We stand for a thorough reconstruction of the national life. Our political objective is the establishment of democratic freedom which will mean effective political power for the people. We strive not only for national freedom, but also for the social emancipation of the toiling masses. Our task is to spread enlightenment which will dispel obscurantism in the political and the spiritual life of the country. We advocate modernism in every walk of life against revivalism. We want the disinherited to come to their own and enjoy the richness and fullness of life on this earth. We want man to be the master of the world and the maker of his destiny...

M.N. Roy

For A Revolution From Below
POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF RADICAL HUMANISM

I. ROY'S VIEWS ON STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

As an integrated political thinker Roy had a theory of the State, which naturally followed from his theory of life. As Roy was an orthodox Marxist, although with occasional significant differences from Russified Marxism until his release from the Jail in November, 1936, he, like a true Marxist, used to subscribe to the class-instrument theory of the State, each social State having its characteristic form of the State machinery. Roy held, that as the impending Indian revolution to capture power from the British would be a new type of revolution, it would also usher in a new type of State. The character of the impending Indian revolution would be a bourgeoisie democratic revolution, but it would be accomplished as a part of the process of the socialist reconstruction. Owing to a mixed character of this revolution, the State that would emerge out of it was to be of a mixed type. Taking a phrase out of the communist vocabulary, Roy called it 'democratic dictatorship'- democratic because of the historical association of the birth of modern democracy with the rise of the bourgeoisie and dictatorship, because of the Marxian association of the term with socialist regime*. Roy in his Our Task Ahead, then proceeded to give a blue print of the State machinery, based on this apparently self-contradictory concept.

*Corresponding to an intermediate economic stage between Capitalism and Socialism, the democratic dictatorship would be the intermediate political State between a capitalist democracy and a dictatorship of the proletariat. It would be a democracy in the sense, that "its base will consist not of one class, but of a coalition of three classes. It would be a dictatorship in the sense, that three classes will form one whole on the basis of a program of overthrowing and destroying all classes outside the bloc of three classes.
After Roy had come out of the Indian Jail, it was found that he was holding a neo-Marxian position and his views had started becoming more and more liberal. He was in Russia from 1919 to 1927. His disillusionment with the working, in Russia, of the dictatorship of the proletariat which was to be highly democratic in content, if not always in form and which in effect nothing but undiluted dictatorship of a few party officials, might have something to lead him to temper his version of Marxism with the liberal views of the State.

On the face of it, the Marxian theory of State is not an all pervading solution to the working classes. The State is an institution equipped with central and local machineries. These machineries were often captured by vested interests, of which the economically dominant class, the most important came to be utilised to their advantage. It is also true, that at least to some extent the possibility of misusing the State power will always remain there, as all rulers are but men and are thus prone to the weakness of human nature. Now Marxism has not been able to make a clear distinction between the lawful use of the State power and its abuse. To argue, that the State as such is necessarily a class instrument is to miss the essential nature of the society.

Man has created society for prosecuting more successfully the struggle for existence. Society by itself can not possibly exist without being governed by a definite authority. In opposition to the Marxian view, Roy like Saint Thomas spoke of man, not only as being social but also political. The State was a natural necessity in society. In fact it was the political organisation of the society, its task being to look after the common interests of its population. This is essentially a liberal conception of the State.

Once Roy gave up the theory of the class character of the State, the rejection of all sorts of dictatorship logically followed from it. The process observed was just the reverse. Roy’s experience with the working of the dictatorship, both of the right and of the left in Europe, shook his faith in dictatorship as such, and because he wanted to eschew dictatorship, he proceeded to revise his theory about the character of the State. Roy hence forward began propagating the ideal of an out and out democratic structure of the state machinery. His logic was that as the State was the political organisation of society, the people should have complete control over the State and its affairs, with the acceptance of democracy as the ideal form of organising the State. Roy’s theory of the State became completely liberal, although the practical shape that he wanted to give was that of the machinery of State.

As against all those current lines of theoretical reactions like Fascism, Communism, Nationalism and so on, claiming to dislodge the individual from his assumed position of ultimate priority to the State, Roy never ceased to assert rights for citizens over and above their government. As already pointed out, the relation between the State and its individual citizens constituted the basic issue in Roy’s political thought, a theoretical standard by which the claims asserted for individual citizens can be appraised. This standard, Roy found in the origin of the State. Naturally, he had belief in the existence of natural rights. According to him, the State was a creation of individuals for their convenience. Political authority, therefore, rested rightfully only on the consent of the governed. Like a true utilitarian, Roy found the measure of right in utility, interpreted as human welfare and happiness in concrete terms. The State being solely a creation of its citizens had by implication, and not an independent character of its own.

They could make and remake it and devise novel and untried institutions to protect, if not further their rights and augment their happiness.

While giving a solution to this problem of the relation between the State and individuals, Roy eventually gave his version of the nature and functions of the State, because the present relation of the State with the individual should be a continuation of the original relation between man and society. The original society was the creation of the savage men to enable them to carry on the struggle for existence successfully. As the political organisation of a human society, the State too could not but be the creation of man, but neither as the result of a social contract nor as a deliberately created instrument for the domination of society by some individuals or particular classes. It was more or less “a spontaneous process promoted, almost mechanically, by the common realisation of the necessity of co-operation for the security of all concerned and for the administration of public affairs”. In course of time, however, those who were physically and mentally more virile came to assume the leadership of the society and were entrusted with the defence and civil administration of the State. In this process, ruling dynasties and classes having hereditary or divine right to rule were brought into being. Their rule was eventually challenged by the modern democratic political philosophy, its meaning being that the State which was a creation of man should be controlled by its citizens so as to serve the purpose of protecting individual liberty and promoting general welfare.

The maintenance of effective community action as conscious, but not on a purely traditional level for the attainment of common objectives is a persistent problem of modern politics. Rousseau evolved his theory of general welfare.

will to cope with this problem. His aim was to establish a Society, in which the group could act without frustrating the will of any individual. Rousseau’s theory, is fraught with totalitarian implications and has been subjected to repeated criticism by Roy. He was in favour not of any enforced unity, but of the unity which emerges from the rational negotiation of several conflicting viewpoints, in line with the expanding moral consensus of the community.

