challenges and massacre of workers and peasants in Hunan and Hubei with the connivance of the Wuhan authorities, Roy changed his stand and clashed with the line of appeasement pursued by Borodin and Chen Duxiu. In a Politburo meeting after the Wuhan troops had captured the strategic city Zhengzhou from the northern warlords. Chen Duxiu painted a rosy picture of the prospects of the revolu-

tion. Roy rose to the occasion to demolish Chen's misplaced optimism and pointed out that 'only by attacking the enemies can we find a way out.' He was supported by the majority of the Politburo who requested Roy to draft a resolution. While doing that, Roy sprang a surprise by (a) calling for a general strike in Wuhan to protest against the reactionary massacres, and (b) launching a new propaganda drive in denouncing the warlord elements who were hiding under the camouflage of revolution. A long and hot debate followed, and Roy ultimately carried the floor.

Borodin was furious after the meeting. Tan Pingshan condemned Roy for suffering from leftist infantile disorder and for his ignorance of Chinese conditions. They rallied and got the subsequent Politburo meeting to pass a resolution which virtually neutralised Roy's previous proposals. It was in this meeting that Roy betrayed his infirmity. For this Cai Hesen could not pardon him. He commented that Borodin had all along been a right-wing pacifist, so he could not be blamed for not showing an interest in pursuing the militant line. Roy was keen to launch the revolutionary 'attack', and he would have carried a part of the Politburo to form a new leadership to replace the capitulationist leadership if he had stood firm. Cai also pointed out Roy's miscalculation of the situation. Hunan province was in a state of vacuum so far as enemy forces were concerned. Most of the Hunan warlord Tang Shengzhi's troops had been sent to fight the Northern Expedition, with only four regiments remaining in the home province. Meanwhile, the awakened Hunan peasants were in possession of more than 3,000 rifles. In addition, there were the crack troops of Hubei under the command of a communist general, Ye Ting, who could easily block the railway line and prevent Tang Shengzhi from moving his troops back. It was a golden opportunity for the communists to mobilise the peasants and establish a base in Hunan. Instead of sizing up this situation, Roy preferred to abandon Hunan and Hubei and to return to Guangdong where the Northern Expedition had started.¹⁹

Apart from Cai Hesen, other men of action in the Chinese revolution in 1927 also testified to the Roy-Borodin antagonism. This is highlighted in the report of Li Lisan entitled 'Dangshi

baogao' (A Report on Party History).²⁰ Qu Quibai, who had worked closely with Roy in the CCP, depicted the Chinese revolutionary situation in 1927 as a kind of triangular affair with Roy, Borodin, and Chen Duxiu pulling in three different directions, in his article 'Zhongguo geming yu Zhongguo gongchandang' (Chinese Revolution and Chinese Communist Party). In Qu's assessment, Chen Duxiu, though always vacillating between Roy and Borodin, was more pro-Borodin than pro-Roy.²¹ The tussle between these two was also emphasised in a book written by a scholar from Taiwan entitled *Bao Luoting yu Wuhan zhengquan* (Borodin and the Wuhan Regime).²²

Contemporary Writings

In the 1950's a well-known political historian. He Ganzhi (Ho Kanchih) wrote a book entitled *Zhongguo xiandai geming shi* (History of Revolution in Modern China), published in Beijing in 1954. This book was rendered into English and published by the Foreign Language Press, Beijing, and has been adopted as a university textbook in India and elsewhere. His book probably represented the official line of historical evaluation. In this book, the author was all praise for Stalin and the Comintern. Chen Duxiu was singled out for blame for all the mistakes during the period of the first internal revolutionary war.²³ From 1979 onwards, a series of articles have appeared in Mainland China which indicates the liberalisation of view in assessing historical personages. Research activities developed further in the 1980s. A book, *Zhongguo gongchandang lishi jiangyi* (Manual of the History of Chinese Communist Party), was compiled by a team of university teachers (published in Shandong in 1980) which takes a more realistic view of the Comintern and its representatives. It apportions praise and blame to the Comintern on a fifty-fifty basis. Roy comes in for criticism for colluding with Borodin to shield Chen Duxiu in blacking out the party members from the instructions of the Comintern for arming the party members and workers and peasants, and for revealing the secret message to Wang Jingwei, providing the latter with an excuse to break up with the communists.²⁴ Qian Feng and Liu Qifa in their article 'Diyici guonei geming zhanzheng shiqide geming lingdaoquan wenti' (On the Revolutionary Leadership Issue dur-

ing the 1st National Revolutionary War) in *Zhongguo shehui kexue* (Social Sciences in China), No. 4, 1980, categorically point out the responsibility of the Comintern for the failure of the united front and the erroneous line of Chen Duxiu's leadership. The article refers to the crucial Comintern telegram in June 1927 without explicitly blaming Roy for showing it to Wang. However, the authors have placed both the Comintern and its representatives in China on the defensive in an interesting perspective which is worth quoting:

After Chaing Kai-shek had betrayed the revolution on 12 April 1927, Stalin viewed the Wuhan Kuomintang government as 'resolutely struggling against the warlordism and imperialism' and that 'it would gradually transform into the organ of revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry'. At that time, Wang Jingwei did not reveal his rightist face. However, this erroneous evaluation (of Stalin) doubtlessly relaxed the vigilance on the part of Chinese Communists.

In May that year, the 'Resolution on the China Problem passed by the 8th Plenum of Executive Committee of the Communist International.' called for 'most resolute opposition to the demand for quitting the Kuomintang' and considered 'absurd' the ideas of either quitting or preparing for quitting. Not only that, the Comintern even unrealistically asked the communists to 'establish the proletarian leadership' within the Kuomintang.

Meanwhile, Stalin responded to the request of the leader of the Comintern representative in China, Roy, and sent a telegram 'demanding the CCP to pursue a line of revolutionary action'. However, Borodin thought the telegram 'absurd' and replied that 'order received shall implement if possible'. Thus Roy and Borodin started a vehement quarrel... Chen Duxiu obeyed Borodin and opposed developing an independent workers and peasants' movement, and continued to ally with the Kuomintang. Finally, Wang Jingwei utilised the Stalin telegram shown to him by Roy as a pretext and 'disassociated with the communists' on the night of July 14th, betraying the revolution.²⁸

Interestingly, the article by Qian Feng and Liu Qifa cited above was commented upon by a scholar of the Department of Politics in the Hubei Institute of Finances and Economics, Zhao Dexin, and published in *Zhongguo shehui kexue*, No. 4 1981. Zhao argued against the two scholars' assertion tracing Chen Duxiu's right opportunism to the Comintern resolution on colonialism first drafted by Lenin in 1920. Zhao highlights the importance of the 'Supplementary thesis' jointly drafted by Lenin and Roy which was specifically aimed at China and India. He quoted at length from Roy's memoirs to defend the 'thesis'. This is one of the first instances of a Chinese researcher using Roy's writings to substantiate a certain viewpoint in Chinese historical studies, particularly on such a sensitive issue.²⁶

The most authoritative Chinese scholar on the Comintern's relationship with the Chinese revolution is Xiang Qing, Professor in the Department of International Politics of Peking University. His writings which have a bearing on the study of Roy are as follows: (a) 'Guanyu gongchanguoji he Zhongguo geming wenti' (Issues Relating to the Comintern and the Chinese Revolution), in *Beijing daxue xuebao* (Journal of Peking University), No. 6, 1979; (b) 'Zhongguo gongchandang chuangjian shiqide gongchanguoji he Zhongguo geming' (Comintern and Chinese Revolution during the Founding Period of the CCP) in *Jindaishi yanjiu* (Modern History Research), No. 4, 1980; (c) 'Chen Duxiu youqing jihui zhuyi he gongchanguoji guanyu Zhongguo geming zhengce' (The Right Opportunism of Chen Duxiu and the Policies of Comintern vis-a-vis the Chinese Revolution); and (d) 'Da geming jingji shiqi gongchanguoji zhidao Zhongguo gemingde zhengce celue' (Policies and Strategies of the Comintern vis-a-vis the Chinese Revolution during the Critical Period of the Great Revolution). The last two articles are included in his book *Gongchanguoji he Zhongguo geming guanxi lunwen ji* (Collection of Essays on Comintern vis-a-vis the Chinese Revolution), published by People's Publishing House, Shanghai, 1985. All these articles in addition to his biographical article mentioned earlier enhance our understanding of Roy's mission in China.

Another scholar, Chen Fengjun, published an article in 1984, entitled 'Feizhiminhua' lilunde youlai yu yanbian' (The

Origin and Evolution of the Theory of 'decolonisation') included in *Shijieshi yanjiu dongtai* (Report on Studies of World History), No. 4, which is an internal reference material of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. 'Decolonisation' was a term used by Roy in the 1920s.

The article devotes a substantial part to elaborate Roy's thesis on 'Decolonisation'. Chen is Associate Professor of the Department of International Politics in Peking University. (For Chen Fengjun's article titled 'M.N. Roy and the Comintern', see *China Report*, Vol. 24, No. 1 January-March 1988. SNR.)

New Publications

A healthy trend in the current Chinese academic scene is the publication of source materials for research. The People's Publishing House, Beijing, published in 1985 a collection entitled *Gongchangguoji yu Zhongguo geming ziliao xuanji* (Selected Edition of Source Materials on the Comintern vis-a-vis Chinese Revolution), which was meant for 'internal circulation'. In this collection, the compilers have republished from the Kuomintang archives the proceedings of the Sixth enlarged Plenary session of the Second Standing Committee of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang two important speeches delivered at the session by Roy and Borodin respectively, dated Wuhan, 8 April 1927. In his speech, Borodin praised Roy for having lived under and fought the repression of British imperialism and as a leader of the Indian revolution with several decades of experience.²⁷ In his speech, Roy dwelt upon the theme of anti-imperialism and the policies of the Comintern to help the Chinese revolution to overthrow the repression of imperialism.²⁸

Included in this collection are also the following speeches and writings of Roy which have been re-translated into Chinese from the documents gathered and translated in North and Eudin's book:

1. The Base and the Social Forces of the Revolution.
2. The Problems of the Chinese Revolution and the Role of the Proletariat.
3. The Proletariat and the Petty Bourgeoisie.

4. The Perspective and the Character of the Chinese Revolution.
5. National Revolution and Socialism.
6. Non-capitalist Development and Socialism, Democratic Dictatorship and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.
7. The Bolshevik Party.
8. Relations with the Kuomintang and the Independence of the Communist Party.
9. Resolution on the Agrarian Questions.
10. Counter-revolution and Communist Tactics: Defence or Offence.
11. Telegram to the Comintern (sent by) Chen Duxiu at the Instruction of the Politbureau (15 June 1927).

These documents are not ordinary translations but have been produced with research effort. They have an enhanced value as a source material for their identification of Chinese events and developments. In certain places, the translators were able to improve upon the original English translations in North's book. For example:

1. In Roy's speech 'The Base and the Social Forces of the Revolution' there is a sentence: 'To Comrade Borodin the Canton proletariat is "dust" whereas the Shanghai proletariat is "a cotton-fibre proletariat."' 'North's editorial note makes out the "cotton fibre" as 'a reference to the numerous proletarians employed in the cotton industry in Shanghai' (North, p. 166), while the Chinese translators think it is a metaphor used by Roy to depict Borodin's belittling the power of the proletarian masses.²⁹
2. In Roy's speech at the Fifth Congress of the CCP entitled 'The Problems of the Chinese Revolution and the Role of the Proletariat', the Chinese translators point out that there is some omission of the text preceding to the mention of 'Feng Yu-hsiang' (North, p. 198).³⁰
3. The Chinese translators have added a note to the following

sentence in Roy's Fifth Congress speech: 'An example of this was the defeat suffered by Fen Yu-hsiang's forces even on the other side of the Nankou Pass' (North, p. 201). The Chinese note reads:

This points to the incident of a joint attack of Fen Yuxiang (Feng Yu-hsiang) by the Zhili and Fengtian warlords with the support of the imperialists in March 1926, which ousted the nationalist army from Beijing. In April the nationalist army was forced to withdraw to Nankou and then to Zhangjiakou, Inner Mongolia and the Northwest.³¹

4. Another note is added to Roy's reference to 'the Chiang Kaishek affair' in the above quoted speech (North p. 205) that 'This refers to the Zhongshan gunboat incident.'³²
5. About Roy's article on 'The Fifth Congress of the CCP' (North, p. 279) the Chinese translators not only point out that the article had been carried by the Chinese Communist organ *Xiangdao* or *The Guide Weekly* in its issue No. 195, but have used the *Xiangdao* article as its translation ignoring the fact that there are great discrepancies in the two versions as I have pointed out earlier. They also insisted on dating the article as 13 May 1927 (according to the date appeared in *Xiangdao*) contrary to North's date of 10 May 1927 (North, p. 282) with a promise to further investigate the discrepancy in date.³³

There are two other reference books published in China, recently which have mentioned Roy. One is entitled *Gongchan' guoji he Zhongguo geming guanxi dashi tiyao* (Chronology of Major Events Relating to the Comintern vis-a-vis the Chinese Revolution) compiled by Wu Chuangun and Ma Baohua, published by the University of Anhui in 1985. Another is entitled *Gongchan guoji he Zhongguo geming guanxi jishi* (Chronicles of the Comintern vis-a-vis the Chinese Revolution) compiled by Yang Yunruo and published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1983.

I have gathered the above materials as a tribute to a man who has made his mark in the modern history of the world. This report, I hope, gives the readers an idea of the lengthy files on Roy in various Chinese archives dealing with his short sojourn in China.

As time passes, more material is certain to be discovered and added to this. That will be the subject for another report.

Appendix

Xu Qian's Welcome Speech at a banquet which he hosted at the hall of the Chamber of Commerce of China in Hankou at 10 p.m. on 8 April 1927:

Comrades:

This evening, we members of the Central Executive Committee are overjoyed in welcoming Mrs and Comrade Roy because the revolution in China, though it has achieved a lot and is still developing, is confronted with difficulties which have cropped up within the Party. These difficulties should, of course, be overcome by the efforts of every one of us. It is particularly gratifying that Comrade Roy has arrived at this crucial juncture. Comrade Roy has been closely connected with problems of the East and has now come to Wuhan from Moscow to guide us and help us. We comrades are happy in our innermost hearts. Revolution in China has come to a crossroad. Whither is our revolution heading? One road is heading towards capitalist revolution. Another is heading towards a non-capitalist revolution, a social revolution, which is a revolution for the people's livelihood, which we have inherited from the Prime Minister (Dr Sun Yat-sen). In the development of the revolution we have suddenly come to this crossroad. Which road should we take? Those comrades who are firmly determined for revolution would go along the non-capitalist road, the road of people's livelihood. Indeed, we have some military comrades who have embarked on the capitalist road. Although there is military victory, yet revolution had come to a crossroad and developed a counter-revolutionary trend. How dangerous and grave it is! In this situation we are really very happy to have Comrade Roy with us to guide us.

Originally, the third plenary session of the Central Executive Committee was to solve the problem of the Party, the question of the power of the Party. Since there has developed an individual autocracy, a military dictatorship which has eroded the power of

the Party, and formed a dictatorship of might is right, we are faced with a very dangerous situation. The third plenary session met in Wuhan in order to mend this system, which, of course, was a good thing. However, empty words on paper cannot correct what has actually happened. We have seen that at Nanchang, Jiujiang, Anqing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou, where the revolutionary army has occupied, not only the workers and peasants' interests have not been promoted, but there have been incidents of repression against the workers and peasants. Then, does it not amount to rendering the resolution into a worthless piece of paper? (Applause). Is it not true that the situation has not been corrected? (Applause). Particularly in Shanghai, where we have been provided with many glaring evidences showing that it is not an issue of intra-party problem or of varying tendencies, but of the transformation of the revolution into counter-revolution, the embarking upon the capitalist road. (Applause). This is not a question of a small defect in the (Kuomintang) Party system, but it is a question of whether the Party is heading in the right direction or not. (Applause).

Revolution retreats if it does not march forward. If we don't travel along the revolutionary road, we become counter-revolutionary. Our Party is the leader of the revolution by advocating a national revolution in China. China is economically backward, but national revolution can also lead to the road of class struggle. Not that this national revolution precludes carrying it out to its logical end. But one must admit that various elements have participated in the revolution. The Chinese bourgeoisie are also an oppressed class, hence they are allowed to participate in the national revolution. Our revolution is not intended to stop at any particular stage. Contrary to our expectations, when the revolution has just covered half the way, it is not only being called to a halt, but its direction is sought to be changed. This is the situation today. (Applause). Look at the development in Shanghai. After Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek reached Shanghai, the direction of the revolution has suddenly been changed. Even before Generalissimo Chiang landed in Shanghai the contradictions within the Party had surfaced and demanded to be corrected. After his arrival in Shanghai, he has been besieged not only by the ordinary small men, but also by the Shanghai comprador and bourgeois classes. i.e., the instruments of

the imperialists. The revolution has become such a thing that the imperialists are not only not afraid of it, but are rejoiced by it and praise and compliment it. (Applause). Whatever is praised by the imperialists is rotten. (Applause). Since it (the revolution) is praised by the imperialists, needless to say, it is definitely counter-revolutionary. (Applause).

Now, we talk of the problem of the Party, the movement to save the Party, we mean to enhance the authority of the Party, to overthrow the military autocracy, to oppose the control of the Party by the military. All this we talk from the view point of the interests of the revolution. Contrary to our expectation, the counter-revolutionaries in Shanghai also talk about saving the Party. This is ridiculous. Since the so-called saving of the Party by the counter-revolutionaries only means that the Party is going to be destroyed, it is naturally what the imperialists like best. What they allege about our being manipulated by the Communist Party, about the Party being destroyed, only means that the Party has to be saved from the communists, the communists must be weeded out. All this is naturally looked forward to and rejoiced by the imperialists. This is an extraordinary crisis!

Regarding the Party issue, Generalissimo Chiang is so blatantly reactionary that we comrades have all seen through him. I need not repeat it. But Comrades Wu Zhihui and Li Shizeng, these two veterans are not counter-revolutionaries, nor do they care for selfish interests. It is a pity that even they are of the view that the Party is on the brink of destruction. What Comrade Wu has said is rather ridiculous, really incomprehensible. Once when Wu met Comrade Chen Duxiu in Shanghai, Wu asked Chen: 'It can be materialised in 20 years'. Comrade Wu thus thought that only 19 years were left of the life of the Kuomintang. Is it not a illusion? Communist comrades have written to our Party recently. We have to reply which is not difficult to do. The intra-Party contradiction has arisen entirely from the individual autocracy of Generalissimo Chiang, as well as his controlling the Party through the military. Our Party has determined to solve this contradiction. This is of course easier said than done. But if we study this problem we must answer two questions: (1) Has the national revolution reached its

goal? (2) What is the relationship between the Kuomintang and the Comintern? How close are they? If we can answer these questions then everything will be solved. If the national revolution is not pursued to the end then the Party would be dead. That means the national revolution is terminated after completing a certain phase. The result would be like the October Revolution overthrowing Kerensky in Russia. Comrades Wu and Li have no ambitions to become dictators. But they don't understand the meaning of national revolution, which is rather unfortunate. We must understand that the Prime Minister (Sun Yat-sen) told us that the revolution would forge ahead, not ending with the bourgeois revolution, but serving the interests of peasants and workers. All the more it should not be halted mid-way or at some such stage. (Applause). The petty bourgeoisie is strategically allowed to participate in the revolution, but the real revolution advances continuously forward. Generalissimo Chiang is satisfied with this much. He thinks that if it (the revolution) advances further it would serve the interests of the peasants and workers and this would clash with his own interests. Thus, for protecting his own interests he goes astray. It is not that our Party comrades want to get rid of him, it is he who wants to depart from our Party. Since we are real revolutionaries and we advance continuously forward, the national revolution can proceed to its logical end. And this is closely connected with the Comintern. These three policies of uniting with Russia, uniting with the communists and promoting the interests of the workers and peasants left behind for us by the Prime Minister, form one integral whole. The Russian comrades are all members of the Communist Party, which represents the interests of the peasants and workers. Generalissimo Chiang who does not thoroughly understand revolution is trying his best to apologise with plausible arguments that he is not pro-Japan but actually pro-Russia. However, he has cast aside the policy of uniting with the communists. He devastates the peasants' and workers' movements, thus casting aside the policy of promoting the interests of the peasants and workers. These (three policies) are intertwined, but he cuts them asunder. Don't you see, it would not do if you unite with Russia but ditch the communists, nor it would do if you unite with the communists but ditch the workers and peasants.

