CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPT OF REVOLUTION

Framework

This chapter consists of three major sections. In the first section, we have noted briefly the transition of Roy's idea of revolution from a classical Marxist one to a Radical Humanist one. Section II is an elucidation of Roy's criticism of the Marxist-Leninist understanding of revolution. Before stating Roy's objections we have elaborated and discussed Marx's concept of revolution as well as Lenin's. The last section is an elaboration and examination of Roy's new Radical Humanist understanding of the concept of revolution.

SECTION I

Introduction

In the last chapter we saw that Roy advocated a renaissance as the only answer to the crisis which he identified as the crisis of modern times. In his theory of Radical Humanism, which was to serve his advocacy of a renaissance, Roy holds that a revolution is to be brought about by a reassertion of reason, or in other words, a renaissance. In this chapter, we shall analyse Roy's notion of revolution in his theory of Radical Humanism and examine its implications.
Since Roy was a part of the Communist International and occupied several important positions on various bodies of the Communist International, we may assume that his understanding of revolution was in keeping with the classical or orthodox Marxist interpretation. After his release from prison in 1936, by which time he no longer belonged to the Communist International, Roy seems to have given up the classical Marxist notion of revolution, for he was already talking of the need of a renaissance. It was a peculiar situation. On the one hand, Roy wanted to be identified as, a Marxist and considered himself as one. At the same time, however, he was aware that he was deviating from the orthodox Marxist position.

In 1940, Roy states at the Dehra Dun camp, "Revolution means a radical change in the established social order...." Roy still spoke in terms of revolutionary classes, capture of power and the need of a revolutionary party and theory. Yet, he already had differences with the classical Marxist position. Roy's deviance lay primarily in his analysis of classes. Roy had rejected the Marxist view that the proletariat was the vanguard of the revolution. His rejection of this fundamental tenet of the Marxist theory of revolution implied that he no longer saw history as the history of class struggle or class conflict. Instead, Roy was now emphasizing the 'cohesive factor' that holds a society together. Thus it was Roy's changed notion of history that led him to reject the Marxist theory of revolution.
The post-jail years, till 1946, mark a period of the development of Roy's new understanding of revolution. His elaboration of the new position is contained in three of his books -- Scientific Politics, New Orientation and Beyond Communism. In the preface to the second edition (1947) of Scientific Politics he writes,

"Seven years ago, I still spoke as an orthodox Marxist criticizing deviations from, or faulty understanding of the pure creed. Nevertheless, the tendency to look beyond Communism was already there in a germinal form. While still speaking in terms of class struggle, I laid emphasis on the cohesive factor in social organisation. Already then I appreciated Marxism as something greater than the ideology of a class."^6

Roy also points out that the heterodox ideas which he had outlined in the first camp in 1940 unfolded themselves over the years to finally develop into a new theory of revolution.^7

SECTION II

Roy's Critique Of The Marxist-Leninist Theory Of Revolution

Roy's new understanding of history and of the social forces that make history, leads to his rejection of the Marxist theory of revolution. To understand Roy's objections and criticisms of the Marxist theory of revolution, let us first grasp what the Marxist theory of revolution is.
Marx's Theory Of Revolution

Marx's theory of revolution is based on his understanding of history, which is a materialist conception of history. According to this, it is the material conditions under which people live, produce and consume that determines their social, political and intellectual life processes. According to Marx, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."\(^8\)

Thus the necessity of a revolution is created in the objective material conditions of a society and is not brought about by simply a will to do so. Krishan Kumar has rightly identified the implications of Marx's argument,

"The Marxist concept of revolution therefore sets itself against a purely romantic conception of revolution as willed, spontaneous action".\(^9\)

Though Marx identifies the genesis of revolution in the material conditions he does not attribute them with the power to bring about the revolution. Marx states this very explicitly,

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."\(^10\)

According to Marx, a revolutionary situation is created when certain changes occur in the material conditions of existence of a
particular society. Marx explains that the material productive forces of a society, at a certain stage of development, come into conflict with the relations of production. These relations are no longer conducive to growth, in fact they become fetters. And this conflict marks the beginning of an epoch of social revolution. Marx traces through the different epochs of history, the different productive forces which keep on growing, till they cannot be contained by the existing relations of production, thereby bringing about a revolution. He identifies these different epochs as primitive communism, slave society, feudalism and capitalism, followed by socialism. Capitalism, according to Marx, is the last stage of a class-divided society, based on private ownership of the means of production and the division of labour.

Marx explains the movement of the production forces and social relations prevalent in the capitalist epoch thus,

"Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society......In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity -- the epidemic of over-production...."

The contradiction, or conflict, of the productive forces and
the social relations within capitalism, are to be resolved through a socialist revolution. The socialist revolution is to be led by the proletariat for, Marx argues, it is the most revolutionary class and destroys the class society itself. The proletariat occupies this special position because,

"All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property."

This revolution, according to Marx, would be like other revolutions in as much as it would be essentially a change in the mode of production. And yet, in one crucial manner, this revolution would be different from all other revolutions in history. It would be the last revolution. As Marx explains in the German Ideology,

"In all previous revolutions the mode of activity always remained unchanged and it was only a question of a different distribution of this activity, a new distribution of labour to other persons, whilst the communist revolution is directed against the hitherto existing mode of activity, does away with labour, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, which is not recognised as a class, and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc., within present society...."

From the above elaboration of the Marxist theory of revolution, we may now be in a position to note the essential or fundamental
tenets of the theory of revolution as conceived by Marx: (1) that conflict is fundamental to class societies; (2) that the genesis of revolution is in the objective conditions, in the production forces and the social relations; (3) that revolution is to be brought about by men, but under given conditions; (4) that the working class is the most revolutionary class and is the vanguard of the revolution, the socialist revolution which is the last revolution of history.

Having elucidated Marx's theory of revolution, we shall proceed to elaborate Lenin's theory of revolution, before we examine Roy's objections to both of them.

The Leninist Theory Of Revolution

"Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular." 

Stalin has very succinctly defined what is considered to be Lenin's contribution to the theory of Marxist revolution. Lenin formulated his theory within the paradigms of Marxist theory and is considered to have furthered the understanding of the nature of capitalism.

According to the well-known scholar, R.N. Carew Hunt, Lenin's contributions to Marxist theory of revolution are: (a) the theory
of party; (b) the theory of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism; (c) the theory of dictatorship of the proletariat.

**Theory Of Party**

According to Lenin, the State is a product of irreconcilable class antagonisms and there is no question of the bourgeois State withering away. It was the proletarian State that would wither away. As Lenin elaborates in *State and Revolution*, "The State is the product and the manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises when, where, and to the extent that the class antagonisms cannot be objectively reconciled. And conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable." This state, according to Lenin, can be smashed only by a violent revolution, "The replacement of the bourgeois by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution...." Thus the question of revolution is essentially the capture of power. And Lenin's theory of party is concerned with the capture of power. As Ralph Miliband points out, "The important point for him (Lenin) indeed the essence of Lenin's contribution to Marxism -- was that there must be organisation and direction if the revolutionary process was to be advanced...." Lenin was the first, and for a long time the only one, to tackle the problem of revolution at the decisive practical level, that of organisation."
The revolution, according to Lenin, is to be guided by the revolutionary party, comprised of professional revolutionaries who would be guided by proletarian ideology i.e. social-democracy. As Lenin argues in What Is To Be Done, "...the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory."\(^21\) The need for such an organisation was justified by Lenin on several grounds:

(a) Spontaneous revolts of the working class, though manifestations of revolutionary consciousness are only embryonic forms and express resistance and not struggle.\(^22\) The workers who are embroiled in their day to day struggles at the factories cannot achieve revolutionary consciousness by themselves. This consciousness has to be brought to them from without.\(^23\) Lenin states, "The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness...."\(^24\)

(b) Spontaneous development of the working class movement only leads to the strengthening of the bourgeois ideology, the trade unionism and the enslavement of the working class to bourgeois ideology.\(^25\) Therefore, the political revolutionary consciousness must guide the working class and this can be achieved through the revolutionary party of the Social-Democrats.

