Chapter II

Nationalist Phase

The main concern of this chapter is to discuss the development of the political ideas of Roy till the end of 1919. This would cover his activities and ideas during his stay in India, U.S.A., and Mexico. It would be observed as to what were the ideas of Roy as a Nationalist and what factors influenced Roy in shifting his position from a Nationalist to a Socialist and then to a Communist.

As a schoolboy Roy was noted for his intrepidity, independence, intellectual curiosity and deep compassion for the downtrodden. He organized a volunteer group along with some of his classmates, whose activities included nursing people who were stricken with infectious and often fatal diseases like cholera and smallpox. The group also raised alms to feed the starving in times of famine. It also provided free funeral services in the case of people who had died as destitutes or who had been ostracized by the village community for breaking some caste rule or other.¹

Like many Bengali Brahmins, Roy was attracted to politics in his teens, and before he was twenty he was deeply involved in the struggle for Indian independence. In 1905 various militant nationalist groups and secret revolutionary societies, became active in different parts of Bengal because of the ‘Partition of Bengal’. At that time Roy was in his final year in school. He organized an anti-partition meeting and procession against the explicit instructions of his headmaster, for which he was rusticated along with several of his schoolmates.² He had already been introduced to the revolutionary underground organization Anushilan Samiti³ which had been formed in 1902.
Now he joined the organization.

One of Roy’s colleagues of those days of the revolutionary movement in Bengal has described Roy’s entry into the fold of the revolutionary organisation as follows:

Narendra almost a boy, hardly fourteen, and yet verile and energetic, full of revolutionary enthusiasm, rushed into a little room in which we were holding an informal talk on the problems then facing us in Bengal and elsewhere. He had a talk with us. After this, he offered himself as a whole timer for the cause of liberty of India from the foreign yoke. He declared on oath that he would be prepared to do the impossible; for, there was nothing impossible for a revolutionary. Soon after, he joined us; he proved to be of very great value to our movement and possessed rare qualities found only in a great leader of men.4

To quote Roy, “when as a school boy of fourteen, I began my political life, which may end in nothing, I wanted to be free. Independence, absolute and complete is a new fangled idea. The old-fashioned revolutionaries thought in terms of freedom”.5

The politics that attracted Roy was the politics of armed struggle for the liberation of motherland. Now the question arises as to what were the influences on young Roy which inspired him to take up the path of armed struggle for the freedom of his country. It is observed that Vinayak Savarkar, the well-known revolutionary, was Roy’s first hero in his school days,6 whose brave and courageous actions were a matter of great inspiration to him.7 As a younger Roy also admired Bhupendranath Dutta, a brother of Swami Vivekananda, as a martyr national hero. As the editor of Jugantar, the organ of the revolutionary movement, Bhupendranath Dutta had been arrested and sentenced to imprisonment in 1907.8 Both the Jugantar and the Sandhya of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay by their inflammable writings gave inspiration to the revolutionaries. Moreover, like the other revolutionaries and radicals of Bengal, Roy was also influenced by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. He said,
“Bankim Chatterji’s *Anand Math* was our common source of inspiration. Therein we found our revolutionary ideal.”

In the writings of some thinkers, at that particular time, one can observe the argument that *Bhagavadgita* approved of all actions if made for greater interests. Such ideas also find expression in the writings of Sri Aurobindo and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Aurobindo justified any and every means, including violence for the attainment of the freedom of the country. He said, “The Gita is the best answer to those who shrink from battle as a sin, and aggression as a lowering of morality.” Similarly, according to Tilak, *Bhagavadgita* taught disinterested discharge of one’s duty, and in course of discharging it without any selfish motive, if one had to do some unpleasant things, one should not hesitate on that score. He argued that the moral worth of an action did not depend on the external action, but on the purity of the intention of the doer of that action.

The revolutionaries needed money to maintain themselves as full-time workers and to provide themselves with arms. Political robbery (dakati) was considered justified as a means as long as the end was the country’s freedom from foreign rule. According to Roy, “*Srimad Bhagwat Gita* gave the necessary sanction for such actions, provided one does them in a spirit of detachment and as a matter of fulfilment of one’s duty. The Yogi—the detached person—purged of personal desires, is free to adopt whatever means he sees best to suit his ends.”