What was decided by the Prime Minister at that time was an integral and consistent policy. He (Chiang) does not understand these relations entirely. Or maybe he understands but deliberately creates a situation to serve his selfish interest. Now we want to ask. Are there Kuomintang members inside the Communist Party? Are there communist members inside the Kuomintang? If this is understood, then, there is no need to elaborate. When I was in Moscow, I advocated mutual exchange of representatives and create an ever increasing intimate relationship. This is a straight issue. Now Comrade Roy has come. He can tell us whether our national revolution can reach its final goal or not. He can certainly give a clear explanation as this is related to Comintern. Our unity is closer than at the time when the Prime Minister was alive. Therefore, though we feel the danger now, yet, there is more hope. (Applause). How can Kuomintang be destroyed? Unless it stops the revolution. If Kuomintang is continuously advancing ahead, how can it be destroyed? (Applause). Actually there is no need to elaborate. The revolution led by the Prime Minister is continuously advancing. We can make it out from his speeches. People's livelihood means communism. Industry is not developed in China, economy is backward, therefore it needs a national revolution, leading the masses towards social revolution and proletarian revolution (Applause). If Kuomintang stops the revolution, there will be the tragedy of the Party being destroyed (Applause). The Central Executive Committee is leaning towards the left not the right. We can sincerely tell Comrade Roy about it. (Applause). Our Party has indeed been joined by varying elements. Generalissimo Chiang has made contributions on the military front. But our Party has been entrusted with the task of serving the interests of the masses. If we do not work for the masses of workers and peasants, there would be no need for this Party. And we would not be able to defeat the reactionaries. (Applause). We have had the problem about saving the Party. We are happy that we can tell Comrade Roy candidly that although there are counter-revolutionary obstacles, we would still advance ahead. (Applause). Now Comrade Roy has also come to guide us how to deal with it, we should warmly accept his guidance. This is not merely a national issue, it is an international issue as well. The imperialists are not willing to see the

success of Chinese revolution. They want to gather all the imperialist forces to extinguish this revolutionary movement in China. The imperialists are not only attacking the Chinese revolution, but will also at a certain stage split the revolution by dragging to the imperialist side persons who look like revolutionaries but are actually not so. Though we are fearless in carrying the revolution forward, we still need the help of the revolutionaries all over the world. Comrade Roy has already told us that he has come to help us, to work for the success of the world revolution—as the Chinese revolution is an important part of the world revolution. I and my colleagues are very happy and very grateful to him. (Applause). May I propose a toast and cheer: Long live Comintern! Long live the success of world revolution! (Applause).*

Roy's Reply Speech

Comrades,

I have great pleasure this afternoon to attend the enlarged Standing Committee session and to talk about the task and aim of the mission entrusted to me by the Comintern. I shall benefit from the opportunity of participating in the Chinese revolution. I am particularly delighted to be in the company of the leaders of Chinese revolution to solve the problems of the present as well as the future. Comrades have already had a long session, therefore I shall be very brief.

The revolution in China today is really facing a danger. But I believe if the Chinese revolution needs to have a leader, then no other but the Kuomintang of China can shoulder the responsibility. Just now Comrade Xu has talked about the latest policy of the Party which can guarantee that the Chinese revolution develops to its logical end. Comrade Xu said that there are two roads, one leading to capitalism and the other to non-capitalism. I dare say that the Chinese revolution would not serve the interests of the minority of capitalists. (Applause). It would definitely serve the interests of the workers and peasants. This is not what military victory can

* *Gongfei huoguo shiliao huibian*, Vol. I, pp. 285-89.

determine. If by serving the interests of the workers and peasants, the revolution will be pursued to the end, we should then carry on and we can expect good results. (Applause).

At this critical and dangerous moment, every comrade knows and feels that the leadership is not under any individual, but it is under a collective leadership. We should surge forward unanimously. In such a dangerous situation as prevails now, it is inevitable that some veterans would rally around while other would fall apart. We need not be panicky about it. If only all revolutionary leaders unite under the leadership of the central headquarters of the Party, the revolution will definitely triumph. Now I congratulate the unity of all central leaders and yours surging ahead. (Applause).

NOTES

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2. Yun-yuan Yang, 'M.N. Luoyi yu Wuhan zhengquan' (M.N. Roy and the Wuhan Regime), in *Zhuanji wenxue* (Biographical Literature) (Taipeh, Taiwan), Vol. XI, No. 4, 1966, pp. 6-11.
3. This dictionary was compiled by the translation section of the Institute of Modern History in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Chinese Social Science Publishing House, 1981, p. 420.
4. Zhou Shangwen, (Comp.), *Guoji gongyun shishi renwu lu* (Who's Who in the History of the Communist International Movement) (Shanghai: People's Publishing House, 1984), pp. 705-06.
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7. Xiang Qing, 'Guanyu Gongchanguoji he Zhongguo geming wenti' (The Issue of the Comintern vis-a-vis the Chinese Revolution), in *Beijing daxue xuebao* (Journal of Peking University) (Beijing), No. 6, 1979, p. 25.

8. Quoted in Wang Jianmin, *Zhongguo gongchandang shigao* (A Draft of the History of Chinese Communist Party) (Hong Kong, 1974), p. 482.
9. *Xiangdao zhoubao* (The Guide Weekly), No. 194. 1 May 1927. pp. 2104-05.
10. *Gongfei huoguo shiliao huibian* (Compilation of Historical Data on the Disaster to the Nation by the Communist Bandits), Vol. 1, p. 290.
11. *Xiangdao zhoubao*, No. 194, p. 2105.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, No. 195, p. 2119.
14. *Ibid.*, No. 197, pp. 2156-57.
15. *Ibid.*, No. 80, pp. 639-41.
16. Cai Hesende *shi'erpian wenzhang* (Twelve Essays of Cai Hesen) (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1980), p. 93.
17. *Gongfei huoguo shiliao huibian*, Vol. 1, pp. 349-51.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 371-73.
19. *Cai Hesende shi'erpian wenzhang*, pp. 78-79.
20. Li Lisan, 'Dangshi Baogao', in *Zhonggong dangshi baogao xuanbian* (A Selection of Report on Party History) (Beijing: Publishing House of the Party Institute of CCP), p. 252.
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25. Qian Feng and Liu Qifa, 'Deyici guonei geming zhanzheng shiqide geming lingdao quan wenti', in *Zhongguo shehui kexue* (Social Sciences in China). No. 4, 1980, pp. 71-72.
26. Zhao Dexin, 'Dui 'Diyici guonei geming zhanzheng shiqide geming lingdao quan wenti' de uijian' (A Comment on the Issue of Leader-

ship during the 1st National Revolutionary War), in *Zhonggou shehui kexue*, No. 4, 1981, pp. 153-154.

27. 'Bao Luoting jianghua' (Speech delivered by Borodin), in *Gongchan' guoji yu Zhongguo geming ziliao xuanji* (Collection of Essays on the Comintern vis-a-vis the Chinese Revolution) (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1985), p. 240.
28. 'Luoyi jianghua' (Speech delivered by Roy), *ibid.*, pp. 235-37.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 248.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
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32. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 395.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Political religion of Nationalism

They speak grandiloquently of national interest, national honour and national spirit; behind all these high-sounding phrases are hidden the selfish interests of minority. Drugged by the political religion, called Nationalism, a people becomes the Nation which claims and obtains the effacement of individuals composing the people. Rising and capturing power on the authority of the people, the Nation becomes the enemy of popular freedom. The state being the political organisation of society, it is equated with the nation. But it is a historical fact that political organisation of society became necessary when homogeneous human communities were divided into possessing and dispossessed classes, and ever since that time the State has been the instrument in the hand of the former to maintain its position of privilege. So, by identifying itself with the State, the Nation becomes antagonistic to the interest and freedom of the people. It is a totalitarian concept. Therefore, nationalist politics cannot but be power-politics without any socially liberating principle.

The Crisis in the Communist International : The Question of Leadership*

M.N. Roy

On 13 December 1929 Inprecor announced that "Roy, by contributing to the Brandler press and by supporting Brandler Organisation, has placed himself outside the ranks of the Communist International". The decision was based on the authority of a resolution of the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI (3 to 19 July 1929).

Roy was opposed to the extremist line adopted by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, but his earliest published criticism of this line appeared in the Opposition journal *Das Volksrecht* in May 1929 (See *Selected Works of M.N. Roy*, Vol. III, pp 231-257). His famous "Open Letter to the members of the C.I." appeared under the title "Meine Verbrechen" (My Crime) in the principal opposition organ *Gegen den Strom* on 14 September 1929. This was followed by a series of twelve articles on the Crisis in the Communist International of which the first one is reproduced here in English translation. For the complete series, see *Selected Works III*, pp 290-423.

Roy's closest friends in Germany, August Thalheimer, Heinrich Brandler, Paul Froelich and others, were members of the Communist Opposition, and their organ *Gegen den Strom* was published from 1928 to 1935. This was a different opposition from the one led by Leon

* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 39, pp. 7-8; No. 40, p. 9, written on 16 September 1929; and published under the signature of Manabendra Nath Roy in the issues of 28 September and 5 October 1929. Highlighting of sentences in the original German text has been retained in translation through italicization. SNR.

Trotsky. During 1930-31 Roy and Thalheimer jointly edited another periodical, *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition* (INKOPP) which ceased publication after Roy's arrest in India (July 1931).

The most outstanding work written by Roy during his opposition years in Germany was *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China* initially published in German in 1930, subsequently in English in 1946. He was also working at this time on a study of the *Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, but the draft manuscript was left behind in Berlin and it was presumably destroyed by the Nazis along with his other books and papers. SNR.

In spite of official optimism it is a deplorable, unpleasant and disquieting fact that *the influence of the Communist Party is regressing in every capitalist country, that the proletarian masses are not won over to Communism*. In the eyes of the current leadership the detection of this fact means it is 'rightist deviation', which reveals a lack of faith in the Revolution. The mere pointing out of this fact suffices one to be branded a 'renegade'. However, first of all it is urgently necessary that we undertake a thorough self-examination to find out the causes of this standstill situation, or rather this regression in the development of the Communist Party. These causes must be pointed out and eradicated; that is the fundamental precondition for the success of the revolutionary proletarian movement. The decline in the influence of the communist parties in capitalist countries, *the communist party's inability to secure the support of the proletarian masses*, etc. are all the more deplorable, unpleasant and disquieting, because it is occurring not during a 'flat' period but during a period of general (albeit slow but sure) radicalization of the workers' movement. In other words, just when the objective conditions for the triumph of the Revolution are maturing, the subjective element fails by being unable to cope with the situation.

Let us remember the most blatant facts. In Germany three years ago, through the initiative of the Communist Party, over 14 million workers were mobilized on the issue of opposing compensation to the landowning classes. In the ensuing parliamentary elections the CP is unsuccessful in achieving the same num-

ber of votes as in 1924. During the armoured-cruiser campaign, which followed the elections, the party is unable to obtain the 1.5 million votes necessary to obtain a referendum in this matter. And since then we notice a constant process of decline. The 'campaign leaders' during the lock-out in the Ruhr, for which there had been wide publicity, could influence the situation merely superficially. The 1st of May adventure was rapidly followed by the August fiasco. Later events were to reveal the illusory character of the 'victories' during the elections of the shop-committees. In a series of local elections—within the unions, the councils, the co-operatives—the communists suffered further defeats. The Communist Party does not succeed in organizing mass resistance, be it ever so small, against the brutal attacks on the unemployed. Nothing has been done to lead the dispute on the onus of the reparations which is due to flare up in consequence of the Young-Plan. The membership itself has been greatly reduced because of the exclusion of its best elements on the one hand and the resignation on the other of the pessimistic and disgusted ones.

In France: The sudden reversal of electioneering tactics led to a defeat of the party during the national elections. Strikes in the metal and textile industries did not strengthen the influence of the party in these areas. A capitalist recovery and industrial expansion (both are to be seen as relative) are driving the French peasant-farmer to the brink of total or partial proletarianization. On the pretext of fighting the 'rightist danger', the party is completely isolating itself from the mass of impoverished peasants which form such an important political factor in France.

In England: The picture is more depressing than anywhere else. Even under conditions of a continuous industrial ruin and the decline of capitalism, of furious attacks on the working-classes and the most shameless deception by reformist leaders, the Communist Party is unable to register any increase in numbers. After the general strike of 1926 and during the ensuing months-long lock-outs in the mines, the membership of the CP approached some 10,000 in number. Since then it has decreased to a little over 3,000. The results of the last national elections revealed how far away the CP is from exercising a lasting influence on the labour movement.

In *Czechoslovakia*: Where the CP used to be the strongest workers' party, the fiasco of the 'red day' last year was a surprising revelation. The plan to organize a counter-demonstration on the anniversary of the Republic had to be abandoned as an impossible task. Yes, and even the plan to participate in the demonstrations as in independent proletarian group with its own revolutionary slogans failed because only a couple of hundred workers followed the Party's call. The tragedies of 1 May and 1 August were also re-enacted in Czechoslovakia. The decline in the number of members in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is truly shattering. According to reports at the 6th World Congress the CP then had a membership of 150,000. At the 10th Plenum Piatnitski reported that this figure had declined to 81,432; i.e. that the membership decreased by almost half in the course of one year! Indeed, the situation is even worse; in reality the members in the party number no more than 30,000. If the parties are incapable of holding their membership, how much less can they influence the working-class as a whole.

The decline in *China* is catastrophic. The heavy defeat in 1927 practically had the effect of eliminating the party as an effective factor in the political life of the country. The extent of the recession became obvious in the current conflict over the Manchurian railway. The Communist Party, which dominated the situation during the revolutionary years of 1925 to 1927, is incapable of organizing any mass-resistance against the anti-Russian acts which the nationalist bourgeoisie, as an immediate instrument of imperialism, is carrying out. Surely it is not a very laudable testimony for a party which 2 years ago was still the acknowledged leader of 2.5 million organized workers and nearly 9 million organized peasants! The party and the red unions have lost their influence over the proletarian masses so completely that the Communist International is proposing that in future the communists should work illegally (underground) in the reformist unions that have been instituted after the defeat of the revolution by the bourgeois counter-revolutionary leadership. The whole class composition of the party has changed. Whilst in the summer of 1927 over 60% of the members were workers from the large industrial centres, the ratio is currently at most 5% (Tsiu

Chu-pao, *International Press Correspondence* No. 57, 2 July 1929). It is almost incredible. If, however, we take into consideration the source from which this information originates, we have to assume that the situation has been assessed rather too optimistically than that it represented an underestimation.

All other parties show the same picture, more or less. It is difficult to establish the actual position of the illegal parties. Here the situation must be still worse.

In contrast, the social-democratic parties registered a growing influence during the past years, i.e. just at a time when the reformist leaders act openly as agents of the bourgeoisie. How can that be explained? The failure to discover the reasons for this abnormal situation must either lead to a lack of faith in the Revolution or the desperate politics of a putchist sectarianism which means a departure from Marxism to Anarchism. The First International was dissolved because of the conflict between Marxism and Anarchism. We hear the echo of these conflicts in the Communist International today. The politics of the current leadership of the Communist International is an echo of Anarchism. It stands for the mistaken belief that the success of the Revolution does not depend on the will of the masses but on the determination of a small minority which is bound together by political backwardness and mechanical discipline. The regression of the Communist parties, of which some were leaders of the masses in their respective countries, to such putchist minorities is called 'bolshevization'.

Marxists cannot be representatives of the one or the other deviant type. On the one hand they can never lose faith in the Revolution, can never doubt that the masses will eventually follow the Communist Party, when the latter knows how to attract them; on the other hand they can never fall prey to despair and dream of a revolution without the support of the masses. It is the purest form of opportunism to speak of an 'offensive battle' if the masses, instead of following us, exhibit a tendency to distance themselves from us. Condemnation of this dangerous Don Quixotism is not in the least an indication of decline in revolutionary determination.

It does not mean that one 'resigns oneself to depression, pessimism, scepticism'. One cannot make an omelette without breaking an egg. 'Independent leadership' will not bring us closer to the revolution if the masses do not accept this leadership. The current policy leads to the creation of a pompous general staff without an army. It is high time for communists to realize that tough words do not suffice to unmask the reformists in front of the masses. We simply render ourselves ridiculous with the repeated assertion that the German Socia-Democratic Party leaders have lost all influence over the masses, when the latter join the social-democrats by the tens of thousands or vote for them by the millions. It is a precondition for an effective revolutionary leadership to have the courage to face the facts, not to look for plausible explanations, but to establish their causes.

As Marxists we believe that capitalist exploitation will force the proletariat to the revolutionary fight for socialism. The proletariat must follow the party which does not only defend its class interests in principle but also knows how to lead them step by step, first towards and then in the revolutionary struggle itself. Not agreeing with the theory of a 'third phase', the absurd claim of an 'inactive vacillating stabilization', a Marxist observes that the post-war crisis of capitalism is a 'normal' periodic depression. It is a constant decline. Capitalism in general is on a downward road. That does not exclude a zigzag, and up and down, within the overall process. Consequently, the exploitation of the working class must be greater in the present period. *Therefore the objective situation is favourable for the Communist International to extend its influence over the masses and to mobilize them for the revolutionary struggle which will liberate society from the chaos of capitalist decadence. If the influence of the communist parties decreases instead of increasing in such a situation, then we must realize that something is wrong in our approach to the masses. Else we might be suspected of doubting the infallibility of the Marxist principle of class struggle. If we do not acknowledge that the parties commit errors, then we have to bury our faith in the proletariat as the gravedigger of capitalism.* A Marxist would not be in doubt here, he would attempt to discover the shortcomings of the subjective factor. He puts the actions of the party, the competence of its leadership to

a merciless investigation. Such an investigation causes us today to pose the question about the leadership of the International. There are no objective reasons for the undeniable weakness of the communist parties. (It can only be denied by those who, at the moment when the movement overcomes the crisis, will be removed from position and power.) *The cause then is a deficient leadership. The current leadership of the Communist International is weak, incompetent and has no authority.*

One of the many things which differentiate the Communist International from the former International is its composition. Its leading section is a party which has led the proletariat through the first stages of the revolution; it is a party of the dictatorship of the proletariat which is presently in power; it is a party currently occupied with the task of establishing socialism. The other sections are still acting under pre-revolutionary conditions. Apparently the two wings—if one wishes to call them that—of the International, are unable to make use of a unified policy, unified tactics or organizational methods. However, due to the logic of facts, *the* party which carried through and accomplished the revolution from its beginnings dominates the International. Indeed, the Communist International was created by the Russian Revolution. The existence of a proletarian state was a tremendous impulse for organizing the revolutionary proletarian vanguard into a mighty international party. On the strength of this factor, the Russian Party not only played the dominant role in the International but practically monopolized its leadership. As long as the International was in its infancy, this was not detrimental, as long as the other sections were more or less immature, consisting of advanced, revolutionary, proletarian elements that strove towards communism but without a solid communist education or conviction. On the other hand, the leadership of the Russian Party was embodied in Lenin, who was international because of his character, experience and knowledge. Lenin and his closer associates lived abroad (in foreign countries) for years, they participated actively in the revolutionary proletarian movements in other countries, they were almost as familiar with the peculiar problems of other European countries as they were with the peculiarities of the Russian position. They were therefore

more international as Russian leaders.

