

## SAUMYENDRANATH TAGORE'S "ILLEGAL BOOKLET"

Saumyendranath Tagore has written a brochure on the historical development of the Communist movement in India. It was described on the cover, within double brackets, as "an illegal booklet" by Saumyendranath Tagore. When a movement is conducted from underground, illegal literature has a special glamour. This booklet was thus written with the motive that it might be counted among illegal publications. What, however, would happen if the British police in India could not realise that the booklet was illegal? To prevent such a contingency it was plainly indicated, as if by poking one's finger into the policeman's eye, that the booklet was illegal and was written by Saumyendranath Tagore! The idea was that if even after seeing the words "illegal booklet", the dull-witted police failed to realise its importance, the authorship of Saumyendranath Tagore

must compel them to acknowledge its illegality! This brochure was printed in 1944.

Many long years have passed since the appearance of this booklet. Unfortunately, however, till about a year ago, I was unaware of its existence. I had the first inkling of it when I saw it mentioned in the bibliography appended to various books by anti-Communists, and especially in Overstreet and Windmiller's enormous tome, "Communism in India". The two last named, unable to get a printed copy of the booklet, borrowed a typed copy from Robert C. North of Stanford University in the United States of America. It was natural for me to be keen on reading such a book at least once. Saumyendranath Tagore had written this invaluable (?) history in order to coach members of his own party. Conscious Communists among them have all joined the Communist Party of India and I imagined that perhaps from one or the other of them I could get a copy. It appeared, however, on enquiry that the comrades concerned had only seen the booklet but did not possess it. Thus I came to think that foreign anti-Communists might have the booklet, but here in India it was unavailable. Our comrade Mahadev Saha anyway, is a collector and he ferreted out a copy from somewhere and let me read it for a few days. I have availed myself of the opportunity.

In giving the booklet its title, Saumyendranath Tagore has shown much guile. Anyone hearing of the title would think that the booklet was rich with factual material. In reality, it has hardly any fact and is full of empty verbosity. It gives no account

of the first beginnings and the advance of the Communist movement in India. Saumyendranath has waxed eloquent on what he knows nothing about. This is due not merely to ignorance but a very special motive.

Before describing other things it is necessary to say in a short summary how Saumyendranath came to be associated with the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal and, then, with the Communist Party of India. I have already briefly stated how the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal was organised and explained the circumstances in which changes in its nomenclature were made. I have also said earlier that its first name was Labour Swaraj Party. Now, Saumyendranath Tagore joined the Labour Swaraj Party in the beginning of January 1926. He knew Qazi Nazrul Islam and Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, but he came to the office of the Labour Swaraj Party on account of his earlier introduction to Shamsuddin Hossain. Nazrul Islam and Hemanta Kumar Sarkar then lived in Krishnagar (district Nadia), and Shamsuddin Hossain stayed in the office of the Labour Swaraj Party. Saumyendranath had met Shamsuddin Hossain at Rabindranath's Shantiniketan, where the latter was a teacher for some time. Saumyendranath is the grandson of Rabindranath's eldest brother, Dwijendranath Tagore. Thus a scion of a well-known aristocratic family of Calcutta came to the Workers' and Peasants' Party.

It was at the call of the non-co-operation struggle that Saumyendranath Tagore, then in his M. A. class, gave up his studies. He then became a Gandhist.

But before long he lost his faith in Gandhism. In 1926, when he joined the Labour Swaraj party, there must have come about some inner change in his life, but his outward appearance was rather bizarre. He wore saffron-coloured *khadi dhoti* and *kurta*, walked about bare-footed, and carried a big staff in his hand. His hair hung down in locks. It was in this rig-out he remained in the Workers' and Peasants' Party from January 1926 to April 1927. Meanwhile he had also joined the Communist Party of India, though he had no compunction in writing in his booklet that as late as 1927 there was no Communist Party of India. This statement is obviously motivated. What the motive was will be related later.