Thus, Roy became involved in a number of political robberies. In January 1910 he was arrested along with 45 revolutionaries in connection with ‘Howrah Conspiracy Case.’ The principal accused was Jatindra Nath Mukherjee (1879-1915). In prison, Roy developed a lasting attachment to Jatindra Nath Mukherjee—one of the most dangerous anarchists and a terrorist leader determined to overthrow British rule by means of an armed insurrection.
After their release, Roy became busy in reviving and reorganising the fragmented underground revolutionary groups in Bengal, under the leadership of Jatindra Nath.

It was in pursuance of this plan that Roy at times disguised himself as a *sadhu*, which confounded even many of his compatriots. In the epilogue of *Memoirs*, G.D. Parikh has written, “During the period in jail Narendranath read a number of religious books. They left a deep impression on his mind and he decided to be a religious preacher. After his release from jail he became a Sanyasi. He also joined, for some time, the Ramakrishna Mission . . . However, he became soon tired of the religious superstitions and prejudices and, the desire to work for the political emancipation of the country proving stronger, he returned to his political activities.”

However, it appears more probable that Roy took up the *garb* of a *Sadhu*, to carry on his revolutionary activities without coming to the notice of the authorities. As V.B. Karnik has written that “for some time he became a Sanyasi. As a Sanyasi it was easier to move about without arousing the suspicion of the police. Some revolutionary leaders had become sanyasis and some of Naren’s colleagues thought that he was following in their footsteps. His constant search for holy men might have strengthened their suspicion. But it soon became clear that the liberation that Naren was seeking was not the liberation of the soul but of his motherland.”

Samren Roy has also expressed the same opinion. He has argued that “After his release from the Howrah case . . . Naren decided to take up the *garb* of a *Sadhu*—seeking religious man searching for guru . . . in the *garb* of *Sadhus*, Naren wanted to gather knowledge about guerilla type warfare from those people to apply it to his plan for armed insurrection against the British.”

On 12 February 1915, another robbery was committed by Roy and his group, to finance the plan of an insurrection. Acid bulbs and homemade bulbs
were the standard equipment used by the hot-headed revolutionaries, at the beginning of the century. But effective weapons for revolution were lacking. The outbreak of the European war in 1914 seemed to provide an opportunity for securing them. By the end of 1914, the revolutionaries in India received the news that the Indian Independence Committee in Berlin had obtained from the German Government the promise of arms and money required to declare the war of independence.

Roy left India twice in 1915 to smuggle arms but failed each time. First time he returned to India within two months, but second time he could not come back to India for sixteen years.

Thinking of getting some help in U.S.A., in order to go to Germany, he landed at San Francisco in 1916. In the United States, keeping in view the mission with which he had left India, Roy met various Indian revolutionaries. But it was neither a fruitful nor a pleasant experience. The Indian revolutionaries in the United States were very much divided and poorly organized. Before long he lost the hope of getting any assistance from anybody to go to Germany. He wrote, "I had come to America on the way to Germany. As soon as it became clear that no help for the purpose could be had in the U.S.A. either from the Germans or from the representative of the Indian Revolutionary Committee of Berlin, I resolved to explore other possibilities."

Moreover, while in U.S.A., Roy lost touch with the revolutionaries in India. Soon after he left India, most of the prominent members of revolutionary movement in India were arrested. Jatindra Nath Mukherji—the only person whom he ever obeyed blindly—was wounded by the police and died subsequently. Those revolutionaries in India who were not arrested were absconding. Roy had no idea as to whom and to which place the arms should be despatched if he ever succeeded in his mission. Thus he began to realize that from the practical point of view, it was no longer any use for him to pursue the
mission.\

In the meantime he came in contact with new people and new ideas. He made friends with Radicals. Some of them were anti-imperialists. They sympathised with the aspirations of the subject peoples to be free. It was at Palo Alto that he met Evelyn Trent, a bright and attractive graduate student with radical views. When Roy moved to New York a few months later, Evelyn went with him. She was a great asset to Roy in his work.

Another experience in America, marked a turning point in Roy’s life. He attended a socialist rally in New York addressed by Lajpat Rai, who spoke on the poverty of India under the British rule. After the speech a member of the audience asked Lajpat Rai, if it made any difference whether Indians were exploited by native capitalists rather than by foreign imperialists. Lajpat Rai’s reply that it did make a difference whether one was kicked by one’s brother or by a foreign robber, struck inadequate to Roy and he felt that there was something missing in the nationalist blueprint for freedom. He began to wonder if exploitation and poverty would really cease in India with the attainment of political freedom from the alien rule?

