

Reminiscences Of Nalini Das ; by Niranjan Sen

BARISAL'S REVOLUTIONARY  
FREEDOM-SOLDIER

IT WAS IN 1929. I had then just come back to Barisal after four years of detention under the Bengal Ordinance. A feeling of joy and relief was in me after the monotony of prison-life. A friend practically forced me to go along with him to witness a football match, which was having a big draw in town.

Football Star

The local college team was due to play against a European team. Excited discussions went all round the field about the prospects of the day, and many had misgivings that the barefooted college lads might be no match for the well-shod European team. But a young body cut this short: "It's not going to be so simple as all that, sir. Don't you know NALINI DAS is playing for the college? He certainly does not care for all the boots that they can bring to the field."

Nalini had by then taken the field, thousands applauded him, and every movement that he made was greeted with loud cheers. The college team put up a really splendid show, and won too, and Nalini was, of course, the star-performer of the evening. He was borne shoulder high by his innumerable admirers through the streets after the match.

I was impressed by the young lad's popularity, but dismissed it as the usual reward of a good sportsman.

Shop Keeper's Faith

But a few days later, I had another experience of his popularity: passing the college, I found a man desperately crying, vomiting all the time. There were several people around him just watching the fun. Cholera was raging in Barisal at this time and the man was obviously a victim of it. I was at a loss as to what to do with him, how to remove him from there and get him treated. A shopkeeper came from round the corner and said: "Why, call Nalini Babu from the college hostel; everything will be arranged as soon as he is informed."

I could not get Nalini in the hostel that day, but what I got was the impression that Nalini was already a leader among his people, not only through sports but through service of his people as well.

Months later, one night our revolutionary group was discussing our future plan of work. Sachin (Sachin Kar Gupta, just released after serving a term of 15 years) said: "Let us wait a bit; let Hari

come, for he can let us know the position inside the college, how popular we are with the students." I asked: "Who is this Hari?" Sachin answered: "Hari's real name is Nalini Das, he comes from Bhola. In my opinion, he is the best of our cadres." I was intrigued: "Is that the renowned footballer?" I asked. Sachin said with a laugh: "That's right. He is our boy." I was filled with pride to learn that such a popular boy, perhaps the most popular in Barisal at the time—belonged to our party.

Pucca Swadeshi Family

Nalini came from a pucca Swadeshi family. His uncle was a leader of old terrorist revolutionaries, and had passed a number of years in prison. His elder brother was a noted Congress worker of Bhola. In the Non-Co-operation of 1921, his uncle and brothers joined the movement giving up their studies. Nalini was then a young kid, reading in the junior classes.

But he was already being schooled in patriotism. In those days, the Congress and Khilafat leaders attending political meetings at Bhola and the neighbourhood would take Nalini with them. He was a great favourite of many of the leaders like Badshah Mesh, the Pir of Faridpur, Wahed Raza Choudhury of Utania, Laj Mesh of Bhola, Chuni Sen, Anulya Mukherji and others. It was through them that Nalini was initiated into Swadeshi.

First Fight

The Government was hiring people to break up the Congress movement then going on; but despite their best efforts, these despicable were usually found out.

One day Nalini on his way to the National School (which he had joined during the Non-Co-operation Movement) met one such agent of Government. The little boy went up to him and told him to his face: "You are a lickspittle of the government. That makes you an enemy of the country. Why don't you give up your job right now?" The man was furious, and pounced upon him. Nalini was undaunted, and he hit him back. The scuffle went on for some time before the passers-by came and rescued him, and the man disappeared.

But the matter did not end there. Nalini and a couple of his friends were prosecuted, and the case became the sensation of the town. Nalini was convicted, though the sentence was light. But this earned him the unstinted respect of the Congress and Khilafat workers of Bhola who came to greet the young lad with bouquets.

