

M. N. ROY

FROM MARXISM TO HUMANISM



G. P. Bhattacharjee

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MINERVA

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by G. P. Bhattacharjee

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*In Memory of the
Martyrs
for the cause of
Human Progress
and
Real Spiritual Liberation of Mankind*

FOREWORD

An unique personality in Indian politics M. N. Roy was admired by all, but followed by few. He changed his views several times, remaining however constant in his search for truth and freedom. As a boy of fourteen years of age he started his political career fighting against national oppression, as a young man of about thirty two he began fighting against class oppression, and later on, in about 1946, when he was about 59 years of age he entered into the humanist period of his political career. He remained a humanist for less than a decade (he died in January 1954), and during this brief period he showed a new way of politics without party, and without the object of coming to power. His humanist politics, of course, was not without power, but power, he said, must not be captured by a party, however large it might be. In democratic system power belongs to the people, and to be true to this ideal, power must be exercised by the people themselves. In large countries of modern age it is obviously not possible for the people to exercise power directly. They must exercise it through their representatives, but their representatives must remain constantly under their guidance. If the representatives remain under the guidance of a party, the system will be partyocracy and not democracy. To be representatives of the people they must be chosen by the people of the constituency, and guided by them. Roy's politics centered round this objective – to convert party rule by people's rule.

A representative in a parliamentary democracy actually represents not the people of his constituency but the party to which he belongs. He must follow the party dictates. Parliamentary democracy, it is true, recognises the rights of individual citizens, but it fails not only to prepare the individuals to exercise the rights which theoretically belong to them, but also, as we have already indicated, fails to provide an opportunity through which they can

raise their voice constantly in the administration of their country. Instead of peoples' government parliamentary democracy gives rise to party government, and national politics is reduced to party rivalry. Roy tried to raise democracy to peoples' rule. How he tried to realise this objective has been explained in the book.

Roy began his life as a nationalist, and as a nationalist he went to America where he came in contact with Marxist ideas, and ultimately embraced it. His conversion to Marxism has been explained in Chapter I of the book. He at first tried to introduce communism to India from abroad, and the way of this application has been dealt with in Chapter II. Coming back to India (December 1930) he saw the conditions of the country directly, and his application of Marxism, as a result, took a different form, and ultimately he gave up Marxism in favour of a new political ideology to which he gave the name Radical Humanism or New Humanism. This process has been dealt with in Chapter III. The rest of the book explains the different aspects of the new ideology — philosophical aspect in Chapter IV, interpretation of history in Chapter V, political aspect in Chapter VI, and economic aspect in Chapter VII. The book ends with a brief concluding chapter.

In preparing the book I have received unstinted assistance from Nripen Chowdhury and Kanai Paul to whom I shall remain ever grateful.

G. P. BHATTACHARJEE

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I

ROY'S CONVERSION TO MARXISM

M. N. Roy whose family name was Narendranath Bhattacharya started his political career in his teenage, and played a prominent role in the revolutionary politics of Bengal during the period 1902-1916. Son of Pandit Dinabandhu Bhattacharya he was born in 1887, and as a school boy of about 14 years of age he was drawn to the field of underground revolutionary politics of Bengal led by men of remarkable ability like Sri Aurobindo, his brother Barin Ghosh, Rash Behari Bose, Jatin Mukherji — better known as BaghaJatin —, to name only the topmost few. The revolutionaries were badly in need of money and arms, and they tried to secure them mainly through dacoities. Narendranath took a prominent part in such activities which are fully recorded in the Sedition Committee Report of Justice Rowlatt (1918).

After the first world war broke out in 1914 the Bengal revolutionaries entered into a conspiracy with Germany, and they were assured of German military help in their fight against Britain. Accordingly in April 1915 Narendranath, adopting the pseudonym of C. Martin, went to Batavia, and arranged the despatch of German arms to Bengal. Narendranath came back to India in the middle of June, and along with other revolutionaries made an elaborate arrangement to receive the German arms and use it in the best possible manner. But the arms did not arrive, and in August Narendranath started for Batavia for the second time, and he did not return to India until December 1930. This period of 15 years abroad may roughly be divided into three phases of unequal length — far eastern phase (August 1915-1916), American phase (1916-1919 November), and European phase (1919-1930 December).

The far eastern phase was a period of quest for arms. This quest was not simply a failure, it had a lesson also, and Narendranath was disappointed not only with the Germans, but also with the Indian leaders of the conspiracy such as Rash Behari Bose, Heramba Lal Gupta, Dr. Chandra Chakrabarty and others. Narendranath approached them all, and found them all disappointing.

In pursuit of his object he arrived in U.S.A., where he came in contact with new ideas of socialism which had a great attraction for him. He landed at San Francisco in 1916, and went to town of Palo Alto, the seat of the Stanford University. There he met Dhanagopal Mukherji, the younger brother of Jadugopal, the revolutionary comrade of Narendranath in Bengal. Dhanagopal advised him to forget the past, and start as a new man, and it was he who gave the name Manabendranath Roy. Accordingly, Roy wrote, "M. N. Roy was born in the campus of Stanford University."¹ When Roy was thus born he was a youngman of about 29 years of age.

Roy then went to New York and became closely acquainted with the veteran Indian nationalist leader, Lajpat Rai, who went to America on a propaganda tour and succeeded in winning the sympathy of a section of the American people towards the cause of Indian independence. Roy along with Lajpat came in close contact with the socialists of New York, though both of them were opposed to their ideas. In his *Memoirs* Roy writes that Lajpat purchased the works of Marx and other socialist classics. Roy studied those books and ultimately became attracted towards the socialist ideas, and began to frequent the New York Public Library to read Marx. Thus, as Roy recalls in his *Memoirs*, he soon accepted socialism, except its materialist philosophy which was his last ditch.²

Roy along with many other Indian leaders were arrested in the USA in connection with the Indo-German conspiracy. Roy was let out on parole and he escaped to Mexico. In Mexico Roy developed an intimate relation with the President of Mexico, General Carranza and this created an atmosphere favourable for the pursuit of his political activities. Meanwhile Roy published a book titled *The High Way to Durable Peace* where he maintained that the world peace was conditional more upon the liberation of the colonies than upon

the overthrow of capitalism. The book contained a chapter on the Monroe Doctrine and it was highly appreciated by the President of Mexico. The relations between Mexico and the USA was at that time far from friendly, and General Carranza found in Roy's book a defence for the Mexican standpoint. In Mexico there was a Socialist Party with which Roy came in close contact. Roy was in possession of a huge fund given to him by the Germans, and he used this money to help the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party of Mexico published half a dozen pamphlets, mostly written by Roy himself, and he was appointed the editor of the party organ and director of party propaganda.

When Roy was in Mexico the Russian Revolution took place and Michael Borodin came to Mexico to popularize the new regime. He came in contact with the socialist group and Roy invited him to come and stay with him and also helped him with money. They became close friends and Roy was fully converted to the Marxist philosophy by Borodin. The Socialist Party of Mexico was then turned into the Communist Party which endorsed the manifesto issued by the First World Congress of the Comintern. The party decided to send a delegation to the second world congress of the Communist International to be held in Moscow, and Roy was selected to lead the delegation. Thus was formed the first communist party outside Russia, and Roy stood upon the threshold of a new chapter of his political career. Early in November 1919 Roy started for Moscow, and at the end of the year he came to Berlin no longer in quest of arms but inspired by a new type of revolution.

Notes :

1. M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*; Bombay : Allied Publishers : 1964, p. 22.
2. *Ibid*, p. 24.

II

MARXISM APPLIED TO INDIA FROM ABROAD

M. N. Roy tried to lead the freedom struggle of India from abroad by applying the principles of Marxism, as he understood them. For this purpose he at first tried to analyse the position and role of different classes composing the Indian society. From the beginning it was clear to him that due to foreign intervention the Indian condition was quite different from that of Europe.

The feudal rulers of India were deprived of political power by the representatives of the foreign bourgeoisie. With the growth of capitalism the craft economy of the feudal system is bound to die but in India the craft industry was destroyed not in favour of a higher form of production within the country but in the interests of the industrial growth of England. The machine industry did not grow in India though its destructive effects were fully felt. In the words of Roy "the secret of the abnormal economic condition of India during a century and a half lies in the fact that with the machine, the effects of machine production were not kept out of the country".¹ As a result, the growth of the Indian economy became stunted. Later on, when the bourgeois class arose in India, it could not play its normal role for various reasons discussed below. Due to the abnormal development of Indian economy Roy analysed the position and role of five important classes of Indian society, namely, the landed aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants and the workers.

To consolidate its foundation in India, the foreign imperialism naturally sought a social basis in the country—the support of a section of the Indian population. With this end in view, in the earlier days of their domination, the British rulers created a new class of

taxfarming landlords "with more or less feudal attributes".² This land-owning class, owing its rise to Imperialism, became an unconditional supporter of the colonial economy. Pre-capitalist social relations thus galvanised became the basis of capitalist exploitation.

Roy's ideas on the role of the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries are found for the first time in the supplementary thesis on the National and Colonial Question, which he prepared for the Colonial Commission of the Second Congress of the Communist International. In the Commission two theses on the subject were submitted—one prepared by Lenin and another by Roy. In his Memoirs Roy states that he prepared his thesis on National and Colonial Question at the suggestion of Lenin who was much impressed by the conversation which he had with him on this subject. At his own insistence, Roy tells us in the same context, his viewpoint was presented as a supplementary, rather than as an alternative, thesis to that of Lenin. In order to understand Roy's ideas about the position and role of the bourgeoisie in colonial countries like India it is necessary to analyse his thesis and to compare it with that of Lenin.

The main point where Roy and Lenin differed was about the particular social force in the colonial countries that should be assisted by the Communists. In his preliminary draft Lenin recommended assistance to "the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement".³ Roy, on the other hand, recommended assistance to the "proletarian parties of the colonies" and through them to the revolutionary movement in general.⁴ In his thesis Roy referred to "two distinct movements" in these countries. One was "the bourgeois-democratic nationalist movement, with a programme of political independence under the bourgeois order" and the other was "the mass struggle of the poor for their liberation from various forms of exploitation". In order to overthrow the foreign rule "which is the first step towards a revolution in the colonies", Roy thought, "cooperation" between them might be necessary, but he was opposed to the attempt of the bourgeois-democratic nationalist movement to "control" the other one. Here Roy did not exclude the bourgeoisie from the anti-

imperialist movement but the problem was one of leadership. He argued that in the anti-imperialist movement the leadership should remain "in the hands of a Communist vanguard" so that after the national independence "the masses in the backward countries may reach communism not through capitalist development" but peacefully under the leadership of the class-conscious proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries, that is, the Communist International. In his thesis Roy categorically affirmed that in the first stage "the revolution in the colonies is not going to be a communist revolution". On the contrary, he said, it would include "many petty bourgeois reforms" particularly in the agrarian field. But from this, Roy contended, it did not necessarily follow that the leadership of the movement should be left to the bourgeois democrats. The foremost task in the colonial countries, Roy thought, was to form communist parties which would organise the workers and peasants—the revolutionary masses—in the anti-imperialist struggle.

As a result of Roy's criticism Lenin's thesis was modified and in the Final Draft of this Thesis the Communist parties were advised to support "the revolutionary liberation movements" rather than 'bourgeois-democratic liberation movements' as recommended in the preliminary draft.⁵ Whiting thinks that the change was only verbal and in support of his view he quotes from Lenin who in his report to the Comintern Congress on the deliberations of the National and Colonial Commission said that every national movement can be only a bourgeois-democratic movement.⁶ On the same ground Overstreet and Windmiller also conclude that "to Lenin's mind the change was more apparent than real".⁷ The views of Roy and Lenin were however "markedly different in emphasis".⁸ Explaining the difference Roy in a letter to Whiting wrote : "I did recommend formation of Communist Parties on the ground that, as a guarantee against the danger of the nationalist bourgeois compromising with Imperialism, the movement for national liberation must be socially based on the workers and peasant masses Lenin believed in the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries on the analogy of European history".⁹ Both stood

for the bourgeois-democratic revolution in colonial countries but Roy held that the bourgeois-democratic revolution such as the abolition of feudalism and the development of industries does not necessarily mean the rule of the bourgeoisie. These changes should take place under a government controlled by the working masses and the same government would gradually lead the country to socialism. Therefore, the working class parties should be assisted by the Communist International. Though Lenin agreed to change his thesis still it is doubtful whether he accepted the viewpoint of Roy and the change practically made confusion worse confounded. The change in the wording of the thesis did not settle the controversy and it has rightly been pointed out that "the root of the later catastrophe in China lies to this duplicity".¹⁰ Overstreet and Windmiller think that Roy's ideas as expressed in his Supplementary Thesis were possibly determined mainly by sentimental and personal factors.¹¹ As an Asian, they maintain, Roy naturally felt that the Asians were better able than the Europeans to understand the Asian conditions. Secondly, they point out that his ambition to establish his leadership over the communist movement in India might also have played a part in this matter. Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya, the leader of the Indian Revolutionary Committee in Berlin, also established contact with Lenin and agreed to cooperate with the Comintern to further the cause of revolution in India. The Berlin Committee had fairly good relations with the Indian National Congress and its leader Chattopadhyaya was the brother of Sarojini Naidu, a prominent figure of the Congress movement and a close associate of Gandhiji. If the Comintern should decide in favour of the bourgeoisie, naturally it would give direct support to the Congress leaders. In that case Chattopadhyaya would be a greater help to the Comintern than Roy because the latter's contacts were entirely with the Bengali and Punjabi revolutionary groups. Therefore, Roy opposed Lenin. This, in brief, is the argument of Overstreet and Windmiller.

A brief comment on their views is necessary for an impartial evaluation of Roy's ideas. Roy maintained his view of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in colonial countries under the proletarian

leadership (or hegemony) consistently for a long time until he gave up Marxism itself. Is it not more reasonable, therefore, to treat it as a theoretical proposition without trying to discover a personal motive behind it? If personal leadership were the principal concern of Roy, he should have sided with Lenin instead of opposing him. Is it conceivable that to oust Chattopadhyaya Roy went to the length of opposing Lenin's thesis? Roy had to face this controversy in all the Congresses of the Comintern as long as he was within it. Roy's opposition to Lenin, unless it was fortified by strong theoretical arguments, was more likely to ruin his leadership and bring Chattopadhyaya closer to Lenin. Moreover, it was only after the second World Congress that the contact between Chattopadhyaya and the Communist International was established. On the basis of the report of the British Intelligence, Overstreet and Windmiller gather that Chattopadhyaya sent to the Communist International a programme of his organisation of Indian revolutionaries two months after the Second World Congress. Then why should Roy be so much afraid of Chattopadhyaya's group in the Second World Congress and go to oppose Lenin to maintain his leadership? In order to justify their suspicion Overstreet and Windmiller observe that Roy might have an inkling in Berlin that the Chattopadhyaya group would approach the Communist International for its support to the Indian National Congress. When Roy visited Berlin on his way to Moscow Chattopadhyaya was in Stockholm and therefore Roy could not meet him there. He met Bhupendra Nath Dutta, an important member of the Berlin Committee, and Bhupendra Nath Dutta admits that Roy himself first invited Chattopadhyaya to Moscow.¹² All these considerations appear to make the suspicion of Overstreet and Windmiller rather untenable. In China and Mexico Roy had found that national independence by itself did not mean people's welfare and this experience was possibly the basis of his antagonism towards the bourgeoisie. As an Indian he was certainly deeply interested in the revolution of his country but this does not necessarily imply that his theory was determined by racial arrogance.

In his thesis Roy did not deny the anti-imperialist role of the colonial bourgeoisie but he stood for the leadership of the

'Communist Vanguard' in the struggle against imperialism with an eye to the future development of the revolution in those countries. But his opinion on the role of the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries passed through a process of change ultimately giving rise to what is known as the 'decolonization' theory. In *'India in Transition'*, published in 1922, Roy refers to a clash of interest between Indian capitalism and foreign imperialism, the former trying to bring about the industrial development of the country and the latter trying to hold India as a source of raw materials and as a market for finished products. This relation of antagonism continued down the First World War but "the war", Roy analysed, "opened up a new era for the Indian bourgeoisie"¹³, — an era of cooperation between them and the British Government. During the war, due to her military pre-occupation, Britain, Roy argued, was unable to keep the Indian market supplied with manufactured goods. Temporarily, therefore, the competition of the imperial capital was removed and Indian capital found a free scope of development. Even after the war was over, Roy pointed out, the British Government which so far had persistently followed the policy of keeping India industrially backward found it necessary to change its policy. As a matter of fact, during the war and after it Roy found certain developments, such as the appointment of the Indian Industrial Commission in 1916, the Fiscal Commission in 1922 and the Montague-Chelmsford Reform Scheme in 1919, as indicating a spirit of cooperation between the Indian National Congress — the political instrument of the intellectual bourgeoisie to gain their economic objective¹⁴ — and the British Government. Trying to explain these developments Roy discovered two basic factors of which one was political and the other economic. The political factor occurred to him first and this is explained in his book *India in Transition*. The economic factor, which was fully elucidated later provided the foundation of the decolonization theory.

In the political movement of India Roy found, as we have already mentioned, the presence of two factors — one was the bourgeois class fighting the British Government for its economic interest and the other was the mass of poverty-stricken people groaning under the

policy of exploitation pursued by the foreign capital. Though socially contradictory, these two factors, having a common enemy in the British Government, might unite in the anti-imperialist struggle. To prevent this union, Roy said, must be the natural desire and purpose of the British Government. After the war the British Government did not revert to the old policy of obstructing the industrial development of India owing to the fear that such a policy might force the Indian bourgeoisie to make common front with the Indian masses in the anti-imperialist struggle.¹⁵ Roy interpreted the various concessions, political and economic, granted to the Indian bourgeoisie by the British Government after the war as attempts to split the revolutionary movement. British Imperialism, Roy further thought, was eager to come to an understanding with the Indian bourgeoisie in order to counteract the influence of the Russian revolution in the country. "The plan of British Imperialism" he wrote, "is to encourage the Indian bourgeoisie and to terrify them with the cry of Bolshevik propaganda".¹⁶

Until the First World War the British imperialism in India rested, in Roy's view, on two factors, namely, loyalty of the revolutionary landed aristocracy and the passivity of the masses. After the war the passivity of the masses disappeared and the country was in a state of agitation. As a result, it was evident to the British Imperialists that their domination in India could no longer be maintained on the old narrow social basis, that is, the loyalty of the reactionary landed aristocracy. Therefore "the necessity of widening and deepening the social basis of British rule in India by winning over the native bourgeoisie became imperative."¹⁷ The policy of concession was a strategy of British Imperialism to win over the Indian bourgeoisie to its side.

This strategy, Roy thought, cannot remove the contradiction between the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie and those of foreign imperialism. The ultimate objective of the Indian bourgeoisie was to overthrow foreign imperialism in order to enjoy the right of monopoly of exploitation of the Indian people. But this objective cannot be realised by the Indian bourgeoisie without the help of the Indian masses. Therefore, the bourgeoisie in their own interest

wanted the cooperation of the masses by throwing the door of the Indian National Congress open to them and thus the British strategy of winning over the sympathy of the Indian bourgeoisie may not succeed. Roy observed : "The overthrow of the British rule will be achieved by the joint action of the bourgeoisie and the masses, but how this joint action can be consummated still remains a question".¹⁸

The bourgeois class in colonial countries is, according to Roy, objectively revolutionary in so far as it is anti-imperialist but in a positive way it cannot play the progressive part which its counterpart played in Europe. Roy explained this point clearly in the Fourth Congress of the Communist International held in November 1922. He said : "The bourgeoisie become a revolutionary factor when it raises the standard of revolt against backward, antiquated forms of society—that is, when the struggle is fundamentally against the feudal order, the bourgeoisie leading the people. Then the bourgeoisie is the vanguard of the revolution. But this cannot be said about the new bourgeoisie in the Eastern countries, or most of them. Although the bourgeoisie is leading the struggle there, it is at the same time not leading it against feudalism. It is leading the struggle against capitalism. Therefore, it is a struggle of the weak and suppressed and undeveloped bourgeoisie against a stronger and more developed bourgeoisie. Instead of being a class war it is an internecine war so to say and as such contains the elements of compromise. So, the nationalist struggle in the colonies, the revolutionary movement for national development in the colonies, cannot be based purely and simply on a movement inspired by bourgeois ideology and led by the bourgeoisie".¹⁹

In Europe the bourgeoisie abolished feudalism in favour of a higher form of economy and thus they brought about a social revolution. But in India, Roy pointed out, the relation of forces is different and here in numerous instances "the rich landholder and industrialist are combined in the same person".²⁰ In many cases the landholders themselves, investing their accumulated wealth to commercial and later, when the Government allowed it, (for reasons to be explained afterwards) to industrial enterprises, developed as the bourgeoisie. And as long as the road to industrial development

was closed to them, the native bourgeoisie who arose as a group of middle men carrying on trade on behalf of imperialism naturally sought to invest their capital in trade, usury and land holding.²¹ The bourgeoisie in India, thus, unlike the bourgeoisie in Europe, developed in alliance with and not in opposition to feudalism. Therefore, the bourgeois-democratic revolution cannot take place in India under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois national movement in the colonial countries "should be given support" (leadership must not be left to the bourgeoisie) in so far as it is anti-imperialist but the anti-imperialist role of the colonial bourgeoisie, Roy pointed out, is extremely limited because of the danger of their coming to a compromise even in their own interest with the imperial bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie in the colonial countries, he observed, "are now really afraid that in case foreign rule is overthrown as a consequence of the development of this revolutionary upheaval, a period of anarchy, chaos and disturbance, of civil war will follow that will not be conducive to the promotion of their own interests. That is to say the industrial development of the bourgeoisie needs peace and order which was given to most of these countries by foreign imperialism. The threat to this peace and order, the possibility of disturbance and revolutionary upheaval, has made it more convenient for the native bourgeoisie to compromise with the imperial overlord."²² The problem was a ticklish one because though the Indian bourgeoisie and the Indian masses are two objective forces making for a revolution still these two factors are divided by class interest. Under such circumstances, the Indian bourgeoisie, Roy maintained, "stands between two fires".²³ It cannot fully cooperate with foreign imperialism because of the basic contradiction between their interests nor can it fully cooperate with the Indian masses fearing a social revolution submerging capitalism in the process. Which side would the Indian bourgeoisie prefer? In *India in Transition* Roy did not give any categorical answer to this question beyond suggesting that "to rely on the national solidarity under purely bourgeois leadership for the purpose of destroying British rule in India may not be always safe".²⁴ Later thoughts, however, would give Roy a definite answer. That was to be found in the economic factor.

In a new economic tendency of British Imperialism in the post-First-World-War period Roy discovered a factor strong enough to unite the Indian bourgeoisie with foreign imperialism. This economic tendency is the foundation of what came to be known as the decolonization theory. A clear elucidation of this theory is found in several books, such as, *The Future of Indian Politics*, *Our Task in India*, *Our Differences* and in a number of articles.

After the First World War, Roy maintained, British Imperialism was faced with a severe crisis and a new economic tendency resulted from its attempt to overcome the crisis. Explaining its origin Roy wrote : "Owing to the contradiction of the world market on the whole and the reduction of her share in it, Britain found herself in deep industrial crisis".²⁵ There was a 'contraction of the world market' because the war had ruined a number of countries economically reducing their purchasing power almost to a vanishing point. And there was a 'reduction of Britain's share in world market' because when Britain was busy with war efforts several countries such as the U.S.A. and Japan established themselves in the world market as exporters of manufactured goods. As a result, a large part of the world market was lost to British industries and the actual production of Britain fell much lower than her productive capacity.²⁶ Owing to this decline in production the accumulation of British capital also diminished and the needs of the home industry (refitting the old etc.) absorbed so much of it that there was little left for the purpose of export.²⁷ In order to survive as an imperialist power under such circumstances Britain was forced to adopt new methods of imperialist exploitation. She was in need mainly of two favourable conditions—a large market to sell the produce of her industries, and secondly, a reduction in the cost of production in order to face the new competition successfully. In order to secure these two conditions the imperialist policy in India was given a new orientation. In its own interest British Imperialism, Roy maintained, now favoured a policy of Indian industrialisation reversing the older policy of keeping India industrially backward. A policy of industrialisation in India would, Roy pointed out, enable Britain to secure the foregoing conditions, necessary for her survival as an

imperialist power. To overcome the crisis, the British industries must sell more and more commodities to India and therefore the purchasing power of the Indian people must be increased. "This can be done", Roy explained, "only by raising the standard of living of the Indian people. The standard of living of the Indian people again cannot be raised unless the choking grip of her economic life is considerably loosened".²⁸ That is, the obstacle in the way of her industrialisation must be removed. Indian industrialisation would help British economy also by creating a market for her metal and engineering industries. Owing to the rise of new industrial countries with greater competing power, Britain, as already mentioned, found herself in a difficult position. But this difficulty also could be obviated, Roy argued, by following a policy of Indian industrialisation. Industries in India would be more profitable for the British capitalists than industries in their own country. Cheap labour, cheap raw materials and considerable saving on the cost of transportation taken together would enable the British capitalists to produce commodities at a very low cost in India and thus face world competition successfully. All these considerations led the British Government, Roy held, to encourage industrialisation in India. Summarising the whole process Roy wrote: "It is no longer profitable for Britain to hold India as a purely agricultural reserve. It will be more profitable to industrialise her. Industrialised India will offer lucrative investment for British capital, cheap labour and easily accessible raw materials will produce enormous profit; and the buying capacity of India will increase, thus helping British trade".²⁹

British Imperialism, therefore, decided in its own interest to follow a policy of industrialisation in India. But there arose, as Roy pointed out, another difficulty. It was the inability of Britain to supply the capital necessary to promote the rapid industrialisation of India. The post-First-World-War economic crisis, as previously indicated, seriously affected the accumulation of capital in Britain and she was not in a position to export the necessary amount of capital to India. In order to solve this problem the British capitalists agreed to form an alliance with the Indian bourgeoisie in whose hands a considerable amount of wealth had already been

accumulated.³⁰ Therefore, the foreign imperialists and the Indian bourgeoisie came to an economic alliance on the basis of the mobilisation of India's capital resources under the hegemony of imperialist finance. This view of Roy came to be known as the theory of decolonisation. The theory implies a direct economic cooperation between the British imperialists and the Indian bourgeoisie. And this economic cooperation would, Roy firmly believed, prepare the way for political cooperation. After this economic alliance, the Indian bourgeoisie, Roy held, would not take part in any anti-imperialist struggle "except of the harmless parliamentary brand".³¹ The appointment of the Industrial Commission (1916), the Fiscal Commission (1922), the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms (1919) — all these were explained by Roy in terms of this theory.

Thus, in Roy's analysis, the landed aristocracy and the big bourgeoisie entered into an alliance with foreign imperialism and ceased to be revolutionary forces. The remaining three classes — the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the workers — were the oppressed classes and the Indian Revolution, Roy maintained, would be the joint-product of these three classes.³²

Of these three classes the petty bourgeoisie were considered by Roy as incapable of independent political action.³³ The usual Marxist derision of the petty bourgeoisie was fully shared by him. The petty bourgeoisie who were economically bankrupt were recognised by Roy as "an important factor in the national revolution"³⁴, but their vision, he held, was clouded by the reactionary social philosophy of Gandhism. Moreover, the petty bourgeoisie, depending upon the upper classes and government employments, cannot advocate a violent overthrow of the foreign rule, and therefore Roy concluded that "the lower middle class extremism cannot and will not go very far beyond -the limits set by the Moderates".³⁵ Roy, however, still had faith in the revolutionary potentialities of the petty bourgeois class and maintained that under favourable conditions they might lean towards the toiling masses. He wrote: "The petty bourgeois are still linked in thought with feudalism and landlordism and are separated from the masses, but if we organise the peasantry and the workers they will force the pace of the petty bourgeoisie who

are now ready to compromise with imperialism for the sake of peace and money. If they find that by fighting for more they gain support from the masses in their fight they will grow bolder and less inclined to compromise.”³⁶

The remaining two of the oppressed classes, namely the peasantry and the workers, were considered by Roy as the most revolutionary section of the Indian population. They “will go boldly into the struggle, because they have nothing to risk, but everything to gain” from the violent overthrow of Imperialist regime.³⁷ Sometimes, therefore, Roy characterised the workers and the peasants as the only elements essentially revolutionary. Of these two classes again the peasantry was considered by him as too backward to be an independent political factor. They, he said, either follow the bourgeoisie, when they carry on a revolutionary struggle against feudalism, or become allies of the proletariat. Therefore by this process of elimination the proletariat class emerges as the only class capable of leading the national revolution.³⁸

By an analysis of the position and role of different classes in Indian society Roy came to the conclusion that, a section of the Indian population in their own economic interest would side with foreign imperialism. The anti-imperialist war, therefore, would take the form of a class war rather than a national war for independence. “The movement for national freedom” he wrote, “has developed into a gigantic class struggle. In this situation the task is to confront the counter-revolutionary alliance of foreign imperialism and native reaction (the nationalist bourgeoisie is a thoroughly reactionary force) with the united army of all the oppressed and exploited classes”.³⁹

In this analysis of the role and position of different classes in the Indian society Roy completely ignored the force of nationalism. Marxism had convinced him that man is exclusively an economic being and that politics is simply the means to realise the economic interest of a class. By acknowledging the revolutionary role of the Indian bourgeoisie, Lenin was at least more realistic because his theory was compatible with a national struggle for independence. Roy’s thesis went directly counter to nationalism and could make no headway in the period of a national struggle for independence.

On the basis of the preceding analysis about the role and position of different classes Roy developed certain ideas on the nature and perspective of the Indian Revolution. The distorted growth of the Indian economy would, Roy maintained, make the pattern of the evolution of the Indian society different from that of Europe. In India capitalism has developed but feudalism has not been abolished. The bourgeoisie in India, Roy analysed, seek to maintain the feudal-cum-capitalist social order and cannot play the role its Western counter-part played in society. In order to abolish feudalism, India requires what is usually called a bourgeois democratic revolution, though the bourgeois class itself, as we have already explained, cannot bring it about. The development of capitalism, again, brings India on the threshold of the era of the proletarian revolution. The Indian Revolution, therefore would be of an unusual type. Describing the peculiar social setting of Indian conditions Roy wrote : “Two revolutions overlap in contemporary India. The bourgeois revolution has not yet been completed while the proletarian revolution appears on the order of the day. The latter does not depend upon the completion of the former. On the contrary the historic task of carrying through the bourgeois revolution devolves upon the proletariat and taking place under the leadership of the proletariat to become the prelude not historically (as the bourgeois revolution under any condition is) but immediately to the socialist revolution.”⁴⁰

The ultimate objective of the Indian Revolution, according to Roy, is obviously socialism but socialism cannot be achieved immediately because of the absence of its preconditions—the development of the working class on a large scale. The majority of the Indian people belong to the peasantry and their demand is not socialism but the ownership of the land which they cultivate. Therefore, at the first stage the peasant ownership of the land would have to be recognised and to that extent the Indian Revolution would take the character of a bourgeois democratic revolution, but it would not be led by the bourgeoisie, and, therefore, they would not be allowed to reap any benefit out of it. The industries would not be left under the control of the private capitalists but would be placed

under the direction of the state and the supervision of the Worker's Council, and, thus, the abuses and miseries of capitalist industrialism would be avoided. The Indian Revolution led by the proletariat would establish a system which would enter into the socialist phase directly without placing the bourgeoisie in power at any stage. This is what Roy meant when he said that the Indian Revolution would be the immediate prelude to the socialist revolution. This idea was further elaborated by him at a later stage.