To quote him, “During my short stay in the U.S.A., I became painfully conscious of the ignorance which concealed the contradiction between the social idealism of the early revolutionary movement which drew inspiration from Bankim Chatterji’s Anand Math, and the cultural Nationalism which it also professed. It dawned on me that Nationalism, whether revolutionary or constitutional, cultural or political, relied mostly on emotion because it was intellectually weak. Its appeal, at home as well as abroad, was not to the head but to the heart. It tried to move, not to convince.”

He frequented the New York Public Library to read the works of Karl Marx. These works gave him new insights. Soon he came to accept Socialism except its materialist philosophy. He wrote “While in New York, I did a good
deal of reading and soon acquired a fairly comprehensive and critical understanding of the political and economic issues of contemporary history. The result was conversion to Socialism.”

Roy accepted Socialism without much hesitation because he felt that Jatindra Nath’s death could be avenged in a better manner if he worked for the ideal of establishing a social order in which the best in man could be manifest. After all, Roy had admired Jatindra Nath because the latter personified the best of mankind.

Socialism also appealed to Roy because of its anti-imperialist connotations. The ideal of social justice, for which Socialism stood, could be easily incorporated in his inherited hierarchy of values. The humanitarian aspect of Socialism was not something new to the revolutionaries who had drawn inspiration from Anand Math. They shared with the Socialists the desire to uplift the poor and the down-trodden.

But there was no change in the fundamental outlook of his philosophy of life. Culturally, he was still a nationalist. To quote him, “cultural nationalism is a prejudice that dies very hard.”

Meanwhile, the American government had decided to join the War in support of the British. In March and April, 1917 a number of Indian revolutionaries together with their German contacts in the U.S., were arrested. Roy too was arrested and questioned. He was released pending the trial. On 6 April the U.S., declared war on Germany. Shortly after this, Roy wrote an ‘Open Letter to President Wilson.’ However, Roy was not able to see this essay in print because in the meantime he fled to Mexico in June 1917 to avoid arrest and extradition.

Force of circumstances made Roy leave the United States and go to Mexico. To quote him, “Not willing to spend time in an American prison and
thereafter be deported to India where a much heavier sentence awaited my
return, I had to get out of the United States. My attempt to cross the Atlantic
having not succeeded, I had to choose between Canada and Mexico as the only
possible escape. In the former country, I would be under the jurisdiction of the
long arm of British Law. To choose Mexico was therefore, a forced move."32
Moreover, because of the influence of socialist ideas, he was beginning to think
of revolution as an international social necessity. And he learnt from his
socialist acquaintances in New York that Mexico was in the throes of a social
revolution. This prompted Roy to go there.

Among Roy’s earliest Spanish publications from Mexico was his
translation of the Open letter to President Wilson. This was included in the
book La Voz de la India (The voice of India), the other book being La India Su
Pasado Su Presente Su Porvenir, (India: Her Past, Present and Future) both
published in 1918.

These works reflect some very important nationalist ideas of M.N. Roy. Roy argued that Great Britain which claimed to be fighting for the freedom of
small countries called the Nationalist movement of India ‘sedition and anarchy’
and tried to alienate from the Indian nationalists the sympathy of the world by
condemning their cause as if it were a ‘German Plot’.33

This according to Roy was a lie. He said that the movement, which
aimed at liberating India was as old as the British Empire. Indians had never
reconciled with the iron yoke that oppressed them, and whenever they had the
opportunity, they had proved their hostility to the foreign rule. He said, “We,
the Indian people, are trying to liberate ourselves from a tyranny which has
been squashing us for more than a century and a half and which seeks to
deprive us even of the right to live.”34

However, he added that it was a historical fact that no dependent and
oppressed people could succeed in their attempt to gain freedom without the
effective help of some other powerful and great nation. American colonials received the help of France and Italy received the help of France and England to overthrow the Austrian rule. As such, there was nothing wrong if the Indian nationalists also searched for the help of a great and powerful nation in their struggle for independence.35

Roy advocated unconditional freedom of India. He asserted that freedom was the innate right of all human beings. Like Bal Gangadhar Tilak,36 he argued that freedom was the birthright of Indians.37 He said that every country had the right to overthrow an alien or despotic government in accordance with the doctrine that affirmed that 'Governments are based on the consent of the governed and derive their powers from that consent.' He added that the British yoke in India could not be accepted as it was the rule of a strange race upon another which was absolutely different in religion, blood, language, manners and traditions.38

The Britishers justified their rule in India by arguing that the British rule in India was a great step in human progress which had saved the Indian people from bad government and endemic anarchy. They denied national freedom to India on the contention that the Indians were not fit for the same. Roy tried to refute this argument, by highlighting the superiority of Indian civilization.