(c) A revolutionary party alone can lead the working class to freedom,
for it leads the struggle not only for better conditions of work but seeks for "...the abolition of the social system that compels the propertyless to sell themselves to the rich...." The destruction of the State and the capture of power, Lenin argued, can only be conducted by a revolutionary party which embodies the most revolutionary theory, for it alone can transcend the narrow trade union consciousness of the working class and show the real relations of the classes and the nature of the State.

Imperialism: The Highest Stage Of Capitalism

The Second International had come to recognise the changed nature of capitalism and of imperialism, and this found expression in the economic theories of Rosa Luxemburg as well as Lenin. Lenin's theoretical achievement consisted in,

"...his concrete articulation of the economic theory of imperialism with every political problem of the present epoch, thereby making the economics of the new phase a guide-line for all concrete action in the resultant decisive conjuncture."

According to Lenin,

"Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which division of all territories of the globe among the great capitalist powers has been completed."

From the analysis of capitalism in the stage of imperialism, Lenin arrived at a new understanding of the nature of revolution.
According to the earlier Marxist understanding, the proletarian revolution would take place first in the developed countries as national revolutions. However, Lenin argued, that all parts of the world had now become connected through the imperialist chain, and therefore, we have now to speak of the objective conditions for revolution in the entire system of world imperialist economy. Imperialism draws backward economies into the world system of capitalism; therefore, it is possible to talk of the system as a whole being ripe for revolution. The world imperialist chain must now be opposed by a common front of the revolutionary movement.

The answer to the question as to where the revolution would begin, was no longer directly related to where industry was developed, and where the proletariat constituted the majority. Lenin argued that revolution could break out even in an underdeveloped economy. Stalin has very precisely and aptly explained the implications of Lenin's thesis of imperialism,

"The front of capital will be pierced where the chain of imperialism is weakest, for the proletarian revolution is the result of the breaking of the chain of the world imperialist front at its weakest link; and it may turn out that the country which has started the revolution, which has made a breach in the front of capital, is less developed in a capitalist sense than other, more developed, countries, which have, however, remained within the framework of capitalism."

It is for this heightened understanding of the capitalist system that Lenin is considered to have gone beyond the Marxist economic theory that prevailed at the time.
Dictatorship Of The Proletariat

Marx and Engels had ascribed a special role for the proletariat in the transition stage from capitalism to socialism. Lenin built up this idea and came out with a thesis that emphatically asserted,

"...the transition from capitalist society, developing towards Communism, towards a Communist society, is impossible without a 'political transition period' and the state in this period can only be revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

Lenin argues that the State was to be put to the task of completing the proletarian revolution, or in other words the State was to be utilised as a weapon in the class struggle of the proletariat.

Lenin points out that democracy in this State, would change from a democracy of an insignificant minority, the minority of the rich, to a democracy of the working class. Lenin explains,

"Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people -- this is the modification of democracy during the transition from capitalism to Communism."

Only under communism, Lenin argues, when the capitalists have been completely wiped out, when there are no classes, then alone can the state wither away. Until then, Lenin justifies the use of force and suppression as necessary for completing the tasks of the proletarian revolution.

Lenin elaborates his idea of dictatorship as,

"....most determined and most ruthless war waged by the
new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased tenfold by its overthrow, (that) the dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle -- sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative -- against the forces and traditions of the old society.”

To conclude, we may note the salient arguments of Lenin's theory of revolution: (a) that proletarian revolution need not take place only in advanced capitalist countries, because of the altered situation under imperialism; (b) that to bring about a proletarian revolution you need a centralised party; (c) that the proletarian dictatorship is a necessary stage in the completion of the proletarian revolution.

**Roy's Objections To Marx's Theory Of Revolution.**

Through his new theory of revolution Roy is attempting to demolish the fundamental tenets of Marxist theory of revolution: (i) the basis of exploitation in capitalist society is surplus-value; (ii) that class conflict is fundamental in society; (iii) that the working class is the vanguard of the revolution. The other objections that Roy raises pertain to the Leninist theory of revolution.

**Roy's Criticism On Marx's Theory Of Surplus-Value.**

Roy had two principal reservations about Marx's theory of surplus-value: (a) that it is the basis of exploitation; (b) that it is a characteristic specific to capitalism. To understand Roy's argument let us first examine briefly what Marx really meant.
Capitalism, Marx explains in *Das Capital*, is a specific form or mode of production which is characterised by commodity production. This implies that production is no longer only for use, but primarily for exchange through sale. The value of the product is measured in the form of price, in other words, in terms of money. To explain what really is surplus-value and how surplus is produced, Marx goes back to the act of production itself. Marx explains,

"In the labour process, therefore, man's activity, with the help of the instruments of labour, effects an alteration, designed from the commencement, in the material worked upon. The process disappears in the product; the latter is a use-value, Nature's material adapted by a change of form to the wants of man. Labour has incorporated itself with its subject: the former is materialised, the latter transformed. That which in the labourer appeared as movement, now appears in the product as a fixed quality without motion. The blacksmith forges and the product is a forging.

If we examine the whole process from the point of view of its result, the product, it is plain that both the instruments and the subject of labour are means of production, and that the labour itself is productive labour...."

Marx then explains that under capitalism, this fundamental and essential activity 'labour' which transforms Nature's raw material into products, thereby adding value, is itself turned into a commodity for sale in the market. The labourer no longer owns any means of production other than his labour-power. Under feudalism, Marx points out, the serf was not totally cut off from his means of production, land. Through a slow process, however, the serf was deprived of his land and was finally turned into a propertyless labourer. Now the labourer had only his labour-power to sell. Thus labour, which produces value, is itself now turned into a commodity which the capitalist
purchases in the market. The products of labour belong to the capitalist, (for he owns the means of production -- land, capital, machines) which he then sells in the market. Not only does the owner of the means of production own the product, he also appropriates the surplus-value that is created by the labour. How this happens Marx explains through his theory of surplus-value. According to Marx, surplus-value is the difference between the value of the commodity or product and the value of the capital involved in the production process, which includes the labour-power. The value of labour-power is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labour time necessary for the production of this specific commodity. Engels, has explained what Marx means by surplus-value very lucidly,

"What is the value of labour-power? According to the generally known law, it is the value of the means of subsistence necessary to maintain and procreate the labourer in the way established in a given country and a given historical epoch. We assume that the labourer is paid the entire value of his labour-power. Further we assume that this value is represented by six hour's work daily, or half a working-day. But the capitalist asserts that he has bought labour-power for a whole working-day, and he makes the labourer work twelve hours or more. With a twelve-hour working-day he therefore acquires the product of six hours' work without paying for it. From this Marx concludes: all surplus-value .... is unpaid labour." 

Marx explains how surplus value is organic to capitalism. According to Marx,

"Capitalist production is based on the fact that the productive labourer sells his own labour-power, as his commodity, to the capitalist, in whose hands it then functions merely as an element of his productive capital. This transaction, which pertains to circulation -- the sale and purchase of labour-power -- not only inaugurates the process or production, but also
determines implicitly its specific character. The production of a use-value, and even that of a commodity (....) is here only a means of producing absolute and relative surplus-value for a capitalist.

"The appropriation of surplus-value -- a value in excess of the equivalent of the value advanced by the capitalist -- although inaugurated by the purchase and sale of labour-power, is an act performed within the process of production itself, and forms an essential element of it."\(^{33}\) (Emphasis ours)

Thus, Marx not only shows how surplus-value is organic and intrinsic to capitalism, but also that this surplus is appropriated by those who own the means of production, or in other words, those who form the ruling class. Therefore, the basis of exploitation under capitalism is basically through the private appropriation of surplus-value created in the very process of production.