The character of the state to be established by the Revolution would be determined by the nature of the revolution itself. Roy held that the Indian Revolution not being led by the bourgeoisie would not establish Parliamentary Democracy. He also deprecated the idea of a proletarian dictatorship for India under the existing conditions, though he did not categorically rule it out from the future evolution of the Indian society.⁴¹ In his writings of this period Roy referred to 'the revolutionary democratic State'⁴² for India, though its features were not fully explained. As early as 1922 and in many of his programmes formulated during this period Roy stood for universal adult franchise, but in *Our Task in India* he wrote aggressively on Democratic Dictatorship repudiating the principle of universal suffrage. The revolutionary democratic state based upon the franchise of the overwhelming majority of the people (not adult franchise) would, Roy wrote, also be a dictatorship because it would mercilessly suppress its vanquished enemy disregarding the hypocritical parliamentary principle of the right of the minority. In this book we find a faint glimpse of the new democratic state which Roy in course of time developed as Radical Democracy. Criticising parliamentary democracy Roy pointed out that under it political rights do not carry real and effective political power. The average citizen is given the right simply of casting votes once in a while but the effective power is monopolised by the capitalist ruling class. Under the revolutionary democratic state, visualised vaguely by Roy, the people would be given real and effective political power. The basic unit of the state would not be individual citizens but people organised by productive vocations. Delegates from these organisations would meet in conferences at district, divisional,

provincial and all-India levels and both legislative and executive power would be vested in these conferences. They would elect Standing Committees to carry on the administration in the period intervening between two conferences. Under this system the legislature and executive functions of the state would not remain in separate bodies but vested in these conferences and Standing Committees elected by them.⁴³ The principal objective of Roy was, as he explained it in clear and unambiguous terms, to bring the state machinery under direct control of the people instead of keeping it as an instrument of coercion standing over their head. The concept of effective democracy, stated then in broad outline, was later to be dissociated from the idea of dictatorship and evolved with certain major changes into Radical Democracy.

Roy's theories about the nature and perspective of the Indian Revolution were determined by the ideas which he formed about those of the Russian Revolution. Socially and economically he considered India to be on par with the pre-revolutionary Russia and he therefore tried to apply the pattern of the Russian Revolution, as he understood it, to India too. Foreign domination of the country as such did not appear to have caused any change in the character of the revolution in India.

The Indian struggle for national independence, in Roy's opinion, was, as we have already explained, a form of class war and this analysis determined the strategy and tactics he tried to follow in the struggle. In the Indian society there were, in his opinion, three revolutionary classes—the workers, peasants and the petty bourgeoisie—and of these three classes the workers constituted the most advanced section. To launch an uncompromising anti-imperialist struggle for complete national independence, Roy stood for two parties—one of the proletariat only and the other consisting of the three revolutionary classes. In order to discharge its historic mission the proletariat, Roy wrote, must have its own class organisation—the Communist Party wedded to Marxism.⁴⁴ Besides, there was the necessity of another party binding together all the three oppressed classes of the Indian society—a democratic party of the people wedded to the programme of revolutionary

nationalism.⁴⁵ The latter, which must include the former, should, Roy said, have a "non-offensive" name so that the diverse revolutionary elements of the country are not frightened away by the name itself. Roy suggested the name of Peoples' Party or Workers' and Peasants' Party for it. The Revolutionary Peoples' Party was to be organised as a part of the Congress though it should remain under the control of the Communist Party which must remain secret and illegal.

The Indian National Congress arose, according to Roy, as the political organisation of the Indian bourgeoisie, and it remained under the influence, of this class until the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-22.⁴⁶ After the First World War when the British Government started a policy of co-operation towards the Indian capitalists, for reasons already explained, the big bourgeoisie left the Congress and during the time of the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Congress, Roy wrote in the same article, was turned into "a gigantic mass organisation focussing the revolutionary will of the entire people to become free from imperialist domination". In spite of its multiclass character, the movement, Roy observed, remained, on the whole, a petty bourgeois movement, with a reformist political outlook and a decidedly reactionary social ideology, and the leadership was for all practical purposes under the influence of the bourgeoisie. The withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement by Mahatma Gandhi after the manifestation of violence at Chauri Chaura was considered by Roy as an instance of "rank betrayal of the revolutionary forces"⁴⁷ by the Congress leadership. But he confidently believed that the objectively revolutionary movement of the Indian masses would inevitably outgrow the reactionary leadership. "The economic forces", he wrote, "that are awaking them out of their age-long stagnation and apathy will assert themselves and the leadership of the political movement must conform to their imperious dictates."⁴⁸ After the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement the Congress, he believed, was brought to a state of disintegration, and the masses, he felt, were leaving the Congress. The rise of the peasant movement and the trade union organisation among the workers led Roy to

this conclusion.⁴⁹ He was confident that Gandhian politics had no future in India and observed : "Non-Cooperation of the doctrinarian pacifists, of the Tolstoyan passive-resisters, has proved futile, as was to be expected,⁵⁰ "The leadership of the future", Roy wrote, "is left for those ardent and courageous revolutionaries who will undertake the task of organizing the Mass Party—the political party of the Workers and Peasants, the only social elements objectively revolutionary and whose interests can never be protected by half-way measures of reform and compromise."⁵¹ Roy took upon himself the task of supplying that leadership. He tried to organise the secret communist party and at the same time sought to influence a section of the Congress which might form the larger mass party.⁵²

Like Gandhiji, Roy also believed that a successful struggle against Imperialism could be launched only with the active participation of the masses of the Indian people. But according to him, the only way to inspire the masses and bring them actively in the field of politics was to place before them an economic programme embodying their immediate material interests.⁵³ The simple idea of national independence, he thought, could not inspire the masses to political activity. Secondly, a struggle, he believed, must be launched first to realise the programme of the immediate economic interest of the people and this struggle which would at first be directed against the native vested interests would ultimately be linked up with the anti-imperialist struggle for national independence.⁵⁴ Thirdly, the isolated struggles against the native exploiters and the foreign imperialism would ultimately culminate in an armed insurrection throughout the country. This armed insurrection would synchronise with the convocation of a Constituent Assembly elected by the Indian people challenging the authority of the British Imperialists to rule the country. The idea of the Constituent Assembly as the way to achieve national independence was first suggested by Roy during the time of the boycott movement directed against the Simon Commission in 1928.⁵⁵ To conduct this struggle local committees of deputies elected by workers and peasants, artisans and employees, poor intellectuals and small traders, even of soldiers⁵⁶ should be set up throughout the country. Under the

leadership of these Committees the masses would take recourse to direct action, such as strikes, non-payment of rent etc. to enforce their political demands. These Committees would develop as basic units of the future revolutionary state and would take over practically the function of the local government. The whole process would ultimately result in an armed insurrection in which the forces of the imperialist state would be overwhelmed and destroyed.⁵⁷ In Roy's scheme the oppressed and exploited people of the entire nation should be organised in local Committees and the net work of these Committees throughout the country should elect a Constituent Assembly of their own, challenging the right of the British Government to rule the country. The insurrection and the election of the Constituent Assembly are two aspects of the self-same revolutionary process—one is destructive and the other constructive. This was Roy's scheme of organised insurrection.

Roy felt that the Gandhian technique of mass mobilisation was completely inadequate for an all out anti-imperialist struggle. He was opposed to the programme of the Gandhian economy, The removal of British Imperialism was necessary, Roy argued, for the economic and social development, of the country but the Gandhian economic doctrine with its emphasis on the charkha, opposition to industrialisation and the programme of the voluntary restriction of human wants was itself an obstacle in the way of the economic progress of the country.⁵⁸ Gandhi's Constructive Programme of spinning and weaving, wearing of khadi, organisation of national schools, removal of untouchability etc. was condemned by him as "purely reformist and non-revolutionary."⁵⁹ Another major fallacy of Gandhism, in Roy's Marxist analysis, was the obstinate and futile desire to unite all the Indian people, landlords and peasants, capitalists and proletariat, in a common struggle for an undefined goal.⁶⁰ A votary of class struggle, Roy believed that such a scheme was absolutely incapable of mobilizing the Indian masses in the struggle against foreign imperialism. Roy's strategy was in fact an application of the principle of Non-Cooperation on a large scale. He was convinced of the revolutionary significance of the technique of Non-Cooperation but the leadership of the Congress, he felt, could

not wield the weapon properly. The Gandhian ideas, according to him, made Non-Cooperation Movement ineffective. He wrote : "Non-Cooperation as a tactics in our political struggle has not failed; it has not been tried.....In the hands of the revolutionaries who will know how to wield it, the methods of mass strikes organised on a nation-wide scale, are sure to develop as powerful onslaughts against the citadel of State power."⁶¹

In order to apply the principle of Non-Cooperation for revolutionary purposes it must, Roy maintained, be dissociated from the Gandhian cult of non-violence. According to him revolution through non-violence was impossible. He observed: "It is ridiculous to say that we are 'non-violent revolutionaries'. Such a breed cannot grow even on the soil of India. The expropriator will never give in without resistance; nor will the British leave India out of respect for our ability to suffer."⁶² "The Government maintained by violence and brute force", Roy asserted, "cannot be overthrown without violence and brute force."⁶³ The revolutionary movement, in Roy's scheme, would take a violent form after the revolutionary forces were fully prepared and organised throughout the country. He asked his followers to avoid all acts of violence or terrorism before the revolutionary forces were prepared for the final showdown. "Premature violence", he said, "is worse than non-violence and sporadic terrorism has as much to do with revolution as the cult of 'ahimsa'."⁶⁴ But the tactical necessity of refraining from premature violence did not impose on the movement the cult of pacifism. On tactical grounds, he said, the best way was to leave out of the propaganda the controversy between violence and non-violence. "That will be the best tactical move we can make," he advised his followers, "without giving the lie to our propaganda."⁶⁵

During this period Roy wrote little on the philosophical aspect of Marxism or on the ideology of the Indian Revolution. An orthodox Marxist, he believed in economic determinism and thought that a change in the economic basis would inevitably be followed by a corresponding change in the ideological super-structure. Therefore, he was concerned more with the economic than with the ideological aspect of the movement.

In so far as the Indian Revolution was led by the working class it was necessarily guided, according to Roy, by the philosophy of Dialectical Materialism. He wrote : "Dialectical Materialism is the philosophy of the proletariat..... The leader of the Indian proletariat, that is, the Communist Party, therefore, stands firmly on the ground of historical materialism. It will carry on a vigorous ideological fight against all beliefs, traditions, and prejudices which will have great hold upon the young Indian proletariat. The economic development during the transition period will undermine religious beliefs and social institutions (caste system etc.). But the Communist Party as the organ of the revolutionary proletariat consciousness will expedite the objective process so as to quicken the ideological growth of the class."⁶⁶

Marxism was the ideology of the proletariat, but in so far as the Indian revolution represented the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie, its ideology was what Roy termed Revolutionary Nationalism. He did not explain it anywhere though what he meant by it was evident. Revolutionary Nationalism was the ideology of those classes who in their own economic interest stood for the complete independence of the country absolutely free from the control of British Imperialism. In other words, it was the ideology of the Indian masses and only the big bourgeoisie and the feudal landlords were excluded from it.

Though Roy was concerned mainly with the objective forces, he had to combat a rival ideology in order to clear the ground for the development of his movement. The rise of Gandhism almost synchronised with the advent of Bolshevism in India. Roy considered the former as the ideology of reaction and therefore fought it with all the vehemence and fury of the class war.

Roy's Marxist outlook did not enable him to realise the significance of Gandhism in Indian politics. Gandhiji became the acknowledged leader of Indian nationalism not because of his philosophical views or economic doctrines but owing to a political necessity. For an unarmed nation fighting against British imperialism Gandhism was the most effective weapon. He was able to mobilise the large majority of the people irrespective of classes

(though not of communities) to a struggle against the foreign rule in India. Had the British followed the ruthless methods of the Fascists or the Communists, Gandhism would have been crushed, and had there been any chance of a successful armed struggle being waged by India, Gandhism would have been brushed aside. Considering the conditions of India and the nature of the British rule, Gandhism appeared to be the most appropriate banner under which to launch the national struggle for independence. For a dependent people struggling for independence the call of nationalism was irresistible and all talks of economic programme and class struggle appeared either as putting the cart before the horse or a betrayal of the nation. Whatever might be the economic value of Gandhiji's Constructive Programme, it had a great organisational significance. Roy analysed Gandhism but he ignored its political necessity for India. His concept of organised insurrection was theoretically ill-conceived and practically untenable. His strategy based on an economic programme of class interest and an ultimate application of violence was most inappropriate for India. After the First World War secret political activities lost all prospects in India and under those conditions Roy's programme of a secret communist party organising the people on a large scale with the ultimate objective of challenging violently the British authorities in India appeared to be impractical and futile.

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4. For the Supplementary Thesis of Roy see Eudin and North, *Soviet Russia and the East 1920-27 — A Documentary Survey*, pp. 65-67. For texts of the Second Congress of the Communist International

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5. For the Final Draft see Jane Degras (ed.), *The Communist International, Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 138-144. Crucial change took place in Paragraph 11.
 6. Allen S. Whiting, *Soviet Policies in China 1917-1924*, pp. 51-52.
 7. Gane D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*, p. 29.
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 9. The letter dated 11 March, 1951, is preserved in the M. N. Roy Archives, Indian Renaissance Institute, Dehradun.
 10. Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*, p. 292.
 11. Gane D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-32.
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 13. M. N. Roy, *India in Transition*, p. 28.
 14. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
 16. *International Press Correspondence* (Herein after it will be cited as *Inprecor*) (June 28, 1923), p. 451.
 17. M. N. Roy, *The Future of Indian Politics*, p. 24.
 18. M. N. Roy, *India in Transition*, p. 41.
 19. *Inprecor*, II (22 December 1922), p. 989.
 20. M. N. Roy, *India in Transition*, p. 23.
 21. M. N. Roy, *Our Task in India*, p. 49.
 22. *Inprecor* II (22 December, 1922), p. 988.
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 24. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
 25. M. N. Roy, *Our Task in India*, p. 63.
 26. M. N. Roy, *Our Differences*, p. 52.
 27. M. N. Roy, *Our Task in India*, pp. 53-54.
 28. M. N. Roy, *The Future of Indian Politics*, p. 43.
 29. M. N. Roy, *The Aftermath of Non-Co-operation*, p. 12.
 30. M. N. Roy, *Our Task in India*, pp. 53-54.
 31. M. N. Roy, *Our Differences*, p. 103.
 32. *Inprecor*, IV (25 July, 1924), p. 519.
 33. M. N. Roy, *India's Problem and Its Solution*, p. 17.
 34. M. N. Roy, *Our Task in India*, p. 79.
 35. M. N. Roy, *India's Problem and Its Solution*, p. 17.
 36. *Inprecor* IV (25 July, 1924), p. 519.
 37. M. N. Roy, *India's Problem and Its Solution*, p. 17.
 38. M. N. Roy, *Our Task in India*, pp. 78-79.
 39. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
 40. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
 41. Cawnpore Case Evidence, Exhibit No. 13, p. 27.
 42. M. N. Roy, *Our Task in India*, p. 96.
 43. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-98.
 44. M. N. Roy, *Our Task in India*, p. 80.
 45. M. N. Roy, *The Future of Indian Politics*, p. 117.
 46. M. N. Roy, "The Indian National Congress", *Inprecor*, VII, (13 January 1927), p. 99.
 47. M. N. Roy, *India's Problem and Its Solution*, p. 7.
 48. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 49. M. N. Roy, "The Peasant Movement in India", *Inprecor* II (20 June 1922), p. 379. and "The Indian Trade Union Congress", *Inprecor* II (3 January 1922), p. 4.
 50. M. N. Roy, *India's Problem and Its Solution*, p. 20.
 51. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
 52. See Overstreet and Windmiller, *Communism in India*; David Druhe, *Soviet Russia and Indian Communism*; M. R. Masani, *The Communist Party of India*; Sir Cecil Kaye, *Communism in India 1924-27* (Government of India Press)
 53. M. N. Roy, "The Lessons of the Lahore Congress" (Manifesto issued by Roy and few others residing abroad soon after the Lahore Congress in 1929) see *Independent India* (8 March 1939)
 54. M. N. Roy, *What do we Want*, pp. 26-27.
 55. *Masses of India*, Vol. III, No. 12, p. 7.

56. Roy still cherished the idea of organizing secret revolutionary nuclei in the army and expected that through propaganda and agitation the military forces of the Government would be decomposed and the bulk of the Indian army would be won over for the revolution.

Our Task in India, p. 92.

57. M. N. Roy, *Our Task in India*, pp. 92-93.
 58. M. N. Roy, *India's Problem and Its Solution*, p. 5.
 59. M. N. Roy, *One Year of Non-Cooperation*, p. 72.
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
 61. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
 62. Cawnpore Case Evidence, Exhibit No. 13, p. 30.
 63. M. N. Roy, *India's Problem and Its Solution*, p. 17.
 64. M. N. Roy, *The Aftermath of Non-Cooperation*, p. 116.
 65. Cawnpore Case Evidence, Exhibit No. 13, p. 30.
 66. M. N. Roy, *Our Task in India*, pp. 120-123.

III

MARXISM FROM WITHIN INDIA

Roy came back to India in December 1930 after his difference with the thesis adopted by the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in 1928 on the problem of revolution in the colonial countries. The main report on the revolutionary movement in various colonial countries was placed before the congress by Otto Vilhelm Kuusinen who in his report on India criticised severely Roy's theory of decolonization. Roy could not attend the congress because of illness.

The Second World Congress of the Communist International gave rise to a controversy, as we have already discussed, between Roy and Lenin about the role of the bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist struggle of the colonial people. The problem was not finally settled and the same controversy arose in all subsequent congresses. The Thesis of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International¹ fully endorsed Roy's view that the bourgeois class was not a revolutionary force in India but the actual policy which it recommended for India was condemned by Roy in severe terms. The new colonial thesis adopted by the Communist International declared, contrary to Roy's views as expressed in the decolonisation thesis, that British Imperialism had again adopted the policy of hindering the industrial development of India and that the national bourgeois class, though it supports the national movement, betrays "a special vacillating compromising tendency" towards foreign imperialism. Thus, in spite of the difference about the theory of decolonisation, the Communist International adopted the same attitude towards the Indian bourgeoisie which Roy advocated since 1920. The Thesis

considered the poor peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie as allies of the proletariat but it opposed the formation of any party consisting of the people belonging to these three classes, and it advised the Communist Parties "to demarcate themselves in the most clear-cut fashion, both politically and organisationally, from all the petty bourgeois groups and parties". The Indian Communists were instructed to rise as a "single, illegal, independent and centralized party" and to criticise the vacillating attitude of the petty bourgeois groups including the left wing of the Indian National Congress.

Leaving aside Kuusinen's diatribe against the decolonisation theory, the difference between Roy's view and that of the Communist International, in spite of the latter's acceptance of Roy's opinion on the role of the bourgeoisie, was fundamental.

First, Roy considered the Indian bourgeoisie as counter-revolutionary and firmly opposed any cooperation with them when he discovered an economic basis of the collaboration between foreign imperialism and native capitalism. But the thesis of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International did not admit any such basis of collaboration and stated that British Imperialism had returned to the policy of hindering the industrial development of India. If this was true, why then should the national bourgeoisie desert the struggle against foreign imperialism, asked Roy. "If they are still as oppressed as ever,, and there is no prospect of their position being improved, they must," Roy argued, "remain a revolutionary factor."² He, therefore, condemned the resolution as full of glaring contradictions.

Secondly, Roy was opposed to the view adopted by the Thesis towards the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie of India. The thesis recognised the revolutionary significance of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie but it prevented the Communists from organising any party on the basis of the alliance of these classes. In order to combat foreign imperialism and the native bourgeoisie, Roy, on the contrary, was in favour of a united front of all oppressed and exploited social elements and tried to form a party of the workers,

peasants and the petty bourgeoisie under the leadership of the working class.

Thirdly, India was, Roy argued, in need mainly of a bourgeois democratic revolution, not, of course, under the leadership of the bourgeoisie but of the working class and he always insisted that Communism was not the immediate issue before the Indian Revolution. Therefore, a proletarian party alone, in Roy's view, could not play a decisive part in the existing situation of India. The resolution of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, Roy said, was based upon "a wrong estimation of the social character and the perspective of the development of the Indian revolution."³

Fourthly, Roy's attitude towards the Indian National Congress was different from what the Communist International accepted in the new thesis. Roy was opposed to the Congress leadership but not to the Congress organisation as such. He tried to form parties within the Congress and bring the Congress under revolutionary leadership. But the Comintern resolution of 1928 led the Communists to come out of the Congress denouncing it as counter-revolutionary. The C.P.I, under the instruction of the Communist International refused to make any distinction between "the objective revolutionary rank and file and the subjectively anti-revolutionary leadership of the Congress."⁴ Roy was inclined to support the left wing within the Congress but the Comintern thesis of 1928 condemned the Left wing equally with the Right.

The Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in 1928 was followed by the expulsion of Roy from it in 1929.

After his expulsion from the Communist International M. N. Roy came back to India in disguise in 1930, and he was arrested in July 1931 in Bombay. He was prosecuted in Cawnpore and in January 1932 he was sentenced to imprisonment for twelve years. The sentence was reduced on appeal to six years and he was released on 20 November 1936. The period from 1936 to 1946 forms another epoch in the evolution of the political ideas of Roy. He changed his views, in some cases radically, on the perspective, strategy, tactics and ideology of the Indian Revolution. It is necessary to discuss

these views comparing them with his ideas held previously. Expulsion from the Communist International did not undermine his faith in Marxism or loyalty to Russia. But it enabled him to think independently and he was no longer required to comply with the instructions of the Communist International.

In the Indian phase of his Marxist career Roy's views on the position and role of the different classes of the Indian people in the struggle for independence were, in some respects, profoundly altered. His view remained unchanged about the feudal lords and the capitalists, but he revised his view completely about the role of the petty bourgeoisie, workers and along with workers the peasants also.

The urban petty bourgeois class was now recognised by Roy as the leader of the Indian Revolution not so much due to its economic position as to its education and cultural development. The education which the members of this class received qualified them, according to his new analysis, to play the role of the grave-diggers of their exploiters, but the working class of India, he pointed out, was culturally too backward to supply leadership for a revolutionary reconstruction of the Indian society.⁵ Possibly in order to satisfy his Marxist conscience Roy still referred to the proletarian hegemony over the revolutionary movement in India. As he then put it : "the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, in collaboration with the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, can provide the necessary alternative leadership. The next stage of the Indian revolution must develop under that type of leadership—under the hegemony (not leadership) of the proletariat."⁶ Explaining the meaning of 'proletarian hegemony', as distinguished from 'proletarian leadership', Roy wrote : "If it is to be conceived as something distinct from leadership, hegemony must mean ideological influence, proportionately much greater than the physical strength."⁷ Although the proletariat is a negligible factor in India, it has been formed, Roy pointed out, as a distinct class on a world scale and consequently the proletarian ideology has also grown. This ideology will exercise its influence not only in those countries where the proletariat is in a

dominant position but throughout the world. The hegemony of the proletariat, therefore, in the last analysis, means the hegemony of Marxism. And in India, Roy maintained, Marxism would influence the course of revolution not through the proletariat but through the brain of the petty bourgeoisie.⁸ Deprecating the practice of idealising the proletariat Roy observed : "Our vision should not be coloured by our imagination. The revolutionary zeal of the ideological vanguard should not be ascribed to the workers, who strike simply for higher wages and other minor ameliorations."⁹ This sentence appears to be a cryptic one pregnant with new ideas. If the revolutionary zeal of the ideological vanguard of the proletariat is not to be traced to the workers' class struggle *then* what is its basis? Roy did not answer the question. For a Marxist such a view must be a heresy. Roy continued to believe, as before, that the Indian Revolution would be the joint product of a coalition of the oppressed and exploited classes, namely, the peasants, the workers and the petty bourgeoisie, but his idea about the relative importance of these three classes was, however, profoundly modified.

The change in Roy's views about the role of the petty bourgeoisie and the workers in India is remarkable. How was this change brought about? And what are the implications of this change? These questions naturally arise.

The change in Roy's ideas can reasonably be explained with reference to his new experience in India. As long as he guided the communist movement of India from abroad, he imagined the conditions in India more in the light of the Marxist theory than on the basis of any empirical evidence. By applying the Marxist doctrine of economic determinism he hoped that a party of the workers and peasants was bound to develop in India as a formidable force and that the hold of the religious doctrine of Gandhism could not remain long upon the mind of the people. The rise of the labour movement and the peasants organisation in India was consequently interpreted by him as evidence of an awakening of revolutionary class consciousness among the workers and peasants. He believed that by an inexorable process brought about by objective conditions, the

Indian masses would move away from the present leadership of the Congress. But when he came to India in 1930, he saw a different picture. There was a wide gulf between what he imagined and what he found. The Indian proletariat—hitherto considered by Roy as the guiding centre of the Indian revolution—disappointed him completely. It was, he found, not only numerically weak but also “socially immature” and “politically backward” without “the rudimentary ideas of class struggle.”¹⁰ Soon after reaching Bombay in disguise from abroad Roy attended a large mass meeting of the workers which to him was altogether disappointing. Describing his experience he wrote : “I came closer to find that most of the audience were dozing or actually sleeping. The only sign of life was thin wisps of *bidi* smoke here and there.”¹¹ It was a shocking experience for Roy. He himself remarked : “The first experience in Bombay and similar experience later on convinced me how delusive was the picture imagined from the newspaper reports of large meetings and demonstrations.”¹² He found that in spite of seething discontent there was no symptom of any widespread revolutionary awakening among the peasants who had complete confidence in Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress. Almost all the big trade unions, he saw, were under reformist leadership and most of the prominent Trade Union leaders were Congressmen.¹³ The petty bourgeoisie, the much maligned class in Marxist literature to which Roy himself contributed liberally, was found to be “the most active political element” in Indian politics having contact with , the masses.¹⁴

Indian politics, therefore, refused to develop itself in accordance with the Marxist prognosis of M. N Roy, What Roy predicted with confidence to be inevitable in Indian politics did not take place. Roy proved to be a false prophet. How did Roy react to his experience? He could, like an orthodox Marxist, have tried to interpret (rather, to imagine) facts to fit into his theoretical pattern. Or, he might have given up the doctrine of Marxism and developed a new philosophy more in accordance with the reality of the situation. Roy, however, adopted neither of these two courses. He was too objective to quarrel

with facts and too much indoctrinated by Marxism to give it up easily. To come out of the dilemma Roy gave a new interpretation to Marxism — “a broader understanding of Marxism,”¹⁵ as he called it—differentiating it from the narrow and mechanical interpretation.

The fundamental lesson that Roy drew from his experience was that “the most important and decisive factor in a revolution is the subjective factor.”¹⁶ He lost his confidence in the sovereignty of the objective forces of history and the inexorable law of social dialectics operating through the class struggle. Belying his expectation and confident prediction, Gandhism continued to remain as strong as ever and the workers and peasants developed no class consciousness of their own. The objective factors of history had failed to assert themselves. The exploited masses did not move ahead by objective dynamism leaving Gandhism behind, as anticipated by Roy. Trying to explain this phenomenon he wrote : “The fact that even in this 20th century India is swayed by the naive doctrine of Gandhi speaks for cultural backwardness of the masses of the Indian people.”¹⁷ “Gandhism”, he stated several years later, “could not influence the mass mind unless there was a predisposition. The mediaeval mentality of the culturally backward masses makes them easy victims of the Gandhist propaganda.”¹⁸ To combat Gandhism, therefore, the mediaeval mentality of the Indian people must be changed. In other words, the subjective factor must be created. Roy’s politics thus came to attach supreme importance to education, culture and human ideas. This was the beginning of the end of Marxism. The emphasis on education, ideas and cultural factors could not be fitted into the Marxist theory of economic determinism. To make his ideas compatible with the facts of the Indian situation, Roy, now tried to give Marxism, as we have already mentioned, a new interpretation which, in fact, was the very negation of the essential spirit of the Marxist philosophy. In the name of Marxism he developed a set of new ideas which gradually, aided by further experience, liberated themselves from the Marxist terminology and gave rise to a New Humanism.

Roy's hostility to Gandhism continued unabated, it was in fact intensified; he went to the length of equating Gandhism with Fascism. In prison Roy wrote a book on Fascism analysing its philosophy, profession and practice in which he pointed out that Fascism was not simply a socio-political phenomenon but had a deep-rooted philosophical foundation. "If Fascism is a socio-political reaction," Roy wrote, "its ideological foundation must have been laid by philosophical reaction."¹⁹ The roots of the philosophy of Fascism were traced by him to the spiritualist view of life. He observed: "As a matter of fact, the philosophy of Fascist dictatorship results directly from the modern schools of mysticism and spiritualism which represent reaction against the scientific view of life".²⁰ Religion and the cults of mysticism and spiritualism associated with it are, he thought, always useful to maintain a social order based on the exploitation of man by man. Religion is based upon faith, and faith, Roy explained, placed a premium on ignorance, which makes the masses easy victims of exploitation. In its fight against feudal society and monarchical absolutism the bourgeoisie used the revolutionary weapon of the materialist philosophy, but once in possession of power it discarded this weapon and championed the spiritualist view of life in order to perpetuate the social system based upon the exploitation of many. Fascism, according to Roy, was the logical outcome of this reactionary philosophical tendency.

The Indian philosophy because of its spiritual character stood, in Roy's analysis, very near Fascism. He called Indian philosophy as inherently Fascist.²¹ The Indian ancestry of Fascism, according to Roy, could be traced through Schopenhauer whose disciple, Nietzsche, was the father of the philosophy of Fascism. Schopenhauer found consolation in the philosophy of the Upanishads—a philosophy which in Roy's words "prevented the Indian people from facing the realities of life with the courage to change them".²² The roots of the Fascist thought were traced by Roy even to the divine philosophy of Gita.

The philosophy of Gandhism is based upon a spiritual view of life and that led Roy to equate it with Fascism. He observed; "If

Gandhism is to be regarded as a body of religio-ethical doctrines, the quintessence of ancient Indian culture, then the world has already experienced its modern political expression. Gandhism as a philosophical tradition has led to Hitlerism".²³ Roy referred to genealogical kinship between Gandhism and Fascism, both being offsprings of the spiritual view of life. Both are inspired by the revivalist ideal and deny the progressive significance of modern civilization.²⁴ Roy made a clear distinction between revolutionary nationalism and revivalist nationalism in India and maintained that while the former was revolutionary the latter was reactionary.²⁵ Revolutionary nationalism, which seeks to overthrow foreign imperialism as the essential precondition of further social progress, was not, he pointed out, antagonistic to socialism, but, on the contrary, its consummation would create conditions necessary for its ultimate establishment.²⁶ But revivalist nationalism would lead the country to Fascism because, Fascism was described by Roy as nationalism inspired by the revivalist ideal.²⁷ The ideal of class collaboration was another feature common both to Gandhism and Fascism. This ideal, according to Roy, would inevitably lead to violence, because, as he stated, "class collaboration means violent suppression of the efforts of the toiling masses to liberate themselves from the system of exploitation. Class collaboration means stabilization of class domination. This requires violence exercised by the dominating class. Gandhist ideal of class collaboration involves violence. The cult of non-violence is, therefore, hypocritical. It supports actual violence".²⁸ The Gandhian ideal of simple life and the vow of poverty would, Roy thought, keep the masses spell-bound and that would enable the Congress to further the interests of the nationalist bourgeoisie and loyalist landlords.²⁹ Roy, therefore, condemned Gandhism as a philosophy of counter-revolution. The assumption of a logical connection between Gandhism and Fascism determined in large measure Roy's attitude towards the leadership of the Indian National Congress and the Indian independence movement in general.

The logical relation which Roy postulated between Fascism and the spiritualist view of life was a dangerous illusion. Spiritualism endows man with a sanctity of which Fascism is the complete negation. The origin of Fascism may logically be traced to the ideas of Nietzsche who disowned the spiritualist tradition of Christianity. Even after coming back to India, Roy was able to comprehend neither the moral excellence of Gandhian doctrines nor the political significance of the Gandhian strategy. Class collaboration and non-violence were politically necessary for a united struggle of the Indian people against alien rule. Judged as a doctrine, Gandhism was more akin to Christian socialism than to Fascism. Gandhi was the political leader of the Indian masses, and, therefore, instead of trying to change the mass psychology he sought to utilise it for realising his objective. That determined, to a large extent, the pattern of Gandhian politics. Roy was too crude and perhaps a little too 'logical' to comprehend the diverse factors that accounted for the popularity of Gandhism in India. He ignored the strategical significance of Gandhism and made a wrong analysis of the Gandhian philosophy. Therefore all his attempts to undermine the influence of Gandhism in Indian politics failed.

