

Impact of Communist Party and M.N. Roy on the Indian Freedom Movement: A Historical Study

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ABSTRACT

Manabendra Nath Roy (born **Narendra Nath Bhattacharya** better known as **M. N. Roy**; 21 March 1887 – 25 January 1954) was an Indian marxist revolutionary, radical activist and political theorist, as well as a noted philosopher in the 20th century. Roy was the founder of the Mexican Communist Party and the Communist Party of India (Tashkent group). He was also a delegate to congresses of the Communist International and Russia's aide to China. In the aftermath of World War II Roy moved away from orthodox Marxism to espouse the philosophy of radical humanism, attempting to chart a third course between liberalism and communism. Narendra Nath "Naren" Bhattacharya, later known as M. N. Roy, was born on 21 March 1887 at Arbelia, located in the North 24 Parganas of West Bengal, near Calcutta (Kolkata). The Bhattacharyas were Sakta Brahmins – a family of hereditary priests. Naren's paternal grandfather was the head priest of the goddess Khepateswari in the village of Kheput, located in the Midnapore district of West Bengal. Naren's father also served for a time in priestly capacity there, although the large size of his family – he being one of 11 siblings – forced a relocation to the village of Arbelia and a change of occupation. Following the death of his first wife, the elder Bhattacharya married Basantakumari Devi, the niece of Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan and was appointed as a teacher of Sanskrit in the nearby Arbelia English school. The couple had a total of eight children, including the fourth-born Naren. Naren Bhattacharya's early schooling took place at Arbelia. In 1898 the family moved to Kodalia. Bhattacharya continued his studies at the Harinavi Anglo-Sanskrit School, at which his father taught, until 1905. Tall for his age (eventually growing to 6 feet), Bhattacharya was strong and athletic. Bhattacharya later enrolled at the National College under Sri Aurobindo, before moving to the Bengal Technical Institute (present Jadavpur University), where he studied Engineering and

Chemistry. Much of Bhattacharya's knowledge was gained through self-study, however.

Keywords: *M.N. Roy, communist, Mexican, revolutionary, freedom, movement, Indian, Bengal, humanism*

Introduction

Towards the end of the 19th Century revolutionary nationalism began to spread among the educated middle classes of Bengal, inspired by the writings of Bankim and Vivekananda. Naren Bhattacharya was swept up in this movement, reading both of these leading luminaries extensively. According to one biographer, [1,2] Roy gained an appreciation from Bankim that true religion required one not to be cloistered from the world, but to work actively for the public good; Vivekananda reinforced this notion of social service and further advanced the idea that Hinduism and Indian culture was superior to anything the western world could offer.

With his cousin and childhood friend Hari Kumar Chakravarti (1882–1963), he formed a band of free-thinkers including Satcowri Banerjee and the brothers, Saileshvar and Shyamsundar Bose. Two other cousins of Bhattacharya and Chakravarti — Phani and Narendra Chakravarti – often came from Deoghar, where they went to school with Barin Ghosh. A mysterious Vedic scholar, Mokshadacharan Samadhyayi, active organiser of secret branches of the Anushilan Samiti in Chinsura started frequenting Bhattacharya group. In July 1905 a partition of Bengal was announced, scheduled to take effect in October. A spontaneous mass movement aimed at annulment of the partition emerged, giving radical nationalists like Naren Bhattacharya and his co-thinkers an opportunity to build broader support for their ideas. Following his expulsion from high school for organising a meeting and a march against the partition, Bhattacharya and Chakravarti moved to Kolkata and joined in the active work of the