He said, "It is, however, a well known fact that many centuries before Christ and long before the birth of modern Europe, Indian civilization was highly developed in all fields. The superior, philosophical, religious and ethical character of this ancient civilization is generally accepted by the world.39

He supported his argument by saying that the modern democratic concept of making and breaking executive power in order to direct public affairs was quite well-known in India long before the Christian Era.40 Another example, according to Roy, of the progress of ancient India was the growth of trade and industry. He argued that from earliest times until the seventeenth
century, A.D., India was the commercial centre of the world. Until a few years after the British conquest, India's economic state was far better than that of England in the same period. He further said that history had shown that the Indian people under Hindu monarchs were almost all literate and education was always free in India. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, literacy in India equalled that of contemporary Europe. Thus Roy tried to show that until British times India was in no way inferior to contemporary Europe, and England had no right to rule over India in the name of superior civilization.

Similar views were also expressed by Extremists like Tilak and Aurobindo. Tilak talked about the superiority of Indian civilization and argued that "British statesmen themselves have often declared that India was civilized centuries before the modern nations of Europe emerged from barbarism." Aurobindo also stressed the superiority of Indian civilization and argued that aliens had no right to impose an inferior civilisation on the Indians. To quote him, "We point to the unexampled national vigour which has preserved the people of this country through centuries of calamity and defeat, to the great actions of our forefathers continued even to the other day, to the many men of intellect and character such as no nation in a subject condition has been able to produce, and we say that a people capable of such unheard—of vitality is not one which can be put down as a nation of children and incapables. We are in no way inferior to our forefathers."

The Britishers argued that the object of British-rule in India was the well-being of the Indian people and Indians had advanced greatly under the British rule. Roy asserted that the theory that England brought a higher civilization and a better government to India was false. He differed from the Moderates who believed in the providential nature of British rule in India.

According to Roy any government worthy of the name should take care primarily of three basic needs, namely, economic welfare, educational
improvement and health conditions of the people under its rule. However, British government in India had not been able to fulfill any of these functions.

He asserted that as a result of British rule the condition of the Indian people had rapidly deteriorated. He substantiated his argument by quoting William Digby who declared that ‘the land of India under the British government is becoming a land of beggars.’ The cause of this disgraceful situation, according to Roy, was the constant drain of wealth from India by the alien rulers. He said that “During the first days of the British occupation almost all gold was taken out of the country by force; industries were ruined and business crushed by the oppressive methods of the government. The final result was the end of India’s prosperity and the economic salvation of a bankrupt England.” He argued that England had become prosperous due to the looting of India. On the other hand England’s economic demands and commercial exploitation had continued to drain the life and blood of the Indians, throwing them into clutches of famine and inevitable death.

He further said that under the British yoke, the progress of education began to go backwards. Less than fifteen per cent of the population got rudimentary education in India. Education was neither free nor compulsory. It was impossible for a people whose daily income per capita was less than one cent to pay for the education of their children in private schools. The schools in British India were only factories for crushing the young minds and for producing groups of mechanical clerks. They turned out assistants with neither initiative nor willpower who worked for small salaries in government offices and European businesses.

Roy argued that though in the various countries of the world, medical science had reached a high degree of development, British India continued to suffer regularly from plague and epidemics such as cholera, bubonic plague, small pox, malaria etc., which caused millions of deaths annually. The
continuous weakening of the vitality of the people, who according to Roy, were suffering from under-nourishment under the British administration was the cause of these calamitous epidemics which had already been eradicated from the rest of the world.49

Thus Roy highlighted exploitation of India under the British rule and concluded that India had not benefited in any manner under British rule. On the other hand it was England which had benefited from India. According to him, the industrial supremacy of England originated in the plunder of India.