Gradually the situation changed. After Lenin's death the Russian Party continued to rule the International rather by tradition and because of the fact that it was the only party in power than by its own merits. Other parties had developed since. Conditions arose which made for a widening of the basic structure of the international leadership. As in the case of Lenin and his collaborators in Russia, so the best products of the revolutionary proletarian movements in other countries gathered together under the banner of the Communist International. New leading forces arose from the revolutionary impetus which followed the war. In due course it became obvious that the revolutionary movement could not be free of its internal contradictions. The factors which initially gave such a mighty impulse to the crystallization of the revolutionary proletarian vanguard into an international party, began to hamper the further growth of the International. The authority of the Russian Party discouraged subconsciously, or even consciously, the free intellectual growth of other Parties which remained at the infancy phase. The situation worsened further with the removal of most of Lenin's associates with international knowledge and experience from the leadership of the Russian Party. Their removal was essentially caused by their incompetence in solving the post-revolutionary problems as ably as they had solved the pre-revolutionary ones. From the point of view of the Russian situation their removal was probably necessary and advantageous. But it had an unfavourable influence on the leadership of the International. The people who replaced the so-called old guard in the leadership of the Russian Party represented perhaps a change for the better in so far as the internal Russian problems were concerned. But as leaders of the International they were no improvement. They were not equipped for the task. Most of them lacked sufficient knowledge of the global situation and personal experience of the labour movement in other countries. Many of them were not the organizers of the Russian Revolution but its product. Nevertheless they inherited by default the leadership of the International, and under the given conditions they were bound to monopolize it. Their shortcomings for this second role were not only deter-

mined by the lack of appropriate equipment but also by the demands of their main role, namely, that of the leadership of the Russian Party. In the course of time the post-revolutionary tasks have become increasingly gigantic in Russia so that the depleted leadership of the Russian Party can spend very little time on the tasks of the International. Consequently the monopoly lost all its advantages. It did not result in devoting the best forces of the Russian Party to the leadership of the international movement. It was maintained mechanically as a tradition by the activities of a mighty bureaucratic apparatus. What the Russian Party really provided latterly for the leadership of the international movement were very low-ranking types among its members; those who could be of little value to its post-revolutionary tasks.

The Russian leaders could not completely ignore the inadequate and subnormal composition of the leadership of the International. Since the 14th Congress of the Russian Party in 1926 the need to strengthen the leadership of the International by recruiting non-Russian members to it has been mentioned frequently. But it has merely remained a desirability. In reality it has been the practice during the last two years to empty the International by indiscriminate expulsion of its best men from the international revolutionary proletarian movement who possess Marxist schooling, knowledge of the world situation and practical experience, necessary (attributes) in resolving the problems of leadership. The Russian monopoly has remained untouched, but the International has been robbed of its experienced, capable and representative leadership so indispensable in mobilizing the masses in the revolutionary struggle for which the objective conditions are growing to maturity daily. The development of the communist parties as well as that of the revolutionary leadership of the masses depends on resolving the matter of the international leadership. *The solution of this problem is the true internationalization of the leadership of the International.* It does not mean at all the removal of the Russian Party from its position of honour. *But this solution will never come from above.* Even with the best of intentions the Russian leaders are unable to solve the problem. They are hampered by the difficulties within their own party which often force them to use the International as a mere instru-

ment in their internal party struggles. The unavoidable difficulties which arise out of the post-revolutionary tasks hinder the free development of parties which are yet far from reaching these same tasks. The leadership of parties which has to carry out the pre-revolutionary tasks must not be impeded by such difficulties. *To this end the leadership of the International must rise above the Russian monopoly. Let us grant to the only Party which has already accomplished the Revolution the place of honour and due precedence. But the means to that end is the development of independent leading men in the different sections of the International. And as this is a necessary condition for the success of the Revolution, it is certain that the opposition of the official apparatus against this necessity will collapse.*

—16 September 1929

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Communism, status quo, and deceit

It is now a matter of experience that Communism in practice created a new *status quo*, under which the human individual has precious little freedom. Therefore, if freedom 'is the ideal of human life, we must look beyond communism. Revolution, that is, sub-version of the *status quo* and reorganization of society on the basis of more equitable and equalitarian relations, remains a necessity. But it must find a new way. The Marxist scheme of revolution postulates dictatorship, that is, abolition of liberty, as a Condition for success. Experience has exposed the danger inherent in the facile belief in the scheme; at the same time, experience has also proved that there are alternative ways of revolution. Professed Communists are actually travelling that way. But being still wedded to a false philosophy, which disparages humanism and denies freedom to the individual, they cannot harmonise their practice with their theory; the result is moral depravity; intellectual dishonesty and deceitfulness in political behaviour and international relations.

Recollections of M.N. Roy in Opposition (1929-31)

Sunder Kabadi

Sunder Kabadi was one of several recruits in Germany who were sent to India in 1930 to prepare for Roy's arrival. Kabadi worked in Bombay with other associates of Roy till Roy's arrest on July 21, 1931. His association with Roy was short, and he subsequently returned to England where he earned his living as a press correspondent.

I contacted Kabadi in 1978 and requested him to put down his recollections of Roy in 1929-31. What is included here is a slightly abridged version of the lengthy note which he wrote in London on August 31, 1978, and enclosed with his letter to me at Melbourne, Australia on October 14, 1978. SNR

I came to England for the first time on 8th of January 1929. About the same period Tayab Sheikh, one of my closest associates in the political field in Bombay, had arrived in Berlin. Tayab was a student. I was not. He had managed to obtain a scholarship from his Khoja community to study engineering in Germany. I had come to England to eke out my living more or less as a free-lance journalist. At the same time my objective was to organise the Indian student community on the lines of the Bombay Students' Brotherhood of which I was honorary secretary for several years with Dr Mukundrao Jayakar as its President..... I used to report to Tayab Sheikh the progress of my work amongst the Indian students.... Tayab was an earnest nationalist with a deep conviction that India must get rid of alien rule and young Indians must be in the forefront of the struggle against British Raj.

Early in December of 1929 Tayab wrote to me from Berlin inviting me to spend Christmas with him and to advise Indian students in that country to form a student organisation. Despite my limited financial resources I went to Berlin. Needless to say that not only Tayab recuperated my drained wealth but made me most comfortable. His landlady, a motherly type of soul, permitted us to share a big room without extra charge.

Just after breakfast the next morning, Tayab had a visitor. He was a tall erect gentleman with dark hair and spoke English without a trace of an Indian accent. I was introduced to Richard, a national of Mexico, doing research on Indian students in the light of the nationalist movement, of which he had heard so much. He posed that he had just dropped in on the spur of the moment, he was passing by and felt like calling on Tayab for a chat. Tayab too showed surprise at the arrival of his unexpected visitor but he welcomed him to give him an opportunity to introduce to him 'My dear Comrade Sunder' ... After the formalities of introduction we sat down for a political dialogue. Tayab brought Richard up to date about my background. I was told the Mexican visitor was a much-travelled man who had come to Berlin after completing his tour of the Soviet Union. I was fascinated to know what was happening in the Workers' Fatherland...

Time came for me to return to London. By now Richard had convinced me that I should take my share in the struggle for Indian freedom by returning there. At a hearty send-off party in Tayab's apartment, I realised that Mr. Richard from Mexico was in fact Manabendra Nath Roy...

By Easter of 1930 I was back in Berlin once again staying with my faithful Tayab Sheikh. The process of my political education, along with that of Brijesh Singh and Tayab Sheikh began to take shape and we pledged to go back home to work in the nationalist movement. Richard also was firmly of the opinion that he too should be back in India...

By now we were most urgently looking around for a passport to meet the requirements of M.N. Roy. The trio, Tayab, myself and Brijesh scrutinised passports of many Indians in an

innocent manner but with an eye to finding out which one of them could be passed off as M.N. Roy's passport. Our efforts were rewarded. A friend of Brijesh, an United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) Government scholar, had come to Berlin to spend his Easter holidays. Everything in his document met our requirements except the height of the passport-holder. He was 5 ft one inch. We hustled this young scholar at the railway station and managed to pinch the passport just when he was boarding the London-bound train. Within 24 hours Richard, alias Roy, became Bannerji from United Provinces, with a super-imposed photograph of Roy ready to travel to India as an England-returned Indian student, with the height of the passport-holder shown as 5 ft. 11 in. instead of 5 ft. 1 in.

A plan was now laid for the return of the three musketeers, Kabadi, Sheikh and Brijesh, one by one. By now the Bombay police had received a complete dossier from London about my activities in London and Berlin. I travelled by an Italian ship as a deck passenger, my passage having been paid by Brijesh Singh. As soon as I landed in Bombay the British sergeant on duty impounded my passport. The next month Tayab came back, followed by Brijesh a month later. My activities in London and Berlin proved good credentials for me to get a foothold in Bombay's Labour Movement... It enabled me to establish my first contact with the Trade Union leaders, like Kandhalkar, GKU President, Mapankar, Tawde, Majid and a host of other fellow workers. Their approach to me was cautious. They had followed the advice of Moscow-oriented Labour leaders, including Dange, Joglekar and Nimbkar. The prolonged Lal Bavta Union strike had ruined them, they were bankrupt, most of them had pawned their personal chattels, and they did not want to do anything with the Communist Party of India and its leaders.

Kandhalkar and Co. accepted my credentials, namely, that I was a nationalist who was interested in the Congress Movement and I wanted the trade union movement to be identified with the National struggle for freedom. My assurance to them was in keeping with the general understanding that we, Roy, myself, Tayab and Brijesh, had reached in Berlin.

I also visited Congress House in Girgaum, Bombay where I was most welcome by S.K. Patil, Umashankar Dixit and my bosom friend Yusuf Meherally. They agreed that I should work in Parel closely with the Girni Kamgar Union officials who had suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of the Bombay Millowners' Association. As part of the Congress agitation I was to be in charge of the labour branch of the Congress Movement, though not officially identified with the Congress. This was necessary as the Congress was declared an illegal organisation. I could therefore operate, at least for some months, without being accused of conducting illegal activity. In due course Tayab arrived in Bombay. He was impatient and went into action immediately. He kept in touch with the B.B.C.I. railway workers and was accepted as their spokesman by railway workers. Soon we had the company of Brijesh, who, after a few days' stay in Bombay, went to his home in Kalakankar.

By now M.N. Roy had assumed a new identity; he did not send us any communication signed as Richard or Roy. All his communications were signed by him as Mahmood, his new avatar. Mahmood arrived in Bombay on a date and place arranged with us in advance. He did not travel by ship but made his journey overland via Persian Gulf. By sheer accident when he arrived at Ajmer railway station Tayab Sheikh, who was returning from Union work, caught his sight. They behaved as utter strangers chatting as fellow passengers over a cup of tea and dispersed. In Bombay Tayab, as well as I was being trailed by police informants from morning till late in the night. At Grant Road station Tayab took a taxi and straight came to me just to say with a glee in his eyes; "Sunder, Baba is here. As arranged he will wait for you outside Cowasji Jehangir Hall at 7 in the evening. He knows where you will take him for his stay."

Mahmood had travelled light and when we met at the front door of Cowasji Jehangir Hall we went to Church Gate station by a hackney carriage. Our destination was Juhu where the Theosophical Society had established a colony, on co-operative basis. I had arranged a small unoccupied flat for Mahmood who had now assumed the role of a non-political animal. He was suppos-

edly a new recruit of British Civil Service who had to report to New Delhi for his first assignment. I had told Mr. Mavji Govindji, who was the Society's Secretary, that Mahmood as a Civil Servant did not want to get mixed up with Indian politics and would shortly leave for New Delhi. A Theosophist family, neighbours of Mahmood, very gladly arranged to provide meals to 'such a quiet well-mannered brother who has come from England'. Without drawing anyone's attention Tayab and myself had already installed in the flat a Gestetner machine and stationery. While Tayab and myself were going round with other friends who had joined our small group, Mahmood busied himself producing manifestoes for the consumption of the masses. He would also go round the town and watch public meetings organised by us and by the Communist Party of India in the Parel area. Although he could not understand a word of what was spoken he was able to size up from the crowd's reactions what was happening at these workers' gatherings. In the meantime Brijesh had seen Jawaharlal Nehru who had met Roy in Moscow a few years ago. Nehru sent word that he should go to Allahabad.

Of course, it was a game of hide and seek. By now our group had about twelve members and all of us were being watched. Reading the various manifestoes produced under the signature of myself or Tayab convinced the leaders of the Communist Party of India that Roy must be in India and he was responsible for the various manifestoes. Our activities were gaining support not only of the workers but of the officials of the Congress Party. The Communists accused the police of harbouring Roy, an agent of British Imperialism. Roy went to Allahabad, stayed with Brijesh, met Jawaharlal and even accompanied him to political meetings. For these appearances Mahmood had a new garb. Long Khaddar trousers and kurtas—a pucca Congressman! Thus, at first hand, by going round with Jawaharlal to public meetings he was able to assess the staggering popularity of Nehru with the Indian masses. It helped him to realise that when he was in Moscow in charge of Indian affairs he was being fed with exaggerated reports of the importance of the Communist Party and its potential for organising a mass workers' revolution.

On the basis of exaggerated reports supplied to him in Moscow financial aid was reaching Indian Communists.

In his Khaddar clad attire Roy visited every provincial city except Calcutta, the base of his operation as a revolutionary before fleeing the country. He was no longer a tenant at Juhu where Mr. Mavji Govindji had learnt with delight that Mr. Mahmood had finally got his I.C.S. assignment. He was constantly on the move, mostly between Bombay and Allahabad; he never stayed in one place for more than a week. These clandestine activities culminated in his being present at the Karachi Congress of 1931 presided over by Sardar Patel. Myself and Tayab went to Karachi by boat which also carried many Congress delegates.

According to our prearranged plan Roy literally tumbled over me in a tea shop in the Congress Mandap. Pretending to be an utter stranger, he profusely apologised to me and insisted that I should have tea with him. He then asked me to take a message to Jawaharlal to say that 'Bannerjee' has arrived. I visited the place where Jawaharlal was in conclave with other leaders. A volunteer duly took a message to him. Jawaharlal knew the purpose of my mission, and came out and directed me to ask 'Bannerjee' to go to a particular hut where he had arranged for his stay. My 'shadow' was a genial chap who never took much notice of what was being done by me under his very nose. He felt there was nothing unusual for people to gather and meet one another over and over again. So it was not difficult for me to meet 'Bannerjee' and guide him to what hut he should occupy. The same night Jawaharlal visited 'Bannerjee' and gave him a draft of a Charter of Fundamental Rights. Quite a number of meetings took place between 'Bannerjee' and Jawaharlal and the former eventually agreed to the final draft of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, he told us: "Poor Jawaharlal, I am sure the Sardar has watered down the whole document". Jawaharlal asked Roy if he would like to meet Gandhiji. Roy preferred not to, since Gandhiji was a man of truth and therefore he would, if asked by the police, admit that he had met Roy. So no meeting was arranged for Roy to meet Gandhiji...

The Congress delegates had started dispersing. Tayab went to Ajmere, Roy vanished to Kalakankar. Our small group, by now known as Roy group, knew how to shield Roy and he, as a revolutionary, played the role of an innocent congressman. The trouble that the police experienced in those days was that they had no authentic picture of Roy to establish his identity. At Roy's suggestion I went to Meerut to see Dange and other accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. I had known Dange, Nimbkar and Joglekar personally in my earlier days. It was quite an interesting experience for me. My chats with them mostly individually confirmed the reports that I had in Bombay that the prosecutor had succeeded in creating a split in their ranks. Each one, including Ben Bradley and Lester Hutchinson (both of whom I met for the first time), expressed divergent views and there was no more a united front by the defenders in the Meerut Conspiracy Case against their prosecutors. Dange was gratified to greet me as I had unknowingly rendered him service when I was honorary secretary of the Bombay Students' Brotherhood. In those days all his foreign communications, especially those of Roy's, used to come, addressed to me, with a sealed cover inside for Dange. Once a week he used to come for a chat over Irani's cup of tea and khara biscuits and collect his mail from his faithful Sunder. I adopted the same method after returning from Berlin. I had a few faithful theosophist friends and I used to pick up my post from Roy from these good loyal friends who knew I was a political animal. They never questioned me why they received letters meant for me. Occasionally Roy deliberately used to send letters to me or Tayab which were of no consequence. These letters were duly opened, their contents read by the Crawford Market C.I.D. officers, then sealed and delivered to us.

Following the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact Congress became legalised and in Bombay Harindra Chattopadhyaya, who was the last nominated 'dictator' of the illegal Bombay Congress Committee, was released. Our small group hailed his release by having a supper in a Grant Road restaurant. That was our unfortunate undoing in letting the cat out of the bag. Until then the members of the Bombay Communist Party believed Roy was in India but they had no direct proof or evidence. The day

after our supper Harin met his sister Suhasini Nambiar and told her that he had met Roy the previous night in our company at a dinner. Now the police learnt that Roy was definitely in India.

In the meantime Sardar Patel had arrived in Bombay to stay at Ramchandra Mansions. As Roy was keen to meet him I went to the Sardar and asked him if he would find time to meet my friend Mahmood. He readily agreed. He received Mahmood and the two conferred for at least fortyfive minutes. Afterwards Roy told us that there was no half-way house for the Sardar. He was a man of great determination.

On the day Roy was arrested Sardar Patel was in Bombay. I met him at a meeting. He took me aside and gently whispered in my ears in Gujrati: "Your friend Mahmood, I see from the front page in the 'Evening News', is Roy. When I met him I knew he was Roy and not Mahmood. I tested him by speaking at first in Hindi and Urdu. He could not say a word of these languages. It was good of you not to have divulged his identity to me. He is a fine man and he will serve our nation well". Of course, I felt embarrassed at having cheated the Sardar but he patted me for doing the right thing. My father was most amazed when he saw Roy's picture in the paper. Our flat in Gowalia Tank Road was frequented by Roy to meet friends by special appointments. In between the visitors my father used to have religious discourses with him. Roy always agreed with my father in his assertion that Almighty God protects us and there is life after death. My sisters had found him to be a most charming and amicable person and were sad when they learnt that he was to stand trial as a leading figure in the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Man is essentially a rational being. His basic urge is not to believe, but to question, to know.

The Roy Group in Bombay 1930-31

V.B. Karnik

In the brief but hectic seven months between his arrival in Karachi on December 11, 1930 via Istanbul and Bagdad, and his arrest in Bombay on July 21, 1931, Roy organised a group of young radicals even while the police were hot on his heels. His chief lieutenant during this period was Tayab Ali Sheikh, an unorthodox and energetic Muslim whom he had already converted to Marxism in Berlin, and who subsequently wrote Roy's first expository biography, 'M.N. Roy—The Man Who Looked Ahead', and published it under the penname A.K. Hindi (Allahabad, The Modern Publishing House, 1938).

V.B. Karnik, author of 'M.N. Roy: A Political Biography', Bombay, 1978, and several books on the Indian trade union movement, became a member of the Roy Group shortly after Roy's arrival in December. He was Managing Editor of the 'Independent India' weekly from the publication of its first issue on April 4, 1937. He was also the first General Secretary of the Radical Democratic Party and the Indian Federation of Labour, both founded by M.N. Roy. The article included here originally appeared in 'The Radical Humanist', September 1973.

Besides Sheikh, Kabadi, Brijesh and Karnik, the Roy group in this early period included Maniben Kara, A.N. Shetty, Dr. M.R. Shetty, Charles Mascarenhas, Dr. C.Y. Chitnis, Dr. Anadi Bhaduri and others. In July 1931 the Roy group successfully dislodged the official communist leadership from the control of the All India Trade Union Congress. Sheikh was elected one of the secretaries of the AITUC. According to the report of the Director of Intelligence Bureau, "working from behind the scenes he (Roy) succeeded in circulating an amazing amount of literature, including his new organ 'The Masses'...Having secured a

substantial footing in Bombay, Roy turned his attention elsewhere and the month of March saw him touring the United Provinces prior to proceeding to Karachi to attend, at Jawaharlal Nehru's invitation, the annual session of the Indian National Congress. It is of no small importance that the 'Declaration of Fundamental Rights' of which the Karachi Congress approved at Nehru's instance is in some respect the minimum programme which Roy had advocated in Bombay a few weeks previously. His efforts in the United Provinces were attended with a considerable measure of success.... he was behind the Central Peasants' League...His conviction removed from the political arena a dangerous enemy of Capitalism, landlordism and imperialism..." (Horace Williamson, **'India and Communism'**, Calcutta 1976; pp. 159-163. Williamson was Director, Intelligence Bureau, Government of India from 1931 to 1936. **'India and Communism'** was originally issued in 1933 as a compilation for use by government officers; an enlarged and updated edition was brought out in 1935 covering the period 1928-34. The book was reprinted with an introduction and notes in 1976 by Editions Indian, Calcutta). SNR

The Roy Group was born in Bombay in the first or second week of 1931, a few days after the return to India of Com. Roy after an exile of over 16 years. My first meeting with Roy took place in the last week of December 1930, a couple of days after he reached Bombay. He had to come to India in an illegal manner as the police wanted him for his part in the Kanpur and Meerut Communist Conspiracy cases. There was a warrant of arrest standing against him and the police had been on the look-out for him in a number of countries of Europe and Asia. Roy knew that he was walking into a trap when he entered India. He was, however, determined to take his part in the revolutionary national movement that was developing then. He returned to the country knowing full well the dangers that he had to face. At a much later stage, we came to know how he landed at Karachi and escaped police attention by getting mixed in the retinue of a high military officer who travelled on the same steamer. From Karachi Roy travelled to Bombay by train on the then B.B. & C.I. Railway. Tayab Sheikh met him at an intermediate junction and accompanied him to Bombay.