I shall now explain the situation in which Saumyendranath Tagore went to Europe in April 1927 and the relationship which came to subsist between him and Nalini Gupta. The latter had been sentenced along with us in the Kanpur Communist

Conspiracy Case. He used to stay with us in the office of the Workers' and Peasants' Party. When in our company he found it very difficult to keep body and soul together, he went to live for some time with his elder brother Shashi Gupta in Mandalay. Shashi Gupta was a well-to-do resident of Mandalay. As Nalini was adept at making explosives he could be friends with terrorists very rapidly. He was very averse to study, and looked upon the printed word with something like hatred. It was thus by no means possible for him to follow our course of action. We could never even imagine that he would

Saumyendranath  
Tagore and  
Nalini Gupta

carry on organisational work among the toiling people. We could not drop him, but to keep him with us was a matter of no little difficulty.

It was noticed that before he went off to Mandalay Nalini had developed a particular friendship for Saumyendranath Tagore. This mutual feeling increased after his return from Mandalay. Nalini was then often found going to the Jorasanko house of the Tagores and spend the night there. As we did not approve of Nalini's contact with terrorists, he began to meet them at the Tagore house. He also taught them a little of the art of making explosives. It was suddenly reported one day that some of the young people who used to hobnob with him were arrested and detained without trial. This caused a sensation in the Tagore house.

We had learnt that the issue of a passport for Saumyendranath Tagore to travel to Europe had been under the consideration of the Government. Passports not being available on time if one needed suddenly to go abroad, it was the practice of many people to secure a passport and keep it handy. It was our idea that Saumyendranath Tagore's passport application had been made for this reason. However, an opportunity for his getting the passport early came about when the young men who used to meet at his residence became 'detenus'. I shall now relate how one day Nalini Gupta came and told me that there had been great excitement and apprehension in the Tagore house. It seems that Gaganendranath Tagore, the artist, had met Tegart, the Commissioner of Calcutta Police, in a club or somewhere. This was

nothing to think ill of. But it appears he told Gaganendranath: "A member of your family, Saumyen, is hobnobbing with undesirable people. If we arrest him now, there may be a furore in the country for he is a grandson of Rabindranath Tagore. Saumyen has already applied for a passport. If you pack him off to Europe, we shall give it to him forthwith." On learning this, Gaganendranath came and told Saumyen's father, Sudhindranath, about it, who felt so nervous about the situation that he agreed to foot Saumyen's bill for going abroad. This was Nalini Gupta's report, and I cannot affirm if there was any truth in it. We did not always believe all that he used to say. But it is a fact that Saumyendranath got his passport and his father, Sudhindranath Tagore, provided him with the necessary funds. After Saumyendranath's departure, Nalini also went off. He did so with assistance from the Communist Party, for without it he could not have gone. In spite of our disapproval he was always having something to do with terrorists. So we wanted him to be out of India, and made special arrangements for his journey.

Saumyendranath Tagore went first to Germany, but about this he held no consultations with the Committee of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, nor did he even inform the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India. When it was learnt that he was going abroad, he was called for discussion to the Party headquarters in Bombay, but he did not respond.

Saumyendranath Tagore had made all arrangements for his journey in accordance with instructions

from Nalini Gupta. He must have thought at the time that Nalini was a powerful person and that he would realise Nalini's infinite resourcefulness as soon as he set foot on European soil. Since he refused any discussion with us, we did not thrust ourselves and our views on him. Still it was very suspicious to me that he wanted no letters of introduction from us. How was he to function abroad without such introduction, where would he go, and what would be his credentials? Thus, in my impatience, I threw aside all sense of shame and asked him pointblank. I was then shown a letter of introduction purporting to have been issued on behalf of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal, but the alleged signatory knew nothing of the matter. It was Nalini Gupta's advice that Saumyendranath should not carry with him any introduction from the Communist Party of India, but only from the Workers' and Peasants' Party. From this it became clear to my mind why in February 1927 Saumyendranath had wanted to be the General Secretary of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal.

