

## BUILDING THE PARTY ABROAD

It is no longer a matter of dispute that the foundations of the Communist Party of India were laid abroad, at Tashkent, now the capital of the Uzbekistan Republic. But there are differences of view regarding the actual time of the formation of the Party. An American writer, Dr. David N. Druhe, has written a big tome in English under the title "Soviet Russia and Indian Communism". This has been published by Bookman Associates of New York. At page 34 he writes:

"It was among students of 'India House' in Tashkent that the Communist Party of India was first formed in early 1921. It was planned to send the graduates of the propaganda School into India as agents to form the Communist Party there".

Ascertaining  
the time when  
the Party was  
first formed

From Dr. Druhe's use of the word "agents" it

will be clear that as a writer he has no sympathy for communists. Several Americans have recently written large volumes on the Communist movement in India. None of them is in fact friendly towards it. Their object is only to give through their writing a warning to the imperialist world, and particularly to American imperialism, that they should beware of the dangers that might emanate from the Communists of India.

Druhe probably got his material from such of M. N. Roy's writings as have escaped my notice or from articles published in the "Times" of London which were written by that loyal servant of the British rulers of India, Abdul Qadir Sehrai (whom I have already mentioned). The "India House" of Tashkent has been referred to in Rafiq Ahmad's travel story, and he has stated that "India House" was a big building in Tashkent where Indian *muhajirs* (*emigre's*) were put up. *Muhajir* is an Arabic word to indicate those who leave their country to escape oppression. After he had been to Moscow (probably in April 1921), Rafiq Ahmad joined the *emigre* Communist Party of India. However, in a letter to me from Bhopal, dated 29th December 1958, he agreed that the *emigre* Communist Party of India had been set up at first in Tashkent. In that letter he also mentioned the names of the Party's earliest members, e.g. M. N. Roy and his first wife Evelyn Roy, Abani Mukherjee and his wife Rosa, Muhammad Shafiq and Masood Ali Shah. The first Secretary of the Party was Muhammad Shafiq. All this is generally agreed to. But Rafiq Ahmad is not ready to accept the view

that the *emigre* Communist Party of India was formed in Tashkent early in 1921. In his opinion, as indicated to me in his letter, it was October or November, 1920, and by no means in 1921. He relies, of course, only on his memory. But he lays so much stress on this point that we have to consider it carefully. After all, we are also, like him, drawing upon our own recollection of events.

Manabendra Nath Roy was then a member of the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International, and it was on account of this that he was staying at the time in Turkestan. He was very intimately associated with the task of setting up the *emigre* Communist Party of India. He has left behind his memoirs of those days, which were published in the journal "Radical Humanist". There is a lot of stuff in his writings, but he has not deigned to mention dates and such things. To read them is to think as if events took place irrespective of time. He also agrees that the *emigre* Communist Party of India was first formed in Tashkent, but he is entirely silent on the question whether it was towards the end of 1920 or the beginning of 1921. Of course, he wrote his memoirs long after the event and perhaps he could not exactly recall the time. But if he had only set his brains working a little, he could have remembered many things. Besides, many important events of that period have been described in different books. If he had tried to collate them, he could easily find out whether the Communist Party was formed before or after some ascertainable date. In reality, M. N. Roy did not write his memoirs in order to set a

correct date to the formation of the Communist Party. He had no interest in that direction. Expelled from the Communist International in 1929, he continued incessantly to turn his coat. He has spoken in his memoirs of the organisation of the Communist Party only in order to place himself on a pedestal.

Reading M. N. Roy's memoirs one gets an impression as if the record of a long period of time was being stated. But a reference to the facts leads to the discovery that only a few months' events were being described. The Second Congress of the Communist International began its session on July 19, 1920 and ended on August 7, 1920. He was present at this Congress from the start to the finish. After this he must have had a lot to do before leaving for Tashkent. The journey also must have taken some time. He has not told us how long it took him. Rail movement after the revolution was subject to many impediments. It does not also appear as if, after reaching Tashkent, he stayed there long, for he had to go further on to Bokhara. Before the October Revolution, the Emirate of Bokhara and the Khanate of Khiva were integral parts of the Russian Empire. These territories were liberated after the revolution in pursuance of Lenin's principle of self-determination. The British, however, surreptitiously joined in a conspiracy with the Emir of Bokhara. Their objective was to turn Bokhara into a Muslim kingdom under British control. Even Enver Pasha had a hand in this game. Thus it was noticed one day that the Emir had moved off to the mountain regions of Ferghana, from where he had

planned to launch his attack. But the extensive plains of Bokhara could not just remain unaffected. A Bokhara revolutionary committee was set up at Tashkent, and propagandists went on its behalf to Bokhara. Later the revolutionary committee called a delegate conference at Bokhara. It was from the platform of this conference that on September 14, 1920 the Bokhara People's Soviet Republic was proclaimed and established. M. N. Roy was, as he says himself, present at this conference and returned to Tashkent after it was over. All this did not take very long.

M. N. Roy has made a queer mess as far as dates are concerned. He writes that he reached Tashkent about the middle of November. He also describes the bitter cold and snowfall. Immediately thereafter he writes that he was in Bokhara when the Bokhara Soviet republic was set up and that he had gone to Bokhara from Tashkent. The foundation of the Bokhara Soviet Republic is an event recorded in history, and its date is, as noted earlier, September 14, 1920. There is no doubt that M. N. Roy did have experience of the cold weather in Tashkent about the middle of November. But it can only have been considerably after his return from Bokhara to Tashkent.

In another place he states that the *hijrat* movement in India began in 1919. As a matter of fact it was 1920. He writes that while in Bokhara he got the news that some *muhajirs* had been captured by Turkmen rebels. Meanwhile, Frunze had been

appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army in place of Sokolnikov, and luckily he was then present in Bokhara. Roy had some consultation with him, and under his orders a contingent of the Red Army along with a gunboat were sent up the Amu Dariya in order to rescue the Indian *muhajirs*. It was during M. N. Roy's stay in Bokhara that the *muhajirs* were rescued and brought there. They were about seventy in number, and arrangements were made for their food and all requisite apparel in Bokhara. When questioned, the *muhajirs* still seemed determined to go on to Turkey. Attempts were made to persuade them that Mustafa Kemal Pasha was fighting for his country's freedom and not for the establishment of the *Khilafat*. As a result of these talks, M. N. Roy was convinced that the *muhajirs*, while anti-British and anti-imperialist, were at the same time extreme religious fanatics. Roy could not win them over with political arguments, but he could weaken their resistance with the offer of military training. Thus he returned to Tashkent with fifty out of seventy *muhajirs*.