Roy further argued that freedom of India from British yoke was of world significance. The liberation of India, according to him, would not only give freedom to one fifth of the world’s population, but would also prepare the way for humanity towards its goal of peace and fraternity. He said, “The panacea that can cure the evils of the world is the complete liberation of all dominated peoples and countries, not only in Europe but also in Asia and Africa.”50

He supported his argument by saying that it was not in Europe but in the debilitated countries of Asia and Africa that the germs of war in modern times were hatched by the imperialist greed of the European nations. According to him India had been made to bear all the costs of Britain’s imperialist wars and conquests.

This idea was further elaborated by Roy in an article entitled ‘Hunger and Revolution’ which was published in 1919.51 He said that “India is the keystone of British Imperialism which constitutes the greatest and most powerful enemy of the Social and Economic Revolution that exists today.”52 It was so because the English capital which represented the epitome and bulwark of the capitalistic system throughout the world, derived its power from the exploitation of natural resources and manpower of India. As such, for protecting the world from the jaws of capitalistic system, the liberation of India
was necessary.

Thus, Roy believed, that Indians were justified in seeking the moral and material assistance for the liberation of their country of all nations and peoples who sincerely believed in the progress of mankind.

Roy was of firm conviction that India could not gain freedom by peaceful and constitutional means advocated by the Moderate section of Indian nationalist movement. Nor did he have faith in British justice and fair play. He said, "The British cannot be driven out by meetings and petitions. They have to be driven out by force." He believed that India could attain freedom not through the kindness of the English rulers, but through her own energy. To quote him, "It is clear that India will never rid herself of English domination by the goodwill of the rulers. The only possible way is by bloody revolution." He added, "When the natural development of events is blocked artificially, the latent energy forces itself out and then revolution violently destroys the reactionary forces which threaten the new era." It is observed on the basis of above discussion that Roy favoured a violent revolution with the help of foreign powers for the liberation of India.

In Mexico Roy made a final attempt to arrange transportation of arms to the underground revolutionaries in India. He decided to go to China in this connection, but the Japanese boat which the Germans had agreed to provide to take him across the seas failed to arrive. To quote him, "The failure of my last attempt to carry out the mission with which I had left India two and a half years ago definitely closed that chapter of my political career. Convinced that I could do nothing for the liberation of India in the near future, I resolved to apply myself whole-heartedly to the new fields of revolutionary activities which promised satisfaction, if not immediate success."

After the failure of his efforts to bring arms from abroad to the revolutionaries in India, Roy decided to devote himself to the cause of freedom
and social justice in his host country. Study of the origin of the 'Monroe Doctrine' and its development in practice during nearly a hundred years greatly helped the development of his political ideas and understanding of the contemporary world situation.

Formulated in 1823, the U.S. Monroe Doctrine, was originally the "Hands Off America" signal to European Imperialism. It was to keep out of foreign entanglements following the injunction of George Washington, and to demand a reciprocal attitude on the part of the European powers.

However, the practical application of the Monroe Doctrine had established virtual American protectorate over the New world. On the plea of preventing European colonization, the U.S.A., had militarily intervened time and again in Central and South America. As Mexico was the next door neighbour, it was the worst sufferer in this respect. The political protectorate established by the Monroe Doctrine served the purpose of financial penetration of United States which amounted to economic monopoly and reduced political independence of the weaker neighbours to a mere formality. Roy who had taken the fight against British imperialism in India had all his sympathies for the Mexican anti-imperialist movement against the U.S., imperialism. On the basis of this analysis Roy came to the political conclusion which pointed towards the necessity to put an end to the North-American tutelage. He developed the idea that with that purpose, a Latin American League should be formed.

The spectacle of poverty of the Mexican people made Roy realise that national independence was not the cure for all the evils of any country. "In Mexico, the doubt in narrow nationalism was reinforced in him on two counts; that Indian struggle for freedom was not separate from the struggle of all oppressed people, and that not only Indians were fighting for their freedom but Mexican people were also struggling against exploitation and U.S.
imperialism."

In Mexico, Roy resolved to take up the struggle for Socialism. He contacted various local socialist leaders and had a discussion with them about the ways and means of promoting the cause of social revolution. He also met some young American radicals. He was particularly impressed by Irwin Granwich and Maurice Baker. Irwin Granwich was an anarchist Communist. He believed in social revolution, but not in state and political organisation. Maurice Baker's political ideas tended towards left-wing socialism. Along with these American radicals Roy resolved to join the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party in Mexico, at that time was a small, loosely constituted group composed of liberal intellectuals.