Roy tried to replace Gandhism by Marxism though his explanation of Marxism during this period was largely influenced by his experience. He now interpreted Marxism as essentially a philosophy, and the economic doctrines and political theories associated with Marxism were considered as its subsidiary parts only. In his writings of this period he gave emphasis mainly upon three aspects of the Marxian philosophy. First, Marxism was interpreted as the logical outcome of the rationalist and materialist thoughts of man. Tracing the origin of Marxism to the old materialist thoughts of Greece, Roy observed : "Between Democritus and Epicurus and Marx there was a continuous line of development tracing which Marx could only come to his conclusions".³⁰ Thus interpreted, Marxism became a 'human heritage' and not the philosophy of any particular class.³¹ Ridiculing the orthodox interpretation of Marxism as the philosophy of a particular class,

Roy wrote : "There is so much talk about class culture and class philosophy and class ideology. One cannot claim the distinction of being a Marxist, unless he qualified every concept with the term 'Class'! Only, that is a dubious distinction. That may befit an ordinary political propagandist; but a Marxist deserving the distinction is primarily a philosopher".³² In Roy's mind the concept of humanity was gradually replacing the concept of class. Not that he gave up the idea of class struggle, but along with it he began to refer occasionally to the cohesive factor in society and to humanity as a whole.³³ The cultural progress of man, he emphasised, would have been impossible if all cultures were simply class cultures to be replaced in course of time by another class culture. A culture, Roy pointed out, may bear the stamp of a class but "in so far as there is a relation of identity between that class and the entire society, the cultural values produced by it are the production of society as a whole".³⁴

The second aspect of Marxism which Roy during this period emphasised followed logically from his view of Marxism as the highest product of the rational thoughts of man rather than a class ideology. Rationalism being the essential feature of Marxism, Roy considered it not as a system of doctrines or a bunch of dogmas but 'rather a method'.³⁵ Roy made a distinction between Marxism as a method and its specific formulas or doctrines. As a method, Marxism, according to Roy, was a way of thinking and its fundamental principle is that consciousness is determined by existence. This Marxian method, he said, has a permanent and abiding value and holds good for all time and under all circumstances and applicable to the problems of all ages. But unlike the Marxian method, the formulas of Marxism, Roy pointed out, are not immutable and may have to be changed from time to time. Dictatorship of the proletariat was one such Marxist formula. In the process of development of the Indian Revolution, Roy showed that there was no room for a proletarian dictatorship and therefore it must be discarded.³⁶ The distinction that Roy drew between the Marxist method and the Marxist formula is very significant. By

applying this method, he said, one should try "to elaborate, amplify and even revise Marxism" in the light of growing experience and knowledge.³⁷ Once the 'essence' of Marxism was accepted "it is not necessary for us", Roy maintained, "even to abide by the letters of what Marx has written".³⁸

The third principle emphasised by Roy in his interpretation of Marxism was the freedom of man in the making of history. Marx wrote: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it". This bold declaration by Marx recognising the freedom of man to change his environment was, as Roy himself later fully realised, negated by Marx's economic interpretation of history, but at this stage Roy tried to reconcile the two, obviously with little success. In his lecture on 'What is Marxism' Roy condemned the economic interpretation of history as a vulgar interpretation of Marxism' and preferred the expression "materialistic interpretation of history".³⁹ But this is a difference without any distinction. In the same lecture approving the Marxist law of history Roy observed: "Man's ideas are determined not by his environments as such, but by the mode of production through which he earns his livelihood".⁴⁰ Explaining the evolution of human society Roy wrote that "the everchanging standards of human behaviour, the circumstances of living, the structure of society, the successive stages of social evolution—all these are determined by one factor, namely, the mode in which the particular community makes its livelihood".⁴⁰ Roy's refusal to accept the expression 'economic interpretation of history' thus had no philosophical foundation. Most probably it was an expression of a conflict within his mind—his reluctance to equate freedom simply with an economic struggle. This conflict was clearly expressed when he said: "People think in terms of capital and labour, as if revolutionaries were a gang of selfish people fighting for a few annas for themselves. But a true revolutionary is not ashamed of declaring that he is not fighting merely for wages; that he is fighting even for the welfare of those who are against revolution. The revolutionaries of to-day are fighting for the liberation of mankind. The revolution

of our epoch will, for the first time, conquer spiritual freedom for humanity".⁴² This concept of revolution was not in harmony with the Marxian concepts of class-division and economic fundamentalism. To make human freedom possible, the philosophy of history must endow man with free will in order to enable him to play along with other factors a creative role in history. Roy tried to reconcile the creative role of man with the Marxist theory of history. He wrote: "But in the light of scientific research he (Marx) proved that man lives in certain environments, but at the same time man reacts on those environments and shapes them by his reactions. He is not an actor on the stage walking over it, detached and untouched, a prescribed route. But he is a part of the stage itself. His movements are determined by his environments in as much as these include his own being. Thus he has become not only the maker and master of his environments including his own self, but he has become the maker of history".⁴³ One reads the passage in vain to discover any scope for human freedom. If the causative factors of history are all to be traced to the environment, the arguments in favour of any creative role of man in the making of history become simply casuistry. In order to make human freedom compatible with the Marxist scheme of history Roy denied that history was reduced to an inevitable process by Karl Marx. He wrote: "There is actually nothing inevitable in history. The concept of inevitability is unknown in Marxian philosophy. Because inevitability is only another name for fatalism, that is, predestination. Marxism places man in the centre of the world".⁴⁴ This interpretation gives man a creative role to play in history but it goes against the entire spirit of Marxist historiology. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels categorically stated in *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: "What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable".⁴⁵ Marx frankly denied the freedom of man to shape history and he reduced history to an inevitable process. In a letter to P. V. Annenkov, Marx wrote: "Are men free to choose this or that form of society? By no means It is superfluous to add that men are not free arbiters of their productive

forces which are the basis of all their history — for every productive force is an acquired force, the product of former activity”.⁴⁶

As a matter of fact, Roy's interpretation of Marxism during this period was muddle-headed. In the name of Marxism he expressed his own ideas born of his experience, but they remained clumsy because of his attempt to integrate them with the Marxist doctrine. The interpretation of Marxism as the highest product of the rationalist trend of human thought was misleading. The Marxists do not believe that human ideas can be influenced by *reason as such*, apart from the economic interests of the class. The rationalist philosophy of the French Enlightenment, as for example, was to them “nothing more than the idealised kingdom of the bourgeoisie”.⁴⁷ The key to social change, according to the Marxists, lies not in philosophy but in economics. Friedrich Engels explained this theory clearly : “From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in men's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the *philosophy*, but in the *economics* of each particular epoch”.⁴⁸ Dictatorship of the proletariat which Roy discarded as a non-essential part of Marxism was considered by Marx himself as of paramount significance.⁴⁹ There was little of ‘Marxism’ in Roy's interpretation of it. The seeds of New Humanism must be traced to the interpretation which Roy gave to Marxism during this period.

In this period Roy's ideas about the nature and perspective of the Indian Revolution did not undergo any vital change. The bourgeois democratic revolution in India would take place without the cooperation of the bourgeoisie and it was to be engineered by a coalition of the oppressed and exploited classes of India. The main implication of Roy's concept of a bourgeois democratic revolution without the bourgeoisie was the possibility of India's reaching the stage of socialism without passing through the period of capitalist exploitation and proletarian dictatorship. The concept of such a revolution was, as we have already mentioned, developed by him abroad but it became more prominent during this period. In order

to establish socialism, its pre-conditions, such as the industrialisation of the country and the growth of the working class on a large scale, abolition of the feudal restrictions on production, etc., must first be created. To create these preconditions the capitalist mode of production, Roy maintained, was essential, and the fundamental feature of the capitalist mode of production, he explained, is the production of surplus value by which the workers are deprived of a part of the fruit of their labour. This is necessary for the accumulation of capital and the industrial progress of the country. Under capitalist rule the workers are forcibly deprived of this part for the benefit of individual capitalists. But labourers may voluntarily part with a portion of the fruit of their labour by common agreement, and if the process is a voluntary one, the period of the industrial development of the country should, Roy said, be regarded as an integral part of the process of socialist reconstruction.”⁵⁰ In Russia under the Bolshevik rule, Roy believed, industrial development took place by this voluntary method and he tried to develop the Indian revolution in the same way. The perspective of the revolution described above excludes the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship. In 1935 he wrote : “It is foolish romanticism to aim at proletarian dictatorship in the near future in this country; and it may not be an indispensable necessity later on”.⁵¹ The bourgeois democratic revolution in India brought about by a coalition of the oppressed and exploited classes, under the hegemony of the ideological vanguard of the proletariat would, Roy thought, give effective power to the masses which would make proletarian dictatorship redundant.

By this time Roy was clearly opposed to proletarian dictatorship but he did not accept parliamentary democracy. Then what would be the nature of the state that would entrust the people with effective power? His ideas in this respect were not yet very clear. During this period he referred to a “genuinely democratic government” for India as distinguished from “an ordinary capitalist state”.⁵² He was obviously trying to find out a governmental system different from parliamentary democracy and proletarian dictatorship. The

basis of the new state, he said, would not be atomised individuals but organised units through which the people would be able to exercise direct control over the Government. Parliamentary Democracy would thus be replaced by a higher type of democracy. In 1944 Roy published his Draft Constitution of India where he gave a concrete picture of this higher type of democracy to which he gave the name 'Radical Democracy'. This Radical Democracy was incorporated in the philosophy of Radical Humanism and we shall explain it at a later stage.

Roy tried to bring about the necessary revolution in India through the Congress guided by a revolutionary leadership. His analysis about the role and nature of the Congress remained almost unchanged. It was a potentially revolutionary movement saddled with a reactionary leadership, and therefore the main task of the Indian Revolution, according to Roy, was to supply a new leadership—an alternative revolutionary leadership—to the Congress movement. The revolutionary potentialities of the Congress, he maintained, could not develop under the Gandhian leadership. But, he observed : "The leadership of the Congress is not the Congress. There is objective contradiction between the present leadership which is under the influence of the middle bourgeoisie, and the Congress as a movement. There is social basis for an alternative radical democratic leadership to replace the present outfit. The rise of such a leadership is necessary for the next stage of the revolution".⁵³

In the first stage of his Marxist career also Roy considered the Congress movement as of great revolutionary significance and tried to bring it under the leadership of a revolutionary peoples' party—a party, of workers and peasants—formed within the Congress. But this strategy was now entirely given up by Roy. He was now opposed to the formation of any party within the Congress and he, therefore, tried to bring the whole movement under a revolutionary leadership. The reason of this change is not far to seek. By applying the Marxian analysis of history as an inevitable process brought about by the objective conditions of society, Roy firmly believed

that a party of the exploited class was bound to rise in India outgrowing the reactionary influence of Gandhism. The revolutionaries were simply to lead and hasten the inevitable process. But experience, as we have seen, dispelled this optimism. Roy found that the religious mentality of the people was the mainstay of Gandhism, and the rise of a revolutionary party was conditional upon the change of this mentality. The change of the religious mentality of the people in favour of the scientific mode of thought would undermine the hold of Gandhism and thus facilitate the rise of an alternative revolutionary leadership. Formation of a revolutionary group within the Congress without first trying to change the religious mentality of the people was considered by him as futile. The programme of alternative leadership, however, did not, it appears, exclude the possibility of a division of the Congress in the long run. During this period Roy gave up all attempts to organise secret political activities. Direct experience of the country must have convinced him of the futility of such activities.

Another consideration that determined Roy's strategy during this time was the organisational character of the Congress. He was very much impressed by the countrywide net of primary committees built up by it. These committees, he believed, could be used as the basic units of the future democratic state of India. He referred to the dual character of the Congress organisation—a political party and the framework of a new state.⁵² These committees would enable the Indian people to raise the structure of a revolutionary state within the womb of imperialism, and then challenge the latter in an organised rebellion. In order to use the Congress Committees for this revolutionary purpose Roy tried to bring the Congress movement under the revolutionary leadership instead of forming groups or parties within it. He asked : "If a certain section of the masses lose their confidence in the Congress and leave it, is there any guarantee that another organisation equally powerful as the Congress would be established in the country ?"⁵⁵

In this connection it would not be out of place to refer briefly to Roy's concept of 'organised' revolution. The Indian revolution, he

pointed out, must be an organised one, unlike those of the previous age such as in France or in Russia. This difference was due to the character of the modern state which is highly organised and well-equipped. In France a spontaneous mass uprising led to the capture of power in Paris and the whole state collapsed as a result. Similar was the case in Russia also. Those revolutions did not require for their success a country-wide organisation. But in the modern age, conditions were, Roy pointed out, entirely different. The state is now-a-days so well-organised that any idea of the capture of power in Delhi or Calcutta was inconceivable. Unlike the previous revolutions which began in the capital, the revolutionary movement in India, Roy explained, would begin on the periphery and then converge in the centre. Therefore, he maintained that in India capture of power must be "an organised process."⁵⁶ The seven lakhs of villages must be organised, and these organised units would not only initiate struggles against imperialism on various issues concerning the day to day life of the people but would also serve as the basic units of the future democratic state of the country. Roy had similar ideas while abroad but now he found that the already established local, Congress Committees could function in a revolutionary crisis as instruments of mass uprisings and become the basic units of the revolutionary state. Roy tried to develop the Congress as a pyramidal structure on the basis of these Committees. Throughout the country there would come into existence two parallel organisations—one, the pyramidal structure of the Congress Committees enjoying the confidence of the people, and the other, the machinery of the imperialist state, hated by the people and supported only by a handful of mercenaries.⁵⁷ Under such circumstances Roy thought it would be quite possible for the Congress to replace the Imperialist state in a simultaneous bid for power throughout the country. With supreme self-confidence amounting to an under-estimation of the forces of the opponent, Roy, like the Italian patriot Mazzini, declared : "Compare the Congress organisation in the district with the local machinery of the Imperial state. Can there be any doubt about the outcome of a

trial of strength between the two? What power has the machinery of the Imperialist state in this district to prevent the Congress Committee from assuming the functions of the Government?"⁵⁸ The Congress with the demand "All power to the local Congress Committees" would supersede the machinery of the Imperialist state and would convert itself into the Constituent Assembly in order to frame the constitution of the new state.⁵⁹ Upto this point the revolutionary movement would proceed without splitting a drop of blood or committing any violence. But what would happen after that? Would not the British Government retaliate? How would that offensive be met? Roy answered : "What will happen next does not depend on us. Having asserted our right of self-determination, we shall naturally have to be guided only by such codes and laws as are binding on all nations, whose freedom is at stake. If at that moment, India would not be prepared to defend her newly won freedom by all means, she does not deserve to be free"⁶⁰ Roy here indicated that India under such circumstances must defend herself by all means, violent or non-violent. He left the matter there. To wage the struggle successfully, the Congress must first of all be transformed into a well-knit disciplined party with its primary local committees manned by active and conscious revolutionaries liberated from the paralysing grip of Gandhism. In other words, the Congress must be given an alternative leadership.

Roy suggested two methods to bring about the necessary alternative leadership. One was political, and the other and more significant one was intellectual or philosophical.

The Congress was composed very largely of the oppressed and exploited people of India and therefore Roy expected that if the ordinary members of the Congress could be made politically conscious and the primary Congress Committees politically active and assertive, a new leadership might naturally grow from below. He therefore suggested various measures, constitutional as well as educational, to activate and democratise the primary Congress Committees.⁶¹

Secondly, Roy started in India a Renaissance Movement—a movement for a philosophical revolution—in order to lay the intellectual foundation of the alternative leadership. He discovered, as we have already mentioned, the real strength of Gandhism in the religious outlook of the people and concluded that without a change in the religious mentality of the people Gandhism could not be successfully combatted. Therefore, he started an intellectual movement with a view to replace the religious outlook of the people by the scientific mode of thought.

Roy compared the conditions of India with the crisis that overtook Europe towards the close of the Middle Age. The European people, he pointed out, overcame the crisis and made rapid progress owing to the Renaissance which placed before them new ideas and ideals. But in India such a revolution had not taken place, and that was, in his opinion, “the cause for all our national miseries and political humiliation during the last seven or eight hundred years.”⁶² A Renaissance must precede, in his opinion, the political independence and social progress also of India.

In order to promote a Renaissance Movement, Roy began to examine the cultural heritage of India and developed certain ideas which must be briefly mentioned here. The intellectual atmosphere of nationalist India, Roy found, was dominated by the anti-Western revivalist outlook which was “a positive danger,”⁶³ though psychologically natural. It was dangerous because by galvanising the religious mode of thought it stood in the way of the much-needed philosophical revolution. But it was natural because, in the words of Roy, it was the expression of a “historically determined inferiority complex.”⁶⁴ The faith in her spiritual superiority gave the Indians some consolation in the midst of despair and defeat. To combat this attitude of Indian nationalism would be the main task of the Renaissance Movement sponsored by Roy. He maintained that the very notion of the East as the centre of spiritualism and the West of materialism was a fictitious one and pointed out the essential similarity of the ideas and activities pursued by the people of all countries, East as well as West. It is true, Roy admitted, that the

materialist philosophy and rationalist thought have to a large extent developed in modern Europe while in India the predominant outlook remained religious. This religious outlook instead of being an expression of the ‘special genius’ of Indian culture shows, according to him, only her backwardness. The religious mode of thought, Roy pointed out, “characterises human ideology everywhere in a certain stage of social evolution,” but Europe had moved largely beyond that stage but India lagged behind. Hence, the difference.⁶⁵

By analysing the past culture of India Roy showed that it contains a rich heritage of rationalist and materialist tradition from which the Indian Renaissance Movement should draw its inspiration. He referred to the rationalist and materialist thoughts scattered in the Aupanishadik literature, Vaisheshik philosophy of Kanada, Sankhya system of Kapila, in the philosophical thoughts of Gautama, Charvak and the Jains.⁶⁶ The materialist trend of thought in ancient India reached its culmination, according to Roy, in the rise of Buddhism which, he said, was “one of the greatest revolutions of history.”⁶⁷ It was a revolt against the social domination of the priestly class and it threatened religion itself by expressing doubts about the existence of Gods. But this revolution was defeated in India, and Sankaracharya, according to Roy, was “the ideologist of the counter-revolution which was the blackest chapter and the greatest misfortune of Indian history.”⁶⁸ The subsequent misfortune of India was traced by Roy to the defeat of the Buddhist revolution. After the fall of Buddhism the Indian people were placed under the tyranny of Brahmanical reaction and the lower classes were so much oppressed in Hindu society that when Islam entered India they found in it their liberation, and, therefore, many of them embraced it. That alone, Roy said, can explain the success of Islam in India. Similarly the British conquest of India was also made possible by the cooperation of a section of the Indians themselves.⁶⁹ Thus the age-long social stagnation and centuries of political slavery were the price that the Indian people had to pay for the defeat of the Buddhist revolution. With the defeat of Buddhism the rationalist

tradition of Indian thought came to an end,⁷⁰ and then began the 'dark age' in Indian history. India, wedded to the religious mode of thought, still lingers in the twilight of the mediaeval dark age and the Renaissance Movement was conceived by Roy to bring this period to a close and usher in the modern age. By pointing out the materialist and rationalist heritage of Indian culture, he tried to expose the fallacious belief that materialism is Western and alien to Indian culture and thus sought to remove the inferiority complex of Indian nationalism. He believed that India must accept materialism, which is neither Eastern nor Western but the most developed form of human thought, in order to ensure her social, political and economic progress. Materialist thought to which India also had contributed in the past has at present reached its culmination in the West and therefore India must have the courage to accept it with a clean conscience. He wrote: "India must receive the message of deliverance from the West. It is the message of materialist philosophy. Materialist philosophy is the spiritual message of the West. India must equip herself with this weapon to free it from the dead grip of tradition and to strike out a path for future progress. Western civilization is the collective creation of the entire humanity. It is the highest product of man's creative power. The positive outcome of the history of the various races, nations etc. have gone into its making. It is the common heritage of mankind. The future must be built upon this foundation."⁷¹

The Renaissance Movement added a new dimension to the political activities of Roy. He was able to influence the Indian intelligentsia more by his philosophical than by purely political activities. His materialist and critical approach, his stimulating insights and bold assertions earned for him the admiration of many. But his lingering faith in Marxism, his contempt for spiritual (religious) culture and his attempt to discover a class interest behind all the Indian philosophical systems made it difficult for Roy to appreciate the true spirit of Indian culture. According to his analysis the ideal of self-control, embodied in the Hindu Dharma, stands only for "the spoilation and exploitation of the masses".⁷² The

doctrines of 'spiritualist' philosophy (such as the Law of Karma) were, in his words, expounded by the Rishis of the old with the object of making the masses feel themselves responsible for their misery and thus to safeguard the established social order against the danger of a threatening popular revolt.⁷³

Though still professing his faith in Marxism, Roy conceived the Renaissance Movement with the spirit of the Enlightenment. But both in conception as well as largely in content the movement was un-Marxist. For the ideal of a philosophical revolution independent of and preceding the economic transformation goes against the essential spirit of Marxist historiology. Convinced of the rational foundation of Marxism, Roy by this movement tried to create a rational, critical and non-conformist outlook among the people instead of converting them directly to the new ideology. The Renaissance Movement launched under the banner of reason developed its own dynamism and started a process of intellectual exploration which proved fatal to Marxism itself. The movement which was directed against Gandhism ultimately ended in liquidating Roy's Marxism. From the conception of the Renaissance movement to the birth of New Humanism the process was direct and continuous, aided by experience.

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1. "Thesis on the Revolutionary Movement in the colonies and Semi-Colonies", *Inprecor* VIII (12 December 1928). All subsequent quotations from the thesis are to be referred to this source.
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3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
5. M. N. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, pp. 93-94.
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7. M. N. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, p. 163.
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11. M. N. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, p. 256.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
13. M. N. Roy, *Our Differences*, pp. 119-120.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.
15. M. N. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, p. 207.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
17. *Jail Volumes*, IV, p. 71(a).
18. M. N. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, p. 230.
19. M. N. Roy, *Fascism*, p. 2.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
24. M. N. Roy, *Gandhism, Nationalism and Socialism*, p. 83.
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26. M. N. Roy, *Gandhism Nationalism and Socialism*, p. 119.
27. M. N. Roy, *Fascism*, p. 40.
28. M. N. Roy, *Gandhism Nationalism and Socialism*, p. 23.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
30. M. N. Roy, *Heresies of Twentieth Century*, p. 127.
31. M. N. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, p. 182.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
35. M. N. Roy and K. K. Sinha, *Royism Explained*, p. 22.
36. M. N. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, pp. 210-211.
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39. M. N. Roy, *Heresies of Twentieth Century*, p. 109.
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54. M. N. Roy, *On the Congress Constitution*, p. 29.
55. *Independent India I* (6 February 1938) p. 8.
56. M. N. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, p. 240.

57. *Independent India*, III (29 January 1939) p. 76.
58. *Ibid.*, (1 January 1939), p. 13.
59. M. N. Roy, *Our Problem*, p. 142, p. XXIV (appendix II)
60. *Independent India* III (29 January 1939), p. 76.
61. See M. N. Roy, *On the Congress Constitution*.
62. M. N. Roy, *Indian Renaissance Movement*, p. 28.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
65. M. N. Roy, *Materialism*, p. 8.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 124-156.
67. M. N. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, p. 274.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 293-94.
70. M. N. Roy, *Indian Renaissance Movement*, p. 31.
71. *Jail Volumes*, IV p. 129 (a).
72. M. N. Roy, *India's Message*, p. 144.
73. M. N. Roy, *Science and Superstition*, p. 110.

IV

HUMANIST PHILOSOPHY

Humanism is an old philosophy and Roy qualified his Humanism by the words 'New', 'Radical', 'Scientific', etc. because he claimed that "it is humanism enriched, reinforced and elaborated by scientific knowledge and social experience gained during the centuries of modern civilization".¹ The main study of the humanist philosophy is man. Roy tried to interpret man in the light of scientific knowledge, traced all social progress to his ideas and aspirations and visualised a new social order conducive to the welfare and freedom of the individual. He was a full-blooded materialist and maintained that life came out of inanimate matter and man is the highest product of the process of organic evolution. He held that experimentally life cannot be proved to be anything but a phenomenon of matter in a specific state of physico-chemical organisation.² According to him all the attributes of man including his intelligence and emotion have a physical basis and can be traced back to the lowest form of organic matter.

Roy tried to meet the challenge of the modern "revolution" in science which had blasted the Newtonian outlook dominating the, scientific world for nearly two hundred years. The Theory of Relativity, the Quantum Theory, the electrical structure of matter, Heisenberg's principle of Indeterminacy—all these have revolutionized the traditional concepts of science. The philosophical consequences of the new developments of science are of profound significance. The materiality of matter, the law of causality, the concept of determinism—all have been placed in a melting pot. From these developments some renowned scientists like Eddington and Jeans have come to the conclusion that the ultimate nature of the universe is mental. Scientists like Eddington and Schrödinger think

that determinism must be definitely abandoned while another group including Einstein and Max Planck is of opinion that strict causality would ultimately be restored in physics. Roy tried to face the challenge of the new development of science and sought to prove that they ultimately have strengthened rather than blasted the foundation of materialism. He wrote : "It won't do simply to dismiss authoritative scientific opinion, and the neo-mysticism claiming its sanction from it as ideological efforts to bolster up the tottering bourgeois social order and its cultural super-structure. That is only avoiding the issue... The more convincing method will be to show that the philosophical consequences of the post-Marxian scientific research can be fitted into the materialist view of nature and life. The fallacies of the Newtonian natural philosophy should be admitted; Materialism should be freed from those fallacies and restated in terms which would harmonise with the latest scientific knowledge about the anatomy and physiology' of nature, inanimate as well as living".³ With profound scholarship unusual in a political leader Roy tried to establish that in spite of the recent developments of science, the physical reality remains, though the old concept of matter was no longer tenable. The old dichotomy between Materialism and Idealism, he believed, was still valid in the metaphysical field and maintained that "as a negation of Materialism, idealist philosophy is logically associated with a mystic metaphysics of supernaturalism".⁴ The philosophical systems which prefer to take up an intermediate position were condemned by Roy as the ultra-modern scientific scholasticism. In the Jail Volumes we find Roy's most serious attempt to reconcile materialism with the latest scientific knowledge. In the humanist period he fully subscribed to the ideas elaborated by him in these volumes about the philosophical consequences of modern science, though he now gave up the assumption of any direct relation between the advocacy of Spiritualism or Idealism with the desire to maintain the present class domination.⁵

Roy was, however, not happy with the term 'Materialism' and preferred the expression "Physical Realism". He candidly admitted that the term 'Materialism' has lost its meaning and makes a wrong

impression⁶ but he firmly held that the ultimate reality of the universe was a physical substance. He wrote : "... Materialism must be dissociated from certain notions which have been rendered untenable by the latest discoveries of science. Physics has discarded the old conception of matter, but it has not dissolved the physical universe into nothingness or the fantasy of disembodied minds. The world is not made of indivisible atoms — "the hard lumps of reality" of the Newtonian natural philosophy. But at the same time, physics cannot do without the concept of substance — the substratum of the world of experience. The field is not an abstract mathematical construction; it is measurable; therefore, it is a physical entity."⁷ Roy therefore concluded that all really scientific objections to Materialism could be overcome if the expression "Physical Realism" was used.

Roy held that in the last analysis materialism was also a hypothesis, but he considered it a better hypothesis than a metaphysical non-material spiritual force⁸ mainly for two reasons. First, the hypothesis of materialism can be made within the limits of rational thought and scientific knowledge providing a stimulus for its further expansion.⁹ If materialism is accepted, man's urge to explain phenomena hitherto considered inexplicable would grow, but the assumption of a metaphysical non-material force would place man at the tender mercies of an inscrutable providence which would consequently retard the expansion of human knowledge. Secondly, freedom of man, Roy thought, is inconsistent with the faith in the omnipotence of God. He wrote : "The restoration of God, in one form or another, will necessarily deprive man of his sovereignty. Surrendering spiritual freedom, he will naturally doubt his power, and forego his right to remake the world."¹⁰ Faith in God, Roy maintained, is inconsistent with the view that man is the maker of his own destiny, because, religion reduces man simply as the means for the manifestation of God's grace. Roy proclaimed that the Radical Humanist philosophy, therefore, deposed God because, as he said, "unless we can depose God, (it is) no use fighting for freedom."¹¹

Though he accepted materialism as an explanation of the origin of the world, inorganic as well as organic, Roy never accepted what

we may call social materialism. Human nature, according to the philosophy of New Humanism, is determined more by physical and biological rather than by social and environmental factors. The experience of the Russian Revolution had undermined Roy's faith in the supremacy of the social environment over the nature of man. The main problem before him was to discover in human nature a sanction for a harmonious social order as well as the basic incentive to all social progress. The first he discovered in human reason and the second in man's urge for freedom which was also ultimately rooted in human reason or intelligence. Roy's assumption of the rational man and his political philosophy based upon it revived the tradition of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment secularised the old concept of the "law of nature" which was at first propounded by the Greek thinkers.¹² By natural law they understood an intuition of the human heart about what is morally just. The Stoic philosophers and the mediaeval schoolman equated natural law with reason, and their concept of reason was still associated with divine revelation. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, natural laws were understood more or less in the same sense as laws of science. In science, the laws of physical nature are deduced rationally from the observed facts about the nature of matter. From this it was concluded that the laws of human nature could also be deduced from an observation of the supposed facts of human nature. Once the laws of human nature were established scientifically it was assumed that man would conform to them just as matter conformed to the physical law of nature. Man must therefore be made conscious of his own nature. Education or enlightenment was the only way to human regeneration. In his philosophy of New Humanism Roy carried the tradition of the Law of Nature understood in the rational and secular sense and tried to explain the basis of human reason more fully.

As a materialist Roy tried to trace the roots of human nature to physical and biological factors. Man is the product of a long process of evolution—physical and biological—and the nature of man is determined by this process. First, subject to an evolutionary process, human nature, Roy maintained, cannot be an immutable category. He took up an evolutionary view of human nature and wrote: "It is

a hackneyed saying that human nature never changes. The truth however is just the contrary: to change is human nature. Otherwise there is no sense in regarding the history of civilization as an evolutionary process."¹³ But in spite of the evolution and changes there are, Roy maintained, some constant factors in human nature and the origin of these factors were traced by him to this process of evolution itself. Roy recognised the uniqueness of the individual but as human beings they all have some factors in common which form the foundation of human nature.

In the philosophy of Radical Humanism two basic traits of human nature are emphasised. One is the rationality of man and the other is the human urge for freedom. Roy tried to trace the origin of these two basic traits of human nature to the physical universe and to the pre-human biological evolution without postulating anywhere a transcendental category. He, in other words, tried to interpret human nature in physical and naturalistic terms.

It is an old assumption of political philosophy that man is a rational animal. Roy tried to discover the root of human rationality to the law-governed physical universe. He wrote: "Rising out of the background of the law governed physical nature, the human being is essentially rational."¹⁴ There is strict uniformity in physical nature and all its phenomena are regulated by inexorable laws. Man with his highly developed brain and nervous system serving as the means of inter-relations between the organism and its environment becomes conscious of the law-governed character of the universe. "The mind," Roy wrote, "becomes conscious of the environments, the radius of which gradually expands until the entire nature is embraced. It being consciousness of a law-governed system, human mind is necessarily rational in essence."¹⁵ In the physical world man finds that nothing happens arbitrarily. Every phenomenon in nature is connected with some other phenomenon or phenomena. From this experience man concludes that nothing can happen in nature without some cause. This makes him rational, and he begins to think in terms of cause and effect. Explaining the rise of human reason he wrote: "Reason is the simple, instinctive notion that every object of experience is connected with some other object or objects which

may or may not have been already experienced; but, because of the belief in the connection, which holds the world of experience together, their existence is assumed."¹⁶ The reason in man, in the words of Roy, is thus an echo of the harmony of the universe.¹⁷ He pointed out that reason did not appear suddenly in man, but in a rudimentary form it is present even among animals, though their activities still remained on the instinctive level. And an instinctive act, he pointed out, presupposes consciousness, and results from the automatic operation of intelligence.¹⁸ Human rationality, according to Roy, is a developed form of instinctive rationality present in the animal kingdom. Man, he maintained, inherited the mental and emotional equipments of the animals as the basis of "humanness."¹⁹

Roy thus traced the origin of human rationality to "the rational foundation of the objective physical world."²⁰ In his philosophy "reason has, as it were", as Dr. J. P. Van Praag has put it, "emancipated itself in man from living nature."²¹ The process of emancipation began with the pre-human biological organisms and reached the culmination in man. Roy thus found a secular foundation of human rationality and made it independent of any transcendental significance. His main purpose was to integrate materialist philosophy with human reason, and he said that "unless we can trace reason to the common denominator of monistic Materialism, rationalism has no meaning for me".²² Trying to secularise the concept of human reason Roy observed : "Reason is not a metaphysical category. It is the consciousness of the harmony of nature, and as such an empirical reality. Rationality is a biological function, which is microcosmic echo of the rhythm of the cosmos."²³ Reason is an empirical reality because it is represented by physical nature itself ("Physical determinism is reason in nature"),²¹ and it is a biological function because man becomes conscious of it owing to his highly developed brain which he has inherited from his animal ancestry.