We give on this page the story of Nalini Das by Niranjan Sen. There are 43 such Pro-Refugee Revolutionary Prisoners still rotting behind the bars in Bengal. Between them, they have already spent 603 years in jail. YOU can hasten their release by making YOUR voice heard. The Bengal All-Parties' Committee set up for campaigning for their release consists of Congressmen, League, Nationalist Muslims and Communists. The Committee has issued a public appeal to leaders of all political parties and editors of all newspapers to take up this demand. Every patriotic organisation should pass resolutions calling for their release. Wire copies of your resolutions both to the Central Government AND the Bengal Government.



REVOLUTIONARY PRISONER  
Sketch in Ink by PRAN KRISHNA PAUL

By 1942, the Non-Co-operation Movement had started to ebb and many students went back to Government school. Nalini too was made to leave the National School and return to the other. But the day he had to go back saw him in tears which continued for the next two days. His relatives and teachers tried to console him, but it hurt the patriotism of proud Nalini who kept on saying: "It's only because we could not win Swaraj that we have now to go back to Government school."

Joins "Jugantar"

Shortly after this, Nalini joined the Jugantar Party and soon became one of the ablest and most trusted lieutenants of Sachin, who was then the key man of the Party in Barisal.

At first, Nalini, as is natural in schoolboys, was rather careless and exposed himself and a few of his friends. The police began to suspect him and informed the headmaster accordingly. The headmaster was enraged that his school should have become a nest of the Swadeshis. He threatened Nalini to find out who his associates were, and what he was doing. Nalini would not utter a word. The headmaster was equally adamant, but completely baffled when he could get nothing out of him even after caning him. Nalini, of course, became more cautious and careful in his movements now.

In those days, between 1925-30, Nalini was the moving spirit behind every social service activity in Bhola, which became one of the busiest centres in the whole of Barisal district.

Cholera was a normal occurrence in Bhola every year. Nalini came forward to organise a 'Seva Samiti' to tend and nurse the sick. Hindus and Muslims both were equally grateful to him for the services that he rendered them in distress. Even when he moved on to Barisal, he could never hold himself back whenever there was an epidemic in Bhola.

The boys at Bhola had no library or reading room. Nalini took this up too; and soon the Sahitya Mandir (Reading Room) at Bhola became an object of pride for the whole district.

Not only this. At his studies too, he was good. His teachers recognised his exceptional capabilities. But the young revolutionary could hardly spare time for his books with a thousand and one things on his shoulders. Yet, in college, his tutors used to say, "If Nalini could pay a little more attention to his studies, he would become a fine scholar."

His Character

There is no dearth of facts to show his integrity, tenacity and sense of responsibility. All these marked him out as an exceptional revolutionary worker even at an early age. I remember when we were caught and imprisoned in 1929, our group was almost left without cadre. But even in jail, Nalini was one of the few outside on whom we pinned all our hopes. And he justified our expectations too in no small measure.

After our arrest, Nalini was busy reorganising everything. At this time he himself was in hiding. In November 1930, he was arrested. The police tried to implicate him in the Dalhousie Square Bomb Case. But failing to do so they sent him off to Hiji camp as a detainee.

At that time, to the prisoners in Hiji was meted out the worst possible treatment by Government and they went so far that there was shooting of unarmed prisoners in 1931, resulting in the deaths of Santosh Mitra and Tarakeswar Sen. Tarak was a friend of Nalini from childhood. Nalini himself was also wounded in this shooting.

The incident roused the anger

of the nation which brought Tagore down to preside over an unprecedented demonstration in Calcutta. Inside the prison, Nalini vowed to avenge the murder of his comrade. Within three months, Nalini escaped from Hiji.

So began the second round of his revolutionary career, this time completely underground. The police issued warrants and offered rewards for his arrest. But Nalini defied all that, put his entire energy in building up the group, re-forging the old links.

In 1933, the police Commissioner of Chanderbago was murdered, and the police was trying to fast the blame upon Sachin and Dinesh Majumdar (both of whom had escaped from prison) together with Nalini. But despite their best efforts, they could find him nowhere, though Nalini was moving from village to village, sheltered by the villagers themselves who loved and respected him.