II. INADEQUACIES OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

The theory and practice of dictatorship even as the means to an end, is repugnant. But, on the other hand, the limitations of parliamentary democracy can no longer be ignored. Under it, civil liberties can be reduced to mere formalities, without accepting the Marxist view, that parliamentary democracy is also a class dictatorship, (of the bourgeoisie); a view which can not be easily disposed of. Critical students of modern history should be able to see, that the inadequacies of parliamentary democracy are inherent in itself. In the highly complicated modern industrial society, individual citizens, particularly those belonging to the majority, labouring under economic disadvantages, have very little chance of exercising effectively the sovereign right, which formally belongs to them. Law gives them little protection, particularly in critical times. It is an indisputable fact, that under the parliamentary system democracy cannot control the executive. Between two elections, it is completely out of the picture. During this period a party having a majority in the parliament can legally assume dictatorial power. The guarantee against such a possible abuse of power, attainable with democratic sanctions is not legal. The guarantee is provided by
not be solved. In order to survive fascism, democracy might outgrow the limitation of formal parliamentarism based on an atomised and helpless electorate. An organised democracy in a position to wield standing control of the State, should be the political foundation of the new social order. By reorientating itself in this direction, democratic socialism will open up before the modern progressive humanity a new vista of political and economic reconstruction, which will neither postulate an indefinite period of blood and tears, nor be clouded by doubts about the alternative course of peaceful development.

To turn the tide, democracy must reorientate itself. It must revert to the humanist tradition of liberalism. It must not be limited to the counting of heads, particularly when the heads have not the opportunity to rise themselves with sovereign dignity. In India for instance, by conventionally pursuing the formal parliamentary democratic practice, the British labour Government had been only helping the establishment of a minority rule, which would almost certainly degenerate into a fascist dictatorship.

Formal parliamentarism must be replaced by actual democratic practice. The character of a party must be judged not by its ability to catch votes, but by the merit of its proclaimed principles and published programmes. The people should be asked to vote not for professions and promises, but to judge the record of a government. Democratic practice, which is no more than mere counting of heads is, in the last analysis, also a homage to the collective ego. It allows scope neither for the individual nor for intelligence. Under the formal democratic system, unscrupulous demagogues can always come to the top.

Intelligence, integrity, wisdom, moral excellence, as a rule, count for nothing. Yet, unless the purifying influence of these human values is brought to bear upon the political organization of society, the democratic view of life cannot be realised.

In the opinion of Roy, a new world of freedom will not result automatically from an economic reorganisation of society. Nor does freedom necessarily follow from the capture of political power by a party claiming to represent the oppressed and the exploited classes. 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. By disregarding individual freedom, on the plea of taking the fullest advantage of modern technology of efficiency and collective effort, planned economy defeats its own purpose. Instead of ushering in a higher form of democracy, on the basis of economic equality and social justice, it establishes a political dictatorship. Economic democracy is no more possible in the absence of political democracy, than the latter is in the absence of the former.

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 and establishment of social justice. In that case, it should be possible to reconcile planning with freedom. Dictatorship of any kind, however plausible may be the pretext for it, is inconsistent with the ideal of freedom. The practise of western democracy is equally disappointing. Traditional democratic socialism, therefore also does not imagine any confidence of success.

1. Bhagwan, Vishnoo: Indian Political Thinkers, Pp. 82-3.
It is idle to condemn dictatorship on the ground, that regimentation precludes the creation of human values, so long as those values are not allowed to influence public affairs, even under the presumed democratic regimes. To wean the unthinking world away from the appeal of dictatorship, postulated as a short cut, indeed as the only way, to freedom, democracy must recover the humanist tradition of modern culture. Man must again be the measure of things. Intelligence, integrity, wisdom, moral excellence, should be the test of leadership and democracy can no longer be taken simply for granted. Today all thoughtful lovers of freedom are perturbed by a challenging question regarding the establishment of a democracy. The fundamental democratic principle, that the greatest good to the greatest number can be realised only when the conduct of public affairs will be in charge of spiritually free individuals, who represent their own conscience before one's own or anybody else.

Moral sanction, after all, is the highest sanction. The real guarantee of parliamentary democracy is not law, but the moral conscience of the majority in power. In this last analysis, dictatorship also rests on a moral sanction - it claims to be the means to a good end. But, group morality is a doubtful guarantee against the temptation of power. Values operate through individuals. Therefore, a government composed of spiritually free individuals is accountable in the first place to their respective conscience, and becomes the only possible guarantee for securing the greatest good to the greatest number. Democracy must have that philosophical reorientation, if it is to survive the present crisis and resist the powerful onslaught of dictatorship

Democracy can be real, only when the State is reared on a foundation of local republics. The primary function of the latter will be to make individual citizens fully conscious of their sovereign right and enable them to exercise it intelligently and conscientiously. The broad basis of the State, thus coinciding with the entire society, will be composed of a network of local political schools. The right to recall and pass a referendum will enable organised local democracies to wield a direct and effective control on the entire State machinery. They alone will have the right to nominate candidates for election to various legislative bodies, and such a democracy will transcend the limits of party politics. Individual men will have the chance of being recognized on their merits. Party loyalty and party patronage will no longer eclipse intellectual independence, moral integrity and detached wisdom.

There is an implicit need for the creation of conditions, under which democracy will be possible. In the first place, there must be conscious and integrated effort to stimulate amongst the people the urge for freedom, the desire to rely upon themselves, the spirit of free thinking and the will never to submit to any external authority, by exchanging their natural freedom for the false security of the slave. A New Renaissance, based on rationalism and cosmopolitan Humanism is essential for democracy to be realised. Such an atmosphere would foster intellectual independence dedicated to the cause of making human values to triumph. Moral excellence alone can mould a community together without sacrificing the individual on the altar of the collective ego, be it of the nation or a class. Individuals possessed of that great virtue would command the respect of an intelligent public and be recognized as friends, philosophers and guides of society.

In the political sphere, Roy suggested that parliamentary democracy should be replaced by the ‘organized Democracy’. Democracy should mean rule by the people, and not ‘for’ or ‘on behalf of the people’. Parliamentary democracy implies representative government. It means government not by the people but by their representatives. Representative’s government involves delegation of power by the people in periodic elections. The people have no role in such a government, except that of casting their votes once in four or five years. Roy was of the view, that delegation of power should as far as possible be replaced by direct exercise of power by the people themselves. For this purpose, he suggested that the people in villages and towns should be organised into primary democracies, which may be called as people’s committees. These people’s committees should have constitutional status as organs of primary democracies. The Parliament should be an apex based - net work of such people’s committees¹.

It is obvious that Roy’s idea of organised democracy is not confined to rural areas, nor does it visualise the disappearance of the central government. It implies a political decentralisation and a fair degree of direct exercise of power by the people themselves.