Tayab Shiekh and Sunder Kabadi were the two earliest associates of Roy in this later period of his life in India. Tayab Sheikh, a young Bohra student, was studying electrical engineering in Germany when he came in contact with Roy. Sheikh belonged to the small reformist wing of the Bohra community. A zeal for reform and liberation was ingrained in him from his childhood. He met Roy in the second year of his stay in Germany. Roy's political programme, his intellectual eminence and his concern for the people attracted Sheikh and he became his devoted disciple. Sheikh knew Sunder Kabadi before he left India. Sunder was at that time in U.K. undergoing some training. Sunder was one of the leaders of the student movement in Bombay and was at that time the Secretary of the Students' Brotherhood, a premier non-political organisation of students. He and his family were theosophists. He had plenty of contacts among well-placed theosophist families. Sheikh got Sunder interested in Roy and his programme and arranged for his visit to Germany to meet Roy. Brajesh Singh of Lucknow, who also was then in Berlin as a student, fell under Roy's influence. Brajesh was the junior Rajah of Kalakankar.¹ Later, he joined the Communist party, and still later was married to Stalin's daughter. The three had several meetings and discussions with Roy about the problems of revolution in India. The Open Letter to the Lahore Congress written by Roy but published under the signatures of the three youngmen was one of the products of those discussions. They approved Roy's idea of returning to India for active participation in the revolutionary movement and promised to make all arrangements for his stay in the country.

Sunder returned to Bombay some time in June 1930. Tayab Sheikh and Brajesh Singh returned to Bombay and Lucknow respectively a few weeks later. They were in touch with each other and were busy making political and other preparations for Roy's visit. We, who joined Roy later, did not at that time know anything about them.

Sunder arranged for Roy's stay in a theosophist family in Juhu. Later Roy had to change his residence very often and Sunder Kabadi, Tayab Sheikh and other friends in Bombay made the necessary arrangements. We met Roy for the first time at

Sunder Kabadi's place near Gowalia Tank in Central Bombay. We were about ten of us that evening and later all of us became members of the Roy Group, though not everybody continued in the Group for long. Roy was introduced to us as Dr. Mahmood from U.P. He did not speak much at that first meeting and one of us, Dr. G.Y. Chitnis, later said in a satirical tone "what a man! such a big body, but never uttered a single word, except yes or no throughout the evening". Dr. Chitnis later became a close friend and associate of Roy and was for some years a prominent member of the Roy Group.

Some of us had heard about M.N. Roy and read a few of his books and articles in newspapers. His books were not readily available as they were in the category of proscribed literature and not allowed entry into the country. However, some copies always reached in a surreptitious manner and became available to those who were keen to get them. We knew Roy as a communist leader who had later developed some differences with the Communist International. Some of us had become acquainted with the latest manifesto of Roy on the contemporary Indian political situation. The manifesto was introduced to us by Tayab Sheikh at the meetings of the Bombay Youth League. Sheikh wanted the League to adopt the manifesto and develop political activities on the lines indicated in it. The manifesto was adopted after some discussion which took some time, which Sheikh did not particularly like. He was always impatient for action. We were later told that the manifesto had been drafted by Roy. We did not, however, know that Dr. Mahmood, who was introduced to us at Sunder Kabadi's residence, was Roy. We came to know this some weeks later. We were impressed by the personality of Dr. Mahmood and by the knowledge he possessed of the Indian political scene and of the persons connected with it. That made a couple of us wonder how we had never heard of Dr. Mahmood who was so well acquainted with all aspects of the social and political movement and knew so much about its leaders.

Those were the days of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Some of us were participating in it as ordinary rank and file workers. We were all carried away by the enthusiasm that was generated by the Movement. Some of us had, however, begun to

develop doubts about the effectiveness of the programme that Mahatma Gandhi had placed before the Congress. The line of action suggested by Roy in the manifesto appealed to us and we wanted to turn the Movement in that direction. We did not, however, know how to do it concretely. We had contented ourselves with only some agitation and propaganda in favour of that line during meetings and discussions held on a large scale during those days.

When Roy returned to India and we formed the Roy Group the Civil Disobedience Movement was already on the decline. It had lost its initial force and popularity. People had become tired of the perpetual talk about Charkha and Khadi. We felt that it was ineffective and could not bring us independence. Many had suggested to Gandhiji to devise some more effective programme. Roy had suggested in his manifesto, mentioned earlier, the linking of the struggles of the people for their minimum economic needs with the national struggle. Gandhiji was not prepared to accept that suggestion. The Civil Disobedience Movement was thus moving towards collapse or compromise with the British Government. The compromise came soon in the form of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The Pact disappointed and distressed large numbers of young men and women who had joined the movement with great expectations. They were, however, unorganised and could exercise no influence over the policies of the Congress...

In the first two months of his stay in Bombay, Roy was able to move about more or less freely. The police did not begin a hot search for him till about the middle of January. It was about that time that they received intimation of his disappearance from Europe and his entry into India. Then they began looking out for him all over the country, and more particularly in Bombay. The activities of Sheikh and Sunder had already aroused their suspicion. They suspected a foreign hand behind them. They had gathered some information about their contacts with Roy when they were in Europe. The police search was handicapped by the lack of a recent photograph of Roy. The only one they had was about 25 years old and on the basis of that photograph it was difficult for them to locate their prey. The police had seen one

Dr. Mahmood moving about with some of the Royists but they were not sure that he was the Roy they were looking for.

Roy utilised this comparative freedom to meet a number of prominent people connected with the political and the trade union movement. Tayab Sheikh and Sunder Kadi arranged for his meetings with prominent Congress leaders. They included, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Bhulabhai Desai and many others. I arranged his meetings with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, N.M. Joshi and a few others. I had to arrange my meetings with Roy at Railway stations or similar public places. He would be at the appointed place exactly on time and from there I used to take him to the office or the residence of the person he was to meet. These meetings helped Roy to get a more intimate feel of the current political scene...

Roy was a regular visitor to Hanuman Terrace, a tall building on the Lamington Road where I was staying. He would go there every evening to meet our group of friends and answer their questions. Every day for about a couple of hours or so we used to have a masterly exposition of the various problems of the national movement and of the way in which they could be solved. Many of those who attended those discussions later became Royists. Sometime a communist acquaintance or two would also drop in and join the discussions. Being Communists, they had been taught that Roy was a renegade, a reactionary and a counter-revolutionary. They would pour out all they had learnt in the course of the discussion. Roy used to listen to them quietly, suggesting all the while to leave personalities alone and discuss the principles involved in a particular line of action. It must have required an exercise of great self-control on his part to listen without getting angry, to all those abuses directed against him by those new converts to Communism. They did not, however, know that they were addressing those abuses to Roy himself and Roy never gave them an opportunity to suspect that he was the person that they were abusing. He was patience incarnate and never paid any attention to the personal attack directed against him.

Our Hanuman Terrace was in those days a centre of nation-

alist activity. We used to hold meetings very often in the passage between my flat and the opposite flat. On the same floor lived two ardent young men, Umanath Puthli and Anant Shetty, who were closely associated with Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay and her husband Harindranath Chattopadhyay. Harin Chattopadhyay was then very popular in Bombay and also in our building which he used to visit often. He used to compose and sing in those days inspiring songs about the national struggle and the national flag and other patriotic themes. One evening in February there was meeting at the usual place in our building. Roy had come to my place and was talking with several friends about various things. He did not go out of my flat to attend the meeting. That day Harin Chattopadhyay came to the meeting. After the meeting was over, he walked into my flat along with a couple of others. Roy was already seated there and a meeting between the two could not be avoided. Harin met Roy like a long lost brother. They had met each other in Germany and were very well acquainted. That day discussion at my place went on until about midnight...

It did not take us long to learn from various sources that Harin Chattopadhyay had in the course of the next day or so gone to his sister Suhasini Nambiar and given her the information that Roy was in Bombay and that Dr. Mahmood was Roy. The news spread like wild fire in communist circles. Harin met me on the third day to tell me that Dr. Mahmood was Roy and that I should not associate with a dangerous person of that type. The news soon travelled to the police and it became much easier for them to track down the man whom they had tried to catch for years. From that day it became impossible for Roy to move about in Bombay except after dark and in various disguises. He left Bombay in a few days and went to U.P., where Brajesh Singh gave him shelter and arranged for his meetings with leaders of the Congress and other organisations.

In U.P. Roy moved about for two months as Banerjee. He visited some cities as well as many rural areas and became acquainted with the situation in that particular part of the country. It was from there that he went to Karachi to attend the Karachi session of the Congress.

Roy returned to Bombay in the month of April. By then the police had become much more vigilant and strict precautions had to be taken to ensure Roy's safety. A new place had to be found for his stay every few days. It was not difficult to find such places in those days as the patriotic fervour had caught the general public and there were many persons prepared to render such service to political fighters and sufferers. The burden of finding places for Roy was mainly shouldered by Tayab Sheikh. Maniben Kara and Sunder Kabadi were also of help...

Some time in May Louise Geissler arrived in Bombay. She was a close friend of Roy and was his Secretary when he was in China as a representative of the Communist International. She came to India to meet Roy. The police came to know about her departure from Europe and were eagerly looking forward to her arrival in Bombay, as they thought that by keeping an eye on her they would be able to spot Roy. Loo was very keen on meeting Roy and some way had to be found to arrange the meeting. Maniben accomplished the task in a very clever way. She had then a small Baby Austin car. Putting Loo beside her in the car, she drove to the residence of Mr. Bhulabhai Desai. A police car followed her but it had to wait outside the residence of Mr. Desai. Maniben went into the compound and went out by the back entrance. She then took Loo to the place where Roy was staying and the two were able to meet. The police car waited at the front entrance of Mr. Desai's residence for hours together expecting Maniben to come out. Many such tricks had to be adopted from time to time in order to arrange for the meetings as well as for getting things done.

As soon as the Group was formed it became active in the political field. There was a good deal of discontent in the ranks of Congress workers as a result of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The discontent was heightened by the cruel execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades which was carried out on the eve of the Karachi session of the Congress. We tried to give some organisational shape to this discontent. We formed the Independent India League and secured the support of a number of prominent Congress workers in the city of Bombay. We were not, however, able to make much

headway in influencing the policies of the BPCC. We also formed another organisation called the Navjivan Bharat Sabha. We were equally active in the Youth League.

We published during the period a number of leaflets, pamphlets and manifestoes. They were in English as well in Marathi, Gujarati and Hindi. Some of them were written by Roy. He also wrote during the period a large number of articles for publication in daily and weekly papers. Except when he was engaged in discussions, Roy was always at the typewriter, typing away letters, resolutions, articles and manifestoes. Many of his articles were published in newspapers. It is difficult to say what effect they had on the public mind. The course of events, however, compels one to say that they had little effect. But, undeterred, we continued our agitation and propaganda.

The trade union movement was in bad shape in 1930. The Communists had split the All India Trade Union Congress, the central organisation of the movement, in December 1929. Thereafter, they had vigorously followed their tactics of rule or ruin and destroyed a number of trade unions. In Bombay the mighty Girni Kamgar Union of 1928 was just a paper organisation. In 1930 and 1931, there was a running fight between the Communists and others over the possession of what remained of the Union. Railwaymen' unions and other unions were also in a state of disorganisation. The leadership of the Communist Party was then in the hands of two extremists, S.V. Deshpande and B.T. Ranadive. They had taken the place of older leaders who were more experienced, owing to their arrest in March 1929 in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy case. The new leaders were ardent followers of Moscow intent upon doing everything to implement the instructions that they received from time to time from that centre of world revolution. It was in these circumstances that the Roy Group began its activity in the trade union field in Bombay.

Our work in the trade union movement began soon after the formation of the Group. For sometime in the beginning we worked in the name of the Labour Sub-committee of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. In a short while, however, we

were able to establish direct contacts with a number of unions including the Girni Kamgar Union.

The Girni Kamgar Union was, as already stated, divided into two factions. One owed allegiance to the communist group and the other was non-communist. The non-communist faction headed by Kandhalkar, Mapankar and others was happy to welcome us. We began our work with it and in course of time became closely associated with the G.K. Union, and a few other unions. The Communists opposed our entry into the trade union field. They knew that, once the unions received our support, it would not be easy to rule or ruin them. They were already opposed to us as we were the followers of "renegade Roy". They became more opposed to us as we developed our work in the trade union field. It was common in those days to use strong arm methods against one's opponents. The communists used them freely and frequently against us.

In course of time we became pretty strong in the trade union movement with our close working with rank and file workers who were tired of communist leadership with its constant call for strikes and struggles. Our work developed in the textile union as well as in railway unions. In course of time we became a dominant factor in the trade union movement of the country.

In May 1931, we became involved in a strike in the Khatau textile mill at Byculla. The strike was over the wage rates of weavers. As weavers struck work, spinners had also to stop work and the mill closed down. The strikers approached the Girni Kamgar Union for help and guidance. The G.K. Union had to provide the leadership which it could do with our assistance. Meetings of strikers were held every morning and evening and some of us addressed them from day to day. Roy had at that time returned to Bombay. He gave us instructions from day to day about how to conduct the strike, how to publicise the demands of workers and how to secure for them the support of other textile workers as well as of workers in general. A couple of handbills that were published were actually drafted by him. We thus received in the first strike that we conducted concrete lessons from him about the strategy and tactics that were to be adopted in

fighting a strike. The strike ended successfully after about a week. The success of the strike strengthened our position in the union and the movement...

We were able to score our first success in the trade union movement a few weeks before Roy's arrest. It was at the Calcutta session of the All India Trade Union Congress, which was held in June 1931. The session is notable because it rescued the AITUC from the hands of the Communists. They had captured it over a year and a half back at the Nagpur session by forcing a split. They had at that time received full co-operation from the nationalists in the movement. After capturing the organisation, however, they were not able to run it in a proper manner. The office ceased to function and many of the unions also became paper organisations. The nationalists became disillusioned with the Communists and were anxious to rescue the organisation out of their hands. That was also our objective. We worked together, therefore, at the Calcutta session, out-voted the Communists and snatched the TUC out of their hands. When the Communists found that they were outvoted, they left the organisation. They formed thereafter a new central organisation of their own, the Red Trade Union Congress. It did not prosper and after a couple of years the Communists had to liquidate it and return to the AITUC.

This was the first appearance of the Roy Group on an all-India level. It was impressive as well as successful. The group was represented at the session by Tayab Sheikh. It had the backing of the Bombay Girmi Kamgar Union and a few other unions. It had also the backing of the nationalists in the organisation. The Group later developed the AITUC as a powerful central organisation of trade union movement.

Roy was arrested on July 21, 1931. For some days, we suspected that one of us might have turned traitor and given the police information about Roy's whereabouts. Tayab Sheikh was particularly very suspicious. But we learnt later that the suspicion was absolutely unfounded. Roy was arrested because of negligence and lack of foresight on our part. On the 20th night we had a Group meeting at the place of Dr. M.R. Shetty, at Adam

Willie Road, Byculla. The meeting began at about 8.00 p.m. and went on till about midnight. After the meeting, Roy went to a nearby building where arrangement for his stay had been made. He was arrested at that place early in the morning by the Deputy Commissioner of Police. We had no idea that a couple of persons loitering in the open space, opposite Dr. Shetty's place, were policemen in mufti. They found all members of the Roy Group entering Dr. Shetty's place one after the other. This roused their suspicion and they became more vigilant. At about midnight, they found all of us coming out of the building and going back to our respective places. A little later they found a well-built person coming out of Dr. Shetty's place and Dr. Shetty escorting him to a building a few feet away. They found the light in one of the rooms in that building burning for quite some time. On the basis of this they drew their own inference and decided to take a chance by raiding the flat on the third floor in the building early in the morning. Their calculations proved right, and they were able to get the man they had wanted for several years. At about 5.00 a.m., Roy was awakened from sleep, told that he was Mr. Roy, and arrested by the Dy. Commissioner of Police. Roy did not offer any resistance. He knew he was going to be arrested one day or the other. That day evening papers screamed that the great communist revolutionary M.N. Roy had been arrested by the police.

Having caught the big fish, the police were not really bothered about us, the small ones. For some reason, however, they arrested all of us for the offence of sheltering a proclaimed offender. By the evening we found all of us gathered together at the headquarters of the CID. But we were not detained too long. We were released before the night fell on our personal bonds. Later the cases against us were not proceeded with.

The arrest of Roy was a blow to us. We were not prepared for it as we had done our best to avoid it. On the day of his arrest Roy was to leave for Poona. Friends in Poona had arranged a safe place for his stay. They were anxious to meet him in person and learn from him. It was fixed that he would stay there for about a week and then proceed further south to meet political and trade union workers. The plan fell through as he was arrested.

Roy was not, however, shaken by the arrest. It seems he was prepared for it from the day of his return to the country. He knew that one day or the other the police would catch up with him. In the course of the six months that he was able to avoid arrest, a number of prominent figures in the political field had offered him safe places to stay where, they thought, the police would never be able to catch him. He refused all those offers with profuse thanks telling them that he did not return to India to stay in a glass house. He wanted to be active in the field and that would not be possible if he stayed far away in a safe place. He was prepared to take the risk of arrest in order to be in close touch with the movement and play his part in it. That was why he viewed his arrest with equanimity and was ready with his plans for continuing his work from the jail.

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Materialist philosophy and human freedom

Materialism is not satisfied with contemplating what exists. It investigates the existing with the object of finding in it the cause of its destruction and the germs of a future, higher state of existence...By destroying the doctrine of eternal ignorance, and proving that there is nothing beyond the reach of human mind, that supra-sensual categories are pure myths invented to fortify the privileged position of the ruling classes, materialism sets human spirit free. The freedom from the metaphysical conception of the absolute, immutable, categorical, liberates man from the fetters of the traditional, of the respect and awe for the established order of the world. There is nothing sacrosanct, nothing permanent, nothing eternal... Materialist philosophy inspires man to change the world and himself in the process.

"I Accuse" (1931)

M.N. Roy

After his arrest in Bombay Roy was secretly removed to Kanpur charged under Section 121A IPC ("conspiring to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty in India") on a warrant issued in 1924 in connection with the Cawnpore (Kanpur) Conspiracy Case. The committal proceedings opened before a magistrate on August 7, 1931, who committed him to the Sessions Court on October 15. The trial took place not in an open court, but inside the jail where he had been locked up. When Roy refused to be tried surreptitiously in this manner he was brought to the court manacled and by force. He tried to conduct his own defence but was not allowed to make his defence statement. The trial at the Sessions Court lasted from November 3, 1931 to January 7, 1932. On January 9 he was given the savage sentence of twelve years' transportation.

There were strong protests in India and abroad against the manner of Roy's trial and the extraordinary harshness of the sentence. According to the German Marxist historian Edward Fuchs, "the arrest of Roy and the campaign for his unconditional release brought the Indian question more prominently and clearly before the entire world than ever before". Only the partyline communists were jubilant, but protests were made by the Indian Trade Union Congress and various public leaders and organisations. At Hamburg twenty thousand workers addressed an open signed letter to the British Consul demanding Roy's release. A Roy Defence Committee was set up. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote with anguish about the way the life of "one of the bravest and ablest of India's sons" was "sliding downhill to the brink". On September 17, 1934 Albert Einstein wrote to the British Ambassador in Washington that a scholar of M.N. Roy's standing should at least be given all facilities to pursue his studies and researches, even inside prison.