The second conference of the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal (it was renamed Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal in March 1928) was held at the Indian Association Hall in Calcutta, on February 19 and 20, 1927. Comrade Shapurjee Saklatvala was present at the conference. In the previous year I had to carry on the work of the secretary though another person nominally held the office. It was on this account that the president of the conference, Shri Atul Chandra Gupta, proposed my name for the

General Secretaryship, explaining that the person who did the actual work should hold the office. However, when Saumyendranath Tagore expressed his desire to be the General Secretary, I readily agreed. In reality, Saumyen wanted that he might go abroad as an office-bearer of the Party, but of course he did not take me into his confidence.

As soon as he set foot on foreign soil, he could realise that Nalini Gupta's arrangements were by no means effective. Besides, he found out abroad that Nalini was a very different person from what he had imagined him to be. The name that was on the letter of introduction might have carried a lot of weight at home, but in the sphere of the international Communist movement it was neither weighty nor could it cut any ice. Saumyendranath Tagore, thus, became conscious of his mistake. Luckily for him, one of his relatives was then returning home from Germany. Through this relative he sent me a letter informing me of his difficulties. We have not been able to preserve any of the correspondence of those days, for we did not have the means of doing so. Perhaps, the police have preserved letters that were sent by post. One of such letters was filed by the police in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case, and I am quoting extracts from it. This was Exhibit No. P 2130 P in the Meerut Case. In this letter, Saumyendranath wrote that he had read in "Ganavani" (Bengali weekly) that the Workers' and Peasants' Party had also been organised in Bombay and that it was necessary to have units in Madras and Punjab. He asked for a copy of the Constitution of the Party in Bombay, and

then referred to the main point, namely, that he wanted a "mandate" for himself. He wrote: "If you can secure a mandate for me from these two parties in the sense that Saumyendranath Tagore, General Secretary, Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal, who is now in Europe, is authorised to establish relations between this Party and labour organisations in England and Europe, if you can send mandates like this from Bombay and Madras I can act on their behalf. With an all-India status one can work with the Labour parties in Europe". Saumyendranath Tagore's letter possibly was written in Bengali. What was filed in Court might have been its English translation.

Saumyendranath should have arranged for this before he left for Europe. It was his duty to acquaint himself with facts regarding the all-India movement. But he went without learning or grasping anything. He had assimilated nothing through his own experience of work, but at least he could have had some discussion with us and formed an idea of what was happening outside Bengal. However, I had helped him to the best of my limited powers. So did Comrade Abdul Halim throughout this period.

My conduct *vis-a-vis* Saumyendranath Tagore had been faulty; it was the conduct of a goody-goody person, not of a revolutionary. From the manner he went abroad it will be seen that there could be no question of his receiving the honour of a delegate. The only thing for him to do was to receive training at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East or the International Lenin School. He had in him

however, an intolerable sort of 'Orientalism'. Of course, he had also the aristocrat's mentality. None could work in the international Communist movement with these two attributes. I devoutly wished that contact with Communists on the international plane might wipe clean his 'oriental' and aristocratic traits. For that it would have been enough if he had studied at any of the two aforesaid institutions. Anyway, I assisted him to receive recognition as a delegate. To Comrade Abdul Halim he sent by hand a long letter of 28 pages, acknowledging that if Muzaffar Ahmad's letter had not reached at last, he would have no standing at all in the international field.

In November, 1927, the tenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution was celebrated. Many organisations and individuals were invited to the celebration from various countries of the world. The Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal had an invitation sent on behalf of the Russian Rural Co-operatives. On my suggestion, the Party sent a wire intimating that Saumyendranath Tagore would participate in the celebrations as the representative of our Party, which he did.

On March 31, 1928, the third conference of the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal was held at Bhatpara, a big jute mill area. It was mentioned in the report to the conference that the Party's General Secretary, Saumyendranath Tagore, was touring Europe in order to study the working-class movement. All this kind of thing helped him a great deal at the international level.

