Chapter IV

Transition from Marxism to Radical Humanism

The period from 1930 to 1946 forms another epoch in the development of the political ideas of Roy. During this period, he changed his views, on certain aspects radically. It would be desirable to discuss those views and to compare them with the ideas held by him previously. Moreover, the researcher would try to explore the various influences, which led to these changes in Roy’s views.

After his expulsion from Comintern in 1929 Roy came back to India in 1930. He was arrested in July 1931 and was sentenced to imprisonment for twelve years. The sentence was reduced on appeal to six years and he was released from jail on 20th November 1936.

However, Roy’s experience of the actual situation prevailing in India disappointed him. He realised that the picture which he so far had in his mind about the Indian society was not correct. He observed that a social and political revolution was not immediately possible in India as the Indians were not politically conscious and that was mainly due to the fact that they believed too much in religion and spiritualism and were culturally backward. Thus Roy realised the foremost necessity of making the people conscious about their plight and this, according to him, could only be achieved, if they were liberated from ignorance and orthodoxy and were made to think rationally. This led Roy to advocate a philosophical revolution as a prerequisite to social and political revolution.

While in jail, Roy was mainly concerned with the task of rejection of religious mode of thought and spiritualism. He laid emphasis on rationalism and
scientific mode of thought. He highlighted the necessity of freedom of man from the clutches of religion, spiritualism, ignorance and superstition. To quote him, “Superstition persuades the victims of social tyranny to accept the most cruel punishment with resignation, firmly believing that the entire responsibility belongs to themselves.”

Expressing his views on religion Roy said that “Religion is belief in the super-natural. Ignorance is its foundation. Metaphysical agencies are postulated by man unable to explain natural phenomena otherwise.” He added that religious experience was the experience of the animal in man. In it, “animal instincts are sublimated. Superstition becomes revealed truth; Mental images, born of ignorance, appear as super-natural realities; pre conceived notions take concrete form; faith manufactures facts.” The function of religion, according to Roy, was to teach the masses to do with the very minimum of earthly goods, so that the bulk of the fruits of their labour could remain the share of the privileged few.

Roy believed that religiosity was the badge of spiritual backwardness. Therefore, according to him the greater the intellectual backwardness, the stronger would be the religious predisposition. He argued that religious predisposition remained deep-rooted in every human being until a very high level of spiritual development was reached. He said, “Irrationalism being the very essence of religion and religious philosophy, these are antagonistic to the spirit of enquiry, and consequently the rise of modern science coincided with a revolt against them.” According to him knowledge strengthened the highest mental faculties of rationality and intelligence. Consequently, it shook the influence of religious prejudice. He argued that religion became useless when the spiritual development of man attained a sufficiently high level.

Talking about spiritualism Roy said that spiritualism was blind faith in an inscrutable power. It was teleological view of life and the world. According to it
everything was providentially preordained and everything happened in fulfilment of a divine purpose. He added, "The spiritualist view was born of the inability to explain life in terms of the physical laws of nature. It stood in the absence of scientific knowledge."^8

Criticizing spiritualism, Roy said that the society ruled by the enslaving and dehumanising dogma of spiritualism must be composed of dumb-driven cattle.⁹ He argued, "while stubbornly resisting new forms of thought, while combating the coordination of the ever-increasing varieties of empirically acquired knowledge, into a rationalist and scientific philosophy, spiritualism becomes a powerful ally of reaction as against the human urge for freedom and progress."¹⁰ He said that spiritualism stood in the way not only of material progress, but also of the real spiritual emancipation of mankind.

Roy argued that as long as ignorance prevented man from being conscious of the endless potentialities inherent in his own being, he took the support of a super-natural power in the hope of rising above his limitations and overcoming the obstacles to his aspirations. However, as man acquired knowledge of nature and his own self, he got rid of his ignorance and spiritualism ceased to be an intellectual necessity.

According to him the rise of science sounded the deathknell of spiritualism. He said that the advance of modern science meant an extension of the knowledge of nature, and eventually led to the discovery that the cosmos was not a teleological order. The result was the liberation of the spirit of man from the bondage of the belief in the supernatural. To quote him, "The discovery that the movement of heavenly bodies as well as other natural phenomena were determined by mechanical laws inherent in nature itself eliminated the necessity of assuming the harmonious operation of supernatural agencies or a Universal Will as the cause of the being and becoming of things."¹¹ Thus Roy believed that modern science could only open man's eyes and give him power to get out of
humiliating position of an age-long spiritual stagnation.

Roy argued that religious and spiritual culture of India was responsible for making Indian people submissive and resigned to their fate. He said, "Religiosity has broken the backbone of the Indian people. It has crushed the spirit of revolt, which is the lever of human progress. Resignation, the characteristic feature of the Indian people, leads to stagnation which is living death." He added fatalism in the garb of religiosity has been disastrous to India. Similarly he said, "Spiritual culture has taught the Indian masses to be resigned. The spirit of revolt is unknown to them. But they must revolt; otherwise, instead of saving the world with the message of their spiritual culture, they will themselves follow other ancient peoples into oblivion."

He criticized the doctrines of immortality of soul, transmigration of soul and the law of karma, which were the fundamental articles of faith with the vast bulk of the Indian people. He said that "these doctrines of ‘spiritualist’ philosophy were expounded by the Rishis of the old with the object of making the masses feel themselves responsible for their misery, and thus be reconciled to it."

Criticizing the idea of an immortal soul, Roy argued, "The idea of an immortal soul is not the acquisition of man when he reaches a high spiritual level. It is a very very primitive idea, its origin being not spiritual elevation, but ignorance. He added that science had challenged that belief and had exposed its groundlessness.

He argued that the belief in transmigration of soul had to be fostered for securing submission to the law of karma. The object of that was to defend the established social order and to keep everybody in his allotted place. According to Roy, the belief in transmigration fostered fatalism which destroyed initiative.

He argued that the doctrine of karma was a doctrine of social slavery.
Fatalism represented the popular concept of the law of *karma*. According to that doctrine, everyone must enjoy the fruits of good action and be punished for the evil. The causal consequence may not be evident in the same life. The doctrine of *karma* taught everyone to be reconciled to his fate. Regarded as a determinist law, the doctrine of *karma* rendered the ideal of freedom unattainable. Roy said that “The law of *karma* reinforces the laws of the Imperialist State. The belief in providential preordination serves as the safety-valve for the maintenance of the decayed politico-economic order of colonial exploitation, superimposed upon feudal-patriarchal social relations.”

Thus Roy argued that future of India was seriously prejudiced by her religious and cultural traditions which kept the masses in ignorance. Indian religious and spiritual culture taught ignorance, superstition and fatalism to its masses. There was no future for such a nation, the vast bulk of which remained in such a deplorable state of spiritual and moral backwardness. He raised the question as to how such a nation could be free when its cultural tradition taught its people to remain submissive.

Roy asserted that it would be wrong to say that spiritualism was the ‘special genius’ of Indian culture. According to him spiritualism or the religious form of thought characterized human ideology everywhere in a certain stage of social evolution. He said, “If India clings tenaciously to a particular mode of thought which has been rejected or reformed or camouflaged by the Western nations, it is not because the latter are morally depraved by nature . . . It simply proves that advance of civilization . . . has enabled those nations to think more in terms of reason and positive knowledge than in terms of faith and metaphysical fantasies . . . It proves that India clings to an antiquated mode of thought because she did not experience similar changes.”

By analysing the ancient culture of India Roy showed that it contained a rich heritage of rationalist and materialist thoughts scattered in Vaisheshik
philosophy of Kanada, Sankhya system of Kapila, in the philosophical thoughts of Gautama, Charvak and the Jains. Roy argued that the materialist trend of thought in ancient India reached its culmination in the rise of Buddhism, which according to him was “one of the greatest revolutions of the ancient times.”

However, Roy said that the revolution was defeated. He was of the opinion that all the subsequent misfortunes of India could be ultimately traced to that original misfortune of having killed one of the greatest revolutions of human history.

According to him, a long period of social stagnation which followed the unfortunate defeat of the Buddhist revolution arrested the development of Hindu pantheism into its logical conclusion. Indian thought remained in a state of stagnation. But the world went ahead. It came out of the vicious circle of spiritualism and marched forward towards materialism. Roy said, “It has been India’s fate to linger much longer in the twilight of decayed spiritualism. She also must come out of that darkness if she desires to join the progressive march of mankind . . . India herself should be able to learn the true message of her ancient culture. The correct evaluation of her mystic-pantheist philosophy is to discern the germ of materialism embedded in it.”

Roy believed that India would have to carry through another revolution—a philosophical revolution—which would have to pull down the hoary structure of Indian society which was rotten through and through, breeding the deadly disease of spiritual degeneration. He believed that India must accept materialism, which was neither Eastern nor Western, but the most developed form of human thought, in order to ensure her social, political and economic progress.

It is observed that M.N. Roy’s viewpoint on spiritualism was diametrically opposed to that of Sri Aurobindo. Whereas Roy regarded spiritualism as a sign of backwardness and weakness of Indian people, Aurobindo argued that the strength of Indians lay in their spiritualism. To quote him, “We are no ordinary race . . . We are a people to whom suffering is
welcome and who have a spiritual strength within them, greater than any physical
force, we are people in whom God has chosen to manifest himself more than in
any other at many great moments of our history."22

In fact, Aurobindo went to the extent of saying that India had a mighty
role to play in the spiritual regeneration of the human race. He argued that India
had a spiritual message which was urgently needed in the world of the twentieth
century. She was destined to lead mankind up the next step of spiritual evolution.
To quote him, "India is the guru of the nations, the physician of the human soul
in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new-mould the life of the
world and restore the peace of the human spirit."23 He added, "The problems
which have troubled mankind can only be solved by conquering the kingdom
within... For that work the freedom and greatness of India are essential."24

Roy believed that the materialist philosophy was the mighty instrument
for the spiritual liberation of mankind. He said, "Materialist philosophy--
knowledge instead of faith, reason instead of authority, the physical instead of
the metaphysical, the natural instead of the super-natural, facts instead of
fiction—this can lead not only to political freedom, economic prosperity and
social happiness; it indicates the only way to real spiritual freedom."25

He further said that "Materialist philosophy has to be called in to assist
also at the re-birth of India. As long as the progressively minded intellectuals will
remain wedded to the antiquated forms of religious thought, superficially
rationalised to be all the more harmful because of its deceptiveness, they will
simply stultify themselves."26 Roy believed that the boldness required for tearing
down the rotten structure of Indian society, in the vicious atmosphere of which
all incentive to progress was checked, could only be born out of a spirit set free
by scientific knowledge.

Roy's views on spiritual freedom were quite different from those of Sri
Aurobindo. Roy believed that the belief in spiritualism and the supernatural was a
hindrance in the path of spiritual freedom. On the other hand according to Sri Aurobindo, real freedom could only be realised in a spiritual sense. He argued that man had failed to realise freedom as he ignored spirituality which was the key of freedom. To quote him, “spirituality respects the freedom of the human soul, because it is itself fulfilled by freedom.”

Roy, after his release from jail, started a Renaissance Movement with a view to replace the religious outlook of the people by the scientific mode of thought. He delivered three lectures on the Indian Renaissance Movement. The first lecture was given by him at Poona in February 1937. The second lecture was delivered by him on January 13, 1941 and third lecture was given by him on November 1943.