It is interesting to note here that in the Jail Volumes there is a passage very similar to the ideas explained above. Roy wrote : "Rationalism is the mental reflex of physical causality ... Causality

is reason in nature. If nature were irrational, that is to say, if causality were not an objective reality, an ontological category, rationalist thought would be impossible. Intelligence is a biological function, and, as such, is a part of physical nature. Reason is born of intelligence. It is the consciousness of causality in nature."²⁵ Explaining the secular character of human reason he observed : "In the light of the demonstrated fact that causality is an objective reality and an ontological category, reason ceases to be a metaphysical mystery. Reason derives its authority from the objective physical laws, which, in the last analysis, are but generalised statements of causal relations."²⁶

It should be pointed out here that by describing man as rational, Roy oversimplified the problem of human nature. The dynamism of non-rational factors of the human mind has not been taken fully into consideration in his philosophy. Roy did not, it is true, exclude emotions and will from the concept of human nature, but he maintained that they could be reconciled with reason. "Reason being a biological property, it is not the antithesis of will. Intelligence and emotion can be reduced to a common biological denominator."²⁷ He explained his point thus : "(Man) rose out of the background of the physical universe, through the long process of biological evolution. The umbilical cord was never broken; man, with his mind, intelligence, will remain an integral part of the physical universe. The latter is a cosmos—a law-governed system. Therefore, man's being and becoming, his emotions, will, ideas are also determined; man is essentially rational."²⁸ Man's will and emotions are also determined in the sense that they are caused by physical factors. They are rational in so far as they are not mysterious categories. Understood in this light, Roy's assertion that "will is not an irrational impulse"²⁹ may be accepted. But there is no denying the fact that human will and emotion sometimes tend to go against rational consideration. Roy was not quite oblivious of this aspect of human nature. He wrote—although in a different context—that "most emotional acts are voluntary but not rational result of free thinking. Will often defies reason."³⁰ The presence of will having a tendency to defy reason is a specific feature of man's character, and it makes

human nature an extremely complex phenomenon. The physical nature follows a set of laws mechanically which makes the physical system law-governed. The lower animals also follow their instinct without having any tendency contrary to it within themselves. But on the human level the problem becomes complex by the presence of a conflict between different tendencies within man. Roy could not ignore this problem and he wrote : "The universe is a physical system. Having grown out of that background, the human being is also a physical system. But there is a great difference : The physical Universe is law-governed, the laws being inherent in itself, whereas man possesses will and can choose. Between the world of man and the world of inanimate matter there lies the vast world of biological evolution. The latter has its own specific laws which, however, can be referred back to the general laws of the world of dead matter; consciousness appears at a much later stage. Therefore human will cannot be directly related to the laws of the physical universe".³¹ Admitting this peculiar feature of man, Roy asserted that "inasmuch as the entire process of biological evolution takes place in the context of the world of dead matter, human will cannot be an antithesis to the law-governedness of the physical universe. Reason harmonises the two."³² In plain language it means that it is possible for man to direct his will and control his emotion with his rational faculty.

It may however be conceded that man's emotions, will, ideas etc. are determined and can be explained by physical factors and therefore are rational (as opposed to mysterious) categories. But does this functional rationality of the human organism guarantee rational thinking of the human mind? In man's mind passions, emotions and feelings play a dominant role and very often they tend to go counter to the rational thinking. This conflict between passion and reason within the human mind is a common experience of man. The development of psychoanalysis has rendered the problem of human nature all the more complex. The assumption of the "Unconscious" determining the large part of human behaviour has challenged the concept of rational man. The "libido" theory indicates that man's activities are largely determined by impulses rather than by rational calculation. The development of art, science,

social reform etc. was explained by Freud as "sublimation" of the thwarted libido. The 'libido' has been interpreted differently by different writers. Jung does not share Freud's view of Pan-sexualism. According to him the 'libido' is an undifferentiated primal life force which takes the form of various instincts. Adler came to the conclusion that the driving force of life is the Will to Power and the urge to exercise superiority over others. Along with psycho-analysis there developed another school of thought throwing doubts on the assumption that man is rational. This trend of thought is known as anti-intellectualism though the name is a misleading one. The so-called "anti-intellectuals" are not against reason or intelligence. After much observation they have come to the conclusion that human thought and conduct are more often than not determined by appetites, passion, prejudices, conditional reflexes etc. Graham Wallas in his book *Human Nature in Politics* pointed out after a study of British politics that the voters did not consider the issues logically and rationally, not even by intelligent self-interest, but were mostly influenced by prejudices, flattery, good looks of the candidates and many other minor and negligible factors. Pareto and many others also came to the same conclusion. Referring to the development of psycho-analysis, Roy pointed out that it has only a limited scope and can deal only with psycho-pathological cases and all its theories which claim a wider application were considered by him as "far-fetched".³³ The doctrine of psycho-analysis may not be wholly true but it has raised an important problem, namely, the role of passion and blind urges in shaping man's conduct and behaviour. While analysing the concept of human nature Roy did not take this aspect of the problem seriously into consideration though he recognised that the psychological factors must be given proper place in social dynamics.³⁴ The concept of human nature should be based upon a more thorough analysis of human instincts and emotion. These points are mentioned not to establish the irrational character of man but only to emphasise the complexity of his nature. Different thinkers have judged men from different stand-points and all views are only partially true. Man, in the words of Max. C. Otto, "escapes the neat formulas in which the unimaginative would capture him."³⁵

Secondly, it is doubtful whether human rationality can be derived from rational or law-governed world. On the human level reason means reasonable. Otherwise, reason can never be conceived as the basis of morality, as Roy tried, we shall see later on, to show. But can law-governedness of the physical nature make men reasonable? Law-governedness may give rise to a feeling of fatalism in man rather than rationality understood in the above sense. The physical world is determined by inexorable and mechanical laws, and from this experience man may conclude that everything including life is also determined in the same way. This may logically give rise to fatalism rather than rationalism. Ludwig Von Mises argues almost on the same line as Roy and says that "man is what he is because he lives in a world of regularity and has the mental power to conceive the relation of cause and effect."³⁶ Human thinking on the basis of cause-and-effect relation leads him to realise that if he wants to attain a definite end, he must resort to the appropriate means.³⁷ But man's power to postulate a desirable end presupposes his freedom of will and ability of making a choice between a number of alternatives. Human rationality must be understood only with reference to his freedom to choose. Man can be reasonable not in the context of the law-governed universe but only when he is confronted with the problem of choice. Roy (also Von Mises) recognised man's freedom of will and ability to choose, but, as we have mentioned earlier, this freedom, in Roy's own admission, cannot be related to "the laws of the physical universe". Therefore, human rationality cannot be derived directly from the law-governed universe.

The urge for freedom, according to M. N. Roy, is the second basic trait of human nature. The origin of this urge was also traced by him to the animal world and to the biological heritage of man. But before discussing the origin of this urge let us first explain what he meant by it. He defined freedom as "progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals, as human beings, and not as cogs in the wheels of a mechanical social organism."³⁸ The essence of freedom lies in the unfoldment of the potentialities latent in man, but these potentialities, according to Roy, are not divine in character but "biologically inherent in

man."³⁹ Man is biologically so constituted with his complex nervous system and highly developed brain that everyone has infinite potentialities of development within him. And the urge for freedom is a creative urge felt by individuals to develop these potentialities. Freedom thus has not simply an economic or political content but refers to the all-sided development of man's "intellectual and other human potentialities."⁴⁰ A man cannot be free unless he becomes conscious of the potentialities within him and feels the urge to develop them. Human freedom, Roy warned, would not automatically follow from a certain pattern of socio-economic reconstruction nor can it be imposed upon the masses by a group of well-meaning individuals.⁴¹ Freedom, he said, must not be conceived as "an ideal to be attained all at once, at same particular point of time, but as an experience to be made in every moment of man's life."⁴² In other words, freedom depends more upon the mind of the individual, his desire to unfold his potentialities, than upon any external social conditions. Not that freedom was conceived by Roy as quite independent of the social context. He admitted that the circumstances under which man lives set a limit to human endeavours. "Made under adverse circumstances", he wrote, "the best of endeavours may not be fruitful, while under more favourable conditions they may bear fruit."⁴³ But there is no necessary relation between social condition and human freedom, and even under the most favourable conditions man may remain indifferent towards the development of his inherent potentialities. Roy pointed out that "a comfortable physical existence often discourages all creative human endeavours and blunts the moral sensibility of human beings", which, he said, "warrants the conclusion that in a society which attaches greater importance to material well-being and economic prosperity, freedom may be placed at a discount."⁴⁴ Economic prosperity, in other words, would never lead to freedom unless the people individually feel the urge for it within themselves. "While economic sufficiency", Roy wrote, "may be helpful to cultural growth, the view that the one is the pre-condition of the other is historically false and logically untenable."⁴⁵ It is obvious that the miscarriage of the Russian Revolution led Roy to conceive freedom in this broad perspective. The Russian experiment

showed that economic prosperity may lead to human servitude and the change of the economic structure may not necessarily mean the change of the cultural outlook of man. He, therefore, concluded that the concept of freedom must have, in addition to economic prosperity and political democracy, a cultural connotation and its basis must be sought in human nature itself rather than in external environment.

Thus, the urge for freedom, according to Roy, is embedded in human nature. Man inherited it from his animal ancestry. "The quest for freedom is the continuation on a higher level—of intelligence and emotion—of the biological struggle for existence."⁴⁶ The urge for existence is a universal urge in the biological world, and the human urge for freedom, Roy maintained, is the developed form of this animal urge. The animals try to exist but man tries not only to exist but to prosper and to unfold his diverse potentialities. On the sub-human biological level the struggle for existence is very largely mechanical. The environment, if unfavourable, may lead to the extinction of the organism, and the struggle for existence is the striving of the organism to save itself from the tyranny of nature. The organism conducts this struggle by a process of mechanical adaptation. Those who can adapt themselves successfully survive, and those who cannot become extinct. But on the human level this struggle for existence takes a new form. It becomes purposive. Man does not seek simply to adapt himself to environment but tries to change the environment to suit his purpose. The proto-human ancestors of man, for example, had to depend upon their arms to pluck the fruits and tried to prolong their arms in order to wage the struggle for existence successfully, but the moment an anthropoid discovered that he could break a branch with which to pluck a fruit beyond the reach of his arm, the struggle for existence became the quest for freedom. The biological evolution tended towards the social evolution.⁴⁷ With this branch man began, as it were, his struggle to conquer nature and the modern highly developed technology is the continuation of that struggle which was "no longer for mere existence but in quest for freedom."⁴⁸ The struggle for existence developed into a positive quest for freedom owing to man's

desire to be free from the physical limitations and that incentive, Roy pointed out, was due to the power of the human brain. It was the human intelligence that enabled man to make use of a branch to pluck the fruits and the whole subsequent history of the conquest of nature was ultimately due to the superior intelligence of man.⁴⁹ Thus the urge for freedom is also ultimately rooted in human intelligence or reason.

It may be pointed out here that Roy's definition of freedom appears to be narrow and negative.⁵⁰ It is simply the disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals. Freedom, as defined by him, does not include the presence of the conditions favourable for the development of human potentialities. In this connection we may profitably refer to the definition of liberty given by Laski. He defined it as "the absence of restraint upon the existence of those social conditions which, in modern civilization, are the necessary guarantees of individual happiness."⁵¹ Here we find what we may call a positive concept of freedom. By individual happiness Laski actually means "the continuous expression of his personality"⁵²—the same as the unfoldment of individual potentialities. Though Roy in his writings did not deny the importance of social conditions, in his definition of the concept of freedom he ignored the positive social aspect altogether. Most probably he feared that the emphasis upon the social conditions might lead to the eclipse of the individual. Commenting upon Green's concept of positive freedom, Roy wrote that it "was the capacity of self-realisation, the conditions for the attainment of which ideal are guaranteed by an orderly harmonious social world. The implication of this positive idea of freedom is clear enough : Individual freedom is realised in the harmony of the community. An echo of the Hegelian doctrine of the state."⁵³ Roy's approach to the social aspect of human freedom was shame-faced. The miscarriage of the Russian revolution which gave emphasis upon the environmental conditions led him to swing to the other extreme.

Roy tried to trace the origin of the human urge for freedom to the biological struggle for existence. The urge for freedom as defined by him is not simply a desire for a comfortable life but a creative

urge to unfold the varied potentialities within the individuals. He refused to admit any causal relation between economic well-being and the urge for freedom, and referred to the great artists, poets and scientists who lived in great poverty but in spite of all hardships and handicaps, were successful to unfold their creative talents.⁵⁴ The urge for freedom, as denned by Roy, is an ideal for man, and the ability to conceive and follow an ideal is a special human attribute. But an ideal should not be confused with the biological nature of man. Human nature deals with the empirical rather than the ideal man. There is undoubtedly a close relation between what man is and what he should become, but still a line of distinction must be drawn between the two. The urge for security, comfort and prosperity rather than the urge for freedom as defined by Roy may logically be considered as a continuation of the struggle for existence. Man's struggle with Nature may directly be related to his desire for a comfortable existence but the urge to unfold one's intellectual and other human potentialities is essentially a human urge rather than a biological heritage.

In Roy's ethical doctrine freedom is the highest value—the supreme criterion of all value judgements. Whatever promotes freedom is good and whatever retards it is bad. He wrote: "Freedom is not an instrumental value. It is not a means to something; it is an end in itself."⁵⁵

The quest for freedom, Roy maintained, leads necessarily to a search for the truth. The shaping of the environment into some purposive form to suit the interest of man implies knowledge of the environment. Any attempt to bring Nature under human control for the purpose of promoting his freedom pre-supposes knowledge of the laws of Nature. As man acquires knowledge of the laws of Nature he discovers the truth because, as Roy has put it, "truth is the content of knowledge."⁵⁶ Truth, according to him, is not a metaphysical concept but a matter of human experience, a matter of fact. He defined truth as "correspondence with objective reality—the relation between two objects of experience."⁵⁷ Knowledge of the laws of Nature therefore means the discovery of the Truth. The search for truth, therefore, according to Roy, is intimately associated

with the quest for freedom.⁵⁸ Freedom, knowledge and truth are thus woven harmoniously in the texture of his ethical philosophy. From this relation of freedom, knowledge and truth, Roy came to a sweeping conclusion. He wrote: "The hierarchy of humanist axiology thus is freedom, knowledge, truth. They are not autonomous; they are interrelated, logically as well as ontologically. Therefore, freedom cannot be attained by immoral means, nor can an enlightened man be a liar."⁵⁹ But a logical relation does not imply a moral connotation. The urge for freedom might have supplied the impetus to discover the truth by unveiling the mysteries of Nature. But once knowledge is acquired there is no guarantee that it would be used only to promote human freedom. Science is the result of man's search for the truth but it is being used to destroy human civilization. The statement that the enlightened man cannot be a liar is also highly misleading. If enlightenment includes moral excellence then the statement is simply tautology but if it implies intellectual attainment, it is both empirically untenable and logically fallacious. Knowledge itself does not ensure self-control which is the essence of morality. Knowledge is power but it does not indicate the way in which it will be used because knowledge is ethically neutral.

The rationality of man which is the basic trait of human nature was considered by Roy as the only secure foundation of morality. He maintained that man is moral because he is rational. "Morality", Roy wrote, "emanates from the rational desire for harmonious and mutually beneficial social relations."⁶⁰ Tracing the origin of morality he observed: "One knows from experience what is good for him and what is bad for him. Therefore he generalises that what is good for him is good for all like himself, and what is bad for him is also bad for all. That is the origin of morality."⁶¹

Man requires society for the unfoldment of his own potentialities and therefore compliance with the social laws and regulations also serves ultimately his own interest. Roy held that such rational considerations make man moral not under any compulsion but voluntarily, the sanction of morality being embedded in his own nature.⁶² Morality, therefore, according to him, must be referred to man's innate rationality. He admitted that his own existence is the

primary concern of man and therefore in this sense man is selfish, but "rationality", he pointed out, "can subordinate man's selfishness to enlightened self-interest which is a social virtue."⁶³ Enlightened self-interest can harmonise individual welfare with social welfare. Morality, he said, is not a mystic or mysterious category but "a biological function, on the level of consciousness."⁶⁴ Roy described conscience as the measure of the consciousness of man's social responsibility.⁶⁵ Conscience is a biological function inasmuch as the human brain, a biological organ, is the source of its origin. Conscience, Roy maintained, must not be referred to the imaginary divine spark in man but should be taken as the expression of his essential rationality.⁶⁶ There are rules of conduct even among the higher animals possessed with the instinct of reason, and man, he pointed out, inherited those rules from his animal ancestry as the foundation of his morality.⁶⁷ Human morality, therefore, is secular in character.

Roy did not recognise any causal relation between morality and religion. Abiding moral values must be rooted in the basic and original attributes of human nature but "originally", Roy asserted, "man was not religious".⁶⁸ Human nature, he said, is not to believe in some benevolent super-human power. He took up the attitude of an orthodox materialist about the origin of religion though he no longer considered it as an instrument devised by the exploiters to perpetuate the system of exploitation. Religion, Roy maintained, is a product of man's reason and urge for freedom—the two basic attributes of human nature. He agreed with James Frazer that the age of religion was preceded by the age of magic. Roy held that faith in magic, however erroneous, had a rational basis. It was based upon the assumption that the same causes would always produce the same effects. In the primitive age, owing to his ignorance man believed that the magicians by sheer force of spells and enchantments could produce desirable effects. As experience exposed the limitations of the power of the magicians, man imagined a number of gods controlling the various phenomena of nature. Thus arose the gods of natural religion, which, Roy pointed out, "was the rational effort of the barbarian to explain the phenomena of nature

and his experience thereof."⁶⁹ In his search for the cause of such natural phenomena as rain, storm, movements of the stars etc. man postulates various gods and goddesses of the natural religion. The search was an expression of his innate rationality—his faith that everything must have a cause. Monotheism followed as a logical corollary to the primitive rationalist view of polytheism. The gods of natural religion must be traced to one fundamental cause and thus arose the notion of the Almighty Creator. The gods of natural religion as well as the Supreme Being of monotheism, Roy maintained, was analogous to the hypotheses of science. Both science and religion are attempts to explain the mysteries of nature, and religion was regarded by Roy as a backward stage of science. He characterised religion as "a rational system of thought, limited by the inadequate store of positive knowledge."⁷⁰ On the same ground he described religion during his Marxist period as "the naive form of nascent science."⁷¹ Religion and science are thus two stages in the spiritual evolution of man, both determined by man's urge for freedom and his rational nature. The religious spirit of absolute dependence upon God represents, according to him, the human urge for freedom, because, the urge under-lying the sentiment of surrender is a desire—desire for deliverance with the help and grace of God. It is, therefore, "an intelligent act—an act committed with a purpose, believing that it will produce the desired result."⁷²

Roy pointed out that the basic assumption of religion, whether polytheism or monotheism, is that Nature is a law-governed system and that its laws are made by some superior power. Religion urges man to propitiate those superior powers either by sacrifice or by prayer ultimately for his own welfare. Religion does not deny order in nature but ascribes it to the inscrutable will of God. The idea of the law-governed universe, inherent in religious thought, laid the foundation of modern science which tried to find out the laws of nature within Nature itself instead of postulating a superior power as law-maker. Aided by the increased store of knowledge human reason gave up religion as an unnecessary hypothesis but moral values must survive religion and therefore they must be integrated with a secular philosophy.

Roy believed that a system of secular morality was of vital importance for human freedom. In the first place, in this age of secularism, brought about by the development of science, moral values anchored in religion would have meaning only in man's private life.⁷³ In the absence of secular morality a secular state may logically degenerate into a state without morality. On the other hand, any attempt to revive religious morality would inevitably go directly against the modern principle of secularism. The only remedy to this problem is to rear moral values on the scientific principle of secularism.

Secondly, not only secularism but the freedom of man itself, Roy believed, was incompatible with religious morality. He wrote : "The religious faith in man's moral essence limits his sovereignty, indeed it is a negation of the liberating concept. In the last analysis, it implies that man as man cannot be moral; to be so, he must feel himself subordinated to a super-human-power. With this paralysing sense of spiritual subservience, man can never be really free."⁷⁴ As we have already mentioned Roy believed that the freedom of man is incompatible with the omnipotence of God, and therefore religious morality was condemned by him as 'spiritual terrorism'.⁷⁵ To deserve freedom, Roy thought, man must become moral out of his own free will. He asked — "Can man be moral by his nature, without any compulsion, be it of religious or law or social convention?"⁷⁶ Spontaneous and voluntary morality would be possible only if the origin of morality could be traced to some quality inherent in man. This he found in man's innate rationality.

Roy's concern for moral values and his attempt to integrate them with the rational nature of man instead of associating them with religion or treating them simply as a super-structure upon the given socio-economic factors can be traced back to his earlier writings. In the Jail Volumes he wrote : "The religious man's morality is either hypocrisy or performed under duress. A materialist is moral by his own conviction. He practises virtue not as a payment for a place in heaven or for the salvation of his soul, but simply because he cannot help it."⁷⁷ In his ethical philosophy Roy was essentially an Epicurean, both during his Marxist and Humanist periods.

So far we have discussed the sanction and basis of moral values. Let us now briefly refer to their content. The content of religious morality is not necessarily inconsistent with that of secular rational ethics. Religion also has a rational basis and therefore many of the religious moral values, Roy held, may be incorporated in the system of rationalistic ethics. "One can be an unmitigated materialist and yet", Roy wrote, "most punctitiously obey the Ten Commandments without in the least compromising his freedom."⁷⁸

Moral values are divided by Roy into two categories — changing values and basic values. Some values are dependent upon social conditions and they would necessarily change with changes in society. "Given the biological foundation of the impulse of morality", Roy wrote, "the forms of its expression, if not the essence, is bound to change in course of the process of social evolution."⁷⁹ Some moral values, therefore, he explained, must be referred to the context of changing social relations. But, though moral values have been enriched, expanded and amplified in course of human experience, he accepted certain ethical principles as basic human values.⁸⁰ They are eternal and transcend time and space because they are not causally connected with the material conditions of life of any particular age.⁸¹ Religious morality, however, appears to be inconsistent with the changing or dynamic concept of human values. With divine sanction religious morality tends to become dogmatic and it refuses to change with changes in the social conditions and therefore religious philosophy cannot take an evolutionary view of human morality. He observed : "To be moral, one needs only to be human; it is not necessary to go in search of divine or mystic-metaphysical sanction. Humanist morality is evolutionary."⁸² Rational ethics, moreover, is closely related with aesthetics. It is based upon the Renaissance culture which was remarkable for its passionate worship of beauty and partiality for the joy of life.⁸³ In so far as religious moral values are influenced by asceticism they are inconsistent with the humanist concept of rational ethics. "Morality", Roy wrote, "will be a soul-killing virtue, if it cannot co-habit with the pleasant, the enjoyable and the beautiful."⁸⁴

Roy's attempt to reconcile ethics with rationalism and materialism in the philosophy of Humanism is a subject of great controversy. Some are of opinion that without faith in God, a philosophy of Humanism cannot be built up and practised. Following Jacques Maritain, the French Catholic theorist, we may distinguish between two kinds of humanism, the *theocentric* and *anthropocentric* humanism, the former being based upon religion and the latter continuing the tradition of the Renaissance and (in the opinion of many including Maritain) the Reformation.⁸⁵ In the West the foremost exponent of the theocentric humanism in our times is Jacques Maritain himself. In India Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda along with many others belonged to this tradition. Recently Jayaprakash Narayan, the well known Bhoodan leader of India, has also developed a humanist philosophy and has given up materialism in order to make room for ethics. He explains his ideas thus : "If man and his consciousness and the society and culture which he has built up are mere manifestations of matter—howsoever dialectically active—I can see no reason why in such a society, anyone should try to be good, that is, be generous, kind, unselfish. Why should then one feel sympathy with those who are weak, poor or sick? What is matter will dissolve into matter after death. So, what incentive can there be for moral behaviour? Lust for power or wealth or desire to win the acclaim of the people, or the regard of one's peers, may be incentives to action. But such incentives can have no concern with valuations of right or wrong."⁸⁶

As a matter of fact, the same set of moral values may be integrated into different schools of philosophical thought but Roy rightly pointed out that if ethics was to remain anchored in religion, the present trend towards secular public life cannot be reconciled with moral values. To uphold the tradition of secularism a system of secular ethics must be developed. But is human reason alone an adequate sanction for morality? The heart of man is no less real than the head, and ethics must be related to both. As Raymond Aron has put it: "The death of God leaves a void in the human soul; the need of the heart remains and must be satisfied..."⁸⁷ The ethical progress of man requires not simply the development of his

reasoning power but also training of the emotion. As Bertrand Russell puts it: "But wisdom is not *merely* intellectual: intellect may guide and direct, but does not guarantee the force that leads to action. The force must be derived from the emotions. Emotions that have desirable social consequence are not so easily generated as hate and rage and fear. In their creation, much depends upon early childhood; much also, upon economic circumstances. Something, however, can be done, in the course of ordinary education, to provide the nourishment upon which the better emotions can grow and to bring about the realization of what may give value to human life."⁸⁸ Corliss Lamont, an advocate of the man-centred Humanism like Roy, also tries to find out in man an impulse—in addition to reason—as the basis of morality. He writes : "The sympathetic impulses in human nature, such as the parental, the sexual and the gregarious, become socially transformed and broadened in human association."⁸⁹ Ashley Montagu also tried to find out a biological and emotional basis of the social and cooperative life of man. He writes : "The fact that such diverse groups as insects and mammals have developed social life strongly suggests the existence in organic life of deep-seated potentialities toward socialization or rather toward what might more properly be called sociality, the tendency to be attracted to and exist together with other organisms."⁹⁰ Julian Huxley speaks of the 'religious emotion'⁹¹ of man and stands for a religion without revelation or God. He thinks that belief in God in the sense of "a personal or super-personal Divine being, or at least a belief in supernatural beings of some kind"⁹² is not the essence of religion. The normal man, he says, "has an innate capacity for experiencing sanctity in certain events,"⁹³ and everything, according to him, comes "within the ambit of religion in so far as they are touched with sanctity by the mind, in so far as they are thought of and felt as sacred."⁹⁴ Roy, however, considered the idea of a religion without the dogma of revelation as an absurdity.⁹⁵ Julian Huxley believes that religion without God is possible and he refers to Buddhism as an example⁹⁶ but Roy thought that some form of supernatural and transcendental force is an essential feature of religion. It is needless for us to enter into the controversy as to

whether faith in God is essential for religion. But Roy's Pan-rationalism is not a sufficiently strong basis of the system of secular morality. The control of emotion by reason is necessary but human emotions themselves also have to be refined and morality must be related with those emotions which, in the words of Bertrand Russell, have desirable social consequences.

Roy's theory of secular morality did not effectively deal with the core of the ethical problem. The moral problem of today is not mainly a problem of discovering new value-concepts or their roots and sanctions but of practising the long recognised perennial values in actual life in the face of various obstacles, psychological and social. Ignoring this aspect of the problem, Roy wrote : "The moral chaos of our time is not the Nemesis of modern materialist civilization; it has resulted from the fallacies of traditional ethical doctrines and classical moral philosophies. A moral regeneration of the modern world, therefore, calls for a moral philosophy with no transcendental, super-natural, extra-intellectual reference."⁹⁷

It is very difficult to agree with this view. The moral chaos of our time is due more to the failure of man than to the failure of, moral philosophies. The uncontrolled selfishness of man rather than his failure to find a sanction of moral values within himself lies at the root of the moral problem of our time. The difference between rational will and selfish will is too obvious, and the problem of morality is essentially a problem of the subordination of the selfish will by the rational will of man. In other words, it is a problem of self-control. This point was not quite overlooked by Roy; on one occasion he pointed out that the control of passion must be given a prominent place in a rationalist system of ethics.⁹⁸ But how was this to be done? While reviewing the *Essays on Human Evolution* by Sir Arthur Keith, Roy wrote : "The purpose of the civilized man's life is to acquire control of the forces of nature in order to check the blind evolutionary urge, to tame the animal in man and to promote the development of humanness. Ethical values are created in that process. That is how ethics is related to science and the relation is not accidental, but causal."⁹⁹ But it is extremely difficult to establish any causal relation between man's attempt to acquire control of the

forces of physical nature and his endeavour to suppress the animal in him. For the former, knowledge is enough; for the latter, knowledge alone is inadequate. Morality does not follow necessarily from the knowledge of what is good nor from a true theory of ethics. Roy's theory of ethics is open to the same charge which was levelled against Socrates long ago. Socrates maintained that if a man only knows what is right, he will infallibly do what is right. Roy also in the same strain appeared to believe that if man is given a true theory of ethics and can find the sanction of moral values within his reason he would become moral. Therefore he held the fallacies, of traditional moral doctrines responsible for man's moral crisis. Even when Roy had been a Marxist he believed that right knowledge was the only reliable foundation of ethical conduct. He wrote : "The materialist is virtuous not out of fear, by coercion, for greed; he is virtuous, because he cannot be otherwise, and it is knowledge that enables him to be so."¹⁰⁰ But men in fact do commit wrong knowing full well what is right. And a true theory of ethics would not by itself be a sufficient reason for him to tread the moral path. There is a gulf of difference between the application of knowledge to acquire control of the forces of Nature and the application, of knowledge (of goodness) to guide the human conduct. The latter presupposes, as we have already pointed out, self-control and the subordination of the animal in man. The ability of man in practising self-control is the true index of his moral development. In an attempt to justify Roy's view Dr Dhar writes : "From this animal ancestry he (man) has been carrying over in his physiological and psychological make-up some primitive elements like greed, hatred, cruelty, etc. In individual cases these elements sometimes disobey the commands of reason and give psychology predominance over logic. This gives rise to the fundamental problem of ethics. It is, however, expected that reason would enable man to acquire increasing knowledge also about the mental world of man and thus to manipulate the evil passions so as to generate a social disposition in him."¹⁰¹ Subordination of evil passions by reason is indeed the fundamental problem of ethics. It presupposes the training of will, an objective which cannot be realised simply by increased knowledge about the mental world of man. This knowledge is

necessary but not adequate for the ethical development of man. Rational considerations alone cannot lead to self-control. Ethical principles may be deduced by human reason from experience but reason and knowledge may not by themselves persuade man to control his selfishness and lead his life in accordance with the rational ethical principles. Reason may urge man to be very cautious in the pursuit of his own self-interest. The rational pursuit of self-interest may not be incompatible with the practice of deceit and dishonesty provided the perpetrator can escape detection.

Morality which implies self-control is essentially a human problem and any attempt to establish a logical connection between ethics and the physical world would be far-fetched. Therefore it is difficult for us to accept Roy's view that "a secular rationalist system of ethics can be logically deduced from the mechanistic cosmology of the materialist philosophy."¹⁰² Explaining his view Roy wrote: "As the repository of residues antedating homo sapiens, the psyche is not a link between the mortal man and the immortal spirit (God); it is the umbilical cord which binds man, with all his spiritual attributes, to Mother Nature—the physical world. Spiritual values are physically determined, the psyche is a daughter of the Mother Earth."¹⁰³ For establishing the secular character of moral values it is enough to indicate the physical origin of life and the animal ancestry of man, the human psyche having inherited the impulses of the pre-human biological organism. But the attempt to establish a direct link between the human psyche and the physical world is both redundant and far-fetched. Facts and values belong to two different realms of existence and any social studies where judgements of value are involved must be different from the purely causal or factual sciences. But in order to reconcile moral values with materialism Roy sometimes ignored this vital difference. In order to give ethics a high place in social philosophy, "moral philosophy" Roy believed "must be related to science".¹⁰⁴ With the development of science and the rise of secularism, morality, according to him, tended to decline because of the failure to find out a causal relation between ethical values and the world of science. Moral philosophy, Roy wrote, was baffled by the problem of deducing values from facts.¹⁰⁵

Science was given the role of explaining facts of the transitory natural phenomena but the moral values were deduced from the metaphysical-transcendental order. Roy tried to do away with this dichotomy and sought to establish a causal relation between ethics and the philosophy of scientific materialism. The scientific outlook was thus confused with the spirit of "scientism" which implies the belief that the problems of social life are essentially similar to the problems of physical nature and both can be dealt with in the same way.

