

DR. DATTA & CO.'S MOSCOW JOURNEY

In 1921 Dr. Bhupendranath Datta (he had not yet achieved his 'doctorate') and several other Indian exiles started from Germany on their "journey to Moscow". They reached their destination safely. After the October Revolution (November, according to the new style [N. S.] of reckoning) of 1917, Moscow had become a place of pilgrimage for revolutionaries of every country in the world. Even our Indian revolutionaries, already long in exile, went on that pilgrimage. Their names are set out below:

1. Bhupendranath Datta
2. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya
3. Birendranath Das Gupta
4. Abdul Wahid
5. Pandarang Khankhoje
6. Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani
7. Herambalal Gupta

8. Nalini Gupta
9. Agnes Smedley.

The leader of this group was Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, but I have placed Dr. Bhupendranath Datta's name first because, thirty-two years after his "journey to Moscow", he has written about it in his book (in Bengali) under the caption "Unpublished Political History" (revised edition, April, 1953). To this book there is an appendix of 114 pages, entitled "Journey to Moscow". One might say that in this appendix he has spouted venom against the Communists.

I have known Dr. Datta for many years and occasionally I read his writings. Many people do not always attach any importance to what he says or writes. As he speaks or writes he often loses grip and begins to ramble. Personally, I do not much mind even such of his writings as amount to an attack against us. Except in this present instance, I cannot recall a single occasion when I have contradicted him in writing. This time also, I have kept silent for a long time. But on further thought I have realised that everybody does not know Dr. Datta personally as I do, that what he has written will remain permanently on record, and those of the generation succeeding mine and the generation after that might read his writings and get a wrong conception of things. His "Journey to Moscow" was no mere personal reminiscence; he has said in it a great deal about many other people, most of which is not accurate. I fear that in many places he has deliberately said what was not true, and in many others his memory has played him false. It has long been his habit to jumble up things. For one

thing, he has never been able to tolerate the Communist Party of India, though in consideration of his loneliness in public life the Party has consistently placed him in the limelight. He has through his writings sought to slander the international communist movement and its leader Lenin (though with characteristic inconsistency he has in certain places called Lenin a great man). He is now an octogenarian, but if he had not taken to this path I would not have thought of writing in order to contradict him.

First of all, it is necessary to give a short introduction regarding the persons who had made the "Journey to Moscow". My readers should know the situation with which they had been confronted and the hurdles they crossed before taking to the road to Moscow.

Dr. Bhupendranath Datta, Birendranath Das Gupta and Herambalal Gupta had been members of the secret terrorist-revolutionary movement of Bengal. I do not know at what point of time Herambalal Gupta went abroad or whether he left India for educational purposes or to evade arrest by the police. We can remember having seen his father Umesh Vidyaratna who went about in saffron robes and addressed meetings in College Square in Calcutta on political as well as on religious topics. Herambalal Gupta died abroad.

Shri Birendranath Das Gupta is still (May 1961) alive, but since his return from abroad he has not been

actively in politics. He is founder-director of a business firm known as Indo-Swiss Trading Company.

Dr. Bhupendranath Datta is well-known all over the country. However, it is necessary to give some indication of his activities during his early career, and at least every one should know the circumstances in which he went into voluntary exile abroad. He belonged, as noted above, to the terrorist-revolutionary movement. A weekly, "Jugantar", used to be published on behalf of his group in 1906. This paper had created a great sensation. Its powerful writing won such popularity that the group of terrorist-revolutionaries who sponsored it even came to be known by its name as the "Jugantar" party. Datta was closely associated with the conduct of this paper, but I do not know if he used to write for it. There does not seem to be any resemblance between his style and that of the "Jugantar" of those days. However, in 1907, the British Government of India prosecuted the "Jugantar" under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code for an article published on 16th June, 1907, and warrants were issued in the name of the printer and the editor. In those days it was not obligatory for the name of the editor to be printed in the body of the newspaper. The police, arriving with the warrant of arrest, found themselves in a quandary because they did not know who the editor was. It was then that Datta came forward to say: "This paper is mine, and I am the editor. I have written the article in question, and the printer is not liable." (*vide* Hemendranath Das Gupta, "The Story of the Revolution in India" (Bengali), Vol. 1, p. 92). Datta was thereupon arrested. Barindra

Kumar Ghosh, after his release from jail, in his memoirs (now unavailable), wrote in a light vein that Datta had a bearded face and the police guessed he was the editor and took him in custody. Barindra Kumar was always found to be rather frivolous in regard to the past record of terrorists. In any case, Datta was tried in July 1907, and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. When he came out of jail in 1908 after serving his sentence, the Alipore Bomb Case had already begun. There was a fear that the police might also implicate him in that case. Mr. C. R. Das, the barrister (later to win celebrity as Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das), is said to have advised him to leave the country, and Datta went off to America. It is clear that he went abroad in order to evade arrest. Dr. Datta told me once that he had also the intention of prosecuting his studies abroad. No doubt, he did. This was how the chapter of his life as an exile from India commenced.

Virendranath Chattopadhyaya was the eldest son of Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya of Hyderabad. The late Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, well-known leader of the Congress, was his sister. Dr. Aghorenath's original home was in Vikrampur, East Bengal; the name of his ancestral village was Brahmangaon, now submerged in the river Padma. Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya was a highly placed officer in the education department of Hyderabad State, and lived permanently with his family in Hyderabad City. It was an anglicised family where everyone spoke English even at home, as was the vogue in many educated households of that

time. Dr. Chattopadhyaya's children hardly knew any Bengali, but because of residence at Hyderabad were acquainted with Urdu. I have heard that Virendranath Chattopadhyaya knew some Persian also.

In 1903, Virendranath passed his B.A. examination and went to London to appear at the Indian Civil Service examination. In London, however, he was drawn into political work, and consequently failed at the I.C.S. examination. He had also joined the Inns of Court at Middle Temple with a view to being called to the Bar. It is learnt from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography that Virendranath was at Oxford University when the former was a student at Harrow public school. I do not, however, know if Virendranath got through his examinations at Oxford.

In 1905, Pandit Shyamaji Krishna Varma had founded a boarding house for Indians in Highgate, London, and called it "India House." Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar were intimately associated with "India House" which became, both openly and for secret purposes, their political rendezvous. It was after he came in contact with Savarkar that Virendranath was fired with zeal for the politics of terrorism. He joined the "New India League" and "Free India Society" which Savarkar had set up. The former was a secret organisation. As punishment for their political activity, Virendranath's name was struck off the rolls of the Middle Temple, and Savarkar and Shyamaji Krishna Varma had their certificates of having been called to the Bar taken away. The British Government also closed down "India House".

On the evening of 1st July 1909, at the annual meeting in London of the National Indian Association, Madanlal Dhingra, a Punjabi student, shot at and killed Colonel Sir William Curzon-Wylie, who was A.D.C. to Lord Morley, Secretary of State for India. Madanlal Dhingra was tried in Court and was sentenced to death. After this assassination, the soil of England became a little too hot under Virendranath Chattopadhyaya's feet, and he had to leave London and got across to Paris in September 1909. In Paris he collaborated with Madame Cama in her work for Indian freedom. He also conducted a paper called "Madan's Sword". He got entangled with anarchists in Paris. "Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Trimul Acharia became members of the anarchist-communist group in Paris". (Vide Bhupendranath Datta's [Bengali] book, 'Unpublished Political History'. p. 255).

Indians who were in Paris in 1914 could feel that a Franco-German war would begin soon and, if it did, Britain would be on the side of France. As soon as he got wind of it Virendranath went off to Germany. He was the spokesman of *emigre* Indian revolutionaries when they entered into an understanding with the Imperial German Government. In this matter he was assisted by Dr. Abinash Chandra Bhattacharyya. The object of this understanding was to engineer an insurrection in India. In pursuance of this pact, German imperialists helped Indian revolutionaries with lavish sums of money, and also with arms which, however, did not reach India.

Virendranath Chattopadhyaya's name will often recur in this narrative. I do not think it is necessary

at this stage to say anything more. He is no longer living.

Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani belonged to the district of Pabna in North Bengal (now included in Pakistan). His father Ghulam Azam Ghulam Ambia Khan, was a *mukhtear* (advocate in subordinate courts) in Sirajganj, and was an influential person. He was a supporter of the Partition of Bengal. In 1906, the agitation against the Partition had gained momentum in Sirajganj, and the students of Banwarilal High School and the Victoria High School had joined the movement with somewhat excessive zeal. In the view of Sir Bampfylde Fuller, Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal and Assam, the students had been guilty of indiscipline, and for that reason he recommended to the Syndicate of the University of Calcutta that the affiliation of the two schools should be withdrawn. (In those days there was only one university for West and East Bengal). But the rules required that affiliation could not be withdrawn in that way. The Vice-Chancellor of the University, Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, then wrote to the Viceroy and Governor-General, Lord Minto (in those days the Viceroy used to be the ex-officio Chancellor of Calcutta University) requesting him to intervene and get Fuller to withdraw his recommendation. The reason given was that there would be much adverse comment in the country if the affiliation was taken away. The Banwarilal High School had been established as early as 1855 (two years before even the University of Calcutta was founded), and it was not an easy matter to disaffiliate such an institution.