Roy rejects the Marxian thesis that it is in the production of surplus-value that exploitation takes place or is the basis of exploitation in capitalism. Roy states this explicitly,

The theory that the production of surplus-value is the specific feature of capitalism and represents exploitation of the working class, is the fundamental fallacy not only of Marxist economics, but of the entire philosophy of revolution."\(^{36}\)

It is clear from the above quotation that Roy has basically two objections to Marx's thesis: (i) that surplus-value is a characteristic which is specific to capitalism (ii) that surplus-value forms the basis of exploitation.

According to Roy, every society needs to produce a surplus
for survival and progress. He argues that a society will inevitably stagnate and ultimately die out if all the social produce is consumed. Roy states that social surplus is the lever of progress and that Marx, therefore, was mistaken in identifying it as the basis of exploitation. Roy writes,

"As a corollary to that fallacious view, he (Marx) demanded that the class appropriation of social surplus should stop: that the expropriation of the expropriators was the condition for the end of exploitation of man by man."

From here Roy proceeds to assert that labour is exploited even in Socialist Russia. Roy argues,

"Accumulation of capital is the condition sine qua non; and that is possible only on the basis of the production of surplus-value, that is, production over and above what is actually consumed by the producers. . . . If production of surplus-value represents exploitation of labour, then labour is exploited also under Socialism; and it must be admitted that under the Socialist economy of Russia labour is even more exploited— to produce larger surplus-value to be accumulated into new capital."

It only means, that

"....under the new order, social surplus will be appropriated by the new ruling class -- the proletariat, pending the advent of the utopia of a classless and stateless society."

From this Roy concludes that the revolution was not betrayed, it was true to its theoretical pattern, and has proved itself to be fallacious. Roy writes,

"The fallacious doctrine of surplus-value, and particularly the experience of its appropriation, provided the theoretical foundation of the dogma of class struggle. Marx and his orthodox followers, believing in economic determinism, discovered class struggle throughout history...."
What is suggested, if one examines his interpretation critically, is that Roy's understanding of the notion of surplus-value seems to be very naive and confused. He appears to have missed the basic point that Marx was making, namely that it is not the simple production of surplus-value that is the basis of exploitation under capitalism, but rather, as already seen in our elaboration of Marx's concept of surplus, it is the appropriation of surplus by individual capitalists for the further multiplication of capital which leads to exploitation. And finally, that it was for this reason that Marx was demanding the abolition of private property. For, surplus-value, according to Marx, was the unpaid labour of the labourer. Marx did, of course, recognise the need of surplus production, as is clear from his writings in Capital. Marx argues,

"Surplus labour in general, as labour performed over and above the given requirements, must always remain. In the capitalist as well as in the slave system, etc., it merely assumes an antagonistic form and is supplemented by complete idleness of a stratum of society. A definite quantity of surplus labour is required as insurance against accidents and by the necessary and progressive expansion of the process of reproduction in keeping with the development of the needs and growth of population, which is called accumulation from the viewpoint of the capitalist...." (Emphasis ours).

Roy does not distinguish between surplus value and surplus produce and from that seems to spring his misinterpretation of Marx.

Further, Roy criticises Marx for neglecting what he considers to be the moral dimension of the problem of exploitation. Roy feels that exploitation should be abolished on moral grounds and not economic ones as Marx had, according to Roy, argued. Roy believes it is on
grounds of justice and equality that exploitation must be stopped.

In point of fact, Marx was not demanding the abolition of exploitation on economic grounds, as Roy makes it out to be. Marx was really objecting to the objectification of the agent of labour -- the labourer. This objectification takes place under capitalism, Marx argues, for the labourer is turned into a commodity, his labour power is put out for sale just like all other commodities which are the creations of the labourer. Thus, he is totally deprived of and alienated from the creation of his labour, which is an expression of his very species-being. If the product of his labour was denied to the labourer, then he was alienated from his true species self. Therefore, Marx demanded the abolition of exploitation of labour, to end the alienation of man from his true species-being and achieve freedom.

Roy's Criticism Of Marx's Concept Of Class Struggle

Class struggle is a fundamental concept in Marx's theory of revolution. According to Marx, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle."\(^3\)

This oft-quoted statement can be understood only in the context of Marx's materialistic interpretation of history. Marx summarises his concept of history in the *Preface To A Contribution To The Critique Of Political Economy*,

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite
relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political super-structure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production or what is but a legal expression for the same thing -- with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution."

According to Marx, it is in this 'social production of life' that society separates itself into different sections, or what he refers to as classes. This happens, Marx says, as a consequence of the division of labour and its products, hence, private property. This division of labour, necessitated by the growth in population, needs, abilities etc., leads to the creation of interests which are opposed to each other, both between individuals and between the individual and the interests of the community.

And then,

"Out of this very contradiction between the particular and the common interest, the common interest assumes an independent form as the state, which is divorced from the real individual and collective interests, and at the same time as an illusory community, always based however, on the real ties existing in every family conglomeration and tribal conglomeration......and especially, as we shall show later on, on the classes, already implied by the division of labour, which in every mass of men separate out, and one of which dominates all the others. It follows from this that all struggles within the state, the struggle between democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, the struggle for the franchise,
etc., etc., are merely the illusory form of common interests in which the real struggles of the different classes are fought out among one another. Further, it follows that every class which is aiming at domination, as is the case with the proletariat, leads to the abolition of the old form of society in its entirety and of domination in general, must first conquer political power in order to represent its interests in turn as the general interest, which in the first moment it is forced to do.46

According to Marx, the various stages of development of the division of labour are nothing but different forms of ownership. The division of labour also determines the relations of individuals to one another, and to the productive forces, the means of production and the product of labour itself. In other words, it determines the classes. Marx then goes on to elaborate the different forms which the division of labour has acquired, the kinds of properties or forms of wealth that have arisen and the conflicting classes that have existed under these.

The first form is the tribal ownership with its undeveloped means of production and a division of labour that is still very elementary and is only an extension of the division of labour within the family. The second form of property is ownership of the labourer himself, in other words, the slave. The division of labour here is more or less complete and creates two classes -- the propertied masters and the slaves. The third form is feudal property, which Marx also calls "estate property", and is characterised by an expansion of land cultivation and also industry. The two classes in this form of division of labour,
are the serfs and the feudal lords, they who own the land and the serfs who are chained to it but do not own it. The last form of property and division of labour, according to Marx, is the capitalist form of property, which is based on industrialisation. The two classes in this form of division of labour are, the capitalists and the proletariat.

This stage, according to Marx, is the last form of property and division of labour, because by now the contradiction between the productive forces and the social relations has developed to such an extent that the only way in which it can be resolved is by doing away with the division of labour and the private ownership of property. Marx has very perceptively shown the process by which the productive forces keep on expanding to such an extent that they cannot be contained by the existing social relations. Marx writes,

"The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production -- antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from the social conditions of life of the individuals; at the same time the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation brings, therefore, the prehistory of human society to a close."47

Thus Marx locates the site of class struggle in the material conditions under which people live and produce, and not in the class itself. The roots of conflict lie in the very material conditions which have led to the division of society into sections or classes.
Let us now turn to Roy. Basically, Roy rejects Marx's notion of conflict as being fundamental to society, and therefore, he rejects the very concept of class struggle. Roy states his objection very clearly,

"Marx and his orthodox followers, believing in economic determinism, discovered class struggle throughout history, backwards until the dawn of civilisation. Therefore, Marx maintained that the history of civilisation was the history of class struggle." 

Roy argues that history cannot be merely the history of class struggle, for if that were true, then society would not have existed, it would have disintegrated and there would be neither social evolution nor progress.