In these lectures Roy focused attention on the historic necessity of a revolutionary intellectual movement in India. He believed that political independence would be truly fruitful in the lives of the common people if it went together with a social and economic revolution. But, according to him, a socio-economic-political revolution would not take place without a cultural revolution. He called this much needed ‘philosophical’ or ‘cultural revolution’ by the name ‘Renaissance’ on the analogy of a similar phenomenon in European society.

In Roy’s view the established social institutions in India had become antiquated. They had to be replaced by newer institutions which could make room for the growing forces of progress.

According to him, the conditions in Europe in the Middle Ages were no less depressing than the conditions that prevailed in India. He said, the European people overcame that crisis and made rapid progress owing to the Renaissance which placed before them new ideas and ideals. According to Roy, the Renaissance Movement liquidated medieval thought in Europe and created the intellectual atmosphere in which the scientific view of life could develop, providing a stimulus for new social and political movements which conquered
liberty for the people. He wrote, "The essence of the Renaissance Movement was a critical outlook on history. It was a revolt against authority. It was replacement of faith by reason."31

Roy compared the conditions of India with the crisis that prevailed in Europe about four hundred years ago. He pointed out that in India such a cultural and intellectual revolution never took place and "that was the cause for all our material miseries and political humiliation during the last seven or eight hundred years."32 He argued, "If in India we wish to advance on the road of progress, if we wish to clear away the ballast of misery, backwardness, ignorance and superstition, which chokes our national life, we must have to do the same thing as was done by the founders of modern Europe."33

According to Roy, a revolutionary intellectual movement or renaissance was essential for bringing about a social, political and economic revolution in India. Therefore, Roy made an appeal to the Indians to be rational, critical and inspired with the spirit of enquiry. He said, "Don’t take things simply for granted. If you do not have the courage to revolt against authority outright, then, at least go to the extent of demanding on what sanction is the authority based. You shall never be able to be free on this earth so long as you remain a voluntary subject to forces unknown and unknowable. Only men who are spiritually free can lead an entire nation in a great revolutionary movement."34 According to him intellectuals should be free in spirit and rid themselves of pseudo-intellectualism which tried to rationalise the irrational.35

Thus it is observed that now Roy considered spiritual freedom necessary for social, political and economic freedom. He talked of Renaissance Movement, while still admitting his faith in Marxism. But Roy’s conception of Renaissance Movement was un-Marxist, both in conception as well as in content. It was so because the ideal of a philosophical revolution independent of and preceding the economic transformation went against the essential spirit of Marxist historiology.
G.P. Bhattacharjee has correctly remarked, "The Renaissance Movement launched under the banner of reason developed its own dynamism and started a process of intellectual exploration which proved fatal to Marxism itself."36

The researcher would now take up Roy’s views on the structure of the Indian society during this particular period. Roy said, "The present structure of the Indian Society was largely feudal."37 He said that the character of a social system should be judged by the form of the ownership of the main means of production. In India, it was land. It was so because nearly seventy per cent of social labour was performed on land. Moreover, a corresponding percentage of the gross produce of the country was also from land, and the greater part of the state revenue was derived from it. According to Roy, all these things taken together proved that land was still the main means of production in India. That was also a typical feature of feudal economy. So he asserted that main features of feudalism were operative in contemporary India.38

Roy admitted that capitalism had also developed in India. But on the whole, the picture was that of feudalism. He argued that the capitalist class in India was a very small class. Moreover, the history of the development of capitalism in India showed that it did not break its connection with feudal economy. In reality, according to Roy, Indian capitalism grew on the basis of the feudal relation of classes.39

Highlighting the exploited classes in Indian society, Roy talked about the peasantry, the proletariat and the petty-bourgeoisie. He said that peasantry constituted the overwhelming majority of the Indian nation. Its intolerable condition demanded a radical change in the existing society. However, Roy asserted that there was no symptom of any widespread revolutionary awakening in the peasantry.40 It had blind faith in Gandhi and Indian National Congress. He said, “The peasant masses are unaffected by any other political propaganda than that of the National Congress.”41
Talking about the proletariat, Roy said, it was "a very insignificant factor in contemporary India." He argued that there were not more than two million proletarians in India. However, even they were not fully proletarianised in so far as they still retained their connection with the village and could still hope of becoming peasants again. Measured by that standard, he asserted that there were perhaps not more than two lakhs of proletarians in India.

He highlighted the immaturity of the proletariat. According to him it was not only numerically weak but it had also not fully developed into a class. To quote him, "The proletariat constituting a minute fraction of the Indian people, and hardly formed as a class could not alone save the country." He argued that the strikes of the workers were rather the result of elementary revolt against intolerable conditions of daily life rather than symptoms of revolutionary class consciousness.

Therefore, according to Roy, "in a strictly scientific analysis, it is perfectly correct to say that in India the proletariat to-day is not only an insignificant factor, but almost a negligible factor."

Talking about the petty-bourgeoisie, the poor middle class comprising of the traders, artisans, employees and intellectuals, Roy said, "This class is the first to be affected in the period of capitalist decay." As long as capitalism prospered, all these people could get employment. As long as trade thrived, the shop-keepers could make profits, and their dependents could earn a living. But as soon as the crisis began, the intellectual professions became unremunerative, employees were thrown out of job and the small shop-keepers had to close down business. "Therefore, economically, the relation between the big bourgeoisie and this latter category of the petit-bourgeoisie must be one of antagonism." Gradually, members of this group realised the hopelessness of their position and became conscious revolutionaries.

Roy argued that the established system in India was a feudal system. The
revolution which led to the overthrow of feudal social order was known as the bourgeois democratic revolution. Therefore “the impending revolution in India will be essentially a bourgeois democratic revolution.”

According to him a proletarian revolution could not take place in India at that time. He said the bourgeois democratic revolution was a historic necessity and it had to take place in India. It would create the conditions necessary for the proletarian revolution. Thus the proletarian revolution was conditional upon bourgeois democratic revolution. Roy argued, “The proletariat will develop as a class, conscious of its historic mission, equipped for the purpose, in consequence of the modernisation of the economic life of the country, which will be brought about through the accomplishment of the long overdue tasks of the bourgeois revolution.” He added that, “the way to the proletarian revolution—to the establishment of Socialism—will be opened only upon the accomplishment of the democratic revolution.”

At the same time, Roy also believed that the bourgeois democratic revolution in India might create conditions favourable for a direct development towards the establishment of Socialism. However, even then, according to Roy, there would be an intervening period during which the conditions for socialism would be created.

He believed that “Marxism will not be belied if a revolution in the current means and mode of production of our country, so as to create the pre-conditions for Socialism, does not take place in the framework of a bourgeois capitalist society.” He added, “The fundamental fact will be a revolution in the means of production as a necessity for social evolution. That is a law predicted by Marx.”

Roy argued that in India, the delayed bourgeois democratic revolution would not take place in its classical form. The bourgeoisie had forfeited the right to lead it. It was unable and unwilling to lead the revolutionary struggle for
democratic freedom. However, the task of the revolution remained to be accomplished. Therefore, according to him, there should be a new type of leadership.

Talking about the relation of classes in Indian society and their role in the Indian revolution Roy said that on one side were those “who own the means of production, be it, land or mills or mines or factories. They own those means of production as integral parts of the imperialist colonial economy. Therefore, in the relation of classes, in the anti-imperialist struggle, they are on the other side of the barricade.”

He argued that on the one side was the combination of the imperialist-feudal-capitalist forces. According to him colonial, feudal and capitalist exploitation were the component parts of the imperialist economy in India.

On the other side there was a large mass of people more or less under the same system of imperialist exploitation and consequently it was their common interest that the exploitative system should be destroyed. Thus Roy stressed the importance of an anti-imperialist united front which according to him would form a revolutionary army. He said that the only united front possible under the given conditions was a united front of the peasants, workers and the poor middle class (traders, artisans, employees, intellectuals) as integral parts of the petty-bourgeoisie.

Now Roy did not lay too much stress on the idea of class struggle. He said that the harmfulness of such loose talk was realised when it was known that the class struggle was not only between capital and the labour. There was ample ground for antagonism between the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the working class, on one side, and the peasantry on the other. He argued that the class antagonism between the peasant and the workers was the most baffling problem. In India, the workers and peasants lived in terrible poverty. If a demand was made for higher prices for agricultural goods to promote the interest of the
peasantry, there would be a rise in the prices of flour and rice, and consequently
the workers would suffer. If on the other hand, to fulfill the demands of workers
for higher wages the mill-owner raised the prices of manufactured goods, the
poor peasantry would suffer.\textsuperscript{56}

Thus Roy argued, “The idea of developing the anti-imperialist struggle
by sharpening the class struggle is sheer humbug. If you want to create a united
anti-imperialist front, you must emphasise the cohesiveness of social relations,
and the uniting factors.”\textsuperscript{57}

While answering the question, as to who would provide leadership in the
revolutionary army comprising of the peasants, proletariat and petty-bourgeoisie,
Roy argued that in assessing the social significance of any class two factors
should be taken into consideration—objective and subjective. Objectively a class
became revolutionary when its intolerable condition could not be improved
without radically changing the present order of things. However, the objective
significance of a class could not make itself felt, unless the subjective factor of
revolutionary consciousness was also there.\textsuperscript{58} Roy now believed that the most
important and decisive factor in the revolution was the subjective factor. This all-
important subjective factor had its pre-conditions. Such preconditions were some
education and a minimum level of culture.\textsuperscript{59}

He said that if we took all the revolutionary forces in India, the
proletariat, the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie in general, only one particular
group was found to be possessed of those minimum requisites.\textsuperscript{60} That was the
petty-bourgeois which was the most important subjective factor of the revolution.
Roy argued that only the petty-bourgeoisie could claim the leadership of the
revolution since they were endowed with intellectual ability, cultural
achievements and education required for giving expression to the common
demand of the whole mass of the revolutionary army. To quote him, “the credit
and the responsibility of leadership of the Indian Revolution will be neither of the
proletariat nor of the bourgeoisie, but of the jacobins—the petty bourgeoisie acting as the vanguard of the rising proletariat, together with the proletariat acting as an integral part of the petit-bourgeoisie.\(^{61}\)

Roy observed that the proletariat were not in a position to offer leadership. According to him, they "are still too backward, in every respect, to feel the urge for a revolutionary reconstruction of society. They are moved rather by emotions or by the desire for some improvement, than by any intelligent appreciation of social problems. Therefore, at least in the earlier stages of the revolution, the leadership cannot come from them."\(^{62}\)

He added that Indian peasantry was objectively a revolutionary class, because its intolerable condition could not be improved without radically changing the present order of things. But it also lacked the subjective factor of revolutionary consciousness. Therefore it was also not in a position to lead the revolution.\(^{63}\)

However, Roy talked of the proletarian hegemony over the revolutionary movement in India. Explaining the meaning of 'proletarian hegemony' as distinguished from 'proletarian leadership' he said, "If it is to be conceived as something distinct from leadership, hegemony must mean ideological influence, proportionately much greater than the physical strength."\(^{64}\) He said that though the proletarian class had not as yet fully developed in India, it definitely existed as a distinct class on the world scale. Consequently, there had grown a proletarian ideology, which was bound to have its effect over the entire world.\(^{65}\)

Visualizing the problems involved in the Indian revolution Roy rejected the theory of a spontaneous development of revolution. He said that revolutions which took place in the other countries in the earlier periods could succeed as spontaneous revolts because in those days states were weak and not highly organized. However, the situation was different in India. There was a very highly organized state. On the other hand the masses were very backward still
dominated by a sixteenth century mentality. The fatalistic mentality of the masses precluded the possibility of any serious spontaneous uprising. Roy argued that there was great disparity between the might and resources of a highly organised twentieth century state and the potential power of a people handicapped not only by material, but also spiritual backwardness. According to him, that disparity, which itself was an objective factor, may decisively influence the course of the Indian revolution, and compel the revolutionary party to adjust its tactics and strategy to the peculiarities of the situation.

