CHAPTER - VI
FROM CONTRAST TO CONVERGENCE

Born a rebel, Roy matured into a theorist of revolution who not only rationalized but also actualized. Twenty-eight years later, as a terrorist revolutionary, he left India for an adventurous career in the Communist International Movement. These initial twenty-eight years in Bengal were decisive for the shaping of his personality and thought. Three components of this early experience deserve mention. First, there was the influence of Roy's brahmanical family background and outlook. This inspired and reinforced his penchant for theory, his elitism, and his strong moral temper. Second, there was Roy's early, intense belief in Hinduism. His religious frame of mind, like the brahmanical spirit, never left him, but prodded him on in his quest for 'those abiding, permanent values of humanity'. Third, in this first segment of his life, the ideology of Indian nationalism exerted an immense influence on Roy as it did on many of his contemporary Bengali intellectuals and students.

'An ideology', writes Edward Shils, 'is the product of man's need for imposing intellectual order on the world. The need for ideology is an intensification of the need for a cognitive and moral map of the universe...'. Roy's quest for an adequate ideology began during his Youth in Bengal. It continued throughout his next phase as an orthodox communist and later as a Marxist 'Visionist'. Then, still later, having

abandoned Marxism for what he called 'Radical Humanism', his search intensified for 'a cognitive and moral map of the universe'. It ended not in satisfaction, but only with his death in 1954. Yet, in this last phase of his thought, Roy had come closer to the fulfilment of his needs, to realization of this identity through the construction of an ideology, than he had ever approached in his earlier phases. The outlines of Roy's cognitive and moral map had been determined in his youth by the combined influences of a *brahmanical* outlook, a Hindu creed, and the nationalist experience in Bengal. Yet, unlike Gandhi, Roy never came to terms with the demands of his early formative period; unlike Gandhi, he remained alienated until the end from large segments of his own tradition. It is for this reason that the evolution of Roy's thought, which represents a continuing response to the demands of the Indian nationalist tradition, forms an important part of this analysis.

The year 1915 is a key one in the Gandhi-Roy story. In the year, Roy, a terrorist schooled under Jatin Mukherjee and Aurbindo Ghose, left Calcutta on a revolutionary mission to obtain German arms for the struggle against the Raj. In that same year, Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi returned to India after twenty-one years in South Africa. He soon began his extraordinary rise to power in Congress. By 1920, he had come to dominate the Indian nationalist movement with a sure sense of leadership that reached a dramatic peak with the Dandi Salt March of 1930. During these fifteen years of Gandhi's eminence, Roy acquired his reputation of being 'undoubtedly the most colourful of all non-Russian Communists in the era of Lenin and Stalin'. From 1915 until December 1930, Roy moved about on various revolutionary missions, Mexico to Moscow to Berlin, and then Paris, Zurich and Tashkent. In Mexico, Roy
was converted to Communism and reportedly helped by the first Communist Party there. In Moscow, he contributed to revolutionary strategy for communist activity in the colonial areas. In Europe, he rose to a position of authority in the Comintern, published a series of books and pamphlets on Marxist theory, and edited a communist newspaper. Therefore, the achievements of both Gandhi and Roy during this period were spectacular.

Yet, for all their respective achievements, there was never anything like a balance of power between these two figures. It was Gandhi and never Roy who dominated the Indian nationalist movement with his unparalleled genius for mass leadership. Whereas Roy would struggle long and hard to gain power in India. Gandhi acquired authority with ease and kept it. While Roy necessarily remained, throughout this fifteen year period, preoccupied with Gandhi's power, the latter never mentions Roy in his writings or speeches. Even after Roy's return to the political scene in the late thirties, Gandhi took scant notice of him. Roy, then, remained, both a cultural and political outsider and suffered as a result. Gandhi, after his return to India in 1915, became rooted in the nationalist tradition and developed a style of political behaviour which gained for him personal confidence as well as political power. Thus, while Roy, out of touch with his tradition, never ceased in his effort to come to terms with Gandhi and all that the Mahatma personified, Gandhi, secure in his surroundings, could remain aloof. In this sense, a consideration of Roy's view of Gandhi becomes part of a larger problem, that of the relationship of the Indian intellectual to his tradition.
The first detailed Marxist critique of Gandhi appeared in Roy's first major book, 'India in Transition', which was written in Moscow in 1921. The book grew out of discussions which Roy had with Lenin and other communist figures at the Second Congress of the Communist International. At this Congress, Roy had argued against Lenin that communist policy in the colonial areas must be to support proletarian rather than bourgeois movements. Lenin contended that bourgeois nationalist organizations like the Indian Congress could be considered revolutionary, and since no viable Communist parties existed, these organizations deserved the support of the international. Roy replied that the Congress and similar agencies could only betray the revolution: an Indian proletariat existed, and must be mobilized behind a communist leadership. The Roy-Lenin controversy, was clearly over fundamental issues, and had innumerable implications for communist strategy in the future.