Roy does not deny that classes exist, and that they have conflicting interests, but he lays greater emphasis on the cohesive factor that holds a society together. He states,

"....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."

Secondly, Roy argues, crucial predictions by Marx regarding the necessary outcome of capitalist growth had also not been borne out, suggesting a severe shortcoming in the Marxian analysis. Roy states this clearly,

"The refusal of the contemporary capitalist society to be polarised into two classes according to Marxist prediction throws doubt on the theory of class struggle....."
Roy's criticism of Marx's notion of conflict seems, however, a little misdirected. For Marx, by emphasising the notion of class struggle, was not denying by any stretch of implication that society was not also cohesive. In fact, Marx states very clearly that every society or social formation is viable, till the productive forces within it have grown to their maximum. Marx explains, "No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed....." Marx shows that each epoch of history is a viable one and perishes only when the material conditions demand it. Therefore, when Marx says that the history of society is the history of class struggle, he is not implying that it is a history of anarchy. Class struggle does not imply for Marx a social dislocation; in fact Marx visualises society as progressing from one form of production to another, and that would have been impossible if society did not hold together.

That Marx did conceive of society as evolving from one stage of development to another, is indicated in Engels speech at Marx's graveside. Engels remarks,

"Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history...."

Roy rejects Marx's notion of conflict between classes. Yet he fails to provide an alternate explanation of conflict or classes. Again, while he admits that there exist classes with conflicting interests,
he fails to explain their basis and nature. In sum, then, Roy simply ignores the issue, and we are at a loss to understand how exactly his notion of classes and conflict is different from the Marxist notion. On perusal, Roy's classification and interpretation seems to be close to what Miliband calls and identifies as the 'liberal' notion of conflict. Miliband distinguishes between the Marxist and Liberal notions of conflict. Explaining the Marxist notion of conflict he states,

"It (conflict) is not a matter of 'problems' to be 'solved', but of a state of domination and subject ion to be ended by a total transformation of the conditions which give rise to it. No doubt, conflict may be attenuated but only because the ruling class is able by one means or another -- coercion, concessions or persuasion -- to prevent the subordinate classes from seeking emancipation. Ultimately, stability is not a matter of reason, but of force. The antagonists are irreconcilable, and the notion of genuine harmony is a deception or a delusion, at least in relation to class societies."

Miliband differentiates the Liberal view from the Marxist,

"In the Liberal view of politics, conflict exists in terms of 'problems' which need to be 'solved'. The hidden assumption is that conflict does not, or need not, run very deep; that it can be 'managed' by the exercise of reason and good will, and a readiness to compromise and agree. In this view, politics is not civil war conducted by other means but a constant process of bargaining and accommodation, on the basis of accepted procedures, and between parties who have decided as a preliminary that they could and wanted to live together more or less harmoniously...."

Roy's notion of conflict seems to be similar to this, as it emerges from the elaboration of social forces. Consequently the resolution of the conflict can be achieved, as we shall see later, through proper, rational legislation by 'enlightened' people.
Roy's Criticism Of Marx's Concept Of The Proletariat As The Agent Of Socialist Revolution

The agent of the socialist revolution, according to Marx, is the proletariat. Marx had arrived at this formulation not simply because the proletariat was suffering and poor. It was a conclusion that flows from his very theoretical framework. As Shlomo Avineri, in his very perceptive study of Marx's theory explains,

"Marx does not postulate the abolition of class antagonisms because any economic mechanism points in that direction. No economic analysis precedes his dictum about the abolition of classes; they will be abolished (...) because historical development has brought the tension between the general and the particular to a point of no return. The tension, according to Marx, is now radically general. It permeates every nook of society and cannot be transformed into just another change of the ruling class. Only a dialectical Aufhebung (transcendence) will give rise to a humanity with no dichotomy between the general and the particular."  

(Emphasis ours)

Thus, it is only because Marx sees the proletariat as the realisation of universality that he endows it with historical significance and a mission. The realisation of universality alone can, according to Marx, bring freedom to man, for it will end all alienation, all conflict between the particular and the general or the individual and the social.

For Marx, the victory of the proletariat would mean the end of class society, for the proletariat itself would disappear. Avineri explains why Marx argues so. For all other classes,

"(...) which, on attaining victory, still depended on the continuing
existence of their opposite and complementary classes. The feudal baron needed a villein in order to be a baron; a bourgeois needs a proletarian in order to be a bourgeois -- only the proletariat as a true, 'universal class' does not need its opposite to ensure its own existence. Hence the proletariat can abolish all classes by abolishing itself as a separate class and becoming co-eval with the generality of society."

Thus Marx sees the emancipation of the proletariat as the emancipation of the rest of society. He elaborates in his *Early Writings*,

"From the relation of alienated labour to private property it also follows that the emancipation of society from private property, from servitude, takes the political form of the emancipation of the workers; not in the sense that only the latters' emancipation is involved, but because this emancipation includes the emancipation of humanity as a whole. For all human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production, and all the types of servitude are only modifications or consequences of this relation."

It is clear then, why Marx sees the proletariat as the agent of the Socialist revolution. It is a conclusion derived from his understanding of the movement and process of history. It is not because Marx had any 'empathy or spiritual attachment' to the proletariat, nor any economic analysis, as elucidated by Avineri, that he placed the proletariat at the head of the revolution. Marx does not visualise any other class, especially the petty-bourgeois or middle class, as being in a position to play the role of leading the revolution. This is because of their social position in the mode of production. In his analysis of classes in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx describes the characteristic of the petty-bourgeois class. Accordingly,

"In the countries where modern civilisation has become fully developed, a new class of petty-bourgeois has been formed, fluctuating between proletariat and bourgeoisie and ever renewing
itself as a supplementary part of bourgeois society...."  

Again writing about the classes in France in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx notes,

"But the democrat, because he represents the petty-bourgeoisie, that is, a transition class, in which the interests of two classes are simultaneously mutually blunted, imagines himself elevated above class antagonism generally...."

Marx held that the petty-bourgeois class did not relate to the production process directly. Instead, it depended on the bourgeoisie, and therefore, it would always remain a vacillating class, though sections of it may join the working class movement.

Lukacs, in his illuminating study, *History and Class Consciousness*, elaborates Marx's idea very lucidly,

"The outlook of the other classes (petty-bourgeois or peasants) is ambiguous or sterile because their existence is not based exclusively on their role in the capitalist system of production...."

Therefore, according to Lukacs, the petty-bourgeois class will try not to eliminate the two extremes of wage-labour and capital but instead weaken it and transform it into harmony.

In the light of Marx's understanding of classes, let us examine Roy's objections. Roy objects to Marx's analysis of the relations of classes within a society and particularly to the role of the middle class. Roy states this emphatically,

"Marxism certainly is wrong as regards the role of the middle class in the capitalist society. The prophecy that the middle class would disappear in course of time has not been borne
out by history. On the contrary, the intellectual and political importance of the middle class proved to be decisive in the critical period ushered in by the First World War..."63

Roy argues that the middle class was proletarianised only economically and not culturally or intellectually. In fact, Roy argues, that the middle-class occupies a very important place, in what Roy considers to be the determining sphere -- ideas and culture.64 For as already pointed out earlier, Roy had now come to believe that history is determined by ideas and culture and not the material reality of economics as he had earlier held. Logically therefore, Roy considered the middle class, which he regarded as culturally advanced, as the revolutionary class. In fact the middle class, he argues, are the greatest enemy of the status quo because they alone could produce subversive ideas like socialism.