He added that since the collapse of the established political regime was the decisive condition for a revolution to succeed, and since that condition could not be expected to be created in India, as in the case of past revolutions, the ways of the Indian revolution were bound to be different. He said that its battles were more likely to begin on the periphery, and then gradually close in on central places. Therefore, Roy suggested that the revolutionary party must be organised not only in a few important places, but in as many places as possible.

He believed that in India capture of power could not take place in consequence of a spontaneous upheaval. It could not be a sudden event but it had to be an organised process. He said, “There must, therefore, be an instrument for directing that process. To create that instrument is the fundamental problem of the Indian Revolution.”

Roy expected the Congress Committees to serve as the instrument for the capture of power by the masses. However when he observed that those committees were being destroyed organisationally by the Congress leadership he suggested People’s Councils to serve the purpose.

But the most important problem of the Indian revolution, according to Roy, was the problem of building up the party which would organise and lead the revolution. He said, “The function of the party is to develop in the people a militant democratic consciousness, to help them cooperatively function in
organized democratic bodies and to guide them through propaganda and participation in their struggle to build up a free society of their own." Roy advised establishment of local party units in each and every village. These local party units would carry on the work of political propaganda and agitation continuously. It would be like recruiting, drilling and otherwise training a political army. Gradually, there would be everywhere a corps of officers and a potential army to be mobilised for action at the appropriate time. Roy said, "With such a decentralised army, scattered all over the country, it will be a practical proposition to tackle the problem of capturing power ... The task must be accomplished over a whole period of time, and capture of power by the masses must be visualised as a process which might be longer or shorter according to the combination of circumstances." 

Thus Roy believed that India needed three revolutions, which took place over a period of a thousand years, in other parts of the world. There was the need to free India from the most antiquated ideas and out-dated institutions. Then, there was the need to free it from the mediaeval feudal relations and mode of production which placed serious handicaps to the economic development of the country. Finally, there was the need to free the Indian masses from the latest form of bondage, which was capitalist exploitation. He added that all these three revolutions would have to take place in India perhaps in one generation or even less.

It is observed that Roy’s views on the position and role of the different classes in Indian society underwent a great change. In the earlier phase of his thought, Roy believed that the objective force of the proletariat was tremendous in India and that it would lead the revolution. However, now he argued that the proletariat was an insignificant factor in Indian society. As such it was not in a position to lead the revolution. Similarly in India in Transition, Roy highlighted the rebellious mood of the Indian peasantry, but now he argued that there was no
sign of any revolutionary consciousness in the Indian peasantry. Roy no longer believed that the objective factor was sufficient to make a revolution. Now he laid greater stress on the subjective factor.

Though Roy continued to believe, as before, that the Indian revolution would be the joint product of a coalition of the oppressed and exploited classes, namely the peasants, the workers and the petty bourgeoisie, but his views about the relative importance of these three classes changed. Now he believed that the petty-bourgeoisie rather than the proletariat would lead the revolution.

The researcher is of the opinion that the main cause which led to these changes in Roy’s ideas was his personal experience of the Indian situation. When he expressed his ideas, in the earlier phase, he had a different picture of Indian society in his mind. Roy has admitted that when he was abroad he had heard much about the revolutionary class consciousness of the Indian proletariat. Reports of people attending Congress meetings and demonstrations in hundreds of thousands had aroused great expectations in him. However, when he came back to India in 1930, he was altogether disappointed. He observed that the situation in India was quite different from what he was informed or what he had imagined.

He found that the Indian proletariat was very weak and immature. He attended a mass meeting of workers in Bombay in 1930. However, he was very much disappointed when he found that the workers were hardly interested in what was being spoken. Roy said, “I came closer to find that the most of the audience were dozing or actually sleeping. The only sign of the life was their wisps of bidi smoke here and there.” He added, “The first experience in Bombay and similar experience later on convinced me how delusive was the picture imagined from the newspaper reports of large meetings and demonstrations. They were not political events. They had no more revolutionary significance than the mass pilgrimages which have taken place in this country.
from time immemorial." Similarly he was quite disillusioned to find that Indian peasantry was submissive and ignorant in nature. It lacked revolutionary awakening. Thus the only class about which Roy could be hopeful was that of petty-bourgeoisie, because of its eduution and cultural development. The observation of these empirical realities led to a shift in Roy's ideas.

The researcher would now examine Roy's views on National Congress. It is observed that on his return to India, Roy attended the Karachi Congress of 1931, and was believed to be the author of the 'Resolution on Fundamental Rights' adopted at this session, though Jawaharlal Nehru claimed that he himself drafted it, and Roy had "absolutely nothing to do with it."

Roy joined the Congress after his release from jail in 1936. Now he stressed the usefulness of the National Congress as an instrument in the struggle against imperialism. He wanted that all radicals should join the Congress and believed that the Congress itself must be transformed into the united front of the Indian people. He vigorously opposed all attempts to undermine the Congress, or to set up rival organisations and regarded any attempt to weaken the Congress or to lead the workers and peasantry away from the Congress, or to set up organisations rival to the Congress as counter-revolutionary. He was also opposed to the formation of any group or party within the Congress.

At this stage, Roy was of the opinion that all activities required for promoting the welfare of the peasantry, which constituted the overwhelming majority of India's population, were permissible inside the Congress organisation. Thus, according to him, there was no need to organise peasants separately, independent of the Congress.

The official Communists on the other hand condemned the Congress as a counter-revolutionary party of the Indian Capitalists. Consequently, their declared policy was to disrupt and destroy it. They opposed any participation of the workers and peasants in it. They stood for the formation of a new
revolutionary mass organisation on the ruins of the Congress. Down-right thorough-going opposition and hostility to the Congress was their motto.\textsuperscript{82}

It is observed that in the earlier phase of his thought, Roy had advocated the formation of progressive and revolutionary parties within the Congress with a view to capture its leadership. However, now he gave up that idea. One of the reasons which led to this change in Roy's views was that he began to realise the potentiality of Congress to develop into a revolutionary party and stood for its transformation into an effective national revolutionary party by larger and more active participation of the masses, so he laid emphasis on work inside the Congress.\textsuperscript{83}

Roy appreciated National Congress for its broad social basis, and tremendous influence upon the masses. He argued that National Congress was a movement embracing a variety of classes and sub-classes. It was not the political party only of the bourgeoisie as regarded by the official Communists. According to him, for a proper understanding of the character of National Congress, it was necessary to distinguish between the objectively revolutionary rank and file and the subjectively anti-revolutionary leadership of the Congress.\textsuperscript{84}

He said that the National Congress offered the rallying ground to the oppressed and exploited classes in their struggle against imperialism. It commanded the confidence of the masses. It was a movement which expressed the highest degree of political consciousness of the masses.\textsuperscript{85}

However, Roy argued, that National Congress was not a homogeneous political party. The leadership of the Congress was not the Congress. There was contradiction between the present leadership, which was under the influence of the anti-revolutionary bourgeoisie, and the Congress as a movement. He highlighted the necessity of supplying a new leadership—an alternative revolutionary leadership—to the Congress movement. He said, "There is social basis for an alternative radical democratic leadership to replace the present outfit."
The rise of such a leadership is necessary for the next stage of the revolution."86 He argued that the way of the liberation of the Congress from the bourgeois influence and its consequent conversion into a militant mass organisation was the overthrow of the Gandhist leadership and its replacement by a radical democratic leadership. Roy argued that the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, in collaboration with the proletariat, could provide the necessary alternative leadership.87

The main consideration that led Roy to change his views towards the Congress was its organisational structure. He was very much impressed by the countrywide net of primary committees built up by it. These committees, he believed, could be used as the basic units of the future democratic state of India. He said, “Local Congress Committees in a revolutionary crisis can function as instruments of mass uprisings and become the basic units of the revolutionary state.”88

In order to use the Congress Committees for this revolutionary purpose Roy tried to bring the Congress movement under the revolutionary leadership instead of forming groups or parties within it. Roy wanted the Congress to become a pyramidal structure raised on the broad base of a countrywide net of primary committees which, by viture of systematic day to day activity, would assume the character of really democratic local self-governments, the most reliable basic units of a powerful democratic State.89

He wanted the Congress to assume the function of the Constituent Assembly. Roy argued that only a Constituent Assembly elected by the people of India could have the right to frame the constitution of the Government of India. According to Roy, the Constituent Assembly must precede the act of capturing power. It would be the instrument through which the people would capture power.90 In this context Roy highlighted the supreme importance of the Congress organisation, and specially of the primary Congress Committees.91

He argued that for the purpose of capturing political power, the people of
India must have a suitable instrument. According to him, a condition for the seizure of power by the people of India was the creation, within the established State, of an organisation, which was competent to take over the State power. Roy said, “The Congress organisation is the framework of such a State within the established State.”

However, Roy wanted the Congress to be democratised, in order to have behind it the sanction necessary to assume the function of the Constituent Assembly. For that, according to him, it was necessary to realise the supreme importance of primary Congress Committees and to democratise and activise them. He argued that the demand for Constituent Assembly must be given a new formulation—“All power to the primary Congress Committees!” Thus Roy asserted that “everything that serves the purpose of activising and democratising the primary Congress Committees, must be encouraged and regarded as of revolutionary significance.”

Roy gave certain suggestions to strengthen the Congress and to solve some of its organisational problems. He pointed that there was too much of authoritarian, non-democratic centralisation in Congress amounting to virtual dictatorship. This, according to him, “not only reduces the open session of the Congress to a periodical political demonstration and the A.I.C.C. to a mock-parliament; it deprives the lower Congress Committees of all political significance and has been lately transforming them into electoral machineries.”

Roy was of the opinion that no organisation could have a stable structure if it was built on a foundation of sand. According to him, the ordinary membership of the Congress was politically illiterate and bogus to an increasing extent. He suggested that the bogus membership could be easily eliminated. He argued that regular periodical membership meetings and some specified day to day activity on the part of each and every member of the Congress would go a long way to eradicate the evil.
Roy also suggested certain changes in the electoral system of the Congress to make it more representative. He supported 'indirect election' and 'proportional representation'. He believed that the introduction of 'indirect election' would put an end to all the factional fights that were paralysing the political life of the Congress. And 'proportional representation' would provide the guarantee against the suppression of minority opinion.\(^{97}\) He argued, "Under the system of indirect election, the delegation to the Congress, and membership of the Committees will depend upon propagandist and political work among the rank and file. Enrolment of bogus or political illiterate members will no longer serve the purpose. Eventually the leadership will belong to those who will put in the largest amount of solid constructive work and thereby command the confidence of the rank and file."\(^{98}\)

Roy's differences with the Congress arose soon after the Tripuri Congress which was held on 10-12 March 1939. After the leftists' challenge to the Gandhian group failed at Tripuri, the 'League of Radical Congressmen' (LRC) was formed to bring about a change in the Congress leadership from below.