On May 2, 1933 Mr. Justice Thom of Allahabad High Court reduced Roy's sentence to six years' rigorous imprisonment. He was not released till November 20, 1936. His iron constitution was severely and irreparably damaged during his years of confinement at Kanpur, Bareilly, Almora and Dehradun. But his spirit was as unbeaten as ever. From jail he managed to send out clandestinely letters, instructions, articles and pamphlets to his outside contacts. He also studied and wrote extensively on philosophical and historical problems, and when he came out of jail he brought with him nine large manuscript volumes of his prison writings which are now preserved in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

The defence statement which Roy was not allowed to make at the Sessions Court was smuggled out and published simultaneously from Pondicherry and New York in 1932. In the Pondicherry version it is titled "My Defence". The New York version which was an abridgment of the full text and which is reproduced here was published under the title "I Accuse" "From the Suppressed Statement of Manabendra Nath Roy on Trial for Treason Before Sessions Court, Cawnpore, India". It was published by Roy Defence Committee of India, New York Office, 228 Second Avenue, and carried a ten-page introduction (not reproduced here) by Aswani Kumar Sharma, dated January 1932. American spellings are retained. The full text of My Defence is given in *Selected Works* vol. III. pp. 585-645 SNR.

As I have been able to gather, the sum and substance of the evidence against me is: 1. That I have advocated the right of the Indian people to be free of the present foreign domination; 2. that I have tried to organize a political party with the object of asserting this right; 3. that I have held that India cannot be really free unless separated from the British Empire; 4. That I have advocated the application of force as the means of attaining the goal of national freedom; and, 5. that in all this I have acted as the agent of the Communist International.

The crux of the prosecution case is that force and violence are advocated in the documents which are alleged to be written by me. But force is force. The moral philosophy of the ruling power is that force becomes criminal when directed against it but that it is an instrument of virtue when employed for the preservation of

the ruling power. In other words the mercenary army with which the sovereignty of the British is maintained in a foreign country is an instrument of moral, or virtuous, force. The rifles employed in putting down the pauperized peasants of Malabar or Burma are the arms of God. But the same weapons in the hands of the oppressed people of India fighting for freedom are instruments of crime. Airplanes bombing the Frontier tribesmen are vehicles of virtue, teaching those depraved people a moral lesson, but any resistance on the part of the latter is "criminal".

The oppressed people and exploited classes are not obliged to respect the moral philosophy of the ruling power. The sovereign right of the Indian people is usurped by foreign power and as the foreign usurpers maintain themselves in power by force, the Indian people are obliged to use force to recover their sovereign right. A despotic power is always overthrown by force. The force employed in this process is not criminal. On the contrary, precisely the guns carried by the army of the British government of India are instruments of crime. They become instruments of virtue when they are turned against the imperialist state. Weapons in the hands of the oppressed masses of India will be so many hammers to break the chain of a colonial slavery binding one-fifth of the human race.

I am justified in holding this view on the authority of the great English philosophers. Bentham is of the opinion that: "Despotism is veiled under some happy and ingenious phrases as the great power of our ethical system bears witness". Such "happy and ingenious phrases" are used by the British government of India to justify its despotism—"rule of law", "the public security", etc.

Hume is of the opinion that: "In case of enormous tyranny and oppression it is lawful to take arms even against the supreme power and that, as government is a pure human invention for mutual advantage and security, it no longer imposes any obligation either moral or natural when once it ceases to have that tendency."

I hold that the British government of India has been an "enormous tyranny and oppression" for the Indian masses and

that it has never been of any advantage for them. So, according to Hume, the national philosopher of England, the people of India are fully justified to take up arms against the present government. In doing so they will not be employing "criminal force"; on the contrary, the force is moral and virtuous only when employed for the conquest and defense of freedom.

British Rule a Usurpation

By their very nature, cases like this in which I am involved represent so many attempts to suppress the strivings of the Indian people for freedom. By what principle of legislation and government are these attacks upon the popular will raised to the dignity of the administration of justice? Has the present government of India any constitutional basis? Was the law under which the people are being persecuted made with popular consent? How did the British King acquire his sovereignty in India? When did the Indian people swear allegiance to the British Crown?

I maintain that the people of India owe no allegiance to the British Crown! Therefore the law under which I am charged has no force of law in the modern civilized sense of the term. Indians are forced to obey it altho they have had nothing to say about its promulgation. The British government of India holds no power of attorney from the Indian people. It is an instrument of predatory imperialism foisted upon this country by violence. There can be no progress, prosperity and liberty for the Indian people until this foreign domination is overthrown. The charge against me is absurd. This trial is a form of violence.

The charge against me hinges on the assumption that the British King has sovereign right over the Indian people. The substance of the offense I am alleged to have committed is to dispute this assumption. If I can show that the assumption is groundless, that the British King has no constitutional position in India, the absurdity of the charge against me will be palpable, the invalidity and the worthlessness of the law under which the charge is made will be proved. Searching the entire history of India's unfortunate relation with Britain, one does not find the least evidence to establish the assumption.

The British Crown acquired its domination over India in a rather singular way. It was not even by conquest that the valuable acquisition was made. It was more like quiet appropriation of stolen or robbed property in return for the help given to the robbers in their depredation. For a hundred years the British East India Company held political power in India, nominally as a vassal of the Moghul Emperor. At the same time the East India Company owed its existence to charters granted by the British Crown thru the parliament. Towards the end of its existence, the Company practically ceased to be a trading corporation and became a department of the British government; that is, thru the instrumentality of trading company, actual political power passed gradually from the titular Moghul emperor to the British Crown. The people of India had nothing to say about the transfer of the power to rule them, nor was the power transferred voluntarily by the Moghul Emperor. All along, the East India Company, as the administrator of India, theoretically derived its authority from its vassalage to the Moghul Emperors, while on the other hand it was accountable not to them but to the British Parliament. So, there were two supreme authorities: one theoretical and the other practical. This dualism typified the entire history of the administration of India by the British East India Company.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, according to its own law officers, the British Crown had no constitutional authority over India and therefore could not claim from the Indians any allegiance. The fact remains that the Indian people never swore allegiance to the British Crown. The Queen's proclamation did not have as its counterpart a reciprocal proclamation on the part of the Indian people. When James II was deposed from the throne of England and his place occupied by a Dutch prince, the change took place on the initiative and authority of the British Parliament. An act of the British Parliament made a foreign prince the King of England. The Queen of England was not made the Empress of India by any such authority of the Indian people.

Even the theory of acquiescence cannot be advanced in support of the constitutionality of the position of the British Crown in India. What might appear as acquiescence on the part of the

Indian people is silence imposed by fear.

In his *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham completely explodes the theory of acquiescence as the basis for constitutional authority. He writes: "Can a few vague acclamations really be accounted an act of individual and universal concern? Can such a contract really bind the multitude of individuals who never heard of it, who were never summoned to ratify it, and, above all, who could not have refused assent without risking their lives and estates"? So, in the opinion of the father of modern English principles of government and legislation, the demonstrative loyalty of the parasitic upper classes of India does not lend constitutionality to the British domination.

The only justification of the British rule over India is that it has been a successful act of usurpation. In denouncing the tyrants of ancient Greece, Plato argued that "usurpation is not justified by success". Other Greek philosophers, Aristotle, Xenophon, etc., those spiritual preceptors of modern European civilization, all held similar views. Discounting the time factor and the resulting change of conditions, the British conquest of India was very similar to the rise of the despotic monarchy on the ruins of the city republics of Greece. In both cases, the aggressors took advantage of troubled conditions to establish their despotic sway. According to Grote, the English author of the splendid *History of Greece*, the philosophers and law-givers of that cradle of modern civilization regarded "the despot as among the greatest criminals; the man who assassinated him was an object of public honour and reward, and a virtuous Greek would have seldom scrupled to carry his sword in myrtle branches for the execution of the despot".

The Sacred Right of Revolution

Drinking deep in the fountain of the teachings of the ancient Greek philosophers that it was no crime but honor to destroy a despot, the founders of the modern democratic states of Europe passionately preached the sacred right of revolt. The English philosophers, John Locke and David Hume, were among the illustrious pioneers who preached the sacred right of revolt. It

was in England that the right was first asserted. A king was beheaded and another deposed in the process of that great revolution in England. I am accused of having advocated the freedom of Indian people thru a revolution. But we read in the work of Lord John Russell, *The British Constitution*, the following sentence: "The revolution of 1688 is the mighty stock from which all other revolutions had sprung".

Demanding the trial and execution of Charles I, Ludlow exclaimed: "The war has been occasioned by invasion of our right and open breach of our law and constitution on the King's part". Charged as I am, any Indian would be justified to retort in these memorable words of Ludlow, which constitute a very important landmark in the history of England.

If the English people were justified in beheading a king and deposing another to assert their sovereign right, by no law can the Indian people be deprived of the right to overthrow the domination of a foreign king. To subject Indian people to laws not given with their consent is usurpation of powers by those hiding behind the unconstitutional legislature. The usurpers of political powers cannot claim the protection of law any more than a robber or a thief can. I challenge the legality of the British government of India and the pretension of the British King to any sovereign right in this country on the authority of Bentham. He wrote: "Not even the age of a Nestor could suffice to secure a usurper in the wages and spoils of his lawless seizure. Why should there ever come a time when the wrongdoer shall be at rest; why should he enjoy the fruits of his crime under protection of the very law he has violated"?

The charter of slavery is no law for the slave. When all the avenues of normal and peaceful progress are blocked by the established order of things, its violent overthrow becomes a necessity for human welfare. We learn again from the English jurist and moralist Bentham, that "to condemn all change is to condemn all progress".

The despotic fundamental law of the Indian constitution limits the perspective of Indian political progress to "self-government within the British Empire". Those who are not satisfied

with this limited perspective automatically come under the sweeping jurisdiction of Section 121A of the Indian Penal Code. Therefore, complete independence of the Indian people inevitably becomes conditional upon the overthrow of the sovereign power assumed illegally by the British Crown. As the British, on their part, are not likely to abdicate their ill-gotten and unconstitutional power in India, the Indian masses are obliged to get rid of them by force, unless they are prepared to remain enslaved forever. Therefore, the "separation of India from imperialist Britain thru a violent revolution" is an obvious necessity in the interest of the masses of the Indian people. It is not my personal desire; I have no personal grudge against the British King. Let Britain cease to be an imperialist power exploiting the masses of the Indian people to helpless pauperization, and the necessity of a violent clash between her and the Indian people will disappear. Let there be no violent oppression and exploitation of the Indian masses and there will be no occasion for a violent revolution. Otherwise, all the repressive laws, all the ruthless force in their administration, all the instruments of imperialist terror, will not be able to retard the march of human progress. In 1797, commenting on the situation in Ireland, Lord Chatham wrote: "There was ambition, there was sedition, there was violence; but no man shall persuade me that it was not the cause of liberty on the one side and tyranny on the other".

These words characterize the situation in India today. We hear men like Mr. V.J. Patel, the ex-president of the Legislative Assembly, sounding the alarm. Speaking in London the other day, he said cautiously: "I am convinced that India is heading towards a revolution and if the government does not concede the Congress demands I do not know what will happen to it. I know that today between revolution and India stands Gandhi and the government must concede India's demand for freedom".

But the demand for the freedom of the Indian people cannot be conceded by the British government, because this demand, if seriously meant, challenges the very existence of the British government in India. As a matter of fact, the law under which I am charged makes such a demand punishable. Complete indepen-

dence of India means her secession from the British Empire, which inevitably implies the overthrow of the British King's sovereignty in India. Had the Lahore resolution of the National Congress not been hedged in by the old creed, it might be legally construed as an offense against the State punishable under section 121A, I.P.C. Even the old phrases would not save the Congress should the government decide to proceed against it for declaring in favour of complete independence. The unwritten law of the constitution of India under British rule binds her perpetually to the Empire. A declaration in favor of complete independence, which means separation from the Empire if it means anything, commits the organization making such a declaration logically to "unconstitutional," "illegal" and "violent" action. Thus the organization comes under the cruel jurisdiction of Section 121A, I.P.C., "conspiracy to deprive the King of his sovereignty of India".

The only law for the oppressed and exploited people of India is the law of revolt—the majestic law of revolutionary struggle for freedom. The imperialist rulers of India violate every day the only law that the people of India can observe under the present conditions. My arrest and trial represent an instance of such violation of our law. To accuse me of any offense is to add insult to injury. I stand here not to answer any such absurd charge and insolent accusation. I stand here to indict the British government of India at the bar of the civilized world for wanton aggression against one-fifth of the human race, for robbing our land, for obstructing our progress in every sense.

Consequences of British Rule

The English philosopher, David Hume, who greatly influenced modern political thought thruout Europe, testifies to the legality of my indictment against the British government of India. I have already quoted his opinion to that effect. He held that the people were justified in overthrowing a government when it had ceased to perform the function of guarding the welfare of the community. India has not derived any benefits from the British government. The latter was never established with any such

purpose. It was not set up by the people of India to advance mutual interests. On the contrary, it was established with the purpose of oppressing and exploiting the people of India. It has mercilessly done so for nearly two hundred years. Consequently, the Indian masses today are sunk in the lowest depth of economic ruin and cultural backwardness.

The disastrous consequences of the British rule are depicted in many a document exhibited in this case as evidence of my guilt. These very documents (I refer particularly to Chapters II and V of my book, *India in Transition*, Exhibit B) prove my case that the present regime is exceedingly harmful for the masses of the Indian people and therefore must be overthrown in their interests. In support of my case, I shall produce the testimony of an English authority on Indian economic affairs. Mr. Findlay Shiraz, in his latest publication, "Certain Economic Facts in regard to India", estimates the annual per capita income of India at about forty American dollars (that is, slightly over Rs. 100). In his opinion it is the lowest figure of all the civilized countries, being one-twelfth of that in the U.S.A. According to the report of the Department of Commercial Intelligence, the purchasing power of the Indian peasants, that is, of 73% of the entire population, declined 50% last year. According to other English authorities, the total indebtedness of the Indian peasantry is Rs. 700-1,000 crores. According to the report of the Whitley Commission, the wages in India are lower than in any other modern industrial country and the condition of labor is incredibly bad. Nearly forty-six millions of people are perpetually unemployed in India. Still the Royal Commission of Labor recommends a 10-hour working day, while in all other civilized countries the 8-hour day has been introduced long since and the workers now are demanding its reduction to seven and six hours. In one country, in the Soviet Union, in the land of "bloody" Bolshevism, the attempt to introduce which in this country is my crime, people work seven hours a day for five days a week.

In contrast to these facts, I shall quote another set of facts also given by Mr. Findlay Shiraz. They relate to the military expenditure of a number of countries. The facts cited above show that the masses of the Indian population are incredibly poor. Yet no less

than 45% of the revenue, paid mostly by the Indian pauperized masses, is appropriated for the military budget over which the Legislature has no control. The expenditure on the same item in the budget of some countries much richer than India is as follows: Britain 12.8%, U.S.A. 16.4% Austria 4.5%, Canada 2.4%, while the most militarized country of the present day, France, spends only 22% of the budget on this item.

One more fact to give the finishing touch to the picture. We have heard various theories about the British administration of the Indian trusteeship, the "white man's burden", the "civilizing mission," "protecting the minorities against the caste Hindus," etc. It is even made to appear that the British have no material interest in ruling India. The fact of the matter is, however, that from India, Britain derives a net income of about 260 crores a year.

These few facts clearly prove that the British government of India does not perform the function of a modern civilized government. Its concern is not the welfare of the governed. It is an instrument in the hands of foreign exploiters of the country. Again I shall rely upon the testimony of the famous English jurist and political philosopher, Bentham, to establish my contention.

According to Bentham, the function of a government and law is "to provide subsistence, to supply abundance, to encourage equality and to maintain security".

The British government of India cannot claim to have performed any of these functions except the last. It has established order in the country but the maintenance of order has been a plausible pretext to suppress all expression of the popular will. "Law and order" have become chains of slavery for the people. And the Indian masses have paid very heavily for this lesson. Poverty and pauperization of the masses have been their dear price. Let alone abundance, the great majority of the people are not provided with the barest subsistence by the British government, which is guided by the cardinal principle of English liberalism: "Greatest good for the greatest number". Its object has been to secure the greatest gain of the foreign exploiters.

I have already cited the opinion of Hume that it is no crime to take arms against such an oppressive and tyrannical government as the British administration of India has proved to be. Now I shall quote the same authority holding that his verdict, cited already, is applicable even when a government is established constitutionally. He writes :

"It is certain that the people still (that is, even after the establishment of constitutional government) retain the right of resistance since even in these governments (Hume is dealing with constitutional monarchies) the cases wherein resistance is lawful must occur often and greater indulgence must be given to the subjects to defend themselves by force of arms."

What would the national philosopher of England say about trials like this and the law under which trials take place? On the authority of Hume, the Indian people have lawful right to rise up in arms against the British government of India, even if its claim to legality were granted. From this it follows that, even after India has been granted eventually some fraudulent constitution by the British Parliament, the oppressed and exploited masses will still have the right to resist it with arms.

The right of the people to revolt against and overthrow any government is conclusively established by Hume in the following words: "It is gross absurdity to suppress in any government the right of resistance or declare that the supreme power is shared with the people without allowing that it is lawful for them to defend their share against invaders. Therefore, those who would deny the right of resistance have renounced all pretensions to common sense and do not merit a serious answer".

Thus, according to Hume, the authors and the administrators of the law under which I am prosecuted are devoid of common sense. This law is absurd, and the regime based upon such laws is lawless. The right of the Indian people to resist the established government, with armed force if necessary, can be contested only by denying the very basic principles of modern political philosophy, that the supreme power is shared with the people. The British government of India does not recognize this

principle. That means it is pure despotism, and, therefore, it is the more lawful for the Indian people to overthrow it by every available means.

The attempt to overthrow the despotic rule of our own country by the foreign usurpers of power is no offense. It is an act for the assertion of popular liberty. Once again I cite Hume to testify in my favor. He writes:

"When the chief magistrate (that is, the head of a government or government as a whole) enters into measures extremely pernicious to the public... it is allowable to resist and dethrone him tho such resistance and violence may, in general terms of law, be deemed unlawful and rebellious. Nothing is more essential to public interests than the preservation of public liberty."

The laws on the Indian statute book penalizing offenses against the state and the executive ordinances issued frequently on the specious plea of public safety, are measures extremely pernicious to the public liberty because their sole object is to crush public liberty and defend the despotic regime. Indeed, every single administrative act of the government of India is such an extremely pernicious measure as to warrant its overthrow. For it does not rule with the consent of the people, by laws made by their representatives. Even at this very moment, such measures are being taken. The new press law, for example, also justifies resistance to the extent of armed insurrection. In these enlightened days of the twentieth century, such an attack upon the press is intolerable. Then, there is the ruinous exchange policy maintained in the teeth of the unanimous opposition of the elected members of the Legislature. Finally, there is the certification of the budget imposing upon the starving masses new burdens of taxation.

In England, revolutions have taken place on any one of similar issues. But in India, the government, set up by the British conqueror, rules with such measures. Still it claims to be established by law, and ruthlessly suppresses all opposition to its despotic sway.

It is a well known lesson of history that revolutions are inherent in the process of political progress, that armed resistance to absolute monarchy and other forms of despotic government is the only way to the establishment of a constitutional state. Indians are not bound to obey the so-called laws which would prohibit them from travelling the path of political progress travelled by all other civilized peoples.

I am prosecuted because I have tried to help the Indian people learn from the lessons of history. In pointing out the inevitability of an armed revolution, I have only told an historical truth.

The organization of the nobles who forced King John to sign the Magna Carta is glorified as the founder of the glorious British Constitution. But our efforts in India to organize a party of the workers and peasants with the object of securing national freedom are punishable as "conspiracy" to deprive the British King of his non-existent sovereignty of India.