Roy later reflected back upon his differences with Lenin and concluded that “the role of Gandhi was the crucial point of difference. Lenin believed that, as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, he was revolutionary. I maintained that, a religious and cultural revivalist, he was bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically.” In Roy's view, 'the religious ideology preached by him [Gandhi] also appealed to the medieval mentality of the masses. But the same ideology discouraged any revolutionary mass action. The quintessence of the situation, as I analyzed and understood it, was a potentially revolutionary movement restrained by a reactionary...

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3 Ibid., p. 215.
ideology'. 'I reminded Lenin of the dictum that I had learnt from him: that without a revolutionary ideology, there could be no revolution'. These arguments formed the basis of the position on Gandhi that was developed by Roy in *India in Transition*.4

Roy begins his critique of Gandhi in this book with the confident assertion that Gandhism has now 'reached a crisis' and its 'impending wane ... signifies the collapse of the reactionary forces and their total alienation from the political movement'.5 Roy's confidence was rooted in the classic Marxist belief in the inexorable march forward of western civilization. Gandhism was seen as a temporary obstacle in the path of history, which would soon be swept aside: not by the Raj, but by the masses themselves, once they became conscious of the progressive movement of history. Whatever Gandhi may tell the masses, 'post-British India cannot and will not become pre-British India.' Therefore, here lies the contradiction in the orthodox nationalism as expressed, of late, in the cult of Gandhism. It endeavours to utilize the mass energy for the perpetuation or revival of that heritage of national culture which has been made untenable by the awakening of mass energy ... Therefore, Gandhism is bound to be defeated. The signs of the impending defeat are already perceptible. Gandhism will fall victim to its own contradictions.6

Roy admits that under Gandhi's leadership, through the effective use of hartal and non-co-operation, 'for the first time in its history, the Indian national movement entered into the period of active struggle'.

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4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 12.
6 Ibid.
Yet, here as elsewhere, Roy remains confined within his Marxist categories. Gandhi's success in 1920, he says, simply revealed that 'the time for mass-action was ripe. Economic forces, together with other objective causes had created an atmosphere' which propelled Gandhi into power. Roy seeks to drive home his argument against Lenin by stressing the potential role of the Indian proletariat, portraying it as an awakened and thriving revolutionary force.7

Roy's mistake cannot be explained wholly in terms of his Marxism. Rather, his Marxism may be explained as part of a desperate search for a new ideology, which was in turn prompted by a quest for a new identity. The identity that Roy sought in the critical period of his youth, was that of an urbane, Cosmopolitan type, entirely at home with western civilization, fully equipped to appreciate and assist in its historical forward movement. Yet, he required as well an ideology that would allow him to criticize those aspects of western civilization which were responsible for the subjugation of his own people. The ideology must, in short, serve to liberate him from the sense of inferiority instilled by imperialism, and at the same time arm him in his struggle for the liberation of India. Marxism suited this purpose exactly. His total affirmation of Marxism, therefore, followed immediately after his total rejection of nationalism, and from this, there emerged his total and unreasoning denial of Gandhi as a lasting political force in India. In this sense, India in Transition offers a clear example of an intellectual determined to reject his tradition. Not only Gandhi, but also extremist leaders like Tilak and Aurobindo, who, only five years earlier, had

7 Ray, Sibnarayan, M. N. Roy, Philosopher Revolutionary, op. cit., p. 239.
commanded Roy's allegiance, are now dismissed with contempt as examples of 'petty-bourgeois humanitarianism.' For the next ten years, until his imprisonment in 1931, Roy struggled to affirm himself in his new identity as an international Marxist revolutionary.

Throughout the twenties, as Roy rises to the peak of his authority in the Comintern, his view on Gandhi set forth in 1921, is refined and elaborated. A series of excellent articles and pamphlets by Roy and his first wife Evelyn are devoted to Gandhism. In one year of Non-Co-operation, for example, the Roys distinguished themselves by pointing out five 'grave errors' or 'great defects' of Gandhism. The 'most glaring defect' is the absence of an intelligent programme of economic reform. Next, there is Gandhi's 'obstinate and futile' emphasis on social harmony instead of a frank recognition of the real necessity of class conflict. Then, they find a senseless 'intrusion of metaphysics into the realm of politics'. The revolt against the Raj, they emphasize, 'is a question of economics, not metaphysics.' Further, they deplore Gandhi's reactionary view of history, his desire 'to run from the Machine-age back to the Stone Age'. Finally, they criticize the total lack of any revolutionary quality in Gandhi's approach to social change; they see only a 'weak and watery reformism, which shrinks at every turn from the realities of the struggle for freedom'. The entire critique is made with exceptional clarity and forcefulness, and it, together with other writings by the Roy’s on Gandhi, represents the most incisive criticism of communitist by him during this period.