The dangerous implications of the fallacy of 'scientism' becomes evident when we examine Roy's ideal about the objective standard of rational ethics. To serve their purpose in society, moral values, Roy said, must have an objective standard. In the absence of this standard two persons in a similar situation may have different ideas of morality. This would inevitably give rise to a concept of relativity in ethics, and "a relativist morality", Roy said, "was bound to end in ethical nihilism".¹⁰⁶ It was mainly on this ground that Roy was opposed to the utilitarian or hedonistic theory of ethics. If individual pleasure or utility is taken as the sole criterion of morality, it cannot be based on an objective universal standard. Pleasure, whatever its role in human psychology, cannot, Roy pointed out, be raised to the status of a moral value.¹⁰⁷ The fundamental fallacy in the logic of utilitarian ethics was the conflict between personal or psychological hedonism and social or moral hedonism. If man does pursue and ought to pursue his own happiness or pleasure why should he pursue the greatest happiness of the greatest number? The principle of hedonism can reconcile the two only, as Roy thought, "by introducing the postulate of survival beyond the grave and with it the belief in ever-lasting rewards and punishments."¹⁰⁸ The hope of eternal happiness in the life after death alone may induce a hedonist to follow the principle of the greatest good of the greatest number. Thus ultimately it comes to religious morality. Roy therefore concluded that utilitarianism offered a powerful critique of orthodox moral philosophy but it failed to present a positive alternative. All attempts to base morality on intuition would, Roy pointed out, necessarily suffer from the danger of relativity.¹⁰⁹ The

Marxist approach towards ethical questions also, Roy maintained, belonged to the tradition of utilitarianism though, under the influence of Hegel, Marx gave up the individualist approach to morality.¹¹⁰ The Marxist theory introduced the idea of class morality. Whatever is done for the proletariat is good and whatever is done for the bourgeoisie is bad. This element of relativity in the Marxist idea of ethics made the communists indifferent to moral values.

Rationalistic ethics, Roy thought, would be free from this drawback and would supply an objective standard of moral values. A common norm of goodness would be discovered, he believed, only when goodness is rationally conceived. "As bio-logical human beings", Roy wrote, "all men are similarly constructed, and therefore are likely to react more or less in a similar manner under similar circumstances, provided that a minimum background of knowledge is given. With the ability of discrimination and judgement, all men, being similarly constructed, can be expected to react similarly in a similar situation, and the ability can be cultivated. That is the hope for the much desired introduction of morality in politics and generally in public behaviour."¹¹¹ Rationality, a constant factor in human nature, Roy believed, can alone supply an objective standard of moral values. Having discovered an objective standard of morality in human reason Roy expected uniformity in human behaviour to such an extent that he came dangerously close to collectivism. On a few basic values universal agreement of all may reasonably be expected, but the hope that men would react similarly in a similar situation is to ignore the complex construction of human psychology and the diversity of human nature. By cultivating the practice of reacting similarly to similar situation man would simply reduce himself to the position of automaton. Unless the diversity of human nature and personality is emphasised (and for this one must go to the non-rational aspect of human nature) the rational concept of man may ultimately lead to a dull uniformity not very different from totalitarianism. Rationality should enable men to accommodate and tolerate diversities instead of annihilating them. Scepticism very often leads to further investigation and is not by itself antagonistic to rationality.

By an analysis of the concept of human nature Roy came to a very optimistic conclusion about man. Man, according to him, is rational, moral and cooperative. He pointed out that the "vulgar concept (of economic man) must be replaced by the reality of an instinctively rational being who is moral because he is rational."¹¹² Without denying the presence of struggle and competition in society Roy wrote that "an unprejudiced study of history reveals that the desire to be helpful to fellow-man is a more fundamental human trait than competition and conflict."¹¹³ Competition, ambition, jealousy, envy, combative instincts etc. were regarded by him more as acquired than inherent attributes of human nature.¹¹⁴ The political, social and economic structure visualised by Roy as well as the methods suggested by him for their realisation were fundamentally based upon this optimistic conception of human nature.

The analysis of human nature as made by Roy appears to be empirically untenable. If man is by nature rational and moral and is inspired by the urge for freedom, why should there be so much irrationality and immorality and encroachment on freedom everywhere in the world? If, as Roy categorically stated, the desire to be helpful to fellow-men was a more fundamental human trait than competition and conflict, the present state of exploitation, corruption, deceit and tension would remain unexplained. Man, in fact, is selfish and self-centered as well as social and cooperative at the same time. No theory of human nature would be adequate to explain man empirically unless this dual nature of man is taken into consideration. Each of these concepts of man—economic and selfish on the one side and rational and moral on the other—is partially true, and therefore misleading. Roy wrote that "if man is selfish and irrational, society must be a coercive organisation, a prison house to be guarded by earthly policemen backed up by heavenly colleagues"¹¹⁵ Is not society at least partially a coercive organisation maintained by the police and the army? To follow one's interest in harmony with the social good is indeed a virtue which every man should try to attain, but men actually very often follow their own individual interests disregarding and ignoring the legitimate interests of others. While analysing human nature

objectively one must not ignore its vulgar and ugly aspect. Conflict and struggle are no less real in human society than cooperation and mutual aid. It is arbitrary to state which is the more fundamental trait of human nature.

As a matter of fact, both competition and co-operation are "facts" of history. The roots of "aggressive competition" are also to be found in human nature and not in the laissez faire theory, however fallacious this theory may be. The presence of both the tendencies in man must be admitted and the subordination of conflict and struggle by mutual co-operation should be taken as the measure of social progress. The optimistic picture of man drawn by Roy is in sharp contrast to the ugly realities of the present day society. "It is better to err being over-optimistic than otherwise",¹¹⁶ argues Dr Dhar in this connection. The study of human nature supplies the raw materials on the basis of which an ethical doctrine and a political philosophy can be raised. If the study is unrealistic, the theories based upon it will be unreliable. Pessimism and optimism are equally dangerous in this case.

Anticipating this charge of over-optimism, Roy maintained that though rationality and the urge for freedom are the basic features of human nature, these urges, however, do not remain at the conscious level of most of the people. He categorically stated that the urge for freedom is the most basic human urge, but most of the time it remains buried deep under the surface of consciousness. He also admitted that very often men do not behave rationally and this was because "man has been told for ages that his nature is to believe and to follow some higher authority." In other words, religion has undermined man's faith in his own rationality. This faith in the Divine will was, according to Roy, the basis of man's subordination to successive oppressive terrestrial powers. Thus, religion destroyed also man's urge for freedom. Submission to Divine Law led man to submit to the monarchs claiming divine power, and thus his urge for freedom was replaced by what Roy called 'fear of freedom', taking the phrase from Erich Fromm.

References :

1. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 37.
2. *The Marxian Way II*, p. 69.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
4. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 266.
5. In the Jail Volumes he wrote : "The fashionable mysticism of our day is not the result of any absolute inadequacy of scientific knowledge. It is the symptom of a social disease. It reflects the striving for a decayed ruling class to restrain the forces of social progress, antagonistic to the established order". *Jail Volumes*, IV, p. 23(a).
While discussing the views of Jeans and Eddington he pointed out that they "philosophically cannot free themselves from the traditions of the ideology of class domination and therefore entertain philosophical views, which directly or indirectly support spiritualism, contradicting their own scientific theories." *Jail Volumes*, III, p. 109(a).
6. M. N. Roy, *Beyond Communism*, p. 43.
7. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 302.
8. *The Marxian Way II*, p. 366.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.
11. M. N. Roy, *Beyond Communism*, p. 43.
12. See Chapter "The Natural Law", *Reason Romanticism and Revolution I*, pp. 132-160.
13. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution I*, p. 19.
14. Principle No. 4. Principle refers to the *Twenty Two principles of Radical Democracy* formulated by M. N. Roy, See Appendix.
15. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution I*, p. 20.
16. *Ibid.*
17. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 36.
18. *The Marxian Way*, Vol. II, p. 68.
19. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution I*, p. 18.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

21. Dr. J. P. Van Praag, *Humanism* (International Humanist and Ethical Union) p. 11.
22. M. N. Roy, *Beyond Communism*, p. 66.
23. M. N. Roy, *The Rhythm of the Cosmos* (Inaugural address at the second All India Rationalist Conference held at Tanali in February 1962 and published in the form of a pamphlet). p. 17.
24. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 257.
25. *Jail Volumes*, VII, pp. 101(b)-102(a).
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 102 (b) - 103 (a).
27. Principle No. 4. See n. 14.
28. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, pp. 35-36.
29. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution I*, p. 40.
30. *The Humanist Way V*, p. 66.
31. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 16.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *The Marxian Way*, Vol. I, p. 271.
34. *Ibid.* II, p. 183.
35. Max C. Otto, *Science and Moral Life*, p. 38.
36. Ludwig Von Mises, *Theory and History*, p. 74.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
38. Principle No. 3.
39. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 268.
40. *Ibid.* II, p. 277.
41. M. N. Roy, *Cultural Requisites of Freedom* (Modern Age and India Seminar lectures No. 14, Leftist Book Club, Calcutta-12), pp. 182, 191.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
45. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 72.
46. Principle No. 2.
47. M. N. Roy, *Cultural Requisites of Freedom*, p. 185.
48. M. N. Roy, *Beyond Communism*, p. 46.

49. *The Marxian Way II*, p. 66.
50. Though 'freedom' is essentially a political concept, this point should still be discussed here since Roy considered the urge for freedom as a basic urge of human nature.
51. Harold Laski, *Liberty in the Modern State*, New Post-war edition, p. 48.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
53. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 127.
54. M. N. Roy, *Cultural Requisites of Freedom*, p.*181.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
56. Principle No. 2.
57. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution I*, p. 32.
58. In the *Jail Volumes* Roy once referred to 'the urges of life' compelling man to undertake ceaseless struggle against nature. He wrote : "The urges of life compel man to take up the endless struggle with nature. In course of this struggle the man penetrates deeper and deeper into the mysteries of nature, and progressively these mysteries cease to be mysteries." *Jail Volumes, II*, p. 107(b) contd. The idea underlying this passage bears close resemblance with his concept of the human quest for freedom and search for truth.
59. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 18.
60. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 35.
61. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution I*, p. 28.
62. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 18.
63. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 103.
64. Principle No. 13.
65. *The Marxian Way I*, p. 180.
66. *Ibid.*, II p. 277.
67. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution I*, p. 28.
68. M. N. Roy, "Religion, Culture and Durga Puja", *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Puja Special Number 1950, p. 10.
69. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution I*, p. 26.
70. *Ibid.*, I, p. 36.
71. *Jail Volumes*, III p. 10 (b).

72. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. I, p. 40.
73. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 13.
74. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. II, pp. 254-55.
75. *The Marxian Way* II, p. 272.
76. *Ibid.*, I, p. 274.
77. *Jail Volumes*, II p. 123 (b).
78. *The Marxian Way* I, p. 180.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
80. M. N. Roy, *Beyond Communism*, p. 35.
81. *The Marxian Way* I, p. 365.
82. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. II, p. 307.
83. *Ibid.*, I, p. 78.
84. *The Marxian Way* I, p. 182.
85. Jacques Maritain, *True Humanism*, p. 19.
86. *Towards a New Society* (Published by the office for Asian Affairs, Congress for Cultural Freedom, New Delhi, India), p. 21.
87. Raymond Aron, *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, p. 279. This was written to explain the views of Auguste Comte but it has a general applicability also.
88. Bertrand Russell, *Power – a new social analysis*, pp 315-16.
89. Corlis Lamont, *Humanism as a Philosophy*, p. 277.
90. Ashley Montagu, *The Direction of Human Development*, p. 17.
91. Julian Huxley, *Religion without Revelation*, p. 122.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
95. *The Marxian Way* III, p. 269.
96. Julian Huxley, op. cit., p. 100.
97. *The Marxian Way* III, p. 267.
98. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. II, p. 115.
99. *The Marxian Way* II, p. 196.
100. *Jail Volumes*, III p. 156 (a).
101. Niranjana Dhar, *The Political thought of M. N. Roy 1936-1954*, p. 108.

102. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. II, p. 258.
103. *The Marxian Way* I, pp. 365-66.
104. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. II, p. 295.
105. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 12.
106. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. II, p. 118.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
110. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, pp. 20-21.
111. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. II, p. 273.
112. Principle No. 13.
113. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 104.
114. *The Marxian Way* II, p. 195.
115. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 98.
116. Niranjana Dhar, *The Political thought of M. N. Roy 1936-1954*, p. 126.

V

HUMANIST HISTORIOLOGY

A sound political philosophy must be grounded upon a comprehensive theory of history. A political theory is developed in the background of the problems of the contemporary age and to give it general validity a philosopher tries to integrate it with a philosophy of history. The roots of Roy's ideas on humanist historiology must be traced to his own experience. As we have already pointed out, he lost his faith in the predominant role of objective forces in the making of history and began to consider human ideas as more fundamental. The miscarriage of the Russian Revolution convinced him that the ultimate cause of social and cultural progress must not be traced to the economic factor. His experience of the Second World War reinforced his faith in the importance of human ideas. As he became increasingly aware of the significance of human ideas and values, the concept of the class and the theory of the class struggle correspondingly lost their importance for him. The key to all social and cultural progress, he concluded, must be sought in man's own nature—his urge for freedom and reason. His faith in materialism remained unshaken and the main task before him was to reconcile the creative role of man with the philosophy of materialism. History, as Roy conceived it, is not providentially ordained, nor economically determined nor is it simply an unfoldment of the Universal Spirit. Man has the power to make as well as to mar history. "The function of a revolutionary and liberating social philosophy is to lay emphasis on the basic fact of history that man is the maker of his world—man as a thinking being, and he can be so only as an individual."¹ It is an attempt to build up what we may call a humanist historiology, the genealogy of which can be traced to Greek thought. Protagoras and Epicurus,

two philosophers greatly adored by Roy, emphasised the human role in the making of society and these ideas were enriched by the Stoics. This trend was revived by Vico and elaborated by Helvetius, Condorcet, Michelet, by the so-called 'Utopian Socialists' and others. Roy was largely influenced by the tradition of thought upheld by these thinkers and tried to revive it as against a mechanistic view of history. His theory did not degenerate into gross anthropocentrism since along with this emphasis on the human factor, the limitations on the power of man, determined by the material conditions of a given period, were also properly stressed.

The idea of causation in history is a very old one. In the past the sole cause of all historical developments was ascribed to the Divine Providence. In Hegel the Divine Providence was replaced by a metaphysical Reason and history was conceived as a rational and orderly process under the directing force of the Absolute. Later theorists sought to replace the metaphysical Reason of Hegel by some concrete material force as the guiding factor of history. Marx discovered this guiding factor in economics and Buckle in geography. Yet others found in race the determining factor of history and Oswald Spengler discovered some quasi-biological laws regulating the rise and fall of civilisations. Roy discovered the driving force of human history in man's urges and ideas conditioned by material factors. There is therefore an element of eclecticism in his philosophy of history.

Some theorists have questioned the validity of the very concept of the philosophy of history. H. A. L. Fisher, for example, in the preface to his book *A History of Europe* writes: "One intellectual excitement has, however, been denied me. Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows wave, only one great fact with respect to which, since it is unique, there can be no generalisations, only one safe rule for the historian: that he should recognise in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen."² Sir Charles Oman who considers the philosophers as the enemies of history writes:

"But to get to my main point—History looked at from the right point of view, is (I think) a series of happenings, not a logical process, and those who try to explain it by the popular slogans such as are inspired by the words 'Evolution' and 'Progress' are not to be trusted ... The fact is that History is not a tale of logical processes or necessary evolutions, but a series of happenings—some of these so startling as to deserve to be called cataclysms. One has to study these happenings with a cautious conviction that they might have happened otherwise, and that no word is so dangerous as the word 'inevitable'...".³ Karl R. Popper is also very much opposed to the approach of historicism. He defines it as "an approach to the social sciences which assumes that *historical prediction* is their principal aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the 'rhythms' or the 'patterns', the 'Laws' or the 'trends' that underlie the evolution of history."⁴

From the extracts quoted above it appears that the concept 'philosophy of history' is opposed mainly on two grounds. In the first place, history is not an inevitable process and there is no scope for any prophecy or prediction in it. Secondly, there is no rhythm or pattern or law or trend in history. History is thus reduced to a series of events arising casually out of accidental coincidences. This view presupposes that there is no direction in human history and its events are all unrelated with each other caused by chance factors.

Roy tried to develop his philosophy of history recognising fully that the history of man is not an inevitable or pre-determined process. But still it is possible, he believed, to discover in human history an integrating principle with reference to which different events may be related to each other and their social significance assessed. History was looked upon by Roy as a science, as a process of development. It is not, he said, "a chaotic conglomeration of fortuitous events"⁵—a simple chronicle of facts without any causal relation between them. The close relation between the past and the present, Roy pointed out, tends to show that social events are not arbitrary but causally interlinked. "The past is to be studied for a rational explanation of the present. The discovery of a rational connection between the past and the present of the human race

shows off history as an evolutionary process. Consequently, it becomes possible to deduce some general laws governing historical events", which would, Roy thought, enable us to discover "the hidden springs of human action."⁶

Roy's view of history as a determined process may create confusion unless the particular sense in which he used the expression is clearly explained. He used the expression 'determined process' in contradistinction to what we may call the arbitrary or the mysterious process. A determined process in his philosophy means a rational process and it is not necessarily predetermined.

Roy's views can best be explained by quoting from Von Mises on this subject. Mises argues that determinism "does not predict future events. It asserts that there is regularity in the universe in the concatenation of all phenomena."⁷ Mises further writes: "The sciences of human action by no means reject determinism. The objective of history is to bring out in full relief the factors that were operative in producing a definite event. History is entirely guided by the category of cause and effect. In retrospect, there is no question of contingency. The notion of contingency as employed in dealing with human action always refers to man's uncertainty about the future and the limitations of the specific historical understanding of future events. It refers to a limitation of the human search for knowledge, not to a condition of the universe or of some of its parts."⁸ Whatever has happened in the past has taken place owing to certain causes and those causes can be ascertained by human intelligence. Every event of history must be explained—that is the task of history which is different from chronology. If history were simply a record of "one emergency following upon another as wave follows wave" there would have developed no subject called history at all. Human history would have been a chaos—a standing miracle.

By describing history as a determined process Roy simply meant that all its events are caused by some factor or factors; and do not appear arbitrarily. Determinism, it may be mentioned here, has been defined by E. H. Carr as "the belief that everything that happens has a cause or causes, and could not have happened differently unless something in the cause or causes had also been different."⁹

According to S. W. Alexander determinism implies that "the data being what they are, whatever happens, happens definitely and could not be different. To hold that it could means only that it would if the data were different."¹⁰ If we can ascertain all the data working at present with their relative importance we will be able to predict the future. This is possible in some of the natural sciences but in the social sciences (including history) which deal largely with human beings — their will, aspirations and ideas — such predictions cannot be made.¹¹ There is no conflict between Roy's philosophy of history and Popper's view that the tendency to propound historical prophecies is the relic of an ancient superstition.¹²

The controversy between determinism and free will is an old one. It is usually held that a theory which seeks to explain human action in causal terms necessarily implies a denial of the free will of man. Roy accepted human will as the most powerful determining factor of history.¹³ Human will in his philosophy appears to be closely related with the human urge for freedom. We have in the previous chapter explained the meaning of the human urge for freedom as formulated by Roy and its relation to the biological struggle for existence. The urge for freedom is the human will to unfold the potentialities latent within himself. Whenever an obstacle stands in the way of the unfoldment of man's potentialities, his innate will to freedom tries to overcome it and thus it forms the basic impetus to all human progress. As Roy has put it : "From time to time, the march of history is obstructed by the requirements of the established social order, which sets a limit to human creativeness, mental as well as physical. The urge for progress and freedom, born out of the biological struggle for existence, asserts itself with a renewed vigour to break down the obstacle. A new social order conducive to a less hampered unfolding of human potentialities is visualised by men, embodying the liberating ideas and cultural values created in the past. A new philosophy is born out of the spiritual heritage of mankind, to herald a reorganisation of society".¹⁴

Roy tried to reconcile the freedom of the human will and the human urge for freedom with historical determinism by taking human will itself as one of the determining factors of history. He

admitted that there is a great difference between the determinism of the physical nature and the determinism of human history. The former follows mechanical laws and therefore man cannot change its course, but in the latter the human will plays a dominant part and therefore man can influence its development. But determinism can still be maintained if it is differentiated from predestination.¹⁵ Human history, according to Roy, is a determined but not a pre-determined process. History is determined by various factors and human will is the most powerful of them. The role of human will is uncertain and unpredictable, and therefore the future of history is not predetermined. If the events of life and society were pre-determined, either by Divine Providence or by mysterious economic laws, there would have been, Roy admitted, no human freedom.¹⁶ But history nevertheless remains a determined process since the human will, desire and endeavour in pursuance thereof are also determined (in the sense that they are not mysterious but follow from the biological nature of man). Roy however admits that there can be no "absolute determinism" in history¹⁷ which cannot be differentiated from predestination. By making man free to determine his future Roy tried to combine free will and determinism in his philosophy of history. It is interesting to note that Roy held these ideas about free will and determinism long before he developed his philosophy of New Humanism. In the Jail Volumes he asked the question "But is it correct to say that determinism, carried to the biological sciences, reduces human beings to automata? Does physical determinism imply that man is a machine?"¹⁸ He answered : "Physical determinism is not antithetical to the idea of freedom. Freedom is denied by the doctrine of predestination."¹⁹ He further observed : "Will is determined, but man is free to act as he wills. Determinism does not rob him of the freedom of action."²⁰ The philosophy of New Humanism is an elaboration of these ideas which he formed in the course of his fruitful prison life of six years.

In explaining Roy's ideas on free will and determinism we may refer again to the view of Ludwig Von Mises who makes a distinction between activistic and fatalistic determinism and observes that

"activistic determinism is by no means incompatible with the rightly-understood idea of freedom of the will."²¹ Non-human entities, Mises explains, react according to regular patterns but man's reaction is determined by his ideas, thoughts and will. Man actively determines his own destiny. Roy used the expression 'determinism' in history in the sense in which Von Mises uses the expression 'activistic determinism'.

Owing to the predominant role of man, the course of human history is uncertain. Roy observed : "At any period of history, there are many alternative possibilities of development, but that uncertainty is about the future; in the past, history has taken one of the many possible alternative sources; historiology explains why one particular course was preferred; recurrence of certain specific causes of a preference in different parts of the world allow formulation of some laws of history."²² In history there is no predetermined pattern, no rhythm or dynamism of its own independent of human will and ideas but it may still enable us to discover a general trend. If history is made by man it must be purposive, and if man is rational it will be possible to ascertain the purposes by human intelligence. The analysis of history and human nature led Roy to conclude that the main purpose of man in history is to realise his freedom. Man's urge for freedom supplies human history a clear direction. This does not imply, according to Roy, a faith in continuous progress without reverse. Both progress and regression were explained by him with reference to human ideas which, in his view, as we shall later find, run in two directions.

Roy made, as we have seen, a clear distinction between determinism in natural science and determinism in human history. The determining factors of history, he pointed out, are many²³, and they can be divided into two qualitatively different sets of categories—physical or material and human or mental. "After the generation of ideas, the single basic current of physical events bifurcates, so to say : the biological world, on the higher level of evolution, is composed of a double process—dynamics of ideas and succession of physical facts."²⁴ Human history is composed of these two processes involving a multiplicity of factors interacting in an

integral process. All possible kinds of material and mental factors were included in his scheme and he considered "the variables of the equation of social science" as 'innumerable'.²⁵

History involved this 'dual process' but there is a close relation between the two. Both human ideas as well as social, economic and political institutions have a common origin in man's urge for freedom,²⁶ and each process influences the other. But the relation between them is not a causal one—one is not wholly dependent upon the other. Sometimes these two processes come so near each other that their separate and independent existence appears to be lost. As Roy put it : "The two histories, the history of thought and the history of social events, are in some periods so very intertwined that they cannot be easily disentangled. Hence the confusion about their interrelation."²⁷ But notwithstanding this close interdependence he considered them as two separate processes. "The dynamics of ideas runs parallel to the process of social evolution, the two influencing each other mutually. But in no particular point of the process of the integral human evolution, can a direct causal relation be established between historical events and the movements of ideas."²⁸ History, in other words, is determined by the integral interaction of both the processes and any one of them should not be treated as the fundamental. "Religious beliefs, philosophical principles, social change, economic developments of the same historical epoch are mutually influenced. But to attach primary importance no one of them and trace the origin of the rest to it is evidently wrong."²⁹ This view thus accepts the influence of both, the social environment as well as the human ideas, in determining the course of history.

The doctrine of the two histories take both the subjective and objective factors into consideration and is a clear repudiation of all partial and one-sided theories of progress. The Carlylian tradition of interpreting history as the handiwork of a few gifted individuals—as the biography of great men—has not yet died out. While bringing man to the centre of history it commits the error of minimising the influence of the social environment. Carlyle's theory, moreover, has a clear totalitarian significance.³⁰ Roy's humanist historiology did

not incline that way. He fully understood the limitations of man and stated : "Man makes history; but his potentially unlimited creativeness is limited by the available material... ." ³² A revolutionary, therefore, Roy said, "must be modest; he should not aspire to make miracles." ³³

At the other extreme; there is the theory of environmental determination trying to reduce the whole process of history to an institutional dialectics. This view ignores the role of man in human history and thus commits the error of playing Hamlet without the King of Denmark. Roy was opposed to what he called "Sociological historiology," ³⁴ which seeks to explain the historical evolution simply by the operation of social factors regarding the ideological process as a mere superstructure or their by-product. The influence of social factors upon the evolution of ideas is admitted, but apart from that Influence, ideas have their own logic of development as well. Ideas are influenced but not wholly determined by the social factors. Man makes history and "the behaviour of human beings is determined by the autonomous movement of ideas as well as the dynamics of social evolution." ³⁵ Thus both the processes exert their influence in the making of history. "Religious doctrines and philosophical ideas", Roy wrote, "can be greatly influenced by the operation of social factors, but they are never brought about by the latter, do not originate in them. They have their own history, past and future." ³⁶ Ideologies, he said, are not superstructures but structures standing by themselves. ³⁷ The humanist historiology formulated by Roy avoids the fallacies of both the extremes and tries to follow a middle course taking into account all the diverse factors of history, material as well as human.

Though Roy maintained that "equal importance is attached to the dynamics of ideas and dialectics of social historical development," ³⁸ his theory of history contains an unmistakable indication of the possibility of the human element ultimately asserting itself and shaping the course of history. The rise of a new ideology, he pointed out, is an essential precondition of the rise of a new social order. "It is an experience of history", he said, "that invariably a new ideology rises to herald a new social order. New

ideas inspire action for the destruction of established economic relation and the creation of new ones." ³⁹ Does it not imply a causal relation between human ideas and social development? Roy admitted that in so far as ideas act as 'causative force' in social development, 'there is a relation between the movements of ideas and what we call social dynamics.' ⁴⁰ New ideas inspire action to create a new society and therefore history is made by ideas. Human history, he pointed out, is made more by the human brain than by brawn. ⁴¹ Man's brain is also, he said, a means of production; it produces ideas, which are the most iconoclastic of commodities. And revolution, Roy asserted, presupposes iconoclastic ideas. ⁴² In as much as action is motivated by ideas, determinism in history, according to him, is primarily ideal. ⁴³ But Roy still refused to concede any causal relation between ideas and social development possibly because he thought that in spite of their very significant role, ideas after all constitute a condition — not the cause — of social evolution. The rise of a new ideology will not necessarily signify the rise of a corresponding social order. Therefore, the relation is not a causal one.

Roy tried to reconcile the vital role of human ideas in history with the philosophy of materialism. Human ideas influence history but the ideas themselves have a physical origin. "Ideation is a physiological process resulting from the awareness of environment." ⁴⁴ And simple awareness is "supplemented by reactions to the things of which the organism becomes aware." ⁴⁵ The nervous system and the brain of the human organism serve as the means of inter-relation between him and his environment, and the ideas are born out of this process. Roy tried to trace the origin of ideas to the "prehuman biological impulses." ⁴⁶ An idea in the brain of primitive man could not, he said, possibly be distinguished from a biological impulse, and gradually with the rise of language and conceptual thought the whole process became very complex. ⁴⁷ Roy thus rejected the theory of metaphysical origin of ideas which leads either to Idealistic Monism or Psycho-Physical-Parallelism. In spite of his recognition of the vital role of ideas he tried to maintain the position of Materialist Monism. He wrote : "Ideas are not *sui generis*

metaphysical entities which somehow interject themselves into the material make-up of man; nor are they a priori ethereal forms preexisting or existing simultaneously with the events of the material world."⁴⁸ Roy did not recognise the concept of the disembodied ideas or of a cosmic consciousness co-existent with the physical universe. Thus, the fundamental materialist proposition that the physical being precedes ideas remains unassailed. The recognition of the role of ideas in the making of history does not involve any dualism in the philosophical sense. These principles which form a vital part of the philosophy of New Humanism were enunciated by Roy during the period when he called himself a Marxist. He wrote in the jail : "Philosophically, I am not an idealist. But one need not believe in the metaphysical sovereignty of ideas, and yet admit that, once formed spontaneously (ideation is a physiological process) or instilled artificially into consciousness, ideas determine human action to a very large extent. Hence the decisive role of ideology in the development and ultimate success of any political or social movement."⁴⁹

Roy maintained that without an explicit recognition of the decisive role of ideas in social evolution, materialism itself cannot be defended. The social progress necessarily presupposes human action, and human action is motivated by ideas, and, therefore, if the creative role of ideas is excluded from Materialism, it would "relapse into Newtonian natural philosophy which makes room even for an anthropomorphic God."⁵⁰ To be self-operative matter must have motion within it—otherwise a God or a *deus ex machina* would have to be recognised. Similarly social evolution must also contain within it some factor that would serve as the driving force of history. Ideas alone can play that role, and, therefore, Roy pleaded for a 'restatement of Materialism'⁵¹ recognising the creative role of ideas. A materialist per excellence in the field of philosophy, he appeared to be more or less an idealist in his theories of history. To the extent he conceded to ideas a decisive role in history and regarded them as the master-key for interpreting the past, Roy was an idealist. But his ideas were human ideas, born in the human brain motivating human action and thus creating history. All concepts of

trans-human and disembodied ideas leading ultimately to the Absolute Idea manifesting itself in the world of phenomena were considered by him as a fantasy. Discussing the Hegelian doctrine of the identity of thought and being, Roy pointed out that thought and being are co-existent only from a particular stage of the evolutionary process. Prior to the rise of life the doctrine cannot be reconciled with materialism, but after its appearance the identity of thought and being in the biological process of evolution including social evolution and history does not contradict Materialism. With this doctrine shared by both, "Idealism", Roy maintained, "flows into Materialism,"⁵² not in the metaphysical field but in the evolution of society and the making of history.

Though ideas have a physical origin, after they are born in human minds they attain autonomy and become an independent force. "Mind and matter", Roy observed, "can be reduced to a common denominator, but as such, they are two objective realities."⁵³ Born out of matter, mind becomes as real and objective a force as matter itself. Once the ideas are formed, they "exist by themselves governed by their own laws."⁵⁴ Ideas have a history and a development of their own independent of the changes in society. The progress of ideas can be understood "by the logic of the evolution of thought, by the objectivity of the dynamics of ideas themselves,"⁵⁵ apart from the changes in the society or in economic life. There is no direct relation between the rise of an ideology and the rise of any particular class, though a class may take advantage of a particular ideology for its own interests. "The relation between the growth of a new ideology and the rise of a new social class is not causal, either way; it is accidental."⁵⁶ Faced with a new problem, man, led by the urge for freedom, tries to develop a new idea out of the existing store of human thoughts. A new idea, therefore, must be referred back to an old idea.⁵⁷ The ideas of a philosopher, for example, can better be understood as the continuation and elaboration of the ideas formulated by the philosophers of the past rather than as a superstructure upon any new social conditions. Ideas develop owing to the inner necessity felt by man and not simply owing to the impact of social and economic forces. Therefore the process of the

development of ideas is described by Roy as "a process of dynamics, not of mechanics — of internal motion, not of any external impact."⁵⁸ The logic of the development of ideas, he said, is not dialectical but dynamic and continuous.⁵⁹ This theory of the development of ideas conform neither to the Hegelian doctrine of development through conflict nor to the Marxist doctrine of economic determinism, "although", as Roy wrote, "it does corroborate Hegel's philosophy of history rather than that of Marx."⁶⁰ Evolution of ideas by their own inner dynamism is called by Roy the Dynamics of Ideas. The dynamics of ideas, he maintained, can be traced all the way back to the great thinkers of the remotest antiquity. The development of ideas has a continuity of its own.