Anushilan. Under Mokshada's leadership, on 6 December 1907 Bhattacharya successfully committed the first act of political banditry to raise money for the secret society. When arrested, he was carrying two seditious books by Barin Ghosh. Defended by the Barrister J.N. Roy (close friend of Jatindranath Mukherjee or Bagha Jatin) [3,4] and the pleader Promothonath Mukherjee, he got released on bail, thanks to his reputation as a student and social worker. Unhappy with Barin's highly centralised and authoritative way of leadership, Bhattacharya and his group had been looking for something more constructive than making bombs at the Maniktala garden. Two incidents sharpened their interest in an alternative leadership. Barin had sent Prafulla Chaki with Charuchandra Datta to see Bagha Jatin at Darjeeling who was posted there on official duty, and do away with the Lt. Governor; on explaining to Prafulla that the time was not yet ripe, Jatin promised to contact him later. Though Prafulla was much impressed by this hero, Barin cynically commented that it would be too much of an effort for a Government officer to serve a patriotic cause. Shortly after, Phani returned from Darjeeling, after a short holiday: fascinated by Jatin's charisma, he informed his friends about the unusual man. On hearing Barin censuring Phani for disloyalty, Bhattacharya decided to see that exceptional Dada and got caught for good. The Howrah-Shibpur Trial (1910–11) brought Bhattacharya closer to Jatindra Mukherjee.[5,6]

Many Indian nationalists, including Roy, became convinced that only through an armed struggle against the British would be sufficient to separate India from the British Empire. To the furtherance of this end, revolutionary nationalists looked to a rival imperial power, that of Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany, as a potential source of funds and armaments.

In August 1914 a massive European war erupted between Britain and Germany. Expatriate Indian nationalists organised as the Indian Revolutionary Committee in Berlin made an informal approach to the German government in support of aid to the cause of anti-British armed struggle in India. These contacts were favourable and towards the end of the year word reached India that the Germans had agreed to provide the money and material necessary for the launch of an armed struggle against British rule. Revolution seemed near. The task of obtaining funds and armaments for the coming struggle was entrusted to Naren Bhattacharya. Bhattacharya was dispatched first to Java, where over the next two months he was

able to obtain some limited funds, albeit no armaments.[7,8]

Early in 1915, Bhattacharya set out again, leaving India in search of vaguely promised German armaments which were believed to be en route, somewhere on the Pacific.[9] Roy would not see his homeland again for 16 years.

The actual plan seemed fantastic, as Bhattacharya-Roy later recounted in his posthumously published memoirs:

"The plan was to use German ships interned in a port at the northern tip of Sumatra, to storm the Andaman Islands and free and arm the prisoners there, and land the army of liberation on the Orissa coast. The ships were armoured, as many big German vessels were, ready for wartime use. they also carried several guns each. The crew was composed of naval ratings. They had to escape from the internment camp, seize the ships, and sail... Several hundred rifles and other small arms with an adequate supply of ammunition could be acquired through Chinese smugglers who would get then on board the ships." At the last minute, money for the conduct of the operation failed to materialise and "the German Consul General mysteriously disappeared on the day when he was to issue orders for the execution of the plan," Bhattacharya recalled. Disgusted but still holding out hope, Bhattacharya left Indonesia for Japan, hoping to win Japanese support for their cause, despite Japan's nominal alliance with Great Britain. There he met with Chinese nationalist leader Sun Yat-sen, who had escaped to Japan following the failure of a July 1913 uprising in Nanking. Sun Yat-sen refused to assist Bhattacharya in his task of organising an anti-British revolution in India, instead informing Roy that Japanese support would prove sufficient and his own inability to assist them owing to Hong Kong's status as a British colony, Sun's base of operations in South China. Efforts to raise money from the German Ambassador to China were likewise unsuccessful.[10,11]

Bhattacharya's activities soon drew the attention of the Japanese secret police, who were concerned about Bhattacharya's efforts at fomenting revolution. Upon learning that he was about to be served formal notice to leave Japan within 24 hours and not wishing to be deported to Shanghai, Bhattacharya immediately set about leaving the country overland through Korea. He tried to make his way from there to Peking (Beijing), but by this time he was spotted and identified by the

British secret police, who detained him. However, Bhattacharya was able to win his release from the police, due to the British Consul General's ill ease with holding a British subject indefinitely without having formal charges first been preferred.