Here again Roy has mixed up his statement with facts. Did Roy really meet the Indian *Muhajirs* in Bokhara? If so, who were they? Roy has mentioned no names at all. We have learnt from Rafiq Ahmad's narrative that the one hundred and eighty Indian *muhajirs*, while putting up at Jabloos Siraj in Afghanistan, had distributed themselves into two groups, one group of eighty having elected Muhammad Akbar Khan of Hazara district as their leader and the second group (its numerical strength unknown to Rafiq

Ahmad) being led by Muhammad Akbar Jan of Peshawar who was elected to the post. Rafiq Ahmad had heard that the majority of the latter group had gone back home and those who had not done so had joined Enver Pasha. Habib Ahmad Naseem of the second group had, at Muhammad Akbar Jan's instance, been thrown into jail, and after release on M. N. Roy's intercession joined the others at Tashkent. It is by no means strange for M. N. Roy having met at Bokhara a third group of people apart from the two *muhajir* bands referred to by Rafiq Ahmad. But M. N. Roy's narrative tallies to some extent with that of the group to which Rafiq Ahmad belonged. It was this group which had fallen into the hands of Turkmen rebels. It was this group again which joined hands with the Red Army and took up arms for the defence of Kirkee fort against the assault of the Turkmen rebels. Later, when the Red Army began its counter-attack against the Turkmen rebels, some of the *muhajirs* also fought alongside the Red Army. It is extraordinary, however, that in his memoirs Roy does not even remotely breathe a hint that the *muhajirs* had taken up arms at Kirkee. As noted before, a Red Army contingent and also a gunboat had been sent. Besides, Roy has referred in his memoirs to some people with whom a sort of likeness with several of Rafiq Ahmad's group can be discerned. But those of Rafiq Ahmad's group who had gone to Tashkent had done so of their own free will. They had boarded the train at Charjao. They were also taken to Bokhara, though of course they could have travelled to Tashkent without touching

Bokhara. It would be no surprise if they had been taken to Bokhara expressly for a meeting with M. N. Roy. But it seems that Roy had then gone over to Tashkent, where Rafiq Ahmad and his companions had their first interview with him. They had already seen Abdur Rab and Trimul Acharia at Kabul. When they reached Tashkent they found Abdur Rab staying at "India House".

According to Rafiq Ahmad, it was in September 1920, as far as he could remember, that they had reached Tashkent. My idea is that they had reached there towards the end of the month. Their first meeting with M. N. Roy took place after they had arrived at Tashkent. M. N. Roy was in Bokhara at any rate till September 14, 1920, the date of the foundation of the Soviet republic there, and it was only afterwards that he could have come to Tashkent. When Rafiq Ahmad and company, *en route* to Tashkent, had gone to Bokhara and stayed three days there, M. N. Roy had already left. As far as can be guessed, they could not reach Tashkent before the last week of September (or perhaps even in the first week of October). As soon as they reached Tashkent, Rafiq Ahmad and his companions were met by M. N. Roy and his first wife Evelyn Roy, Abani Mukherjee and his wife Rosa, and Muhammad Shafiq. One thing needs to be said here, since M. N. Roy's memory has played him false to some extent. It appears from Roy's writings that Abani Mukherjee had been sent to attend the Congress of Eastern Peoples at Baku. He had directions from Roy to go straight from Baku to Moscow and thence to Holland where he was to

stay and maintain contact with India through the help of Indian sailors. When in the first half of 1921 (probably in the spring) Roy was arranging for his journey from Tashkent to Moscow, he found, much to his annoyance, that Abani Mukherjee was coming back to Tashkent. It appears from the statement of the Executive Committee of the Communist International that the Congress of Eastern Peoples at Baku began its session on September 1, 1920. There is no indication about the date of the end of the session, but it must have been earlier than September 20, since it is known from the documents of the Communist International that on September 20 Zinoviev reported to its Executive Committee on the Baku Congress. There can be no doubt that from Baku Abani Mukherjee went back to Tashkent. The Indian *muhajirs* who had come to Tashkent from Kirkee fort (among them being Rafiq Ahmad, Abdul Majeed, Shaukat Usmani, Firozuddin Mansoor and others) met Abani Mukherjee and his wife at Tashkent itself. The Mukherjees, husband and wife, became members of the *emigre* Communist Party of India set up in Tashkent. When M. N. Roy's memory is shaky, it is safer to trust the version of the young *muhajirs*, who in any case were not likely to make a mistake about those whom they had met first at Tashkent. It may be that Abani Mukherjee went some time later to Moscow, and without journeying to Holland, had returned to Tashkent.

However, it is necessary to determine the time when the *emigre* Communist Party of India was organised in Tashkent. There are no two opinions

about the fact that Tashkent was the venue of the formation of the Party, but in regard to the time Roy seems indifferent. Besides, he mixes up things from time to time. The American writer Druhe is of the view that the Communist Party of India was formed in Tashkent in "early 1921". Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, twin American authors of the voluminous "Communism in India", had the advantage of reading a secret publication with the same title, edited by Colonel C. Kaye, former Director of the Government of India's Central Intelligence Bureau, but they give no dates for the formation of the Party at Tashkent. However, Rafiq Ahmad is very emphatic that the Communist Party of India was formed at Tashkent in either October or November, 1920. Rafiq himself joined the Party later, in 1921, after he had gone to Moscow. This stress on the Party being set up in October or November 1920 is significant, in spite of Rafiq Ahmad's not having the distinction of being among the first members of the Party. M. N. Roy's "memoirs", as published in the "Radical Humanist", are so phrased that any odd date would do. This being so, it will not be unfair to accept Rafiq Ahmad's version. It may certainly be taken for granted that the Communist Party of India was first set up at Tashkent in October or November, 1920.

In his memoirs, as they have appeared in the "Radical Humanist", M. N. Roy avers that in the beginning he was averse to the formation of an Indian Communist Party abroad but that his hands were forced. I do not wish to imply that Roy was not

telling the truth. But was it not helpful to his leadership that an *emigre* Communist Party of India was formed? It is common knowledge that Roy had a certain "thirst" for leadership. Besides, it was not as if he was trying his hand for the first time in his life at Tashkent for setting up a Communist Party. In 1919, even before reaching Moscow, he had set up a small Communist Party in Mexico, a proceeding which helped him to secure a representative capacity for himself at the Second Congress of the Communist International. It was over this matter too, that he had trouble with others in Mexico. Linn Gale, who was in the Party opposed to him, has thus written indignantly about Roy:

"Except for desiring Indian independence, he was in no sense a radical, for he believed firmly in child marriages, the caste system and most of the traditional evils that thus far have prevented India from achieving nationhood". (Quotation as given in Overstreet and Windmiller's "Communism in India").