Roy held almost similar ideas even when he had been a Marxist. In the Jail Volumes he wrote: "There is no discontinuity in scientific knowledge. New theories, however greatly revolutionary, never repudiate older ones. New theories may overshadow older ones but must have them as the foundation to stand upon."⁶¹ Even in those days he sometimes tried to explain the development of ideas by their own dynamics. For example, he observed: "Religion necessarily leads to theology — to futile speculative attempt to define the nature of God. Theology is futile speculation, because it can never perform the task it sets to itself. As soon as human mind can define him, God ceases to be God. Therefore the historical function of theology is to destroy religion as religion. Having destroyed its own source theology destroys itself. Consistently developed, theology culminates into pantheism. Vedantic Pantheism is the logical consequence of the theism of the Upanishads. In the pantheistic form, theology consumes itself, because consistent pantheism leads to atheism. Thus goes on the endless process of ideological development."⁶²

This autonomy of the world of thought was regarded by Roy as "the foundation of the spiritual (in the secular sense) freedom — the highest ideal of human existence."⁶³ If the ideas of man were wholly determined by the environment or economic mode of production, man would have remained a slave of the latter. Man becomes free by his ability to conceive new ideas and by his attempt to change himself and the society accordingly. Roy tried to establish that man

can create himself anew by overcoming the influence of the environment and thus new men must precede a new environment. The autonomous existence and dynamic development of ideas would enable man to change his ideas and thus change himself without any prior change in the environment. The assumption that man can change himself by his ideas is the essence of the humanist historiology formulated by Roy. He wrote: "It has become axiomatic that environment shapes man. But a humanist will prove that men can also shape their environment."⁶⁴

Though philosophically a materialist, Roy admitted that philosophical monism must not preclude the recognition of a plurality of factors in the making of human history. "As foundation of philosophy monism is preferable, but it would be naive to apply it", he wrote, "to the multifarious manifestations of the phenomena of life."⁶⁵ He tried to harmonise monism in philosophy with pluralism in history and maintained that the monistic approach to history, whether idealist or materialist, is bound to become inadequate and partial. Monistic metaphysics, he pointed out, does not preclude pluralism in the process of becoming,⁶⁶ because the plural factors ultimately originate from the same source. To be dependable, historiology must take into consideration all the factors — material and human — present in a given situation.

There is no definite and predetermined way of the development of human ideas. "The dynamics of ideas", Roy observed, "though having their roots in the physical being of man, cannot be fitted into a predetermined pattern of teleological historicism."⁶⁷ But, on the whole, there are two currents of human thought, one is rationalist and the other is religious. Ideas, according to Roy, develop in one of the two directions, either in the right or in the wrong way,⁶⁸ that is, either in the rationalist or in the religious channel. Religion itself, in his view, has its origin in the innate rationality of man and both the currents were originally expressions of man's desire to know and of his will to be free. But in the course of time religion lost its rational character and "faith was postulated as the antithesis of reason."⁶⁹ The stream of human thought — both metaphysical and social — thus became bifurcated

into two currents. The rationalist current which at first could be postulated only as a philosophical proposition was later on reinforced by the development of science and it supplied the impetus to man's struggle for freedom. Throughout history this current of thought expressed man's urge for freedom and it championed the cause of reason in philosophy and of individual freedom in society. The religious tradition, originally developed as a rational hypothesis, continued to linger simply as a mental habit, or rather as a superstition, even long after it had ceased to be a spiritual necessity. Human vanity could not easily cast off its own creation even when its rational basis was blasted. The religious current of thought continued to remain as an expression of man's fear of freedom and stood for mysticism in philosophy and collectivism in society. The conflict between these two currents of thought, one favouring progress and the other retarding it, is, according to Roy, the basic feature of human history. He wrote : "Simultaneously with his age-long struggle for freedom, the incentive for which is a biological urge, man, in so far as he is a victim of his vanity, has all along been haunted by the fear of freedom. This contradiction between a basic biological impulse and the super-structure of a predisposition of primitive human psychology underlies the whole history of mankind and explain the dialectics of spiritual evolution."⁷⁰

Roy believed that to be fruitful, human thought must be reinforced by human will, and, therefore, in his philosophy of history he tried to reconcile reason with emotion and will. The human will in his philosophy is not a mysterious metaphysical category nor is it a blind irrational urge. It is a part of nature and grows out of the rational order. In the law-governed universe and in the rational man there is, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, no mysterious irrational element. Therefore the human will, Roy argued, cannot be anti-rational. Both reason and will grow out of the biological structure of man, and, therefore, in his opinion, they cannot stand in an antithetical relation.⁷¹ The human will expresses itself in Romanticism, and Roy maintained that to be productive, romanticism must be reconciled with rationalism.

The passionate belief in the creativeness and freedom of man is, according to Roy, the essence of the romantic view of life. Romanticism "is the urge of the will of man to break all the chains that bind him in order to realise his freedom."⁷² It is an impetuous urge to get the desirable. Man however cannot create history simply with this urge. Along with this impetuous will to freedom man also possesses reasoning power which has a sobering effect. This reasoning power reveals to man his strength as well as his limitations. Man can make history when the romantic will to freedom is sobered by the rational considerations as to what is 'possible'. Therefore, "romanticism tempered with reason, and rationalism enlivened by the romantic spirit of adventure pave the road to successful revolutions."⁷³ Revolution, according to Roy, is both a rational as well as a romantic concept and he held that there is no contradiction between rationalism and the romantic view of life. The human will supplies the energy and reason shows the way—one supplies dynamism and the other gives direction. Thus reason and romanticism can be fitted into a single revolutionary process.

Roy made a clear distinction between true romanticism and false romanticism. True romanticism, according to him, carries the tradition of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment.⁷⁴ It believes in the free development of individual personality without any divine grace and looks to the future without bemoaning the passing of the old order. Romanticism which tends to emphasise irrationalism, intuition, imagination and fantasy against rational thinking was regarded by Roy as false. Rousseau, in his opinion, was the most notable example of the upholding of false romanticism. Referring to the romantic revival in England heralded by Byron and Shelley, Roy observed : "Their romanticism was a burning faith in the creativeness of man, but it was not intellectually disciplined. The heart got the better of the head; imagination and enthusiasm were not buttressed on a solid foundation of knowledge and critical realism. Therefore, the heralds of a true romantic revival tended towards anarchism, and their magnificent revolt, expressed in sublime poetry, ended in

despair."⁷⁵ Romanticism, in short, to be true, must be compatible with reason.

Roy's proposition that to be fruitful human urges must be disciplined by reason is perhaps non-controversial. K. Mannheim similarly associates man's "will to shape history" with his "ability to understand it."⁷⁶ But the use of the much-discussed word 'Romanticism' connotes that significant aspect of human nature, which eludes the rationalist's attempt of definition and formula. A thing is romantic when, in the words of Irving Babitt, it violates the normal sequence of cause and effect in favour of adventure.⁷⁷ It is "strange, unexpected, intense, superlative, extreme, unique etc." and it "hungers for the thrilling and the marvellous and is, in short, incurably melodramatic".⁷⁸ Romanticism seeks to draw its inspiration from the Middle Age instead of the Renaissance—from the world of knights and chivalry, deep forests, castles and dragons. Romanticism is the expression of the various facets of non-rational aspect of human nature. It is, in the words of Reinhold Niebuhr, "an assertion of the vitalities of nature against the peril of enervation through rational discipline."⁷⁹ It is the "discovery of the dishonesty of reason in its pretension of mastery over, or creation of, the vital impulses of physical life."⁸⁰ Romanticism involves contradictions and ambiguities because the romanticists believe that life itself is contradictory and full of ambiguities. They stand for individual freedom but at the same time believe in Destiny. They believe in this world but also run after the transcendental. They welcome the revolution but also pine for the past. Romanticism defies rationalist calculation and analysis. In his attempt to reconcile "true romanticism" with rationalism, Roy, in fact, killed the true spirit of the romantic movement.

M. N. Roy formulated his 'principles of historiology' as "an alternative to the Marxist interpretation of history. Karl Marx's economic interpretation of history was rightly considered by him as antagonistic to human freedom, as logically fallacious, historically untenable and self-contradictory. It is antagonistic to human freedom because it seeks to interpret human history as an inevitable process determined by the economic mode of production to which

man must adjust himself willingly or unwillingly. "If everything is determined economically", Roy argued, "how can man make history at all? Events will follow, one after another; man has nothing to do with them. He is a mere marionette in the hand of the Economic Providence."⁸¹ The economic determinism of Karl Marx was interpreted by Roy as "Hegelianism applied to human history" only substituting the "World Spirit" by "Economic force."⁸²

The doctrine of economic determinism suffers, Roy said, from the fallacy of *regresso ad infinitum*. Marx explained the evolution of society with reference to the economic mode of production, but "who created the first means of production and how?",⁸³ asked Roy. An idea in the brain must have preceded the creation of the original means of production. The economic means of production cannot be the starting point of social evolution because man did not appear on earth with it. The starting point of social evolution must be sought in man himself—in his brain "which was not produced by man but inherited from his animal ancestry."⁸⁴ With his brain man created the first means of production and the gradual development of the means of production can be explained only by new thoughts and ideas. Marxism instead of recognising the role of human ideas behind the origin and development of the means of production considered them as the superstructure upon the latter.

Karl Marx, on the basis of his theory of economic determinism, predicted the future course of human society, but history refused to oblige him. The Russian Revolution itself, Roy pointed out, "does not fit into the Marxist scheme of revolution."⁸⁵ He observed: "If proletarian revolution was to develop according to the Marxist prognosis, it should have happened first in an industrial country like England, rather than in a backwater of the modern world. The Russian Revolution was an accident—the result of a fortuitous combination of circumstances. As such, it was itself a negation of the mechanical view of historical determinism." Soon after "the unhistorical victory" of the proletarian revolution in Russia, it failed in Germany "where it ought to have triumphed if Marx was not a false prophet."⁸⁷ The Marxist prediction about the future of the

middle class in capitalist society and the Marxist theory of the inevitable replacement of Capitalism by Socialism have also been falsified by history.⁸⁸

Marxism was further denounced by Roy as a self-contradictory philosophy. Marx advocated armed insurrection in order to destroy capitalism and to bring about a new social order but at the same time he considered the collapse of capitalism and the rise of socialism as inevitable. "If the decay and disappearance of any social system was inevitable, a violent revolution for its overthrow was palpably unwarranted. Conversely, if the change had to be brought about by force, it was not inevitable. Because it could be prevented by the use of superior force."⁸⁹

Roy was critical of the Marxist doctrine of class struggle also. Without denying the struggle between classes in the society Roy discarded the Marxist *theory* of class struggle—the idea that the class struggle is the lever of all progress in society. If class struggle is the only way to social progress, a classless society or communism would, Roy argued, inevitably mean a stagnant society."⁹⁰ He expressed his view about classes and class struggle thus : "Society undoubtedly was always divided into classes, and the classes had conflicting interests. But at the same time, there was a cohesive tendency, which held society together. Otherwise, it would have disintegrated, time and again, and there would be no social evolution."⁹¹

Roy's criticism of the Marxist interpretation of history was thorough and reasonable but the abiding contribution of Marxism to the field of historical investigation cannot be denied. The positive contribution of Marxian sociology was to emphasise the influence of socio-economic factors upon the development of human ideas and history, though in his zeal to combat idealism, Marx went to an extreme position. As a general principle, Roy admitted the importance of both, human ideas and social factors, for history.

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4. Karl. R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, p. 3.
5. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 309.
6. *Ibid.*, I, p. 9.
7. Ludwig Von Mises, *Theory and History*, p. 81.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
9. E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (A Pelican Book), p. 93.
10. S. W. Alexander in *Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, 1936, p. 18, quoted by E. H. Carr, *Ibid.*, p. 93.
11. See the article "Social Evolution and the Dynamics of Ideas" by M. I. Sayeed in *The Humanist Way*, IV, pp. 133-147. The article is based on the ideas of M. N. Roy on the philosophy of history.
In the Synopses prepared by Roy on the eve of the Study Camp in 1946 it was stated : "History becomes a science; not indeed an exact science of the order of astronomy and physics, nor experimental like chemistry; history as a science is analogous to geology; historical knowledge is inferential; a picture of the past drawn on the basis of knowledge resulting from a study of relics, documents, inscriptions, monuments etc. assisted by philosophy, palaeontology, archaeology and other branches of investigation in circumscribed fields". (p. 13).
12. See Patrick Gardiner (ed), *Theories of History*, p. 276.
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51. *Ibid. I*, p. 11.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

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54. Principle No. 6.
55. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 8.
Cf: "Ideas influence one another, they provide stimulation for the emergence of new ideas, they supersede or transform other ideas."
Ludwig Von Mises, *Theory and History*, p. 99.
56. M. N. Roy, *Beyond Communism*, p. 52.
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58. *Ibid. I*, p. 163.
59. *Ibid. II*, p. 190.
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70. *Ibid.*, II, p. 10.
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VI

HUMANIST POLITICS

The political aspect of Roy's humanist philosophy was an attempt to reconstruct the state in such a way which would enable the individuals to play constantly a constructive role in the formulation of its policy. In other words, he tried to make democracy more meaningful than simply casting a vote in favour of a candidate over whom he has no control and who, in most cases, is unknown to him.

The theory of sovereignty is the basic principle of any system of political thought. In his Marxist days Roy believed in the principle of the sovereignty of the people which is the corner-stone of modern democracy. In the draft of the Indian Constitution prepared by him in 1944 it was stated : "All authority emanates from the people."¹ But in spite of this categorical statement it is doubtful whether during that period he accepted the basic principle of democracy, namely, equal rights for all. In the chapter on 'The Declaration of Rights and Fundamental Principle' of this above draft, freedom of press and speech was guaranteed to all "but the enemies of the people."² Moreover, the right of association was guaranteed "for the purpose of safe-guarding and amelioration of economic conditions and the political status of workers, employees and peasants"³ only. Roy characterised his Radical Democratic Party as the Peoples' Party, championing the cause of the people, workers, employees and peasants, and, therefore, it is doubtful whether the constitution prepared by him would accommodate the existence of other political parties. This constitution might lead to a system not different from what is called 'People's Democracy' found in many of the Communist-dominated countries of today.⁴

Secondly, during this period Roy's concept of the sovereignty of the people took the form of the absolute sovereign right of the state. An analysis of the Constitution prepared by him for India shows that he tried to develop a thoroughly centralised all-powerful state in the country. The Federal Assembly was given the right to legislate on all matters⁵ and the Central Government was authorised to veto any Provincial legislation on the ground that it was repugnant to the Constitution.⁶ The Constitution prepared by Roy was structurally federal, the provinces were declared to be fully "autonomous"⁷, but it was provided that "all territorial units in India including those that remain out of Federal Union,⁸ shall have a uniformly democratic constitution."⁹ In spite of the federal structure the constitution was unitary in spirit. Roy himself stated that in the constitution an attempt was made to reconcile Federalism with Centralism leaving "no room for fissiparous tendencies."¹⁰ As a socialist he stood for an unlimited extension of the power of the state and tried to bring the entire society under its omnipotent control. The Constitution drafted by him has a chapter on 'The Economic Organization of Society' which provides for the planning of the entire production, agricultural as well as industrial, by the state.¹¹ It granted freedom of enterprise, individual as well as co-operative, subject to the principle that the purpose of production is to satisfy the requirements of the people,¹² and it was provided that to realise the aforesaid object, the state "has the right to fix the maximum and minimum return on private investment, the prices of goods produced or exchanged, the remuneration and working conditions of wage-earners and salaried employees, and to take over private enterprises under state ownership by paying fair compensation to the owners thereof."¹³ Roy therefore stood for an all-powerful centralised state as the only agency to ensure social progress. He tried to make the state broad-based by giving the people organised in the People's Committees the right to control the state but the state remained the supreme organisation in the society, the sole embodiment of the sovereign power of the people. A firm believer in the monistic theory of state, he identified Socialism with Statism.

The experience of the Russian Revolution brought about a profound change in Roy's political outlook. It led him to conclude

that to realise the ideal of the sovereignty of the people, the term 'people' must be interpreted as the sum total of individuals and not in a collective sense. He wrote: "A political system and an economic experiment which subordinates *the man of flesh and blood* to an imaginary collective ego, be it the nation or class, cannot possibly be the suitable means for the attainment of the goal of freedom... Any social philosophy or scheme of social reconstruction which does not recognise *the sovereignty of the individual*, and dismisses the ideal of freedom as an empty abstraction, can have no more than a very limited, progressive and revolutionary significance."¹⁴ Roy now became convinced of the dangerous implication of the terms 'people' and 'Peoples' interest' which may justify the denial of freedom to the so-called 'enemies of the people'. He therefore laid emphasis on 'the sovereignty of the individual' and on the 'man of flesh and blood'. He consequently became an individualist and was drawn towards the ideas of liberal individualism of the nineteenth century. His theory of the state was now purged of all subtle and implied anti-democratic elements. He became convinced of the close relation between ends and means, and this brought moral considerations prominently into his political philosophy.

The problem of state and power vis-a-vis freedom has been one of the perplexing problems of political science throughout. A group of thinkers contends that the state based on power is associated with violence, force and oppression, and, therefore, in order to realise the ideal of freedom they seek to abolish it altogether. Another group of thinkers believes that the state represents the interest of the community and therefore it is the best instrument to secure the social good and to promote human freedom. Karl Marx belonged to the former group, though, in order to realise the ideal of a stateless society through the activities of the state under the absolute control of the proletariat or its party, his followers made the state in Russia the repository of unlimited dictatorial power. The democratic world has reacted to the Russian experiment in two different ways. One group supports the extension of the power of the state to social and economic spheres but tries at the same time to maintain the democratic character of the state. Lord Keynes, Sir William Beveridge, Professor Hansen and many other eminent theorists

belong to this group. They try to lay the foundation of a free society through planning. But another group of libertarian thinkers of our age including F. A. Hayek, Dr Wilhelm Ropke, Ludwig Von Mises, believe that the extension of state authority to the economic and social spheres would increase the power of the bureaucracy to such an extent that in spite of its democratic constitution the state would develop into a Leviathan, eclipsing the individuals. This school of thought holds that "what once were regarded as inherently socialist institutions—public enterprise, a planned economy, even social services—are deliberately employed to reduce every individual to a helpless victim of the state."¹⁵ The experience of the Russian Revolution placed Roy in this second group. He was not opposed to the state as such and considered the ideal of the stateless society as an obvious absurdity. The withering away of the state under Communism, Roy wrote, "is a Utopia which has been exploded by experience."¹⁶ He pointed out that even in an ideal condition, when all contradictory forces would disappear from society and there would remain no classes and class oppression, the state would remain as a necessary institution.¹⁷ A complicated organization of the modern civilization with greatly diversified field of activities cannot exist, he pointed out, without a central organisation, that is, the State. The State is based on power but power itself was not considered by him as an evil. The experience of the Russian Revolution led him to conclude that it is the concentration of power which constitutes a threat to human freedom. He wrote: "Power can be defined as the ability to do things. As such power will always have a place in human society. But the usefulness of power is eclipsed by abuses when it is concentrated to such extent that the community as a whole becomes totally powerless."¹⁸ Analysing the conditions of Russia he concluded: "State ownership of the means of production called nationalisation and state control of the economic life, means so much concentration of power as rules out the possibility of democratic freedom."¹⁹ The main lesson that Roy drew from the Russian experiment was that to safeguard individual freedom power must not be allowed to be concentrated in the state or in any single institution or in the hands of few persons. Power, he concluded, should be distributed among various social

institutions, and in each institution power must remain diffused among the people at large instead of being concentrated in the hands of the few at the top. The first ideal leads to pluralism and the second to the principle of democratic decentralization. Roy's conversion from the monistic theory of state to 'social pluralism'²⁰ must therefore be traced to his experience of the unfoldment of the Russian Revolution.

Though Roy was now, as we have mentioned earlier, essentially an individualist, his theory of pluralism and the principle of democratic decentralization did not lead him towards the acceptance of a political and economic order based on 'atomised' individualism. He contended that an atomised individual feels helpless in the modern large and complicated society whatever his theoretical rights. By reducing the authority of the state Roy tried to bring the voluntary associations of the people more and more into prominence. In the political philosophy of Radical Humanism the two associations that came out prominently were the People's Committee and Co-operatives for realising the political and economic ends of the State. The idea of the People's Committee was introduced into India by Roy during his Marxist period and it was obviously taken from the institution of the 'Soviet' in Russia. The 'Soviet' was at first conceived as an organisation of the people to exercise standing control over the administration of the country. Lenin wrote: "The entire power in the state must pass exclusively to the representatives of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies in accordance with definite program, and the government must be fully accountable to them."²¹ In Russia the experiment with Soviet Democracy was defeated by the rule of the proletarian dictatorship. Roy tried to raise democracy on a higher level by reconstructing the state on the basis of the Soviet as originally conceived. The People's Committee was now conceived not simply as the structural basis of the state but also as the organ through which political power could be decentralised. An economic organisation founded on the voluntary cooperative enterprise of the local people led Roy to revive the tradition of Utopian Socialism²² and of Mutualism which tried to solve the economic problems of

capitalism through cooperatives rather than through the power of the State. A decentralised political and economic structure conceived by Roy brought his social and political theories nearer to those of Mahatma Gandhi and his virulent crusade against Gandhism ended. His main purpose was to build up a society without exploitation and regimentation. This quest is not new. Syndicalism, Guild Socialism and Anarchism represent different attempts to realise this ideal. Radical Humanism as a political and economic system may be judged as a new attempt in the same direction.

We have so far discussed the basic motivations of Roy in formulating the social, political and economic doctrines of New Humanism, and let us now examine them in detail.

The origin of society and the state and their relations to the individual is one of the most vital problems of political philosophy. All social philosophies tend to develop a leaning or preference in one direction, either towards society or towards the individual. The essential character of a social doctrine—whether it is authoritarian or democratic, totalitarian or individualistic—is determined mainly by the answer it offers to this problem.

The relation between the individual and society follows logically from the theory of the origin of society. It is not unreasonable to assume that a philosopher engrossed mainly with the problems of the age tries to construct a theory about the origin of society and state which is consistent with the main philosophical views he seeks to uphold. A political philosopher hardly makes the painstaking research of an anthropologist to unveil the mystery of the origin of the society, and state. He is more concerned with their nature, function and their relation to the individual than with their origin. His theory about the origin of society and state provides essentially a suitable background for his theories about their function, nature and relation to individuals. This is more or less true of all political philosophers of all ages. The difference between Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau about the origin of society and state, for example, can be explained more by their desire to justify different forms of government than by any genuine difference on anthropological or historical evidence and interpretation.

Though the normative considerations of the relation between the individual, society and state largely determine the positive theory about their origin maintained by a political philosopher, for logical consistency we should discuss the latter first while examining the political philosophy of M. N. Roy. Roy categorically asserted that “society is a creation of man” and said that “this view is logically more consistent as well as empirically demonstrable.”²⁴ His insistence upon the human creation of society was due to his attempt to explode the assumption of its organic character. He pointed out that the theory of the human creation of society is based on the scientific theory about the descent of man. He observed : “It logically follows from the theory of evolution that mankind, at a low level of development, existed before society and state came into being; and these are human creations. The logical deduction is corroborated empirically by the existence even today of primitive tribes living almost like animal herds..... Descending from animal ancestry, the human species in the earliest stages of evolution must have lived very much like its progenitors.”²⁵

From this quotation it appears that Roy did not include “primitive tribes living almost like animal herds” within the sphere of social life. It would not be unreasonable to hold that by social existence Roy meant a deliberate and rational co-operative life among man and excluded the stage of the gregarious life derived from the herd instinct present even in the animal kingdom. He maintained that “the original creation of society was a rational act.”²⁶ He admitted the existence of a stage of pre-social human existence, that is, a “state of nature”, which was, he wrote, not the idealised state of Rousseau’s imagination. The Hobbesian description of pre-social mankind, according to him, was close to the reality.²⁷ Although Roy admitted the existence of “primitive tribes living almost like animal herds” before the social existence of man, he categorically and repeatedly affirmed that primitive man, before he set up society, was alone and led an individual life. He wrote : “Coming out of background of biological evolution, the human species starts its struggle as individuals.”²⁸ According to him, man created society in order to conduct his struggle for existence, which he began as an individual,

more successfully and efficiently. In other words, the human urge for freedom lay behind the creation of society. "Society is a creation of man — in quest of freedom. Co-operative social relationships were established originally with the purpose of reinforcing the struggle for existence which the primitive man had undertaken as individual."²⁹ Man realised that by acting together he could make his struggle for existence more effective. That rational judgement led to the foundation of civil society, and Roy, therefore, stated that "in the last analysis the problem was about the nature of man."³⁰

Roy's view about the origin of society and its relation to the individual appears to be confusing and oversimplified. The generally accepted view of sociology is that social life arose out of the extension of the family life or the tribal life, though there is a protracted controversy among the scholars as to whether the families arose out of the disintegration of tribes or tribes arose out of the amalgamation of families. Roy also admitted the existence, as we have already mentioned, of 'primitive tribes living almost like animal herds', but instead of regarding social life as a continuation of tribal life, he maintained that society was a creation of individuals, though he never explained *how* the primitive tribes were dissolved into individuals. He has not given us any evidence to substantiate his theory that society is the rational creation of individuals. In the evolution of human society a distinction is generally made between the instinctive stage and the rational stage, the former gradually merging into the latter. This distinction in many schools of modern sociology has taken the form of a distinction between community and society. Ludwin Stein, for example, maintains that the community is an instinctive product and society implies conscious and deliberate cooperation. Giddings also makes a similar distinction between the instinctive and rational stages of social evolution. In India Sri Aurobindo also made a clear distinction between the infra-rational, rational and supra-rational stages of the social evolution. In his analysis of human nature Roy referred to instinct as primitive reason and he derived the basic attributes of man's nature from his animal ancestry. Therefore, he should logically have traced the origin of society to primitive tribal life.

By maintaining that society is the rational creation of individuals Roy revived the old theory of Social Contract though he tried to differentiate his view from that doctrine. He observed : "On the strength of this evolutionary view we must reject the eighteenth century conception of Social Contract : as if once upon a time primitive human beings met in a kind of conference and entered into a contract by which social relations were henceforth to be governed. Just as the human species itself, social organisation also came into being in the early stages of the rise of man, perhaps by accidental circumstances, and in course of time evolved into more and more purposive and complex forms."³¹ If Society came into being by accidental circumstances in the early stage of human history, how can it be regarded as a rational creation of individuals?

Like society, the state also is, according to Roy, a human creation. He defined the state as "the political organisation of a human community."³² According to him man created the state out of two necessities : first, the administration of public affairs and the maintenance of law and order, and secondly, the co-ordination of various departments of social life.³³ The state was therefore created by man for his own interest in quest of freedom. Roy pointed out that it was not a coercive institution imposed forcibly upon man from above by some individual or any class for the domination of society, nor was it the result of any particular contract entered into at a particular period of time. "It was a spontaneous process promoted, almost mechanically, by the common realisation of the necessity of cooperation for the security of all concerned and for the administration of public affairs."³⁴ The state was not super-imposed on society, and therefore, it was not inconsistent with human freedom. Roy accepted neither the Marxist theory of the state as an engine of class oppression nor the classical liberal view of the state as a necessary evil. After the formation of society man created various institutions "as so many instruments to serve the purpose of his being and becoming."³⁵ The state was one of these "institutions but it was not given "any totalistic significance."³⁶ The state, Roy wrote, rose as one of the many social institutions, all equally autonomous in their spheres — economic, educational, cultural,

political. Like MacIver and other pluralist thinkers, Roy considered the state as one of the organs of the community.

In Roy's political philosophy, society and state are instruments created by man to serve his own interest. He argued that man as creator "is prior to society and the state. The latter are the means for attaining the end of freedom and progress of man."³⁷ Since the individual is prior to society, so, he argued, individual freedom must have priority over social organisation.³⁸ Their relation is one of ends and means, the means are justified only in, so far as they can promote the end. All measures to restrict individual liberty for ensuring collective welfare were considered by him as dangerous, because "once it is conceded that restriction of individual liberty is justifiable for the sake of collective welfare, it follows logically that complete absence of the one may mean the fullest attainment of the other ideal."³⁹ In this political philosophy the importance of society and state is not ignored but they are given only instrumental values. Explaining this aspect of his philosophy Roy wrote: "It is not an anarchic individualism, because a point has no existence except in space. Similarly while individuals cannot exist independent of society, yet society is no more than an integration of individuals."⁴⁰ Society as such has got, Roy asserted, no separate existence apart from the individuals composing it. Society has no interest independent of the interests of the individuals who form the society. What Roy opposed here is the organic view of society—the imaginary conception of a social interest, will and personality transcending the interest, will and personality of individuals composing society. The relation between the state and individual, according to him, is the same as the relation between the society and individuals. "The state being the political organisation of human community, its relation with the individuals is a continuation of the relation between man and society... As the political organisation of human community, the state is also a creation of man, and therefore, it cannot claim the subordination of the individuals without reversing the relation between the creator and creation."⁴¹ Roy's was a violent protest against the idealist and metaphysical theory of the state which makes the state an

omnipotent all-comprehensive living institution with its own will and personality reducing the individuals to the position of its mere cells. He always emphasised that the state like society and all other institutions was a means to an end—the end being individual welfare and freedom. The means are not less important but the end must be given primary significance. Therefore, Roy continued that "not only should we give at least equal weight to the two related things, but primacy must be given to man, the individual human beings."⁴²

From this ends-and-means relation Roy concluded that there should not be any restriction on the freedom of the individual on the ground of social or collective welfare. The "end" can never be sacrificed at the altar of the "means". He maintained that there could be "no contradiction between the fullest freedom of the individual and a harmonious social order."⁴³ The attempt to restrict individual freedom on the ground of maintaining collective welfare was an anathema to him.