Further efforts to raise funds for armaments from the German consulate at Hankow resulted in a further tentative agreement. However, this plan also came to naught owing to the size of the commitment, which had to be approved in Berlin, according to German Ambassador to China Admiral Paul von Hintze. Bhattacharya determined to take his plan for German funding next to the German Ambassador in the United States, before heading to Germany itself. Employees of the German embassy were able to assist Bhattacharya in obtaining a place as a stowaway aboard an American ship with a German crew, bound for San Francisco. Although they knew he was on board the ship, British colonial authorities stopping the vessel in international waters were unable to locate Bhattacharya in the secret compartment in which he was hurriedly hidden. In an effort to throw the British off his trail – and in an effort to obtain more suitable accommodations for the long trans-Pacific voyage, Bhattacharya stealthily disembarked at Kobe, Japan. In Kobe Bhattacharya made use of a false French-Indian passport previously obtained for him by the Germans in China. Posing as a seminary student bound for Paris, Bhattacharya obtained an American passport visa, bought a ticket, and sailed for San Francisco.[12,13]

Discussion

MANABENDRA Nath Roy, popularly known as M N Roy, was an important figure in the early days of the Communist movement in India. Roy was the initiator of the formation of the Communist Party in Tashkent in October 1920. He played a pioneering role in spreading Marxist ideas and the role of a Communist Party amongst the fledgling Communist groups which emerged in India from 1921 onwards. M N Roy's revolutionary life was a colourful one and he went through many adventurous times before becoming a prominent figure in the Communist International. Roy was born in a village, Arbelia, in the 24 Parganas district of Bengal. Even as a young teenager, Roy participated in the anti-British struggle as a member of a revolutionary group. He was first arrested in connection with the Howrah conspiracy case, but was acquitted in 1911. Subsequently, he became a member of the Yugantar group headed by Jatindranath Mukherjee. Jatin's group decided to seek German

support for the fight against British. In April 1915, Roy was sent to Indonesia, then called the Netherlands Indies, to contact the German Consul there. His attempt to send arms to Calcutta was unsuccessful. Meanwhile the British authorities had tracked down the conspiracy and Jatindranath was killed in an armed encounter.

In the meantime, Roy had returned to Java and decided not to return to India after these events. He went to Japan, via Shanghai, and then on to San Francisco in the United States. He made contacts with the Ghadar Party. From there he proceeded to New York to contact Indian revolutionaries there. It is at the New York public library that Roy first became acquainted with the writings of Karl Marx. He was also influenced by the radical views of an American graduate student, Evelyn Trent, whom he had met in Stanford. He later married her.[14,15]

Roy had to leave the United States because of an arrest warrant for illegal entry. He went to Mexico with his wife. Until this stage, M N Roy was focused on how to raise funds and organise armed rebellion in India. In Mexico, he associated with the Mexican Socialist Party, a small group at that time. He came in touch with Mikhail Borodin, who later became a leading functionary of the Communist International. It was Borodin who initiated him into Marxism. Roy had very little formal education. He was self-taught and endowed with enormous intelligence. He mastered enough Spanish in a few months to write pamphlets and speak on public platforms. He became a leader of the Mexican Socialist Party and soon after converted the party into the Communist Party of Mexico in 1919. It was as a representative of the Mexican Communist Party that Roy went to attend the Second Congress of the Communist International which was held in Moscow in July-August 1920.

M N Roy, new to Communism, became prominent in the Second Congress by submitting a supplementary thesis on the national and colonial question. Lenin had prepared a draft thesis on the national and colonial question, which was circulated among the delegates. Both Lenin and Roy's theses were debated in the National and Colonial Commission. Roy had argued in his supplementary theses that the bourgeoisie in India was not capable of putting up an effective fight against British imperialism and was compromising in character. He felt that the united front policies, which called for Communist support to national movements, was inappropriate for India. This was rejected by the

Congress and various amendments were made to the supplementary theses of Roy. Lenin's thesis was adopted with some modifications.