Roy appears to have developed these ideas as early as 1936. However, as soon as it became clear to him that India would attain independence as a

¹ Bhagwan, Vishnou: Indian Political Thinkers. Pp. 87.
result of the ignorance of the axis powers in the last world war, he prepared a
Draft Constitution of India, which was published in December, 1944. His idea evolved in the form of a treatise on Organised Democracy, which was later given a concrete shape in the Draft constitution.

By 1947, Roy realised that the existence of political parties is inconsistent with the concept of organised democracy. The main reason is that political parties strive for the power which is delegated by the people in a parliamentary democracy. Whereas organised democracy implies the direct exercise of political power by the people themselves. The functioning of political parties leads to party government, whereas organised democracy implies people's government, Roy did not imply that political parties should be replaced by one party. He felt that as people's power grew in a country, the existing political parties would become increasingly stronger. He placed these views before a study camp of the Radical Democratic party held in Dehradun, in May 1947, and his lectures at that camp and on subsequent occasions were later published in a book entitled Politics, Power and Parties. These and allied views led to the dissolution of the Radical Democratic party, in December 1948.

III. CONCEPTION OF ORGANISED DEMOCRACY

To Roy, Democracy was the most desirable form of government. But, democracy of his conception was the most undiluted form of democracy. It connotes that a government should be one constituted by the entire adult population of a particular State. Judged by this standard, all types of

1. Grover, Verinder, (Ed.): Political Thinkers Of Modern India, P. X.
parliamentary democracy, not to speak of the so-called democratic dictatorship of the communists, fell far short of this standard. Roy, therefore, had to evolve a new concept of democracy by incorporating in it the positive liberal aspects of parliamentary democracy and the fundamentally democratic features of the Soviet system and thus making it coterminous with the society. This new concept of democracy Roy called "Organised Democracy".

The modern National States throughout the world are large in size and they have vast populations. In these States, there is hardly any scope for rule by all the adults. They simply cannot meet together and enact laws, not to speak of executing them. So recourse had to be taken to the system of electing representatives by the people. But, in a representative or parliamentary democracy the people are galvanised into action only at election-time, and during the inter-election period they remain more or less powerless and ineffective. The people delegate their power to their representatives. A rule by the people would necessitate the delegate keeping their power as a statutory standing control over the governmental machinery. Its importance can not also be over-emphasized, in view of the fact that a modern State with its vast coercive apparatus and with its control over the country's economy has every chance of being turned into a veritable monster, regimenting and suppressing the people. Moreover, during the election period, the people remain liable to manipulation by the unscrupulous and self-seeking politicians.

In the matter of prescribing solutions to these difficulties too, Roy seems to be much influenced by Rousseau. To get rid of the difficulties of representative democracy, Rousseau sought to do away with representation

altogether and to go back to direct democracy, which prevailed in the ancient city-states of Greece. Legislation should embody the will of the people which, by its very nature, can neither be transferred nor represented. Legislation is a privilege to remain in the hands of the sovereign people. The function of the Government is only an executive function - the function of executing only the people's will. Roy, however, does not want to curtail the size of the state and to eschew the method of representation as such. He is a realist. He knows the lacuna of the Greek city-states. To return to the city-states is thus neither possible nor desirable. His efforts are only to temper the representative democracy with the devices of direct democracy, to the greatest possible extent, so that power remains vested in the people. Roy then proceeds to give it an institutional shape.

Enumerating that it is not possible for isolated and atomised individuals to exercise their powers effectively, Roy desires that they be organised into committees. Each village, town and city or part of it would then have its people's committee. These would be elected annually, by all the men and women of the respective localities, who have attained the age of eighteen years. The number of the members of people's committee should be one fiftieth of the total number of voters residing in the locality. These committees are to nominate candidates for election to the higher legislative bodies, keeping constant vigilance over their actions and recalling them, if necessary. They could discuss and express opinions on proposed legislations by the central Assembly and the respective provincial Assembly could in turn initiate legislation and demand a referendum on any legislative and executive measures. The people's committees would thereby also enjoy larger powers in the local government. The result would
lead to a far reaching decentralization of the State. The State, as such would then become more than a mere clearing house of information, with advisory and administrative machinery to co-ordinate and supervise policies framed directly by the people as a whole, operating through local people's committees. Under such a system, the advantages of direct democracy can be realised as far as possible without sacrificing the size of the State. A democratic State in a large country is possible only on the basis of such small organised democracies.

Conversely, the problem of representative democracy lies not only in ensuring popular control over the governmental machinery, but also in seeing that competent political opinions are brought to bear upon the enactments and decisions of the popular assembly. In other words, the propensity to combine quality with quantity is the crux of the problem of a democratic government. In this perspective, Roy has been pragmatic in seeking to solve the problem of effective popular control over the state-machinary, through his scheme of organised democracy.

Roy has propounded a solution to the problem of quality in democracy. The tendency of local people's committees functioning throughout the country as many political schools 'make individual citizens fully conscious of their sovereign right and enable them to exercise the right intelligently'\(^2\). Parties are frequently placed under a heavy discount. Party loyalty can no longer be eclipsed and independent men having moral excellence are bound to command the respect of an intelligent electorate. Democracy will thus be able to reveal a leadership "dedicated to the cause of making human values triumph".

---
Democracy may occasionally take time to come to such a mature stage. However, time being, the people involved would remain ignorant, culturally backward, underfed and under clothed. At this stage, they would remain more or less incapable of appreciating the higher values of life, and election alone may not perhaps be able to bring its best elements to the forefront. Even the economic advancement of the people may not bring about any concomitant cultural advancement. For this reason Roy, unlike some other aristo-democratic thinkers, does not like to postpone practising democracy till more favourable conditions are created. He recognised that democracy itself is the best training ground for its development and a break with democracy for once, is likely to be a break forever. He therefore proceeds to supplement the democratic practice in devious ways.

To solve this difficulty, Mill has advocated plural voting based on brains. This is not to be a temporary measure. Mill has shown an extreme distrust of democracy. According to him, it is based on “collective mediocrity”1 and will never be capable of throwing up a leadership rich in quality. Roy does not go to the extreme extent as Mill does. Roy believes, that gradually the people would improve in intellectual and moral qualities and sooner or later, a time would come, when they would throw up an intellectual and creative leadership. As long as this is not done, democracy would continue to be selective as well as elective. It implies, that during the transitional period, in association with a popular chamber, there would be a selective, second chamber consisting of engineers, economists, scientists, medical men, historians, eminent philosophers, social scientists and civil servants. There is thus a strong element of Platonism in Roy.