The Marxist theory, Roy argues, fails to recognise the importance of the middle class because it is blinded by 'economic determinism'. Economic Determinism also resulted in a cynical attitude towards morality and culture, and kept the middle class away from the movement. Consequently,

"The result was a split of the forces of revolution....(It) alienated the middle class, seriously weakening the forces of revolution intellectually. Selfish economism eclipsed the moral appeal of Socialism."83

The proletariat, Roy insisted, was not a revolutionary force, primarily because it was proletarianised in all spheres and not only economically. By this Roy means that the working class was culturally
and intellectually backward, and since for him it is this sphere of culture, that is determining, it follows that the working class is not qualified to play the role of the leader of the revolution. The working class, Roy argues, would be able to improve themselves culturally and intellectually only after the revolution, when the possibilities to do so would be available. And so Roy states,

"Disregarding this clear implication of its theoretical presuppositions, Marxism allots to the proletariat the honourable role of leading society towards a higher civilisation. The contradiction is palpable. Communist practice has been vitiated by this theoretical contradiction...."

Roy objects to the leadership of the working class, also on the grounds of 'morality'. According to Roy,

"...the cardinal principle of proletarian morality is that everything is fair in love and war...the end justifies the means. The Communist Party is admittedly amoral, and takes a cynical attitude to cultural values. That is hardly an inspiring leadership for the contemporary world engaged in a struggle for the salvation of the total heritage of human civilisation, which alone can be the foundation of a new order of greater freedom and higher culture. Caught in the throes of a moral crisis, the civilised world is looking out for better leadership with a more rational attitude towards the problems to be solved, and a nobler philosophy."

In other words, according to Roy, the working class led by the Communist Party is amoral and has a cynical attitude towards morality. Consequently, since the problem facing the world is a moral crisis, the communists and the proletariat cannot provide the leadership to the revolution.
It is precisely to a charge like Roy’s, regarding Communist morality, that Lenin had attempted to give an answer. According to Lenin,

"Is there such a thing as a Communist morality? Of course there is. Often it is made to appear that we have no ethics of our own; and very often the bourgeoisie accuse us Communists of repudiating all ethics. This is a method of shuffling concepts, of throwing dust in the eyes of the workers and peasants.

"In what sense do we repudiate ethics and morality? ....... We repudiate all morality that is taken outside of human, class concepts. We say that this is deception, a fraud, which clogs the brains of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

"We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is deduced from the class struggle of the proletariat."68

Eugene Kamenka, a political theorist who is very critical about the Marxist theory of ethics, points out however, that the greatest contribution of Marx in the area of ethics was to show the relation of ethics to social conditions. Norms and values, he tells us, are social products derived from the activities and demands of human beings. And that, Kamenka argues, has enabled us to understand the conflicting moral values and moral practices that exist.69

Marxism, it is true, did not have a moral theory in the traditional sense, but to accuse the Communists of being amoral would be incorrect. For even Charles Taylor, who belongs to a totally different
intellectual tradition, admits that Marxism is not amoral. He argues

"While rejecting traditional ethical language and traditional ethical judgements, Marxism has a definite standard of value, of higher and lower. The end of pre-history definitely brings a higher and better state for man than its beginning. The basis of this standard of value lies in the teleological notion of human nature: a stage or form of society is higher than another, because it involves a greater realisation of human goals."^70

Roy fails to see that moral values are not abstract principles that exist timelessly. Since he does not relate values to the social context, he holds communists to be amoral.

**Roy's Interpretation Of Lenin's Theory Of Party**

While maintaining serious objections to Lenin's formulation, Roy holds that Lenin really understood and appreciated the importance of the middle class. In point of fact however, Roy seems to be using Lenin to justify his own position. According to Roy, Lenin had found a way out of the contradiction that existed, Roy maintained, between Marxist theory and reality. According to Roy, Lenin had realised that the working class had ideological limitations, and therefore, to enable revolutionary consciousness to grow, had advocated an external force. Roy writes,

"....Lenin admitted that the proletariat by themselves could not develop a social-democratic consciousness, which must be brought to them from the outside -- by the middle class intellectuals."

Lenin had realised, Roy says, that the working class cannot become
a revolutionary class spontaneously, by itself it can only develop trade union consciousness. According to Roy, that

"...revealed the contradiction between Marxist economism and the theory that the proletariat was the builder of the new order."

What Roy considers to be Lenin's admission of the need of middle class intellectuals in the revolution, was to Roy, a clear indication and recognition of the fact that socialism and the theory of proletarian revolution were not products of the working class itself, but of the middle class.

Roy seems to have totally misinterpreted the Leninist theory of party and the role of middle class intellectuals. Lenin had clearly stated that the ideas of socialism had been formulated by people belonging to the middle class intelligentsia As Lenin argues,

"The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. By their social status the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia...."

Though Lenin recognises this, he does not argue anywhere that middle class intellectuals should lead the revolution. Lenin was only acknowledging the fact (which Marx had also recognised) that this class had acquired the mental skills which enabled them to intellectually arrive at socialism. Lenin had argued instead for a revolutionary party drawn from the proletariat as well as middle class intellectuals, participating not as workers or intellectuals, but as Social Democratic revolutionaries. With 'revolutionary consciousness' and not simply the ideas of revolution,
they are to lead. As Lenin argues in *What is to be Done*,

"...the organisation of the revolutionaries must consist first
and foremost of people who make revolutionary activity their
profession (for which reason I speak of the organisation of
revolutionaries, meaning revolutionary Social-Democrats).
In view of this common characteristic of the members of
such an organisation, *all distinctions as between workers and
intellectuals, not to speak of distinctions of trade and profession,
in both categories, must be effaced....*"

Thus nowhere has Lenin argued for middle class leadership as such,
as Roy seems to make the case out to be.

Although Roy holds that Lenin had recognised the importance
of the middle class, Roy criticises Lenin for what he thinks is only
a partial understanding. According to Roy, Lenin had recognised the
importance of the middle class only 'organisationally'
and not 'theoretically'. And this had led to the superimposition of
the party on the working class. The party, according to Roy, consisting
of middle class intellectuals, became "....the self-appointed leader
of the class, incorporating its imaginary collective ego...."

In theory, Roy argues, the proletariat still remained the chosen people but in
reality the middle class were to lead the revolution.

By saying that the importance of the middle class was not
recognised by Lenin theoretically, but only organisationally, what
Roy really seems to be implying is that they should be considered
as the 'agents' of the revolution.
Roy's Criticism Of The Dictatorship Of The Proletariat

In the Leninist framework, the dictatorship of the proletariat was described as a necessary stage after the capture of power. Roy was critical of this too. According to him, it defeats the very purpose of the revolution as had been proved by the Russian experience. Roy argues,

"This theory not only defeats its purpose, as proved by the Russian experience, by creating a new system of political domination, cultural regimentation and economic enslavement; but the uniform failure of Communists all over the world, after their accidental success in Russia, proves its utter inadequacy even as a technique for the capture of power."77

The emphasis on power, Roy holds, implies a negation of freedom, "....means becomes ends; perpetuation of dictatorship by the party in power is justified...."78 The dictatorship of the proletariat becomes the dictatorship of the party, which justifies the power it holds as necessary for some collective ego, either nation or class.79

Roy had come to question the capture of power as a necessary step for the reorganisation of society. His misgivings were prompted basically in the light of the Russian experience. Several other political thinkers have also raised doubts about the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary stage for completing the socialist revolution.

Roy fears are neither unfounded nor unjustified. For the Stalinist era, with all its excesses, had sought justification on the
same grounds. Roy, who had been very closely involved with the world communist movement, had seen and experienced Stalinism from close quarters. And therefore, his fears were both justified and relevant. Post-revolutionary problems are something communist theory must address itself to, if Stalinism is to be avoided in future history.

Roy's Objections To The Insurrectionary Method Of Revolution

Roy had objections to the method of insurrection as a means of capturing power. According to Roy, the appeal of Marxism was limited to the working class and not to the wider sections of society. And that is why Roy maintained, "....they (communists) remained a sectarian and dogmatic body...." How could such a minority, he argues, bring about a revolution through the capture of power? Logically therefore, the insurrectionary method of revolution, Roy asserts, is outdated. But there was also another reason why Roy regarded the insurrectionary method of revolution as outdated, namely, the military might of the State. Modern weapons have increased the power of States so much that it has now become impossible to capture power on the lines visualised earlier. The military might of the State had increased because of the scientific inventions and advanced weaponry, and therefore Roy comes to the conclusion, "....a minority insurrection (is) impracticable and out of date".