Lord Minto then requested Fuller to withdraw his recommendation. Fuller, however, was a very obstinate type of person; he replied that if his recommendation was not to be acted upon he would rather offer his resignation as Lieutenant-Governor. Lord Minto was constrained to refer the matter to Lord Morley, Secretary of State for India, and the latter, finding no way out, instructed Minto to accept Sir Bampfylde Fuller's resignation, which was done.

In those days there was a custom that when the Lieutenant-Governor of a province went on tour to some town, he would be given welcome addresses by institutions there. Before his resignation Fuller had been to Sirajganj, but influential people of the town organised a boycott of his visit. It was on that occasion that the *mukhtear*, Ghulam Azam Khan, had come forward to greet the Lieutenant-Governor. Newspapers in Calcutta wrote so much attacking Ghulam Azam Khan's conduct that he became quite a notorious person in the whole of Bengal. I have recounted all this only to indicate the environment in which Ghulam Ambia Khan was brought up. It need not be added that he also was a student of the Banwarilal High School.

Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani's colleagues in Europe have hardly written anything about him; at least no such writing has come to my notice. I have said earlier that Virendranath Chattopadhyaya was the leader of the group of Indian revolutionaries who had gone to Moscow, but their spokesman was Luhani. Chattopadhyaya could not give a clear exposition of any subject, and Agnes Smedley held the most extreme

views in everything. This was why they chose as their spokesman Luhani who could speak and write clearly. Of course, he only put forward what Chattopadhyaya and his friends wanted him to say before the Commission of the Communist International. Dr. Datta has made many unsavoury comments about Luhani on account of his having later joined the Communist Party. However, I shall only put down here the little I know about him.

Only once in my life have I seen Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani in person. This was in Burdwan, in 1908 or 1909. A Muslim educational conference was held that year in Burdwan with Nawab Abdul Jabbar as its president. I was then a student of the lower classes in my high school, but I travelled from distant Sandvip to Burdwan, as if I was giving himself a treat. Luhani had come to this conference from Aligarh college (Aligarh College was transformed into a University much later). He had no looks to speak of; on top of that he was lame. But even as a student he had earned the reputation of being a good speaker and writer. He could speak very well, indeed, in English, Bengali and Urdu. While he was a student, many papers printed his articles written in English. Even the Modern Review of Calcutta did it.

At one time Luhani's name had been struck off the rolls of Aligarh College. It was a residential institution, and it was obligatory for Muslim students to say their evening prayers together. There used to be a roll-call at the time of the *namaz*, but Luhani would not attend. By way of excuse he pleaded that he belonged to the Ahmadiya sect and could not pray

along with the other Muslims. The Ahmadiyas were a sect in the Punjab, with headquarters at Qadian in the district of Gurudaspur. The College wrote to Qadian and discovered that Luhani had nothing to do with that sect. He was thus rusticated.

After this incident Luhani continued his studies at Muir Central College in Allahabad. Even while he was a student there he edited a voluminous English quarterly: its title escapes me at the moment. It was very likely that Luhani got his B. A. (Allahabad), from Muir Central College. Sometime in 1913 or 1914 I saw on the table of Maulavi Maniruzzaman Islambadi a letter which Luhani had written from on board ship *en route* to London. At that time Maulavi Maniruzzaman was the editor of the daily Bengali edition of the celebrated Persian paper "Hablul Matin". In his letter Luhani had intimated that he would for some time conduct his studies in the British Museum and would then write the London letter for "Hablul Matin".

I do not know whether Luhani had gone to London to appear at the barristership examination or whether he had passed it or not. We never learnt if he had joined any University in Britain. Generally speaking, we are unaware of his activities during the war years. I do not know what political work, particularly Marxist political work, if any, he did or did not, nor do I know if he was acquainted with any of the early members of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Dr. Datta has written that Luhani had told him he had joined the "Socialist Club" in London and also that he got "his expenses for the journey to Moscow

from the Soviet Embassy in London". Here, again, Dr. Datta's memory has played him false. Diplomatic relations of any sort had not been established between the Soviet Union and Britain when Luhani left London. How could there be a Soviet Embassy at that time in London? A trade pact was concluded between Great Britain and the Soviet Union in March 1921. By that time Dr. Datta and his group had reached Moscow*.

Ghulum Ambia Khan Luhani had joined the Communist Party. He was connected with the Information Department of the Communist International. But it does not appear that he was all the time at the headquarters of the Communist International. In the spring of 1925, M. N. Roy was expelled from Paris and went off to Berlin. According to American writers, this was the time when Evelyn Roy, Muhammad Ali and Luhani were found directing the work of the Communist Party of India from Paris. A paper called the "Masses of India" used to be published there, and the Foreign Bureau of the Communist Party of India was also situated in Paris.

Luhani attended the Sixth Congress of the Communist International as a delegate, but without the right to vote. He took part in the discussion at the Congress; certain extracts from his speech have come to our notice. Luhani had tried to exonerate himself when there was discussion of the 'de-colonisation of

* According to Dr. Datta, they reached Moscow in May and stayed there for three months. I fear his memory again betrays him. Once in his book he says that they had to wait for Roy's return from Central Asia. It was April when Roy got back. They must, therefore, have reached Moscow before April.

India' theory. When the charge against M. N. Roy was being discussed in the Communist International, Luhani had vehemently condemned Roy's conduct. He had set out for abroad in 1913 or 1914. Since then he never returned home. His death, at ripe old age, took place in the Soviet Union.

Pandarang
Khankhoje

Pandarang Khankhoje was a Maratha and came from the area known before as the Central Provinces and now as Maharashtra. The short account, which follows, of his life and work is taken from his own statement in English which Dr. Bhupendranath Datta translated into Bengali and incorporated in his "Unpublished Political History".

This statement does not indicate the year of his departure from India. It seems that about the beginning of 1907 he got together a select group of Indian students in California and organised an "Indian Independence League". There were many Sikh settlers in California, and the League conducted its propaganda especially among them. Till 1910, Portland was the real nerve-centre of the League, the leader being Kashiram. It was about this time that Sohan Singh Granthi also joined. In 1911-12 the League added considerably to its strength, and in 1913, Hardayal came into the organisation. Its name was changed, and it became known as the *Ghadr* party.

When after taking his M. A. degree, Khankhoje was preparing for his doctorate in Minnesota University, a telegram from the party summoned him to California. This was before the First World War had

broken out. It was decided at California that Indian freedom would have to be fought for and Khankhoje received orders to return home, and especially to Western India. Meanwhile war broke out, and after wandering in various places he managed to reach Turkey. With the help of the Turks he went to Iran, accompanied by Pramathanath Datta, a Bengali, and Agase, a Marathi. The former was later to be well-known as a teacher of Bengali and other languages in the Soviet Union under the name of Daud Ali Datta. In Iran Agase called himself Muhammad Ali (not to be confused with Khushi Muhammad *alias* Muhammad Ali Sipassi). They set up various organisations in Iran and took part in certain minor skirmishes with the British. In one of these skirmishes Pramathanath *alias* Daud Ali Datta was hit on the leg by a bullet.

In 1919 Khankhoje came secretly to Bombay and met Tilak and other revolutionaries. Nobody, however, could give him shelter. Tilak advised him to go and try his luck in Russia. Thus, Khankhoje was compelled to escape again to Europe. It does seem exceedingly strange that an eminent leader like Tilak could not offer shelter to an exiled Indian revolutionary and even told him to seek his fortune in the Soviet Union. Yet it was in the same year 1919 that he had contributed three thousand pounds to the British Labour Party.

In 1949 the then Government of Madhya Pradesh intervened and Pandarang Khankhoje was enabled to return to his own country.

I know nothing about Abdul Wahid. Dr. Datta mentions him repeatedly but gives Abdul Wahid no details, except to say that he was a friend of his. I learn that he belonged to Bihar and that his death took place abroad.