Plato has recommended the selection of his philosopher kings by the existing legislators. In an identical Platonic fashion, Roy too provides for the members of his second chamber be nominated by provincial governments out of the panels of ten names, to be respectively prepared by the accredited professional bodies - two from each of the stated professions. Thus, a democratic character has been sought to be imparted to this second chamber, though rather remotely. Once installed in office, they would continue for six years and be eligible for a reappointment. All legislations shall have to be passed in a joint session of the popular Assembly and this second chamber. The statutory planning authority would remain under the direct supervision of the second chamber and thereby function according to its directives.

Such selective second chambers of the elite are not unknown in the constitutional history of the world. The present constitution of India has a limited application of this principle. These aristo-democratic devices have been subjected to severe criticism by many eminent writers. Hence, it has been argued by Le Bon, that "because an individual knows Greek or mathematics, is an architect, a veterinary surgeon, a doctor, a barrister, he is endowed with a special intelligence on social questions". Particularly in groups, the proclaimed intelligentsia are as likely to behave under the reflex influences of the subconscious impulse, as do the average people. It is not the common men that are mainly instrumental in repudiating Socrates, Christ and Galileo. Aristophanes, a prominent aristocrat of the day, prompted the assault upon Socrates, while some other monarchic and aristocratic groups played principal roles in persecuting both Christ and Galileo.

Roy, however, does not seem to think that these men from special categories are endowed with any notable intelligence upon social questions. He prefers them for their qualities, like intellectual detachment, aesthetic sensitiveness of special capacity. They are men, incorporating the values of the humanist tradition. They should be regarded “as the most trustworthy custodians of public welfare”\(^1\). By placing the planning department under their control the economic life of the society would be “Progressively freed from the paralysing and corrupting control of vested interests”\(^2\).

In this connection it may be pointed out that Roy was an unmitigated materialist and never failed to assail the spiritual tradition of India. But, starting from the opposite end he reached the same conclusion as the Indian spiritualists, regarding the divergence of man. The creation of a number of detached individuals is most in the spirit of the doctrine of *karma yoga*, the inherent theme of the *Bhagwad Gita*. Work and service without any attachment constitute the basis of both the doctrines. This is because, the problem of leadership not only of democracy, but of all forms of government is, as Plato understands it to be, to discover the philosopher - the man possessing the capacity and the disposition to look upon public questions in their general and intrinsic aspects. The problem of democracy consists not only in throwing up such detached individuals, but also in preventing them from assuming the role of dictators. They would exercise their influence only to the extent to which they are able to earn and maintain the respect and confidence of the people. According to Roy, democracy thus oriented could survive the present crisis.

Such is the model of new democracy which Roy offered, not only for India, but also for the whole world, “With the hope that progressive world opinion tormented by doubts and pessimism about the future of mankind, and haunted by the dreadful spectre of a new war, will give it a careful consideration”.

IV. ROY’S SCHEME OF PEOPLE’S EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

The afore-mentioned factors emphasize the need for a new political practice which must begin from the grass root level. There is a predominance for a change in the very condition in which political parties thrive and the structural basis on which democracy is built. To bring about awareness of democracy, becomes a virtual necessity education of the people. Roy thus visualises a large pedagogic society.

Education for democracy is, however, not just conventional education. The result, if not the purpose, of this kind of education, particularly in backward countries, is to generate a large degree to conformism and subservience to an established order. The education, which Roy visualized consists in the process of making people conscious of their humanness, developing their intellectual and cultural level and enhancing their discriminating faculties. Unlike many other thinkers, Roy does not think this impossible of achievement, as on the basis of scientific knowledge it is maintained that every man, by virtue of being a human being, is “capable of rising to the highest heights of human attainments”.

Humanist democratic education would also teach the people “to live a corporate life, to transform their local community into a small co-operative commonwealth, a local democratic republic”.

To appeal to reason and to kindle the disseminating faculties of people constitutes the core of Roy's scheme of education. An indication towards this end is also given by modern science, which teaches that human nature is not to blindly believe, but to enquire and be rational. It is true, that the rational nature of man has been buried very deep. But, as it is the essence of human nature, it can be recovered when some people have the necessary conviction and courage to act thus and the new politics would bear fruit sooner than could be imagined.

All along, Roy has held that any significant social change should be preceded by a change in the thinking processes of men. This envisages a philosophical revolution. It is the Renaissance which ushered in the modern age in human history. It was characterised by revolt of man against God. The spirit of this Renaissance is now a spent force. The anticipation in the world, therefore, is for a new Renaissance heralding a new cultural movement, imbued with a humanist outlook.

In the matter of education dependence upon the Government exclusively or even primarily need not always arise. Government-sponsored education often encourages conformity, which enables one to take the initiative in one’s own hands and start educational institutions through mutual co-operation. Before the demand for general education as a responsibility of the state arose in Europe during the French Revolution, the task was carried on by the intellectual movement of the Enlightenment. It laid the foundation for a secular education divorced from the Church and dispelled darkness of the Middle Ages in Europe. In India much benefit could be derived from the lessons of that movement, its ideas being more or less similar to those propagated by the new humanists, to
abolish the last vestiges of the darkness and stagnation of our rational life. Under the condition thus created, the foundation for a partyless democracy could be laid. Roy’s conception of organised democracy has already been disclosed earlier. Having pointed out the inadequacies of the parliamentary democracy and the Soviet system, Roy has tried to incorporate in his scheme the best elements of both. He thus sought to make the State politically identical with society. According to Roy, only this puts a content in the Marxian ideal of the State withering away. The State being political organisation of society and also being the machinery to administer its affairs, it cannot be done away with, altogether. But, when the State no longer remains as an institution over and above society besides being politically identical to it, it ceases to be an instrument of coercion and as such it withers away. In a State virtually coterminous with the society, there will be no room for parties contending for power, the power remaining vested in the people organised in to people’s committees. The baffling problem of power is thus largely solved.

In this state as visualised by Roy, spiritually free and detached individuals would remain at the helm of public affairs. Such detached individuals are not susceptible to corruption, Humanists take a "realistically optimistic view" of human nature and so do not doubt the possibility of creating such individuals in a sufficiently large number. They believe that man is rational and therefore moral. As soon as he becomes conscious of the rational essence and the moral core of his very physical existence, he is on the way to attaining spiritual freedom.