The illiteracy of the Indian masses is pointed to by our foreign rulers as the sign of India's unripeness for political freedom. But the appalling mass illiteracy in India is a damaging commentary upon her civilized rulers and is a cogent reason for their overthrow from power. However, the point I want to make here is that illiteracy did not prevent the founders of British Constitution from accomplishing their historic mission. The illustrious victors of Runnymede put their crossmarks on the Great Charter. They could not write their names. Inability to wield the pen did not hinder them from demanding and conquering political freedom, as long as they could wield the sword. Force is the lever of all progress. It is the foundation of political freedom. Therefore, it is perfectly lawful for the oppressed and exploited masses of India to use force to resist and to overthrow their foreign rulers.

There are but two alternatives before the Indian people: perpetual colonial slavery, which may eventually be somewhat gilded, or forcible overthrow of the foreign domination. I recommend the latter course which will surely be followed by the oppressed and exploited majority of the Indian people who bear the burden of colonial exploitation.

India Must Work Out Its Own Destiny!

The Indians have no reason to idealize the British idea of citizenship. They claim to do their own thinking and have their own conception of freedom. There is no reason why the Indians should evolve a political constitution on the British model. In England itself her unwritten constitution has become obsolete. Even there forces are in operation to overthrow the plutocratic dictatorship hidden behind the veil of parliamentarism. A critical examination of the British constitution does not inspire the Indians to idealize it. The British constitution is a bundle of anomalies and contradictions, veiling a modern plutocratic state with medieval monarchist formalities.

Indians are asked to idealize this constitution of plutocratic dictatorship hidden behind the sham of parliamentary democracy and the ugly ghost of medieval monarchy.

I represent those Indians who refuse this honor with thanks. Excepting those few whose fate is bound up with foreign imperialism, who are benefited by the colonial exploitation of the Indian masses, who have sold their national pride for a mess of pottage, the Indians want to work out their own destiny. They will give their country a political system better than the musty British constitution. They will not be satisfied with a puppet parliament at Delhi eventually set up by the dispensation of the sham parliament at Westminster. Nor will they recognize the sovereignty of the British Crown even if some day it will be exercised thru an Indian Viceroy. We will make our constitution not at any Round-Table Conference in London but here in India in the midst of the struggle for the assertion of our right to self-determination. The British Crown presumes to deprive us of this inalienable right. So, the way to the establishment of a constitutional regime in India lies unavoidably thru a revolutionary war against the British King who has usurped power in India. We are not making the war. It is levied against the Indian people by the British King. The Indians must fight in self-defense. If the Indian people are to have democratic freedom and unrestricted progress in all branches of their national life, they must travel the

road of revolution just as it has been done by all the peoples who stand at the van of modern civilization.

The essence of the charge against me is that I have tried to organize a violent revolution for the overthrow of the British Government of India. The issue involved in trials like this is the right of the oppressed people to revolt against and overthrow the imperialist state. The British King is but the emblem of imperialism which oppresses and exploits the Indian people. The theory of conspiracy is but a legal pretext. This trial is an expression of the conflict between popular will and the established law. The conflict must end in a violent clash, unless the established law is changed according to the will of the people. But laws of maintenance of a given state are in their turn defended by the coercive machinery, namely the police, the courts and finally the army. The process of political evolution is inevitably subject to periodical violent outbreak, because of the resistance of the established order.

"Revolutions," says the historian Gardner, "no less than smaller political changes, are to be accounted for as steps in the historical development of nations. They are more violent and of longer duration in proportion to the stubborn resistance offered to them by the institutions which stand in their way."

The point of departure of all my propaganda and action is that foreign domination hinders the progress of the Indian people in every branch of life; therefore it must be destroyed. Whether the necessary separation should be by violent or non-violent means does not depend upon the people wanting to be free. It depends upon the one that holds the other in subjugation. Let the British gracefully withdraw from our country; then there would be no need for using violent means for securing its separation from imperialist Britain. The people of India are obliged to employ violence in their struggle for national freedom and political and social progress, because British imperialism does not let them be free and advance peacefully. In more than one document exhibited here, I have made it clear that we are not in favor of violence by choice, that the Indian people must adopt violent

means by necessity unless they would remain in perpetual colonial slavery.

I have proved that revolutions are periodical violent outbreaks inherent in the process of evolution in the sphere of social existence. So, it is but a logical statement that revolutionaries cannot believe in non-violence as a principle. The basic principle of the party of the working class is the economic emancipation of the toiling masses. The parasitic possessing classes cannot exist and thrive except upon the product of labor of the producing classes, that is except by expropriating the producers. Should the producing masses want to have the full value of their labour, they are sure to run up against the resistance of the parasitic possessing classes. They are entrenched behind laws, protecting their interests thru their courts which are at their disposal. Therefore, a party standing for the economic emancipation of the workers and peasants, demanding that the toilers should get the full value of their labor, cannot make a creed of non-violence. By its very nature, it is bound to meet the resistance of those who live and prosper upon exploitation and oppression.

I have not tried to invent "a violent revolution" out of my perverse imagination or by acting as "agent" of the Communist International. Whatever propaganda I have made and action I have recommended are warranted by the objective conditions of the country.

Not a Conspiracy but a Revolution!

The evidence proves that I pointed out the inevitability of a revolutionary change in the social and political conditions of India and that the welfare of the toiling masses was dependent upon the revolution. I have been working for the welfare of the Indian masses and have urged the elimination of all obstacles in the way to that goal. I tried to organize a working class party because it is necessary for the liberation of the masses from political slavery, economic exploitation and social degradation. The party is an historic necessity and has an historically revolutionary mission. It is neither a conspiracy nor a weapon in any

conspiracy. The British King, as well as any other power that stands in the way of the progress and prosperity of the Indian masses, must go.

Of course, our attempt to organize a party of the workers and peasants would be a Quixotic venture had the condition of the masses been really what the public prosecutor imagines it to be. In his opening address he told the assessors that the Indian peasants were happy in their misery and that I was trying to disturb their happiness for some sinister purpose of mine. I have already given a few facts and figures to show that "happy peasants" live only in the imagination of the public prosecutor, unless the gentleman would venture to advance a theory that the less one eats and the more one toils the happier he is.

In reality, the government is against the most harmless economic program, for its enforcement would mean loss to imperialism and its Indian allies, the princes, big landlords and capitalists. Therefore, the realization of the program will necessarily mean violation of the laws of the imperialist government. The function of the laws is to hold the masses on the starvation level so that foreign imperialism and its native allies can grow rich, and to suppress the attempts of the masses to rise above the present conditions.

I have not preached violent revolution. I have maintained that revolution is a historic necessity. From time to time, surging forces of social progress reach the period of a violent outburst. This is caused by the resistance of the old to the new. An impending revolution produces its pioneers who force events and herald the maturing of the conflict. The task of the revolutionary vanguard is to expedite the historical process caused by objective necessity. They consciously organize the forces of the revolution and lead them to victory. I have acted as a pioneer of the Indian revolution; but the revolution itself is not my invention. It grows out of the historical conditions of the country. I have simply been one who perceived it earlier than others.

Holding such a dynamic view of the revolution, I could not possibly be a conspirator. As a matter of fact, I have always

maintained that revolution is not a conspiracy and that conspiratorial activities are not always necessarily revolutionary. Consequently, I have been opposed to secret activities and acts of individual terrorism. Political assassination has no place in my theory and practise of revolution.

I have not tried to manufacture a revolution and to use the workers and peasants as raw materials for my sinister fabrication, nor do I believe that the secret association of a few individuals can serve the purpose of a revolution. My approach to the matter is not subjective. My propaganda and other activities have been based upon an analysis of the objective conditions inevitably making for a revolution. Therefore, I could never be a conspirator. I am too much of a revolutionary to be a conspirator.

The propaganda I carried on between 1921-24 was undoubtedly revolutionary, but it had absolutely nothing to do with conspiracy. I have maintained that the progress of the Indian people was conditional upon their freedom from imperialist domination. It is for my prosecutors to prove that it is not so, that imperialist exploitation does not block the progress of the Indian masses. I have also expressed the opinion that the foreign conquerors would never leave our country voluntarily. Let the British government prove that my opinion is wrong. I have not, however, conspired to deprive the British King of the sovereignty which he does not possess. His is the right of conquest and usurpation. Ours is the right of revolt and self-determination.

The burden of the prosecution evidence is that I hold certain revolutionary political and social views, that I have propagated these views and that I have tried to organize a party of the working class with the object of putting those views into practise. I admit all this but I maintain that this does not establish the charge against me. My conviction would mean an attack upon the freedom of opinion, expression and association.

I do not make a secret of my determination of helping the organization of the great revolution which must take place in

order to open up before the Indian masses the road to liberty, progress and prosperity. The impending revolution is an historic necessity. Conditions for it are maturing rapidly. Colonial exploitation of the country creates those conditions. So, I am not responsible for the revolution nor is the Communist International. Imperialism is responsible for it. My punishment, therefore, will not stop the revolution. Imperialism has created its own gravedigger, namely, the forces of national revolution. These will continue operating till their historic task is accomplished. No law, however ruthless may be the sanction behind it, can suppress them.

The very adjective "violent" is superfluous in the case of revolution, for revolution by its very nature implies violence. The object of a revolution is to overthrow the established social order buttressed upon a particular type of political state. The function of the state is to suppress and coerce all opposition to the established order. The essence of the state power is violence. A revolution, that is, a radical social and economic transformation of society according to the need of the given epoch, is therefore conditional upon the overthrow of the state defending the established order. Consequently, by its very nature, revolution is inseparable from violence. The resistance of the established order is responsible for it.

The charge against me represents a gross violation of the Indian people's right to liberty, to set up their own government responsible to themselves in place of the present despotic foreign regime. In refuting the absurd charge, I have purposely not called in the evidence of foreign and frankly revolutionary authorities. I have relied exclusively upon liberal English thinkers and respectable constitutional lawyers to establish my case. I justify what I have held and done on the unchallengeable authority of Locke, Hume, Bentham, Bagehot, Dicey and even Blackstone. You can not punish me unless you proscribe the writings of these political philosophers and constitutional lawyers as seditious, revolutionary and treasonable. I may be punished, nevertheless. I am the victim of a system which knows no other law

than the law of coercion and violence. But I may warn this court in the words of another historian of the British constitution. Referring to the case of Hampden, Lord John Russell wrote: "The judges in Westminster Hall decided against him but the country was roused and overbalanced by the their sympathy the judgment of a court of law".

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Social Welfare and Progress

Since society consists of individual men and women, social welfare and progress must be the sum-total of the welfare and progress of the individuals constituting society. We must revert to this fundamental proposition of political and social thought if we want to approach the baffling problems of our time...

Manabendra Nath Roy v. Emperor : Judgement

J. Thom

On May 2, 1933 Mr. Justice J. Thom of the Allahabad High Court dismissed Roy's appeal but reduced his sentence to six years' rigorous imprisonment. Excerpts from the judgement are reprinted here from AIR 1933 Allahabad 498 which throw light on Roy's activities during the twenties and the nature of the charges against him. SNR

Criminal Appeal No. 219 of 1932, decided on 2nd May 1933, from order of Sess. Judge, Cawnpore, D/9th January 1932.

Judgment: The appellant Manabendra Nath Roy was tried in the Court of Sessions at Cawnpore on a charge under S. 121-A, Penal Code. He was convicted by the Additional sessions Judge and sentenced to transportation for 12 years. The charge preferred against him was that on or about 9th May 1923 and before and after, that is to say, from the beginning of 1921 to the end of 1924 he formed a conspiracy and conspired to deprive the King-Emperor of his Sovereignty of British India by means of violent revolution. The case for the prosecution against the appellant is that between the years 1921 and 1924, in co-operation with a number of other persons in India, the appellant who was in Europe, resolved to embark upon an attempt to introduce the doctrine of communism into India, the final objective of the conspirators being to set up a communist state in India, a state which would be controlled by the workers and peasants. The institution of such a communist regime was to be preceded by the violent overthrow of the existing constitution in India and the destruction of the Sovereignty of the King Emperor. The means

by which the appellant and his fellow conspirators attempted to compass their aims was to unite into one organisation the extremist elements in India, revolutionaries, terrorists, the left wing of congress, labour unions, etc. This organisation was to be utilised for the purpose of promoting a revolution in which the masses of peasants and workers were to be the troops, and chosen communists the officers; the masses were to be won by promises of economic betterment; strikes were to be engineered and if possible riots and the like such as occurred at Chauri Chaura, among the Mohplas and in the Punjab. Revolutionaries and terrorists were also to be enlisted by promises. With this aim in view, the appellant got in touch with his fellow conspirators in India, when exactly is uncertain, but it is clear that the period of the conspiracy was from 1921 to 1924. During these years the appellant was acting in conjunction with his friends in endeavouring to prepare the way for the violent overthrow of the Government of India. He was unable to come himself to India where he feared arrest. It was therefore necessary that he should make use of the post to get in touch with his fellow conspirators and during the years 1921 to 1923 therefore numerous letters passed between the appellant and his fellow conspirators. This correspondence did not escape the vigilance of the Intelligence Service of the Government of India. Numerous letters from the appellant to his fellow conspirators and from his fellow conspirators to the appellant were intercepted; some were retained by the authorities, others were copied or photographed and re-posted to the addressees.

By the early part of the year 1923 the Government authorities came to the conclusion that from these letters and other documents, some of which accompanied these letters, it was clear that the appellant, in conjunction with a number of persons in India, was engaged in a conspiracy to deprive the King Emperor of his Sovereignty of British India. The conspirators in India, namely, Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta alias Nalini Kumar Gupta, Mohammad Shaukat Ushmani, Muzaffar Ahmad and Shripat Amrit Dange were arrested and charged under S. 121-A Penal Code. They were tried, convicted and sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment on 20th May 1924; their convictions and sentences were upheld on appeal. In the year 1923 the appellant was not in

India and so no proceedings were taken against him. In the year 1931, the appellant returned to India and he was arrested in Bombay on 21st July of that year on the original warrant of 1924. In August 1931, proceedings were instituted against him under the 1924 complaint. On 24th August 1931 sanction was given by the Government authorising a Deputy Superintendent of the Intelligence Department to file a complaint against the appellant in the Magistrate's Court at Cawnpore. On 27th August 1931 a complaint was filed. On 15th October 1931 the appellant was committed by the Magistrate to Sessions. On 9th January 1932 the appellant was convicted and sentenced to transportation for 12 years.

The evidence upon which his conviction was based was almost entirely documentary. Apart from the evidence of the Government Examiner of questioned documents and of P.W. 23, who identified the accused as Narendra Nath Bhattacharji and of P.W. 20, the witnesses are purely formal and were produced to prove how the documents came into the hands of the police or before the Court. The documentary evidence against the appellant was the same as in the 1924 trial. This evidence consisted of (a) letters from the appellant to his associates in India and letters from them to him. These are the original letters which were intercepted and retained or found in the possession of the appellant's associates when they were arrested. (b) Copies of letters which were intercepted and either copied or photographed and reposted. (c) Pamphlets, leaflets and other publications which accompanied the letters or were obtained from other sources... These latter include: (a) "One Year of Non-co-operation" by the appellant and Evelyn Roy, (b) "India in Transition" by the appellant, (c) "What do we want" by the appellant, and (d) "India's Problem and Its Solution" by the appellant...

I propose to refer to a few of the more important documents which illustrate the character of the correspondence between the appellant and his fellow-conspirators and the nature of the enterprise in which they were engaged...Exhibit 29. This is a handwritten letter in English by the appellant to Dange with Ex. 29-B, an advertisement of the appellant's book "India in Transition". It was in an envelope, 29-A, addressed in type to Dange in Bom-

bay. This letter was written on a note paper with a printed heading "Not the Masses for Revolution—But Revolution for the Masses: The vanguard of Indian Independence—A Journal of Revolutionary Politics, Berlin, Paris, London, Zurich, Rome". The "Vanguard" was a periodical published in Europe for which the appellant was responsible... Ex. 5 is a letter from the appellant to Dange. It is dated 2nd November and it is written from Moscow where it is proved the appellant attended a meeting of the Communist International. The appellant refers to the meeting of the Congress and states:

The Congress is well on the way. Delegates from almost all the countries are here, even far-off Java is not excepted... I am in charge of the Eastern Section of the Congress, but there is no Indian delegation... In consonance with the point of view of the Communist International I make the following propositions about the role the Socialist Labour Party of India should play... All Communists and Socialists should attempt to form a mass party embracing all the truly revolutionary elements. In order that many available revolutionary elements are not frightened away by the name, our party should have a 'non-offensive' name. We suggest "the Peoples Party". Of course, the social basis of this party will be the workers and peasants and the political direction of the party should be in the hands of the Communists and Socialists who alone can be the custodians of the interests of the toiling masses. But in order that the Communists and Socialists are not isolated in small sects and can take active and leading part in the mass struggle determining its course and destinies by revolutionary and courageous leadership, a legal apparatus of our activities is needed. The Peoples Party will provide this legal apparatus. It is to be anticipated that no powerful political party with a Communist name will be tolerated by the Government and the latter will be able to count upon the moral and even active support of the native bourgeoisie in prosecuting a Communist party. Hence the necessity of a dual organisation—one legal and another illegal. The Communist nucleus should take a very active part in the formation of a mass party for revolutionary nationalist struggle...

I have already written a pamphlet containing a popularized version of the programme we intend to put forward (This reference is to the pamphlet entitled "What do we want").

Exhibits 6, 7 and 8. These are three letters by the appellant from Berlin to Singaravelu, Dange and Muzaffar Ahmad. These letters refer to the fact that the writer has returned from Moscow and to the project of holding a conference in Europe. In his letter to Singaravelu the appellant states:

We must prepare for the conference which is very important. Your presence will be greatly appreciated. The delegates should reach here not later than the end of January.

Each of these letters included a pamphlet Ex. 9 which the writer requests his associates to have published in Indian papers. In his letter to Dange, he is also invited to a conference in the month of January. In his letter Ex. 8 to Muzaffar Ahmad, the appellant refers to the fact that he had expected that Muzaffar Ahmad must have started for Europe but that he had heard that he had not done so owing to lack of money. The writer promises financial help and states that it is urgently necessary that Muzaffar Ahmad should come to Europe for the purpose of the conference...

Exhibit 9 which accompanied these letters is headed: "To the All India National Congress Gaya, India" and it concludes:

With fraternal greetings: Presidium of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, Secretary Humbert Droz.

This letter was apparently drawn up as a result of discussions at the meeting of the Communist International at Moscow which was attended by the appellant and it is proved that the appellant was himself elected to the Presidium of the Communist International. This letter is an inflammatory document and is a plain, definite and frank incitement to revolution. It states:

The infamous methods by which British Imperialism sucks the lifeblood of the Indian people are well-known. They cannot be condemned too strongly; nor will simple condemnation be of any practical value. British rule in India was established by force and is maintained by force; therefore it can

and will be overthrown only by a violent revolution...

In order to declare its complete freedom from all connection with the reactionary upper classes, the National Congress should categorically declare that its political programme is the establishment of a Democratic Republic, completely independent of any foreign control... Tireless and courageous agitation has to be carried on to win the masses for the cause of national liberation. The present spontaneous mass upheaval provides a very fertile field of propaganda. The necessity of developing the revolutionary consciousness of the masses demands the adoption of an economic programme, in addition to the political programme of a republic to be established through a revolution. By leading the rebellious poor peasantry against the reactionary and loyalist landed aristocracy, the Congress will on the one hand strike its roots deeply into the masses and on the other will assail the very bedrock of British rule...

It is quite unnecessary to further comment upon this letter. It speaks for itself. The fact that it was forwarded by the appellant who was a member of the body in whose name it was sent to his associates in India with the instructions that they should have it published in local newspapers is proof, decisive and conclusive, that he and they did jointly engage in a conspiracy which had for its object stirring up of a revolution and the destruction of the existing Government in India...

Exhibit 10—This is a letter from the appellant to Usmani from Berlin dated 9th March. It states:

In my letter instructing you to go to Calcutta, you were told about the work there. To have a conference of those agreeing with our ideas and programme is very important for the future of our work. We know that a favourable atmosphere has been created by our propaganda as well as by the collapse of the non-co-operation movement. We must begin the organization of our party. This must begin with a conference... We have five centres to link up. (1) Dange group in Bombay; (2) Inquilab group in Lahore; (3) Your people in the United Provinces; (4) Muzaffar Ahmad & Co. in Calcutta and (5) Singaravelu group in Madras.