In my view, Linn Gale, in his resentment, has done an injustice to Roy. In 1923, a member of Roy's former (terrorist) party, Shri Monoranjan Gupta, wrote his life-story for the weekly "Sarathi", where it is stated that while in India Roy was a disciple of Shivnarayan Swami. Shri Girish Chandra Chakravarti, sometime headmaster of my school, was also a disciple of the Swami, and I have heard from him something of the principles he preached. When I met my former headmaster for the last time at

Brahmanbaria in 1938, he told me a great deal about his preceptor. Shivnarayan Swami was opposed to all the superstitions mentioned by Linn Gale; above all, he was a believer in the unity of all religions. If, therefore, M. N. Roy did not at the time believe in Communism, at least he could not possibly have the superstitious views ascribed to him.

I have strayed far from my main theme. M. N. Roy has said that there was no hindrance to the setting up of military schools for providing training in arms to Indian *muhajirs*. Those who could give such lessons had actually accompanied him from Moscow to Tashkent. The Russians kept themselves aloof from this task. Every help and cooperation came, however, from government officials and representatives of the Communist Party in Turkestan. Wobbly John, the American, became principal of the school. He had come with Roy from Moscow. The Russians were kept at a distance on account of their being involved in a trade agreement with the British.

Further, M. N. Roy has described how it occurred to him that more things needed to be done after the *muhajirs* learnt the use of many kinds of weapons and perhaps returning home, so equipped, even employed them against the British. What next, was the question. The *muhajirs* were not nationalists and had no conception at all of democracy. Thus M. N. Roy and his colleagues thought of imparting political, along with military, training.

"The plan was not to convert them to communism, but to awaken in them the minimum measure of political consciousness".

Roy says also that while it was not difficult to get the *muhajirs* to say "Long live Revolution", rather than "Long live the Khilafat", the main thing was to implant in their minds some idea of what revolution meant. To grasp how revolution takes place and to turn them into faithful soldiers of revolution was the primary task.

"Then we were thinking in terms of national democratic revolution.....none of them had any idea of democracy."

It was in such a situation that Roy started political training for the *muhajirs*. He took up first of all those who had some education, in the hope of better work. The results were beyond all expectation. When Roy explained to them the different stages of revolution, they took it in very swiftly. The reason for this, Roy thought, was that they were idealists. Then they posed before Roy the question as to why they should not move forward in the path of communist revolution, a question for which Roy himself was not ready. The *muhajirs* got ahead pretty fast with both kinds of training, military as well as political. They did not only learn the use of the rifle; they showed real skill in the handling of complicated weapons. In the sphere of political training could be noticed *muhajirs* who had been extreme Khilafatists growing into equally extreme communists. A few suggested to Roy that they wanted to join the Communist Party. Some went even farther and asked why they should not set up there the Communist Party of India. This enthusiasm was genuine, though it may be there were a few opportunists also

among them. As Roy put it, "I could not find it in me to discourage them".

From Kabul there had come several who had even earlier declared themselves to be communists. Among them was Abdur Rab, who was joined a little later by the South Indian, Trimul Acharia. Along with Abdur Rab, there had also come from Kabul Muhammad Shafiq of Peshawar. It is not known whether he had left India with the *muhajirs* or earlier. However, Muhammad Shafiq took M. N. Roy's side when there was a controversy between Roy on one hand and Abdur Rab and Acharia on the other.

According to M. N. Roy, it was Abdur Rab and Trimul Acharia particularly who inspired those who wanted forthwith to set up the Communist Party of India at Tashkent. Abdur Rab was in favour of forming the Party immediately. Those who had become communists began the most adverse criticism of their own past, and those who had not just could not stand such criticism. In the result, *muhajirs* at "India House" even came to blows. However, those who were in favour of setting up a Party organisation put forward their proposal before the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International. One learns from M. N. Roy's account that he sought to dissuade them. Where was the hurry, he pointed out, in forming the Party; besides, it could be done on their return home to India. This disappointed them a great deal, and Roy felt that if he did not give his consent these new communists would be heart-broken. At last he gave his consent, though he knew the newly set up Party would

remain one on paper. In any case, the Communist Party of India was thus first formed at Tashkent, and Muhammad Shafiq was its first Secretary. Again, Roy had said that he had in his own mind welcomed Abdur Rab and Acharia's advent and had hoped for much help from them, but after discussion with them he felt convinced that Abdur Rab was an impostor and that if any cap fitted Acharia it was that of an anarchist rather than anything else.

So far we had a summary of M. N. Roy's version, as found in his memoirs, of the formation of the Communist Party of India at Tashkent. David Druhe, relying on the writings of Abdul Qadir Sehrai in the London "Times", refers (at p. 39 of his book) to Abdur Rab and Acharia as the founders of the Communist Party of India. This, however, is not true. None of the other *muhajirs* who were in Tashkent at the time and had joined the Communist Party has ever accepted the proposition. What Abdul Qadir reports is not trustworthy. Something has already been said about him in Rafiq Ahmad's travel story. Before leaving India with the *muhajirs* he used to teach the *Pushtu* language to British officers. It will not be unfair to suspect that he had accompanied the *muhajirs* at the instance of the British officers. In Moscow, he became a member of the Communist Party of India. In spite of it, however, he was unconditionally released during the Peshawar Communist Conspiracy trial. After he was let off, he maintained no further contact with the Communist Party of India, but his relations with the British authorities were consolidated. They arranged to have him sent to

London and appointed a tutor in *Pushtu* at London University. The "Times" of London, day after day, printed his "revelations" of the *Hijrat* and the first phase of the Communist movement.

Another point may be noted. I don't know why, but Druhe writes Muhammad Shafiq's name as Muhammad Sadiq. Besides, he has identified Ghulam Hossain of Lahore as Muhammad Sadiq; they were not names of the same individual but of two different personalities.