In June 1933, the police net caught them in Calcutta. Without warning, their flat in Cornwalls Street was surrounded, and a regular exchange of shots took place for sometime before the police could break open the door. Nalini tried to escape by slipping down the drain pipe, but he was wounded and captured. All the three were tried; Dinesh Majumdar was hanged, Nalini and Jagadananda Mukherji, who is still in prison, were sentenced to transportation for life.

Over To Communism

So Nalini came to the Andamans, and here I met him again. Through all the storms and stress of prison-life, Nalini's spirit never admitted defeat. And here too in the Andamans, I was struck by the remarkable capacity for self-analysis that he possessed. So bright and so full of noble sentiments and emotions, yet Nalini had a mind of steel that could never be broken; and like steel, it could never get rusty.

This together with his infinite love for his people brought him over to Communism, and he joined the Communist Consolidation in 1935.

Fourteen years he has served in jail, fourteen years that have taken away the best part of his youth, but no sacrifice is too great for this freedom-soldier, among the finest that our people have produced.

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ASSAM COMMUNIST WEEKLY  
GOVT. REFUSES PERMIT  
FOR REPUBLICATION

FROM JYOTIRMOY NANDY, Sylhet (Assam)

The Government of India has refused permission, without giving any grounds, for resuming publication of "Samhati", the Bengali weekly organ of the Surma Valley (Assam) Communists. It may be recalled that the Assam Government demanded security from "Samhati" in 1941 but subsequently withdrew it. Due to the unsettled conditions, political and financial, "Samhati" was discontinued then. In the coming elections, Assam Communists contemplate putting up four candidates from the Surma Valley, the Bengali speaking area in Assam. The refusal of permission to "Samhati" will severely handicap the Communists who have no paper of their own while no less than six local Bengali and two English pro-Congress weeklies, together with several papers coming in from Calcutta pour out anti-Communist stuff daily and weekly.



# In Monghyr: Home Of Veteran Bihar Communist-Kisan Leader

Under Red Flag

## BIG PEASANT RALLIES

In Congress Name

### "JAWAHAR JATHA'S" DOINGS

Monghyr District is one of the strongest Kisan bases of the Communist Party in Bihar and is the home of Sjt. Karyanand Sharma, most respected Communist-Kisan leader of the Province. Karyanandji is one of the oldest Congress workers of the Province, his service in the Congress dates from 1921. He has braved police bayonets and the lathis of the hirelings of zamindars in mighty kisan struggles since 1927 (since the famous struggle of Chanan).

He has been arrested and jailed seven times beginning with 1921 (once during the Congress Ministry itself!) and has spent over twelve years in jail.

NATURALLY ENOUGH, THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS CONTESTING THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS TO THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY FROM THE TWO CONSTITUENCIES IN MONGHYR DISTRICT.

THE straight path before all of us is to go to the kisans, our common people, and each of us put before them his policy and programme and seek their democratic verdict.

But the Congress leaders of Monghyr District do not seem to be prepared to face the people's verdict. Thrown into a flurry by the Communist decision to contest the election, they are losing their heads and taking to abuse and lathis against the Communists.

#### Ballia Kisan Conference!

Two big Kisan Conferences were held recently in Begusarai area of Monghyr District, at Ballia and Korla, presided over by Brahmdo, veteran Communist-Kisan leader of the District and one of the prospective candidates.

Over 4,000 kisans attended the Ballia rally. Long before the Conference, kisans began pouring into the little town of Ballia in large batches with Red flags and shouting slogans of "Zemindari Pratha Nash Ho", "Kupre Ka Sabal Hal Karo", "Desh Ki Azadi Keliye Hindu-Mussalman Ek Ho", "Kisan Sabha Zindabad".