Agnes Smedley was an American lady, with leanings towards anarchism, who thought increasingly of Indian freedom and had made it her dream. She used to help in various ways the Indian revolutionaries who lived as exiles in America and even went to jail for their sake. After the first world war was over, she came to Berlin in the belief that she could work more effectively for Indian freedom from Germany. She was introduced to Virendranath Chattopadhyaya after she arrived there, and very easily succeeded in exerting her influence over him. Later in Moscow, Agnes Smedley and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya declared they were married. The mentality of either of them was very similar; that is to say, they were both very extreme in their views. They were not prepared to apply their mind to things like the thesis of the Communist International. Their sole preoccupation was the expulsion of Britain from India. Agnes Smedley's Anglophobia was so acute that she would not even touch a British Communist! It was the same with Chattopadhyaya.

Later, Agnes Smedley went to China. A great change must have come over her after she had been working hand in glove with the Communists of that country. She is no longer alive.

Nalini Gupta's full name was Nalini Kumar Das

Gupta. His home was in a village called Beldakhan near Jhalakathi in the district of Nalini Gupta Bakerganj (now in Pakistan). Though he went in the company of Dr. Datta to Moscow, he had never been a member of the latter's group. He had nothing whatever to do with the conspiracy and the understanding which took place between Imperial Germany and the group led by Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. Also, he had never any contact with any of the revolutionary groups, big or small or middling, when he was at home. He was purely a seeker of fortune, with a certain inborn streak of daredevilry.

He told us once that before the war he used to work in Dr. Kartik Bose's laboratory in Calcutta. Inquiries revealed that he had spoken the truth. Throughout the pendency of the First World War he worked in one or more munitions factories in England; this fact has also been verified. Many Indians were in England at the time and they knew Nalini Gupta. They knew also that Gupta was working in some factory and earning good money; some had had a good turn done them by him. Besides, he used to send money home every month by postal money order from England to Beldakhan village. This indeed was a phenomenon and attracted attention. Our people knew that the rule was for Indian money to be sent to Britain and were thus much surprised to find money coming to India from that country!

In Moscow Nalini Gupta had persuaded M. N. Roy that before going to Moscow the first time in 1921 he had been to India for a while, interrupting his stay in Europe, and during that period he had met

Roy's terrorist friends. He told him, besides, that these people had asked him to get in touch with Roy. This is what Roy has recorded in his memoirs. If, however, Nalini Gupta had told him such things it was all a made-up story from beginning to end. In any case, it indicates that Nalini Gupta had introduced himself as a terrorist when he met Roy.

The Third Congress of the Communist International had met at Moscow from 22nd June to 12th July 1921. It was after it was over that Nalini Gupta returned to India, to be more precise, to Bengal. He went nowhere else in India and travelled to Europe directly from Bengal. He had come home in 1921 after an absence abroad of six years at a stretch. He had never been a member of any terrorist revolutionary group, though of course, he had seen many of them and knew their names. When in 1913 many of those, who belonged to these terrorist groups, had gone to Burdwan for flood relief work, Nalini had also been there. He might at that time have known some of them, no doubt, superficially. A distinguished terrorist leader, Shri Atul Krishna Ghosh, once told me that at that time Nalini Gupta was heartily disliked, because he would carry tales and provoke quarrels between people. We also have seen how Nalini had an instinctive flair for fanning personal resentments. Anyway, if he had been a terrorist himself in the earlier period, he could certainly, on his return home in 1921, have contacted many terrorist leaders, but obviously he could not. Before leaving India he had only once met one single terrorist leader, Shri Bhupendra Kumar (not Bhupendranath)

Datta. Through the help of a mutual friend, Nalini saw Qazi Nazrul Islam and me because the daily "Navayug" (then already defunct), which we edited, used to print special articles on the problems of workers and peasants. At that time I helped Nalini Gupta in many ways. Overstreet and Windmiller, in their study of "Communism in India", write (at p. 39) that I had been a leader of M. N. Roy's old terrorist party and that was why Nalini Gupta came to Calcutta to contact me. This is a fabrication. Far from being a leader, I was never even an ordinary rank-and-filer of any terrorist group.

I do not know if Nalini Gupta, while he was abroad, introduced himself as a Communist or a Communist Party member but I do know that here in India he never joined the Party. Before us he always described himself as a nationalist-revolutionary. He never believed that it was the right course to join the Communist Party. Besides, he was totally allergic to study. He had no attraction for the printed word; rather he was repelled by it. But he had the requisite qualification for membership of a terrorist party; he knew how explosives were manufactured.

Through the instrumentality of M. N. Roy, Nalini Gupta came twice to India as a messenger of the Communist International—once in 1921 and again in 1923. After his return in 1923 he stayed till 1927 when he left again for abroad. Meanwhile he had served his sentence in the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case. After he went back to Europe in 1927, we lost all contact with him. Even after Hitler's seizure of power, he had carried on restaurant

business in Berlin. During World War II he returned home; we do not know how he did, nor do we know anything about his work here. When he was here in India during the pendency of the war, it was not only that he kept no contact with us, but he had tried his utmost to make sure that his friends and relatives did not come within miles of us. He died in 1957.

I have given above a summary idea of the character of Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Bhupendranath Datta and a few other Indian revolutionaries who had gone to Moscow in 1921.

The background of Indian revolutionaries I think it is necessary to say a few more things about their background.

Apart from Nalini Gupta, they were all included in the British Government's list of exiles. They could not, even if they wanted to, return home. They had left India in the period between 1903 and 1915, many of them with a view to evading arrest. Some had been arrested, released on bail and then escaped (as was the case of Narendranath Bhattacharya *alias* Manabendra Nath Roy). In those days it was comparatively simple to go abroad. Passports were not essential. Even without a passport anybody could purchase a ticket in a foreign ship and get abroad. There were even many who had nothing to do with political work at home but were attracted towards it while abroad through contact with other people. A majority of them were students at German and American universities.

In 1914 France and Britain declared war on Germany. All Indian revolutionaries who were then

in Germany accepted the idea that Britain's enemy was *ipso facto* India's friend. Thus they sought for ways and means to form contact with the Imperial German Government. For instance, they issued a statement in German on this subject. "We sent copies of the printed statement to all newspaper-offices, different universities and the leading libraries in Germany, Austria-Hungary, Switzerland and the Netherlands. We sent them also to the heads of the different German States. For several days we saw in the State libraries that different journals were printing the statement under big headlines and, in some, editorial comments were also made. We were content, and we congratulated ourselves that we had succeeded in doing a big job for our country". [*vide* Dr. Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya's book (in Bengali) "The Indian Revolution in Europe", p. 134].

The aforesaid statement is set out below:

"Imperialist Great Britain and France, trading upon her motto of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, have always practised great oppression in Africa and Asia, and by ceaseless plunder have dragged down the people of the two continents to the path of ruination. Today these two tyrannical nations have conspired with the world's biggest and most autocratic and barbarous realm of Russia to proceed with the object of distorting Germany, the seat of science and learning and the sacred shrine of literature, philosophy, music and fine arts. All the downtrodden races of Asia and Africa, and innumerable men and

women professing different religions and belonging to different cultural communities were conveying their most heartfelt and sincere sympathy to Germany in the hour of crisis, and were praying to God so that Germany could be victorious and overcome the crisis and the three oppressive oppressor states met their doom, when suddenly Asia's infamy, that savage and sly Japan, declared war on Germany without provocation and proceeded to overthrow her culture and civilisation. This has been like a thunderbolt hurled at the hopes and aspirations of helpless, inoffensive and peaceful Asians and Africans.

"Indians, resident in Germany, send forth their prayer to the beneficial Providence so that the science and learning of Germany progresses unhindered and by its success illuminates the whole world. Indians denounce the behaviour of the crooked Japanese who have brought shame on all Asia." (*Ibid* pp. 133-34).

This statement was published on behalf of Indian *emigre's* in Germany and in the name of Dr. Abinash Bhattacharya and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. Both of them lived then at Halle, a town in Germany. When there was in the beginning no response from the German Government they were somewhat disappointed, but they did not give up trying. Then, one day, they received a summons from Berlin where they went, fairly beside themselves with joy. Imperialist and monarchist Germany concluded with

Indian revolutionaries a pact aimed against imperialist Britain. The terms of the pact are not being set out here, but Germany agreed to supply Indian revolutionaries with enormous sums of money and also arms. I am quoting from Dr. Bhattacharyya's book the item No. 10 of the said pact.

"10. It is our desire that on the successful launching of our revolution a socialist republican government will be set up in India and the Austro-German alliance will not obstruct its formation."

I am not aware of the German word which, in his Bengali Dr. Bhattacharyya rendered as "socialist". They had taken it for granted that Germany would inevitably win the war and therefore the independence of India was also inevitable. Thus, counting the chicken before they were hatched, they had even framed a constitution for India. They had also decided the personnel of the administration running the "socialist-republican" State. For example, Surendranath Banerjee was their choice for the President of India, Balgangadhar Tilak as Foreign Minister, Lala Harkissen Lal as Industries Minister, Dr. Sir Subrahmanyam as Law Minister, Gopalkrishna Gokhale as Finance Minister, Sir Phirozeshah Mehta as Commerce Minister, Sir (*sic*) Hasan Imam as Education Minister; there was mention also of the name of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee in the same context. From these names one gets a good idea of the extraordinary "socialist republican" State which Indian revolutionaries then in Germany had conceived!