However, in spite of whatever we did for his sake, he did not truly have the right to be our representative. He knew a little about conditions in Bengal but he was completely ignorant about the rest of India. Besides, he had not even discussed things with us in order that he might present a good report while he was abroad. And yet he concocted some sort of a report and placed it before the Communist International. In this matter he trod in the footsteps of M. N. Roy. But one cannot just present a report and get away with it. Representatives of the International read it and proceeded to ask a series of questions to which he could not give a satisfactory reply. He did not even know the circumstances in which the Labour Swaraj Party had emerged in Bengal. Perhaps, he had an idea that the Labour Swaraj Party owed its inception to the inspiration of the Communist International or of any of its representatives. This is what appears to have been in his mind when one reads his address to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International. But, in reality, it was a very different event. Those who had come forward to establish the Labour Swaraj Party were not inspired to do so either by the Communist International or by M. N. Roy. They had no contact whatever with the Communist International, though of course they had felt the influence of the October Revolution and also of the Communist International.

Not content with Saumyendranath's report, the representatives of the Communist International began a lengthy and exhaustive discussion with him regarding the movement in India and the problems

of party-building. Then they asked him to return to India and report back to the Party the discussions that had taken place. It is superfluous to add that though Saumyendranath Tagore states in his booklet that in 1927 there was no Communist Party he had described himself in Moscow as a member of the Communist Party of India. He had not imagined before that he might be asked to go back home forthwith. This direction, thus, was by no means to his liking, and he requested six months' grace in order that he might see and learn more things in Europe. However, it was not till six years and more had passed that he returned home. Anyway, when the Communist International's directive that he should go back to India was not being acted upon, the only thing it could do was to help Saumyendranath in adding to his store of ideology. The question was whether he would study at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East or the International Lenin School. He preferred the latter and was admitted accordingly.

It is a matter of honour to get admission into the International Lenin School. But did Saumyendranath make good use of this great opportunity? To our misfortune, it must be said that he did not. When he went to Moscow, it was a bare ten years after the October Revolution. Bohemian-type artists were still to be seen there, and Saumyendranath sought them out and wasted valuable time in their company. He had no inclination for making himself proficient in the ideology of Marxism. Besides, it was the period of the great debate with Trotsky, and at bottom he

leaned towards Trotsky, though so long as he was in Russia he did not call himself a Trotskyist. While Saumyendranath was in Moscow, certain other Indians were students at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, and the *emigre* Communist Party of India, affiliated to the Communist International, was still there. But his behaviour towards Indians in Moscow was not satisfactory. This is being written on the basis of reports we received later about his life in Moscow.

The Sixth Congress of the Communist International held its session in Moscow from July 27 to August 28, 1928. Saumyendranath Tagore was still staying on in Moscow. He was allowed into the Congress as a delegate but without voting rights, that is to say, he could make speeches at the Congress but could not cast his vote. It was at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International that he first met Shaukat Usmani. There was very little similarity between the two. From the point of view of their family background they were poles apart. Saumyendranath Tagore was born in an aristocratic family while Shaukat Usmani came of artisan stock in Bikaner. In spite of it, however, Shaukat Usmani's temper was such that he could give himself the airs of a scion of the Great Moghuls! Saumyendranath Tagore was also very self-opinionated, but he was never so intolerant as Shaukat Usmani. All the papers that Shaukat Usmani had, like the letters of introduction he carried, were forged documents. Saumyendranath had a genuine pass-

port, but his credential letter was dubious, for the signatory to it never knew anything about it, let alone signing it. From this angle the two had certain similarities. There was also another matter over which there was much concord between them. Shaukat Usmani turned out to be a Trotskyist while he was in Moscow in 1928. He admitted it himself to me in a talk in Calcutta during the last week of December, 1928. He had told me that if I criticised Trotsky he would not tolerate it. I was amazed to hear him talk in that way, for we had not then had any mutual discussions about Trotsky. However, Shaukat Usmani was far too much the opportunist type. Anyhow, before three more months were out we were again clapped together inside jail where—strange to say—Shaukat Usmani gave not the slightest inkling about his having turned Trotskyist.