I intend now to say a few words about the information culled, as above, from M. N. Roy's memoirs. A band of *muhajirs*, saved from captivity in the hands of Turkmen rebels by the appearance of Red Army soldiers, had taken refuge in the fort of Kirkee which was guarded by the Red Army. When the Turkmen rebels, with reinforced strength, attacked the fort, these *muhajirs* had also taken arms to defend it alongside the Red Army. This was a big event in the life of the *muhajirs* in 1920. Out of the eighty *muhajirs* in the band, no trace could be found of twenty people. It is certain that the Turkmen rebels had killed them while they were in their custody. After the rout of the rebels, sixty *muhajirs* had travelled by steamer to Charjao, where they split themselves into two groups. One group took the road to Anatolia and the other, of their own free will, boarded the train for Tashkent. At Charjao, M. N. Roy was not present to incite them to move on to Tashkent. When these *muhajirs* reached Tashkent, they must surely have related these happenings to M. N. Roy. Reports regarding the events at Kirkee fort



must also have been received by the Turkestan Bureau from the military section. It is from M. N. Roy's own memoirs that we learn how the Russians kept a very sympathetic and watchful eye on the Indians and specially the Indian *muhajirs*. When it is remembered that the *muhajirs* in question were actually in the charge of the Turekstan Bureau in Tashkent, it is inconceivable that the Kirkee fort events had not been communicated to the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International.

It is a matter of surprise that nowhere in his memoirs does Roy mention the fact that at Kirkee the *muhajirs* had taken up arms and that a group of them had come of their own free will to Tashkent. Besides, many of this group had even decided in Kabul that they would go over to the Soviet country. It was at Kabul that invitation to visit the land of revolution had been extended to them. The mentality of some other people, again, had changed after their experience of captivity in the hands of Turkmen rebels. This was why they could readily join hands at Kirkee with the Red Army and fight to repel the rebel invaders. Thus there were two types of people who had got aboard the train from Charjao to Tashkent. They were keen on having a good look themselves at what was transpiring in Soviet land. No doubt they knew that in Tashkent one did not fight for the Khilafat! Of course, there were among them dubious people like Abdul Qadir; quite often doubtful characters penetrate into such company. There were also among them some people who were chronic malcontents, a type which it is difficult to discipline and

to make them get on with the others. Even so, as we have seen already, most of those who had come from Kirkee joined the Communist Party of India, while the rest did not. It may also be said with certainty that the names of a few such people are mentioned in Roy's memoirs. In spite of it, however, Roy has drawn a veil over the incident. This concealment of facts is only an indication of Roy's self-centred nature. He has exaggerated many things in order to arrogate to himself the credit of converting fanatic Khilafatists to Communism. However, what else could the men of Kirkee, who had come with an open mind to Tashkent, do except to become communists? I agree that Roy had a lot of bother over many other *muhajirs*, but none of the latter ever became friends, let alone members, of the Communist Party.

According to Roy, the *muhajirs*, while indubitably anti-British, had no idea of what was meant by democracy. This is a worthless statement. The *hijrat* movement took place in 1920. In that same year eighteen thousand Muslims left their country. All India then was bursting with discontent. The Jalianwalabagh massacre at Amritsar had taken place in April, 1919, and after that the Punjab had experienced the horror of martial law. During 1919 and 1920 many working-class strikes, big and small, had taken place. How can it be said that such events left no influence on the minds of the young *muhajirs*? Besides, that was the time when all over the country intense Khilafat movement was being conducted. It was out of this Khilafat movement that, indeed, the non-co-operation struggle emerged. Hindus had

joined the Khilafat agitation. And yet, is it credible that a few more or less educated *muhajirs* whom M. N. Roy confronted had no inkling even of bourgeois democracy?

Roy had gone to work in a republic inhabited largely by Muslims. For this purpose he had acquainted himself to some extent with Islamic literature. He had also read the Quran. All this he writes in his memoirs. How can it be that in spite of having made such study he could not realise that Islam was based on a brand of democracy? Didn't the young *muhajirs* have any conception of Muslim democracy, if of nothing else?

There was, and perhaps still is, in the Muslim mind something like a feeling of international fraternity, and its symbol was the *Khilafat*. The Sultan of Turkey, ruler of the empire of the Osmanias, was the last Muslim Khalifa (Caliph). In our country the *Khilafat* movement began when, during the First World War, the *Khilafat* (Caliphate) was being overthrown. The Hindus of India could join the movement because it was anti-British. It is unfortunate that political movements in our country have throughout been mixed up with religious revivalism. Such was the case during the *Khilafat* struggle, and the revolutionary movement which M. N. Roy had first joined was by no means free of religious revivalism.

It was in Tashkent that the first foundations were laid of the *emigre'* Communist Party of India. From there it moved to Moscow and added to its strength. When the Party was formed in Tashkent

old Abdur Rab of Peshawar and the South Indian Trimul Acharia were also in it. Abdur Rab and Trimul Acharia They used to refer to themselves as Communists. And it was after meeting them at Kabul that several young *muhajirs* decided to go to the Soviet Union, the land of revolution, rather than to Turkey. I do not know much about these two men, Abdur Rab and Trimul Acharia. I do not even know if they are alive at present. I know only this much, that Acharia had returned to India. In Dr. Bhupendranath Datta's book (in Bengali) entitled "Unpublished Political History", which came out in April, 1953, one sees the following written about Acharia: "He returned to India later, and is at present living in Bombay".

In Dr. Datta's book, mentioned above, there are only a very few lines about the two men. Abdur Rab, the book notes, was a resident of Peshawar. He was a highly placed officer of the British Government and knew many languages. Before the First World War he held a high post in the British Consulate at Baghdad. After the war began the British left, and he stayed on there. The idea was that Abdur Rab would furnish intelligence to the British. "But he belonged to the Wahabi sect and held pan-Islamic political ideas." That was why he went over to the side of Turkey. In 1920, along with Kumar Mahendra Pratap and Trimul Acharia he went to Kabul.

According to Dr. Datta, Trimul Acharia's full name was Khandeyam Pratibadi Bhayankaram Trimul Acharya. He had great regard for Swami Vivekananda. In early youth he went to London and,

along with Savarkar, plunged into politics. When the First World War was over, he joined in Paris the "Anarchist-Communist Party" along with Virendra-nath Chattopadhyaya. Of course, Chattopadhyaya was also a colleague of Savarkar in London.

The statement made by Dr. Datta that Abdur Rab and Trimul Acharia went with the *muhajirs* from Kabul to Tashkent and set up a nationalist organisation in the latter place is entirely incorrect. I am not aware whether he had this information from Abdur Rab and Acharia or he had formed the impression from the nomenclature of Tashkent's "India House", but, as I have said earlier, both men had already declared themselves Communists when they were in Kabul. At Tashkent also they were extreme champions of the idea of forming a Communist Party. It was not only that they furnished incentive to the *muhajirs* in the matter of setting up the Party; they goaded them into it. This was why the British agent Abdul Qadir wrote that the founding fathers of the Communist Party of India were Abdur Rab and Trimul Acharia and not M. N. Roy. At the same time, I am not prepared to accept Roy's statement that he was in the beginning averse to the formation abroad of the Communist Party of India and had tried at first to dissuade the *muhajirs* from that step. I have heard from those who had joined the Party abroad that M. N. Roy had been very enthusiastic about its setting up. Rafiq Ahmad has further stated that Roy's position in the Communist International had gone up as a result of it.