The Indian Committee started work, with their headquarters in Berlin. From different countries they were summoned there, and many came even from America. Bhupendranath Datta was then in America, but he reached Berlin in May 1915. Many others went home to India to prepare for a rising there. Contact had been made with the *Ghadr* party and many of that party returned to India. But very little money perhaps reached India, and the arms could not be supplied. The British had already got scent of the matter. Some among the Indians must have informed the British, and a few people pocketed large sums of money.

The German authorities treated the Indian Committee organised in Germany with great deference, its members receiving very nearly the courtesies due to diplomatic envoys. They acted with much courage and even risked their lives in the job. But the great war ended one day with the defeat of Germany. Of the post-war period Jawaharlal Nehru has written in his autobiography:

"The war ended, and with it ended finally the Indian Committee in Berlin. Life became a dreary affair for them after the failure of all their hopes. They had gambled for high stakes and lost. In any event, life would have seemed a humdrum affair after the high adventure and importance of those wartime years. But even a secure, humdrum life was not to be had for the asking. They could not return to India, and defeated Germany after the War

was not an easy place to live in. It was a hard struggle. A few of them were later allowed by the British Government to return to India, but many had to stay on in Germany. Their position was peculiar. They were, apparently, citizens of no State. They had no State. They had no proper passports. Travel outside Germany was hardly possible, even residence in Germany was full of difficulties and was at the mercy of the local police. It was a life of insecurity and hardship, and day-to-day worry, of continual anxiety to find the wherewithal to eat and live". (Jawaharlal Nehru: An Autobiography, John Lane The Bodley Head, London, Page 153).

Virendranath Chattopadhyaya was the leader of the Indian revolutionaries who went to Moscow in 1921. Next in rank was Bhupendranath Datta. Virendranath had an enormous influence over Datta whose writings indicate that he accepted the former's views as almost incontestable. Chattopadhyaya, for his part, could never forget, and was very much under the influence of imperialist, monarchist and aristocratic Germany. As has been noted earlier, Dr. Abinash Chandra Bhattacharyya was instrumental, first of all, in forming contact with the German authorities. He was helped in this task by a German lady named Frau Simon. Then Chattopadhyaya was summoned to Berlin. As soon as he got the news he was "beside himself with joy and exuberance."

What was the mentality with which the Indian revolutionaries went to Moscow ?

'Bhattacharyya, my brother,' he said, 'may you bring fulfilment to our lives!'

"Chattopadhyaya was silent for a few moments and then exclaimed, 'Bhatta! my friend! so long we have just chewed dead wood and could savour nothing, but now, thanks to your achievement, perhaps we can do something for the country and have fulfilment before life ceases.'

(Bhattacharyya, *op. cit.* p. 137).

In 1922 Virendranath wrote to Bhattacharyya from Berne:

"If in this world the plighted word have no value, why regret that our hopes have been dashed? Japan and Italy took so much money from Germany, but left her in her moment of distress". (*ibid*, p. 81).

Even in 1922 Chattopadhyaya, it appears, could not forget the Germany with whom he had contact in 1914. The passage just quoted shows how even then his mind was full of gratitude towards the old Germany.

The Indian Committee of Berlin had extended its work and in 1917 set up a branch in Sweden. At that time Virendranath Chattopadhyaya was staying in Stockholm and Bhupendranath Datta in one of its suburbs. The October (November, according to the new calendar) Revolution took place successfully in Russia under Lenin's leadership. Bhupendranath Datta needed everything to be explained by his friend Chattopadhyaya, and he asked the latter on the telephone:

"How could this revolution succeed? The reply he got was: "Director so and so must have given those people a lot of money!" (Datta, "Unpublished Political History" [in Bengali] 3rd edition, 1953, p-242).

This conversation was followed by no clarificatory questions by Datta. However, the October Revolution in Russia had stirred the minds of leftist Indian revolutionaries. They called a conference at Stockholm in 1920 to decide upon their course of action. From Bhupendranath Datta's book, it is learnt that Pandarang Khankhoje, Birendranath Das Gupta, Viswamitra (an Indian student resident in Denmark) and Datta himself attended the meeting. It was resolved at the conference that those who wanted to continue as nationalists should form a body and work in it, just as those who accepted the Communist ideology should form another body for their work, but both together must labour for Indian freedom. This was also communicated to the *Ghadr* party in America. The conference, besides, decided to send Virendranath Chattopadhyaya to Moscow; even earlier, M. N. Roy had sent him an invitation.

"At this time the writer, feeling curious, asked Virendranath: 'In 1917 you had told me, "Director so and so must have given those people a lot of money!" Now, what was it exactly that you meant?' The reply he gave me referred to an astonishing event in world history. He said that in 1917, the German ambassador in Stockholm had called him to

intimate that the Bolsheviks were the biggest party in Russia and that two million roubles (or may be marks, for the writer does not precisely recollect it) were being sent to Petrograd through a Dutchman (whose name Virendranath had forgotten). The ambassador further asked if in the event of this man being caught, oriental revolutionaries could hide the fact that the money had been sent to their Russian comrades. Virendranath's answer was that he could not give a reply to the question without ascertaining the views of his Oriental colleagues. He later asked the Iranian leader Syed Taqi Zade (now in Iran) and the Egyptian leader Farid Bey (who died later) and others, who unanimously refused to take any responsibility in the matter. Virendranath told the writer: 'What could I do? I had pledged my word and so could not give you this confidential information'. (*ibid*, p. 257)

Bhupendranath Datta cannot remember, whether Chattopadhyaya had mentioned two million roubles or marks! The money was sent through a 'Dutchman' whose name the German ambassador is reported to have told Chattopadhyaya, but the latter, when relating the story to Bhupendranath, simply forgot what it was! Of course, it was something convenient to forget. The name could only be remembered if the Dutchman concerned had a real existence. Immediately after the October Revolution of 1917, Chattopadhyaya had informed Bhupendranath that

"Director so-and-so must have given those people a lot of money"! 'So-and-so' indicates somebody, and yet Bhupendranath asked him no further questions about it, his curiosity died down and he kept mum! Suddenly in 1920, after the lapse of a few years, his curiosity revived and he inquired of Chattopadhyaya the answer to his question of 1917! This again was a time when Chattopadhyaya was getting ready to go to Moscow. Chattopadhyaya expressed regret that he had not been able to tell Datta 'the secret news', because he had pledged his word to the German ambassador. But what was it that he kept secret? What, indeed, remained unsaid when he told Datta about Director so-and-so having paid a lot of money to the Bolsheviks? The German ambassador had called on Chattopadhyaya to assume a responsibility which the latter said he could not without consulting his Oriental colleagues. He had later asked Iranian and Egyptian fellow-workers who had refused any responsibility in the matter. But was not Bhupendranath Datta his closest colleague and, of course, also an Oriental? Datta, indeed, was secretary to the Berlin Committee. If half the story could be confided to him, how does the question of Chattopadhyaya having plighted his word arise at all? In fact, it will be the right thing to point out that the whole messy story was only part of a mean trick to conduct propaganda against the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and especially against Lenin.

It will be very relevant here to quote in full a letter written to me by Rafiq Ahmad. The original letter is in Urdu and is given here in translation.

Bhopal,
22nd June, 1960.

"Dear Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad,

I thank you for remembering me. I hesitate to write the story of my journey, complete with details regarding years and months, because it relates to a long past period and the dates have slipped off my memory. Shaukat Usmani has given in his book certain dates which are perhaps nearly correct. M. A. Majeed also may have published the story of his travels. I learn that Khan Akbar Khan has these days brought out a paper in which he is said to have described happenings in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. You may have a lot of help from that sort of thing.

"When we were [in Moscow], a group came from Germany under the leadership of Chattopadhyaya [Virendranath Chattopadhyaya].

"Apart from Chattopadhyaya, there were in this group Abdul Wahid, Bhupendranath Datta, Khankhoje and others.

"I used to meet Chattopadhyaya and Abdul Wahid almost every day. They refused persistently to work with M. N. Roy. Maulavi Barkatulla tried a great deal to bring them together. Ultimately they went back to Germany.

"In this connection, one thing should be known. Chattopadhyaya had told me in

venomous language a surprising matter, namely, that Comrade Lenin had during the Russian Revolution received a lot of [financial] help from the German Government and capitalists, and that it was the German Government which, sensing the opportunity, had sent Lenin back to Russia. I have never heard these things from anyone except Chattopadhyaya. Could you give some information in the matter?