Saumyendranath Tagore knew nothing about the beginnings of the Communist Party of India. While he was here, he showed no particular curiosity about such things. From some passages in his booklet it appears that he tried to find out something from Shaukat Usmani while in Moscow. I have already related how Shaukat Usmani had gone to Moscow in 1928. Naturally, Saumyendranath heard from him a lot of exaggerated and distorted reports. It is very likely that Usmani did not at all confide in him that he had gone with forged credentials while the Party was in the dark about it. It seems that the two of them also met from time to time when they were back home. I am inclined to think that it was on the basis of what he had heard from Usmani that

Saumyendranath wrote about the former having resigned from the Party, while the fact is that he was expelled.

Saumyendranath Tagore's main purpose in the booklet, intended for his followers, was to convince them that a real Communist Party had never grown in India, which was why he had taken a hand in the matter. He writes that inside the Party Usmani had to suffer a great deal on account of the wickedness of S. V. Ghate, Muzaffar Ahmad and Joglekar. The American writers, referred to earlier, have quoted this statement in their tome, no doubt, because they thought it an important averment. Anyway, Saumyendranath did not know either Ghate or Joglekar. He must have relied on what he had heard from Shaukat Usmani, but I have grave doubts if even Usmani had mentioned Joglekar's name. He might have mentioned Ghate's name and mine, because we had sent intimation of Usmani going abroad with fake credentials. My guess is that Saumyendranath mentions Joglekar rather forgetfully. About Shaukat Usmani I have said enough to convey an idea of the kind of man he was. Saumyendranath, however, has tried to put him on a pedestal, imagining that his party would gain thereby. To that I do not object, but I do object that in seeking to elevate Shaukat Usmani he has said things about me which are untrue. It is correct to say that in May, 1923, Usmani and I had been arrested, but why does Saumyendranath proceed to tell the lie that after arrest the police released me and detained Usmani? Did he imagine that he would build up his party by teaching false



history to his followers? Did he know that even before the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case, Usmani, Ghulam Hossain and I had been detained under Regulation III of 1818? For a short while Nalini Gupta also had been detained under the same Regulation.

Not much harm would have been done if I had disregarded Saumyendranath Tagore's booklet. He wrote it for the instruction of his followers, but, as I have said before, the most notable of them have all joined the Communist Party of India. The trouble, however, is that he has also circulated this "illegal booklet" abroad. Non-Communists these days are writing volumes on the Communist Party of India and they are giving quotations from Saumyendranath's "illegal booklet". He has written, for instance, that in the middle of 1922 Nalini Gupta came to India and made a "recruit" of me; also that he met Dange in Bombay and arranged publication of the English weekly "Socialist"—his language suggesting that Dange also had been "recruited" by Nalini Gupta. As a matter of fact, Saumyendranath Tagore, writing thus, was falsifying history. Nalini Gupta came to Bengal towards the end of 1921, and he went back to Europe directly from Bengal, having on that occasion travelled nowhere else in India. Thus his meeting Dange and organising publication of the English weekly "Socialist" is a cock and bull story. Nalini Gupta understood nothing of the Communist ideology. How could he draw other people towards it? He had come to this country only as a messenger. From M. N. Roy's writings it is plain that his object was only to establish contact