Further, Roy finds fault with what he regards as an erroneous
relation drawn by Marx and Lenin concerning class struggle and insurrection. For Roy argues, that it is the idea of

"...uncompromising class struggle, and the false expectation of a polarisation of society into two classes, moved exclusively by economic incentives (that) led Marx and Lenin, particularly the latter, to visualise revolution taking place through an *insurrection engineered* by the so-called vanguard of the proletariat...."[^82] (Emphasis ours).

Whatever be Roy's objections to the validity of the relation between class struggle and insurrection, the fact remains that the Russian Revolution was a success based on an *insurrection*. Moreover, within the Marxist fold itself, new strategies for revolution have always been conceived of and advocated in response to the demands of a particular situation. For instance, Mao Tse Tung while advocating 'people's war' and 'protracted struggle' rather than insurrection as the method most suited for revolution in China, remained nevertheless a firm believer in Marxism.

**SECTION III**

**Roy's New/Radical Humanist Theory Of Revolution.**

Roy claims to have formulated a new theory of revolution while he was in jail. He writes, "The new way was actually discovered before 1942, when I was still in jail...."[^83] According to him, revolution was something that occupied his mind and he had considered it seriously. Roy explains how he finally arrived at the new theory,

"We felt the necessity of remaking the world, and wanted
to begin with the job, and to forge an instrument for doing
so out of the materials available in this country, in our days.
We have succeeded in evolving a new theory. It is not a deviation
from Marxism."

Roy exudes the confidence of a veteran, "If there is going to be a
revolution in India, it will take place that way. There is no other
way....."

Roy seeks legitimation for his theory of revolution from Marx's
11th Thesis on Feuerbach. Roy writes,

"The philosophical point of departure of our politics is derived
from the eleventh thesis of Karl Marx on Feuerbach; until
now, philosophers have interpreted the world; now they must
remake it...." (Emphasis ours).

It is interesting to note here that the little change of words in Roy's
statement, quoted above, reveal the thrust of Roy's new theory. For
Marx had written, "....the point, however, is to change it" while Roy
writes "now they (philosophers) must remake it."  

Roy clarifies that he wanted to be a 'spiritual heir' to Marx
and not 'a bastard of Karl Marx'. Therefore, he argues that his new
formulation is within the Marxist tradition, but that he does "....not
recognise the authority of Marxian scriptures and scholasticism."

Roy's fundamental premise is that revolutions are brought
about or made by man, and he states this very clearly,

"We believe that man makes history; we believe that every
man, if he is conscious that he is a man -- neither a slave
of Comrade Stalin nor of Mahatma Gandhi -- will find the
creative genius in himself, and only by bringing that powerful urge into the consciousness of a sufficiently large number of Indian men and women shall we forge the instrument and make a revolution...."

For man, according to Roy, is a creative being and it is this creative being that is the guiding factor of history, and not collectives or classes or masses. Roy argues,

"Those accustomed to think (rather believe) and talk in terms of the masses, ignore the human factor which is the basic factor of history, and it can be properly appreciated only in individual behaviour. Man must be man, individually conscious of his dignity and creativeness, before he can make history. Man makes history, not the masses."

Here again we get the impression that Roy is arguing within the Marxist tradition, in stating that man makes history. However, there is a difference between Marx's argument and that of Roy. By arguing that it is not men (that is masses), but man (the individual) who makes history, the implication of Roy's argument is different. Does Roy mean that an individual makes history? Roy cannot obviously mean such a thing. However, by categorically asserting that man, and not collectives make history, Roy only appears to be confused and confusing. Individuals belong to and exist only in collectives, and it is only when the people act not only as collectives but as a conscious group, that revolutions occur. Roy does talk of groups creating change, but his emphasis seems to be more on an association of individuals bound by a common will rather than a collective which has come together on the basis of a revolutionary class consciousness which has arisen inevitably from their objective conditions. This distinction must be noted when Roy argues,

"Revolution is not inevitable. Only objective conditions and
even historical necessity do not make a revolution successful. Fundamental changes in the structure of society take place only when there is a group of individuals who feel the necessity, who see the possibility of fulfilling it, and who can develop an adequate amount of will to bring about the changes which are both necessary and possible. In the absence of such a group of people revolution is not only not inevitable, but even when it is necessary it does not take place...." (Emphasis ours).

Roy is probably reacting to the then prevalent trend among Marxists, which was deterministic and held that revolutions were inevitable and occur when objective conditions are ripe. This is suggested by Roy's ridiculing the trend thus,

"....capitalist exploitation will sharpen the class antagonism; gradually, the oppressed classes will come in the camp of revolution; all the reactionaries will go to the other side; and suddenly God will beat the drums of revolution, there will be a clash, power will be captured by the revolutionary class, who will usher in a new order...."92

Having rejected objective conditions or historical necessity as being essential for revolution, Roy now arrives at a new explanation. Revolutions, he maintains, are brought about by the will of individuals and need not be determined by objective conditions. This is clear from Roy's argument, that will is the most important thing in the social world. Roy argues,

"In the social world, will is a very powerful factor. The power of attraction or repulsion of any particular policy can be determined by the amount of will developed in that particular pole. So if we cannot develop an indomitable will to draw a large section of the people towards the pole which we represent, all our theoretical presuppositions or the maturity of objective conditions, nationally and internationally, will not help us, and revolution will remain a dream."93

That Roy was not merely trying to emphasize, in the context of the deterministic Marxist trend, the importance of the subjective factor (like several Marxists did) is clear from his argument. Roy was attempting
at something more. Roy argues that there is an urge in every man for freedom which leads him to rebel. Any person who is conscious of his creativity, who is 'spiritually free' and exerts his 'will' can bring about revolution. Roy writes,

"And why do you think that only slaves can be revolutionaries? Why can you not imagine that free men can be greater revolutionaries? I mean, spiritually free men, men who can think for themselves, who do not need any authority to rely upon, nor any dogma to dictate their behaviour." (Emphasis ours).

Roy goes on to demonstrate how the old nationalist revolutionaries, from whom he had learned his early lessons, were revolutionaries without having any knowledge of Marxism, or class struggle or the proletariat. As Roy explains,

"They did not have the dream of Communism. But they had the human urge to revolt against the intolerable conditions of life. They did not know exactly how those conditions could be changed. But they tried to change them, anyhow....I still draw my inspiration rather from that spirit than from the three volumes of Capital or three hundred volumes by the Marxists. That is the basic urge of freedom, which created this world of men, which created the feudal as well as the capitalist world, and which will create a still better world of which we are dreaming." (Emphasis ours).

This belief in the creativeness of man and the ability of man to make history, to bring about change, Roy calls the 'romantic view of life', which according to him was formulated during the Renaissance. Therefore, "The idea of revolution....is a romantic idea." Romanticism according to Roy, is the subjective factor of life which declares what is desirable, and what should be done. However, according to Roy, revolutions are not totally romantic, they take place of necessity too. Roy explains it thus,

"The rational order of nature and history are determined; it must run its course; it cannot be changed by any human endeavour. That a rationalist view seems to exclude the
possibility of revolution. But there is another way of looking at the thing without abandoning the rationalist position. Human will is a part of nature; it also grows out of the rational order. Man's desire, and endeavours in pursuance thereof, are also determined; therefore revolutions take place of necessity; they are historically determined. As mutations in history, they are inherent in the rational process of social evolution."

