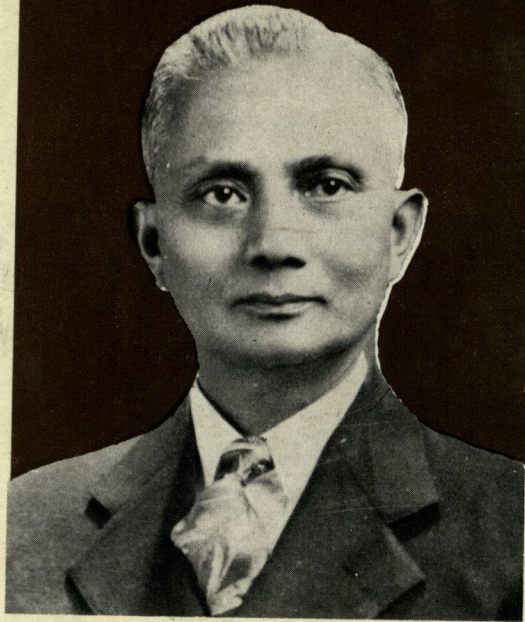


Rev.
J.J.M. Nichols Roy



Architect of
District Council Autonomy

320.50954164
KYN
002170
ICSSR

P. R. Kyndiah

When India was marching towards independence, the political future of the North Eastern Region became a question mark. Some among the vacating British bureaucrats, with help from interested locals, sought to turn it into a Protectorate, a virtual Crown Colony. Many of the opinion leaders in India, on the other hand, did not care to understand the special nature of the region and the people, and sought to steamroller a solution that would flatten out all tribal identities and extinguish cultural singularities. They were vociferous about binding up the entire region into a single State, homogeneous with other States of the Indian Union.

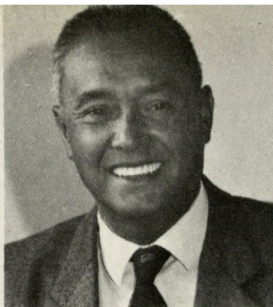
Both viewpoints were extreme, portending danger for the stability of the region. It devolved upon Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy, a son of the soil, to hammer out a golden mean. With all his scholarship and propensity for modernisation he did not lose touch with his people. But he was enlightened enough to see the political reality, and with his skill for persuasion convinced his people that their best interests lay in being part of the Indian Union. With passionate conviction he also prevailed upon the Constitution-makers to give a special deal to his people if the country's interests were to be served. The result was the status of autonomous District Councils to the North Eastern region.

Rev. Nichols Roy's stand for the cause of tribal identity was forthright and courageous. Although he was a Khasi tribal, his cause was for the greater good of the entire nation. Public service was to him a fusion of social, economic and spiritual services. His leadership and wisdom, his closeness to national leaders of the day particularly Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, gave his people a feeling of security and identification with the national movement.

This book is an inspired account of the life of Rev. Nichols Roy by one who knew him closely and worked with him in a common political endeavour.

ISBN 81-7203-014-2

Rs. 195.00



Born in 1928, **Paty Ripple Kyndiah** has run up a long innings of a successful political career. With Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy as President, he was Joint Secretary of the Khasi-Jaintia National Conference, a powerful political party in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. In 1964 he joined the All Party Hill Leaders Conference and also became its General Secretary and later the Senior Vice-President. He held the post of Chairman of the Shillong Municipal Board.

When Meghalaya was first formed as an autonomous State in 1970 Kyndiah was elected a member of its Provisional Assembly. Thereafter, he successively won the elections to the State Assembly. He was State Cabinet Minister many times since 1975 and held important portfolios, including that of acting Chief Minister. During 1979-81, he was leader of the opposition. He has also been Chairman of many vital Assembly Committees. He held the office of Speaker of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly during 1989-1993. He was a member of A.I.C.C. and is recognised as a veteran Congress leader of the North-East. Presently he is Governor of the State of Mizoram. He attended United Nations Assembly as an Indian delegate in 1992.

A pioneer in cooperatives and banking in the region, Kyndiah was Vice-Chairman, Assam Cooperative Apex Bank, founded the Shillong Cooperative Urban Bank and was the Founder Chairman of the Meghalaya Cooperative Apex Bank.

Kyndiah is one of the founders and President of Sein Jaintia, an influential social and cultural organisation. He was founder member of the Assam Sangeet Natak Akademi. He is also the President of Gandhi Study Centre, Shillong and has been the Chief Patron of the Meghalaya Body-building Association since 1974.