Education of the people and the gradual building up of a new political structure already described are thereby only guarantees against the dangers of the party system. It being not in the nature of a political party to function in this role, Roy decided to disband his Radical Democratic party in December, 1948, by transforming it into a humanist movement for spreading the people's education for democracy and for promoting the ideal of freedom.* According to Roy, the contemporary problem of democracy is more comprehensive than one of institutional adjustments. It can be solved only by "a comprehensive social movement developed on the basis of the realisation of the ultimate identity of political, economic and moral problems, and inspired by a philosophy capable of suggesting solutions to them all" - a movement which calls for a rebirth of man the sovereign entirely, as the measure of all things, as the root of mankind and the highest outcome of the entire history of evolution".

The political ideal of the humanist practice according to Roy is not to be achieved at some distant future. For humanists as also for Gandhians means and end are not so differentiated. The means also is an unmistakeable part of the end. The foundation for a good and rational society is therefore, to be laid here and now. The followers must make the most of their lives through contemplation. Otherwise, they would end up by making the thoughts dictate their lives. If the small number of humanists spread throughout the country begin living this philosophy in their humble way instead of only preaching it, this would lead to the advent of small islands of democracy and freedom constituting the nucleus of a humanist democratic society. Once the example is

* At first Roy was not disposed to think in terms of abolition of all parties. A party composed of spiritually free man, according to him, will indulge not in a politics of power but a politics of freedom.

1. Dhar, Niranjan: The Political Thought Of M.N. Roy, P. 173
set and the spirit gets abroad, with gathering momentum the movement is bound to spread much faster than can be imagined. But, before talking about practice, an understanding and acceptance of the ideas becomes necessary so that they become a part of one's existence. Only in that case one's actions would be the practical expressions of this theory.

This approach to social revolution is all the more necessary, because of the fact that the old pattern of revolution has landed people in a blind alley. Unless there is an attempt to blaze a new train and evolve a new way of revolution, humanity is doomed to stagnation. Although greater importance should be attached to the educational aspect of the people, the outcome of elections cannot be left to their fate. So long as partyless organised democracy does not come into force, there is a need to carry on with parliamentary democracy. Since democratic politics as a rule thinks in terms of election, New Humanism can be practised in elections too.

Elections are necessary to reflect an intelligent public opinion. This requires the existence of an intelligent public opinion, which has to be created first. If the people in their respective localities meet in local or regional conferences to seriously discuss issues and understand political and economic problems for themselves, an intelligent public opinion can be created in the process. The people would readily see that they need not only longer vote for a party and leave all judgement to it. But, that they could judge independently and elect candidates of their own choice from among themselves. They would be independent candidates and hence remain directly accountable to their own conscience and to the people. The scope and extent to influence the affairs would depend upon the number of such independent candidates This would then go a long way in purifying the public life.
Their voice, in turn, would also quicken the consciousness of the people outside the parliament, who follow its proceedings. Moreover, independent candidates, who directly depend upon the people of their locality for election cannot forget their constituencies after elections, but must remain in constant touch with them for their mandate and support. Moreover, the humanists, who do not work to be elected and thereby go away to the centres of power, but who have stimulated political awakening in their respective localities would remain there to preventing the voters from relapsing into apathy. They would continue to educate the voters and help them establish a democratic local republic. Ultimately, such local republics would constitute the basic units of a Radical Democratic State.

V. PARTYLESS DEMOCRACY - PEOPLE’S COMMITTEES - HUMANIST POLITICS

Roy mainly adduced two reasons for rejecting party democracy. Firstly, it was a contradiction in terms and made a sham of democracy. A party was constituted of a part of the people, while democracy was a government by the entire people. As a part could not be equated with the whole, the very concept of a party-democracy contradicted itself. A party government could at best be a government for the people and not a government by the people. "If government for the people was a democratic government", thus argued Roy, "then the benevolent despotism should be considered as the highest form of democracy". While the people might not elect the despotism and parties were placed in power by popular suffrage, there was little essential difference between the two. The difference was only one of form1.

The fact, that the concept of a government by the people and for the people degenerated into one for the people only was the result of the inability to solve the problem of practising democracy in vast national states having large populations. The solution of the problem was found in the doctrine of representative government and of the delegation of power by the people. Thus, since its very inception, modern democratic governments came to be governments for the people. The sovereignty of the people is transferred to a group of politicians constituting a party. To make matters worse, members of legislative Assemblies elected on party-tickets owed their primary loyalties to the parties and not to their respective people, who elected them.

It is not only thought impossible to practise direct democracy in vast states of these days, but also not thought desirable to do so. In a representative democracy, the society is horizontally divided side by side between the elite and the masses. Sovereignty indeed belongs to the people. But, it is generally assumed that most of them do not possess the intellectual capacity for administering the public affairs. They must therefore, delegate their power to elected representatives. That is why, direct democratic devices like recall, referendum, initiative and so on, are denied to them, even if it is not physically possible for them to assemble together to manage their affairs. It is the political parties, which keep the machine of representative democracy going.

Secondly, party-politics meant power-politics pure and simple. Parties remain engaged in the struggle for capturing power. With this purpose they fight elections, because it is believed that nothing can be done except by governments in power. The fight has rules of its own, and does not allow itself to be hindered by any moral scruples. As a result, parties do not hesitate to
stoop to any level to come to power. Thus, they take recourse to demagogy, bribery, violence, voting by proxy and various other nefarious tactics. All these manipulations can be done only so long as the people remain politically unconscious and indiscriminating in nature. The backwardness of the people is thus the *sine qua non* of party-politics.

The party in power seeks to come back to power repeatedly. Because, apart from all other things, unless it can do so, it will not be able to implement its manifesto even partially. Its aim would be to ensure its return to power by maintaining the cultural and intellectual *status quo*. The existence of an effective opposition party is generally taken to be essential for the successful working of a modern democracy. If the party, ambitious to attain the status of an opposition party is to succeed in the given atmosphere, it has to appeal to the same primitive sentiments and religious prejudices of the people and has to take to the same nefarious practises, as the party in power. Thus, a vicious circle is created reinforcing and galvanising the very conditions, the removal of which constitutes the precondition of a successful democracy. Political parties indulge in this scramble, not because their members are mostly incompetent men, but because these are the rules of the game. Even a political party imbued with a humanist ideology would have to play the game according to these rules, in order to secure power, otherwise it would stand no chance at all. Besides, Roy ardently believed, that the political parties are all collectivistic in nature. They relegate man to a subsidiary position and profess to serve a collective concept like a State, a nation, a class or a people. It is conveniently forgotten, that only individual men can be moral, and individuals have been lost in the masses.