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For a variety of reasons, Roy soon fell out of favour with Moscow, and in December 1929 he was officially expelled from the Communist International. He sharply reacted to this action and persuaded himself to the belief that he could seize control of the revolutionary movement in India, and so, a year later, he returned home. He was soon arrested, and he remained a political prisoner until November 1936. These five hard years in jail brought about a substantial change in Roy's ideology, and this eventually had its effect upon his view of Gandhi.

While in prison, Roy, like Gandhi and Nehru did, read and wrote voluminously. His three volumes of 'prison diaries' refer often to Gandhi. Indeed, it might be argued that there is no better index to the extent to which Gandhi's presence dominated the Indian scene than the jail reflections of his harshest critic. Roy had inherited from his early nationalist experience and religious out-look a moralist's predilection for seeing the world in categorical terms of right and wrong and he had acquired from his brahmanical spirit a corresponding intellectual tendency to construct the required moral categories. Although Gandhi was never a theorist of this type, he nevertheless shared with Roy a strong taste for moralizing and a passionate concern for the ethical well-being of society. Eventually, in his Radical Humanist phase, the morality in Roy prevails, just as it had always prevailed in Gandhi, and Roy abandoned Marxism because he finds it devoid of ethics. However, even as early as the thirties, the first glimpse of the way in which Roy's moral outlook eroded his Marxism can be seen in his prison diaries.9

This appears in his reflections on the two concepts of freedom and revolution. Both of these ideas became in dire course key themes of Radical humanism, and the basis of their development later is found in the diaries.

When Roy wrote about freedom and revolution as an orthodox Marxist in the twenties, he conceived them as economic categories. Freedom would come with the necessary changes in the economic mode of production, and revolution would be achieved through a violent seizure of power by the Party, and the masses. Now, in the 'thirties, Roy begins to perceive other dimensions in these two ideas. In regard to freedom, he says that his aim is to indicate the way to real spiritual freedom offered by the materialist philosophy. For the first time in Roy's writings, the supreme goal of 'spiritual freedom' is distinguished from the lesser aims of 'political freedom, economic prosperity and social happiness'. It should be obvious that Roy, a Marxist, is not using the term 'spiritual freedom' here consciously in a metaphysical sense. Yet the term does not derive from Marxism and it cannot be a mere coincidence that it was used often by both Vivekananda and Aurobindo, whom Roy had at one time read closely. The significant change in Roy's concept of revolution is evident in his increasing preference for the term 'Indian Renaissance', which means for him a 'philosophical' and 'spiritual' as well as economic revolution. His concluding essay, 'Preconditions of Indian Renaissance', in the second volume of the jail diaries emphasizes the need for a new philosophical outlook in India.

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The above analysis of Roy's prison diaries is not meant to suggest that a reader of these volumes in the thirties, with no possible knowledge of the way Roy's thought would develop, could have perceived the affinities between Gandhi and Roy which eventually appeared. The fact, however, that these ideas found in the diaries in embryonic form indicates that Roy's movement along Gandhian way of thinking did not occur overnight. While this degree of continuity in Roy's thought can be appreciated, it is equally important to recognize the sharp contrasts, especially in his view of Gandhi, between the thirties and the late forties.

The ruthlessness of Roy's attack on Gandhi in the diaries reaches a climax in an essay entitled 'India's Message'. The critique begins with a contemptuous dismissal of Gandhism as a political philosophy. Far from positing a philosophical system, Roy finds in Gandhism only 'a mass of platitudes and hopeless self-contradictions' emerging from 'a conception of morality based upon dogmatic faith'. As such, it is religion, not philosophy, a religion which has become politicized and thus serves as 'the ideological reflex' of India's 'cultural backwardness' and 'superstition'.

Roy's attack on Gandhi in 1922 was largely meant to write Gandhism off as a medieval ideology at the mercy of inexorable economic forces. Now, however, Roy concentrates on the moral virtues which Gandhi idealized and refutes them at length. Roy argues that 'admirable virtues' like 'love, goodness, sacrifice, simplicity, and absolute non-violence', when preached to the masses by Gandhi, only serve to emasculate them. Overthrow of the ruling classes becomes impossible, and the result can only be voluntary submission of the masses to the established system of oppression and exploitation. The
worst of Gandhi's tenets is his cult of non-violence, the 'central pivot' of his thought, 'holding its quaint dogmas and native doctrines together into a comprehensive system of highly reactionary thought'. Far from serving any noble purpose, ahimsa in politics tends only to support the forces of violence and exploitation. 'Therefore, those who preach non-violence (to and for).... the exploited and oppressed masses, are defenders of violence in practice'. If Gandhi's non-violence were practised, capitalism would remain entrenched and 'the Juggernaut of vulgar materialism' would emerge triumphant. Love, the sentimental counterpart of the cult of non-violence is thus exposed as mere cant. Finally, Roy asserts that Gandhi's values are based on 'blind faith' and offer only 'the message of mediaevalism' which idealizes 'the savage living on the tree'. In this way, Gandhi inhibits real progress, which Roy sees in terms of the 'dynamic process' of 'modern civilization' that 'must go forward'. For Roy, then, the light is in the West: in the forces of rationalism, technology, modern science, and 'an economy of abundance'. This latter position was maintained by Roy until the end, and it will always distinguish him sharply from Gandhi.