with the terrorists of Bengal. It will be no exaggeration to say that he failed even to do that, for he could contact Bhupendra Kumar Datta alone and nobody else. It is true that Nalini Gupta saw Qazi Nazrul Islam and me. The two of us had been editing the evening daily "Navayug", where the problems of working people were discussed. Nalini Gupta had learnt of it from a friend and through him had a meeting arranged with both of us. He was then much disappointed at not being able to contact the terrorists. Having met us he felt somewhat out of his quandary, for at least he could go back to Europe with some addresses! He could see Bhupendra Kumar Datta after he had met us. When Nalini saw us, "Navayug" had ceased publication, and I was trying to grasp the problems of the working class and had collected some literature on the subject. I had got hold of "People's Marx" and two of Lenin's books—"Will the Bolsheviks Retain Power?" and "Left-wing Communism", as well as some other things. I was struggling with "People's Marx", unable to get the hang of the matter. If at that time Nalini could expound the subject to me I could have felt like being his bond-slave. But in regard to such things the poor man was perfectly "innocent". The fact is that Nalini went back to Europe with the addresses he got from us. Later on, it was I who had tried to "recruit" Nalini Gupta to the Communist Party of India, but I failed. He always claimed he was not a Communist, but a nationalist revolutionary. He could certainly have 'recruited' me in the manufacture of explosives, but I did not learn the art. Of course, Nalini

Gupta had to some extent made a 'recruit' of Saumyendranath Tagore, but it was not as a Communist but in quite another direction.

In spite of his ignorance, Saumyendranath has written many things with an air of wisdom. He asserts that even in 1928 Mirajkar was not a member of the Communist Party of India. Perhaps for some reason Shaukat Usmani did not think kindly of Mirajkar, and had a dig at him by giving false information to Saumyendranath. But why did Saumyendranath put it down in his booklet? Who does not know that Mirajkar is an old member of the Communist Party of India?

Saumyendranath Tagore writes that towards the end of December, 1928, he left the Soviet Union for Berlin *en route* to India, but he vouchsafes in his booklet no reason why he did not return home forthwith. In 1927-28, stupendous working-class struggles were going on in India. It was in the course of those struggles that the leadership of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and of the Communist Party was established. Saumyendranath Tagore knew all about this sort of thing. It was surely his duty to come back home at once to help in carrying forward that struggle. Of course, the British Government of India was, from behind the scenes, preparing the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case, but Saumyendranath Tagore, doubtless, did not know of it. Where, in that case, was any hurdle in the way of his return to India? However, one could very well say that he did not return because he was apprehensive at the news of the acute

working-class struggles that had commenced in the country. I do not know what he would say in contradiction. Let me only ask if he had informed the Communist International of his having settled down in Berlin when he had left Moscow ostensibly to return home *via* Berlin? Did he associate himself in Berlin with the Communist Party of Germany? What can be his answer to such questions? After the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case was started, Saumyendranath Tagore's name was included in the list of co-conspirators. That did not, of course, mean that if he were in India he would have been placed in the dock with the other accused persons. Many of our alleged co-conspirators were in India, and some of them even came to the court to have interviews with us, but they were not just caught and included in the accusation. He could at least return to India without the least unease when the hearing of the case was nearing completion. The British Government of India was not so foolish as to arrest him then and begin the trial anew. The utmost that could have happened was his detention as a State prisoner for some time under Regulation III of 1818. These things had been communicated to him more than once, but it was his cowardice which prevented him returning home till after the stage of appeal to the High Court in relation to the convictions in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case was over.

I shall refer only to two more matters before finishing this narrative. Saumyendranath Tagore has made certain references to Comrade Abdul Halim,

which truly betray a most vulgar and vitiated taste.

Comrade Abdul  
Halim and  
Saumyendranath  
Tagore

Referring to his pamphlet "Hitlerism or Aryan Rule in Germany", he writes: "The book was published by *one Abdul Halim* on behalf of the Bengal Provincial Branch of the

Communist Party of India". Then he adds: "Abdul Halim, whose services to the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal were always strictly limited to the manual plane and the creature comforts of Muzaffar Ahmad, was Muzaffar's pet creature. After the arrest of Muzaffar, Muzaffar managed to put Halim on the head of the Bengal organisation of the Party". The reason why Saumyendranath Tagore displayed in regard to Halim such dirty feudal snobbery and aristocratic superiority complex is explained in the pamphlet itself.