---

Masses respond easily to emotional appeals. The level of the public life thus adjusts itself to this mentality.

People's committees are but Indian version of the Russian Soviets. Roy does not appear to draw any inspiration from the ancient Indian tradition of the *panchayat* system, which is highly controversial in character. The Soviets, who came to be accidentally associated with the communist Government of Russia were subsequently again put into cold storage, and the communist party came to arrogate to itself all State-powers. Roy gives permanent place to these committees. Organised democracy grows directly out of the organised shape to be given to the revolution, which would automatically bring into being the new State. The mould through which the mass movement would find an organised outlet is to serve, after the revolution is successful, as the basic structure of the State. This would very largely obviate the chance of the new State being captured by any ambitious individual or any interested clique.

Roy, who advocated a rigorous distinction between society and government does not take a dualistic view of politics. True to his political theory, Roy had absolute confidence in the capacities of average people. And this competence may certainly grow with culture. He, therefore, wanted to place the responsibility directly in their hands. The elected representatives being no more than the delegates or mandatories of the electors. The practice of periodic assessment of responsibility would thus give place to that of daily assessment of responsibility. Roy seems to be of the opinion, that democracy should not encourage the reverential spirit. The general mass of voters is more qualified to

---

*Panchayat* is a council of five. It refers to a village council or court of elders, entrusted with executive and judicial powers for the community affairs. This institution, which flourished in many parts of India in the past, is now being revived as the basic administrative unit of government.
judge the common needs, than their representatives\(^1\). By legislation, *panchayats* were set up throughout the country. Once certain political functions with regard to the central and state assemblies like selection of candidates, recall and such other stipulations are added to their existing functions, the emerging picture would be that of Roy's organised democracy. These two types of functions, the existing local ones and the new national ones to be added are, however said to be mutually contradictory in spirit. One should guard against the introduction of party-politics into these committees and not of polities as such. The problem copeup only when the officially sponsored institutions would be capable of acquiring the necessary strength and vitality for discharging these functions properly.

The introduction of the devices of direct democracy like recall and other modes. Would not necessarily curtail the initiative of the elective of the elected representative. On the contrary, these devices may add to their initiative in view of the fact that the assessment of their actions by the people are not periodic any longer. They are under the constant vigilance of their electorates and always have to prove their mettle on pain of recall. Besides, the devices of direct democracy would prevent the representatives from developing particular wills of their own, in contravention to the general will of their electors. They often develop such particular wills, partly because they may have particular interests and partly because they live at a much physical and psychological

---

distance from the voters of their respective constituencies. The implication being, we should note that in modern Nation-States, individuals, unorganised and atomised are not only physically but also psychologically isolated. Deprived of the natural satisfaction from the day-to-day social co-operation and participation, Roy believed that they are apt commit follies through errors of judgement. Dictatorships of various kinds have particular appeals for such individuals, because these help them to get rid of the terrible burden of freedom, by satisfying their sense of belonging and worthlessness. Organised democracy would give a new compactness to their social life and also provide an effective emotional barrier against the onslaught of modern dictatorship. It would assert the last chance for the preservation of the characteristic achievements of the liberal culture.

People have a tendency to be increasingly disillusioned with the party system. But, still they cannot think of doing away with them. Parties are looked upon as necessary evils, because they are taken to discharge certain essential functions in a modern democracy, which no other agency is thought capable of discharging. Thus it has been contended, that in the absence of political parties, the selection of the candidates for election to the Assemblies and the Parliament would become difficult to predict and the outcome of elections deciding the government to be formed, and so on would be called in question. Those who argue in this way, claim to be political realists and dismiss the concept of a partyless democracy as a mere Utopia, not to be taken seriously.

The questions raised by the pseudo political realists appear to be plausible, because human beings are accustomed to think and act in a particular
way. It is always very difficult to come out of the mental rut, to understand how the affairs of democracy can be managed without political parties, although it is known to them that the representative government came into operation long before the rise of political parties in the proper sense of the term.

Thus, there is no necessary historical or logical connection between democracy and parties. The party system has come to stay to exploit the unorganised electorate. Otherwise it would not have been possible, for modern dictatorships too are sustained by political parties. After the development of the party system, it has been sought to be justified on various grounds, at periodic intervals and people have become accustomed to think in its own terms. But the net result of the development of the party system has been the decline of the legislative assemblies. Both in the case of single-party system and in the multi-party system, the legislative actions originate from the party. The party overshadows the legislative organs almost completely, the latter being merely instrumental, through which the party majority legislates and governs. A new form of despotism is thus set up.

There are two ways of conducting the proceedings. One is to impose from above and the other is to build from below. Political parties function from above. They may be said to be the lineal group descendants of the two sorts of groups, that repeatedly appear in human history from very ancient times - the group that conspired to overthrow the existing government and the group that rallied to defend the status quo. The party system sublimates this struggle for power into political behaviour. In the political wrangle, the people by whose name the parties swear are no better than pawns in their hands. As against this, when partyless democracy entails building from below. Here, it is the people
who take the initiative in governmental affairs and make their voices felt. In other words, partyless democracy stands for territorial democracy, possessing the local control of the political activities against what Bromson calls Jacobian democracy, which takes an abstract view of the people and advocates the concentration of the "Popular power". For realising the ideal of territorial, partyless democracy, the people would have to forge an appropriate instrument and discover an appropriate way of performing and exercising their rights.

Since elections have a very important place in democratic politics, a partyless democracy will be capable of meeting the challenge of the situation under the parliamentary system, when the voters remain atomised and are liable to manipulation from above. But, in a partyless democracy the people would remain organised into bodies as village or town panchayats. This is the first step towards the realisation of a partyless democracy. For, unless the people are physically organised, they would not be capable of taking any concerted action. A mere physical organisation is not enough. The people involved must have education too - particularly education for citizenship which will, among other things, teach them to reconcile their loyalty to their neighbourhood with that of the nation. Therefore, these panchayats should also function as many schools of political education for the mass benefit of the people, who must be in a position to understand for themselves various social problems of the day. Without their judgements instructed, the people are often likely to play into the hands of political middlemen in the shape of the members of the different political parties. Steps should also be taken to remove the apathy and indifference. It is true that groupism and factionalism may develop inside the panchayats too. With the emphasis shifted from power politics to the creation

of a moral society carved on moral means, together with the spread of enlightenment, the public life of the country is bound to be much clearer than ever, today.