He is the author of many popular books, *Jawaharlal Nehru: The Thinking Dynamo*; *Meghalaya: Yesterday and Today*. He is married to Gavvy Khyriem and has three sons and three daughters.

REV. J.J.M. NICHOLS ROY:
ARCHITECT OF DISTRICT
COUNCIL AUTONOMY

P.R. KYNDIAH



SANCHAR PUBLISHING HOUSE
NEW DELHI

SANCHAR PUBLISHING HOUSE
H 18/4, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi

First Published in 1993
First reprint, 1993
© P.R. Kyndiah, 1993
ISBN 81-7203-014-2

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced
in any form without the prior permission of the publishers.

2170
26.3.86

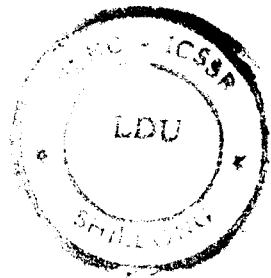


002170

Published by
Jagdish Malhotra, Sanchar Publishing House, New Delhi 110 017

Lasertypeset by
dTech Services Pvt. Ltd., 61-C, Kalu Sarai, Sarva Priya Vihar,
New Delhi 110 016

Printed by
Allied Publishers Limited, A-104, Mayapuri II,
New Delhi 110 064



CONTENTS

	Introduction	ix
Chapter I	India Is our Home	1
Chapter II	The Child of God's Love	7
Chapter III	To America and Back	11
Chapter IV	Religious Crusader	15
Chapter V	Political Personality	19
Chapter VI	Champion of the Indigenous People of North-East	23
Chapter VII	District Council Autonomy: A Weapon of Integration or Disintegration?	29
Chapter VIII	Architect of District Council Autonomy	35
Chapter IX	Constitution and the Sixth Schedule	42
Chapter X	Gopinath Bardoloi and Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy	48
Chapter XI	The Sixth Schedule: Main Thrust	53
Chapter XII	His Last Decade	57
	Reflections	61
	References	64
Appendix I	Sixth Schedule	65
Appendix II	Proposed Draft Constitution of a Part of Assam, Namely, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills	85
Appendix III	Memorandum to the British Parliamentary Delegation	103
Appendix IV	Excerpts from the Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly	113

INTRODUCTION

He was inside a car, looking dignified and comfortably placed—and what a face, serene and unperturbed, manly but gentle. I marvelled at his mien and demeanour. I was then just six years old or so. “Bah Joy!” I shouted voicelessly. My friend, who was with me, gave voice to what he felt and shouted, “Bah Joy!” His eyes were glued to the white American lady who sat beside the centre of our attention, Mrs Nichols Roy. What a lovely lady she was! The car was proceeding leisurely towards “Mountain View”, the house of the Nichols Roys at Qualapatty, Shillong. That was my first encounter with “Bah Joy”, the Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy, the Minister of the Government. Pyltan Bazar in Cantonment Area, where we lived, was adjacent to Qualapatty. When I started attending school at Qualapatty, I often saw the couple but most of the time he was alone. As children we used to go near the “Mountain View”, a beautiful red-roofed two-storeyed house with a spacious lawn and tennis court where his sons played tennis almost everyday. To us it appeared a palatial building. Bah Joy was always busy with people who thronged his courtyard.

A decade or so later, after our house at Pyltan Bazar was burnt down in a devastating fire in the locality, I went to live at the house of my maternal uncle at Qualapatty. We were a politically active family, and the discussion often centred around Congress strategy to liberate India. Immersed in this political atmosphere, I naturally took keen interest in political development particularly the struggle to free India from the clutches of the British. Our family members were always the target of C.I.D. and Intelligence men. My uncle, the late Welson Roy Kyndiah, who was the District General Secretary of the Congress party in the 1930s and early 1940s, was the butt of harassment. During the Quit India Movement in 1942, I recollect, the plain clothed policemen came to raid our house at Pyltan Bazar looking for incriminating documents and photographs of national leaders. Fortunately we had got wind of the proposed raid the day earlier and we had removed to a safer place the photographs of Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru and all the files and documents relating to the Congress party. The police were crestfallen at their failure to nail us.