By redefining romanticism and reason, Roy is trying to establish that revolutions are both determined as well as products of man's free will. Roy concludes,

"Romanticism tempered with reason and rationalism enlivened by the romantic spirit of adventure, pave the road to successful revolutions."

Let us briefly recapitulate Roy's argument. Man has within him both reason as well romanticism. Romanticism is identified with the will of man to break out of all chains, or in other words, the urge for freedom. Reason, in man, is the faculty of thinking causally. Rationality reveals what is possible, by thinking causally; and romanticism dictates what is desirable. Both reason and romanticism are rooted in the biology of man, for man is an inseparable part of nature.

Roy considers this position to be a secular point of view for it places man in the centre of the universe, subject to the laws of nature and at the same time having the innate desire for freedom which is itself determined, which enables him to acquire mastery over it.
It is clear from the above elaboration that Roy is more rhetorical than logical. For he has not really demonstrated how the two, reason and romanticism, are related. Further, he is unable to establish how reason and romanticism interact with one another, or how they combine to pave the way to revolution. In other words, the two concepts are simply put together to make what Roy considers the right admixture for revolution. But by simply redefining romanticism and reason the problem cannot be solved. Traditionally, romanticism is considered to be a revolt against reason, but Roy in redefining it says, "Historically, romanticism is a form of the revolt of man against the tyranny of the supernatural." Again, "Romanticism was not a revolt against reason..." "

The problem of 'free-will' and 'determinism' is an old problem in philosophy, and any philosophical system, be it secular or theoretical, has to address itself to it. Roy also attempts to solve the problem - through his formulation of reason and romanticism. Reason stands for 'determinism' and romanticism for 'free-will'. Roy argues that free-will and determinism are compatible, but is unable to convincingly establish their compatibility.

Roy was not offering this solution in a vacuum, but rather in the context of Marxist theory. The debate between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks, which finally led to the split of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, was precisely over this issue. The Mensheviks
were more deterministic and argued that conditions were not yet ripe and that till then any attempt at revolution should be put off. Lenin argued instead that a revolution could be brought about by the conscious intervention of revolutionaries, armed with the revolutionary consciousness of Social-Democracy. This consciousness was a revolutionary class consciousness related to the objective conditions and not just a 'free-will'. It is this revolutionary consciousness which could intervene in the movement of the objective forces and shape it.

The difference between Roy's concept of 'free-will' and the Marxist concept of 'revolutionary consciousness' is not merely verbal, it is fundamental. In the Royist framework, 'free-will' is rooted in the very biological make-up of man; in the Marxist theory 'revolutionary consciousness' is rooted in the objective historical conditions. Thus, in the former, the relation between free-will and determinism is a passive one, for free-will itself is determined by the biology of man. On the other hand, in Marxist theory the relation whether between free-will and determinism or revolutionary consciousness and determinism -- is active and reciprocal, or as Marx calls it, 'dialectical'.

Roy fails to explain this interaction between free-will and determinism because he gives up dialectics. B.S. Sharma has very perceptively identified the problem in Roy's argument. Sharma explains,

"......following Marx, Roy argues that it (revolution) is a determined process, since human free will itself is an evolute of the determined process of nature. Whereas Marx could
explain the emergence of free will with the help of the Dialectic, Roy does not give any explanation at all."

Roy's ideas of revolution are derived from his understanding of history and human nature. This is evident from his argument. History, for Roy, is the history of ideas. Ideas determine history, because man, the maker of history, is basically a thinking animal, or what Roy calls 'a rational animal'. According to Roy, it is thought that leads to action, and therefore, the history of civilisation is nothing but the history of ideas. Ideas, Roy argues, "....are the urge for all human activity, and all human progress." 

According to Roy, revolutions occur,

"When these ideas exhaust all their possibilities and can no longer move men to great and heroic actions, the period of social and political developments heralded by them comes to an end, and humanity begins to look out for newer ideas, new inspirations, new ideals, a new faith, in order to begin a new surge ahead."

Thus, according to Roy, revolutions occur when old ideas are exhausted, creating the need for new ideas.

Roy neither explains here how ideas are exhausted, nor what the indications of such a situation are. In other words, how are we to know that the situation is ripe for a revolution, that ideas no longer fulfill their task of guiding action? Roy is silent here, and we are left confused.
According to Roy, when ideas exhaust themselves, they can no longer provide freedom. It is the denial of freedom under any system that motivates people to rise against a given status quo. Thus, what makes a system repressive is the ideology or philosophy upon which a system is based. Therefore, the obstacle to freedom, the source of human bondage, is false 'ideas' or 'philosophies'. Logically then, for Roy, a revolution has its genesis in the ideas of a society. Roy explains,

"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."

D.C. Grover, in his book *M.N. Roy: Revolution and Reason in Indian Politics*, discusses Roy's ideas on revolution. Grover elaborates Roy's position thus,

"......revolution, which etymologically is the result of revolt, but chronologically, it has a different meaning. It represents a turning of history, changing the course of ideas and events. There are two stages in Roy's concept of revolution. The first is the removal of conditions which militate against historically necessary progress. The second part is the development of the embryonic forces of progress in a new social and political system. The British conquest of India performed only the first part of the revolution, and that even only partially. The second part was never accomplished."

Grover has rightly identified the two stages involved in Roy's understanding of the revolution. And it is this second stage of revolution, that Roy's programme of revolutionary action is directed towards.
Agent Of Revolution

As we have already noted, Roy had discarded the class theory as formulated by Marx. Next we pointed out that, for Roy, revolutions have their genesis in the world of ideas. Therefore, Roy comes to the conclusion that, only that section of society which is basically involved in the creation of ideas i.e. the middle class, is the most revolutionary and progressive class and it is this class that will lead the revolution. It is this middle class which really appreciates values and culture, and not only are they the appreciators but also the upholders of values and ideals, in short all that can be called culture. Roy asserts that Marxism is completely wrong as regards the role of the middle class. The middle class, because of its education and its intellectual capacities, Roy argues, is capable of being the most revolutionary class in a society to effectively lead the revolution, in fact it is the most subversive class. He argues that it was the middle class who first formulated the ideas of socialism. Roy asserts,

"Socialism, indeed, is a middle class ideology....possessed of the requisite intellectual attainments, the middle-class alone could produce individuals who saw beyond the clash of immediate economic interests and conceived the possibility of a new order of social justice and harmony."

Thus, the new revolutionary ideas that would lead the revolution, the ideas of Socialism, were conceived, Roy asserts, by the middle class. And this, he says, is because they were capable of appreciating cultural and moral values as the positive outcome of human civilisation.
The middle class, according to Roy, is only economically proletarianised with the decay of capitalism; in other ways it is the most advanced class of society. The working class is backward in every way, economically, culturally and intellectually. Therefore, it cannot be the agent of the socialist revolution. Roy tries to demonstrate his point by showing that it was the middle class that was already in the fray of the (Indian) national independence struggle. Roy explains,

"Because it can feel the urge for freedom, while the masses are callous, the middle-class was swept by the emotion of nationalism which promised to satisfy the urge...."

The middle class, Roy argues, are dissatisfied with the present order but,

"....they are not prepared to accept orthodox Marxist ideals; they are repelled particularly by the communist political practice, and the negative attitude to cultural tradition and ethical values."

We may once again note here that Roy separates the political from the cultural, the economic from the cultural and never really explains how they are related. This differentiation between the political and cultural, we may recollect, was something that Roy held since the early days of his differences with Lenin on the question of Gandhi and the nationalist movement in India.

**Method Of Revolution**

Roy had rejected the insurrectionary method of revolution.
This was on the grounds of its unfeasibility in the context of the military might of modern states and the fact that the insurrectionary method meant only a minority revolution. Moreover, that led to other problems, Roy felt, namely the creation of vested interests, and a minority which, once in power, did not want to give it up to any other.