The Comintern Congress elected M N Roy as a member of the executive committee of the Communist International. Subsequently, he was made head of the Central Asiatic Bureau, in which capacity he went to Tashkent. [16,17] Here he got in touch with the large number of Muhajirs who had come from India. He worked among them to convince them to join the Communist Party in order to pursue the goal of fighting British rule. It is in this process that Roy took the initiative to form the first Indian Communist group, on October 17, 1920. Roy returned to Moscow and after discussions with the Communist International, it was decided that all Communist activities in India would be channeled through the group headed by Roy. His sojourn in the Comintern was notable. He was elected to the Presidium in 1926 and also held key positions in the Political Secretariat, the ECCI and the World Congress. From 1921 onwards, Roy kept up a barrage of letters and publications addressed to fledgling Communist groups and its leaders in India. In May 1922, he started the journal *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* which continued with other names like *the Advance Guard* and *the Masses of India* till 1925. This was the first Communist journal to reach India talking about Indian issues. The British were vigilant. They proscribed the journal and confiscated the bulk of the copies which were reaching India.

It was in this period that he wrote his first book, *India in Transition*. This book sought to do a Marxist analysis of the economy, polity and ideology in India under British rule. This book had a big impact upon those looking towards Communism in India. M N Roy also published regularly articles on India in the Comintern organ *International Press Correspondence*, ie, *Imprecor*. Roy also sent manifestos and statements to the Indian National Congress sessions. The first one was sent to the Ahmedabad Congress in 1921 and subsequently to the Gaya Congress in 1922 and to the 1923 and 1924 sessions.[18,19]

M N Roy shifted to Berlin in April 1922 because he found it difficult to reach other regions in India, apart from North India via Central Asia. He sent an emissary, Nalini Dasgupta, in 1921 and 1923 to make contact with the Communist groups that were developing. As Communist activities increased in India, the Comintern established a Foreign Bureau of

the CPI headed by M N Roy, Sipassi and Clemens Dutt to look after affairs in India. After seeing the repressive policy of the British government to the newly sprung Communist groups and the conspiracy cases, trial and imprisonment of Communist activists, Roy wanted the formation of Workers and Peasants parties which could also cooperate with the Congress nationalist movement. Such Workers and Peasants parties sprang up in Bengal, Bombay, Punjab and later in Uttar Pradesh.

After the Kanpur conspiracy case of 1924, in which Roy himself was indicted, he called for the creation of a 'Revolutionary Nationalist Party' with a programme of "national independence, abolition of feudalism and landlordism, nationalisation of land, mines and public utilities and freedom of religion and worship". Till 1926, M N Roy was closely following and involved in various efforts to develop the Communist Party and the Workers and Peasants parties within India. In 1927, the Comintern sent M N Roy as one of its representatives to China, where the revolutionary movement was developing. The brutal suppression of the Communists in Shanghai and Canton by the Kuomintang with whom there was a united front led to a major controversy in the Comintern.

Roy returned to Moscow in September 1927, but soon fell out of favour with the Comintern leadership. He left for Berlin in 1929 and became associated with the German opposition Communists. He was expelled from the Comintern in December 1929. Roy returned to India in 1930 and began working with the Congress party with a group of loyalists known as "Royists". He was arrested by the British authorities on old cases pending against him. Put on trial, he was sentenced to 12 years rigorous imprisonment which, on appeal, was reduced to six years. He came out of jail in 1936.[20,21]

The Royists, who worked in trade unions and other political activities, were bitterly anti-Communist. M N Roy was pitted against the CPI, though he never denounced the Soviet Union and actually supported the Stalin led war effort to defeat fascism. In 1943, he renounced Marxism and adopted a new creed, 'Radical Humanism'. Though he ended up abandoning Marxism, the pioneering contributions of M N Roy in developing the Communist movement in India between 1921 to 1926, cannot be forgotten.