Soon after his discharge from prison, Roy decided that the sole route to political success in India lay in co-operation with the Congress. This meant a much more conciliatory attitude towards Gandhi. Subhas Chandra Bose had opposed Gandhi in the Congress with some initial success, but Roy, unlike Bose, had neither mass appeal nor a strong regional base of power in Bengal. Therefore, Roy made a brief but futile attempt to rise in the Congress through co-operation with the Gandhians. His article of this period entitled 'Gandhiji, Critical Appreciation' reflects this spirit of conciliation. He begins with the claim that 'I
appreciate Gandhiji’s greatness better than any of his ardent admirers’. Gandhi, he says, ‘is a great ‘political awakener’ of the masses and the highest tribute that one can pay him ‘would be to regard and respect Gandhiji as the embodiment of the primitive, blind, spontaneous spirit of revolt of the Indian masses.’ While Roy does mention, incidentally, that Gandhism may in the future come to stifle the revolution rather than promote it, he concludes that at present ‘let us admire, respect, and properly appreciate him for the great services that he has rendered to the struggle for freedom’. Roy regarded Gandhi in this period as his arch-enemy who should be destroyed as quickly as possible.

In 1946, Philip Spratt, a close associate and strong admirer of Roy, wrote an appreciative foreword for Roy's latest series of speeches, which were published under the significant title of New Orientation. Spratt reviewed Roy's position on Gandhi and he concluded:

11 Independent India, 16 October, 1938, p. 453.
12 At precisely the time when Roy says he was expressing his 'appreciation' of Gandhi to one of the Mahatma's colleagues, we find him writing to a Marxist comrade abroad: 'Our real fight is against the right wing which is still very powerful thanks to the popularity of Gandhi... I am striking at the very root. Gandhist ideology must go before the nationalist movement can develop its enormous revolutionary potentialities. And Gandhi has recognized in us his mortal enemy. As a matter of fact, in his inner circle, I am branded as the enemy No. V (Roy to Jay Lovestone, 19 October 1937, Bombay) Exactly one year after writing his appreciation, Roy wrote to an Indian associate for help in the great effort to destroy this curse of Gandhism. (Roy to Makhan Lal Sen, 12 September 1939) The quotations are from correspondence preserved in the M.N. Roy Archives of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
“Roy was highly critical of Gandhism from the very start, in 1920, and has never altered his opinion... Yet it is true, I think that he has failed to make his criticisms intelligible to the India reader. His approach to Gandhism seems that of an outsider, a unsympathetic foreigner. He has never tried to get under the skin of the Mahatma or his admirers and see where that extraordinary power comes from.”

This remark constitutes a good indication of the nature of Roy's difficulties with Gandhi during a generation of observation and criticism. Yet, precisely at the moment of Spratt's writing, we can see now in retrospect that significant changes were occurring in Roy's thinking about several key theoretical issues: fundamental questions concerning the nature of power and authority, revolution and history, politics and leadership. And with this fundamental reassessment of basic issues, which Roy called his 'New Orientation', there eventually followed a drastic change of his view on Gandhi.

By tracing will and reason, emotion and intelligence to their common biological origin, New Humanism reconciles the romantic doctrine of revolution, that man makes history, with the rationalist notion of orderly social progress. History, being the record of human endeavour, and man being an integral part of the law-governed Universe, history is not a chaotic conglomeration of fortuitous events. Social evolution is a determined process. But New Humanism rejects Economic Determinism, which is deduced from a wrong interpretation of the materialist philosophy. Human will is the motive force of social evolution; it is, indeed, the most powerful determining factor of history.

Otherwise, there would be no place for revolutions in a rationally determined process of social evolution. A revolution is acceleration in the tempo of the evolutionary process, brought about by the will of a minority of men. But human will, as well as ideas, can seldom be referred directly to economic incentives...

