

N.C. Roychaudhury, President, South Eastern Railwaymen's Union, Calcutta

Name	N.C. Roychaudhury President, South Eastern Railwaymen's Union, Calcutta
Date of Interview	February 4, 2003
Place	Calcutta
Context	N.C. Roychaudhury is still in saddle. Active and alert, he commands respect from all shades of trade unions in railways and other sectors. "There is a difference between railwaymen's trade union and general trade unions. In 1953, first locomotive was brought from London to India at the British initiative which generated capitalism in the country," said N.C. Roychaudhury and added that it was Marx who had said it and predicted that the initiative would also bring the grave diggers of the capitalism, the proletariat.
Interviewers	Anil Rajimwale

Biographical Sketches

I was born in Mymensingh but after three years lost my father. My mother was brought to Shillong along with us where I studied upto school final. After school, I was sent to Calcutta to join college and my brother was there to support me. Eventually I was sent to Nawadweep where a branch of Vidyasagar college was newly opened.

I was involved in the student movement from 1944-45, but had to go underground as warrant was issued against me.

Later at Jamalpur I joined Kissan movement that was going on there as part of famous Tebhaga movement.

I joined South Easter Railways in 1951 which was originally started in Kharagpur and not Calcutta. Originally I had been in the South Indian Railways and spoke even Tamil as Tamil Nadu and Kerala dominated the union. I was posted at Trichanapally Golden Rock Workshop and came in touch with Anandam Nambiar and Kalyan Sundaram. But soon they were in Jail by 1951. I was transferred to Purulia and by 1954 came in touch with GM Biswas (Jitendra Mohan Biswas). We both started organising workers at Anara Loco Shed.

In South Eastern Railways, VV Giri and Guruswami were the leaders. JM Biswas was soon transferred to Nagbheer near Nagpur as punishment posting.

In 1960, there was a big strike and mass movement in the railways. We all were active in it. JM Biswas was suspended alongwith me. I was taken back after few years but he was removed. Later JM Biswas decided to contest elections from Bankura constituency in 1968 against Atulya Ghosh. The entire area was populated by tribals and proved the fact that we had our base among the general masses and not only among railway workers. GM Biswas was elected with a margin of more than one lakh votes. It was a success both of us shared.

I live in Kharagpur and work at Calcutta and Kharagpur both.

Transcript Summary

N.C. Roychaudhury was born in Mymensingh but was brought up in Shillong where he studied upto school final. His father died when he was merely three-year-old. After school, he came to Calcutta to join college. But Vidyasagar College principal sent him to Nawadweep where a branch of the college was newly opened. Here he came in touch with Radical Humanists but was not much impressed.

He joined student movement in 1944-45. Soon warrant was issued in his name but he went underground. He went to Garo hill in this period and worked among the tribals.

Later he came to Jamalpur where he joined Kissan movement that was going on in Jamalpur in cooperation with Tebhaga movement.

He joined South Eastern Railways in 1951 which was originally started in Kharagpur and not Calcutta. It was originally BN Railways (Bengal Nagpur Railways). It was organised by VV Giri and later became Bengal Nagpur Railway Labour Union. In 1964, there was another change. It was called South Eastern Railwaymen's Union led by GM Biswas.

Originally he had been in the South Indian Railways and spoke even Tamil as Tamil Nadu and Kerala dominated the union. He was posted at Trichanapally Golden Rock Workshop and came in touch with Anandam Nambiar and Kalyan Sundaram. But soon they were in Jail by 1951. NC Roychaudhury was transferred to Purulia and by 1954 came in touch with GM Biswas (Jitendra Mohan Biswas). Both of them started organising workers at Anara Loco Shed.

In South Eastern Railways, VV Giri and Guruswami were the leaders. JM Biswas was soon transferred to Nagbheer near Nagpur as punishment posting.

In 1960, there was a big strike and mass movement in the railways. All of them were active in it. JM Biswas was suspended alongwith NC Roychaudhury. Roychaudhury was taken back after few years but Biswas was removed. Later JM Biswas decided to contest elections from Bankura constituency in 1968 against Atulya Ghosh. The entire area was populated by tribals and proved the fact that they had their base among the general masses and not only among railway workers. GM Biswas was elected with a margin of more than one lakh votes. It was a success they both shared.

N.C. Roychaudhury is still in saddle and operates from Calcutta and Kharagpur both.