A week before the Conference, local Congressmen had already gone into "action". A handbill was circulated on behalf of the Thana Congress Committee calling the Communists enemies of the people and warning the kisans that the Communists are doing the work of fighting black-marketeers and securing and distributing cloth to the people only to cheat them!

On the eve of the Conference, a group of notorious and discredited anti-Communist workers were imported from Begusarai (more about them later) to parade in Ballia town with Congress flags, shouting slogans of vile abuse and slander against the Communists (such as that they forge currency notes, See P.W. No. 20).

The kisans of Monghyr District, however, know the Communists and their leaders quite well. It is the Kisan Sabha led by the Communists which has worked tirelessly for the interests of the kisans, during the last three years—building bunds to save their crop and homes against flood, fighting police corruption and zamindari lootings on kisans, fighting food and cloth hoarders and securing for the kisan homes their daily needs like cloth and kerosene.

#### Rival Congress Meeting

Finding, therefore, that none of their tricks were working the Congressmen held a rival meeting. They called it Anonoshan Day Meeting, at the same place and time as the Kisan Conference. But only about 300 people attended their meeting, the kisan masses could be called on anti-Communist standard.

The Kisan Conference, however, attended by over 400 Communist Kisan leaders put before the kisans their program

Here is something for Pandit Nehru himself to ponder over. While he goes up and down the country calling Communists "traitors," young Congress boys organise themselves into "Jawahar Jathas" to beat up and assault Communists and use obscene language against them. Does he see no connection between the two? If Panditji does not speak up now against such methods, where will it soon lead the Congress organisation and our people?

lems and the way forward to the country's freedom; and called upon them to vote for these candidates who honestly fight for their demands.

Korla is a small village of 2,000 poor peasants and agricultural

labourers. Ground down by age-long zamindari oppression, these people have begun straightening their backs only after long struggles led by the Kisan Sabha.

There are only a few anti-Communist Congressmen in Korla without any influence; they are boycotted even by the members of their own families who all belong to the Kisan Sabha, and actively worked for the success of the Conference.

Therefore, the anti-Communists mobilised to their aid top Provincial Congress leaders from outside like Babu Ramcharitra Singh, ex-General Secretary of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee; and held a Congress meeting, the day before the Kisan Conference, attended by these Provincial bosses. As at Ballia,

here too, they thought they would blow up the Kisan Sabha Conference altogether this way.

At this meeting, all that Ramcharitra Babu and his friends did was to pour out vile anti-Communist and anti-Kisan Sabha abuse.

No wonder, once again only about 200 people turned up to hear this slander and abuse. The few kisans who were present were heard to say after the meeting: "They only abuse the Kisan Sabha and the Communists, but say nothing about our problems and demands."

#### Korla Kisan Conference

The very next day, over 6,000 kisans including 1,000 women turned up at the Kisan Conference and listened till late into

the night to the speeches and songs.

#### "Jawahar Jatha" in Action

The success of the Ballia and Korla Kisan Conferences in spite of all their efforts to break them, has made even the responsible Congress leaders lose their heads. Afraid of facing the people's democratic verdict, they are openly organising physical assaults against Communist workers.

A jatha of about a dozen Congress boys calling itself "Jawahar Jatha" has been organised which goes about abusing and beating up Communist workers with slogans of "August Revolution Zindabad" and "Amar Subhas Zindabad". The leader of this jatha is the son of Babu Sar-

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A section of the gathering of 6,000 peasants at the Korla (Monghyr) Kisan Conference.

## In Lahore: INA Release Campaign

### KHIZAR'S POLICE ARREST CONGRESSMEN

#### LATHI-CHARGE PEOPLE

#### Gopichand's Apologia For Unionists !!

From Our Own Correspondent.

LAHORE, Nov. 10.

THE people of the Punjab have been agitated over the fate of the Indian National Army more than of any other province as the majority of its personnel belong to this province. Several organisations have been holding meetings and demonstrations demanding their release. Thousands have signed the memorial of the Punjab Congress to the Viceroy. Congressmen, Communists, League-ers and students, all have held meetings and passed resolutions demanding the release of INA prisoners.