During his stay in Palo Alto, a period of about two months, Roy met his future wife, a young Stanford University graduate named Evelyn Leonora Trent

(1892–1970; alias Shanthi Devi). The pair fell in love and journeyed together across the country to New York City. It was in the New York City public library that Roy began to develop his interest in Marxism. His socialist transition under Lala owed much to Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's essays on communism and Vivekananda's message of serving the proletariat.[citation needed] Noting the presence of British spies, Roy fled to Mexico in July 1917 with Evelyn. German military authorities, on the spot, gave him large amounts of money. The Mexican president Venustiano Carranza and other liberal thinkers appreciated Roy's writings for *El Pueblo*. The Socialist Party he founded (December 1917), was converted into the Communist Party of Mexico in 1919, the first Communist Party outside Russia. The Roys lodged a penniless Mikhail Borodin, the Bolshevik leader, under special circumstances. On the basis of a grateful Borodin's reports on Roy's activities, Moscow was to invite Roy to the 2nd World Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow during the summer of 1920. A few weeks before the Congress, Vladimir Lenin personally received Roy with great warmth. At Lenin's behest, Roy formulated his own ideas as a supplement to Lenin's Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions.

Material from Roy's pen was published by International Press Correspondence (Inprecor), the weekly bulletin of the Communist International. Roy served as a member of the Comintern's Presidium for eight years and at one stage was a member of the Presidium, the Political Secretariat, the Executive Committee, and the World Congress. Commissioned by Lenin to prepare the East – especially India – for revolution, Roy founded military and political schools in Tashkent. In October 1920, as he formed the Communist Party of India (Tashkent group), he contacted his erstwhile revolutionary colleagues who, at this juncture, were hesitating between Radicalism (Jugantar) and Mohandas K. Gandhi's novel programme. Close to the Jugantar in spirit and action, C. R. Das inspired Roy's confidence. From Moscow, Roy published his major reflections, *India in Transition*, almost simultaneously translated into other languages. In 1922 Roy's own journal, the *Vanguard*, which was the organ of the emigre Communist Party of India, was first published. These were followed by *The Future of Indian Politics* (1926) and *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China* (1930), while he had been tossing between Germany and France. Leading a

Comintern delegation appointed by Joseph Stalin to develop agrarian revolution in China, Roy reached Canton in February 1927. Despite fulfilling his mission with skill,[citation needed] a disagreement with the CCP leaders and Borodin led to a fiasco. Roy returned to Moscow where factions supporting Leon Trotsky and Grigory Zinoviev were busy fighting with Stalin's.[22,23] Here he voted for Trotsky's expulsion from the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Stalin refused to meet Roy and give him a hearing at the plenum in February 1928. Denied a decent treatment for an infected ear, Roy escaped with Nikolai Bukharin's help, sparing himself Stalin's anger. Shortly after Trotsky's deportation, on 22 May 1928, Roy received the permission to go abroad for medical treatment on board a Berlin-bound plane of the Russo-German Airline Deruluft. [28] In December 1929, the Inprecor announced Roy's expulsion from the Comintern, almost simultaneously with Bukharin's fall from grace.

In India (1930–1954)

Roy returned to India for the first time in December 1930. Upon reaching Bombay, Roy met leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose, the former of whom recalled that despite significant political differences, "I was attracted to him by his remarkable intellectual capacity." Roy's political activity in India proved to be brief, on 21 July 1931 he was arrested in Bombay on an arrest warrant issued in 1924. Roy was taken to Kanpur to face charges under Section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code, "conspiring to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty in India." No trial was held in open court; rather, the proceedings were conducted inside the jail in which Roy was held. Roy was allowed neither trial by jury nor defense witnesses, nor was he allowed to make a defense statement. Proceedings were conducted from 3 November 1931 until 9 January 1932, at which time Roy was sentenced to 12 years of rigorous imprisonment. Roy was taken immediately under armed guard to Bareilly Central Jail for completion of his sentence managing, however, he was able to smuggle out the defence statement which he was not allowed to present in court. This disallowed declaration was published in full by Roy's supporters in India as *My Defence*, and in abridged form in New York as *I Accuse*. Roy was unapologetic for his advocacy of the use of armed struggle against British colonial rule, in his own defence declaring