However, it was in Tashkent itself that the discord between M. N. Roy on one hand and Abdur Rab and Trimul Acharia on the other grew intense. The conflict veered round the issue of leadership. Abdur Rab and Acharia had wanted to be supreme leaders of the young *muhajirs*. That Roy also had the same desire goes without saying. For the *muhajirs*, however, the politics of Roy was clearer to grasp. That is the impression one gets from Rafiq Ahmad. Besides, Muhammad Shafiq had come with Abdur Rab from Kabul to Tashkent, but as soon as he arrived he became a follower of M. N. Roy. Abdur Rab and Acharia did not stick to the Communist Party till the end. If a quarrel with M. N. Roy over leadership causes renunciation of the Party, how can such conduct be approved? It was their duty, if they had joined the Communist Party, to associate themselves with the Communist Party of some country or the other even after leaving the Soviet Union. They did not do this, though they had left Soviet territory. Indeed, there was a considerable admixture of opportunism in the matter of their entry into the Communist Party.

In April, 1921, the Communist University of Toilers of the East, referred to in short as the Eastern University, was established in Moscow. The young *muhajirs* from Tashkent were the first Indian students of this university. In the enormous tome on "Communism in India", written by Overstreet and Windmiller, there has been quoted, from a secret publication of the same

The Communist  
University of  
Toilers of the  
East

name which was edited by the director of the Government of India's Central Intelligence Bureau, Colonel C. Kaye, part of a letter written by M. N. Roy's first wife, Evelyn Roy, which she had sent from Moscow to some one in Paris. I do not know how this letter got into the hands of the Government of India's Central Intelligence Bureau. But I recall Colonel Kaye deposing in Court during the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case (1924) that his agents were spread out all over the world. Evelyn had written in her letter that seventeen Indian students had been admitted into the Eastern University.\* She reported that the students had already been with them (at Tashkent) and made good progress in political training and thus they would have a further three month's course at the university. Further, the Communist Party [of India, at Moscow] would be directing the entire job, and the trainees would be utilised in the task of organising a powerful Communist Party in India.

A former Governor-General and Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, lost his sleep when news came of the

\* Overstreet and Windmiller have not mentioned the names of these seventeen students, but have referred their readers, for such information, to Ernestine Evan's "Looking East from Moscow", *Asia*, XXII (Dec. 1922), pp. 972-976. However, I have met many of these students later in their lives, and as far as I know, their names are the following:

(1) Gawhar Rahman Khan; (2) Mian Muhammad Akbar Shah; (3) Sultan Mahmud; (4) Meer Abdul Majeed; (5) Firozuddin Mansoor; (6) Fazle Elahi Qurban; (7) Abdulla Safdar; (8) Shaukat Usmani; (9) Rafiq Ahmad; (10) Habib Ahmad Naseem; (11) Fida Ali Zahid; (12) Abdul Qadir Sehrai; (13) Masood Ali Shah; (14) Abdul Qavyum; (15) Master Abdul Hamid; (16) Sayeed; (17) Aziz Ahmad: The last named was a nephew of Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi.

setting up of a military school at Tashkent, where young Indian *muhajirs* were to have training in arms. This Lord Curzon was at that time Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the British Government. During his tenure of office in India he had been haunted by the spectre of Russians in Central Asia. He never outgrew this fear, which became more acute after the Revolution.

When the military school was established at Tashkent, the Russians kept somewhat aloof from the project. This was because at that time talks were being held for the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian commercial treaty. It is well-known that the entire imperialist world had instituted an economic blockade of the Soviet country. It was absolutely essential for the Soviets to remove this blockade. Besides, Britain also needed to have some trade relations with the Soviets. Work in British mines threatened to come to a standstill on account of the lack of timber imports from Russia. Many other varieties of Soviet goods were required by Britain. Thus in June, 1920, the Soviets took the initiative to organise in Great Britain an Anglo-Russian Co-operative Society (ARCOS). A commercial treaty, properly so-called, between the two countries was not, however, signed till March 16, 1921.

It was because negotiations for the treaty were under way that the Russians did not take a leading part

in the organisation of the military school which was set up in Tashkent in the presence and with the support of highly placed personalities of the Turkestan Republic and of the Communist Party of

Tashkent Military School and the British Foreign Office.

Turkestan. At the foundation ceremony, government and Communist Party leaders of Turkestan spoke very sharply against British imperialism in India. At that period Indian traders could still be seen in the marts of Tashkent and they furnished good cover for the comings and goings of British intelligence agents from India. Besides, there were no doubt some dubious elements among the *muhajirs*. Thus, full reports regarding the military school certainly reached the British authorities. In fact, it was not a very serious matter, but Britain, and particularly Lord Curzon, had not shed the old haunting fear of the Russian spectre. Britain did indeed stand to lose a good deal by breaking off trade relations. Yet the Soviet Government received from the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, a formal communication intimating cessation of the commercial treaty. This letter noted that the "Indian Military School" at Tashkent had been set up in order to wage war upon the British Empire. However, economic reconstruction in the Soviet Union would have met with a serious hurdle if the recently concluded trade pact was renounced. Besides, what the young Indians then needed was political, much more than military, training. As mentioned earlier, the Communist University of Toilers of the East had been set up in Moscow in April, 1921. Thus, the "Indian Military School" at Tashkent came to be abolished.

Some of the students of the Indian Military School at Tashkent had been eager for aeronautical training, and a few had availed themselves of it. In M. N. Roy's memoirs it is stated that two among them had

made very good progress. One had earned real distinction and was attached to the Air Division of the Red Army in Leningrad. It was in Leningrad that he died in an accident and a news bulletin to that effect was issued by the Red Army. The other had been sent to southern Russia where he gave lessons in flying to cadets who came from Iran and Afghanistan. Roy, however, writes to say that he is unaware of what happened to him afterwards. This ignorance, it must be stated, bespeaks his lack of a sense of responsibility. Both these men had distinguished themselves, and yet Roy forgot even their names! However, towards the end of 1922 the report of the death of one Abdur Rahim appeared in the journal "Vanguard of Indian Independence". Abdur Rahim, it seems, was connected with flying work. Roy conducted the journal just mentioned and he wrote therein that Abdur Rahim had died in harness. It may be that Abdur Rahim was one of the two whose names Roy had forgotten. According to Rafiq Ahmad, Abdur Rahim belonged to Uttar Pradesh, received some military training in Meerut and had gone to Tashkent along with Rafiq Ahmad's group.