Not only Marxian materialism but Marx's prescription of revolutionary seizure and consolidation of power found in Roy a critic, mainly because the whole Milieu had changed. In his classic study of "The Russian Revolution", Roy made some candid statements which are quoted below: "Marxism is not the horoscope of humanity, it is a method of studying history. The miscarriage of the Russian revolution is due to the fallacies of Marxist historicism. Experience exposed those fallacies. It will never be known whether Lenin consciously realized the inadequacies of the Marxist theory of revolution. In any case, already early in its history, he did switch the revolution in a different channel. Until after the war, when the Russians missed rapidly recurring opportunities to adjust the revolution to the new context of its expansion and further development, I believed that Stalin was astutely reacting to reality, dis-regarded in the theoretical system of Marx, and deliberately bringing about a metamorphosis of the Revolution..."  

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14 Roy, M. N., Renaissance, Calcutta, Renaissance 1949, The volume is a compilation of a survey of the Russian scene vis-a-vis international developments written over a period of 10 years; contains a "running commentary" specially of the period before, during and following World War II. Also contains a detailed estimate of Trotsky and several documents. Quotations are from pp. viii, xv and xiv.
In the period of the French Revolution, Napoleon's Empire was a transitory phenomenon, but the impact of the revolution imparted through that medium was abiding. Stalin's strategy of spreading the revolution of our time might have had a greater success if it remembered the lesson of history and was guided by Lenin's wisdom. Reaching Europe, the revolution was bound to democratize itself in order to be abiding in a new cultural atmosphere. In the historically determined perspective of the revolution triumphant, the Russians saw a danger for their supremacy. A masterful revolutionary strategy, on the point of successful culmination, degenerated into a struggle for the domination of Europe.

The defeat of Red Napoleonism, mostly due to its own miscalculations, kept the revolution away from the world of modern culture and precluded its ideas and ideals being revaluated in an atmosphere of spiritual freedom. The experience of having been hailed as the liberators of Europe and then of being dreaded, instead of being loved, when they came nearer, naturally embittered the Russians. Flushed with the delirium of victory, they did not stop to think if their message of deliverance was up to the expectation of Europe, ready for a revolution; nor did it occur to them that their conduct might be disappointing for those who had admired them from a distance. The ideologists of their new order explained the disconcerting experience by the theory that Western culture was antagonistic to the blessings offered by the Russian Revolution.

“... The historical justification of the revolution was that the capitalist order sets limits to social and cultural progress; therefore, it
must be overthrown and replaced by a more liberating new order. The purpose of revolution being to promote human progress, the humanist and democratic traditions of the European culture could not be antagonistic to it. Stalin’s double mistake of letting Russians see Europe and Europe see the Russians, was not the subject of a popular joke. It was of great significance and could have had far-reaching consequences. Liberal thought and democratic ideals were first introduced in Russia after the Napoleonic war by officers who had been in Europe for a number of years. The Red Army going out to Europe and staying there for years was bound to have a similar repercussion on the internal life of Russia. But the rulers of the Communist new order of Russia were frightened by the first signs of the tendency of the revolution to widen its cultural horizon in consequence of its coming in contact with the European democratic ways of life.“15

Frantic measures were taken to stop the process, which might have converted the Russian Revolution in a general European revolution. Russian soldiers, privates as well as officers, were prohibited from mixing socially with the people of the occupied countries. Offenders were severely punished for breach of discipline. The penalties included mass transfer to the rear - to be detained indefinitely in segregation camps on the Russian frontier, to be ‘re-educated’ so as to shake off the ‘corrupting influence’ of Western culture. But ideas cannot be quarantined. A large number of Russians having seen a new world abroad, their experience imparted the cultural life at home. While Europe was resisting the imposition of the Communist new order, the traditions of Western culture captivated sensitive Russians at home, just

15 Ibid.
as captive Greece had once upon a time made captives of her Roman conquerors. Confronted with that danger of Europeanization, Russian Communists began a crusade against the ‘corrupting influence of the bourgeois civilization’ which found expression in ‘post-war laxity and easy-going ways’. Democratic ideas and the vision of a good life should not be allowed to weaken the rigour of cultural regimentation. In the literature of the proletarian new order, there was no place for humanist dreams. Music, poetry and drama should be free from all abstraction and individual’s emotionalism; they must depict ‘the socialist reality’ and glorify ‘the new hero of our time - the hero of industry, the Soviet worker.’

