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A short biography of Indian anarchist M.P.T. Acharya
(1887–1954)
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and proclaimed himself "a politician in politics and a libertarian in economy." He became a disciple of J. S. Mill and moved from Bombay to Deolali at the age of eighty four to take advantage of its better climate.The Libertarian Socialist Institute continued to function at least up until 1959.

In an article in Freedom in 1954 A.M. (Albert Meltzer) revealed that he had met Acharya on only two occasions but had established an uninterrupted correspondence with him for fifteen years.

Despite all of his efforts Acharya remained an isolated Anarchist in India and failed to create a movement. Whilst nationalists like Har Dayal and Bhagat Singh had a knowledge of anarchist texts, they merely incorporated what they felt to be useful to the struggle against British rule into their thought. Nationalist, and to a lesser extent Communist Party orthodoxy, had too much of a grip on the Indian masses, and unlike elsewhere in Asia, an anarchist movement did not develop, much to the chagrin of Acharya.

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> "Acharya….is the most salient figure among the Indian libertarians. He was above all a very informed connoisseur of Western socialist theories."
>
> Victor Garcia

Mandyam Prativadi Bhayankara Thirumalacharya was born around 1887 in Madras. He is usually referred to as M. P.T. Acharya, or P.B Acharya or M.P.B Acharya. His father M. P. Narasimha Ayangar was a supervisor in the Public Works Department. His forefathers had originally lived in Mysore state and moved to Madras state.The Ayangars are a Brahmin priest caste and wear their hair long.

The family was heavily involved in the nationalist cause. A close relative, M C Alasingaperumal had started a monthly journal Brahmavadin, and his uncle S. N. Thirumalacharya had started one himself called India, because he felt that it was too narrowly focussed on religious and Vedantic themes, to the exclusion of politics. This was a weekly with MPT on the editorial board in 1900. It used cartoons, the first time they had been used in any language in south India, which enraged the British authorities. They proceeded to start prosecution against the paper. The young men running it decided to shift it to Pondicherry, a French enclave in India. He moved with it there. It became very popular and his uncle was able to make money out of the paper and went with his cousin and co-worker to Europe, leaving MPT behind.

The British began to put pressure on the French to ban seditious literature in Pondicherry. They allowed the British to set up police stations to monitor the nationalists.

Being cooped up in Pondicherry led MPT to decide to cut off his hair and move to Colombo. From there he shipped to France and then moved on to London where he met up with the Indian National Congress activists at India House in Highgate. V D Savarkar was the leading light there. He learnt a trade of photo-engraving at the LCC Trade School. A few days after his

arrival he realised that all inmates of India House were being shadowed by detectives.

Acharya was used to act as a bogus informer to Scotland so that Savarkar and V V S Aiyar could supply false information. He was one of those who practised shooting at a range on Tottenham Court Road, and he became a good revolver shot.

In 1909 a nationalist assassinated Sir Curzon Wylie, political aide de camp to the Secretary of State for India. Moderate Indians organised a meeting a few days later to demonstrate their loyalty. Savarkar and others, including MPT turned up and Savarkar stood up to disagree with the motion. He was punched in the eye by Palmer, a barrister. MPT immediately struck him over the head with a stick. Both Savarkar and MPT were arrested but Palmer backed down from pressing charges because he had made the attack first.

In Europe, the Indian nationalists started training for violent attacks on the British authorities, sending them to be trained by the IRA, and by Turkish and Egyptian nationalists. The Rif Moors rose against Spanish rule in 1909 and MPT was sent there to make contact but the Rifs suspected them of being spies and they were knocked back. From there he went to Lisbon., but harassment there meant he then had to go to Paris. Here he assisted the fiery female nationalist Bhikaji Cama in publishing her paper Bande Mataram. He undertook its smuggling into India and other centres of Indian nationalism around the world. In Paris he associated with socialist circles and this started to influence him. With Cama and others he persuaded socialists to run a campaign for Savarkar's liberation. With Guy Aldred, Cama and others, Acharya helped form the Savarkar Release Committee in August 1910.