Immediately after the Congress session was over, a meeting of the Royists was held at Tripuri where they decided to form the league and to issue a manifesto explaining its nature and objectives.\(^{99}\) It is observed that when Roy joined the Congress in 1936 he was opposed to the formation of any group or party within the Congress and asked his followers to work simply as Congressmen. Though the formation of the LRC was certainly a deviation from that principle, Roy still sought to maintain that stand as far as possible. Referring to the Tripuri meeting of the Royists where they decided to form the LRC, Roy said in a statement: "The consensus of opinion was that while categorically rejecting the tendency of forming parties inside the Congress, those opposed to the present policy and the Gandhian leadership of the Congress must conduct
their activity in a co-ordinated manner. The suggestion for the formation of a League of Radical Congressmen was generally welcomed as a step in that direction.**100 In that statement Roy described the proposed LRC as a “non party left wing inside the Congress.”**101

Talking about the LRC Roy said, “This particular group obviously does not represent any centrifugal tendency. It is a group of loyal Congressmen who earnestly wish to strengthen the organisation to which they belong.”**102 He added, “When it criticises the policy of the present leadership, and suggests the necessity of an alternative leadership, thereby meaning a change of the policy, not necessarily the personnel, it should not be accused of ‘bidding for power.’”**103

All the basic ideas of Roy propagated by him since his release from jail—alternative leadership, uncompromising struggle against imperialism, democratization of the Congress, activization of its primary committees, adoption of a concrete programme of democratic revolution, policy of revolutionary parliamentarism and the formation of the Constituent Assembly—were summed up in the draft manifesto of LRC which was published in April 1939.**104

In a letter to the members of the A.I.C.C., dated 7th October, 1939, Roy said that the central point of the plan should be to train every single Congressman as a conscious revolutionary soldier of a mighty political army, as a prospective basic unit of the future Democratic State of India.**105

The Ramgarh Session held in March 1940, was the last Congress session attended by Roy. Serious differences emerged between Roy and Congress during that session. In subjects Committee meeting at Ramgarh Roy explained his views on the Constituent Assembly, which he said, would be elected by the Local ‘People’s Councils’ formed throughout the country challenging the British authority directly. Rajendra Prasad, who presided over the meeting, criticized in his speech the Royist Programme of the Constituent Assembly and said that the
Congress was wedded to the Constructive programme of Gandhi as the best means to attain Swaraj. Gandhi proposed to turn every Congress committee into a Satyagraha Committee in order to prepare the country for a new civil disobedience movement. When the Congress leadership took steps for converting the character of the Congress Committee according to Gandhi’s proposal, the members of the LRC found themselves in an embarrassing position.¹⁰⁶

When Roy joined the Congress he felt that the potentialities of the Congress were twofold. It could develop into a revolutionary political party, and it could also supply the framework of the new state.

Roy wanted to create a revolutionary party of the Indian people. He believed that for the development and success of the Indian Revolution, a certain type of political party was necessary. He discovered that a considerable section of the masses destined to go into the making of that party were partially mobilised in the Congress. Therefore, he joined the Congress. He appreciated the Congress, as it was a mass movement, and believed that being a mass movement, the tendency of its growing into a political party was inherent in it.

The immediate object of Roy’s work in the Congress was “to raise the political level of the rank and file, to radicalise and activise them progressively.”¹⁰⁷ He hoped that in course of time, the defects existing in the Congress would be eliminated and the masses mobilised under the banner of Congress, would be crystallized in a revolutionary political party.

However, it is observed that with the passage of time, Roy became disillusioned with the functioning of the Congress. By examining his views as expressed in 1940, it becomes clear that he by now came to realize that the task of mobilising the masses in a revolutionary struggle was not possible within the organizational framework of the Congress.
By experience Roy realised that his desire was not shared by the leadership of the Congress, which was reactionary in nature, and which formed the organisational machinery of the Congress. It was so because the existing leadership of the Congress thrived on the political backwardness of the masses. Thus the organisation and consciousness of the masses could be a danger for the reactionary leadership, because if the masses would be organised there could be a pressure for the democratic control of the Congress and its policy. To quote Roy, "The crystallisation of the reactionary elements as the machinery of the Congress makes it impossible for the revolutionary forces to organise themselves into a political party within the Congress."^108

Thus the organisational machinery of the Congress, according to Roy, served the purpose of checking all revolutionary development. He said, "To-day, the Congress is identified with a definitely anti-revolutionary organisation. The organisation functions as a powerful apparatus, checking the revolutionary urge of its own components."^109 The problem was aggravated, according to Roy, by the fact that masses incorporated in the Congress, because of their political backwardness, were completely controlled by the organisational machinery. He said, "To-day, whatever exists of the mass movement, is an adjunct to this machinery, completely controlled by it. You cannot have any access to this movement without the permission of this machinery."^110 He further said that experience had shown that organisational machinery could not be removed constitutionally.

Thus Roy came to the conclusion that it was not possible to transform the Congress as such into a revolutionary people's party. He argued that under such circumstances, it would become necessary to part company with the Congress machinery in order to fulfil the object of organising a revolutionary party of the people. To quote him, "But the split is inevitable. It is a condition for the attainment of our object of organising a revolutionary party of the people. Sooner
When Roy joined Congress, he was quite optimistic about the role which could be played by the Congress Committees. However, Roy learned with experience that the Congress Committees could no longer become the organs of popular power and that no revolutionary political propaganda, or revolutionary struggle could be conducted through them. In 1940 he said, “The Congress Committees have practically ceased to be what we thought they were or could have been. They are no longer the local organs of struggle. They are not representatives of the local population.”

He added, “The men who control the Congress Committees need not have the confidence of the local people. They rely upon the patronage from above. That enables them to function as leaders of the local Congress organisations. Therefore, the Congress Committees have ceased to be popular organs.”

Roy now felt that the slogan “All power to the Congress Committees” must be abandoned. Instead he introduced the idea of People’s Councils. He said, “People’s Councils will be a continuation of our programme of building up the local Congress Committees as the units of a Democratic State.”

He said that People’s Councils would also represent those sections of the people who were not in the Congress, therefore, the propaganda for the organisation of People’s Councils could not be carried on through Congress. Now he believed that greater importance should be given to work among the masses outside the Congress.

Roy now began to think in terms of the formation of a new party. He said, “As long as there was a possibility of developing the Congress into a people’s party, it was correct tactics on the part of the leftists to make it popular with the masses. But once it became clear that the Congress could not be freed from the control of National-Capitalism and other more reactionary interests, it was no longer permissible for the leftists to act as the political link between the
Congress and the masses."^{116}

It was on the issue of the Second World War that differences of grave nature arose between Roy and the Congress. Roy decided to support the war against Nazi Germany without any condition.^{117} This attitude brought Roy and his group of League of Radical Congressmen in direct conflict with the Congress policy towards the war. The policy of the Congress towards the war was that in spite of its sympathy for the victims of Fascism it could not support the war unless the independence of India was assured by Britain.^{118}

Roy was opposed to this policy of Congress and he advocated unconditional support to the anti-fascist war. He said, "If the present policy of the Congress will be carried on to its logical consequence, it will mean a virtual support to Fascism. And as far as it depends on me, I shall not tolerate that."^{119} These differences ultimately led to his break with the Congress and the formation of an independent party by Roy—the Radical Democratic Party in December 1940—outside the Congress and in direct opposition to it.

After taking up a discussion on Roy’s views on National Congress it would be desirable to examine his ideas on Gandhi and Gandhism. It is observed that during this period, and especially in the 1930’s, Roy criticized mainly Gandhian theory of non-violence.

According to him, non-violence provided the metaphysical moral justification for conservative reactionary outlook of Gandhism. Roy argued that Gandhi’s doctrine of non-violence was opposed to all change and progress. It would lead to stagnation in society. To quote Roy, "No change is possible without the application of force. Violence is inherent in life. Life is a chain of changes. Without change, life becomes a stagnant pool. Gandhiji’s non-violence will mean cessation of the operation of life."^{120}

Roy argued that Gandhi’s non-violence had been the greatest check upon
the operation of forces which alone could free India if she was ever to be free. He believed that the success of the doctrine of non-violence could only mean permanent slavery of the Indian people. He argued that if India wanted to be free, she would have to go through revolution. So nationalism should be inspired with the philosophy of revolution. On the other hand Gandhi’s doctrine of non-violence was counter-revolutionary in nature. Thus according to Roy, “Nationalism must outgrow Gandhism, before it can succeed.”

Roy further said that by preaching the doctrine of non-violence Gandhi tried to defend the social status quo. He argued that Gandhi himself admitted that the relation between capital and labour in the existing society was a relation of violence. The capitalist could compel the workingmen to accept any rate of wages simply because he was in a position to starve the workers if they did not accept his terms. To talk of non-violence under such conditions, according to Roy, was to condone the practice of violence which was the rule in the existing society.

Roy believed that the pseudo-moral doctrine of non-violence was a convenient cover for cowardice. Non-violence meant absolute submission of the masses to the established order of oppression and exploitation. According to him the cult of non-violence was exactly the opposite of what it appeared to be. It offered a direct aid to violence in practice. To quote him, “Every form of class-ridden society is maintained by indirect violence. Therefore, those who preach non-violence, to be scrupulously observed at all cost by the exploited and oppressed masses, are defenders of violence in practice.”

Roy argued that there was a logical connection between Gandhism and Fascism. To quote him, “As a social philosophy Gandhism is incipient Fascism, notwithstanding its moral dogmas and spiritualism.” He said that Gandhi had declared his determination to defend the princes and landlords if any attempt was made to confiscate their property by using violence. This according to Roy was the essence of Fascism, which tried to defend the established order of class
Roy added that Gandhism was also akin to Fascism as both of them gave precedence to nation over class and subordinated class interest to national interest. Both Gandhism and fascism advocated class collaboration. However, according to Roy, class collaboration could not be peacefully realised. As it meant violent suppression of the efforts of the toiling masses to liberate themselves from the system of exploitation. Class collaboration meant stabilization of class domination, which required violence exercised by the dominating class. Gandhian ideal of class collaboration involved violence. Thus Roy argued that Gandhi's cult of non-violence was hypocritical and it supported actual violence.

Roy accused Gandhi of criticizing machine and technology. Roy appraised the modern means of production. He said that with the rise of modern technology mankind entered into the state of advancement and progress. He contended that before the machine age the majority of people lived a life hardly above the level of animal existence. They had to devote their entire time and energy only in producing the means of physical existence. They had no time for leisure. Having no leisure they could not develop the finer aspects of life. However, according to Roy, the development of machinery and technology had helped man in saving his time, which could be utilized in developing the finer aspects of his life. Roy wrote, "Machine frees man from age-long drudgery, which continues throughout the epoch of savagery and barbarism and opens up before humanity as a whole avenues of an allround cultural progress and real spiritual elevation." Roy said that machine in itself was not faulty but capitalism had made man the slave of machine. "Under capitalism man is enslaved, not by the machine, but by the accident of the private ownership of the machine." However, Roy argued that Gandhism was shocked so much by the vulgarities and cruelties of what was called the machine civilization that it
proposes to throw the baby away with the bath water, it comes to the conclusion that man cannot be freed from this monster unless he returns to simple living and primitive mode of production.”

On the 70th anniversary of Gandhi’s birth Roy gave credit to Gandhi for mobilising the Indian masses in the struggle for freedom. He argued that Gandhi was successful in this task while others failed, because he spoke in the language of the masses.

However, Roy argued that Gandhism was not a co-ordinated system of thought. Their was little of philosophy in it. What Gandhi primarily preached was religion. According to Roy, as the bulk of Indian people were culturally backward and steeped in religious superstitions, Gandhism appealed to them. Thus Roy regarded Gandhi as the embodiment of Indian backwardness and obscurantism. He said that political backwardness and ignorance of the masses was the foundation of Gandhi’s popularity. To quote him, “The mediaeval mentality of the culturally backward masses makes them easy victims of the Gandhist propaganda.” He further said, “It is neither a philosopher nor a moralist who has become the idol of the Indian people. The masses pay their homage to a Mahatma--a source of revealed wisdom and agency of super-natural power. The social basis of Gandhism is cultural backwardness; its intellectual mainstay superstition.”