So you see we have a good framework to build upon...

Exhibit 46—This is a letter dated 19th March from the appellant to Usmani. In this letter the writer says:

It really surprises me to see that the more I write about what is to be done the more you ask for instructions. I wonder if my letters reach you... To be short, our party must be organized at once. The things necessary for it are: (1) a preliminary conference of the pioneers for all the provinces here with the committee representatives; (2) calling of National Convention on the return of the delegates to the preliminary conference; and (3) meanwhile form nuclei and groups all over the country. I consider this to be a definite work—a work enough to keep dozens of energetic workers like you busy for the next six months. It is for this purpose that I ask you to go to Calcutta, there with the help of our comrade to see various revolutionary elements and convince of the necessity of sending delegates to the preliminary conference here...

Exhibit 13—This is a memorandum to the conference for organizing a working class party in India. The appellant admitted that he was the author of this document. In the paragraph entitled "The Programme" the author states:

... I propose that the programme drafted for the consideration of the National Congress at Gaya be adopted as the Programme of our party... The economic freedom of the producing class can be conquered only through a revolutionary struggle from beginning to the end. This should be clearly set forth in our programme... Before the Indian working class can take up the slogan of dictatorship, it has to go through a period of political education which it will gain in the struggle against imperialism, a struggle carried on not for the benefit and under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, but with a programme consciously for the interests of the workers and peasants, and under the leadership of a revolutionary vanguard, the political party... Upon our ability to formulate these principal points in the political aspect of our programme will depend the possibility of a working alliance between the working class party and the bourgeois national

parties. This alliance should be sought during the anti-imperialist struggle. The revolutionary significance that the nationalist bourgeoisie possess, will be brought to bear fully upon the situation under the pressure of the revolutionary masses... Nothing less than a total abolition of landlordism will begin a radical solution of the agrarian problem...

It has already been observed that the appellant has admitted that he is the author of the pamphlet entitled *India in Transition*... It will suffice here to give one excerpt from this work:

Mass action thus begun will develop into organized agrarian strikes, into food riots, the plunder of corn stock and assaults upon large estates with the idea of confiscation. The down-trodden peasantry must be made conscious of their right to live like human beings and our propaganda should be aimed at making them understand that they should conquer the right by militant action. Such action, properly organized on a large scale, will arouse them from their age-long mental and spiritual slavery and make them conscious of their own might... Peasant revolts should spread like wildfire from one end of the country to the other.

It is unnecessary further to multiply quotations from the letters which passed between the appellant and his co-conspirators in India or from the writings of the former... From the general evidence in the case I hold it established that the appellant who left India in 1915 joined the International Revolutionary Movement, the headquarters of which were at Moscow. He was elected as a member of the Presidium of the Communist International and was appointed head of the Eastern Department of that organization. He determined with the help of the Communist International to overthrow the Government and set up a communist state in India. With this object in view he established connexion with, amongst others, the persons whose letters have been referred to earlier in this judgement and some of whom were tried and convicted under S. 121-A, Penal Code, in the year 1924. These persons agreed to work with him and help him in the furtherance of his schemes. The advancement of the scheme to overthrow the Government of India necessitated communication

between the conspirators and the appellant. Part of this correspondence has been produced by the prosecution in the Sessions Court.

This correspondence and the other documents produced by the prosecution establish beyond all doubt: (1) that the intention of the appellant and his associates was to overthrow the Government of India by violent means and set up a communist state; (2) with this object in view the appellant endeavoured to arrange conferences to be attended by his associates both in India and in Europe; (3) that his intention was to set up two parties, a legal party which should be called the Peoples Party and an illegal secret party to which only avowed communists would be admitted; this latter party was to work secretly for the overthrow of the existing regime in India. Every member of the communist party was to be a member of the Peoples Party which was to be used as an instrument for stirring up dissension and strife amongst the masses and sowing the seeds of revolution and rebellion; (4) the appellant provided certain sums of money to finance delegates who were invited to come to attend the conference in Europe; (5) by holding out hopes of better economic conditions the appellant and his associates essayed to enlist the support of workers and peasants and by means of personal canvass, seditious literature and propaganda they endeavoured to inflame the masses against the existing regime, and by linking up all the extremists, terrorists and revolutionary elements they intended to compass the violent overthrow of the Government of India...

Counsel for appellant has argued that the appellant should not be punished for holding extreme views. It has never been suggested that he should. The law does not prohibit a person from forming any views however extreme they may be and if the appellant had confined himself to an academic discussion as to the soundness of his views he would have been guilty of no crime; his letters and pamphlets, however, are not mere erudite academic discussions. It is clear that the appellant had left the regions of economic discussions and had entered the regions of political action. In his statement before the Sessions Court the appellant prays in aid the works of Hume and Bentham which he

claims are authorities for the proposition that it is permissible to engage in an attempt to overthrow a Government by violence. The writings of Hume and Benetham are quite irrelevant to the present issue however weighty the opinion of these philosophers may be in academic matters. Having decided to go beyond the stage of academic discussion it was necessary that the appellant should have regard not merely to the attractive doctrines of political philosophers but to the mundane matter-of-fact provisions of the Indian Penal Code. This Court has no concern with the justice or otherwise of the claims of the appellant or with the rectitude of his political views, but the Court may take cognisance of the fact that he does hold certain views; for as a guide to his conduct and intention these views are more relevant consideration. With the knowledge that the appellant considered that he could morally resort to force it is impossible to put an innocent interpretation on his actions and to hold that he was engaged between the year 1921 and 1924 in peaceful legitimate political propaganda...

As with the doctrine of political philosophers so with the theories sound or unsound of constitutional law, they avail nothing against provisions of the Indian Penal Code. In conclusion it may be observed that if any corroboration of the prosecution case were necessary it is to be found in the statement of the accused himself in the Sessions Court... He says in the course of his statement (in the Sessions Court):

In all the documents the responsibility for which I have admitted there occurs in several places the inevitability of violence in the struggle of the Indian people for freedom.. The sovereignty of the Indian people is usurped by foreign power. As the foreign usurper maintains itself in power by force the Indian people are obliged to use force to recover their sovereign rights... I hold that the British Government of India has been an enormous tyranny and oppression for the Indian masses and it has never been an advantage to them. So the people of India are fully justified on the authority of Hume to take up arms against the present Government. I maintain that the people of India owe no allegiance to the British Crown.

It is unnecessary to refer further to the appellant's statement in the Sessions Court. Upon a consideration of the entire evidence I hold for the reasons given that the appellant is guilty of an offence under S. 121-A I.P.C., and that he has been rightly convicted by the learned Sessions Judge... In conjunction with the avowed enemies of the British Empire he engaged in an attempt, however futile, to stir up armed revolution in India. His associates in the conspiracy were tried in the year 1924 and were sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment. In deciding what punishment should be awarded against the appellant, however, I take into consideration the fact that he was the leader amongst the conspirators; his was the moving spirit and the master mind. In view of the fact, that the appellant has been incarcerated since his arrest in 1931, I am of the opinion that the ends of justice will be met by sentencing him to six years' rigorous imprisonment.

In the result the sentence of transportation for 12 years against the appellant is reduced to one of six years' rigorous imprisonment. Quod ultra the appeal is dismissed.

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Education and enlightenment

If man was ideal, there would be nothing for us to do. In quest of freedom, in search for knowledge, he blundered into all sorts of wrong channels and conceived false ideas; therefore his entire mental make-up is much burdened with heaps of ballast. When we talk about education and enlightenment, of making man moral, we undertake the task of removing the heaps of ballast which have buried the innate rationality of man.

The Political Philosophy of M.N.Roy

Stanley Maron

Professor Stanley Maron taught political science at various universities in the United States before choosing to settle down and work in a Kibbutz. He has written on South Asian society and politics and now lives in Kibbutz Maayan Zvi, Israel. His essay provides a selective account of Roy's political thinking since his release from jail. It has been shortened for the symposium, but the full text of the original essay may be read in THE RADICAL HUMANIST of January 25, 1966. SNR

India has produced in this century a constellation of outstanding men of genius. Among them have been Tagore the poet, Aurobindo the spiritual philosopher, Gandhi the moralist and politician, and Nehru the statesman. To that group belongs M.N. Roy the political theoretician and humanist.

After a remarkable career as a revolutionary in India, South-east Asia, the United States, Mexico, the Soviet Union, Europe and China, M.N. Roy returned to his mother country in December 1930 and spent six years in jail. Because of his national and international reputation he was, upon his return, immediately welcomed into the Indian National Congress and became a member of the All-India Congress Committee, where he worked closely with Nehru. During the ensuing election campaign, the two of them travelled together over much of India. Roy's influence during those months is considered to have been decisive in bringing Nehru over to the radical socialism to which he inclined thereafter.

The Congress was dominated by Gandhi whose whole ap-

proach to political problems was the opposite of Roy's. They soon began to clash, and Roy began building an alternative socialist leadership within the Congress to oppose Gandhi's "Hindu revivalist nationalism." The programme of this alternative leadership called for a cultural renaissance in India in order to modernize the nation and a democratic revolution which would bring both political independence and drastic socio-economic changes. In support of this programme, Roy formed within the Congress a League of Radical Congressmen as a distinct bloc within the parent organization. In 1937 he started a weekly paper, *Independent India*, later called *The Radical Humanist*.

Roy's break with the Comintern and his entry into Indian politics brought him to a radical revaluation of his political views. He had seen at close range in Mexico, the Soviet Union and China the danger that comes to a revolution from the centralized control of a political party. In Germany, with the rise of Hitler, he had seen the weakness of parliamentary democracy. On the basis of these experiences and his own inclination toward "revolution from below", Roy developed a theory of radical democracy which increasingly absorbed his attention and activities during the remaining years of his life.

As a member of the Congress, he urged a policy of radical decentralization through the activization of primary committees at the village and urban levels. Such units, he felt, should be transformed into People's Committees (on the model of soviets) which in turn would send representatives to a National Convention. This National Convention, once in existence, would form in fact an alternative government, and eventually an independent one. Roy's plan was rejected by the leadership of the Congress.

At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Roy took a strong stand in favour of full Indian support for the British war effort. He based his position on two arguments: (1) that Fascism was the greater evil and all forces should be rallied against it, and (2) that the British would emerge from the war so exhausted militarily and economically that it would have to grant independence to India. On the other hand, the Congress under Gandhi's

leadership adopted an official policy of non-co-operation with the British. This divergence in views brought a parting of the ways. Most of the Congress leadership was put in jail by the British, while Roy left the Congress to form the Radical Democratic Party. This new party was based on his concept of radical democracy, and it adopted a policy of supporting the British war effort. Roy also organized the Indian Federation of Labour as a means of rallying the workers to the same policy in opposition to the union controlled by the Congress.

Roy was convinced that the end of the war would be quickly followed by independence for India. In anticipation of this eventuality, he published in 1944 a *Draft Constitution for India*, while an experts' committee of his party published a *People's Plan* for the economic development of India. In his *Draft Constitution*, Roy outlined his concept of radical democracy based on a national system of People's Committees elected on a population ratio of 1 to 50 in each locality. These People's Committees were to be responsible not only for nominating delegates to governmental bodies at higher administrative levels, but even more important, they were intended to be schools of political thought and guardians of the national welfare. Roy envisaged the People's Committees as centers of active discussion of all phases of local, provincial and federal affairs, with constant surveillance over all governmental activity. In this way he hoped to bridge the gap between governmental officials and the masses, and to break the control of a small elite at the center. By way of controlling power, the People's Committees were to be authorized to initiate recall of representatives elected to the provincial or federal legislatures, or of the governor-general, if it was felt that their conduct in office was undesirable. The People's Committees were also to have the right to initiate a referendum on any issue where they felt higher organs of government were acting against the wishes of the people.

Article 9 of the Second Chapter of the *Draft Constitution* listed the following functions of the People's Committees:

- (a) Nominate candidates to seek election to the Federal Assembly and to the Provincial People's Councils.

- (b) Give constant expression to the will of the people for the guidance of their representatives in Federal Assembly and the respective Provincial People's Councils.
- (c) Discuss, and express opinion on, proposed legislations by the Federal Assembly as well as the respective Provincial People's Council.
- (d) Recommend the recall of the representatives of the particular constituency, either in the Federal Assembly or in the respective Provincial People's Council, on the ground that the representative has failed to act according to the mandate of his constituents.
- (e) Recommend the recall of the Governor-General and/or of the respective Provincial Governor.
- (f) Initiate legislation by the Federal Assembly or the respective Provincial People's Council.
- (g) Demand a referendum on any legislative or executive measure either of the Federal or the respective Provincial Government.

The draft constitution called for provincial autonomy, with full legislative and executive power vested in a Provincial People's Council elected directly by all citizens over 18 years of age, with candidates nominated by the local People's Committees. Legislative and executive power at the national level was to be held by a Federal Assembly to be elected indirectly by a college of electors established by the local People's Committees. All legislation of the Federal Assembly, with the exception of certain key subjects, would be subject to ratification by the Provincial People's Councils. Also at the national level was to be a Council of State, with members appointed by the Provincial Governments in equal number. Preference in appointment was to be given to those engaged in teaching, but it was also to comprise members from other professional groups. The chief function of the Council of State was to be responsibility for national planning and development. The Governor-General as Chief Executive was to be elected directly, like the provincial governors.

Roy's efforts to develop a sound theory of democratic government in anticipation of independence were overshadowed by the emerging struggle between the Congress and the Muslim League on the communal issue. In the elections which took place shortly after the end of the war, the Congress and the Muslim League dominated the scene, and the Radical Democratic Party exercised only minor influence.

The dominance of the communal issue as an irrational factor which overshadowed the rational pursuit of democracy, as well as the failure of Roy's party in the elections, led him to further review of his own thinking. At the same time, he had reached the point of final disillusionment with the Russian revolution. He realized that Stalinism had turned into "Red Bonapartism" which seemed to be the inevitable result of centralized power in government. Out of these reflections came the "radical humanism" which dominated the final period of Roy's life.

Roy first outlined this new philosophy of Radical Humanism at a meeting of the Radical Democratic Party in 1946. He was still reluctant to make a complete break with Marxism, to which he had so many sentimental ties, and he preferred to call it a revision of Marxism rather than a negation of it. As a point of departure, he took Marx's statement that "man is the root of mankind," and he asserted that society must be based on the individual man and not on abstractions. Communism, he said, by losing itself in the abstraction of the collective ego of the proletariat, had gone the way of Fascism which builds on the collective ego of the nation. Communism is no longer the road to freedom, and revolution must take place under another flag.¹

A revolutionary philosophy, he declared, must be judged by the measure of freedom it gives to the individual. Dictatorship of any kind, however plausible might be the pretext for it, is excluded by this perspective of social evolution.² The concentration of power which results from party politics must also be prevented since it is a persistent obstacle to individual freedom. Instead of conventional parliamentary democracy, the government should be based on a pyramidal structure of democratic bodies as outlined in the draft constitution. In this way, he said,

"Democracy will be placed above parties representing collective egos. Party loyalty and party patronage or other forms of nepotism will no longer eclipse intellectual independence, moral integrity and detached wisdom"³

A genuine revolutionary philosophy rests on commitment to individual freedom and moral values. It must be *radical* in penetrating through all abstractions to reach the root of society in individual human beings, and it must be *humanist* in its dedication to those values which preserve the integrity of the individual—truth and freedom. To stress the importance of these two aspects of his philosophy, Roy gave it the name of Radical Humanism.

Political parties stand in opposition to genuine democracy. At best a political party represents only a part of the society as a whole, even when that part is the majority. At worst, it represents only the handful of men who control the party's policies and actions. The objective of a political party is to acquire control of the government, either peacefully or by force. It is not the party as a whole, though, which acquires that power but only the leaders. Once they have their hands on the levers of power, their primary interest becomes that of preserving their hold. The desire to hold on to power brings the leadership of the party into dialectical opposition to the broad base of membership who might dispossess them.

However it might be rationalized, the primary interest of political leaders once in office is that of remaining in office, for that is the only way in which they can have the power which is their objective. Whether they want to use that power selfishly or unselfishly does not alter the basic condition. Since the people who can remove them from office are the same people who put them into office, their position automatically puts the leadership into a conflict of interest with those whom they are supposed to represent. Their primary interest becomes that of protecting their power against those who have given it to them, and only secondarily of using that power on behalf of those who have given it to them.

In the case of parliamentary democracy, the problem is complicated by a dual struggle. On the one hand, the party leadership must strive to achieve and preserve a position of power within the government, while on the other hand those same leaders must defend their own power and position within their party. The internal struggle for power often conflicts with the national welfare, and democratic government suffers as a consequence. In a multi-party system of government, the struggle over party interests frequently prevents stability and coherency in the national government.

In sum, the system of political parties in a parliamentary democracy suffers from three chief weaknesses: (a) it accentuates the conflict of interests between various sectors by tending to give power to some at the expense of the others, (b) it tends to defeat the purpose of democracy by delegating power to representatives without adequate safeguards that they shall function representatively, and (c) it places leaders in a position of conflict of interest with those whom they are supposed to represent if they wish to remain in office. Roy saw the solution to these three weaknesses in replacing parliamentary democracy with a system of pyramidal democracy in which the power would rest with local People's Committees who would have ample authority to recall non-representative officials, while assuring that the interests of all sectors were adequately represented.

At the end of 1946, the Radical Democratic Party, meeting in Bombay, adopted Roy's "New Humanism" and a manifesto was issued later explaining its change of policy and including a list of theses or basic principles of the new philosophy. The party renounced the struggle for power and declared: "The members of the party will function as the guides, friends and philosophers of the people rather than as their would-be rulers. Consistent with the goal of freedom, the political practice of the party will be rational and ethical... Realising that freedom is inconsistent with concentration of power, the party will not seek to capture power."⁴ Instead, the party was to dedicate itself to bring about a new social order 'from below' by educating the masses as a means to a cultural renaissance and successful organization of People's Committees.

The programme called for rejection of Marxism as well as parliamentary democracy. A political system and an economic experiment which subordinate the man of flesh and blood to an imaginary collective ego, be it the nation or a class, cannot be the suitable means for the attainment of the goal of freedom. The defects of formal parliamentary democracy result from the delegation of power. Atomised individual citizens are powerless for all practical purposes, and most of the time, they have no means to exercise their sovereignty and to wield a standing control of the State machinery.

The alternative to parliamentary democracy is not dictatorship; it is organised democracy in the place of the formal democracy of powerless atomised individual citizens. The parliament should be the apex of a pyramidal structure of the State reared on the base of an organised democracy composed of a countrywide network of People's Committees.

The manifesto also called for radical economic reorganization of the national economy. It envisaged a system of producers' and consumers' co-operatives organized pyramidally parallel to the system of People's Committees. It recognized that the economic liberation of the masses is an essential condition for their advancing towards the goal of freedom.

Roy continued to develop his criticism of political parties, and shortly afterward recommended to the members of the Radical Democratic Party that it should be dissolved. A conference was held at Calcutta in 1948 in which a statement was adopted which transformed the party into an educational movement aimed at promoting radical democracy by the diffusion rather than the centralization of power. The issue today, it declared, is not a struggle between socialism and capitalism, but between the centralization and decentralization of power—dictatorship and democracy. The rise of economic planning in the place of *laissez faire* capitalism has changed the nature of the political contest. "Politics of the traditional type has lost all progressive significance..." With the end of competitive capitalism, the doctrine of *laissez faire* has been replaced by that of State planning. Economic planning increases the scope and power of the State. Those in

control of the State are placed in possession of a vast concentration of power... Therefore, the issue is no longer between capitalism and socialism, but between dictatorship resulting from power-politics and democracy. In this situation, traditional concepts of politics must be given up; democratic politics must be conceived differently."⁵

The new name adopted was the Radical Humanist Movement. Roy meanwhile published a criticism of Marxism and exposition of humanism which he entitled, *Beyond Communism* (1946). The quarterly, *The Marxian Way*, which he edited was renamed *The Humanist Way*. The weekly newspaper was renamed *The Radical Humanist*. In addition to a volume on *Science and Philosophy* (1947), Roy published a lengthy criticism of *The Russian Revolution* (1949).