Rev. Nichols Roy kept a low profile during the Quit India

Introduction

Movement. Perhaps he was engrossed in the work of the Church, I cannot be sure. He left for America in 1943 in connection with his ecclesiastical work and was back in 1945. By then I had got to know him more closely, and when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Shillong in December 1945 and was a guest of Rev. Nichols Roy in our locality, I had been working for the Reverend as a political worker. Having been involved for brief spells in the freedom struggle 1942 onwards, I proceeded to Delhi in early 1946 with other youth leaders to contribute our mite in speeding up the process of the country's independence. Even at that time some of us did not trust the British since they were quite capable of backing out of their commitment as they had often done in the past.

Having returned from Delhi, I enthusiastically jumped into the election campaign of Rev. Nichols Roy. He was a Congress candidate and won the contest easily.

I was drawn more and more to Rev. Nichols Roy's politics. First, I was fascinated by his knowledge and broad outlook. Although he was a patriotic Khasi tribal, his cause was for the greater good of the entire country, India. Secondly, his forthright and courageous stand for the cause of tribal identity in the entire area of Assam, then comprising the North Eastern Region, was in line with the aspirations of the people. Thirdly, his policies were based on a set of values and ethics and never did he swerve from these even when his political gains were affected. I recall that he was totally opposed to taking alcoholic drinks. Once in an election campaign when some drunks tried to disturb his speech he scolded them. He said that he did not want the votes of drunkards and even if they voted, their votes would not be counted. His political ethics were deep rooted. He believed that public service was a noble profession and to him it was a fusion of social, economic and spiritual service. Fourthly, idealists that we were, we saw in Rev. Nichols Roy a crusader for our rights and future place. We had faith in his leadership and wisdom. Fifthly, his closeness to national leaders of the day, particularly Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru gave us a feeling of security and identification with the national movement which at that time was high on the agenda of the youth.

Pandit Nehru appreciated the special political situation of the hill areas in Assam and agreed to Rev. Nichols Roy's suggestion to

Introduction

organise a regional party in Khasi-Jaintia Hills, by the name of Khasi Jaintia National Conference, to be an affiliate of the Congress party. I joined the Conference and after the General Elections in 1952, in which I played not a small role, I was elected the Joint Secretary of the party. Rev. Nichols Roy, who had won the parliamentary seat by a comfortable margin, was elected President and Aaron Alley the General Secretary of the party. I had then the opportunity to know at close quarters the working of the mind of Rev. Nichols Roy. His social, political and even spiritual world was opened to me. He often visited my humble place. We discussed at length about politics and morality. It appeared to me that he was greatly concerned with building the character of the people, particularly the youth, who he believed ought to play a more important role in public affairs. Development as is known today took a hind seat in his scale of values. He was an organiser of extraordinary qualities and chose men and women of character to be his confidants. Throughout his public career what impressed the most was the moral stream that ran strongly through his personality and the strength of his character was never in doubt. He was a man of tremendous energy. He hardly slept more than four to five hours and spent his time thinking, meditating and writing and always was ready to meet people of all shades of opinion. He was recognised as an able speaker, an orator par excellence. I simply marvelled at his dedication to work, hard work. A disciplinarian to the core, he lived a life of total dedication toward the service of his people and mankind. Even today I wonder how enormous was his energy, the concentrated application of his mind to the problems of the day and the ability to communicate his ideas to the common man in a simple language.

More than from anyone else, I learnt the meaning of public service from him. His struggle for the tribals' cause in the hill areas of the North Eastern Region culminating in the creation of autonomous District Councils as incorporated in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution is epochal. Unquestionably, he was the motivating force of the autonomy concept for the tribal people to whom he ceaselessly and ungrudgingly gave his mind and heart as no leader of the day ever did. He created for himself a niche in the history of constitution-making and as the maker of history, by

Introduction

becoming the architect of the autonomous District Councils.

This book is a tribute to his life of dedicated service of our people. I must confess, however, that it deals with only a fraction of his public life, being confined mostly to the crucial role he played in the Constituent Assembly of India and in particular his valuable contribution in the incorporation of the Sixth Schedule in the Constitution. I have also dealt with certain high points of his career as a public leader and churchman. I am keenly aware that enough justice has not been done in this book to portray him as an outstanding leader possessed of sterling qualities of head and heart, which he truly was. Perhaps in the not distant future a more comprehensive biography of this rare personality, a builder of modern India, may be written. Deep inside me I know that without him we would not, as a people, have achieved what we have today in the field of politics and other realms of public endeavour.