Thus it is observed that Roy continued to criticize Gandhi. He went to the extent of equating Gandhism with Fascism. Even after coming back to India, Roy was not able to understand the moral excellence of Gandhian doctrines nor the political significance of the Gandhian strategy. He could not realise that class-collaboration and non-violence advocated by Gandhi were politically necessary for united struggle of the Indian people against alien rule. He ignored the strategic significance of Gandhism and thus he could not make a correct analysis of the Gandhian philosophy. Therefore, all his attempts to undermine the
influence of Gandhism in Indian politics failed.

Writings of M.N. Roy, particularly after his release from jail, reveal that now he no longer understood Marxism in a narrow dogmatic sense. Writing in 1938 he said that we should appreciate Marxism as a system of rationalist, materialist thought rather than a bunch of dogmas. He said that Marxism was distinguished from other philosophies in as much as it was not a closed system of thought. He further said, “Marxism is a philosophy, but it is not a body of doctrines, it is not a bunch of dogmas. It is a method.”

Explaining Marxism, Roy said that what was called Marxism was not revealed wisdom. The teachings of Karl Marx were not the products of the mind of one individual. According to him, the historical significance and value “of the teachings of Karl Marx is to be found in the fact that they are a co-ordination, a systematisation and a clear scientific presentation of the entire product of human thought and human activity during the three or four hundred years which preceded the time of Karl Marx.” He argued that Marxism was the outcome of the Renaissance movement in Europe and rationalism was its foundation. He added that the philosophy known as Marxism was the logical outcome of the scientific mode of thought, the essence of which was not to accept anything without proof.

Roy said, “Marxism is Realism. It is a Rational approach in everything. It is the rejection of all faith, even in Marxism. If we are true Marxists, we must have the courage to submit every single sentence written, even by Marx himself, to a scrutiny in the light of the discoveries of modern science made since then.”

Thus it is observed that towards the end of the 1930’s Roy did not understand Marxism in a narrow sense. He gave a broader interpretation to Marxism and believed that Marxism implied rational approach to everything. Moreover, he argued during this period that the teachings of Marx should be
adjusted, revised, or changed if the developments of science or knowledge so required.

Roy said that Marxism knew no final and absolute truth. Regarding experience as the only source of knowledge and truth, it was bound to adjust itself, continuously to unforeseen events and changing circumstances. Holding that thought was determined by being, Marxism admitted not only the possibility, but necessity of self-development.

To quote him, "Marxism does not know any finality. Therefore, it is not necessary for us even to abide by the letters of what Marx has written. By applying the method which is the essence of Marxism, it will be perfectly legitimate for us, nay, it will be the duty of every Marxist, to elaborate, amplify and even revise the teachings of Marx in the light of the knowledge of modern science, which was not available at the time of Karl Marx." He further said that human knowledge did not stop growing since the three volumes of *Capital* were written. Since Karl Marx wrote, human knowledge had progressed and if that knowledge demanded that certain modifications should be made in the teachings of Marx, then it became the duty of a good Marxist to have the courage to do so.

He added, "By quoting scriptures, I can also prove that revision of Marxism is inherent in Marxism. Anybody who says that Marxism must not be revised is anti-Marxist. The distinguishing feature of Marxism is its dynamic nature. It is pragmatic and empiricist. It says that ideas are determined by experience; and Marx did not say that all human experience and knowledge came to a stop in 1851."

Thus, Roy made a distinction between Marxism as a method and Marxism as a set of specific formulas or doctrines. As a method, Marxism, according to Roy, was a way of thinking and its fundamental principle was that consciousness was determined by existence. This Marxian method, he said, had
a permanent and abiding value and held good for all times and under all circumstances. As such it was applicable to the problems of all ages. But unlike the Marxist method, according to Roy, the formulas of Marxism or the peculiar prescriptions of Marxism may not be immutable, and may have to be changed from time to time. To quote him, “Marxism is not the final truth; even its fundamental principles should be from time to time re-examined in the light of empirical evidence and revised accordingly.” Thus Roy highlighted the necessity of “revising or even discarding certain formulas which are considered by orthodox Marxists to be part and parcel, even the very essence of Marxism.” For example Roy argued that there would be no room for dictatorship of the proletariat in the process of the development of Indian Revolution.

In the late 1930’s, Roy condemned the economic interpretation of history as a vulgar interpretation of Marxism. Instead of it, he argued that Marxism gave a materialist interpretation of history. However, according to him, “Materialism is not the cult of bread and butter. Marxism includes economic theories, political doctrines and a program of political action, because Marxism is a philosophy of life. As a philosophy of life, it must include every department of human activity.”

Roy tried to reconcile the creative role of man with the Marxist theory of history. In order to make human freedom compatible with the Marxist scheme of history he denied that history was reduced to an inevitable process by Karl Marx. He said, “Marxism knows no inevitability. The belief in inevitability is fatalism. Marxism knows only necessity. That which is determined takes place. But a thing or event is determined by a number of causes.”

He argued that the object of Marxian philosophy was not only to interpret the world but also to remake it. According to him in the Marxian philosophy man assumed the function of God. He asserted that Marx proved, “that man’s ideas,
beliefs and behaviours, his being and becoming were all determined by the environments of life. But at the same time man reacts on those environments and shapes them by his reactions.” He added, “the fundamental principle of Marx is that ideas are also realities.”

It is observed that Roy’s interpretation of Marxism during this period was muddle-headed. In the name of Marxism he expressed his own ideas, but they remained vague because of his attempt to integrate them with Marxism.

His interpretation of Marxism as the highest product of the rationalist trend of human thought was misleading. The Marxists did not believe that human ideas could be influenced by reason as such, apart from the economic interests of the class. The rationalist philosophy of the French Enlightenment, as for example, was to them “nothing more than the idealised kingdom of the bourgeoisie.”

Dictatorship of the proletariat which Roy discarded as a non-essential part of Marxism was considered by Marx himself as of paramount importance. Similarly by arguing that inevitability was unknown in Marxian philosophy, Roy went against the entire spirit of Marxist historiology. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote, “What the bourgeoisie, therefore produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable. Thus it can be argued that Roy’s interpretation of Marxism during this period was not free from errors.

During the 1940’s Roy shifted his position more and more away from orthodox Marxism and questioned certain fundamental principles of Marxism. He said, “Marxism as vulgarized by its orthodox exponents can no longer give us strong enough inspiration.” He added, “To rescue Marxism from the rut of orthodoxy—call it revision, if you please . . . has become a historical necessity.”

Roy argued that the orthodox protagonists of Marxism regarded it as the philosophy of proletariat. However, according to him it was a wrong and narrow
conception of Marxism. He said, "In my opinion, it is not a narrow philosophy of any particular class, but the quintessence of the entire process of human development." He added, "Marxism is the highest form human knowledge has attained so far. It is based on the accumulated store of human experience, gathered ever since the dawn of civilization. As such, it cannot be the property of any particular class. It is a human heritage. It is the highest form of philosophy."  

Roy said that according to orthodox Marxism, class antagonism had been the spring of all progress throughout history. It was believed that Communism would establish a classless society. Thereupon, class antagonism would disappear. Roy argued that "there is an obvious corollary to the assumption: with the disappearance of class antagonism the spring of progress will dry out, and the wagon of history get stuck in the morass of a utopia. It is a utopia, because there is no reason to believe that history is heading towards the disappearance of humanity."  

Roy added that the orthodox Marxists talked of class antagonism. It was argued that the history of human society was the history of class struggle. However, according to Roy, there was another side to the picture, which was the cohesive force in society. Without that force, human society would have broken down long ago and there would have been no evolution of civilization. Roy argued that there was some social interest which bound classes together. He said that Capitalism grew out of the exploitation of labour, but at the same time, capitalist economy raised the entire society on a higher level. And in so far as the working class was a part of society, in spite of all antagonism and exploitation, in the beginning its interest was identical with that of the capitalists.  

Roy argued that Marxism was wrong as regards to the role of the middle class in the capitalist society. He said that according to Marxism the middle class would disappear in the course of time. However, according to Roy, the facts
were to the contrary. The intellectual and political importance of the middle class had proved to be decisive after the First World War and could not be easily ignored. To quote Roy, "The concentration of the ownership of the means of production in fewer hands necessarily enlarged the middle class ... they remain a distinct social factor capable of influencing events. As a matter of fact, between capital, and labour, the middle class numerically grows, potentially as an enemy of the status quo."\textsuperscript{157}

Roy also drifted away from orthodox Marxism by asserting that the maturity of the objective conditions was not sufficient for the development and success of a revolution. He said, "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 absence of such a group of people revolution is not only inevitable, but even when it is necessary, it does not take place."\textsuperscript{158} Roy argued that the subjective factor, represented by the will power and the leadership of the movement played a decisive role in the development and success of a revolution. To quote him, "The most important and decisive factor in a revolution is the subjective factor. All the learned talk about objective conditions is but a convenient way of shirking one's responsibility of creating the subjective factor."\textsuperscript{159}

Roy asserted that "revolution can no longer take place under the banner of Communism, and that Marxism as vulgarised by its orthodox exponents can no longer give us strong enough inspiration. We shall have to set up higher ideals and find a nobler philosophy of life."\textsuperscript{160}

Roy argued that in the conditions of post-war Europe, the necessity for a revolution was felt by the majority of the population. Therefore, a minority
rising in revolt and establishing a revolutionary dictatorship was no longer necessary. To quote him, "If revolutions take place of necessity, if they are historically necessary, then the necessity must be realised not only by the proletariat, but by a much larger section of society." He indicated that the new way of revolution was to be brought about not by the proletariat under the leadership of its party, but by the great bulk of the people, comprising many classes.

In the ‘Second Political Study Camp’ held at Dehradun in 1946, Roy highlighted certain fallacies in the theoretical presuppositions of orthodox Marxism. Roy said that it was a theoretical preposition of Marxism that the abolition of private ownership of means of production would make possible the attainment of freedom as it would end economic disabilities and inequalities resulting from the system of the exploitation of man by man. However, according to Roy, it was not so simple as that. He added that just as industrialization by itself did not mean economic prosperity for the entire people of a particular country, similarly, abolition of private ownership did not predetermine the establishment of common ownership. That fallacy of a theoretical presupposition of Marxism had been exposed by practice in Soviet Union.

The Marxist concept of surplus value was also critically examined by Roy. He maintained that the theory that production of surplus value was the specific feature of Capitalism and represented exploitation of the working class, was the fundamental fallacy not only of Marxist economics, but of the entire philosophy of revolution. Roy argued that it was not the peculiarity of the capitalist system that the producer did not receive the full value of his labour. In fact, the social progress, according to Roy since the dawn of history, had been conditional upon the fact that the entire product, at any time, of the labour of the community was not consumed. The margin according to Roy could be called social surplus.
Roy regarded the social surplus as the lever of all progress. He said what was called surplus value in Marxist economic language was the social surplus produced under Capitalism. According to him, the practice of surplus production had been as old as the society and it was the real source of all social development. Had it been not there from the beginning of human society, civilization would have never come out of the state of savagery. Roy argued, "Economically, a demand for the abolition of surplus value will be impractical, indeed suicidal. Social surplus will disappear if production of surplus value is ever stopped; then, with the disappearance of the lever of progress, society will stagnate and eventually break down."