In "Hitlerism or Aryan Rule in Germany", Saumyendranath Tagore has stated that the reasons for Hitler's emergence were the treachery of the German Social-Democrats and the "fatal" error of the Communist Party of Germany. Comrade Abdul Halim told him that he disagreed with him in regard to his comment on the Communist Party of Germany. This was because Abdul Halim had received a copy of the resolution of the Communist International on the German situation, where the responsibility for Nazi victory was placed squarely on the shoulders of the German Social-Democrats. In that period the Communist Party of Germany pursued principles and policies which were correct. This report [of Abdul Halim's talk with Saumyendranath] is taken from

Saumyendranath's "illegal booklet" itself and not from any writing of Abdul Halim's. Comrade Halim, as a trusted and disciplined Communist, had made his protest to Saumyendranath. He had accepted the decisions of the Communist International. He had no idea then that Saumyendranath Tagore had turned Trotskyist and had gone out of the Communist International. It was only for his crime of giving evidence of Communist discipline that Abdul Halim became, in Saumyendranath's eyes, a show-boy of Stalin's.

As a grandson (nephew's son) of Rabindranath, Saumyendranath Tagore possibly imagines himself to be a man of great taste and discernment. What kind of taste and discernment, one wonders, can be seen in the language he has used about Comrade Halim? It is clear, anyhow, that he had learnt not an iota from the International Lenin School. If he had, he would surely not have betrayed such feudal-aristocratic snobbery. Assuming for the sake of argument that Comrade Abdul Halim did manual labour while in the Workers' and Peasants' Party and looked after my creature comforts, does that, in the eyes of a Communist, appear to be petty job-doing? Besides, where is the relevance of this talk about somebody else looking after my food and such things? When there was a little cash in our hands, I myself would cook and feed everybody. Again, was our food like the multi-course affair in the Jorasanko house of the Tagores that help would be necessary in its preparation? Saumyendranath Tagore knew very

well that Abdul Halim and I had to starve from time to time. But he chooses to forget that once the students of Hardinge Hostel, learning from him about our starving condition, made a donation of ten rupees, and he goes so far as to say that Abdul Halim's services were necessary for looking after Muzaffar Ahmad's "creature comforts"!

Comrade Abdul Halim is one of the founders of the Communist Party of India. Shamsuddin Hossain, a founder of the Labour Swaraj Party of Bengal, and therefore also of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, was the eldest brother of Comrade Halim's. Saumyendranath knew that it was the influence of the younger brother which had drawn him into political life. When Saumyendranath was in trouble abroad, it was Abdul Halim who helped him out. I have referred already to his 28-page letter. But, of course, this same Abdul Halim became in his eyes "one Abdul Halim". Indeed, effrontery must have a limit.

I have said already that Saumyendranath Tagore had turned a Trotskyist. He did not then have the courage to let everyone know the fact. And yet, being a Trotskyist, he found it impossible to work in the Communist Party of India and observe its discipline. He was groping for a way out of this impasse. Differences of opinion with Comrade Abdul Halim showed him a way and he took the opportunity to clear out of the Communist Party of India.

In his booklet, Saumyendranath Tagore has spoken of Philip Spratt and Ben Bradley. Like him, Philip Spratt, too, has found his level outside the Communist Party. This is why Saumyendranath Tagore and Ben Bradley he refers to Spratt as an ineffective but a good man. But about Ben Bradley, he just spouts venom. He never met Ben Bradley and had no indirect contact even with him. Yet, at Usmani's instigation he writes that Bradley had served a jail term in Peshawar on a charge of cheating.

Comrade Bradley was an engineer by profession. Once, after the First World War, he came to Rawalpindi to work, on contract with the British Government, in a factory for the repair of arms. After completing his contractual term he went back to England. He was a courageous soldier. He was never, like Shaukat Usmani, expelled from the Communist Party, nor did he, like Saumyendranath Tagore, shirk out of it. In India, he not only worked for India's freedom; he was with us in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case, was convicted and jailed. He was a leading member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Even after returning home from India, he would thrill to every Indian cause. Indians in Britain have known how very much he loved India to his dying day. And yet it is against this Ben Bradley that Saumyendranath has, without the least provocation, mouthed such slander!