After the winding up of the Tashkent military school many of its students returned home to India. Muhammad Akbar Khan's name has already been noted. He never joined the Communist Party of India, but he undertook work on its behalf when he returned to the North-West Frontier Province. He was arrested and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. It may be that he is still alive.

Those among the students of the Tashkent military school, who had gone further ahead to Moscow, were admitted into the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. Almost all of them joined the Communist Party of India in Moscow. Apart from the young *muhajirs*, several other Indians also joined this *emigre* Party. I have not been able to ascertain their number from any documents. But I am certain that Muhammad Ali and Zakaria were among them. Without giving their names, M. N. Roy has referred to two persons who had come from Kabul and had been members of the "provisional government of free India" in Kabul. From the description it seems that these two were Muhamad Ali and Zakaria. When in 1915, some fifteen college students of Lahore travelled through the North-West Frontier Province and left India, Muhammad Ali and Zakaria were among their number. The former's real name was, probably, Khushi Muhammad. In the list of alleged co-conspirators in the Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929-33) his name is written as Khushi Muhammad *alias* Muhammad Ali *alias* Sipassi. During World War II he was in Paris. Indian newspapers reported that he was shot dead by Hitler's soldiers because after the Hitlerite occupation of Paris he had refused for political reasons to give himself up. I do not know what happened to his Rumanian wife and the daughter she had borne him. Zakaria's real name was, probably, Rahmat Ali. He had secured a doctorate from the University of Paris for a dissertation, on Marxist lines, on the Hindu-Muslim problem in India. I have not heard of his not being alive.

The *emigre* Communist Party of India had been affiliated to the Communist International. It was on account of this affiliation that there was a dispute with

Dr. Bhupendranath Datta, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and others who had come from Germany to Moscow. I shall discuss this issue at some length in the next chapter. These gentlemen came to Moscow in 1921.

In his "Unpublished Political History" (original edition in Bengali, 1953, p. 293), Dr. Datta writes:

"... Suddenly, one fine morning, a Moscow newspaper reported that an Indian Communist Party had been formed and had affiliated itself to the International".

On 30th December, 1927, M. N. Roy wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India from the headquarters of the Communist International (this letter also mentioned the Central Committee of the Workers' and Peasants' Party). Roy had shown this letter to other leaders of the Communist International before it was sent. This happened after he had returned from his visit to China. In those days this letter became famous in India as the "Assembly Letter". It was Exhibit No. 377(1) among the documents filed in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case. On the question of affiliation of the Communist Party of India to the Communist International the letter notes:

"The C. P. must unquestionably be a section of C. I. It is practically treated as such, but no formal request to this effect has yet come from our Party in India.

“Up till now C. I. has acted upon the affiliation of the emigrant section of the C. P. of India.”

There can be no doubt that the *emigre* Communist Party of India was affiliated to the Communist International in 1921. Dr. Bhupendranath Datta, even though he was opposed to the formation of the Party abroad and to its affiliation, has been constrained to accept the position. When M. N. Roy's aforementioned letter of 30th December, 1927, written from the headquarters of the Communist International, is recalled, it is clear that the affiliation was then intact. As a matter of fact the *emigre* unit of the Communist Party of India continued in Moscow till as long as the Communist University of the Toilers of the East was working.

The link between the *emigre* unit of the Communist Party of India and the party as constituted inside India was a continuous one. It will indeed be not in the least erroneous if one says that the Communist

Party of India was the extended form of the Party-organisation as set up abroad. There cannot be two opinions on the indubitable fact that the Party was constituted, first of all, abroad. The Peshawar Communist Conspiracy Case of 1922-23 was the first of its kind where Indian communists were put on trial. Of the ten accused in that case, as many as nine had been members of the Party's *emigre* unit.

In May 1923, I was arrested at Calcutta, Shaukat

Usmani at Kanpur and Ghulam Hossain at Lahore. The Government of India had the idea of tacking the three of us on to the list of accused in the Peshawar Conspiracy Case. Shaukat Usmani and Ghulam Hossain had, as a matter of fact, been even taken to Peshawar. But the hearing of the case had at that time been completed or perhaps nearly completed. Thus the three of us were taken to different jails and kept imprisoned for some time under Regulation III of 1818.

On 27th February, 1924, Colonel C. Kaye, Director of the Central Intelligence Bureau of the Government of India, appeared in the court of the District Magistrate of Kanpur and presented a petition for the prosecution of several communists. A trial was thus initiated under section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. This trial later became celebrated as the Kanpur Bolshevik (or Communist) Conspiracy Case. Five years later, on 15th March, 1929, Mr. R. A. Horton, Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Bureau of the Government of India, appeared similarly in the court of the District Magistrate of Meerut with a petition, and the trial which followed, the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case, became world-famous. The petition in the Kanpur case had been drafted by Mr. S. R. Das, the Advocate General of Bengal. (In those days the Advocate-General of Bengal also acted as adviser to the Government of India). The petition in the Meerut case was drafted by Mr. Langford James, a barrister of the Calcutta High Court. In spite of slight divergences in language the main point of both petitions was identical. I quote below the first and

fourth paragraphs of the prosecution petition in the Meerut case :

"1. That there exists in Russia an organisation called the Communist International. The aim of this organisation is by the creation of armed revolution to overthrow all the existing forms of Government throughout the world and to replace them by Soviet Republics subordinate to and controlled by the Central Soviet Administration in Moscow.

\* \* \* \* \*

"4. That in the year 1921 the said Communist International determined to establish a branch organisation in British India, and the accused Shripad Amrit Dange, Shaukat Usmani and Muzaffar Ahmad entered into a conspiracy with certain other persons to establish such branch organisations with a view to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty of British India."

Shripad Amrit Dange and I had joined the Communist Party of India while we were here in India, while Shaukat Usmani had joined the *emigre* unit in Moscow. As I have related earlier, the Communist Party of India was first set up in Tashkent. With the foundation in Moscow of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East its headquarters were transferred to Moscow. I have described already in some detail how the young Indians reached Tashkent and Moscow and how, coming in touch with the Communist International, they had accepted the principles and the programmes which were propounded by

communists. Thus, the Communist Party of India formed abroad and the Communist Party of India organised within the country were one and indivisible, the fact being that the Communist Party of India was first set up abroad, and the Party organised within India was the extended form thereof.