The significance of the crazy campaign was that the Communist new order should be proud of the capitalist heritage of the enslavement of man through technology and mass production; but the humanist tradition, liberal ideas, democratic ways of life, and moral values of the modern civilization, should be condemned as ‘corrupting bourgeois prejudices.’ For thus disowning the sum total of the positive achievements of the old order, the entire cultural heritage of Europe, as antagonistic to its purpose, the Communist revolution forfeits its historical significance, and is itself disowned by Europe.16

In the Indian Context

Believing as he did that the ‘revolutionary movement in Europe was absolutely dependent upon the course of the revolution in Asia, largely due to erosion of the colonial nexus’, which he considered inevitable, he maintained that the nationalist bourgeoisie would not lead

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16 Ibid., pp. 551-53.
the democratic revolution in the colonial countries, and pointed out that: “the anti-imperialist movement even in the most advanced colonial country, namely India, was not led by the bourgeoisie, who were ready for a compromise with Imperialism, accepting a junior partnership in the profitable business of exploiting labour under pre-capitalist social conditions. If the bourgeoisie was non-revolutionary, landlords and priests, who led the nationalist movement in the Near-Eastern Muslim countries, were positively counter-revolutionary.17

After his release from an Indian prison, Roy joined the Indian National Congress party and was made a member of its all-India body. His plea for activization and democratization, coupled with canvassing for a constituent assembly in order to make it an ‘effective instrument of national revolution’, was bound to make the right-wing of the Congress oppose him. Even the so called leftists ‘wanted him to keep aloof from the actual work of mobilizing and organizing the radical forces. They could have then adored him as a hero and boosted him as a great revolutionary.’ Roy, however, joined the ranks and started consolidating his organization.18 Not having been moved to narrow nationalism in any way for years past, Roy at last was free to act and theorize.

Roy's reaction to world war II, his anti-fascist stand and his premonition that Soviet Russia would be involved (as it was from June, 1941), led him to swim against the Quit India movement of August, 1942, and urge that all freedom-loving people should support the allied cause. Expulsion from the Indian National Congress followed. This was

the beginning of Roy's great lonely campaign for rational politics and a greater emphasis on a world perspective which led him ultimately to concretise the concept of New Humanism.

It is worthwhile to note the limitations under which Roy worked as an idealist: Roy treats the human element as the basic factor in the revolution. This requires the leadership of those who are intellectually high and morally great. Intelligence, integrity, moral excellence and wisdom should be the test of revolutionary leadership. These qualities inspire the masses and lend credibility to the leader. The government, established through this revolutionary process, would ensure the conduct of public affairs through the hands of spiritually free individuals. What is suggested by Roy is not the adhoc establishment of rule by an intellectual elite, but such an organization of the democratic society as will give ultimate scope for the unfolding of the creative genius of man and place executive power of the state under the control of free intellectuals, free from the influence of vested interests and also from the vagaries of the collective ego which is very much susceptible to demagogic appeals...

The free individual discharges social obligations not under any compulsion, nor as a homage to the exacting god of collective ego, but out of a moral conviction which grows from the consciousness of freedom. Party loyalty and patronage will no longer eclipse intellectual independence and moral integrity. Mysticism is no philosophy for revolutionary political workers. Revolutionary politics must draw its inspiration from scientific philosophy. The world stands in need of a gigantic change. Science has given confidence to a growing number of
human beings that they possess the power to remake the world. What Roy desires is not philosopher-king but philosopher-citizen.19

In fact, Roy's claims on behalf of rationality and 'man remaking the world', as well as the pitfalls of 'pure democracy', make him hardly credible as a practical politician to some critics.

Materialism Re-interpreted

Roy is usually criticized for being a renegade Marxist philosopher. But the revision of Marxism by Roy is a corollary to his thesis that there can be no absolute truth nor perfect knowledge.

To insist that the deductions made from an analysis of the conditions of a century ago hold good even today and will hold good forever, is deviation from Marxism. On the contrary, Marxism is defended by those who realize that it should be revised in the light of changed conditions, and have the competence to do so.20

... Marx wrote the Theses on Feuerbach, which laid down the philosophical foundation of his political doctrines and their practise, years before working class parties appeared on the political scene. We are trying to practise politics and formulate its philosophical principles at the same time... laying the foundations and raising the walls in quick succession. Two things done over a period of fifty years in the time of Marx have to be done by us simultaneously... the impartial and short-sighted fear that we are giving up politics for philosophy. On the

contrary, we are clarifying our revolutionary ideology, so that our revolutionary action may be more effective, though it may be less spectacular, and also less abortive.”21

Later, he raises other pertinent points with authority. “As one of those who have formulated these principles or the philosophy of revolution in our time, I am convinced that Materialism is the only philosophy possible. That conviction breathes through all my other works, philosophical and scientific, not directly related to political theories. In those works, I have shown that all systems of Philosophy since the dawn of human civilization, which have received any place in the history of thought, are essentially materialist. . . As regards the substitution of the term Materialism by another, I have been thinking about it for many years. Strictly speaking, the term has lost its meaning... But it has not been possible to find a more appropriate term...

...It is so very clear that our theory of history, as of social reconstruction, is deduced, and can be deduced only, from materialist philosophy, that it may not be necessary to use the odious term at all. Those who will like our political practice will eventually accept its political motivation.”22

On a practical plane, he noted that the breakdown of capitalist economy was not taking place ‘strictly according to the Marxian scheme of polarization between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie engaged in a fierce class struggle.’