Roy summarises the irrelevance of the old method by demonstrating why the revolutions failed in Europe. Roy states,

"...when the classical Communist scheme of revolution was imagined, the armed forces of the state had not grown into such a formidable factor as now......the mechanised army of today is a different thing. The old idea of winning over the army has also become untenable. Then, counter-revolution now operates internationally. The army of a country in the throes of a revolution may waver or actually join the revolution; but there are other countries to intervene promptly. The ordinary soldiers may be recruited from the peasants and workers, but the officers come from the upper classes. Therefore, the old idea of the decomposition of the army does not work any more. During the inter-war period, the threat of revolution in any country was countered by the threat of armed intervention from outside the country concerned. That was the cause of the failure of revolution one after another. We simply drew lessons from that experience...."112

Secondly, the old insurrectionary method of revolution, of capture of power was, Roy felt, outdated because of the changed nature of world conflict. Roy explains,

"We simply said that under the impact of the war the old social order was disintegrating and its superstructure, the State, was also crumbling with it; consequently, other ways of revolutions were opening up. The old obstacles were no longer there. The war was breaking them down...."113

Roy had developed by then a different analysis of the world situation.
He now saw imperialism as a dying force. Roy argues, "A revolution of a kind has actually taken place by consent. Imperialism is going voluntarily...." 114

Roy comes to the conclusion that the conflict of the world having now changed from imperialism versus colonies to fascism versus democracy, the method of revolution must also change; along with the method, the instrument of revolution must change too. He argues,

"The type of the revolution will be determined by the peculiarities of social conditions and cultural atmosphere; a new type of revolution requires a new kind of party as its instrument." 115 (Emphasis ours).

The new instrument, according to Roy, would be the Peoples' Committees, and not the party as conceived by Lenin. It is through these committees that a revolution would be carried out. This was Roy's new conviction.

Roy's Programme Of Revolution

We are now in a position to understand how Roy arrives at his programme of revolution for India. We are not interested in the programme per se but in finding out the logic that leads Roy to this programme.

In *New Orientation* Roy states clearly what his revolutionary
programme consists of,

"....the programme of the party can be stated in one word; it is freedom; and freedom is not an abstract concept. It means the right of individuals to choose how best each can unfold his or her creativeness and thus make the greatest contribution to common welfare and social progress." (Emphasis ours).

The obstacles in the path of freedom must, therefore, be removed and Roy identifies this obstacle in the false philosophies.

According to Roy, the danger of Fascism rising in India was real, in fact, it was threatening to do so. Roy saw Fascism as a philosophy which has its roots in religious beliefs and mysticism. In India, where religion and mysticism prevailed, Roy feared a fertile base for Fascism to grow and thrive. The backwardness of the masses, he felt, had been utilised by the Congress, to come to power. Roy explains,

"....the foundation of Indian Fascism is God, the belief in God: that everything is created by God and the only thing that we can do is to sing Ramdhun, spin and wear khaddar. The Indian masses are going to be regimented in this uniform of khaddar. The proletariat may not put on the physical uniform, but will be readily regimented spiritually...." 117

Roy's programme of revolution, therefore, was directed against this reactionary philosophy of Fascism, for he saw it as denying human freedom. To fight Fascism effectively, religion and mysticism must be combatted by science and rationality. That was Roy's contention.

Roy believed that the State, in India, which had the potential
of becoming Fascist, could be pulled down easily if the philosophy of Radical Humanism were followed. The emphasis must be on the correct philosophy and ideas. For Roy, this follows logically from his understanding of the process of history: that ideas determine history. Logically then, 'enlightenment' is the key factor in a revolution. Therefore, Roy lays great stress on 'education' of the people. The 20th thesis of the *Principles of Radical Democracy* state very clearly, "In the last analysis, education of the citizen is the condition for such a reorganisation of society...." Roy argues that a revolution can come about only by determined and consistent education of the people regarding the principles of freedom, reason and co-operative living. The purpose of,

"....all social endeavour should be to make man increasingly conscious of his innate rationality." (Emphasis ours).

The other part of Roy's programme to attain freedom, was to construct a Radical Democratic State. This would be a pyramidal structure raised on the basis of local Peoples Committees. These committees which the Radical Humanist movement must construct, would be the organs of democratic power and,

"....becoming coterminous with the entire society, the Radical Democratic State, as the organs for its political administration, will cease to be an instrument of coercion."  

Roy had arrived at the conclusion that power in the hands of a few people, whether in a party, or in a parliament, leads to denial of freedom. Therefore, he rejected both these forms and directed
the energies of the movement towards building a Radical Democratic State.

The condition for building this was, once again, the education of the people. The Peoples' Committees would serve as schools for political education of the citizens. It was only when there were educated people that Roy's ideal would be achieved. Therefore, Roy argued,

"The ideal of Radical Democracy, will be attained through the collective efforts of spiritually free men and women united with the determination of creating a new order of freedom. They will function as the guides, friends and philosophers of the people rather than as their would-be rulers. Consistent with the goal of freedom, their political practice will be rational and ethical. Their efforts will be reinforced by the growth of the peoples' will to freedom. Ultimately, the Radical Democratic State will rise with the support of enlightened public opinion as well as intelligent action of the people...."

Roy concludes the enumeration of his programme of revolution by admitting a charge made against him, that of an idealist deviation. Roy says,

"Call it an idealistic deviation if you please. I would plead guilty, to the charge. Because I cannot think of any great social upheaval except under the impact of a revolutionary philosophy of life. Radicalism is more than a mere political programme, a plan of social reconstruction. It is a philosophy of life."

Conclusion

From the above discussion, we are now in a position to note some of the problems that exist in Roy's concept of revolution.
To start with, it may be noted that Roy changes the very definition of revolution. The notion of revolution as has existed traditionally both in Marxist and non-Marxist, lexicon is totally different from Roy's interpretation. Shankar Ghose's observation, therefore, is valid. He states,

"But it is clear that he was using the word 'revolution' in a sense very different from that of a Marxist. Roy's revolution involved no sudden change. His Radical Humanist revolution was to be achieved not by violence or armed insurrection, but through the slow process of education." 122

Ghose's observation about Roy's notion of revolution is correct to the extent that it is a departure from the Marxist notion of revolution, but it is not only because it is not sudden or violent, but because it no longer identifies the genesis of change in the material conditions of life, because it lays emphasis not on objective forces but on the 'ideal' -- subjectivity.

In Roy's notion of the revolution, being derived from his understanding of history, which is history of ideas, change is brought about by 'ideas'. And ideas, for Roy, have their own logic and development, and are not related to objective reality except in that they guide action. Men, therefore, appear only as carriers of ideas, which ultimately determine history. This is a clear shift from a materialist interpretation of history. As a result, Roy ends up providing an 'idealist' explanation of revolution, though he claims to be a 'materialist'.

B.S. Sharma offers an evaluation,

"Starting with the Marxist definition of 'revolution' Roy so completely changes its content as to deprive it of all its original meaning, and emerges as an advocate of liberal philosophy."[123]

Sharma further points out, how Roy turned his concept of revolution into a liberal one,

"....Roy's scheme involves a long-term process of social change. His method stresses the necessity of educating the masses. It is essentially a constitutional method, similar to that which the Moderates in the Indian National Movement—Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade and Gokhale—had advocated....."[124]

That is also why we find that Roy considers the latter half of the nineteenth century a 'Golden Age' in the history of India.

Lastly, Roy's understanding of revolution, which is based on his notion of human nature, reveals even revolution to be biologically determined. For it is the biological urge in man for freedom, that is his 'will', that brings about a revolution. Man can, through the assertion of his biological urge, the 'will', bring about change. This is not only ahistorical but also makes revolution a rather arbitrary process.

Having elucidated and examined the third fundamental concept of Roy's theoretical system, that of revolution, we shall now proceed to examine all three concepts together and note some of the major unresolved problems in his argument.
REFERENCES : CHAPTER IV

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