Those who had joined the Communist Party of India while they were abroad faced repression on that account while they were back in India. An instance of such repression was the Peshawar Communist Conspiracy Case of 1922-23. After release from jail, those who had been convicted in that case joined hands with the communists like us who had come to the Party inside India. If we accept the view of Rafiq Ahmad (and I do not see why we should not), the Communist Party of India was first formed at Tashkent not later than November 1920. It cannot be said that he has pre-dated the foundation of the Party in order to publicise his own part in the achievement, for he himself joined the Party after he went to Moscow in April, 1921. It is agreed on all sides that the Party was set up first of all at Tashkent. If one is inclined not to agree with Rafiq Ahmad's account, one has still to concede that the Party, if it was founded in 1921, must have been formed between January and March, since in April the headquarters were found shifted already to Moscow.

There is one other thing to stress. The Communist Party of India, as initiated abroad, however small in numbers it had been, was affiliated to the Communist International in the first half of 1921. Therefore, the



date of the Party's foundation, if it was not 1920, could not have been later than early 1921.

This little book is likely to be of use as providing material for the history of the Communist Party of India when, at some future date, it comes to be written. It is, on that account, necessary to say a few things more about the names and events already referred to. Many of those whose names have been mentioned were later expelled from the Communist Party of India. I fear this book will be incomplete if the cases of such expulsion are not, in a summary, explained.

There is one thing which strikes me as very surprising, namely, that M. N. Roy in his memoirs nowhere even as much as mentions the name of his wife Evelyn. Her maiden name was Evelyn Trent. She first met M. N. Roy in the campus of Stanford University, California. They were married in America. Evelyn had already been attracted towards socialism, and it was under her influence that M. N. Roy began his study of Marxist literature. That he secured a high place in the Communist International was due, in no small measure, to Evelyn's share in his work. Evelyn was not just a wife to Roy; she was, in politics, his collaborator and assistant. I have heard that their separation took place in 1925 or 1926. I do not know why this happened or whether there was ever any charge of political unreliability against Evelyn. But how, I wonder, could M. N. Roy write his memoirs without a mention of Evelyn? Roy was expelled from the *emigre* section

of the Communist Party of India and from the Communist International. There were numerous charges against him. Our experience is that he greatly lacked political integrity. But, of course, we cannot avoid mentioning his name while relating the story of the first foundations of the Communist Party of India.

After separation from Evelyn, M. N. Roy married several times; Mrs. Ellen Roy was his fifth (or sixth) wife. When I had sent my essay on Rafiq Ahmad's journey for publication in the journal "*Parichaya*", the editor's office inquired of me why I had spoken of M. N. Roy's wife as Evelyn when she, as they knew, bore the name Ellen! Indeed, many people these days do not know that Roy had married several times.

Of those who had joined the Communist Party of India while they were abroad, Masood Ali Shah never kept any contact with it in India. Habib Ahmad Naseem did some little work in the Party during 1926. Till early 1928, he did nothing against the Party, and was on the contrary a thorough-going sympathiser. Muhammad Shafiq, the first Secretary of the Communist Party of India, was in 1924 sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment after return to India; after release he gave up work in the Party. Mian Muhammad Akbar Shah secured admission to college after his release and passed his B. A. and law examinations. He tried from time to time to help in Party work but he never came inside the organisation to work in conformity with Party discipline. When in 1939 Subhas Chandra Bose formed the Forward Bloc, Mian Muhammad Akbar Shah joined that body. Rafiq

Ahmad was for some time in Delhi and along with Habib Ahmad did some Party work. On return to Bhopal he took a job in the State government. There was no Party unit in Bhopal, but he kept in touch with Meer Abdul Majeed of Lahore. After the Partition of India (1947), this contact of his, outside Bhopal, also ceased.

It has been mentioned several times that Shaukat Usmani was expelled from the Communist Party of India. But it is not enough just to note this fact. He was one of the founder-members of the Communist Party of India. He was one of those who were accused in the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case (1924) and the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case (1929-33). In both the cases he was convicted and sentenced. Usmani had joined the *emigre* Communist Party of India at Moscow in 1921. From his statement it appears that he had done so in March of that year.

To understand how Shaukat Usmani had reached the stage when his expulsion became inevitable, it is necessary to relate in a few words what happened from the time when he joined the *Hijrat* movement. M. N. Roy in his memoirs has made a few references to him. At first, without naming him Roy noted that he had exchanged extreme religious fanaticism for ultra-communism, that he used to suspect everybody, and that he was a pathological case. Whoever has known him intimately would easily identify Roy's anonymous target as Usmani. In another place Roy mentioned his name and wrote that Usmani was a graduate of some Indian university. As a matter of fact, Usmani

was not a graduate. He had been a student of Dongar College, Bikaner—an institution which, though it bore the title of a college, was no more than a 'high English school.' Shaukat Usmani, however, knew English well. Dr. Sampurnanand was then Usmani's teacher at Dongar College. Once at the instance of his pupil, Shri Sampurnanand had issued a progressive manifesto to the All-India Congress Committee. Even while mentioning his name, Roy noted that Usmani had been a religious fanatic.

There can be no manner of doubt that when he joined the *Hijrat* movement Shaukat Usmani was an ultra-*Khilafatist*. Proof of it was carried even in his name. When he went on *Hijrat* he renounced his real name Maula Bukhsh and called himself Shaukat Usmani. In the list of the accused during the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy case his name was noted as Maula Bukhsh, *alias* Shaukat Usmani. The words 'Shaukat Usmani' signify "the glory of the Usmanias". It will be recalled that the Turkish empire was called the empire of the Usmanias; the last Khalifa (Caliph) of the Muslim world was the Sultan of Turkey who belonged to the Usmania dynasty. It was with the determination to recover 'the glory of the Usmanias' that Maula Bukhsh emerged as Shaukat Usmani. When he became well-known under the latter name he could fly into a temper and even murder whoever called him Maula Bukhsh. It is from this aspect of his character that the man Shaukat Usmani could be understood.