The oppressed people and exploited classes are not obliged to respect the moral philosophy of the ruling

power.... 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 in India are instruments of crime. They become instruments of virtue when they are turned against the imperialist state. Roy filed an appeal in his case to the Allahabad High Court, but this was dismissed on 2 May 1933 – although Roy's sentence was at the same time reduced from 12 years to 6 by the court.[21] Roy ultimately served 5 years and 4 months of this term, sitting in five different jails.[22] Dismal prison conditions took a severe toll on Roy's health, and he suffered lasting damage to his heart, kidneys, lungs, and digestive tract as a result of his time behind bars.[23] Roy also lost several teeth, was frequently feverish, and suffered constant pain from a chronically infected inner ear.

Despite his imprisonment, Roy still managed to contribute to the Indian independence movement. A steady stream of letters and articles were smuggled out of jail. He also wrote a 3000-page draft manuscript provisionally titled *The Philosophical Consequence of Modern Science*. His followers, including A. A. Alwe, formed the Bombay Provincial Working Class Party in 1933 to continue his work while he was imprisoned. Released in November 1936 in broken health, Roy went to Allahabad for recovery, invited by Nehru. Defying the Comintern order to boycott the Indian National Congress, Roy urged Indian Communists to join this Party to radicalise it. Nehru, in his presidential address at Faizpur session in December 1936, greeted the presence of Roy, as...one who, though young, is an old and well-trying soldier in India's fight for freedom. Comrade M.N. Roy has just come to us after a long and most distressing period in prison, but though shaken up in body, he comes with a fresh mind and heart, eager to take part in that old struggle that knows no end till it ends in success. From the podium Roy in his speech recommended the capture of power by Constituent Assembly. Unable to collaborate with Gandhi, however, Roy was to stick to his own conviction. In April 1937, his weekly *Independent India* appeared and was welcomed by progressive leaders like Bose and Nehru, unlike Gandhi, and the staunch Communists who accused Roy of deviation.

Results

In marrying Ellen Gottschalk, his second wife, "Roy found not only a loving wife but also an intelligent helper and close collaborator." They settled in Dehra

Dun. Roy proposed an alternative leadership, seized the crisis following Bose's re-election as the Congress President, in 1938: in Pune, in June, he formed his League of Radical Congressmen. Disillusioned with both bourgeois democracy and communism, he devoted the last years of his life to the formulation of an alternative philosophy which he called Radical Humanism and of which he wrote a detailed exposition in *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*. [24]

In his monumental biography, *In Freedom's Quest*, Sibnarayan Ray writes:

If Nehru had his problems, so had Roy. From early life his sharp intellect was matched by a strong will and extra-ordinary self-confidence. It would seem that in his long political career there were only two persons and a half who, in his estimate, qualified to be his mentors. The first was Jatin Mukherji (or Bagha Jatin) from his revolutionary nationalist period; the second was Lenin. The half was Joseph Stalin.

With the declaration of World War II, Roy (in a position close to that of Sri Aurobindo) condemned the rising totalitarian regimes in Germany and Italy, instead supporting England and France in the fight against fascism. He severed connections with the Congress Party and created the Radical Democratic Party in 1940. Gandhi proceeded to lead the Quit India movement in August 1942. In response, the British colonial government imprisoned without trial almost the entire Indian National Congress leadership within hours. Roy's line was clearly different from that of the mainstream of the independence movement. According to Roy, a victory for Germany and the Axis powers would have resulted in the end of democracy worldwide and India would never be independent. In his view India could win her independence only in a free world. On the other hand, Subhas Chandra Bose took the stance that The enemy of my enemy is my friend, leading him to seek alliances with Axis powers. Escaping house-arrest and India, Bose formed the Azad Hind Provisional Indian Government in Exile and allied with the Japanese, bringing the Indian National Army to India's doorstep.