I hope you are well. Please oblige me with a reply.

Yours
(Sd.) Rafiq Ahmad

I have stated in a summary the mentality which inspired the Indian revolutionaries when they went to Moscow from Germany. Later I shall relate a few more things about it. It is difficult indeed to extract the meaning out of what Dr. Bhupendranath

Datta writes. It is clear, however, that they had travelled to Moscow at the invitation of the Communist International. Their expenses were entirely borne by the Communist International. But, what exactly was their motive? At first sight it seems

that they had gone to Moscow as nationalist revolutionaries. This is the impression one gets from Virendranath Chattopadhyaya's words. "Chattopadhyaya propagated his view that in India's present condition a working-class and communist movement was not

What was it they wanted? Did they intend to form the Communist Party of India?

possible, and what was necessary was assistance to the revolutionary movement for the expulsion of the British". (Datta, *op. cit.* p. 286). "Smedley was of opinion that in India, currently, the nationalist movement against Britain alone was important, and the Chattopadhyaya group agreed with it. They would state that in India there was no room for a labour movement and that only nationalist activity required to be carried on. This was the idea which they propagated among the delegates of all countries." (*ibid*, pp. 288-89). "Chattopadhyaya's thesis was that the first priority should be given to the task of overthrowing the British Empire and for that purpose the Third International should form a revolutionary board to help revolutionary work in India." (*ibid*, p. 289). Chattopadhyaya had on his side, Agnes Smedley, Luhani, Khankhoje and others, the majority that is to say, of those who had journeyed to Moscow. According to Dr. Datta, Abdul Wahid, Birendranath Das Gupta and he himself held different views. At p. 292 of his book he writes:

"At last Roy got up and said: 'There is talk of the formation of a new Communist Party; but already there is one, and why didn't they all join it?' As soon as he said this the group to which the writer (Datta) belonged raised their voice against it and at Rakosi's instigation submitted to the Commission a typed statement in protest. This statement said, *inter alia*: 'We are keen on mobilising all who are convinced Communists and wish to organise with their help an

Indian Communist Party. News to this effect has been sent home and steps are being taken for that purpose. However, all of a sudden and without any intimation to us a Communist Party was formed in Moscow. We do not recognise it and are unable to co-operate with it in any way."

"It should be noted at this stage that a few days ago a Moscow paper suddenly reported one fine morning that an Indian Communist Party had been organised and had secured affiliation to the International. Who were the members of this Communist Party? They were Roy and his wife, Mukherjee and his wife, and some young *muhajirs*. As the thesis was being read Luhani exclaimed: 'Let this Party be dis-affiliated from the Third International, and let help be given to the Indian revolutionary movement through their projected revolutionary board.'" (*Ibid*, pp. 292-93).

I have quoted certain extracts from Dr. Datta's book and the full text of a letter of Rafiq Ahmad's. It is not difficult to realise from all these quotations that Chattopadhyaya was an ultra-nationalist. In 1914 it was he who had signed on behalf of India the pact with the imperialist-monarchists of Germany. Afterwards, he and his colleagues among Indian revolutionaries got from Germany enormous amounts of financial and other assistance. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya could never in his life forget this good turn done by imperialist-monarchist Germany;

he had eaten the salt of old Germany and sang her praise. That he did mischievous propaganda against Lenin was also recompense for this salt. If even after all this anybody calls Chattopadhyaya a German agent, Dr. Bhupendranath Datta flies into a temper! However, the point is: why was it that with his ultra-nationalism and a vile animus against Lenin, Chattopadhyaya went as much as twice to Moscow at the invitation of the Communist International? Where was the link between ultra-nationalists and Communist Internationalism? In reality, the issue was one of finance. These people had large sums of money from old Germany. The flow of such money ceased with the fall of German imperialism. In spite of there being no agreement in principle, they planned to ask for funds from the Communist International. This becomes plain as one reads Dr. Datta. He also concedes that during their stay in Germany they received some ten thousand marks. I have said it earlier, and I repeat here that Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani had later realised his mistake and left the company of the Chattopadhyayas to join the Communist Party. Whether Chattopadhyaya actually became a member towards the end of his life is not known to me. But none else among the Indian revolutionaries who had gone to Moscow from Germany in 1921 joined hands with the Communists.

We learn from Dr. Datta's writings that though three of them, Birendranath Das Gupta, Abdul Wahid and himself did not support the views of Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, they had gone on their "Moscow journey" with the latter as their leader.

We discover also from his writings that he looked upon Chattopadhyaya's words almost as "gospel truth". However, according to Dr.

Why did Dr
Datta & Co.
not join the
Communist
Party?

Datta himself, the three of them were communists by conviction. If that was so, one might ask: Why did they not join the Communist Party of India which was there in Moscow?

What stopped them joining the Party formed already with young *muhajirs*? Doubtless, if they had joined, it would have been strengthened. They were well aware that the Communist Party of India had been organised much before their visit to Moscow. Dr. Datta himself vouchsafes the information that it was affiliated to the Communist International. And yet they intimated in writing that they did not propose to recognise it. They said they were keen on organising all who believed in communism into an Indian Party and stated further that news to that effect had been sent to India and attempts in that regard were proceeding. Is it then to be assumed that the Communist Party of India (in Moscow) had been set up with people who were not convinced Communists? Indeed, there should be a limit even to effrontery. Could I ask who were the people in India whom Dr. Datta had sent the news and who, in fact, were those who were carrying on attempts to set up a Communist Party of India? Where did they go? Did they just vanish into thin air? We know that Dr. Datta could never see anything good in Manabendra Nath Roy, and this dislike reached the stage of a pathological obsession. But surely the

Communist International and the Communist Party did not simply connote Manabendra Nath Roy. If at that time the Communist Party of India had been formed with Dr. Datta in it, Roy also would have been in it, however much Dr. Datta's dislike for him. Surely, Dr. Datta and Co. were not so dull as not to know it.

One has to delve into further depths in order to be able to understand why inspite of knowing everything Dr. Datta and his friends did not join the Communist Party of India abroad and refused to recognise it. Most of the Indian revolutionaries who had for the sake of Indian independence entered into a pact with imperialist Germany during the First World War, and at any rate their leaders, were terrorist revolutionaries in India. They imagined themselves to be the only genuine revolutionaries. They were firmly convinced that they alone, and none else, had earned the monopoly right to the title of revolutionaries. They would never care to analyse things and grasp the idea that revolutions bring about social change. From their writings it does not appear that they believed in class struggle even though they often spoke of their study of Marx and Lenin's works. Those whom they had decided to appoint ministers of the free Indian State after the achievement of freedom through German assistance were the capitalist-landlord leaders of the Indian National Congress.

At page 170 of the book of Dr. Datta's which I am referring to from time to time he writes: "When in 1918 Karl Liebknecht founded the German Communist Party, the writer saw him and said, 'We are

nationalists; the British Government is our enemy, and their enemy is our friend'. At this, Liebknecht replied, 'Yes, I understand the position'. The writer then told him, 'You are overjoyed at the ruin of German militarism, but you have, as a result of it, enhanced the strength of British and French militarism. Have you thought of its repercussions on our situation?' The writer had put these questions before him very strongly, but Liebknecht kept silent."

Perhaps Liebknecht was then recalling the words of Sa'adi, the poet of Iran: "It is better to be silent when the ignorant ask questions."

India, doubtless, was under the heel of imperialist Britain. But that was no reason to believe that as Britain's enemy, imperialist Germany could be India's friend. Whether it is British or German, imperialism retains its own character. If Britain lost to Germany in the First World War the latter's imperialist power would have enormously increased, and there is no doubt that, whatever the terms of the pact with Indian revolutionaries, it would have subjugated a country like ours. They would have come to India to settle our affairs and not gone back again. We have since seen the straits to which Burma was reduced during the Second World War. Imperialist Japan came ostensibly to liberate Burma from the British yoke and then sat on her chest. Burma's fighters for freedom who had requisitioned the help of Japanese imperialists to overthrow British imperialism, were driven to call again for the latter's help to expel the former. That after all this, imperialist Britain could not continue in Burma was due to the fact that its

staying power had been exhausted. If instead of being imperialist, Germany had been a socialist state, there would have been no cause for fear, since a socialist power does not subjugate other countries.

During 1918-20 revolution took place repeatedly in Germany and power came to the hands of the working class. They were overthrown, however, on account of betrayal by Rightist elements. It was on account of working class upsurge that the German Kaiser fled the country. What were our Indian revolutionaries doing during this time of revolution? Nowhere in Dr. Datta's book is there an inkling that Indian revolutionaries had, directly or indirectly, joined the German revolution. On the contrary, it appears from the reported conversation of Dr. Datta with Karl Liebknecht that they felt desolate at the defeat of German militarists.