Masood Ali Shah was a friend of Shaukat Usmani's. They had returned home together from

Moscow *via* Iran either towards the end of 1921 or the beginning of 1922. This friendship of his remained intact till 1928, though we had begun suspecting Masood Ali Shah as a spy of Britain. At a place called Sardana near Meerut there was the residence of an aristocratic Afghan family. In those early days this family was loyal to the British government. Masood Ali Shah was a scion of this family. There was at that time a well-known journalistic writer called Iqbal Ali Shah, who was a cousin of Masood's. Before 1928, Masood Ali had worked for some time under the U. P. government as a *naib-tehsildar*, a post which approximated to that of a sub-deputy collector in Bengal.

When he returned to India the first time, Shaukat Usmani very probably had not been on good terms with M. N. Roy. He seems to have secretly arranged with Abdur Rab and Acharia that on going back home he would be working on their behalf. But having returned to India he realised that he could not do much work. Thus, he calculated that it was better to stand by M. N. Roy who commanded the confidence of the Communist International. With this end in view he betook himself to Masood Ali Shah who escorted him to Shiraz in Iran. Obviously, Usmani did not wish to find out how Masood Ali Shah could do it. From Shiraz, Usmani wrote a long letter to M. N. Roy. The contents of the letter are not known, but Usmani interpreted his action as surrender and continued to nurse the humiliation in the hope that one day he would have his own back on Roy. Under Masood Ali Shah's direction Usmani returned home

from Shiraz, while the former again went to Moscow, to go back home sometime later *via* Berlin. I do not know what report he gave M. N. Roy, but I have heard reports that Roy and his wife Evelyn had been very happy to have him with them again.

In September, 1927, Shaukat Usmani was released from jail after having served out his term in the Kanpur trial. As soon as he came out he proposed to the Communist Party that he should be sent as its representative to the Communist International. The Party, however, did not agree. He was told on the contrary, that it was necessary for him first of all to collect direct experience of agitational work. In 1927-28 there swept over India a wave of working-class struggles. But from the beginning of 1928 Usmani began to stay in Delhi, remote from that wave. He engaged in a secret effort, along with Habib Ahmad Naseem, Masood Ali Shah and Muhammad Shafiq, to go again to Moscow without letting the Party know of it. They forged a number of letters of introduction. They also collected some reports of the working class movement. For this purpose they wrote letter after letter to Bombay and Calcutta. This time also his prop was Masood Ali Shah. It was perhaps on 7th June, 1928, that Usmani and his friends left Delhi. On that day Usmani sent me a letter intimating that he would be coming to Calcutta *via* Kanpur, Allahabad and Banaras and would then go to Madras, having arranged a programme for two months. This letter was written in order to hoodwink the police. Later, Usmani gave us a statement in which he said that Masood Ali Shah had secured for all of them Iranian

passports from the Consul for Iran at Karachi; that is to say, they had described themselves as Iranian subjects and got the passports. Whatever the truth or otherwise of the statement, they did in fact reach Moscow, with the assistance of Masood Ali Shah, that is to say, of the British, for Masood was a British agent. The Sixth Congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow from 27th July to 28th August, 1928. It was on the very eve of the Congress that Shaukat Usmani, Muhammad Shafiq, Habib Ahmad Naseem and Masood Ali Shah reached Moscow. There was hardly any time for the scrutiny of their credentials. Besides, it is very likely that the leaders of the Communist International were extremely happy to see delegates arriving directly from India. Thus all four were given the status of delegates; perhaps Habib Ahmad Naseem represented India at the Young Communist International. It was long after the Sixth Congress was over that news reached regarding the spurious character of their credentials. Usmani spent some time in sanatoria. When later he reached back home after a tour of the Continent it was nearly the end of December. Perhaps during his stay in Moscow, Usmani had become a Trotskyist. No sooner had he reached Calcutta than he told me that he would not stand anything said against Trotsky. Usmani flew suddenly into a temper. That was his character.

In the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case Usmani was among those who were arrested. There was no news then of his other three companions. Towards the end of 1932, when the hearing of the

Meerut case was nearing completion, a post card reached Usmani. In the post card Muhammad Shafiq had written to him from Bombay that he had just got back after touring many places in Europe, including London. He had also asked why Usmani was undergoing so much suffering. Shafiq's communication included, besides, the intimation that the Communist International had suspended the affiliation of the Communist Party of India. It was in 1930 that the Communist Party of India was formally affiliated to the Communist International. Shafiq's news, thus, was accurate; the affiliation of our Party had for some time been suspended.

We began to notice a big change in Usmani after he received Shafiq's letter. Later, he betrayed various other kinds of weakness. No one can remain in a Communist Party if one shows such weakness. Usmani, thus, came to be expelled from the Communist Party, towards the end of 1932. Judgment was delivered in the Meerut Conspiracy Case by the Sessions Court on 16th January, 1933. Thereafter, we got no news of Habib Ahmad Naseem and Masood Ali Shah.

Usmani and his friends had not been immediately hauled up for their faithlessness in attending the Sixth Congress of the Communist International with faked credentials, but the final consummation of such guilt was expulsion from the Party. The chain of things done by Usmani pulled him in that direction. He was not punished by the Party as soon as he returned from Moscow, but Usmani had no peace of mind. He knew the blow was sure one day to fall on him. Usmani's main desire was to have revenge on M. N. Roy. But

on 15th March, 1929, Usmani got Dr. Gangadhar Adhikari to write to Roy himself:

“He (Usmani) asked me to tell you that “your men” attacked him over there without reason. But C. I. has cut his feet as well as yours. He has nothing against you.”

At that time M. N. Roy was biding his time in Berlin, awaiting the bad news from the Communist International. It will be clear from all this where Usmani’s opportunism and looking out for chances were leading him.

In his memoirs M. N. Roy has made special mention of Abdulla Safdar, mistakenly saying, however, that the latter had been a teacher of Urdu when he left on *Hijrat*. Abdulla’s companions report that when he left India in 1920 he was sixteen or seventeen years of age and did not know Urdu very well. It seems M. N. Roy has wrongly identified him with Abdul Qadir who used to teach Pushtu to Europeans before he left India. Abdulla Safdar had all his education in Moscow. It is certain that after completing his course at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, Abdulla Safdar was, for higher ideological training in Marxism, admitted into the Institute of Red Professors.

Even after M. N. Roy’s expulsion from the Party and the International, Abdulla Safdar continued to be his adherent. He returned home in 1933. At that time our comrades were preparing in Calcutta to reorganise the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India. Abdulla Safdar put spokes in the wheel. He suggested that instead of a Central Committee, only an

organisational committee should be set up. This was also Roy’s slogan when he returned to India secretly.

After World War II began, Abdulla Safdar left India for the Soviet Union. This is what M. N. Roy writes in his memoirs. It is not known whether he did actually reach Soviet territory.