In a partyless democracy, it is the *panchayats*, vested with powers to nominate candidates for election. But, it is not sufficient that such men should be men of character and ability only. The programmes advocated by them must also be taken into consideration. Prior to the people electing their representative, they must have beforehand a clear indication of the intentions, consequent upon his election. Viewed as such, the party candidates would have no difficulties to face. Each party has its own manifesto and its own machinery to propagate it before the people. But, such is not the case of unattached individual candidates, who have a great task of facing the *panchayats*, of convincing them regarding their programmes, besides permitting the candidates concerned to publicize them. Left to themselves such candidates would not possess machineries of their own.

Confronted with this difficulty, some advocates of partyless democracy have gone to the extreme extent of denying the necessity of the intending candidates having programmes at all. According to them, the Indian Constitution itself contains a programme of its own in the form of Directive Principles, and several others, which a government is necessarily expected to implement. Further, they argue that if a candidate’s programme only repeats what is already there in the constitution, it is certainly superfluous. But, if a candidate’s programme goes against any of the provisions of the Constitution, it will be *ultra vires*. Going into the merits and demerits of the Indian Constitution, it may be pointed out in this connection, that a written Constitution is more or
less a static one and especially in the context of a dynamic world, where newer and innovative issues are constantly rising and agitating the minds of voters. As an instance, passing mention may be made of the case of food zones. Candidates, who claim to represent the people cannot, and should not, shirk raising these issues during the time of elections seek their verdict upon them. This emphasizes the need for candidates having their respective programmes which, when implemented would at least supplement the provisions of the Constitution.

In a partyless democracy which evolves from below, the chief contending segment of elections would be those of the panchayats themselves. Like-minded individual candidates would be asked to espouse and implement them. Failing which they would make themselves liable to recall. In a partyless democracy, an established procedure may be adopted with local variations, as and when necessary.

On the eve of an election, the voters of each constituency would be organised in to panchayats or an adequate number of their representatives would meet in local and regional conferences, and ultimately in a convention discuss the various issues confronting the constituency and the country. Intending candidates may also submit their programmes before the convention for consideration. Thereby, the panchayats would decide upon some guidelines, on the basis of which a sub-committee drafts a programme. This programme may finally be placed for approval before the afore-mentioned convention. A representative committee may then be constituted. It would invite applications from men of integrity and competence, who are ready to accept the candidature of the panchayats and implement their programmes. The choice of the committee
must not, however, remain confined to the actual applicants. On its own initiative, it may select a candidate who, though highly deserving, has fought shy of applying for a ticket of the panchayat, owing to subjective reasons. In very special cases, the candidature of a selected candidate may be ratified by a majority of the village panchayats located within that constituency, and by a majority of the members of those panchayats. Where other things are more or less equal, recourse may also be taken to the ancient Greek practice of selection by lottery. After the selection of a candidate, it would be the duty of the panchayats concerned to see that the candidate sponsored by them gets elected. They may even go to the extent of reverting to the original practice of paying the salaries of the elected representatives by their respective constituencies. If the system were to work even tolerably well, political parties would wither away due to the lack of sustenance.

It is very likely, that the preparation of an election programme or the selection of a candidate would not always proceed on the basis of a consensus. In this sophisticated society, there are bound to be clashes of interests and wills. Here, an increasing dependence would have to be placed upon human reasons which, when awakened to the need for a common action, would gradually lead to the discovery of some mutually accepted basis for that common action. Where grave differences of opinion still continue to persist, the panchayats or any committee thereof would necessarily have to abide by principle of a workable majority.

After the elections are over, State Assemblies and Parliament would meet, and the problem of forming a new government brought to the forefront. Here again, the mode of its evolution is from below. The elected members
would then discuss the election manifestos of the different constituencies concerned and process them with the help of sub-committees and experts, if necessary. They may eliminate some of the existing items and add some new ones. A programme agreed upon, would then be formulated. In the absence of unanimity, the principle of majority may be acted upon.

A man of high respectability, ability and character would be the natural choice as the Chief Minister or the Prime Minister, as the case may be, who would also be the leader of the House in the real sense of the term. It is a misnomer to declare, as it prevails at present, the leader of the majority party as chief Minister or the Prime Minister would thereafter function from his own cabinet, among the members of the House normally, without any interference whatsoever. This is essential for the homogeneity, cohesiveness and smooth working of the government.

It is clear that the form of government as visualised here is parliamentary with some adjustments, and not presidential. The latter has a fixed executive and a fixed legislature and therefore admits of only a periodic assessment of the government’s responsibility. As contrasted with it, the parliamentary form demands a daily assessment of such responsibility. This is also more in keeping with the spirit of partyless democracy. It is appropriate to recall the Jeffersonian dictum, “that government which is best for the people is that which is closest to them”. The country can thus be governed according to “the real sentiment and purpose of the country”.

The concept of partyless politics of M.N. Roy has to be understood both as a strategy as well as an ideology. As a strategy, to improve and expand

individual psychological parameters so as to provide him an easy access to the national bargaining process in a situation that is often vitiated by systemic imbalance and inequalities and also as an ideology to provide an alternative to both the traditional Marxist perspective and the liberal philosophy. The Marxist perspective provides a misleading and dangerous frame work, that considers all political disagreements to be caused by socio-economic structures, often ignoring the role of a minority within the dominant class that controls the state apparatus and neglects the psycho-analysis of political conflicts, which are bound to result in a clash between the citizens and the State, particularly in the context of technological progress and economic scarcity in a developing economy. Frequently, it is erroneously looked at merely as an agent of the capitalist class. The growth of science and technology, mutually stimulating action-reaction-over reaction patterns created out of excessive militarisation of the political process increased the involvement of the internal military industrial complex and the external multi lateral industrial corporations that guide the local ruling elites, in providing legitimation as well as interaction, between a domestic monopoly structure interested in having a nexus between native monopolies and their external counter parts, and multiple sectorial adjustments between divergent social, economic, cultural, and political factors, have necessitated the creation of an equal correlation between economic power and political power. Further more, a modern State with its manifold functions and a society where needs outstrip the goods available, the nineteenth century liberal philosophy of parliamentary democracy can at best provide only a government for the people, not a government of and by the people.
To neutralize the ever increasing power of the State M.N. Roy provides his doctrine of organised democracy, of which partyless politics is an important concomitant. A radical decentralisation of power, formation of people's committees with provision for having people representatives under the control of primary voters, and a cultural foundation, form the essential elements of his concept of an organised democracy. While elaborating on his thesis of Radical Humanism in 1936, Roy, declared that a cultural revolution must precede a society from below 11.