Roy admitted that the problem of the relation between the society and the individual becomes more difficult in proportion as society becomes more and more complex. But the original purpose of all social organisations, he maintained, was to help man to develop the potentialities inherent in him as a biological organism. Therefore, Roy concluded that the social organisation which inhibits the possibility of free development of human personality is contrary to the original purpose with which human society was created. National prosperity and social progress were considered by him as frauds unless they referred to the progress, prosperity, welfare and freedom of the individual which to him was the only criterion of measuring social progress."⁴⁴ They had not simply an economic connotation, but also a cultural significance. He wrote: "In modern society, an individual, to be free, must not only be able to enjoy the economic sufficiency and security, but live in a psychological atmosphere free from cultural regimentation and helpful to the development of his intellectual and other human potentialities. Progressive attainment of freedom in this wide sense by the individuals composing society should provide the criterion for judging the merits of social organisation."⁴⁵

Lest Roy's ideas should be misunderstood it is necessary to make three brief observations at this stage. In the first place. Roy's individualism must not be equated with ego-centrism. Society implies cooperative life and to live in society which was essential for individual development, man, Roy said, "had to adjust himself to the need and desires and sentiments of other human beings also."⁴⁶ Secondly, Roy did not deny the possibility of the conflict between individuals and the necessity of laws and regulations to keep individuals within the proper limit. He observed : "When a large number of people live together, the development of human beings being unequal, there is always the possibility of conflict, which may develop violent form. Hence. political organisation is always a necessity."⁴⁷ Roy was not an anarchist and did not stand for the removal of all restrictions on the conduct of man. Thirdly, he argued that it might be possible for man to comply more and more voluntarily with the laws and regulations necessary to maintain social harmony. With the development of his rational and moral sense, the individuals may, out of their own accord, live in harmony with the laws and regulations. "Since the impulse leading to the creation of society is the urge for freedom ... the social responsibility of individuals need not be obligatory. Under the normal conditions, it is bound to be discharged voluntarily; because the preservation and evolution of society are necessary for enabling each of its members to unfold his or her potentialities. The concept of individual freedom, therefore, is not incompatible with social responsibilities."⁴⁸ Here Roy came very near to Anarchism though the state as a coordinating machinery of the various departments of social life, he said, would always remain. Unlike the Anarchists of the Bakunin-Kropotkin school, he held that the era of full social cooperation and mutuality could be reached not by destroying the existing coercive institutions of the state and government but by developing the moral sense of the individual men and women. He stated categorically : "I am of the opinion that, to be able to live in peace with society and with ourselves, to behave morally and intelligently, depends very largely on the individuals."⁴⁹

Roy's ideas explained above would become clearer if they are judged in the context of his conception of law. Like sovereignty the concept of law is vital to any theory of state. Roy however did not build up any new theory of law, but made some observations on it while discussing the problems of human nature and freedom, and they enable us to form a clear idea about his view on law. Roy believed that there was no absolute antagonism between law and liberty. He tried, as we have explained in another chapter, to trace the foundation of human reason to the law-governed universe, and according to him it is this reason which led man to establish society and the state in order to realise his freedom. Laws of the state like the laws of Nature should also be rational and should be directed towards the realisation of human freedom. Just as by discovering the laws of Nature man has developed science and thus promoted his freedom, similarly by finding out the appropriate laws of the society it is possible for man to administer the social life in such a way as would help the individuals to realise his freedom more and more. He wrote : "The laws of the order of nature could be discovered and understood. They need no longer be ascribed to any supernatural agency beyond the control of man; and society, being also a creation of man, could be so administered as to serve the, purpose of man, the purpose being attainment of freedom."⁵⁰ Roy thus carried forward the tradition of the natural law which was first formulated by the Greek thinkers of the classical period and was later developed by the Stoics. It found a prominent place in the thoughts of many Roman and medieval thinkers like Cicero and Thomas Aquinas and was re-stated in modern secular terms by Locke, Grotius and others. Roy carried the same tradition and while discussing the interpretation of the Natural Law by Grotius he observed : "The doctrine of Natural Law has always been based on an appeal to reason; Grotius cleared the concept of reason from all mystic and transcendental connotation, and defined it as a property of the human mind. Thus, the old notion of Natural Law as elaborated by him provided a rational method for the making of positive laws for the guidance of the political organisation of society."⁵¹ Thus, positive laws discovered by the rational method

may promote human freedom, and there will remain no antagonism between such laws and human nature. Therefore, Roy believed that as man would become increasingly aware of his rational and moral nature it may be possible for him to obey the laws voluntarily, because the ultimate sanction of law lies in his own rational nature and not in any authority above him.

As a staunch advocate of individual freedom, Roy considered democracy as theoretically the best form of Government so far conceived by man. The democratic principle of popular sovereignty, he explained, implies that the people are qualified and entitled to rule themselves, and this principle leads logically to a government of the people and by the people. A government for the people, he said, is not necessarily a democratic government, because a benevolent despot may also rule the country for the welfare of the people.⁵² The ideal of democracy or self-government would be realised only if the government happens to be a government of the people and by the people, and Roy examined the practice of democracy by the application of this standard, and found that the ideal of real democracy and individual freedom were not realised in practice anywhere. He stated : "While individual liberty still remains a professed ideal, theoretically guaranteed, to a greater or lesser degree, by all modern democratic constitutions, in practice it is subordinated to the exigency of organisation. The undeniable necessity of protecting and promoting collective welfare seems to contradict the concept of individual freedom. It is held that cooperation and organisation indispensable for the purpose presupposes restriction of the liberty of the individual, and that the constitution which reduces the necessary restrictions to the most minimum degree assures the nearest approximation to the ideal of democracy."⁵³ In theory democracy stands for the freedom of the individual and the sovereignty of the people, but in practice he found that even in democratic countries there were many restrictions upon individual liberty, and the sovereignty of the people remained more or less a legal fiction. The main objective of his political philosophy was to eliminate this discrepancy and to realise the ideal of popular sovereignty in practice.

The modern representative or indirect form of democracy is based upon the principle of delegation of power. The people elect a few representatives to the legislature and these representatives claim the right to rule the country in the name of the sovereign people, Roy thought that to be real, democracy must mean the constant exercise of sovereign power by the people,⁵⁴ and therefore he condemned the practice of the delegation of powers as a negation of democracy. The delegation of authority was considered by Roy as incompatible with the principle of popular sovereignty, because sovereignty, he argued, was an inalienable right and therefore cannot be transferred. He wrote: "As soon as on one pretext or another, power is taken away from the people by delegation, even for the shortest period of time, democracy is killed. Power must always remain vested in the people; that is the only guarantee for democracy."⁵⁵ Re-presentative democracy theoretically accepted the principle of sovereignty of the people and the only way in which they can exercise this right under it is through periodical election. Once the election is over, the people are deprived of all actual authority and have no control over the representatives. The voting right in election time thus is simply a way to surrender power in favour of a particular candidate. This is, in Roy's opinion, the basic contradiction between the theory of popular sovereignty and its practice under the present system of democracy. This contradiction, he maintained, has discredited democracy and given dictatorship a chance to thrive. To quote Roy's own words: "The implication of this vote was to delegate his sovereign power to a group of individuals or some party which became the repositories of the sovereignty for the period between two elections. Now, the practice of democracy shows that between the two elections the sovereign people is nowhere in the picture and has absolutely no possibility of controlling those who are ruling the country on their behalf; and consequently delegation of power, for all practical purposes, has become surrender of power. The people exercise their sovereignty by surrendering it from time to time. That was the basic contradiction of democratic practice. Because of this contradiction democracy eventually become discredited and supplied plausible

reason for the rise of various forms of dictatorship."⁵⁶ In the representative form of democracy the political power through the election process is concentrated in the hands of the few representatives and therefore it cannot establish a government of the people and by the people, which, according to Roy, is the essence of democracy. If the representatives are inspired by a spirit of popular welfare, they can at best set up a government for the people. And a government for the people, in Roy's opinion, as already pointed out, is not a democratic government. "Governments for the people", he wrote, "in reality became rulers of the people. The sovereign was degraded to the position of the ruled."⁵⁷ Such a government, according to him, "is no more democratic than a monarchist government, or even a more or less benevolent dictatorship. Because kings and dictators also claim to rule for the people."⁵⁸ And the professions of the democratic leaders need not be taken more seriously than those of the kings and dictators. The only difference between representative democracy and benevolent dictatorship or monarchy, in his opinion, is that the representatives unlike the dictators or monarchs are elected by the people.

Though keenly conscious of the drawbacks of the present system of parliamentary democracy, Roy did not advocate dictatorship as a remedy. He considered dictatorship of all varieties and even as a transitional device as a great evil. He pointed out that "under dictatorship the worst defects of democracy—namely practical elimination of popular sovereignty and negation of the principle of individual freedom—will be still further aggravated. This is not an improvement on defective democracy for those who cherish the ideals of individual freedom and sovereignty of the people. Hence, when thinking of a political theory and practice suitable for our time they must reject dictatorship as a possible alternative."⁵⁹ All theories which recommend some form of dictatorship as a means for the ultimate achievement of democracy were considered by him as logically fallacious. Dictatorship, however benevolent it might be, cannot help people to stand upon their own feet, and so a dictatorship can never create a climate suitable for the practice of democracy. "The control of the State by one party claiming to be

the sole custodian of popular interest is antagonistic to democracy. Paternalism, even with the best of motives, kills self-reliance in the people and fosters in them an authoritarian mentality, a predisposition to accept authority as the natural order of things."⁶⁰ Democracy requires training in self-government, and dictatorship, however laudable might be the purpose with which it is set up, cannot impart this training to the people. Dictatorship means the negation of freedom, and "it is absurd to argue," Roy pointed out, "that negation of freedom will lead to freedom."⁶¹ Referring to the Marxist criticism of democracy, Roy observed: "If Parliamentary Democracy is to be improved on the ground that it is veiled dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, an open dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be logically advocated as the better alternative."⁶² The experience of Russia convinced him that dictatorship once established as a means to a good end develops the tendency to perpetuate itself⁶³ discarding the end in the process. This led him to conclude that ends and means are closely related. Between defective parliamentary democracy and dictatorship Roy preferred the former. He wrote: "In the transition period, parliamentary democracy with all its manifest failures and inadequacies, will be obviously preferable to a dictatorship. Civil liberties will have a greater chance of survival so long as several parties alternate in power or contend for power than under one-party rule."⁶⁴ But Roy's choice was not limited to dictatorship and parliamentary democracy. He categorically rejected all brands of dictatorships and considered democracy practised so far as inadequate for realising the principle of popular sovereignty, and, therefore, he was searching for a new pattern of democratic practice.

Roy's criticism of Parliamentary Democracy, it may be pointed out here, is unduly harsh and bitter. Although he recognised it as better than open dictatorship, he had nevertheless a tendency to minimise its qualitative difference from ancient monarchy and modern totalitarianism. People in the present system of democracy may not exercise sovereign power directly but the civil and political rights which they enjoy under it are undoubtedly of great significance. The support of the party may enable a government in

a parliamentary democracy to pass any law it proposes but the Government is always subject to criticism and vigilance through the press, platform, political parties, parliament etc. Though parliamentary democracy in practice is often reduced to what is called 'Cabinet Dictatorship', it has to work under so many limitations that its difference with the totalitarian system is fundamental and too palpable to be ignored. Roy's denunciation of Parliamentary Democracy appears to be a legacy of his Marxist heritage.

Representative Democracy, according to Roy, lost all its democratic character owing to the rise of the party system. His unqualified opposition to the party system stems mainly from two considerations, namely, its undemocratic nature and its corrupting influence.

The party system is antagonistic to democracy in two ways. In the first place, it carries further the tendency to the concentration of power in the hands of a few which is inherent, as we have seen, in Representative Democracy. In this form of democracy the people lose their sovereign power after electing the representatives but owing to the influence of the party system the representatives themselves are deprived of their freedom and remain under the control of the party machinery which has ensured their success in the election. The majority party (or coalition of parties) in the Parliament forms the Government, and, therefore, Roy remarked that "a representative government represents only the party which controls it and the membership of the largest party is only a small fraction of the people. In other words, representative party government is the rule of a minority."⁶⁵ Even the members of the government party in the parliament are not free to run the government because they remain under the leading string of the party whip. Therefore, ultimately the power, owing to the influence of the party system, is concentrated in the hands of the few leaders who control the party in power. Roy thus described the whole process: "The electorate delegates its sovereign power to a party; only a few members of the party go to parliament; there they are subject to discipline, are whipped into the government lobby; and a

fewer still actually compose the government and wield power."⁶⁶ To realise the democratic principle of popular sovereignty, power should be diffused among the people, but the party system "leads to concentration of power and hence carries in it the germs of the destruction of democracy."⁶⁷ The present form of democracy, thus, according to Roy, ultimately degenerates into 'party dictatorship'.

Secondly, the party system destroys democracy by denying the individuals any significant opportunity for effective political action. With the rise of the party system the party has replaced the Demos as the dominating factor in Democracy. Under the present system the candidates for election usually appear not as individuals but as party members, and thus "impersonal party machines have eclipsed individual candidates; the choice is between parties."⁶⁸ The candidates for election with the support of political parties behind them try to win the votes of the people by creating an atmosphere of mass hysteria. Whipped up into a state of frenzy most of the people lose their discriminating power while exercising their franchise. In election campaigns appeals are not made to individual voters and their power of reasoning but to the sentiment of masses.⁶⁹ Thus under the party system, Roy showed, the individual completely disappears from politics, whether as candidate for election or as elector. Sovereignty of the individual man is the essence of democracy and Roy was uncompromisingly opposed to a system which, he thought, led to the annihilation of the individual.

Another reason for Roy's opposition to the party system was, as we have already mentioned, its corrupting influence. The corrupting influence of the party follows from its strategy of the capture of power. Every political party tries to come to power in order to implement its programme, and in order to come to power or to retain power it adopts every possible means, fair or foul. Acting upon the time-honoured dictum — the end justifies the means, — the political parties become unscrupulous about the means and thus all ethical considerations disappear from political practice.⁷⁰ An election under the present democratic practice is a race between parties to capture power, and so Roy characterised the parliamentary party system as a scramble for power. Under this

system of unscrupulous scramble for power honesty and sincerely have no chance to survive. The political parties thus lead to an immoral system of political practice. The causes of immorality lie inherent in the party system and therefore Roy concluded that it can never be purified. In his quest for moral politics Roy thus had to give up party politics.⁷¹

While discussing Roy's concept of politics without party we should at the very outset refer to a suspicion that may lurk in many minds. Was the dissolution of the party (Radical Democratic Party) in 1948, and the concept of partyless politics an instance of making a virtue out of necessity? The R. D. P. was completely routed in the elections of 1945 and it was so unpopular in the country that after independence it had little chance of developing into a great force.⁷² It is therefore argued that when power was actually transferred to the Indian National Congress by the British Government Roy realised that in the field of power politics his future was sealed. Out of frustration, therefore, he is said to have developed the theory of partyless politics and politics without power. There is a tendency among some to explain Roy's concept of partyless politics by this psychological factor, but such explanations appear to be wholly untenable. The origin of the concept of politics without power and party can be logically traced to the earlier ideas of Roy. It has already been mentioned that when he came to India in 1930, experience led him to conclude that subjective factors or ideas of the people were of greater significance for the revolution than the objective economic force. Consequently, he started a Renaissance Movement in the country in order to bring about a revolution in the ideas and outlook of the people. These conclusions were reinforced by his experience of the war. He observed that the people of Western Europe fought Fascism owing more to ideological convictions and loyalty to cultural values than to any economic considerations. As a result, in his politics human ideas and cultural values became more prominent than economic or institutional changes. Ideas and values have little relation with power, and, therefore, in 1946 Roy developed the idea of a political party without the objective of coming to power. Later on, he realised that a political party is formed precisely to capture

power, and, therefore, a group of people who disclaimed power should not organise themselves into a party. So the party was dissolved in 1948 and the idea of politics without power and party crystallised itself in Roy's mind.⁷³ In view of this logical consistency in the evolution of Roy's thought any attempt to explain his concept of partyless politics by any psychological factor is uncalled for. In this connection we may refer to the evolution of Sri Aurobindo's thought-process. For some time the ideas of spiritualism and those of political extremism ran parallel in his mind but gradually the former became prominent and ultimately he gave up the practice of politics in the usual sense. His spiritualism was not simply a mere sublimation of his desire to escape arrest by the police. Rabindra Nath Tagore also participated in the political movement of the country during the stormy days of the anti-partition agitation in Bengal in 1905, but experience disillusioned him and he withdrew from agitational politics and devoted himself to constructive social work. This change in Tagore's policy cannot be explained — though it was so misinterpreted by some — simply in terms of a defeatist mentality on his part. Mahatma Gandhi also asked for the dissolution of the Congress Party and its conversion into the Lok Sevak Sangha. These facts are mentioned just to emphasise the point that politics without power and party is not wholly unknown in the history of modern Indian political thought. The politics of spiritualism, the politics of service and the politics of education rather than the politics of power were conceived by some of the best luminaries in the firmament of modern Indian political thought. One writer has aptly pointed out that "India's political life is frequently characterised by what has been called a 'renunciation of power', a phenomenon which manifests itself in a variety of ways."⁷⁴

The tragic experience of the Russian Revolution was possibly a potent factor leading to the rise of his concept of politics without party. Roy expected that the Soviets under the Russian Constitution would raise democracy to a higher level and the People's Committee was conceived by Roy in the image of the Soviet. But the experiment with the new type of organised democracy in Russia was defeated by the Communist Party which monopolised all power. The party

stood in the way of the rise of a new type of democracy in Russia, and this experience might have influenced his thoughts in favour of politics without party.

The inadequacies of parliamentary democracy and the evils of the party system mentioned by Roy cannot possibly be denied. In an election, the people—particularly in the under-developed countries like India—play only a passive role. The candidates are selected by the parties without any consultation with the people, the election campaign is conducted wholly by parties and after election the representatives are not required to maintain, at least by law, any relation with the electorate. The people only cast votes in favour of a particular candidate and that is the only role of the Demos. One may legitimately refuse to call it Democracy proper—a government of the people, by the people and for the people. The evils of the party system have drawn the attention of many scholars. Maurice Duverger after an exhaustive analysis of the methods followed by the political parties concluded that “the organisation of political parties is certainly not in conformity with orthodox notions of democracy.”⁷⁵ He has shown how the parties try to control their members in the legislature and adopt various measures so that the members of the electorate may not exercise any control over them. Under the influence of the party system, the Parliament, he said, has ceased to be the representative of the people. He writes : “There is no longer a dialogue between the elector and the representative, the nation and parliament : a third party has come between them radically modifying the nature of their relations.”⁷⁶

There is no denying the fact that the ideal of democracy—a government of the people and by the people—has not been fully realised through representative government and the party system. But the question is—Is there any better practical alternative? In other words, as Roy himself has put it,—Is Democracy (Government of the People and by the People) possible? Maurice Duverger has answered the question in the negative and has written that “the formula ‘Government of the people, by the people’ must be replaced by this formula ‘Government of the people by an elite sprung from

the people’.”⁷⁷ But Roy tried to answer the question in the affirmative and he offered an alternative. He mentioned two factors which made democracy in the modern age indirect and based upon the party system. Of these, one refers to the institutional and the other to the human aspect of the problem.

Owing to the enormous size of the population of the present state the founders of modern democracy found it impossible to practise it literally and the doctrine of representative government was conceived as the only way out of the impasse. Political parties gradually arose for the efficient and harmonious working of Representative Democracy. A well-organised party system is necessary for a stable executive in the cabinet form of government. The presidential form of government also requires a close harmony between the President and the Legislature and this can be ensured by the party system. Thus Roy concluded that political parties were “instruments devised mainly for the smooth functioning of the political apparatus of parliamentary democracy.”⁷⁸ In a democracy, a political party is an extra-constitutional growth which arose only for the practical convenience of the working of representative democracy.

Another factor which, according to Roy, contributed to the rise of Representative Democracy and the party system was lack of faith in the ability of the people to exercise sovereign power in the actual administration of the country. “Theoretically, sovereignty belonged equally to all the citizens; but only a few were qualified to wield the sovereign power to rule, or even be conscious of it. Under such circumstances the doctrine of popular sovereignty could not but be reduced to a mere abstraction, indeed a legal fiction. The undeniable fact of the greatly uneven intellectual and cultural development of the community justified the practice of the delegation of sovereignty by the people at large to a few qualified to administer public affairs who thus usurped the sovereignty of the people.”⁷⁹ In spite of the doctrine of popular sovereignty it was held that only a few are capable of ruling the country and the people must choose their leaders from these superior few. Under such circumstances democracy was bound to remain a mere formality and no attempt was made to realise it in practice.

The success of real democracy and the realisation of popular sovereignty will in practice depend upon the solution of these two problems. Let us first explain the solution suggested by Roy and later we shall see how far it is acceptable. First let us discuss how he tried to solve the institutional difficulty.

In order to solve the institutional problem. Roy advocated the introduction of direct democracy even in the modern big states with large population. His objective was to keep the people always vested with power and that was, according to him, the only guarantee for democracy. He wrote : "To be real, democracy must be direct, government must be under the direct control of the people. Is that possible? That is the problem before the political thinkers of our time."⁸⁰

The problem is to devise an institutional framework in which the ideal of peoples' sovereignty would be realised in modern big states without any delegation of power to the representatives. Roy visualised such an institutional form to which he gave the name Radical Democracy or Organised Democracy. It is called Organised Democracy because the basic unit of this democratic structure is not the atomised individuals but the people of a locality organised in what is called 'People's Committee'. One cardinal drawback of the system of representative democracy and the philosophy of liberalism, according to Roy, is that it is based upon the individual in a scattered atomised existence. In a large society an individual alone cannot exercise his sovereign power whatever may be his right in theory. The concept of atomised individualism has destroyed the idea of popular sovereignty "because no single individual can think of exercising his sovereign power and that realisation has grown as social structure has become more and more complex."⁸¹ The sovereign right of an individual, he maintained, becomes meaningful only when he is given the opportunity to exercise it effectively along with others in a small organised unit. Roy, therefore, proposed that the unit of the really democratic state should not be single helpless individuals, but small groups which he called People's Committees.⁸² He did not indicate anything specifically about the territorial size or population basis of the People's

Committee apart from suggesting that the number of members of a People's Committee would be one-fiftieth of the total number of voters in the locality.⁸³ These People's Committees would function, on the one hand, as units of local self-government, and, on the other and more importantly, they would function as 'local republics'⁸⁴ controlling and guiding the entire state machinery. Roy tried to realise the ideal of direct democracy in the modern large states through these People's Committees. The People's Committees would nominate candidates to seek election to the state assemblies and the national parliament. After election these candidates would remain responsible to the People's Committees and would be guided by them and not by any political party. They must maintain a close contact with the People's Committees, inform the people of all their problems and carry the decisions of the People's Committees to the state assembly or to the national parliament. The majority view of the constituency (which presumably would include a number of People's Committees) would thus be truly reflected in the assemblies and parliament, and consequently law would be a true index of public opinion. Under this scheme the People's Committees would exercise real power and the representatives in the Assemblies and Parliament would be simply their spokesmen. The state thus would be reduced to the position of a clearing house of information only.⁸⁵ Explaining his scheme, Roy wrote : "And at the election time, when all parties come and offer their candidates, the People's Committees may decide to vote for none of those party candidates but elect one from among themselves as their candidate and the people will vote for him. The person who will be thus elected and go to the parliament will not be responsible to any existing political party machinery. He will be and remain responsible to his local democracy, of which he himself is a part; he will be directly responsible to the people who sent him to the Parliament; he will not have to act on the behests and discipline of any extraneous authority and he will have to report to and inform his fellow citizens in his constituency about all his actions and the problems of the wider community, and take his mandate from them alone in all matters and act accordingly to his best ability and conscience."⁸⁶ Apart from the control exercised

through its representatives the People's Committee would have the power of recall, initiative and referendum.⁸⁷ Under such conditions every citizen would be informed and consulted about the affairs of the state and thus the state would become coterminous with society.⁸⁸ Roy therefore stood for the capture of power not by a party but by People's Committees whose country-wide network would embrace the entire people.

The successful working of the constitution of direct democracy described above would require abiding political interest and a high level of political consciousness on the part of the citizens. Is it reasonable to expect such a high level of political consciousness from the entire adult population of the country? Roy's concept of human nature led him to offer an optimistic answer to this question. Modern scientific knowledge, he argued, has proved that every human being, as a biological unit, is endowed with the same basic potentialities of development,⁸⁹ and, therefore, any distinction between the rulers and the ruled, between the leaders and the followers, has no ultimate validity. Every man is rational but owing to various factors, already referred to in another chapter, man has forgotten his own nature. If he is again made conscious of his essential human attributes, he would naturally develop himself as a rational and moral being and Roy was convinced that this would make direct democracy possible.

The main problem of democracy was, therefore, to make men conscious of their innate rationality, and education was the only way to it. The aim of education, as conceived by Roy, is to make man conscious of his own nature—his rationality and urge for freedom. By education he, therefore, did not mean primary education or even conventional higher or scientific education. "What is needed", he said, "is a different kind of education, an education which will not be imparted with the purpose of maintaining any given status quo, but with the sole purpose of making the individuals of a community conscious of their potentialities, help them to think rationally and judge for themselves and promote their critical faculties by applying it to all problems confronting them."⁹⁰ Education for democracy must give man faith in himself, and he must be made conscious that the social order is his own creation

and therefore it is within his power to create a new social system. Without this faith man would never be able to create a new society and in this lack of faith lies, according to Roy, the root of the present crisis of human civilization.⁹¹ Self-reliant individuals alone can build up a true democratic structure, and to have self-confidence man must liberate himself from the clutches of the Divine Providence as well as the modern secular God called the Mass. Education alone, in Roy's opinion, can create conditions favourable for the practice of democracy and that was why he believed that the new humanist political practice must begin as a cultural movement. He, therefore, stood for a new Renaissance, a philosophical revolution without which, he said, "no social change in the direction of greater freedom is possible."⁹³

With the spread of education and the rise of enlightened and discriminating individuals in large numbers the spiritually free men and women would, Roy expected, naturally come at the helm of public affairs, because they "will command the respect of an intelligent public and be recognised as the leaders of society."⁹⁴ But before the rise of intelligent and discriminating citizens in large numbers such people cannot come into prominence because "politics as it is practised today repels them."⁹⁵ Prior to the rise of the rational and moral society some special arrangement was recommended by Roy in order to bring the spiritually free individuals to participate in public affairs. He suggested that in the transitional stage the second chamber in the Federal Assembly, called by him the Council of State, should be formed on the basis of selection "representing men of science, intelligence, integrity, wisdom and moral excellence."⁹⁶ Each professional group—engineers, economists, scientists, medical men, jurists, historians and others would recommend a specific number for membership of the Council of State. The head of the State would nominate them along with, if necessary, some others equally qualified though not formally attached to any particular group. This Council of State would be given the power of planning the development of society in all branches—economic, health, education, culture, and of guiding and supervising the execution of the plans. Roy changed his idea, as we

shall later see, on state planning but he persisted in his view of placing the executive power of the state under the control of free individuals. "Spiritually free individuals in power will", he believed, "smash all chains of slavery and usher in freedom for all."⁹⁷

The technique of social change, based on education, suggested by Roy, is entirely different from the traditional political method. In usual political practice the political party and the state power are considered vital instruments to bring about social change. But both are excluded in the methodology of Roy who tried to leave the beaten track and blaze a new trail in the field of social engineering. We have already explained the reasons why he gave up the party system. It is undemocratic and immoral and all its evils follow from its attempt to capture political power. Therefore, along with the party Roy gave up the politics of power as well. He characterised his system of political practice as 'politics without power'. He believed that politics can be practised without the organisational form of the party and without any attempt to capture state power.

The politics which Roy wanted to practise had mainly two objectives, namely, peoples' education and peoples' organisation. We have already referred to the educational aspect and it should be pointed out that, according to Roy, a political party cannot undertake this task effectively. The first objective of a political party is to come to power and therefore it is more interested in indoctrinating the people with its ideas than in their real education. "Being involved in the game of power", Roy pointed out, "it has to play it according to the rules, and objective political education of the people might be a means to defeat the end of coming to power."⁹⁸ Apart from this educational task the main purpose of Roy's politics was to organise the local people in People's Committees and to encourage them to solve their own problems by their cooperative efforts instead of depending upon the Government helplessly. The popular tendency of depending upon the government for the solution of the problems would, Roy believed, undermine the democratic character of the society by promoting a feeling of helplessness among the people on the one hand and creating the conditions favourable for the rise of state authoritarianism on the other. Explaining this point Roy

observed: "So long as the people want their problem to be solved for them, they must be prepared to obey, to follow blindly, to be regimented. On the contrary, if they want freedom, they must be declaring that as human beings they can do whatever they expect others to do for them."⁹⁹ The people, trying to solve their problems by their own cooperative efforts, would increasingly assume the functions of government and thereby lay the foundation of the government of the people and by the people.¹⁰⁰

The new political practice suggested by Roy was given by him the name 'Humanist politics'. It is humanist because, as he himself puts it, it tried to introduce 'the human element into public affairs' or gave 'the human individual a prominent place in political practice.'¹⁰¹ Individual human beings rather than 'impersonal forces and factors' are given decisive significance in this school of politics. In the traditional political method institutions are more emphasized than man himself. Man, according to Roy's social philosophy, created all institutions of the society and therefore new social institutions can be created only by new men inspired by new ideas. Rational and moral men alone, Roy said, can constitute a rational and moral society. A party in power may create some new institutions in the society by legislative measures but such institutions imposed from above would not actually usher in a new society. He wrote: "A few good and intelligent people can think of some very good new institutions, but if these institutions will be run by human beings whose ideas are not so new and not so good, they will not produce the expected result."¹⁰² The moral sense of man is inherent in him and state laws imposed from above cannot make men moral, and, therefore, a moral society cannot be created through legislation. A really democratic society would be created only if the democratic mentality is developed among the people, and therefore, democracy, Roy concluded, cannot come into being by passing of laws nor can it be imposed from above. Roy's humanist politics is based upon the principle that the renewal of man is the beginning of the reconstruction of society.

Roy's concept of democracy without delegation of power and the party system and also the ways he suggested to realise it have

been explained. Dr. Dhar accepts the scheme in full and considers that it has solved "the baffling problem of power."¹⁰³ It is however necessary to go into a detailed and critical examination of Roy's scheme in order to ascertain its real worth.

Roy hoped that his system would realise the ideal of direct democracy even in modern large states. But the Peoples' Committee, the lowest unit of the pyramidal structure of the Radical Democratic State, would not include all the adults of the locality. In his Draft Constitution Roy proposed that the number of the members of the People's Committee would be one fiftieth of the total number of voters in the locality. Thus the people who would remain outside the People's Committee — 98 per cent of the total number of voters — would have no direct role to play even in the Radical Democratic State proposed by Roy. Democracy, therefore, would still remain indirect and representative.

Secondly, there is no reason to believe that Radical Democratic State would remain free from the evils of the party system. The parties — obviously they could not be banned in a real democracy — would still try to dominate the People's Committee so that their views might prevail. Responsibility of the representatives to the People's Committees would simply turn the latter into hot-beds of party intrigue and strife. The difference between the capture of power by a party and the capture of power by the People's Committee would be of little practical significance because the parties would still try to capture power through the People's Committees. The parties might not come into prominence in a People's Committee or Pandiyat dealing simply with the problems of local self-government, but if they were given the right to control the State Assemblies and Parliament the parties would surely try to dominate these bodies and the network of People's Committees dominated by parties would make the evils of the party system all the more glaring. The whole scheme might ultimately amount to a change from the frying pan into the fire. Political parties may actually disappear only if the People's Committees can work on the basis of a consensus. The Sarvodaya philosophy tries to do away with the parties on the assumption that a consensus is both possible and

desirable, but Roy's Radical Humanism is not very clear and categorical on this point. If differences of opinion on political matters are taken as natural, political parties are bound to emerge, whatever may be the form of government.

Thirdly, the scheme of Organised Democracy is based on a false psychology. Since man is not simply a political animal, it is idle to expect that the people throughout the country would take a living and sustained interest in the political problems of the country. On this problem H. A. Deane's observations in his book *The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski* are worth quoting here: "While it may be natural for a student of politics to feel that other men would, if only they had adequate knowledge, leisure and opportunities, share his passion for politics, the assumption is psychologically hardly more valid than a poet's belief that if men were given proper training and adequate opportunities they would naturally devote most of their time and energy to the composition of verse."¹⁰⁴ Prof. Robert Michels, Vilfredo Pareto and many others have shown by a minute study of social organisations that in spite of rights and privileges a democratic organisation tends to become oligarchical in character because most people do not take an active interest in democracy, as they have neither the ability nor the inclination for it. Hilaire Belloc has shown that even the industrial masses of our times suffer from the tendency to hero-worship and instead of exercising power and taking responsibility themselves they like to place responsibility on a single person and expect him to look after their interest. Undaunted by the warnings of these gloomy prophets, Roy pursued his ideal of radical democracy because he believed in the possibility of human development and the rise of a better type of man. All persons are endowed with equal potentialities and therefore everybody can develop himself equally. Failure in the past, therefore, could not make him pessimistic about the future, Roy's assumption is however open to serious doubts. There is a growing opinion among a group of scientists that variation in the achievement of different persons is largely due to hereditary factors — due to the nature of the native germ plasm. The recent psychological method of measuring general intelligence shows that on the basis of general

intelligence people can be divided into various groups and many are of the opinion that these differences are hereditary. If these theories are accepted Roy's assumption that all human beings are endowed with equal potentialities would become untenable. The present state of our knowledge of genetics and eugenics is inadequate and on the basis of this one cannot be dogmatic about its political and social implications. But even if men are endowed with equal potentialities their aptitudes would still be different and it is idle to expect that all would take a living and sustained interest in political affairs.