Roy got actively involved in the activities of the Socialist Party in Mexico and suggested that the latter should convene a conference with the object of forming a mass party of the working class. The first conference of the Socialist Party of Mexico was held in December 1918. In addition to the several hundred delegates from different states of the Republic, a number of socialist leaders from Central and South American countries assembled on the occasion to discuss the plan of the Latin-American League to fight Yankee Imperialism. For the first time, the Socialist Party of Mexico ceased to be a small, ineffective group confined to the capital and became a national organisation. Roy was elected General Secretary of the Party.

Roy stayed in Mexico for two and a half years. However, his stay in Mexico was significant from the point of view of the development of his political thought. He said, “In a sense, Mexico was the land of my rebirth. It is true that before coming there I had begun to feel dissatisfied with ideas and ideals of my earlier life. But it was during my stay in Mexico that the new vision became clear and the dissatisfaction with a sterile past was replaced by a conviction to guide me in a more promising future. It was more than a change
in political ideas and revolutionary ideals. I acquired a new outlook on life; there was a revolution in my mind—a philosophical revolution which knew no finality.”

In the last year of his stay in Mexico, he shifted his position from a militant Nationalist through a Socialist to a Marxist. Roy argued that since the anti-imperialist connotation of left-wing Socialism was emphasised in Communism, therefore his stay in the ‘half-way house’—socialism—was brief. The road from revolutionary anti-imperialist nationalism to communism was short. Kiran Saxena has rightly remarked that “Mexico was an important landmark in Roy’s life in the quest for freedom . . . The national revolutionary who had, as he discovered, a narrow concept of freedom as national freedom when he landed up in Mexico learnt a new meaning of freedom.”

Russian revolution also had an impact on the development of political ideas of Roy. He wrote, “It was about the middle of 1918. The news of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia had reached the New World to fire the imagination of all who dreamt of the proletariat capturing power. It was no longer a utopia. The manifesto calling for formation of a working class party as the instrument of capturing political power, therefore, could not be dismissed as fantastic.” Again he said, “The Bolsheviks had just captured power in Russia, and a faint echo of the revolution reached across the Atlantic. All left-wing socialists were in an exuberant mood, and lived in an atmosphere surcharged with great expectations. They were all would-be Communists. I was sucked up in that electrified atmosphere. In my case, it was not a few degrees rise of the revolutionary temperature. It was a mutation in my political evolution: a sudden jump from die-hard nationalism to communism. With the fanaticism of a new convert, reformism was an anathema.”

However, it was during the months immediately preceding Roy’s departure for Moscow that the foundation of his subsequent intellectual
development was laid. The most decisive role was played by Michael Borodin, who had come to Mexico, in early summer of 1919, as the first emissary of the newly founded Communist International in converting Roy to Marxism.

Roy had discussions with Borodin quite frequently on the philosophical aspect of Marxism. He wrote, Borodin “initiated me in the intricacies of Hegelian dialectics as the key to Marxism. My lingering faith in the special genius of India faded as I learned from him the history of European culture.”

Though in New York Roy’s conversion to Socialism had taken place, still, as already stated, there was no change in the fundamental outlook, of his philosophy of life. Culturally he was still a nationalist. And in his discussions with Borodin, Roy tried to put up his last resistance to Marxism from the point of view of cultural nationalism. However, Borodin, with his keen psychological insight, did not have much difficulty to show that Roy was defending a point of view in which he no longer believed and that it was a sheer die-hard prejudice.

To quote Roy, “My preceptor of Bolshevism . . . undertook to initiate a willing novice into the mysteries of the revolutionary faith and lead me through the intricacies of the labyrinth of its philosophical background. It was an intellectual challenge to the tradition of my Brahmanical heritage, and, as I discovered before long, also to die-hard cultural Nationalism, still lingering in my sub-conscious mind.” He added, “As a devout revolutionary, I was a willing pupil, but I was also a rational human being, who aspired to think for himself. It was no easier for a born heretic to accept a new faith, albeit materialist and atheistic, than for the Biblical Camel to pass through the eye of a needle. It was my last resistance to Marxism.” Thus it is observed that Borodin played a crucial role in converting Roy to a Marxist.