Sensing India's independence to be a post-war reality following the defeat of the Axis powers and the weakening of the British Empire, Roy wrote a series of articles in *Independent India* on the economic and political structures of new India, even presenting a concrete ten-year plan, and drafting a Constitution of Free India (1944).

Roy in his philosophy devised means to ensure human freedom and progress. Remembering Bagha Jatin who "personified the best of mankind", Roy worked "for the ideal of establishing a social order in which the best in man could be manifest." In 1947, he elaborated his theses into a manifesto, *New Humanism*, expected to be as important as the *Communist Manifesto* by Marx a century earlier.[23,24]

A lecture tour to the United States was suspended on 25 January 1954 as console to Roy's death.

Beginning in 1987, Oxford University Press began the publication of the *Selected Works of M.N. Roy*. A total of 4 volumes were published through 1997, gathering Roy's writings through his prison years. Project editor Sibnarayan Ray died in 2008, however, and the Roy works publishing project was therefore prematurely terminated. Noted personalities like T. M. Tarkunde, Govardhandas Parekh, V. B. Karnik, Sunil Bhattacharya, B. R. Sunthakar, Saleel Wagh, V. R. Jawahire and Dr. Nalini Taralekar were influenced by M. N. Roy and his philosophy.

In 1915, after World War I had begun, Roy made several trips to Indonesia, with help from German contacts, to procure arms to overthrow the British. In 1916, he landed in the United States. Roy was tracked so closely by British Intelligence that the day he landed at San Francisco, a local newspaper published a report headlined, "Mysterious Alien Reaches America, Famous Brahmin Revolutionary or Dangerous German Spy." This forced him to flee south to Palo Alto, California. It was here that he changed his name from Narendranath Bhattacharya and became Manabendra Nath Roy. When the United States participated in WWI, Roy was arrested for his anti-colonial leanings. He jumped bail and escaped to Mexico. In Mexico, he became a vocal advocate of the socialist state and founded the Mexican Communist Party in 1917.

In M.N. Roy's *Memoirs*, he wrote, "...Mexico was the land of my rebirth...during my stay in Mexico... (a) new vision became clear and the dissatisfaction with a sterile past was replaced by a conviction to guide me in a more promising future." Roy was a restless spirit always on the move. Inspired by his experiences in Mexico, Roy founded the Communist Party of India in 1920 along with six other leaders at Tashkent now in Uzbekistan. He also travelled to Moscow to attend the second conference of the Communist International.[20,21]

There he formed a favourable impression of Communists leader Vladimir Lenin, met Joseph Stalin and became a part of the Communist International. By 1926, he was serving the policy-making bodies of the Communist International and in 1927, he visited China. Roy's mission to make Chinese Communist Party implement guidelines by the Communist International failed. Following this, he was expelled from the Communist International in September 1929. Roy returned to India in 1930 and was sentenced to six years imprisonment in 1931 for his involvement in 1924 Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy case. Roy and other senior communist leaders, including S.A. Dange and Shaikat Usmani, were arrested for trying "to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty of British India, by complete separation of India from imperialistic Britain by a violent revolution." While in jail, Roy wrote *Prison Manuscripts*, a set of nine thick volumes. These have not been published in totality. They are preserved at Nehru Memorial Museum and National Archives of India, New Delhi. After his release in 1936, Roy joined the Indian National Congress. He left the party later in 1940 as a result of Congress' reluctance to aid the British in World War II. In 1946, Roy established the Indian Renaissance Institute at Dehradun in order to develop the Indian Renaissance Movement. Roy died of a heart attack on 25 January 1954.