Dr. Datta and Co. returned from Moscow to Berlin in 1921, and they set up a new committee in 1922 with the co-operation of Maulavi Barkatullah. We learn that a member of this committee, Syed Abdul Wahid, used to go often to Italy with Dr. Datta's consent and maintain contact with Mussolini (Datta, *op. cit.* p. 162). Mussolini was very anxious for the establishment of relations with "old India". A business firm was set up under the name of Dr. Datta & Co.'s "Italian-Indian Syndicate", and contact with Mussolini appointed his own brother Fascist Italy as a director. It was in this connection that Syed Abdul Wahid went round India in 1924 with an introduction from Dr. Datta (*Ibid*, pp-164-65). Now, the question is: how could Syed

Abdul Wahid come to India and go back again to Europe? They had no permit of entry into India. Dr. Datta tells us nothing at all about it. Perhaps it will not be unfair to guess that Syed Wahid travelled to India in a fascist merchant ship and went back again in it. Dr. Datta's own writings furnish warrant for this guess. At page 164 of his book he writes: "On returning home in 1925 the writer heard that as a result of this contact and with Wahid's help two young men of the Dacca Anushilan Samity could get abroad with Italian fascist sailors and travel secretly to Europe without either a passport or a ticket for the voyage."

In the first half of 1921, Dr. Bhupendranath Datta, Syed Abdul Wahid and others gave to a Commission of the Communist International a written statement to the effect that they were Communists in ideology. But as soon as fascist Mussolini emerged in Italy, they established contact with him. The kind of Communist they were will be clear from this sort of thing. Could Communists form contact with fascists and ask for help from them? In reality, Dr. Datta and Co. had gone to Moscow in quest of opportunity. They had not accepted the principles of communism. Had they done so, they could have joined the *emigre* Communist Party of India and would not have asked for a Communist Party with all rights reserved for themselves. If in spite of a long rupture of contact with India they could claim the right to form a Communist Party of India, why could not *muhajir* youths, only lately arrived from home, do the same? If it is said that the *muhajirs* had left home

in pursuance of religious fanaticism, can it not be retorted that a change in their objective situation had caused a tremendous difference? Was not the patriotism of terrorist revolutionaries largely tinged with religious revivalism? Have not so many of them come over to the Communist Party, an organisation where religious revivalism has no place whatever?

Dr. Bhupendranath Datta has mentioned in his book many events about which he knew nothing; and even in regard to events with which he was somewhat familiar, his memory has often deceived him. For example, one may mention the letter from Abani Mukherjee, which the police had filed in evidence against us during the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case of 1924. (*Vide Ibid*, pp. 308-309).

Abani Mukherjee's letter and Dr. Datta

Dr. Datta claims to have had some talk about this letter with Abani Mukherjee in Berlin. After we came to know each other in this country he asked me also about the letter. I had then given him an extended history of the letter for fear that he might otherwise go about saying whatever came to his head. Unfortunately, he forgot all that I had told him. I do not blame him for his forgetfulness, but why should he write on something about which he had forgotten the essentials? What he has written does not tally with the real event. First, it was not at the Dacca Youth Conference that I first met him; it was at a meeting in the committee room of Albert Hall in Calcutta, and the Dacca Youth Conference was held later. He has further written that he had it from me that one day Santosh Mitra, then a

lad of only sixteen, had given me a letter and said, "Do see what Abani has written against you!" This, however, is not what happened.

There was no need for Dr. Datta to write of this matter, but he has put it down, without reason and to my embarrassment. This is why I have to elucidate the position for otherwise the whole matter will remain too vague and mystifying. Some little time after Dr. Datta and his friends returned from Moscow to Berlin in 1921, Abani Mukherjee was expelled from the Party. I am not aware of the specific charges against him. It may be that one of the reasons for his expulsion was the charge which Dr. Datta and Co. had made in writing against him, namely, that he was an enemy agent. Anyway, I had received in 1922 from the Communist International a circular intimating Abani Mukherjee's expulsion. After expulsion, Abani Mukherjee went to Germany. His object was to establish contact with India on his own and to have his Party position restored. At this time, they acted on the principle that an enemy of M. N. Roy's was their friend, just as earlier they had done in regard to the enemy of Britain being India's friend. Various addresses in our country were known to Abani Mukherjee. I received a good few of his letters in English and Bengali, addressed from Berlin. He also sent me some literature. On account of his stay in Moscow he had got to know the Communist leaders of many countries. It was in pursuance of this link that he met some German Party leaders who helped him. Those leaders later set up an opposition group in the Communist International.

The news of M. N. Roy's expulsion from the Communist International was first published in 1929 *a propos* of an article which appeared in their paper, attacking the decision of the International, though the expulsion had been decided upon much earlier.

However, it was with the assistance of these German leaders that in 1922 Abani Mukherjee came back to India. I do not know where he put up in Calcutta or how he got acquainted with Santosh Mitra. I did not personally know Santosh Mitra at that time. I knew his name because he had contact with Abdur Razzak Khan and knew also that he was trying to get together a terrorist group. Dr. Datta's statement that Mitra was then a lad of sixteen is entirely incorrect. In those days nobody could appear at the Matriculation examination of Calcutta University unless one was sixteen, and Santosh had given up his studies at College when he was an M. A. student. He was, at the relevant period, some twentythree or twentyfour years of age. Dr. Datta's statement has a motive, namely, that Santosh Mitra, being merely sixteen, had not then reached the age when he could understand the pros and cons of a matter.

Let me turn to what I have to say. I do not know what talks took place between Abani Mukherjee and Santosh Mitra after they got acquainted. But I know that Abani asked Santosh for a shelter. Santosh then introduced Abani to Abdur Razzak Khan who gave him shelter for a few days. In the course of conversation with Khan Sahib, Abani found that I was a friend of his. "Then I have come to the right place", was the exultant comment. He then professed great

anxiety to see me. When Abdur Razzak Khan, intending to fix an appointment, saw me and mentioned Abani Mukherjee's name, I expressed my surprise that he had come back home and at the same time told Khan Sahib that I would not see him at all. I did so because Abani Mukherjee had been expelled from the Party, and I asked Khan Sahib also to cease all contact with him. At this Abani Mukherjee got very angry with me and exclaimed that he would one day have his own back. Obviously, he felt highly insulted, and it was in order to wreak his revenge that the letter mentioned above, which was a piece of forgery, was composed.

I sent word to the proper quarters in Europe about Abani Mukherjee's return home. From time to time I continued to hear of his goings-on in different places. I had nothing very special to do in regard to him. My financial position was then most desperate. I could not afford any house-rent. Some of my one-time students lived at 3, Gumghar Lane in the Chandney Chawk area, and I slept in their place. The house belonged to a well-known Calcutta resident, Munshi Ali-muddin, after whom a street has been named. One day I got up very early in the morning and went to see Abdur Razzak Khan at Narkeldanga. He then used to stay with his uncles in Narkeldanga North Road. Even though I had walked all the way from Chandney Chawk, I found him still in bed, and I woke him up. His eyes still sleepy, he pulled some papers from under his pillow, pushed them into my hand, saying "Look, what Santosh (Santosh Mitra) has left for me", and went out for a wash. When he came back I asked him what had happened. He said that very early that

morning, even before it was light, Santosh Mitra had come to his place and handed to him certain papers, at the same time requesting Abdur Razzak Khan somehow to collect a few printed letter-heads from the office of the Bengal Provincial Khilafat Committee so that the content of the papers could be typed on them and sent to different addresses in Europe. There was on the piece of paper that Abdur Razzak Khan had given me the draft of a letter in pencil, which contained some ugly and false accusations against me, to be sent to the Chairman and Secretary of the Communist International. The idea was to produce an impression that the Khilafat Committee was making the accusation while in actual fact the Committee knew nothing about the matter. Abdur Razzak Khan was to steal the Khilafat Committee's printed letter paper, and the forged letter was to be typed on it and sent to six or seven addresses in Germany and Holland. Along with the draft of the letter, the addresses also were written on separate pieces of paper.

I do not know if Abdur Razzak Khan knew who had forged the letter; at any rate he said nothing to me. I had an immediate suspicion that the forgery was Abani Mukherjee's work. I told Khan Sahib that I was finding it difficult to read the pencilled draft but that I would read it carefully at leisure and return it to him. My motive was to verify if it was in Abani Mukherjee's handwriting. I had several of Abani's letters, sent from Germany. On comparison, I saw that it was indeed Abani Mukherjee's hand-writing. It goes without saying that the letter was written in English. We had a post-box address in Germany and

I sent it there, without giving it back to Abdur Razzak Khan. But the Indian police had already got scent of our German post-box address. At the Foreign Post Office in Bombay they kept a photograph of the letter and sent it onward. I learnt later that this letter of Abani's had reached the Bureau of the Communist International. During the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case the police filed against us the photostatic copy of this letter as kept in Bombay's Foreign Post Office.