Acharya was sent to Berlin to speak to Indian nationalists there and after his return suggested that another propaganda paper, Talvar, be set up in Berlin. He continued with the underground distribution of Talvar and Bande Mataram. In 1911 he

Acharya's interest in economic matters was pronounced and the Free Society Group of Chicago published his work How Long Can Capitalism Survive? In 1951. Acharya included what he saw as state capitalism in the USSR in this work . He noted that: " Anarchy and the anarchists must be prepared by scientific and viable plans. For anarchists, anarchy is the synonym of scientific economy and for such an economy , anarchic conditions, that is to say the absence of the State , are essential. In consequence we must establish aneconomic and social plan for the good of all, a plan that must be acceptable even for those who are not anarchists. Our programme must not be presented as an anarchist programme, but as a plan of scientific economy. We must consider anarchism as being the precursor of scientific economy, inseparable from this economy….We have no solution and no one can for the great economic problem existing in the wages system. Today battles engaged for the raising of wages serve for nothing: the sole solution lies in its abolition. All the rest is nothing but illusion and disillusion. The trade unionists must not be lured into the struggle for the best retributions if they want to prepare for a social revolution. We either forget the problems of wages or we suffocate in the capitalist and Bolshevik swamp."

In the 1950s Magda died. Acharya asked Albert Meltzer to put on an exhibition of her works in London but before they could be shipped Acharya died. The artworks were seized by his first wife whom he had not seen for fifty years.

He died on 20th March 1954 . Unlike Savarkar, the Indian government completely ignored Acharya's role in the independence of India and he spent the last few years of his life in abject poverty. Only one small periodical of Ahmedabad saw fit to signal his passing noting that "Now that India has obtained independence, the old combatant for liberty has given up his last gasp in the most complete poverty."

Lotvala, always dubious in his attitude to social anarchism, moved away from libertarian ideas after the death of Acharya

CRIA(Commission de Relations de l'Internationale Anarchiste — Liaison Commission of the Anarchist International) and he began to contribute to Freedom in London, Tierra y Libertad in Mexico and Contre Courant in Paris. He appears to have made contact with Albert Meltzer and worked with him on a short lived Asian Prisoners Aid Committee. He was also in contact with the North East London Anarchist Group (founded in 1946 and a component of the Union of Anarchist Groups).

In Bombay he made contact with the wealthy mill-owner Ranchoddas Bhavan Lotvala, who had financed and sponsored the publication of the first Marxist texts in India, including The Communist Manifesto.He also financed the Labour Press which printed the weekly paper The Socialist, one of the first Marxist periodicals in India, edited by Shripat Amrit Dange. The Labour Press was not narrow in its outlook and published Kropotkin's Appeal to The Young in its Socialist Series. Acharya had previously made his acquaintance in Berlin in 1930–1. Lotvala now had the same enthusiasm for libertarian ideas as Acharya, after passing through Trotskyism, although his interpretation of anarchism was somewhat ambivalent. He had established the Institute of Indian Sociology a few years beforehand and Acharya now became its secretary. Libertarian tendencies within the Institute were strengthened by Acharya's influence and was seen in its statutes of 1947 and in the decision to change its name to the Libertarian Socialist Institute.

The new statutes were 1. To encourage the interest of the people in libertarian socialism 2. Unite and propagate all news and information to libertarian thought and its activities 3. Facilitate the study of natural and social sciences 4. Unite, with the intention of examination, the different points of view of the libertarian movement 5. Set up a library and edit a libertarian periodical 6, Adopt all means which can amlify and reinforce the signalled objectives.

was sent to Istanbul by the Paris Indian Society to secure the support of Turkish nationalists but without success.

He cooperated with other nationalists in Germany during WW1 in producing anti-British literature with Germany's help. The defeat of the British at Gallipoli enthused the nationalistss but the attitude of the German and Turkish governments had an unscrupulous attitude to India's independence. Acharya came to realise that they could only rely on socialists. They began to attend the International Socialist Congress in Stockholm. They sent letters of encouragement to the Bolshevik fraction of the Petrograd Soviet in 1917. In Stockholm, Acharya with V. Chattopadhyaya came in contact with K. M. Troionovsky who assured them of support. He and Chattopadhyaya and Mahendra Pratap went to Petrograd to join the Russian Propaganda Centre under Troionovsky in December 1918. He and others held talks with Lenin and were sent with Z. Suritz to Kabul but had no luck with the Amir Habibullah.