Roy said that ignoring the fact that production of social surplus represented exploitation of labour, in the sense that the producer did not get the full value of his labour and disregarding the consideration that surplus must be produced in any economic system, if it was not to stagnate, Marx held that under Capitalism production of surplus value represented exploitation of labour because it was appropriated by one class. Roy added that as a corollary to that fallacious view, Marx demanded that the class appropriation of social surplus should stop to end exploitation of man by man.

Roy admitted the necessity of ending appropriation of social surplus by one particular class. However, he argued that the sanction for such a demand was moral and not economic. It was demanded for social justice which could not be derived from the Marxist scheme of revolution.

Roy justified his argument by saying that it was "implicitly admitted in Marxism that even under the socialist economic system social surplus will be produced; and it is explicitly demanded that for the establishment of socialism, the expropriator should be expropriated by the proletariat." This meant that the social surplus would be appropriated by the new ruling class, i.e., the proletariat in the socialist society, till the advent of the utopia of the classless and stateless
Roy further argued that surplus value was produced in the socialist economy of Russia and concluded that “If production of surplus value represented 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.”

Roy argued that “The experience of the Soviet Union compels us to examine some of our economic dogmas, and to come to the conclusion that there are certain fallacies in Marxian economics, the blind acceptance of which could, therefore, no longer be considered as the guide to revolutionary practice.”

According to Roy, the Russian experience also challenged another assumption of Marxism, which was that proletarian dictatorship was only a transition towards socialism. He argued that though it was claimed that the bourgeoisie had been liquidated and a classless society had been established in Soviet Union, still there was the continuation of dictatorship. He said, “Once a State is established, it becomes a vested interest. Power is not voluntarily transferred. The pattern of Marxist theory does not provide for any transfer of power.” He added that once the proletariat captured power, it also wanted to keep it in its own hand. Thus proletarian dictatorship was bound to establish the rule of another class. Roy argued that it appeared that proletarian dictatorship would be a permanent feature and it would never wither away. He raised the question, “Is economic democracy possible in the absence of political democracy anymore than when the position is the reverse?”

Roy said that it had also been asserted that the withering away of the state was a fundamental tenet of Marxism. He argued, “Here is something worse than a fallacy; it is an absurdity. The state is the political organisation of society. It can never disappear unless human society will revert to the state of savagery.”

Roy asked, since state was the political organisation of society, how could
communist society cease to be politically organised? According to him, "A highly complicated industrial society must have a highly complicated political organisation. Therefore, a state must be there." Roy asserted that one had to be a day-dreamer to hold on the dogma of the withering away of the state. He raised a serious question and asked, "Is it possible for any government, not to mention a dictatorship, be it of a class or any other kind, or even of a hypothetical classless or super class dictatorship, ever to divest itself of power voluntarily and wither away?" According to him, the State was getting stronger in Soviet Union day by day. Thus he said, "The Russian experience calls for a revision also of the fundamental political principles of Marxism."

During this period, Roy can be called a critical Marxist. While rejecting the fallacious doctrines of orthodox Marxism, he admitted that he still accepted the positive contributions of Marxism, in so far as they were not contradicted by subsequent social experience and scientific knowledge.

While talking about the application of Marxism to Indian society Roy said that, although chronologically Indians were living in the twentieth century, in the scheme of social history they were living partly in the eighteenth and partly in the seventeenth and partly even in earlier centuries.

However, Roy said that Marxism was formulated in the nineteenth century. Thus Indians were living in a pre-Marxian period. Thus, he said, "Our task is to apply Marxism to problems which were the specific features of pre-Marxian period." He further said that “it should be possible for us to operate as Marxists in a pre-Marxian social environment.”

He said that the fundamental principle of Marxism as a philosophy was that being preceded consciousness. Our being was not determined by consciousness but our consciousness was determined by our being. According to Marxism our mental equipment resulted from our being, which included our experience. Roy argued that once Marxism was appreciated in that way, it
became evident that it was not limited by time. And all the problems belonging chronologically to the so-called pre-Marxian ages could be subjected to Marxian practice.\(^\text{182}\)

He talked of applying Marxism to Indian conditions and adjusting it in accordance with those particular conditions. He said, “We have our being in a peculiar set of circumstances. Our political consciousness and behaviour will be determined by these peculiar features of our social being. Necessarily, our thinking process, our ideology, also must be very largely influenced thereby. And we shall be able to contribute to an amplification, enrichment, of Marxism which is not a closed system of philosophy . . . and therefore must adjust itself to new lessons acquired from experience.”\(^\text{183}\)

According to Roy, there was a large feudal element in the Indian national economy. Imperialist exploitation rested on the basis of feudal relations. Thus, the task of the impending revolution in India was the liquidation of feudalism, so that the process of economic development creating conditions for the establishment of Socialism may take place freely. Roy argued that India needed bourgeois democratic revolution which would lead to the overthrow of feudal social order.\(^\text{184}\)

He further said that “an orthodox exposition of Marxism of the Anglo-Saxon or German or Russian variety will not help us.”\(^\text{185}\) He added, “If we wish to find a historical analogy to the task set to ourselves, we should fix upon neither the Russian Revolution nor any other revolution of our time. We shall have to go further back and find our prototype in the Jacobins of the French Revolution.”\(^\text{186}\)

Roy said that the leading cadre of the revolutionary party of India would come from the class analogous to that of the Jacobins (the petit-bourgeoisie) in the French Revolution. The Jacobins carried through the bourgeois revolution in the teeth of the opposition of the bourgeoisie. The representatives of the
bourgeoisie, who had heralded the revolution, went over to the camp of counter-revolution and the Jacobins carried it through against the feudal aristocracy as well as the big bourgeoisie. He said, "The relation of classes in contemporary India is somewhat analogous."\textsuperscript{187}

Roy suggested that the ideology of the party which was to lead the Indian revolution, should be named Twentieth Century Jacobinism. To quote him, "Marxist theory applied in practice to the problems of the bourgeois democratic revolution, is Jacobinism. Therefore, Marxism applied to the social problems of the seventeenth and eighteenth century to be solved in the atmosphere of the twentieth century can be called Twentieth Century Jacobinism."\textsuperscript{188}

Thus it is observed that during the 1940's, Roy departed away from orthodox Marxism. He took particular care to differentiate his Marxism from a narrow conception of Marxism. He tried to move away from Marxist dogmatism and tried to base his Marxism on rational and critical thinking. Differentiating his approach from orthodox Marxists, he said, "Our Marxism is bigger, broader and more comprehensive than theirs."\textsuperscript{189}

The researcher is of the opinion that a number of factors were responsible for this shift in Roy's position. It can be argued that Roy's expulsion from the Communist International enabled him to think in a more independent and rational manner because now he was no longer bound to comply with the instructions of the Communist International. He started critically examining the various tenets of Marxism on the basis of reason, which made him realize the dire need of certain changes in the orthodox Marxism.

His interpretation of Marxism was also influenced by the development of Communism in Russia. His disillusionment with the actual political and economic practice in Russia made him question the validity of some of the fundamental theoretical principles of Marxism.
Moreover, Roy's experiences of the Indian situation also made him realise that Marxism as such, in its orthodox sense, could not be applied to the Indian conditions. He realised the necessity of adjusting and modifying Marxism in accordance with the conditions prevailing in India. These reasons prompted Roy to reject certain principles of Marxism.

In the 'Second Political Study Camp', in 1946, Roy also criticized Communism. Differentiating between Marxism and communism, he said, "Marxism is a philosophy and Communism is a political practice." He said, "So long as Communism was still an unattainable ideal, we could only cherish it and believe in its promises; we had no chance of examining its practical validity. Once the ideal is realised, we can no longer believe blindly; we must face the reality and have the courage to tell the truth about it. Has the ideal turned out as expected? Has it yielded the promised result?" He argued that communism was now practised in the Soviet Union, so we could examine it and see whether it was really what we wanted?

Criticizing communism, Roy said that many of those who had cherished and worked for communism for years, seemed to be disillusioned by the conditions of Soviet Union. He added that communists claimed that Marxism was their philosophy. But, according to Roy, as the political practice of communism ceased to be controlled or guided by the fundamental principles of Marxist philosophy, it became rank opportunism. That had been the case with communist practice during the recent years.

He said, "Marxism is antithetical to any dictatorship. Yet proletarian dictatorship is supposed to be the only way to Communism! Evidently, the political practice of Communism has broken away from the anchorage of the Marxist philosophy. Communism as it is preached and practised today is not Marxism. It is un-Marxist, anti-Marxist." Roy argued that we must discard the fallacious doctrine that negation of democracy (dictatorship) will lead to a
Roy added that communism did not recognise the individual. His very existence was ruled out as an abstraction. Its theory was that the individual existed only as a part of the collectivity. With that theory, communism broke away from its philosophical anchorage. According to him, such a view was not consistent with the fundamental philosophical principle of Marxism, namely, being determines consciousness.

He said that communism had degenerated into nationalism. "Having degenerated into Nationalism, it has ceased to be communism. It has ceased to be an ideal for people who look beyond national rivalries and jealousies, towards an order of human brotherhood and commonwealth. Since Communism can no longer provide that ideal, it has ceased to be the banner of revolution."

Comparing communism with fascism, Roy said that both stood for collectivism. The communist collective ego was the proletariat class and the fascist collective ego was the nation. Both sacrificed the individual on the altar of the collective ego. Both were totalitarian in nature. So, Roy believed that the dividing line between fascism and a decadent communism was very thin.

He further said that "the utopia of Communism promises only death. In a classless society, dialectics will cease to operate; history will come to a standstill and humanity will die out. This brand of what is called orthodox Communism or Marxism does not open up a vista of unlimited progress and freedom. It tells us that on such and such a day the world is going to die. I do not believe in horoscopes, not even if it were cast by Marx himself."

Roy argued that the ideal of every progressive human being was freedom. It was hoped that communism would achieve freedom. However, according to Roy, that did not prove to be true. He contended that, "It is now a matter of experience that communism in practice creates a new status quo, under
which the human individual has precious little freedom. Therefore, if freedom is the ideal of human life, we must look beyond Communism." Thus Roy contended that communism had ceased to be an ideal which could inspire us and guide our steps in the march towards freedom. Roy concluded that he wanted to save Marxist philosophy by dissociating it from decadent communism. Only then it could be placed in the proper historical perspective and fully appreciated.

Once a full blooded nationalist, Roy on the outbreak of Second World War realised the deficiencies and contradictions of nationalism. In his book, Nationalism: An Antiquated Cult, Roy criticized nationalism as old, parochial, selfish, negative and narrow minded. He stated that nationalism stood for revivalism. He said that one could not look forward without losing the sight of nationalist isolation and without visualising the possibility of national boundaries disappearing in order to make room for a universal human family. He considered nationalism as one of the greatest obstacles in the making of one world.

Roy felt that nationalism had lost its utility, and if it still existed, it would serve the forces of reaction as an antiquated cult. He wrote, “The fundamental defect of the antiquated nationalism of our time is its purely negative character. This character inevitably makes it a reactionary movement, practically in every sense. And its reactionary outlook upon social and cultural matters prevents it from releasing the revolutionary energy of the people, which alone can conquer its political goal.” So, according to Roy, nationalism was a reactionary or revivalist force.

He argued that there was a time when nationalism was a historic necessity, and human progress took place under the banner of nationalism. But in course of time, the aspirations of different nations conflicted with each other, and the consequence was that nations with their respective conflicting ambitions plunged the world into periodical wars. Roy felt that if the humanity wanted to
progress it would have to transcend national boundaries. He felt that human progress could not be made within national boundaries.