I did not personally know Santosh Mitra when he helped Abani Mukherjee in his conspiracy against me. It surprises me that he did it even though he knew nothing whatever about the matter. I had come to know an old terrorist leader who used to come and see Qazi Nazrul Islam and had been a colleague of M. N. Roy's during the latter's terrorist phase. M. N. Roy had also sent him a few letters through me. He was sorry when I told him about Abani Mukherjee's forgery and Santosh Mitra's involvement in the matter. He knew both of them. One day he called Santosh and asked him in my presence why he had assisted in the forgery. Santosh could not give much of an explanation. However, since that encounter I came to know Santosh personally. He told me later that he understood nothing of the point at issue and being rather struck with Abani Mukherjee and his talk, he had done it. Sometime afterwards the old terrorist leader, whom I have mentioned, met Abani Mukherjee and I learnt from him that over this subject he and Abani had an estrangement. Mukherjee discovered that the forged letter had got into my hands, but not

from Santosh Mitra. I do not know in what manner Abani Mukherjee spoke to Dr. Datta about Santosh's perfidy. Besides, Santosh Mitra was not then "a lad of sixteen", but a young man of twentyfour and the organiser and leader of a small terrorist group.

At pp. 310-11 of his book Dr. Datta writes:

"In 1924 Abani came suddenly to the writer and said, 'Nalini had a quarrel with Roy. Roy wanted to forward to the International Nalini's report on the work in India, but the latter was unwilling and wanted to send the report directly himself.' 'The International wants to send Nalini again to India, but Nalini is unwilling to go again as Roy's agent and would prefer to have your 'mandate'. At last through Abani's instrumentality the writer met Nalini and said to him 'If I send you secretly with a letter and you get caught it will be my discredit'."

Now, one has to ask, how could Nalini have had a quarrel with Roy in 1924? As a matter of fact, in 1924 Nalini Gupta was clapped in jail in India. Dr. Datta has himself written about having drawn Abani's attention in 1924 to his letter filed by the police in connection with the Kanpur case. He knew also that Nalini himself was one of the accused in the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy case which was heard in 1924. But in that case Nalini Gupta who had come a second time to India in 1923 could not have met Dr. Datta in Europe through Abani Mukherjee, because Abani came home in 1922 and returned to Europe in 1924. Dr. Datta's writings are full of self-contradictions.

What he relates does not tally with the facts, and he pieces together imaginary happenings. If one carefully probes the extracts given above, one would surely agree with my view.

I never met Abani Mukherjee, and I do not wish to say anything more about him. He came to India in 1922, and it was perhaps some time in 1924 that he went back unscathed to Europe. For a while he was offered shelter by the Anushilan Samiti of Dacca. Long ago, I read a book by a member of the Samiti, Shri Rakhal Ghosh, entitled "Abani Mukherjee, the revolutionary", but I do not have it before me now. Shivprasad Gupta of Banaras, Shri Bhupati Majumdar (now a Minister in the West Bengal Government) and Abani Mukherjee had been arrested in Singapore. The police, it is said, took Abani for a bath in the sea, and then he escaped, holding on to the bottom of a sailing boat and floating away while the police could do nothing. I cannot understand why he was taken for a bath and how he could escape by floating away, but the whole affair strikes me as strange.

From India he returned to Germany. After much correspondence he got permission to go from there to the Soviet Union, where his wife and son lived. In 1926 Abani Mukherjee was working at the Statistical Institute in Moscow. While there, he wrote a letter to the Peasants' and Workers' Party office at 37, Harrison Road in Calcutta, and intimated that he was working at the Statistical Institute, but had nothing to do with the Party, and that he was translating into Bengali Bukharin's "ABC of Communism", which we could publish if we wanted it. We, of course, did

nothing of the sort. I do not know if in 1927 or 1928 Abani Mukherjee was restored to Party membership. We heard that in 1937 or 1938 he had been arrested, but we know nothing further about him.

Dr. Bhupendranath Datta is a past master in the art of manufacturing sensational stories. At page 306 of his book he writes that Shri K. C. Roy had been prosecuted in Bombay on the charge

that he used to have funds sent him by M. N. Roy for the purpose of building the Party in India. No one

of the name of K. C. Roy was ever prosecuted; actually, there was none of that name either. Perhaps Dr. Datta had heard from somebody about Shri Kiran Bihari Ray, who belonged to Bakerganj district and was one of the few chartered accountants who had qualified in England in those days. In 1923-24 he was holding a big job in Bombay at the Tata's insurance company. Shri Roy was a friend of Nalini Gupta's, and on the latter's assurance had gone to England for his studies without the consent of his own people. Nalini was then working in a London factory. Roy's expenses, of course, were met by his father. A money order for twentyfive pounds once came in his name, though it was intended for Nalini. The money never reached the latter. The police had got scent of the matter through the Foreign Money Order office, and searched Shri Roy's residence. The money order had only just been received, and the police took charge of the money. At the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy trial the police produced this money in court. Summons were issued for Shri Kiran Bihari Roy to

appear and give evidence in the case. He testified that he had accepted a money order for £ 25 for Nalini Gupta. The money remained deposited in court in Nalini's name and was never forfeited. Later, it was taken out by the advocate on the strength of a power of attorney given by Nalini. The story of the prosecution of Shri Kiran Bihari Roy is a figment of the imagination.

At page 302 of his book, Dr. Datta writes: "Those who had called themselves adherents of Communism in Moscow got together and set up a Communist Party. Its members were the writer, Shri Birendranath Das Gupta, Abdul Wahid, Surendranath Kar and Dr. Hemendranath Ghosh". How-

ever, the two last-named never went to Moscow. It should be particularly noticed that Virendranath

Chattopadhyaya was not in this 'Communist Party'. Of the members, Surendranath Kar and Syed Abdul Wahid died in Europe. None of the rest, including Dr. Datta, ever joined the Communist Party of India. If the Communist Party of India could be set up in Germany, what indeed was the objection to the same procedure in Moscow? Another matter should be particularly noted. At the same time as Dr. Datta and Co. formed the 'Communist Party of India' in Germany, they established contact with Mussolini's Italy! It gives an idea of the kind of Communists they were. As a matter of fact, it was the peculiar psychology of exiles which led them to this unsavoury proceeding. They badly needed funds, and their principle had reduced itself to finding funds whatever the source.

Dr. Datta and his entourage never even tried to grasp that the life of the Communist Party was sustained by its organisational discipline. They would never understand that members join the Communist Party as individuals and not as groups. From what he writes it seems that in Moscow they were always asking childishly for special treatment. I am honestly amazed at the patience of the Communist International which, in spite of all this kind of thing, set up a Commission to examine the case of the Indians who came from Germany. When they were being asked questions individually, "Chattopadhyaya pleaded that they all belonged to the same group and answers would be given by one of them on their behalf." When they were told that they would, after scrutiny, be taken individually as members of the Party, Dr. Datta interpreted it to mean that "the Communist International would select 'agents' of their choice" (*ibid*, p. 285). Dr. Datta was very touchy in regard to money matters. When Professor Varga asked "What the writer (Datta) did and how he earned his living, he answered that he was a student of the university and had his allowance sent from home". (*ibid*, p. 295). Dr. Datta gave the same kind of answer on several other occasions. We know, of course, that Dr. Datta's people lived in comparative affluence. He and his brother, both unmarried, had a good deal of property in Calcutta. In spite of there being perhaps a warrant of arrest against him, his own property had never been declared forfeited to the Government of India, since he had never been proclaimed an absconder from justice. But during the First World War he spent

several years in Germany. Did he get any money from home during that time? And yet, he had, of course, to 'maintain himself'. Besides, I wish in all humility to ask him if he actually received financial help from home when he said in answer to Professor Varga that he did. If a man cannot control his own tongue he only embarrasses himself by saying all kinds of pointless things.

In certain sections of his book Dr. Datta writes as if he was possessed by a spirit.

"Meanwhile a most amazing event took place. In 1922 or 1923 the British Government started a 'Bolshevik Conspiracy Case' at Peshawar.