He then sought to sum up his humanist philosophy in a comprehensive two-volume work entitled, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* (1952-1955). He saw reason and romanticism as the two essential forces in revolution. The passionate belief in the creativeness and freedom of man is the essence of the romantic view of life. In this sense, revolution is a romantic idea. On the other hand, revolutions take place because of determinable causes. There is a rational order in nature, which must be understood. Reason, through the understanding of social and economic forces, can help in the realization of revolution.

Human desires are themselves a part of the rational order of the universe. Man's passionate desire for *what should be* requires tempering by an awareness of *what is possible*. Here is the essence of political action. "Romanticism tempered with reason, and rationalism enlivened by the romantic spirit of adventure, pave the road to successful revolution."⁶

The goal of political action must be the pursuit of human freedom, for that is the path of man's further development. The quest for freedom is the basis of man's struggle for existence and the source of his biological evolution. It is the source of his search for knowledge, which in turn liberates him from the tyranny of natural phenomena in his physical and social environment. "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 organization. Guided by the dictum of ancient wisdom that man is the measure of everything, the philosophy of the future should proclaim that the merit of any pattern of social organisation or political institution is to be judged by the actual measure of freedom it affords to the individual."⁷

"What is needed is creation of conditions under which democracy will be possible. In the first place, there must be a conscious and integrated effort to stimulate amongst the people the urge for freedom, the desire to rely upon themselves, the spirit of free thinking and the will never to submit to any external authority by exchanging their freedom for the security of the slave... Moral excellence alone can mould a community together without sacrificing the individual on the altar of the collective ego, be it of the nation or a class. Individuals possessed of that great virtue will command the respect of the intelligent public and be recognised as the friends, philosophers and guides of society."⁸ Thus, political action becomes converted into philosophical action and the struggle for power changed into a quest for moral values.

The separation between the world of philosophy and the world of everyday life has had disastrous consequences. It has reduced everyday life in society to the laws of the jungle. The need of modern man is to bring philosophy back into his everyday life. "The practice of the virtues of rational thinking, of the love of truth and moral values, by a growing number of men concerned with the problems of this world, is the crying need of the day. The world needs a philosophy to bridge the gulf between spirit and matter, mind and body, and harmonise thought and action."⁹

This philosophy must be humanist. It must counter the cur-

rent schools of political thought—conservative, liberal, socialist and communist—which have one common objective or dominant tendency: to submerge man in the mass. On the other hand, a humanist philosophy can guide man to that ideal society, a commonwealth of spiritually free individuals. In a closing passage, which brings his thoughts close to the idea of the Kibbutz, Roy described the ideal revolutionary movement as: "A brotherhood of men attracted by the adventure of ideas, keenly conscious of the urge for freedom, fired with the vision of a free society of free men, and motivated by the will to remake the world, so as to restore the individual in his position of primacy and dignity, which will show the way out of the contemporary crisis of modern civilisation."

M.N. Roy died in 1954, but Roy's philosophy has continued to provoke attention. A collection of his lectures and articles from the last years of his life, *Politics, Power and Parties*, was published posthumously in 1960.

During his last years, Roy concentrated on criticism of party politics. He reviewed the history of democracy and its present failure which he concluded "resulted from the inability to devise ways and means for the practice of direct democracy in modern States. To be real, democracy must be direct; government must be under the direct control of the people. Is that possible? That is the problem before the political thinkers of our time. In so far as democracy is not government of the people and by the people, it is not democracy. With the rise of the party system, the idea of popular sovereignty became a constitutional fiction. And with the rise of the party system, politics became a scramble for power."¹⁰

Political parties are the chief evil in modern democracy, for they are the main cause of the concentration of power. Both the parties and the concentration of power must be removed, and a truly democratic State established on the foundation of local republics "which will combine all functions of the State as they affect the local life. National culture, national economy and national political institutions will be cast on the pattern of the functions of these local republics; power will remain with them

to be wielded directly by the individual members of the small communities. Being thus reared upon a broad foundation of direct democracies, the State will be really democratic." Usurpation of power will be impossible. A pluralistic modern society can be built up doing away with centralization of power in politics and economics.¹¹

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5. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.
6. M.N. Roy, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*, Calcutta: Renaissance Publishers, Vol. 1, p. 15.
7. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 277.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
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From the writings of M.N. Roy

Lack of Indian Renaissance

Our present misfortune is due to the fact that India did not have her renaissance movement. Having had gone ahead of the European people in the earlier stages of intellectual development, she should have gone through the philosophical revolution known as the Renaissance, if insurmountable obstacles were not inherent in her ancient heritage. Suffice it to say at this moment that, upon the downfall of Buddhism, Indian intellectual life made no room for rationalism, and thus precluded the possibility of the eventual development of scientific thought.

Principles of Radical Democracy

22 Theses

Soon after the Summer Camp of the Radical Democratic Party in May, 1946, M.N. Roy prepared the first draft of the Principles of Radical Democracy. The draft was circulated, and comments and suggestions were received from several of his associates. Prior to the Conference of the Radical Democratic Party at Bombay in December, 1946, intensive sessions of discussions were held to consider the revised draft—among those who took part in those sessions were Tarkateerth Laxman Shastri Joshi, Philip Spratt, Ellen Roy, G.D. Parikh, V.M. Tarkunde, G.R. Dalvi and myself. The Twenty-Two Theses were adopted at the Bombay Conference and Roy then prepared a manifesto elaborating the theses which was published on August 15, 1947 under the title NEW HUMANISM. Ellen Roy and I were also asked to prepare a systematic exposition of the Principles, and our joint effort was published in August 1948 under the title IN MAN'S OWN IMAGE.

In December 1948 the Fourth All-India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party was held in Calcutta where it was resolved that the RDP shall "cease functioning as a political organization and transform itself into the Radical Humanist Movement". In consequence of the 'clarification and crystallisation of ideas', which had been taking place in 1948, Theses 19 and 20 and the last three paragraphs of the Manifesto were also amended by a resolution of the same Conference. The main changes were deletion of all references to 'the party', its growth and its conceivable attainment of political power in Thesis 19 from which the last sentence was also deleted, and alteration of the second sentence in Thesis 20 where the original statement "The Radical Democratic State will be the school..." was amended to read "The People's Committees will be the schools..." We have here reproduced the amended Principles as adopted in December 1948.

For readers who wish to have a further grasp both of the historic context and the philosophical-practical implications of Radical Humanism the following currently available books are recommended:

M.N. Roy: *NEW ORIENTATION; BEYOND COMMUNISM; NEW HUMANISM; REASON, ROMANTICISM AND REVOLUTION 2 VOLS, POLITICS POWER AND PARTIES.*

S.N. Ray: *RADICALISM.*

Ellen Roy and S.N. Ray: *IN MAN'S OWN IMAGE. SNR*

One

Man is the archetype of Society. Co-operative social relationships contribute to develop individual potentialities. But the development of the individual is the measure of social progress. Collectivity presupposes the existence of individuals. Except as the sum total of freedom and well-being, actually enjoyed by individuals, social liberation and progress are imaginary ideals, which are never attained. Well-being, if it is actual, is enjoyed by individuals. It is wrong to ascribe a collective ego to any form of human community (viz., nation, class, etc.), as that practice means sacrifice of the individual. Collective well-being is a function of the well-being of individuals.

Two

Quest for freedom and search for truth constitute the basic urge of human progress. The quest for freedom is the continuation, on a higher level—of intelligence and emotion—of the biological struggle for existence. The search for truth is a corollary thereof. Increasing knowledge of nature enables man to be progressively free from the tyranny of natural phenomena, and physical and social environments. Truth is the content of knowledge.

Three

The purpose of all rational human endeavour, individual as well as collective, is attainment of freedom, in ever increasing measure. Freedom is progressive disappearance of all restric-

tions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals, as human beings, and not as cogs in the wheels of a mechanised social organism. The position of the individual, therefore, is the measure of the progressive and liberating significance of any collective effort or social organisation. The success of any collective endeavour is to be measured by the actual benefit for its constituent units.

Four

Rising out of the background of the law-governed physical nature, the human being is essentially rational. Reason being a biological property, it is not the anti-thesis of will. Intelligence and emotion can be reduced to a common biological denominator. Historical determinism, therefore, does not exclude freedom of the will. As a matter of fact, human will is the most powerful determining factor. Otherwise, there would be no room for revolutions in a rationally determined process of history. The rational and scientific concept of determinism is not to be confused with the teleological or religious doctrine of predestination.

Five

The economic interpretation of history is deduced from a wrong interpretation of Materialism. It implies dualism, whereas Materialism is a monistic philosophy. History is a determined process; but there are more than one causative factors. Human will is one of them, and it cannot always be referred directly to any economic incentive.

Six

Ideation is a physiological process resulting from the awareness of environments. But once they are formed, ideas exist by themselves, governed by their own laws. The dynamics of ideas runs parallel to the process of social evolution, the two influencing each other mutually. But in no particular point of the process of the integral human evolution, can a direct causal relation be established between historical events and the movements of ideas. ('Idea' is here used in the common philosophical sense of

ideology or system of ideas), Cultural patterns and ethical values are not mere ideological super-structures of established economic relations. They are also historically determined—by the logic of the history of ideas.

Seven

For creating a new world of freedom, revolution must go beyond an economic reorganisation of society. Freedom does not necessarily follow from the capture of political power in the name of the oppressed and exploited classes and abolition of private property in the means of production.

Eight

Communism or socialism may conceivably be the means for the attainment of the goal of freedom. How far it can serve that purpose must be judged by experience. A political system and an economic experiment which subordinate the man of flesh and blood to an imaginary collective ego, be it the nation or a class, cannot possibly be the suitable means for the attainment of the goal of freedom. On the one hand, it is absurd to argue that negation of freedom will lead to freedom; and, on the other hand, it is not freedom to sacrifice the individual at the altar of an imaginary collective ego. Any social philosophy or scheme of social reconstruction which does not recognise the sovereignty of the individual, and dismisses the ideal of freedom as an empty abstraction, can have no more than a very limited progressive and revolutionary significance.

Nine

The State being the political organisation of society, its withering away under Communism is a utopia which has been exploded by experience. Planned economy on the basis of socialised industries presupposes a powerful political machinery. Democratic control of that machinery alone can guarantee freedom under the new order. Planning of production for use is possible on the basis of political democracy and individual freedom.

Ten

State ownership and planned economy do not by themselves end exploitation of labour; nor do they necessarily lead to an equal distribution of wealth. Economic democracy is no more possible in the absence of political democracy than the latter is in the absence of the former.

Eleven

Dictatorship tends to perpetuate itself. Planned economy under political dictatorship disregards individual freedom on the pleas of efficiency, collective effort and social progress. Consequently, a higher form of democracy in the socialist society, as it is conceived at present, becomes an impossibility. Dictatorship defeats its professed end.

Twelve

The defects of formal parliamentary democracy have also been exposed in experience. They result from the delegation of power. To make democracy effective, power must always remain vested in the people, and there must be ways and means for the people to wield the sovereign power effectively, not periodically, but from day to day. Atomised individual citizens are powerless for all practical purposes, and most of the time. They have no means to exercise their sovereignty and to wield a standing control of the State machinery.

Thirteen

Liberalism is falsified or parodied under formal parliamentary democracy. The doctrine of *laissez faire* only provides the legal sanction to the exploitation of man by man. The concept of economic man negatifies the liberating doctrine of individualism. The economic man is bound to be a slave or a slave-holder. This vulgar concept must be replaced by the reality of an instinctively rational being who is moral because he is rational. Morality is an appeal to conscience, and conscience is the instinctive awareness of, and reaction to, environments. It is a mechanistic biological function on the level of consciousness. Therefore, it is rational.

Fourteen

The alternative to parliamentary democracy is not dictatorship; it is organised democracy in the place of the formal democracy of powerless atomised individual citizens. The parliament should be the apex of a pyramidal structure of the State reared on the base of an organised democracy composed of a countrywide network of People's Committees. The political organisation of society (the State) will be coincident with the entire society, and consequently the State will be under a standing democratic control.

Fifteen

The function of a revolutionary and liberating social philosophy is to lay emphasis on the basic fact of history that man is the maker of his world—man as a thinking being, and he can be so only as an individual. The brain is a means of production, and produces the most revolutionary commodity. Revolutions presuppose iconoclastic ideas. An increasingly large number of men conscious of their creative power, motivated by the indomitable will to remake the world, moved by the adventure of ideas, and fired with the ideal of a free society of free men can create the conditions under which democracy will be possible.

Sixteen

The method and programme of social revolution must be based on a reassertion of the basic principle of social progress. A social renaissance can come only through determined and widespread endeavour to educate the people as regards the principles of freedom and rational co-operative living. The people will be organised into effective democratic bodies to build up the socio-political foundation of the post-revolutionary order. Social revolution requires in a rapidly increasing number men of the new renaissance and a rapidly expanding system of People's Committees, and an organic co-ordination of both. The programme of revolution will similarly be based on the principles of freedom, reason and social harmony. It will mean elimination of every form of monopoly and vested interest in the regulation of social life.

Seventeen

Radical democracy presupposes economic reorganisation of society so as to eliminate the possibility of exploitation of man by man. Progressive satisfaction of material necessities is the precondition for the individual members of society unfolding their intellectual and other finer human potentialities. An economic reorganisation, such as will guarantee a progressively rising standard of living, is the foundation of the Radical Democratic State. Economic liberation of the masses is an essential condition for their advancing towards the goal of freedom.

Eighteen

The economy of the new social order will be based on production for use and distribution with reference to human needs. Its political organisation excludes delegation of power which, in practice, deprives the people of effective power; it will be based on the direct participation of the entire adult population through the People's Committees. Its culture will be based on universal dissemination of knowledge and on minimum control and maximum scope for, and incentive to, scientific and creative activities. The new society, being founded on reason and science, will necessarily be planned. But it will be planning with the freedom of the individual as its main purpose. The new society will be democratic—politically, economically as well as culturally. Consequently, it will be a democracy which can defend itself.

Nineteen

The ideal of Radical Democracy will be attained through the collective efforts of spiritually free men united in the determination of creating a world of freedom. They will function as the guides, friends and philosophers of the people rather than as their would-be rulers. Consistently with the goal of freedom, their political practice will be rational and therefore ethical. Their effort will be reinforced by the growth of the people's will to freedom. Ultimately, the Radical Democratic State will rise with the support of enlightened public opinion as well as intelligent action of the people. Realising that freedom is inconsistent with

concentration of power, Radical Democrats aim at the widest diffusion of power.

Twenty

In the last analysis, education of the citizen is the condition for such a reorganisation of society as will be conducive to common progress and prosperity without encroaching upon the freedom of the individual. The People's Committees will be the schools for the political and civic education of the citizen. The structure and function of the Radical Democratic State will enable detached individuals to come to the forefront of public affairs. Manned with such individuals, the State machinery will cease to be the instrument in the hands of any particular class to coerce others. Only spiritually free individuals in power can smash all chains of slavery and usher in freedom for all.

Twenty-one

Radicalism integrates science into social organisation and reconciles individuality with collective life; it gives to freedom a moral-intellectual as well as a social content; it offers a comprehensive theory of social progress in which both the dialectics of economic determinism and dynamics of ideas find their due recognition; and it deduces from the same a method and a programme of social revolution in our time.

Twenty-two

Radicalism starts from the dictum that "Man is the measure of everything" (Protagoras) or "Man is the root of mankind" (Marx), and advocates reconstruction of the world as a commonwealth and fraternity of free men, by the collective endeavour of spiritually emancipated moral men.

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Triple pillars of Freedom

Freedom is not a beautiful castle built in the air of imagination. It rests on the triple pillars of humanism, individualism and rationalism.

Homage To M.N. Roy

Sudhindranath Datta

Sudhindranath Datta (1901-1960), a major poet and literary critic in Bengali, was the founder and editor of 'Parichaya' (1931-1943), one of the most celebrated literary journals in the language. His poetical works include: 'Tanvi'; 'Orchestra'; 'Krandasi'; 'Uttarphalguni'; 'Sangbarta'; and 'Dasami'; and prose writings are gathered in two volumes: 'Swagata' and 'Kulaya O Kalpurush'. A selection of his English writings together with translations of some of his Bengali writings into English was published posthumously in 1970 under the title 'The World of Twilight'. The essay reproduced here was written and published shortly after Roy's death SNR

M.N. Roy passed away ten minutes before midnight on January 25, 1954. Since August, 1952, he had been gravely ill; and the end seemed near more than once in the last eighteen months. But miraculous were the recoveries he made, confounding his physicians and lulling the anxiety of his friends with false hopes; and now that he is gone for ever, his death appears incredible. For to those who knew him well he was the embodiment of the vital force that has persisted so triumphantly in an alien universe; and one felt this not only because of the extra-ordinary vicissitudes of his personal life but also because almost alone among the great revolutionaries of our times he pinned his undying faith on man—not in the abstract but as the individual measure of all things.

He hated injustice and inhumanity, although he recognised development and decay to be inseparable from the process of life; and after having sat on the same council as Lenin and Stalin, Gandhi and Nehru, he voluntarily retired into the wilderness,

because he found that to the majority of his fellow revolutionaries social change meant mere transference of power without any real diminution of man-made misery. For such was his integrity that he could not discriminate between ends and means in action, and between sense and slogan in thought; and yet he was not unresponsive to pure ideas, so called. At any rate, the older he became the more analytically philosophical grew his writings; and even in the early days of his success his pre-eminence among the founders of Bolshevism was the consequence less of his Mexican exploits than of his mastery of the dialectical method in which he was at least the equal of Bukharin.

But the initial urge to fight for increase of human happiness came to him while he was still in his teens; and this meant that he had no time at all to acquire an academic education. Thus he was almost entirely self-taught, and even the problems, which as a result of regular schooling are generally admitted to have been thoroughly explored in the past, were for him personal discoveries aided by experience and orientated by private thinking. Consequently, he was seldom trite; and if, underestimating the fund of common knowledge, he occasionally laboured the obvious, whatever he said carried his peculiar accent. Indeed, impressive though he was as a speaker, he never uttered a word merely to create an effect; and he could be assertive only because he was absolutely truthful, according, of course, to his own lights.

These are not the qualities of a purposeful politician who, even when no opportunist, cannot afford to forget expediency; and it is difficult to call M.N. Roy a saint, since at least in the popular mind the concept of saintliness is based on rejection of much that makes life pleasurable. He had little use for such an emasculated ideal; and the good life he wished to see established on earth is a full life, a life, integrated like his own, in which both mind and body receive their just dues. Inevitably therefore, he was widely misunderstood in India where virtue has long been either cloistered or compartmental; and as he refused to compromise, or to subordinate reason to emotion, as he would not differentiate between country and country, or break up the unity of the world by arbitrary hostility to some parts, militant nationalists, whether of the old or the new school, went so far as to

consider him an enemy of the State.

Conversely, individuals of all nations found in him a friend of astonishing loyalty, the kindest of mentors, and one of the wisest students of human affairs; and to his disciples, especially those who remained with him after he had renounced the very desire for political power by dissolving the Radical Democratic Party, he offered a personal relationship that perhaps only the Mahatma had been capable of. Those who loved him must, of course, find his loss irreparable; but should they have learnt by his example, they would not imagine that his death leaves the world poorer. For the world is what it is because it no longer feels the need of persons like him; and yet there is no reason for despair.

At any rate, M.N. Roy was no pessimist, although his sense of realism bordered on the stoical in recent years. He believed in history; and remembering how civilisation survived the fall of Rome in the monastic islands lost in the darkness of barbaric Europe, he sought, in so far as it lay in his power, to foster the growth of individuals. According to him, these repositories of human dignity are the seeds which might form the nuclei of the oases in the circumambient desert; and if they do not forget his counsel of patience, the renaissance he so resolutely hoped for will perhaps recur here and elsewhere—not tomorrow but in the fulness of time.

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Genuine secularism

An alternative development in the democratic and therefore genuinely secular direction will be possible only when the placid background of ignorance, superstition and blind faith will be ploughed up by the spread of knowledge, skepticism and a critical attitude. These are the characteristic features of genuine secularism.