Fourthly, the practical difficulties of the scheme are overwhelming. It would be impossible to run any government in a big country if all the bills were to be referred to the different Peoples' Committees throughout the country which might propose different amendments difficult to reconcile with one another. Many of the problems of the government are very complex and intricate in nature and require expert knowledge for their full comprehension. Even many members of parliament are not competent to deal with them effectively. Therefore, it would be unwise, if not positively dangerous, to entrust the Peoples' Committees with the supreme legal power to give their verdict on all bills and measures proposed by the government. Loyalty to democracy must not overwhelm our sense of realism. A party saddled with the responsibility of running the administration may take a long-distance view and judge a measure from the standpoint of the national interest but the local People's Committees without the actual responsibility of governing the country are more likely to judge a measure from the point of view of their immediate and local interests. In the absence of the party in the legislature, it would not be possible to form a stable executive confident of legislative support. In the Presidential form of Government it is the party that serves as an indirect link between the Executive and the Legislative departments and its disappearance would lead to the constant danger of administrative deadlock. Even in the proposed Radical Democracy the State would co-ordinate the activities of different social institutions and the Government, therefore, must have at least in broad outline a uniform and

consistent policy to be followed in every sector of social life. If the Government is composed of individuals having no common policy and programme it would lead the country to chaos. A government must start with an agreed comprehensive policy and every issue cannot be judged in isolation. In that case government policy would have no coherence. It is the party organisation which enables the Government to follow a coherent and consistent policy. Chander Prakash Bhambhri, therefore, in an article on Roy's New Humanism has rightly characterised his concept of partyless politics as facile, impracticable and dangerous.¹⁰⁵ It is dangerous because, as the writer says, the doctrine, if practised, would result in totalitarianism. Partyless politics will lead to chaos and chaos is the breeding ground of dictatorship. A distinction between the legal and the political sovereign must be recognised in modern states. Measures should be taken so that the latter may influence the former but to identify the two in the legal and constitutional structure would be dangerous even if practicable. In a democracy the legal sovereign must derive power from the people but cannot entrust the people with power in day-to-day administration.

Lastly, Roy's scheme of assigning special power to the spiritually free individuals in the transitional period is also open to criticism. This scheme is beset with almost insurmountable practical difficulties. How are the spiritually free and detached individuals to be selected? Roy's suggestion that the selection of such persons would be on the recommendation of the professional groups is not likely to realise his purpose. By such methods the state may get the assistance of professional experts and persons of great intellectual eminence but not necessarily of spiritually free and incorruptible individuals.

By pointing out the shortcomings of Parliamentary Democracy and the evils of the party system Roy has rendered one useful service. He has drawn the attention of many towards these problems which may encourage efforts to mitigate them without however destroying the system itself. In an article on Partyless Democracy Acharya J. B. Kripalani remarks that most of the defects of the party system are not inherent in it but are as much curable as those of any other

human institution.¹⁰⁶ With the growth of political consciousness among the people and of a democratic outlook and conviction among the parties, these evils may certainly be reduced appreciably. In the underdeveloped areas the evils of the party system became more prominent mainly because of the absence of democratic traditions and convictions among the people. That is possibly the reason why the concept of partyless Democracy has developed in such areas. If the people of a constituency—organised in local committees like the Panchayats in India today—take the initiative in conducting elections by organising meetings and inviting the different candidates to address the people, much of the immoral practices connected with elections may presumably be reduced. Direct democracy cannot be practised in the modern large states and therefore one must remain satisfied with the representative system. Bertrand De Jouvenel has very aptly pointed out that whatever might be the merits of democracy of the Athenian model we must “reconcile ourselves to the fact that participationist democracy cannot be restored in very large-scale organisations.”¹⁰⁷ But in spite of the indirect character of democracy, provision should be made for frequent contact between the representative and the voters of his constituency so that the latter may not feel completely ignored after the election and the politically interested and conscious elements of the constituency may enlighten the representative with their views and may secure information from him about the attitude of the Government on various problems. This will make democracy more lively and meaningful. The centralisation of power in the hands of a few is undoubtedly contrary to the spirit of democracy but the principle of decentralisation can be secured only by vesting the maximum possible freedom to the lower levels of administration in the village, district and the state. The participationist democracy may however be built up on the local scale dealing with local problems.

Roy's view that education is the precondition of democracy would readily be accepted by many. But it gives rise at least to two significant questions—what are the agencies to spread education among the people? Secondly, what should be the content of

education? Roy thought that neither the political parties nor the government can undertake the task. The parties would try to indoctrinate the people with their ideas and the Government would create a spirit of conformism among the people in order to maintain the status quo. A political party would, it is true, try to convert the people to its own opinion but in a democracy where there are several parties holding different views, party propaganda has no doubt an educational value. A government with a liberal democratic outlook can and does promote general education among the people without any ulterior purpose of regimenting the public mind. The efforts of the government and the parties may be reinforced by individual and cooperative endeavours but to exclude the former agencies completely appears to be dogmatic.

Many social thinkers have laid emphasis on man's education rather than on institutional changes as the starting point of social reconstruction. The whole programme of Community Development is based upon it. Many religious thinkers have tried to bring about the kingdom of heaven on earth through the divine illumination of men. W. E. Hocking believes that the success of democracy depends upon the religious transformation of human nature. P. A. Sorokin similarly holds that to be fruitful, the institutional changes must be preceded by a new spiritual culture. Nicolas Berdyaev also stands for a religious revival of human culture as the essential precondition of social progress. According to Sri Aurobindo the spiritual transformation of man must precede social change. 'He held that rational and intellectual education alone would not lead to a better future and he stood for the unfoldment of the hidden power of the human soul—a source of authority higher than reason. Vivekananda and Gandhiji also stood for the spiritual development of man. The Sarvodaya Movement carrying the Gandhian tradition and fortified by the socialist experience of Jayaprakash Narayan tries to bring about in India a social revolution without legislation. Rabindranath Tagore, who gave so much stress on education in his social and political theory, developed an elaborate theory of education laying emphasis not only on the education of the intellect but also of human emotions and spirit. Roy gave education only an intellectual content

and tried thereby to make man conscious of his potentialities, his rationality and the urge for freedom. But will the nourishment of the intellect alone lead to such moral development of man as to usher in a rational and moral society? Experience at least does not warrant optimism. Man possesses not simply a 'head' but also a 'heart' and education which cannot reach the human heart cannot change human conduct. Roy did not develop a detailed educational theory like Rousseau or Gandhi, though education formed a pivotal part in his social and political theory. Moreover, as, a technique of social change, education, it may be mentioned here, should be considered not in opposition to legislation but as its supplement. The limitations of legislation are obvious. Laws have their loopholes and in the absence of active popular support and co-operation a law may remain a dead letter. To be effective legislation must be rooted in enlightened public opinion and education is the only way to create it. Social progress is a complex function of many variables and a theory of social change must take all the factors into consideration.

In order to realise the democratic ideal of the sovereignty of the individual, Roy discarded not only the principle of the delegation of power and the party system but also the cult of nationalism. Nationalism, according to Roy, corrupted democracy and under its influence the practice of democracy, he held, ran counter to the philosophical principle of individualism. "The misalliance with nationalism put into the concept of democracy a collectivist connotation. The Nation-state, whether republican or monarchist, claimed to represent a collective ego, which was morally as well as legally entitled to ignore the comforts and convenience of individual citizens. The nation became a metaphysical concept; it was greater than the sum total of its component units — individual human beings. Democracy broke away from its humanist tradition."¹⁰⁸ According to Roy democracy lost its libertarian significance by its association with nationalism. He pointed out that "even the classic land of 'rugged individualism', the United States of America, is no exception. America is greater than the greatest of the Americans; the so-called American way of life means the obligation of all

individual Americans to conform with the will of the fiction of a collective ego. The Nation-state, in practice, makes no greater concession to the concept of individual freedom than the class-state of the Communists, and also of the Socialists. And no modern democratic state has as yet outgrown nationalist collectivism."¹⁰⁹

Roy, however, appears to have misinterpreted the spirit of nationalism and exaggerated its danger. A Nation-State, he maintained, is no more democratic than a communist state. But neither history nor logic would bear testimony in his favour. Britain or the U.S.A., to take the two leading examples, have not given up nationalism to realise democracy (which may not be full-fledged). Nationalism is more a feeling and an urge than an ideology. Nationalism is given different contents by people having different ideas. The Fascists used German nationalism for their totalitarian and aggressive purposes. Fichte and Hegel prepared the ground for this. But to be a democrat a German need not renounce nationalism. The doctrine of national sovereignty, it is true, is incompatible with world co-operation but an encroachment on national sovereignty would not imply an end of nationalism. Nationalism as a social and associational bond may survive the concept of the national sovereign state. Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and many other thinkers of the present age found no essential contradiction between nationalism and universalism. They believed that nationalism may be given a noble content which would accelerate rather than retard the advent of the age of universal co-operation. Nationalism is a double edged sword. It may be utilised for parochial, chauvinistic and totalitarian purposes, and it may also be treated as a vital stage in the social evolution of man from the primitive tribal life to world unity. Roy's opposition to nationalism was extended to an opposition to internationalism as well because the latter 'presupposes the existence of autonomous National States.'¹¹⁰ World Government, as a matter of fact, can be conceived only as a federation of the existing National States. Roy stood for a cosmopolitan common-wealth of free men, which, he said, would be a spiritual community not limited by the boundaries of national states.¹¹¹ World brotherhood undoubtedly presupposes

a world outlook but the spiritual community must have a political expression in which the nation states, as integral parts of the World Federation, would inevitably play a significant role. A federation of today does not imply annihilation of component states. Similarly the World Federation can be made feasible only on the basis of the existing nation states.

References :

1. M. N. Roy, *Constitution of India – A Draft*, p. 16, Article 2.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 15, Article 1 (a).
3. *Ibid.*, p. 15, Article 1 (t).
4. Explaining the meaning of 'People's Democracy' Dorothy Pickles writes that in it "the expression of the people's will is provided for by an intricate system of leadership from above within a single governmental party or alliance, thus restricting the citizen's effective choice to either support for, or refusal to support, one party". *A glossary of Political Terms*, edited by Maurice Cranston, p. 80.
5. M. N. Roy, *Constitution of India – A Draft*, p. 28, Article 54.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 30, Article 62.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 33, Article 74.
8. *Ibid.*, Article 75.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 13, Article 1 (e).
10. *Ibid.*, p. 5, (Introduction).
11. *Ibid.*, p. 39, Articles 106, 107.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 41, Article 117.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42, Article 118.
14. Principle No. 8.
15. *Twentieth Century Socialism*, by Socialist Union (A Penguin Special), p. 15.
16. Principle No. 9.
17. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 37.
18. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 181.

19. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, pp. 54-55.
20. In his book *The State and the Citizen*, J. D. Mabbott prefers the term 'Social pluralism' to 'political pluralism'. The Pluralists seek to bring various social institutions into prominence and therefore this term appears to be more appropriate.
21. *Lenin Selected Works II* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1947), p. 127.
22. Utopianism was characterised by Roy as "a declaration of faith in man's power to mould his destiny", RRR, II, p. 200.
23. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 277.
24. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 33.
25. *Radical Humanist*, XV, (26 August 1951) p. 400.
26. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 37.
27. *Radical Humanist* XV (26 August 1951), p. 400.
28. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 283.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
30. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 106.
Roy held similar views even when he had been a Marxist. He wrote in the Jail Volumes : "Society had originated as association of individuals. A society that suppresss the individual runs contrary to its own historical purpose. Individual man (and woman) is prior not only to family, but society itself, this being a creation of the individual", *Jail Volumes*, IX, pp. 145(b) – 146(a), Marginal notes.
31. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 34.
32. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 22.
33. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 74.
34. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 23.
35. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 269.
36. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 74.
37. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution II*, p. 283.
38. *Ibid.* II, p. 284.

It is interesting to note here that in the Jail 'Volumes Roy wrote : "Representative government, government responsible to the people, popular sovereignty – all these forms of political freedom derive their legal and moral sanction from the doctrine that function

of the state is to protect the rights and liberties of the individual, that society is an aggregate of individuals, and should be so organised and administered as to provide each of its members greatest possible freedom and opportunity for self-development", *Jail Volumes*, IX, p. 168(a).

39. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 20.
40. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 141.
41. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, pp. 22-23.
42. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 121.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
44. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 29.
45. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution*, II, p. 277.
46. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 35.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.
48. M. N. Roy, *Beyond Communism*, p. 151.
49. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 40.
50. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution*, I, p. 160.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
52. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 28.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
54. "To make democracy effective, power must always remain vested in the people, and there must be ways and means for the people to wield the sovereign power effectively, not periodically, but from day to day". Principle No. 12.
55. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 84.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
57. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, pp. 29-30.
58. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 116.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
61. Principle No. 8.
62. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 80.
63. Principle No. 11.
64. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 96.

65. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 30.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.
67. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 63.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.
70. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 33.
71. Palmer's observation that Roy was opposed to the party system since he believed that "the people are too backward to become politically conscious and discriminating members of any party" does not appear to be a correct explanation of Roy's ideas. Norman D. Palmer, *The Indian Political System*, p. 185.
72. The Radical Democratic Party, founded by Roy in 1940 took part in the election held in 1945. In the election Roy denounced the Congress as a Fascist party and claimed that the Radical Democratic party was the only party of the down-trodden people of India. In the election the party was miserably defeated.
73. In 1946 the Radical Democratic Party in its national conference held in Bombay adopted New Humanism as its philosophy and gave up all attempts to capture power. In 1948 at the Calcutta Conference the party was dissolved and the Radical Humanist Movement was inaugurated.
74. Marcus F. Franda, "The Political Idioms of Atulya Ghose", *Asian Survey* VI (August 1966), p. 420.
75. Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties : their organisation and activity in the modern state*, p. 422.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 353.
77. Maurice Duverger, n. 75, p. 425.
78. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 101.
79. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 24.
80. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 67.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
82. M. N. Roy, *Beyond Communism*, p. 152.
83. M. N. Roy, *Constitution of India – A Draft*, Article 6, p. 16.
84. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* II, p. 280.
85. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 84.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
87. M. N. Roy, *Constitution of India – A Draft*, p. 17.
88. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 61.
89. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 25.
90. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 59.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 112.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
94. NH, p. 45. Explaining the meaning of spiritually free or detached individuals Roy wrote: "in proportion as man feels that he has the power to resist the various temptations of life, to that extent he is spiritually free" (RRR, II, p. 271). A spiritually free man must be, Roy asserted, beyond the corrupting influence of power. Man, according to Roy, may attain the status of spiritual freedom by becoming conscious of his own rational and moral nature. Roy's concept of 'spiritually free individuals' has, it is obvious, no relation with religion or transcendental philosophy. He described the urge for spiritual freedom as "the striving to feel that man is a free agent, that he can act according to his judgement, and is capable of discriminating good from evil and right from wrong without being haunted by the preoccupation that he is helplessly at the mercy of some capricious super-human power" (RRR, II, p. 297). Roy's concept of spiritually free or detached individuals is similar to the Platonic concept of philosopher kings and Roy himself said that the idea of detached individuals may be traced back to Plato (BC, p. 77). His idea of 'spiritually free individuals' must however be differentiated from the concept of Superman held by Sri Aurobindo or Nietzsche. Aurobindo gave a supra-rational connotation to the idea of superman and emphasised an inward gnostic transformation leading to the transmutation of human values to divine values. Nietzsche's superman represents the qualities of master morality—energy, power, pride etc. Roy's spiritually free man is, on the other hand, characterised mainly by intellectual development, rational discrimination and spontaneous moral sense.
95. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 40.
96. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 46.
97. *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 47, 49.
98. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 101.
99. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 107.
100. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 63.
101. M. N. Roy, *Humanist Politics*, p. 1.
102. M. N. Roy, *Politics Power and Parties*, p. 57.
103. Niranjana Dhar, *The Political thought of M. N. Roy 1936-1954*, p. 172.
104. H. A. Deane, *Political Ideas of Harold Laski*, p. 63.
105. *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. XXI, No. 3, July-September, 1960, p. 255.
106. Acharya J. B. Kripalani, "Partyless Democracy", *Career and Courses*, Vol. XV, No. 10, p. 879.
107. Bertrand De Jouvenel, "What is Democracy", in *Democracy in the New States* (Rhodes Seminar Papers, published by Prabhakar Padhye for the Congress for Cultural Freedom, New Delhi, India), p. 39.
108. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, pp. 24-25.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 20-21.
110. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 37.
111. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution Vol. II*, p. 310.

VII

HUMANIST ECONOMICS

The main objective of Roy's political philosophy, was, as has been already mentioned, to realise the principle of the sovereignty of the people and the ideal of individual freedom in actual practice. This naturally brought economics within the purview of his philosophy. Like many other thinkers of the modern age he felt that one of the important factors that led to the miscarriage of the ideal of democracy in practice was economic. According to him, the free enterprise of the liberals and the state control of the socialists were both inadequate for safeguarding individual freedom. The concept of the economic man and the doctrine of 'laissez-faire' falsified the ideal of the individual freedom. The liberals conceived man as an economic being propelled by economic interest, which was considered to be the only incentive to human action. Roy pointed out that "the concept of the economic man negatives the liberating doctrine of individualism. The economic man is bound to be a slave or a slave-holder."¹ In liberalism individual freedom implied the freedom to pursue one's own economic interest which, in the context of the competitive economy and gross economic inequality, led to the exploitation of man by man. The practice of the laissez-faire economy thus "reduced the individual to a helpless position"² and this helplessness killed the spirit of democracy and created an atmosphere favourable for the rise of collectivism. The experience of Russia led Roy to conclude that communism was no better than state capitalism so far as the ideal of individual freedom was concerned. The extension of state control would necessarily lead to the concentration of power in the state and thus jeopardise the freedom of the individual, but there was no guarantee that this power would be used to end economic exploitation. The replacement

of private ownership by State ownership did not usher in a new civilization in Russia. Roy, therefore, concluded : "The abolition of private property, state ownership of the means of production, and planned economy do not by themselves end exploitation of labour, nor lead to an equal distribution of wealth."³

Roy's idea of limited government goes obviously against the theory of Democratic Socialism and also against the concept of the Welfare State. In a letter to Lewis Corey, Roy categorically explained his view thus : "But I have given up socialism also! Socialism is ineffective communism. Welfare State is a paternalist dictatorship. You cannot have socialism in a pluralist society, which you advocate."⁴ Apart from the technique and methods of coming to power, there is, according to Roy, little difference between socialism and communism. Both consider private property as the cause of all evils and advocate a programme of nationalization and state ownership as the remedy. Any scheme to use state power for promoting social good and public welfare, Roy feared, would ultimately result in the rise of totalitarianism and the denial of individual freedom. He stated : "The exorbitant price for problematical economic security and doubtful material welfare has to be paid whenever the government of a country, whether dictatorial or formally democratic, claims to be the guardian of the welfare of the people and the latter expected the government to do everything for them."⁵ From this condition Roy thought political dictatorship, either de facto or de jure, would follow logically. If the state was to be given the responsibility for promoting social welfare, it must be armed with the requisite power which would, Roy argued, necessarily lead to the rise of state authoritarianism, though it might remain hidden behind the facade of a parliamentary structure. "Even under the democratic socialism", Roy wrote, "economic welfare must be purchased; the price is forfeiture of individual liberty and regimentation."⁶ He thought that there was 'something fraudulent' in the concept of the welfare state. The state confers benefit upon the people with money taken from the people themselves, and for this purpose a large amount of money is spent to maintain the state bureaucracy. In Roy's words : "Money is taken out of one pocket of

the worker and put into his other pocket in the form of benefits; in the process the money loses about 20-25% of its value."⁷ He therefore tried to keep the economic life of society beyond the control of the state.

Roy's Radical Humanist philosophy thus considered both capitalism and socialism as inadequate and it stood for a third alternative which was called the Cooperative Economy. Roy wanted the economic life of society to be reorganised on the basis of mutual cooperation independent of state interference. The new economy would consist of a network of consumers' and producers' cooperatives and the economic activities of society would be conducted and coordinated by the people through these institutions.⁸ His main objective was to apply the principle of decentralization to the economic organisation of society through these co-operatives. Like the Peoples' Committee which would serve as the basic unit of the decentralised democratic state, every locality would have its own co-operative as the nucleus of the democratic decentralised economic system. The local and regional cooperatives would look after the economic interests of the people within their territorial jurisdiction, but the cooperative communities, Roy pointed out, would not be autarchic. As the constituent units of national economy they would be interdependent and integrated in a larger co-operative community. "Every local cooperative", he pointed out, "will be able to make, for example, bricks needed for building houses; but only some will be in a position to manufacture cement. Commodities will have to be exchanged and local multipurpose cooperative societies will be integrated into one larger economic system."⁹ The surplus from the local and regional cooperative societies would be pooled to finance the growth of industries producing on a large scale the commodities required everywhere but which could not be produced locally on a small scale. The large scale production of certain specified articles as well as the exploitation of natural resources such as mining would also be organized on a co-operative basis and they would be owned by local cooperative societies. The purpose of the production would be to raise the general standard of living of the people and there

would remain no motive of exploitation of labour for private profit in the Cooperative Economy. This economy would be self-sufficient financially, though in the beginning financial assistance by the state might be necessary; but it must not imply state control or state interference which, according to Roy, is bound to breed corruption and inefficiency.¹⁰

The Cooperative Economy, Roy maintained, might develop along with the existing privately owned industries. These industries would be given the option either to remain independent and compete with the new economy or to become integrated into the Cooperative system recognising the principle of production for use. If they decide to remain independent, they would gradually, Roy believed, be wiped out because of the "impossibility to compete with a non-profit-making economy sustained by the cooperative efforts of practically the entire society."¹¹ Thus without any coercion the problem of private enterprise based on the profit motive would be solved.

The Cooperative Economy, Roy pointed out, would take the benefit of modern science and technology but would never sacrifice the freedom of the individual in the economic organisation at the altar of technological efficiency. Modern technology has the tendency to make the unit of production so very large and complicated that individual workers are reduced to the position of cogs in the wheels of the economic machinery. But in Roy's philosophy individual freedom is the highest value and therefore he was of opinion that modern technological trends, if necessary, would have to be curbed so that they might serve the interest of man instead of swallowing them up. He wrote : "Machine should not be the Frankenstein of modern civilization. Created by man, it must subserve man's purpose — contribute to his freedom."¹²

Roy's views on economic planning does not appear to be very clear. The main problem before him was to reconcile planning with freedom. He wrote : "Economic democracy is no more possible in the absence of political democracy than the latter is in the absence of the former. That consideration should be borne in mind by those who make a fetish of economic planning."¹³ He further wrote :

"The crucial question is, Planning for what? It is assumed that planned economy will guarantee the greatest good to the greatest number; in other words, it will mean equal distribution of wealth—establish social justice. In that case, it would be possible to reconcile planning with freedom."¹⁴ In *New Humanism*, published in 1947 Roy entrusted the Council of State representing the professional groups with the work of planning the development of society in all branches—economic, health, education and culture.¹⁵ But he later changed his view radically and tried to make the economic organisation of society independent of any state interference. In *Radical Humanism*, published in 1952, he wrote: "It is an unfounded assumption that state planning necessarily leads to economic democracy and social justice Planning may quicken the tempo of production; but it has nowhere done better than in American free enterprise. In Russia it has promoted considerable industrial progress in a relatively short time. But there also equitable, not to mention equal, distribution remains in the realm of Utopia. And the status quo does not allow any optimism about the attainment of the ideal. In the meantime planning has resulted in economic regimentation and eclipse of liberty."¹⁶ Roy completely abandoned the idea of planning the economic life through the state but it is doubtful whether he gave up the idea of planning itself. The Cooperative Economy, as outlined by Roy, cannot obviously function without an overall plan. Roy possibly had the idea of a plan prepared and executed by the Cooperatives themselves for the economic development of society.

Roy's emphasis on the decentralisation and dispersal of industries throughout the country instead of localising them in a few selected areas, and on the medium-sized mechanised industries rather than on large-scale enterprise, would go a long way to solve the problems of the 'mass' society and 'mass' culture confronting the industrialised civilization of today. Even in the West many leading thinkers stand for a decentralised economic order. "Our centrist civilization, which has become more and more remote from man and the human scale," Dr. Wilhelm Ropke rightly points out, "has reached the point where its own continued existence is at

stake."¹⁷ But it is however doubtful whether the economic life of society can be made entirely independent of state interference particularly in the newly liberated countries of Asia and Africa. The attempt to reorganise the economic life of society on the basis of cooperation and mutualism is an old one and it was tried both in Europe and America. In modern Europe the anarchist and syndicalist movements aimed at reorganising the economic life of society without the interference of the state. But as an alternative to free enterprise co-operation could not succeed to any appreciable extent. Unlike the Anarchists, Roy admitted that the state must be given the right to co-ordinate the activities of different organisations of the society. This naturally would give the state a large share of economic power. Co-ordination of different social institutions presupposes more or less a common policy to be pursued by them and this policy would necessarily be determined by the state. Leslie Lipson has rightly pointed out that the modern pluralists "do modify their basic theory and make such concessions to the state that after denying admission to monism at the front door they let it creep in at the back."¹⁸ In the underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa the state has got a special role to play. "Asian Governments", Maurice Zinkin has rightly argued, "have to take more economic initiative than Western Governments. The facts, not socialist doctrine, make them to do so."¹⁹ Before the underdeveloped countries there is a concrete ideal of modernism (in European society) which they try to imitate, may be with some differences here and there. In the West during the period of liberalism there was no such given ideal for the government to realise. When the emphasis goes to execution the state necessarily comes into prominence. Describing the special condition of Asia Maurice Zinkin writes: "No Western Government has to face the prospect of transforming its whole society. In the West the people forced family planning on the governments. The accounts of the best companies were taken as the model for the Companies Act. Private universities and grammar schools provided the model for the state's educational efforts. Before the Welfare State there were the friendly societies. And so on. The state's function is normally to generalise an idea or an institution which has already arisen spontaneously within the

society. The state does not innovate. In Asia on the other hand the government must lead, or no one will. That the government is sometimes handicapped by inadequate servants and prejudiced politicians, that it is on occasion ineffective, is an argument for making it better, it cannot be an argument for doing nothing."²⁰ In the growth of democracy in the underdeveloped countries the ideal of the Welfare State appears to have a vital role to play. "The Welfare State", D. L. Hobman rightly observes, "is a compromise between the two extremes of Communism on the one hand and unbridled Individualism on the other and as such, in spite of all its imperfections, it sets a pattern for any humane and 'progressive society'."²¹ In the absence of popular initiative, a co-operative institution would also develop dictatorial tendencies, but a people organised locally and conscious of their democratic rights and obligations may use the Democratic Welfare State to promote their freedom without submitting to its authoritarian rule.

References :

1. Principle No. 13.
2. M. N. Roy, *Reason Romanticism and Revolution Vol. II*, p. 255.
3. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 40.
State ownership, according to Roy, includes all the evils of capitalism but "only the relative freedom of bourgeois society is lost in the bargain." Synopses prepared by M. N. Roy on the eve of the Study Camp in 1946, p. 23.
4. The letter of M. N. Roy (dated April 6, 1952) to Lewis Corey was preserved in the M. N. Roy Archives, Indian Renaissance Institute, Dehradun.
5. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 97.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
7. *Ibid.* On the same problem Ropke writes : "But this amounts merely to a transfer of purchasing power from the left-hand into the right-hand pocket, by diverting it with tremendous wastage, through State Channels" Wilhelm Ropke, *Reflections on the Welfare State*, p. 14.

8. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 75.
9. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 52.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
12. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 41.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
16. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 54.
See *Humanist Approach to Economic Development*.
(Indian Renaissance Institute), pp. 14-21.
17. Wilhelm Ropke, *A Humane Economy*, p. 261.
18. Leslie Lipson, *The Great Issues of Politics*, p. 436.
19. Maurice Zinkin, *Development for Free Asia*, p. 66.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
21. D. L. Hobman, *The Welfare State*, p. 1.

VIII

CONCLUSION

Roy has developed a new ideology replacing Marxism instead of advocating politics without ideology. Is ideology necessary for social progress? Can we not make progress through necessary reforms in different fields without an integrating ideology? There are scholars who believe that the age of ideology has come to an end, and it should be replaced by piecemeal social engineering. The ideological attempt to explain the whole existence by few general principles is possibly too difficult a task for human ingenuity. Moreover, ideology has a tendency to divide people even when they agree on essential social reforms. It, according to some, gives rise to fanaticism which is almost similar to religious fanaticism of the past.

Roy however has not dealt with this problem directly and specifically but he did not ignore or overlook it altogether. The view against ideology arose specifically in the context of Marxism as practised in erstwhile Soviet Union. If an ideology recognizes individual freedom and promotes democratic government, it will most probably not be considered undesirable or redundant, Soviet Marxism created the problem because there Marxism was taken as synonymous with truth. Antiideological views did not appear in the context say of liberalism, and the Radical Humanist ideology is also a liberal—as opposed to a collectivist-ideology. An ideology need not be intolerant of rivals, and several ideologies may co-exist at a particular time. Firm conviction, Roy argues, is an incentive to action, and with new experience conviction may change. The tendency of not changing conviction even when experience warrants it gives rise to dogmatism, which must be avoided. But “in order to avoid dogmatism”, Roy argues, “one need not fight shy of any

conviction.” A perfect ideology is not possible because, as Roy explains, “human knowledge will be always defective because always there will be more to know. But that does not necessarily lead to epistemological nihilism.” Epistemological nihilism here means refusal to have conviction in an ideology. What Roy means here is that in spite of possible defects, men must formulate ideologies which would serve as incentives to action. Though in the passage Roy did not use the term ‘ideology’, whenever he used the word ‘conviction’, he meant conviction in ideology. We may conclude our topic by pointing out that a piecemeal approach to social change has its merits, but without an implied perspective of total transformation such an approach may lead to changes in contradictory directions and ultimately give rise to social maladjustment.

It is alleged by many that Roy in spite of his intellectual brilliance and profound knowledge was a failure at least in the field of Indian politics. To what extent is this allegation acceptable? He introduced communism in India, and the Communist Party of India was also the creation of his followers. Leaders like Muzaffar Ahmed and Dange came in contact with Marxism through Roy’s efforts. This was not a mean achievement, though he had no relation with the party after his dispute with the Communist International.

Roy gave Indian politics an international setting, a positive content and an intellectual and moral dimension. He judged Indian politics in the context of world developments, and predicted confidently that victory of the allied powers in the second world war would not only remove the danger of fascism from the world, but would also accelerate the process of transfer of power from the British to the Indian hands. History followed faithfully the prediction of Roy, but historians could not do justice to him. Some Indian leaders are proud to proclaim that Indian independence was due to non-violence, and some assert that it was due to the armed struggle of the revolutionaries. Roy’s views are seldom discussed. During the British rule national politics consisted exclusively of anti-imperialism whatever may be the means of the anti-imperialist struggle. Roy alone tried to give a positive content to this anti-

imperialism by explaining the meaning of independence concretely in terms of economic prosperity and social emancipation. After independence politics was reduced to a mere scramble for power among the parties, leaving the development of the country to administration. Successful politicians remained concerned exclusively with power to be attained through election. This scramble for power ultimately led to the criminalization of politics, and Roy sought to give politics a new orientation by giving up the race for power and by turning politics towards constructive activities like promoting peoples' education, and forming peoples' organization. This was certainly an up hill task, and concrete achievements in this sphere remain negligible. Roy's achievement consists in showing the way. Those who believe that democratic politics should not remain confined to struggle for power may turn their attention to the radical thoughts of Roy.

Further, the concept of Renaissance which Roy sought to introduce in our political thought has a significance which requires emphasis. Renaissance stood for a humanist view of life—a rational life of enjoyment, co-operation, toleration and unfoldment of human potentialities. Democracy arises naturally out of a life of toleration and co-operation, and democracy may not necessarily be viewed simply as a matter of power. It means more fundamentally a way of life. Roy was a materialist and Radical Humanism was a materialist philosophy, but he tried to rejuvenate the country by the spirit of the Renaissance. The Renaissance movement of Europe included both materialists and religious minded people, but all were concerned with the life of this world instead of remaining absorbed in thoughts of life after death. Roy wanted to build up a similar atmosphere in India.

Roy's attempt to introduce moral politics in the country may also be noted. Political corruption arises mainly from rivalry between parties, attempts of parties to capture power, and intrigue of leaders and their groups to dominate their parties. The end of the party system would therefore naturally lead at least to the diminution of political immorality. Roy was opposed also to the practice of realising the interests of a state through immoral means.

Like Gandhi he was opposed to the doctrine—end justifies the means. End and means must both be moral.

Roy's contributions to Indian politics were thus formidable, though they did not strengthen the nationalist school. And that is the reason why he is usually regarded as a failure. He had, as a matter of fact, blazed a new trail and struck a new path which however remained mostly unknown to the people of his own country.

References :

1. *Reason Romanticism and Revolution Vol. II*, p. 265.

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