Dr. Datta and his 'revelations' In this case a young man who had been to Russia got a long sentence in jail. A few days later, Wahid came to Berlin from Rome and said, 'It is strange that the young man sentenced in the Peshawar Case has come to Rome. How could it happen, and what is its significance?' (*ibid*, p. 329). "In March, 1925 the writer left Berlin.....coming to Paris, he met the aforesaid Peshawari youth who had been convicted in the Peshawar 'Bolshevik Conspiracy Case'. Everyone suspected him to be a spy. Madame Cama, however, told the writer: 'Whatever people might say, I am getting him to write my memoirs and shall pay him for his pains too.' When the writer had a talk with the young man, he heard that he had been among the young *muhajirs* who had escaped from Kabul

to Russia, that he was by birth a Pathan and had relatives in the Punjab where he intended to work for the peasant movement and that he was in serious financial straits. He further added that he was studying sociology at Paris University, that the Orientalist, Professor Sylvain Levi, was helping him with opportunities for work and wages, and that as a student he relied upon himself to carry him through. The writer then consoled him by saying: 'Don't lend your ear to what people might say, but carry on your own studies. In a foreign country, everybody suffers from exile psychology which you should overcome'. Back home, the writer was astonished to learn from a student who had returned from Paris that the dead body of the young man had been found floating in the river Seine." (*ibid*, pp. 331-32).

Probably Dr. Datta was possessed and was making 'revelations' when he wrote such things. There is not a shred of truth in the narrative quoted above. In my chapter headed "The Story of Rafiq Ahmad's Travels", I have already given a detailed account of the Peshawar Communist Conspiracy trial. No one got a sentence of more than two years in that case. All who had been convicted served their full term of sentence in Peshawar jail. None among them went abroad later. I have referred already to Abdul Qadir Sehrai, who had been unconditionally acquitted. Perhaps, he was a police informer even earlier, but in any case he became later an agent of the British Government,

which arranged for him a job in London as teacher of the Pushtu language at London University in order that he might propagate anti-Communist slander. Abdul Qadir, too, went to England at least two years after Dr. Datta's return to India. Muhammad Akbar Khan of Hazara district was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment even before the Peshawar Communist Conspiracy trial began. He never joined the Communist Party. He served his sentence in full and came out of jail in 1930.

"The young man sentenced in the Peshawar Case"—this is what Dr. Datta writes. But surely the young man must have had a name. Why does Dr. Datta not mention it? How could it be that someone whom he had known in Moscow, whose name was mentioned to him in Berlin by Abdul Wahid, and whom he met in person again in Paris, came to have even his name forgotten and could only be described as "that young man". It was perhaps not impossible for any of those who had a year's sentence in Peshawar Case to go to Europe in 1924, but the difficulty is that none of them went.

I am not inclined to believe that in some secret recess of Dr. Datta's mind there was an anti-Muslim bias. But there can be no manner of doubt that he wrote this untruthful story on account of his mind having been poisoned by political animus. Towards the close of the Meerut Communist Conspiracy trial Shaukat Usmani betrayed some weakness. I have said earlier that he was expelled from the Party on that account. It stands to reason that after such action being taken against him he could keep away

from us. But to say, as Dr. Datta does in his book (*ibid*, p. 333), that Shaukat Usmani after expulsion from the Party grew a beard and moustaches and started performing his ritual prayers (*namaz*) is sheer mendacity. I must state with every emphasis that this is a story invented by Dr. Datta's own imagination and not "something which he had heard from one of the accused in the Meerut Case".

After returning home, Dr. Datta has travelled over various places in India and made speeches from diverse platforms. He moved about especially among the middle class. He made many attempts to have his own organisation, even as a blind cow wants a shed to itself. But he did not have the capacity for it and he did not succeed in his endeavour. In spite of his multiform antagonism towards us, we pleaded with him to join the Workers' and Peasants' Party, but he refused. Even so, we provided him with a certain position in the All-India Trade Union Congress. In 1936, when the All-India Kisan Sabha was organised, we dragged him into it. All these things were done, so that he did not suffer the pangs of loneliness and frustration in political life. But unfortunately Dr. Datta could never give up his animus against Communists. He has sometimes called himself an international Marxist (*vide* his 1926 speech at the Dacca Youth Conference) or something like that. From one point of view one might call him an unprincipled person. I have referred already to his trying at the same time to establish contact with Fascist Italy and the Communist International. He has ever been an aggrieved type of person. Those

who perpetually nurse discontent can never be happy. We are indeed sorry for him.

Dr. Datta placed on record his view that the Communist Party of India has always "opposed" India's struggle for freedom. He is, of course, the kind of person who would say so. The Communist Party of India never accepted the ideology of Dr. Datta and of certain other people, and never consented to calling in imperialist powers to India. It has been the Communist Party of India which alone has consistently held up before the country the idea of India's complete independence. Who voted against the resolution on complete independence at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1928? Did Communists do so?

I shall finish this chapter with one last word about Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. In the first half of February 1927, a Conference of oppressed peoples was held in Brussels. At this meeting an international organisation called the "League against Imperialism and for National Independence" was established. The German youth leader, Willi Munchenburg, and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya were elected joint secretaries of the organisation. Munchenburg was a Communist, and it was with Communist support that Chattopadhyaya became one of the secretaries. One might guess from this that he had then changed his mind about Communists and about the Soviet Union. But it seems from what he had intimated to Dr. Datta that no such change had

taken place. At pp. 325-26 of his book, Dr. Datta writes: "The late Surendranath Basu, proprietor of Bengal Waterproof Company, told the writer after his return from Europe that he had met Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and his wife, Agnes Smedley, at Thomas Cook's office in Berlin and had brought the following message: 'Tell our friend Dr. Datta not to rely on the Bolsheviks. They are quarrelling among themselves. They are gone to pieces. I have told the Nehrus, the father and the son, to go and see things for themselves.'" This relates to the latter part of 1927. The Nehrus did go to Moscow at the time of the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the November Revolution. On his return, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote a book appreciative of the Soviet Union.

In 1933, after Hitler's seizure of power, Chattopadhyaya and many others had to run away from Berlin. It appears that Chattopadhyaya went over to the Soviet Union. In 1936 or 1937 he was associated with the anthropological department of Leningrad University. He was put in charge of the department's museum and took great interest in the work. During this period Clemens Palme Dutt met him at the museum and wrote me a letter which is the source of my information. I learnt that in 1938 Chattopadhyaya was arrested, but I do not know the reason for the arrest. I have an idea that documents about him had been divulged. The Soviet Government intimated to the Government of India the nature of the disease of which he died. I am not aware if he was in jail or in a camp or outside either place. It has also been reported that he died during the siege of

Leningrad. When he died, he was fairly advanced in age.

It is necessary, before I conclude, to write a few words about M. N. Roy. I have said once before that he badly lacked integrity. I have had a few words about M. N. Roy no means of knowing the report submitted by Roy to the Communist International. But one thing should be very clear: there was not a shred of M. N. Roy's inspiration behind the formation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party in India. Roy had not the slightest contact with those who had taken the initiative in this matter. I have often said earlier, and I say it again, that the main sponsors of the Workers' and Peasants' Party were Qazi Nazrul Islam, Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, Qutubuddin Ahmad, and Shamsuddin Hossain. Of them, Qazi Nazrul Islam is with us today. But he is more dead than alive. The initial expenses were borne by Qutubuddin Ahmad. This was towards the end of 1925. I had not till then returned to Calcutta after my release from jail.

This Party was set up first in Bengal under the name of "Labour Swaraj Party of the Indian National Congress." Later, the name was changed to "Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal" and then "Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal". Following in the wake of Bengal, the Workers' and Peasants' Party was organised in Bombay about the beginning of 1927, and in Punjab towards the end of the year. The all-India conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties was held in Calcutta in December 1928. At this conference the parties coalesced to form the All-India

Workers' and Peasants' Party. The decisions of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International had not reached us at the time. It goes without saying that members of the Communist Party of India worked also inside the Workers' and Peasants' Party; they were indeed its life and soul.

I have heard many other allegations against M. N. Roy, for instance, his mistakes in China, his exaggerated reports on the Indian situation, etc. He had also been charged with creating ideological confusion through such things as his theory of de-colonisation of India.

Manabendra Nath Roy had found himself in a position of high responsibility in the Communist International. It is a pity he could not maintain the revolutionary dignity of his position, and the reason was his lack of integrity which dragged him down, till he was expelled from the Communist International.

One matter remains to be noted. Dr. Datta has written that M. N. Roy was prosecuted at Kanpur for having travelled without a passport. This, however, is not correct. How can one be prosecuted after one has managed to gain entry into one's own country? M. N. Roy had been one of the accused in the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case of 1924. He could not be produced in court because he was abroad. When after a long period he was caught inside India, he was tried on the old charges. In the Sessions Court, he was sentenced to twelve years' rigorous imprisonment. On appeal the High Court reduced the sentence to one of six years.