According to Roy, freedom was not necessarily identical with nationalism. He observed that, "a National State is not necessarily a democratic State," and that national freedom was not identical with democratic freedom. He stated that "Indian nationalism to-day contradicts itself. It is running the risk of defeating its own end, if that end is visualized positively as freedom for the Indian people, and not negatively as the disappearance of British imperialism." Roy said that past experience had shown that no colonial country had attained freedom under the banner of nationalism. He contended that nationalism would not lead to the political freedom of the Indian people. By political freedom he meant that "effective political power will be vested in the masses of the people."

Moreover, Roy argued that so long as the people were not given equal opportunities in the economic life, political right was only a legal fiction. Freedom in so far as the majority was concerned, ceased to be a purely political conception; it was conceived as the liberation of the toiling majority from economic exploitation and social subjugation. According to him real freedom was the freedom from poverty and the fear of starvation. He wrote, "A political regime which does not guarantee that freedom, be it 'nationalist' or imperialist, is an obstacle to freedom." He said the new conception of freedom necessarily transcended national boundaries, because its attainment presupposed efforts and co-operation on a larger field. The struggle for freedom was treated by him as an integral part of world freedom. He wrote, "The struggle for the freedom of any particular country cannot possibly succeed so long as the basic impulse of that struggle is characterised by an indifference for the welfare of the rest of the world."

Roy also criticized nationalism by aligning it with fascism. According to
him, fascism in effect was the highest form of nationalism. He believed that there was a spiritual affinity between nationalism and fascism, the latter being only the most extravagant and aggressive form of the former. In Roy's opinion the conception of the idea of nation was a characteristic feature of fascism. The nation was identified with the state, which again was conceived as a metaphysical power. He argued that according to fascism, "The nation is not the sum total of all the entities,—individuals, classes and communities,—comprising it. It is more than all of them taken together, and the function of the latter is to contribute to the greatness of the nation at the cost of their respective interests. That exactly is the essence of nationalism, which also makes a cult of the nation which is regarded as an abstract, metaphysical, entity." Roy argued that this metaphysical concept of nationalism led to the suppression of the freedom of the vast majority of the nation. He said that power was captured by a small minority which happened to be in control of the national state. This small minority, according to Roy, exercised power in a dictatorial manner and thus led to the suppression of all freedom. He added that in the name of the promotion of national interest, endless sacrifices were demanded from the majority, which was left without any freedom or power. In this way rights were subordinated to duties which had to be performed for promoting national greatness. Roy said that these doctrines were common to fascism and nationalism—both being different expressions of the self-same cult.

It is observed that Roy has taken one-sided view of nationalism. The phenomenon of nationalism has brought in its wake both order and chaos, unity and disintegration, loyalty and enmity, and respect as well as disorder for law. However, Roy has highlighted only the darker side of nationalism.

D.C. Grover has rightly remarked that though nationalism has its unpleasant aspects, it appears to be a necessary stage in historical development. Roy failed to appreciate as to how India, disunited and subjected to foreign rule
could help in forging a broader cosmopolitan view. He failed to realise that the generation of some kind of national spirit was necessary to force the British to quit India.\footnote{213}

Roy also criticized fascism. Talking about fascism he said, “Fascism is not to be identified with the dictatorship, or lust for power, of any particular individual, nor with the wickedness of any clique, nor again with the aggressiveness of this or that nation. Fascism, is a social phenomenon. It is the symptom of a disease, the germs of which breed in the stagnant pool of an economic system which, once a lever of progress has now exhausted all its possibilities.”\footnote{214} Roy further maintained, “It is a world historical phenomenon, the spectre of which not only gravely endangers the present, but casts an ominous shadow on the future of entire humanity.”\footnote{215} He argued that fascism was not a platonic idea like cowhood or treehood or horsehood, for all actual cows or trees or horses to fit in. Fascism was a socio-political manifestation of our time and its pattern was determined by the peculiarities of the country in which it grew. German fascism was different from Indian fascism, and the fascism in the East-European countries was again different from both.\footnote{216}

In Roy’s opinion Western democracy and fascism were the manifestations of the same phenomenon in two different periods of history. He believed that parliamentary democracy was the political expression of capitalism in its period of prosperity and fascism was the expression of the same economic system in its period of decline. He wrote, “The creator of parliamentary democracy was also the promoter of Fascism in a later period of history. Fascism was created to replace parliamentary democracy when this no longer served the purpose of the creator. The creator was Capitalism.”\footnote{217} He described fascism as “the administration of the capitalist society in the period of decay.”\footnote{218}

Roy held the view that fascism was socio-economic reaction. He regarded it the last defense of capitalism. So long capitalism enjoyed a
prosperous state, it could give economic concessions in the form of higher wages to the workers and political concessions in the form of parliamentary democracy. But when capitalism fell in distress and became confronted with acute proletarian revolts, it could no longer afford those concessions and assumed blatantly dictatorial powers, thus giving rise to the monster of fascism.219

Roy found remarkable similarity between fascism and Hindu mysticism, which according to him represented a reaction against scientific views of life. He observed fascist philosophy beginning just where “Indian philosophy also claims to begin, beyond the reach of sense-perception, outside the ken of reason, beyond the radius of mind flies up in imagination to the dizzy attitude of metaphysical unrealities, to recognise them as absolute truth.”220 Roy was of the view that Nietzsche’s philosophy bore close resemblance with Hindu’s conception of karma, which emphasised the difference in size of the five fingers of the same hand when attention was drawn to the social inequality. This led to the moral approval of arbitrary power, and provided “metaphysical sanction for despotism and violence.”221 According to Roy the absence of the traditions of individual liberty in Indian culture was most conducive to the growth of fascism.

Roy argued that the most characteristic feature of the philosophy of fascism was the cult of Superman. He added that the Indian tradition of leadership was based on that authoritarian concept. The leader was considered infallible. Thus Indians had blind faith in Gandhi.222

Roy noticed a dangerous development in India, and argued that it was moving towards fascism and not freedom. He said, “The analysis of the Indian situation in the context of world events has brought us to the conclusion that the perspective of the Indian situation is dominated by the rise of fascism.”223

According to Roy Indian fascism would be cultural. It would be a cultural reaction. The cultural backwardness made the Indian masses superstitious, religiously inclined and given to blind faith. To quote him, “The tradition is the
foundation of Indian fascism... The foundation of Indian fascism is God, the belief in God: that everything is created by God." \(^{224}\)

He said that in order to succeed, fascism must have the support of the masses. However, in that sense, fascism had already succeeded in India, at least partially. The British Labour Government wanted to hand over power to the Congress because it appeared to have the support of the masses. However, the Congress had succeeded in gaining the support of the masses, by taking the advantage of the cultural backwardness of the masses. He said, "The Congress, with its Mahatma, has made political capital out of that factor to secure the support of the masses." \(^{225}\) Congress, according to Roy, had secured the support of the masses, not by advocating a programme of the welfare of the masses, but by demagogy and deceit. In his book *Fascism: Its Philosophy, Profession and Practice* (1938) he analysed the character of fascism and tried to establish that Indian nationalism and Gandhism shared the nature of fascism.

Roy highlighted the necessity of fighting fascism on the home front. He said that cultural backwardness of the masses had lent itself to their emotional regimentation. The result was that the rise of fascism had been glorified, as the struggle for freedom. Thus he said, "We shall have to fight the objective factor of backwardness, if we want to undermine Indian fascism." \(^{226}\) According to Roy, enlightenment and rationalism could alone take the Indian people out of that vicious circle. Philosophical revolution and scientific politics were the only weapons which could blast the foundation of Indian fascism. Roy said, "A party of moral men, moved by the Ideal of human freedom; therefore, alone can be the instrument for pulling down the fascist state rising on the unstable foundation of disintegrated society." \(^{227}\) He expected the Radical Democratic Party to perform that role.

It is observed that Roy overstated the elements of fascism in Indian life. It would not be correct to say that ancient Indian thought justified fascist
tendencies. It is found that in the ancient Indian thought the emphasis was on the moral basis of political authority. The ancient Indian theorists conceived political power to be a means. They stressed that force should not be the basis of political power but the latter should have its foundations in discipline, self-restraint and the performance of the function for which power has been instituted.

Roy also misrepresented the concept of karma which provides an antidote to despair and constantly impels a man to action. The doctrine of karma does not operate to the exclusion of resistance to tyranny. Roy ignored the general problem of resistance. The Indian doctrine of karma based on the belief in the triumph of good in life, does not prevent people from rising against fascist tyranny.

Roy described Gandhi as fascist. However, it would not be right to dub Gandhi as a fascist. Gandhi admitted the right of critics to fight and criticize Gandhism. In a conference Gandhi held “You cannot realise Ahimsa unless you can peacefully tolerate your opponent.” Though Gandhi was a charismatic leader with mass appeal, yet he symbolised a new trend in the Indian context of an individual wielding immense power and influence on millions without occupying any formal positions of power and authority. It was wrong on the part of Roy to attribute fascist tendencies to such a person.

Roy’s exposition of fascism developed into a theory of International Civil War—a war between democracy and totalitarianism. Roy insisted upon an unconditional support to British resistance to fascism in the Second World War. In August 1940 he wrote, “I am decidedly of opinion that the road to Indian freedom lies through an active participation in the struggle against fascism.” Roy advocated support to British in the war because the destruction of fascism, according to him, was not inconsistent with the ideal of freedom. He stressed that our destiny lay with the allies because democracy must be supported. He believed that the support to Germany and Japan would be detrimental to India’s
interests. He was concerned with democracy for the people in India and wanted that anti-fascist movement must gain more and more in strength. Roy believed that the end of fascism may coincide with the end of imperialism in India. He found that on the outbreak of the Second World War "All of a sudden, India found herself almost within the reach of freedom. But very few saw the opportunity, because not many in this country felt the urge for freedom."  

He believed that India would gain her freedom by virtue of contributing to the defence of world freedom. He argued that India could not be free in the midst of the world enslaved by triumphant fascism. He said that if India did not help in defeating fascist powers in the near East, she herself would be the object of invasion. Thus Roy argued that the Second World War was India's war as well as of England. He therefore pleaded for broader vision of internationalism while approaching the problem of Indian freedom.

Roy dubbed the attitude of Congress towards war as a virtual support to fascism. He criticized Congress because its attitude was determined neither by enlightened consideration of national interests nor by any regard for any principle of human freedom. Roy wanted India to outgrow the limits of narrow nationalism. He said, "Pure nationalism has triumphed in Congress politics, only to show that it will land India in the camp of fascism. The leaders may not have ever the slightest intention of doing that. But they are victims of their thought process. Nationalist thought is determined by its own logic, and nationalist action is predetermined by nationalist thought. Fascism, after all is the highest (or lowest, if you please) form of nationalism."

Roy had come to the view that the war did not represent a conflict which was entirely or even primarily economic, it was a conflict between two ideologies, the democratic and the fascist ideology. He therefore, thought that that war, though led by imperialist countries, was really a people's war. It was in the interest of people everywhere that the fascist powers should be totally
defeated.  

However, it can be argued that Roy, in his theory of International Civil War was biased against Indian National Congress, when he criticized the latter for being sympathetic to fascism. Roy failed to realize that a country which was itself enslaved could not think in terms of contributing to the freedom of the world.