Conclusions

Like in other parts of the world, the Russian Revolution of 1917 served as a great inspiration for revolutionaries in India who at that time were engaged in the struggle for the liberation from British rule. Many of them were living in exile and had been in contact with Lenin and the Bolshevik Party and in 1913-14 some of them had formed the Ghadar Party. But it was in 1920 that the Communist Party of India came into existence. The ground for the formation of an émigré Communist Party of India was prepared by The Second World Congress of the Communist Third International (1920). The Comintern Executive committee (ECCI) set up a sub-committee, the 'Small Bureau', to begin the process. The Bureau organised the First Congress of the Peoples of the East at Baku in September 1920, specifically aimed at fighting imperialism in Asia. This was followed by the formation of the Communist Party of India on 17 October 1920 at Tashkent. The seven members were M. N. Roy, Evelyn Roy-Trent, Abani Mukherjee, Rosa Fitingov, Mohammad Ali,

Mohamad Shafiq and Acharya. Shafiq was elected as the secretary of the party, Roy as secretary of the party's Bureau based in socialist Turkestan and Acharya as the chairman who signed the minutes. At the first meeting on 17 October, the organization adopted its name as the 'The Indian Communist Party'. The inaugural meeting also adopted the principles of the Comintern and decided to work out a programme of the CPI that was 'suited to the conditions of India'. A preliminary discussion was held on membership procedure and affiliation to the Comintern. The meeting was concluded with the singing of 'The International'.

M. N. Roy, as the principal organiser of the party, was keen on and successfully recruited young ex-Muhajir students from India. Roy and Evelyn Roy-Trent, his wife and comrade at the time, played a key role in bringing Mohammad Shafiq, Mohammad Ali and other ex-Muhajirs into the fold of the nascent communist party. The former Muhajirs (Muslims on self-imposed exile from colonial India) were losing their faith in Pan-Islam and enthusiastically joined the early CPI as its founders and earliest members. They had started their journey from India as Muhajirs and joined the process of hijrat, or religious exodus from the land ruled by the infidel (British colonisers). This was an anti-colonial impulse which gained ground among a section of Indian Muslims during the First World War and its immediate aftermath. It was expressed through anti-imperialist Pan-Islamism and showed a marked tendency to align with other anti-colonial tendencies and groups. The aim of the Muhajirs was to reach Afghanistan and Turkey. Some of them had made their way through the North West Frontier Province to Afghanistan, and from there to Soviet Central Asia. In the Bolshevik territories, they underwent an ideological transformation.[23]

The minutes of the CPI of 15 December 1920 reveal the induction of three others as candidate members who had to complete a probation period of three months for full membership of the party. The same meeting also elected a three-member Executive Committee with Roy, Shafiq and Acharya. The party was registered in Turkestan and recognized by the Comintern as a group with a consultative voice during the Third Congress of the International in 1921. Many of the ex-Muhajirs who joined the party in early 1921 travelled to Moscow and enrolled in the newly started University of the Toilers of the East.

The formation of the CPI was followed by the establishment of an Indian Military Training School in Tashkent. The school functioned from October 1920 to the end of May 1921. Its students, such as Rafiq Ahmad and Shaukat Usmani, later shifted to the University of Toilers of the East in Moscow. According to Muzaffar Ahmad, one of the pioneers of the communist movement in India, at least twenty-one names of young Muhajir students could be identified from the records. They had joined the Tashkent Military School and later some of them had enrolled at the university in Moscow. Of them, ten were arrested when they returned to India to form a communist movement. They were tried in the Peshawar Conspiracy Case and convicted to various terms of rigorous imprisonment. Shaukat Usmani who had been convicted in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case of 1924, was re-convicted along with Mir Abdul Majid in the Meerut Conspiracy Case of 1929. Muzaffar Ahmad dedicated his memoirs of the CPI to Abdul Majid and Ferozuddin Mansur, two of the pioneering ex-Muhajirs turned communists from India.[24]

Though the émigré communists faced persecution when they tried to return, their activities from abroad boosted and preceded the emergence of the communist movement within India. The formation of the party in Tashkent was followed by initiatives by the émigrés to connect with activists such as Muzaffar Ahmad, S. A. Dange, Singaravelu Chettier and others who were inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and were turning towards Marxist-Leninist politics and organising small communist groups in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Lahore and Kanpur in the course of late 1921 and 1922.[25]

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