Acharya and Abdul Rab now founded the Indian Revolutionary Association, Inquilabin-I- Hind, separate from other nationalists, with the help of Suritz. The IRA was composed mainly of militant Moslems who had crossed to Tashkent from Afghanistan and NW India. It had different currents within it, many with a strong inclination to nationalism and Pan-Islamism. But the Amir asked them to leave Kabul. They now moved the new organisation to Tashkent.

Meanwhile M N Roy had founded an All India Central Revolutionary Committee but he failed to involve other Indians in other countries and even in Tashkent. They opposed the one party composition of the committee as they were excluded from it and felt that Roy was subordinating the Indian Revolutionary Association.

During his time in Moscow between 1919–1921 Acharya met and married the Russian artist Magda Nachman, who afterwards added Shrimati to the front of her name. This was his second wife as Acharya had left his first wife through an arranged

marriage by his family when he went into exile ten years before. Here he attended the Second and Third Congresses of the Communist International and here too he met M. N. Roy, one of the founders of Indian Communism. Roy refers to Acharya with an ill-disguised hatred in his memoirs, noting that he was "an anarchist, if he was anything." Nevertheless at the beginning both Roy and Acharya shared an admiration for the Soviet Union, which was soon to disappear with Acharya as he noted conditions in Russia. Acharya had identified himself as a Communist in 1921, but he rebelled against Roy's autocratic hold over the fledging Indian Communist Party. These differences with Roy deepened into differences with the Communist International itself and with the Soviet regime. On behalf of the Indian Revolutionary Association he remarked that: "We are not against Communism and we do not make a distinction between a Communist revolutionary or just a revolutionary. All we object to is forcible conversion to Communism."

The Bolsheviks supported Roy. Roy saw to it that their rations were stopped. He and another leading activist, Abani Mukherji, launched a campaign against them. Mukherji and others started to make false statements that Barq was an English spy and he was arrested. Acharya in a note from Moscow on 22nd July 1921, analysed the position of Roy as being one of wishing to exclude non-Communist elements among the Indian revolutionaries. Roy was able to gain a dominant position within the Third International. Barq and Acharya were thrown out of the All-India Central Revolutionary Committee and accused of being British spies. Both Roy and Mukherji were involved in this. (Roy later in the year turned on Mukherji and accused him of being a British spy as a result of which he was expelled from the Comintern) Acharya also wrote to the Komintern calling for the setting up of a commission comprised of both Communist and nationalist elements. Acharya and other activists left Moscow for other European countries. Both Mukherji and Chattopadhyaya were

later accused of espionage by the Russian secret police and murdered in 1937.

Another founding member of the Indian Communist Party Muzaffar Ahmad noted that Acharya and Chattopadhyaya were in contact with anarchist-communists in France and that Acharya had insisted on the inclusion of anarcho-syndicalists at the Congresses of the Communist International. Ahmad noted that Acharya eventually reverted to his anarchist ideas and described himself as an anarcho-syndicalist, although he also says that he had relations with Trotsky's Fourth International (not that surprising as a number of anarchist and council communist groups and individuals were involved with the FI at the very beginning).

Acharya returned to Berlin in late 1922 or early 1923, and worked with Chattopadhyaya in the office of the League of Oppressed Nationalities, which was supported by the Communist International. He sent political texts to the Comintern's mailing list back in India and apparently on his own initiative included anarchist literature in the mailouts. He wrote to a political activist in Madras in 1923, speaking favourably of the newly emergent anarcho-syndicalist IWMA which he described as " anti-political and federal." He also mentioned the Russian anarchist publication Rabotchi Put, edited by Maximov, to which he was contributing articles on the Indian workers' movement. By 1930–1931 he was in Amsterdam and according to Indulal Yajnik who met him there working with the "School of Anarchist-Syndicalism" there.

By 1935 he finally overcame his long term ban from return to India by the British administration and went to Bombay with Magda . Here he eked out a living as a journalist including eight articles which eventually were collated as a book Reminiscences of a Revolutionary.

From Bombay he made contact with the Japanese anarchist Taiji Yamaga and the Chinese anarchist Lu Jianbo, then residing in Sichuan. Together they made contact with the