#### Double-Faced Policy

But Khizar's Unionist Government has adopted a double-faced policy in this matter. On the one hand it wants to give the impression that it stands for their release while on the other it hurls its police hounds on those who participate in the INA Release Campaign. Khizar gave an interview to a Unionist MLA praying for the Viceroy's clemency to INA officers and men, and secured its wide press publicity. He is also reported to have made representation to the Government of India for their release.

The reason is obvious. Many of the INA personnel are connected with families who form the very backbone of the Unionist Party. For instance Captain Shah Nawaz is related to Khan Bahadur Batai Khan, Unionist M.L.A. Faced with the coming elections, Khizar has to safeguard his "soldier base" and put up the show of a sympathetic attitude. The Unionist Party have even drama-

tically announced that they are making preparations for the defence of the INA boys, but nothing has been done about it so far.

But the real face of the Unionist Ministry was revealed when it launched police repression against those who are carrying on the campaign for release.

On November 4, Lahore broke away from its tradition of decades by not having the usual magnificent diwali illumination in sympathy with the INA men and a number of meetings were held. The Unionist police was let loose, and 14 people were arrested in Lahore on Nov. 4 and 5 under the Defence of India Rules.

#### AICC Member in Custody

They included Lala Kedarnath Sehgal, M.L.A., A.I.C.C. member. The "offence" according to the Punjab Government Advocates General was non-bailable. Sehgal was not produced before the court and instead the Magistrate was called at the Police Station where Sehgal is in remand.

Drwan Chamanlal put in an application in the court on the

5th for his release on bail so that Sehgal might attend the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Board of which he is a member. The Magistrate said that he had a lot of work to attend to and could not hear the application before November 9, and asked Chamanlal to appeal to the High Court if he wished against this order. The High Court allowed him Interim bail on the 6th but this also was rejected by the Magistrate on the 10th.

The treatment meted out to the persons arrested was revealed when Harbhajan Singh Aluwalia was produced before the City Magistrate. He complained that both his hands had been handcuffed and he was given nothing to eat.

#### Lathi-Charge

On the 5th the Unionist police made three successive lathi charges in front of the girls' school at Krishna Nagar. 11 people were injured, one of them seriously, and had to be removed to hospital. Seven young boys were arrested for shouting slogans. Two Congress women also were taken into custody but they were released later.

The Government did all this on a day which according to Khizar's own Superintendent of Police "on the whole remained peaceful." News of similar arrests has come from Batala also.

This is how Khizar shows his sympathy for the INA. His double-faced strategy is clear—appeal to the soldiers by talking

sympathetically about the INA and at the same time smash the popular campaign for their release. Khizar's mouthpiece Shahbaz features INA trial news and writes in a sympathetic tone, while his Police resorts to lathi charges and uses the DIR against those who demand their release.

In their eagerness to win Unionist support against the League, some of the Punjab Congress leaders are afraid even to speak up against these deeds of the Unionist Ministry.

At a public meeting held under the auspices of the Congress, Sardar Pratap Singh, General Secretary of the P.C.C. warned the Premier that it would be stupid on his part to expect an absolute majority in the coming Legislature. He said "The Congress will be holding the balance and you will have to come to us if you want to form a Ministry. Take this into consideration!"

Speaking at another meeting, Mufti Ziaul Hasan, member of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Majlis said: "The Unionists seem to forget that the situation is all in their favour, if they know how to make use of it. We are ready to forget and forgive. But they are going too far."

#### People at Fault!

Gopichand Bhargava, leader of the pro-Unionist group inside the Punjab Congress went still further. He is reported to have apologetically said, referring to the Krishna Nagar lathi-charge: "The crowd started pelting stones at the school and the authorities sent for the police. That alone led to the unfortunate incident." And these are the men who shout loudest today, that Communists are betraying the I.N.A!