It is observed that Roy not only criticized communism, fascism and nationalism but he even showed his dissatisfaction with parliamentary democracy. According to him there was difference between theory and practice of parliamentary democracy. Theoretically parliamentary democracy was based on the doctrine of popular sovereignty. But in practice, the doctrine of popular sovereignty became a mere formality. Theoretically, in parliamentary democracy, the individual was sovereign but in practice he remained a passive spectator. The sovereign individual had nothing more to do in the political organisation of society than to cast a piece of paper in a box every three or four years. He said, “In parliamentary democracy, power nominally belongs to the entire people. But in practice the individual is divested of all power; the individual is helpless in parliamentary democracy.” He added, “Parliamentary democracy formally recognised the sovereignty of the individual, but in practice deprived all but a privileged few of effective use of that sovereignty. The sovereign individual became a legal fiction. For all practical purposes, most individuals were deprived of all power and even of their dignity.”

Roy argued that the fundamental defect of parliamentary democracy resulted from the contradiction between the philosophy and political practice of Liberalism on which parliamentary democracy was based. While the philosophy of liberalism proclaimed freedom of the individual, its economic doctrine of laissez-faire, placed the individual in a helpless position in the wilderness of cut-throat competition. In such circumstances, individualism became a mere word.
He said, "The political and social practice of Liberalism having negativated the moral excellence of its philosophy, parliamentary democracy was bound to be discredited."\textsuperscript{238}

Roy said that the limitations of parliamentary democracy could no longer be ignored. Under it, civil liberties could be reduced to mere formalities. According to him the inadequacies of parliamentary democracy were inherent in itself. In the highly complicated modern industrial society, individual citizens, particularly those belonging to the majority labouring under economic disadvantages, had very little chance of exercising effectively the sovereign right which formally belonged to them. Law gave them little protection, particularly in critical times.\textsuperscript{239} Roy argued that it was an indisputable fact that under the parliamentary system democracy could not control the executive. Between two elections, it was completely out of the picture. During that period a party having a majority in the parliament could legally assume dictatorial power. There was no guarantee against such a possible abuse of power, attainable with democratic sanction. Thus, according to Roy, parliamentarism as such could not defend democracy, and guarantee civil liberties, under all circumstances.\textsuperscript{240}

Roy argued that formal parliamentarism must be replaced by actual democratic practice. According to him democracy, must not be limited by the counting of heads, particularly when the heads did not have the opportunity to raise themselves with sovereign dignity. According to him the practice of parliamentary democracy which was no more than mere counting of heads, was also a homage to collective ego. It allowed scope neither for the individual nor for intelligence. Under the formal parliamentary system, unscrupulous demagogues could always come to the top. Intelligence, integrity, wisdom, moral excellence, as a rule, counted for nothing. However, Roy believed that unless the purifying influence of these human values was brought to bear upon the political organisation and administration of society, the democratic way of life
According to Roy, in parliamentary democracy the individual was divested of power through the delegation of power. Every individual was considered sovereign and had a right to choose the government of his country. Accordingly, elections took place periodically in which every individual could record his choice. The sovereign people, as electors, voted for some individuals or for some parties. The implication of that vote was that every individual delegated his sovereign power to a group of individuals or some party, which became the repositories of the sovereignty for the period between two elections: Roy argued that the practice of democracy showed that between two elections the sovereign people were nowhere in the picture and had absolutely no possibility of controlling those who were ruling the country on their behalf. Consequently delegation of power, for all practical purposes, had become surrender of power. The people exercised their sovereignty by surrendering it from time to time. Roy said, "That was the basic contradiction of democratic practice. Because of this contradiction democracy eventually became discredited and supplied plausible reasons for the rise of various forms of dictatorship.""^^

In parliamentary democracy, according to Roy, the people did not govern. They simply delegated their sovereign right to their representatives, and the representatives governed. The representatives met in parliament, and the parliament formed a government. However, both parliaments and governments tended to become increasingly remote and independent of the theoretically sovereign people. Roy said, "As soon as, on one pretext or another, power is taken away from the people by delegation, even for the shortest period of time, democracy is killed. Power must always remain vested in the people; that is the only guarantee for democracy.""^^

Roy argued that the practice of delegation of power was a negation of democracy, because it could never establish government of the people and by the
people. It could, under the best of circumstances, only establish government for the people, which again in the best of cases could be only a benevolent dictatorship, but not democracy.245

According to Roy the delegation of power led to centralisation of power which was dehumanising. He argued that because of concentration of power, the state had become an engine of coercion. So ultimately, the problem of democratic political practice was that of decentralisation. He said, “Diffusion of power is the essence of democracy; because, concentration of power leads to tyranny and dictatorship, which may be hidden behind a facade of empty formalities.”246 Roy argued that democracy could survive the crisis by reorientating itself. For that, according to him it would have to outgrow the fetters of parliamentary formalism.247

It is observed that like Roy, Jayapraksh Narayan also criticized parliamentary democracy. Like Roy, Jayaprakash Narayan believed that the individual had become helpless in the parliamentary democracy. Describing the role of individual in parliamentary democracy, Jayaprakash Narayan said, “Democracy in our country gives only this much right to the people that they cast their votes when an election comes around. Beyond this you and I have no other role as citizens in this democratic process. But this right is also snatched away from us since the elections are increasingly neither fair nor free.”248

Again like Roy, J.P. argued that under parliamentary system the representative government was a minority government representing only the interests of the party in power. He wrote, “present-day mass elections manipulated by powerful, centrally controlled parties, with the aid of high finance and diabolically clever methods and super media of communication represent far less the electorate than the forces and interests behind the parties and propaganda machines.249

Demagoguery was the next defect of parliamentary democracy, according
to Jayaprakash Narayan. He said that politicians indulged in half-truths, and sometimes even in outright lies. They made dishonest, pleasing promises to arouse false hopes in the people to catch their votes.250

The most prominent defect of parliamentary democracy, according to Jayaprakash, was its inherent tendency towards centralization. He wrote, “The sovereign people being dispersed over the length and breadth of the country like particles of sand over the desert and having no other organised political force then the national State itself to interpose between themselves and that State, the latter naturally becomes all powerful. The issue of power in such State is decided not by the fictitious ‘people’ but by a balance between political parties and such organised interests as industrialists and bankers and powerful labour unions.” 251

Therefore, for Jayaprakash Narayan, parliamentary democracy was an inadequate democracy. According to him, parliamentary democracy may be a government for the people and of the people, but it was not a government by the people. He stated, “That no example of Parliamentary democracy exists today or has existed before which would satisfy the third part of the definition, namely, Government by the people. It may be a government with the consent of the people, but it is not a government by the people.” 252

Thus it can be argued that Jayaprakash Narayan resembled Roy in criticizing parliamentary democracy. In fact, Jayaprakash was influenced by Roy in his views.253

Thus it is observed that, Roy criticized communism, fascism, nationalism as well as parliamentary democracy. The researcher is of the opinion that this critical attitude of Roy was mainly determined by his loyalty to the cause of freedom.

Roy believed that freedom was the ideal of all progressive and enlightened human effort. His craze for freedom became evident when he said, “I
make a greater confession. My whole political life, which is now nearly forty years old, has been nothing but a tormented soul's search for freedom.”

He added, “When, as a school boy of fourteen, I began my political life, which may end in nothing, I wanted to be free... I began my political life with that spirit, and 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.”

Thus for Roy, the ultimate ideal to be pursued was freedom. He said, “as far as I am concerned, the ideal is neither Communism, nor Social Democracy nor simple democracy nor again a classless society; it is freedom.” Roy was critical of communism, fascism, nationalism and parliamentary democracy because he believed that they were incompatible with the ideal of freedom so much cherished by him.

He argued that formal parliamentary democracy and dictatorship were not the only alternatives for the future. He added that since both the Western Democracy as well as the Russian Communism were unable to provide freedom to the individual, the formulation of a new philosophy of life was the crying need of the time. He said:

The progressive world pursuing the ideals of democratic freedom and economic equalitarianism, and cherishing the human heritage of cultural values, is torn between the two rivals for the leadership of post-war Europe. In the absence of a common code of behaviour and standard of values, there can be no unity of purpose, and therefore no cooperation. The result is the present atmosphere of tormenting doubts, corroding suspicions and cynical efforts to stab each other in the back, and the general instability, and fear of an impending catastrophe. At this gravest crisis of its entire history, the civilised world needs a new hope, a new faith, a new ideal; to inspire a new philosophy of revolutionary theory and practice suitable for the prevailing conditions.

Roy made an attempt to fill in the gap by developing the philosophy of
‘Radical Humanism’. He said, "Our political philosophy makes room for the individual, and moral value. Its basic principle is that man is the measure of all things. We judge the merit of any social order by the freedom it give to its individual members." In the next chapter the researcher would explore Roy’s views on the philosophy of Radical Humanism.
Notes and References


2M.N. Roy, Science and Superstition (Dehradun: The Indian Renaissance Association, 1940), p. 3.

3Ibid., p. 93.

4Ibid., p. 65.


6Ibid., p. 91.

7For details see M.N. Roy, Science and Superstition, p. 93.

8Ibid., p. 53.


10Ibid., p. 146.


12M.N. Roy, Science and Superstition, p. 163.


14M.N. Roy, Science and Superstition, p. 54.

15Ibid., p. 110.

16Ibid., p. 11.

17Ibid., p. 54.

18Ibid., p. 109.


26 Ibid., p. 79.


29 Ibid.


31 Ibid., p. 35. Italics in original.

32 Ibid., p. 32.

33 Ibid., p. 35

34 Ibid., pp. 39-40. Italics in original.


38 Ibid., p. 71.

39 For details see Ibid., p. 101.

40 M.N. Roy, Our Differences (Calcutta: Saraswaty Library, 1938), p. 120.

41 Ibid.

42 M.N. Roy, Scientific Politics, p. 98.

43 Ibid., pp. 98-99.


46 Ibid., p. 92.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., p. 72.

49 M.N. Roy, Our Differences, p. 17


51 Roy said that the introduction of the mechanical means of production on a large scale, the abolition of all pre-capitalist restriction on production, the
attainment of a certain economic level—these were the historical pre-conditions for the establishment of Socialism. Ordinarily, they were created under the capitalist society. The instrument, however, was not capitalism, but mechanisation of the process of production. Therefore, capitalism in the traditional sense, was not indispensable stage of social evolution. For details see M.N. Roy, *Some Fundamental Principles of Mass Mobilisation* (Dehradun: Indian Renaissance Association, 1940), p. 30.

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53 Ibid.
55 Ibid., p. 112.
56 Ibid., p. 111.
57 Ibid., p. 112.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., p. 114.
62 Ibid., p. 94.
63 Ibid., p. 62.
65 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
67 Ibid., p. 238.
68 Ibid., p. 240.
69 Ibid., p. 259.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., pp. 254-55.
72 Ibid., p. 248.
73 Ibid., pp. 248-49.
74 Ibid., p. 276.
76 Ibid., p. 256.
77 Ibid., p. 257.
78 Thomas A. Rusch argued in his unpublished thesis “The Role of the CSP on the Indian National Congress” that the Karachi Resolution was authored.
by three persons, Gandhi, Nehru and M.N. Roy, with the main body of ideas drawn from Roy and Gandhi and with skilful editing, drafting and slight additions by Nehru to produce a compromise acceptable to Congress. For details see S.M. Ganguly, *Leftism in India: M.N. Roy and Indian Politics: 1920-1948* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1984), pp. 127-129.


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84Ibid., p. 128.

85For details see Ibid., p. 122.

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89For details see M.N. Roy and K.K. Sinha, Royism Explained, p. 8.

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For details see Ibid., pp. 3-4.


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