In support of Roy's contention it may, however, be pointed out that when the representative government comes into vogue before the rise of political parties, the latter cannot have any necessary connection with the former. It is the introduction of more or less universal franchise, which necessitates the rise of political parities to bring order out of chaos and make the system of representative government work smoothly, as far as possible. Here further note should be taken that not only modern democracies, are party-democracies, but modern dictatorships also remain so. The vastness of the modern States and the complexity of force in operation make the existence of political parties more or less indispensable, irrespective of the forms of government. So, even if it be conceded that the party system is an evil, it is at least a necessary evil. To control it requires manipulation, but it cannot be abolished altogether.

It is however, a great credit on the part of Roy, that he could visualise an alternative mode of organising the citizen voters. His scheme of organised democracy provides this alternative mode. It is true, that many a people's committee may also prove vulnerable to groupism and factionalism. But, that

---

is only a concomitant of the imperfection of human nature. It may at least be said that unlike the party-system, functionalism would not remain inherent in it. In the present sophisticated society, reliance or dependence upon a consensus of opinion is rare, and there is bound to be a clash of interests and wills. It is, however, human reason slowly awakened to the need for common action, which would gradually lead to the discovery of some mutually acceptable basis for common action. With the emphasis shifted from power-politics to the creation of a moral society with moral means and with the spread of social education, the public life of the country is bound to record much improvement.

Thus, Humanist politics may appear to be something novel, because the term politics may have been qualified by a variety of adjectives, but these have never included the term humanist. According to Roy, those who have come to feel the necessity of humanist politics have been led to comprehend this by the conviction that this medley can be cleared away only by introducing the human element into public affairs, or rather by giving the human individual a prominent place in political practice, which has of late become a veritable chaos. All sorts of forces, elements and factors are considered in politics, and it is often forgotten that, there is no purpose in all these unless it is for the welfare and happiness of men, and that it is man alone who can bring it about, not impersonal forces and factors. Further, Roy was of the view that originally, politics was a concern of human beings with common interests and purposes. Its purpose was to regulate human relations in certain aspects of social existence. The units of all political organisations were the individual men and women constituting it. But later on, State organisations became larger and larger, and

ultimately entire countries and continents came to be embraced by one political State. Therefore, the fundamental problem of modern political philosophy has concentrated on the issue of regulating the relations between the individual and the State, as also to carry on organised social existence, without encroaching on the liberty of the individual.

In India, the followers of Mahatma Gandhi were also advocating the ideal of partyless democracy. In order to assess the merit of Roy's scheme there arises a need to compare and contrast it with that of the sarvodayists. The latter have made democracy partyless by sacrificing democracy itself. Under this scheme, the village panchayats would depute their representatives to the higher body which would in its turn send representatives to the next higher body and the process would continue until the apex body is elected. This hierarchical system of representation would widen the distance from the general body of citizens more and more at each further stage. Thus, it would be self-defeatistic. Under this scheme of Sarvodayists, the evils of representation would be far more pronounced and democracy far more managerial, than under a democracy run along party-lines. In comparison, Roy's organised partyless democracy is a far more satisfactory solution.

It is necessary to go into a detailed and critical examination of Roy's scheme in order to ascertain its real worth. 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 and so on. 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.

Roy hoped that his system would realise the ideal of direct democracy, even in modern large States. But the People's 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 that locality. Thus, the people who would remain outside the People's Committee - ninety eight percent 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 the 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

CHAPTER IV

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 Committee. The parties might not come into prominence in a People's Committee, or Panchayat 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 certainly try to dominate these bodies and the network of People's Committee's 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 Committee 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 neither very clear nor 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 ideal 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 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." Prof. Robert Michels, Vilfredo Pareto and many others have shown by a minute study of social organisations, that inspite 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 during their times suffered from the tendency to hero-worship and instead of exercising power and taking responsibilities themselves, they preferred place responsibility on a single person and expected him to look after their interests.

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 people's 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 ideal 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 People’s Committees throughout the country, which might propose different amendments difficult to reconcile with one another. Many problems of the government are very complex and intricate in nature and require expert knowledge for their full comprehension. Several members of parliament may not competent to deal with them effectively. Therefore, it would be unwise, if not positively dangerous, to entrust the People’s 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 one’s essential sense of realism. A party saddled with the responsibility of running the administration may take a futuristic 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 an 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, the government's policy would have no coherence. It is the party organisation, which enables the Government to follow a coherent and consistent policy. Chander Prakash Bhambri, therefore, in an article on Roy's New Humanism has rightly characterised his concept of partyless politics as facile, impracticable and dangerous. It is dangerous because, as the writer says, the doctrine, if practised, would result in totalitarianism. Partyless politics would invariably 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 the 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. Selection of the spiritually free and detached individuals is postulated, wherein Roy's suggestion that the selection of such persons would be on the recommendation of the professional groups, and is not likely to realise the 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.

Roy has rendered primeval service pointing out the shortcomings of Parliamentary Democracy and the evils of the party system. 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. Dr. Sharma also holds, that the criticism of the party system made by Roy “points to the necessity of removing these defects”. 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 predominant reason why the concept of partyless Democracy has developed in such areas. Today, the people of a constituency have been able to organise into local committees like the Panchayats in India and have - taken the initiative by conducting elections and organising meetings by inviting the different candidates to address the people, much of the immoral practices connected with elections may presumable attributed to have been 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”. Inspite of the indirect characteristics of

2. Sharma, B. S: The Political Philosophy of M.N. Roy, National Publishing House, Delhi, P. 89.
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 neglected 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 would 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 participational democracy may however be built upon the locals dealing with local problems.

Roy’s view, that education is the precondition of democracy would readily be accepted by many. Preponderance on the agencies that spread education among the people besides Secondly the content of education are the necessary concomitants Roy thought that neither the political parties nor the government were capable enough to 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 co-operative 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 as a source of authority higher than reason. Vivekananda and Gandhiji also stood for the spiritual development of man. The Sarvodaya Movement ennobling the Gandhian tradition and fortified by the socialist experience of Jayaprakash Narayan tried to bring about a social revolution without legislation in India. 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.

government and the parties may be reinforced by individual and co-operative 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 as a source of authority higher than reason. Vivekananda and Gandhiji also stood for the spiritual development of man. The Sarvodaya Movement ennobling the Gandhian tradition and fortified by the socialist experience of Jayaprakash Narayan tried to bring about a social revolution without legislation in India. Rabindranth 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.

2. Ibid.