Now, mainly with Roy’s efforts the Socialist Party of Mexico was converted into the Communist Party of Mexico. An extraordinary meeting of
the Socialist Party was called, where with the majority support the party renamed itself as *El Partido Kommunista de Mexico* in November, 1919. However, Roy had to leave Mexico in December, 1919 as a delegate to represent Mexico's Communist Party in Moscow in the Second Congress of the Communist International.
Notes and References


2Ibid.

3The Anushilan Samiti which originally came to be founded in Calcutta in the year 1902, as a revolutionary cultural and youth organisation has always played a pivotal and central role in the growth and development of the anti-imperialist national revolutionary movement in the country. The Anushilan Samiti sought to give an organised shape to the first revolutionary urges of the new generation of the country’s youth in those exciting days of national resurgence in their restless search for effective ways to put an end to alien imperialist rule over their motherland as early as possible. For details see Buddhadeva Bhattacharyya, ed., Freedom Struggle and Anushilan Samiti, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Anushilan Samiti, 1979), pp. xix-xx.


9Ibid., p. 99.


13The first officially recorded political robbery in Bengal took place at Changripora under Roy’s leadership on 6th Dec. 1907. He was arrested, charged and tried, but released on the ground of insufficient evidence. He committed another political robbery at Netra near Diamond Harbour on 23rd

The charge against them was that they had conspired to wage war against His Majesty the King Emperor and deprive the King Emperor of the sovereignty of British India and to overawe by means of criminal force the government of India. The trial lasted from July 1910 to April 1911. But Roy was discharged for lack of sufficient evidence. See Ibid.


To the Germans, India presented a formidable opening. If an armed revolution could be fomented in India, Britain would be obliged to withdraw troops from the European front to put it down, and could not send native Indian regiments to Europe. With this in mind the Germans invited to Berlin the Indian revolutionary Har Dayal, who was then in Switzerland and who had founded the Ghadr Party in California. In Germany Har Dayal was asked to head what became known as the Berlin Indian Independence Committee. With the aid of this group the Germans hoped to smuggle arms into India. For details see Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, Communism in India (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 20.

In his Memoirs (p.3) Roy mentioned that he left for Java for the first time before the end of 1914. This was a misrecollection. Since Roy agreed to write about the formative phase of his life at a very late stage, it is quite possible that he might have forgotten the actual date and time. The time mentioned here in the chapter is based on verifiable information. For details see Cecil Kaye, Communism in India (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1926), p. 186.

M.N. Roy, Memoirs, p. 43.

Ibid., p. 35.

The Common American designation for Socialists, Anarchists and Syndicalists.

Although M.N. Roy’s Memoirs (p. 29) stated that the ‘Open Letter’ was written before America joined the war, the introduction to its Spanish version included in La Voz de la India leaves no doubt that it was composed shortly after the event. For details see M.N. Roy, “Open Letter to His Excellency Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States Of America” in Selected Works of M.N. Roy, vol. I, 1917-1922 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 67.

M.N. Roy, Memoirs, p. 58.


Ibid.

For details see A Step in the Steamer (Bombay: National Bureau, 1918), p. 53.


Ibid., pp. 77-78.


Ibid., p. 96.

Ibid, p. 111.

Ibid., pp. 130-131.


M.N. Roy, “Open Letter to His Excellency Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America”, in Selected Works of M.N. Roy,
It was on 2nd December 1823 that President Monroe of the United States in a message sent to the Congress declared that the American continents were no longer open to colonisation by European powers. It also announced that the U.S. would consider any attempt on the part of the European powers to extend their system to the Western hemisphere as dangerous to its own peace and security as well as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition. In course of time, this policy assumed imperialistic connotations and the U.S. adopted a policy of breaking the tips of the any American state by a Big Stick if it disagreed with the wishes of the ‘colossus of the North’. So much so that in 1923 American Secretary of State Hughes stated that as the policy embodied in the Monroe Doctrine “is distinctively the policy of the United States, the Government of United States reserves to itself its definition, interpretation and application”. See Fenwick, *International Law* (New York: Appleton - Century Crafts, Inc., 1948), p. 238.


See M.N. Roy, *Memoirs*, p. 120.
63 For details see Ibid., p. 146.
64 Ibid., p. 217.
65 Ibid., p. 60.
68 Ibid., p. 59.
69 Ibid., p. 195.
70 Ibid., p. 219.
71 Ibid., pp. 214-215.
72 Ibid., p. 215.