22 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
“The Marxist analysis ignored the numerous and important middle class in capitalist society. In the period of decay, the middle class loses its faith in capitalism, but is not proletarianized, not in the intellectual and cultural sense, at any rate. . . It also demands, at least feels the necessity of, a capitalist revolution, though not of the proletariat ... It is the Nemesis of one's own blood turning against oneself...

.... The middle class is dissatisfied with the established order... But they are not prepared to accept orthodox Marxist ideals; they are repelled particularly by communist political practice, and the negative attitude to cultural tradition and ethical values... Marxist economism cannot move the middle class towards the ideal of a social reconstruction. The cultural tradition of modern civilized mankind and universal ethical values must be given their due importance in the philosophy of the revolution of our time. Nobody has as yet raised the philosophical platform on which the greatly swelled army of revolution can stand together.”

Freedom of the Individual

As freedom for the individual is basic to Roy's philosophy of man, he declared: “As against the exploded Marxist Utopia of a stagnant society or the reality of a permanent dictatorship, we revert to the humanist ideal of freedom. I am not ashamed to say that I derive my inspiration from the Renaissance. Karl Marx was also a humanist. His followers have forgotten that he declared man to be the root of mankind. I do not think that anything more can be said with reference to the doubt

23 Ibid., pp. 34-35.
about relation between the movement of ideas and the operation of material social forces. As a materialist, I regard them as two currents in the integral process of human evolution; the two together constitute human evolution. In so far as our philosophy traces the origin of human evolution to the background of the physical Universe, it is Materialism. But it differentiates itself from Marxist materialist determinism by recognizing the autonomy of the mental world, in the context of physical nature. In building up a social philosophy, on the basis of Materialism, we do not allot a subsidiary role to ideas. Originating in the pre-human stage of biological evolution, emotion and intelligence are decisive factors of social and historical progress. The behaviour of human beings is determined by the autonomous movement of ideas as well as the dynamics of social evolution. They influence each other continuously; history can be regarded as an organic process only in that sense…”

“In biology, we come up against such terms as instinct, intuition, impulse etc. Are they all elementary indefinables? Are they just given a priori? Materialism knows no elementary indefinable. It reduces everything to the common denominator of the physical Universe, subject to its fundamental law. Not finding a rational explanation of reason in biology, I go further. The entire physical Universe is determined of becoming. Therefore, I identify reason with determinism in nature. All biological processes, including man's mental activities, take place in the context of the physical Universe, being integral parts thereof. So, reason is a property of physical existence. It is neither metaphysical nor a mystic category.”24

24 Ibid., pp. 55-56.
The physical Universe is law-governed; nothing happens without a cause; it is rational. Thus, we place reason in the physical Universe. Only when biological processes are discovered to be a continuation of determinism in physical nature, does it become possible to explain rationally such mysterious phenomena as instinct, intuition, impulse, etc. They can be traced to their origin in the mechanism of pre-human evolution. Tracing the rational thread further downwards, we come up against the problem of another missing link in the chain of evolution; the origin of life. How does life grow out of the background of inanimate nature? Unless that problem is solved, you cannot reduce reason to determinism in the physical Universe. The problem is no longer baffling, even if we take an extremely sceptical attitude towards the suggested solution. The first appearance of life out of certain chemical processes can be theoretically conceived, though it may not yet be experimentally demonstrated. There is an unbroken chain connecting the elementary indefinables of psychology with physics; it runs through physiology, cytology and chemistry. Once the rationality (determinateness) of the mysterious phenomena of instinct, intuition, impulse, etc., are revealed, the chain can be traced to the other direction also, to the highest expressions and greatest creations of the human mind. There is an unbroken chain of evolution from the vibratory mass intelligence, emotion, imagination to abstract philosophical thought, recondite mathematical theories, the sublimest poetry, the master works of arts. Only the materialist philosophy, call it by any other name you may prefer such as Physical Realism, Scientific Rationalism, Materialist Monism, can trace this red thread of unity running through the entire cosmic system of being and becoming. Unless that is done, we cannot explain history. If we cannot explain man, if we cannot show that man is
an instinctively, naturally, rational being, history cannot be explained. History is a rational process because it is made by man. If you can never know how man will behave in a given situation, you cannot make a science of history.25

Ethics of Materialism

In emphasizing that his approach to ethics was also materialistic, Roy observed:

“... Unless ethical concepts and moral values can be derived from the process of pre-human biological evolution, they cannot stand criticism except on the authority of God or some ad hoc metaphysical assumption. Either morality is inborn in us, or we are moral under the dictate of some external agency. You cannot have it both ways. If you reject the proposition that man is moral because he is rational, then, you have to reject morality, or you have to accept the morality of the priests and pundits. Morality is a kind of human conduct. If human beings are rational, there must be a connection between morality and rationalism. Morality is an appeal to conscience. But what is conscience? Here is another concept which has remained veiled in mystery even in modern rationalist moral philosophies. I conceive conscience as awareness of social responsibility. The sense of social responsibility does not necessarily run counter to individual freedom. On the contrary, it can easily be shown how it results from the urge for freedom... If I started with the conviction that I was a member of society because, in cooperation with others moved by the same urge, I could develop my potentialities more successfully, social responsibility should be my

25 Ibid., pp. 57-59.
natural impulse. I do not like anybody restricting my freedom; therefore, I should willingly grant the same right to every other member of society. Consciousness of the urge for freedom is the decisive factor; once that is there, the respect for others’ freedom naturally follows, and social responsibility is voluntarily undertaken by all. Imagine a community of people, everyone of them acting according to this conviction, and we shall have a moral society. It will be moral, because it is rational. Because I do not want any one to do any harm to me, I should not do any harm to others. This reciprocity is the foundation of society. In a rational society, appeal to conscience is not a mystic device for subordination to some metaphysical compulsion or divine coercion.”

The optimism of Roy regarding man and his rational evolution was evident quite early. For instance, in his introduction to a volume of essays by noted scientists he wrote: “Like all the laws of the physical world, the laws of social evolution are sovereign; they operate by themselves. If in the past, human beings and communities developed by virtue of the potentialities inherent in themselves, in the future also the process will be equally independent of any external influence. What is still more significant is that, the future development being determined by the forces operative at the present, a scientific study of the latter should enable us to visualize the perspective of future development. As soon as we shall have established still greater dominion over the forces of nature, human nature will again change, and men of science, learning, culture will no longer be exceptional, but the average citizen of a future human society... What is stated above in brief is the philosophy of materialism. In India, the term materialism is used in a depreciative

26 Ibid., pp. 60, 61-61.
sense. But this materialistic view of history alone enables us to have a perspective of the future in which the spiritual potentialities of man will be freely unfolded, when man will not live so near to animalness as the majority of mankind still do today, where the satisfaction of true spiritual needs and aspirations will be available to all.27

This deterministic view of history, of course, rejects any teleological approach. Moreover, Roy does not hesitate to believe that there is any necessary antagonism between selfishness and social well-being.

Selfishness has acquired a very narrow meaning. But that is the meaning of vulgar. We are engaged in a scientific study, and terms used have only scientific connotation. Selfishness means concern for one's self. There is absolutely nothing wrong in it. In order to be anything or do anything one must exist. As soon as the primitive man realizes that he can exist more comfortably in the company of others, the evolution of human society begins. The individual self merges in a group; his selfishness becomes the concern for the welfare of the entire community. Because the individual interest is promoted by collective interest, individual selfishness becomes collective selfishness.28

It is sometimes difficult to share his hopes and faith.

28 Ibid., p. 8.
contradiction to the old, which eventually destroy the latter, and having done so, lose their negative character and consequently convert themselves into the new positive. That is the dialectical view of being which, in reality, is a dynamic process of becoming. 31

Real synthesis, therefore, is not a compromise between the contra factor: that would mean not progress, but reaction.

With a more critical view, Roy continues: “It is the destruction of the thesis - of the old grown static - by the anti-thesis which is a new dynamic force, and the establishment of this latter, divested of its negative character, its destructive function having been performed, as the new thesis. Real synthesis is, as Hegel defined it, negation of the negation.

This is a positively dangerous view because it recognizes revolution as inherent in every phase of existence; legalizes revolution, so to say. Consequently, the formidable weapon, perfected by an idealist philosopher has been inherited by Materialism - the philosophy of revolution.

Having failed to check the ascendancy of revolutionary social philosophy by the resort to neo-Kantianism and various other brands of distorted idealism, the official philosophy of the reactionary bourgeoisie sought to strengthen itself through the adoption of dialectics of Hegel in a perverted, emasculated form. It interprets synthesis as a compromise

31 Ibid., p. 19
between the old and the new. By denying the absolute validity of the negative function of the new, dialectic itself is falsified.\textsuperscript{32}

Describing pragmatism as the philosophy of endless means, and a ‘carnal philosophy of civilized cannibalism’, he continues: “... The doctrine of motive in individual action necessarily leads to the teleological conception of the Universe. Indeed, this spiritualist conception provides the moral sanction for the predatory doctrine of motive. The cult of endless experience necessarily makes of truth and other concepts of morality intuitive categories. Since his own experience is the only guide for the individual, the highest truth must also come from that source. Those actuated by selfish motive—those who consider every event of life, history and society to be a subjective phenomenon read an intelligent purpose, a divine will behind all the phenomena of nature. Egocentrist deprive truth of objectivity, and make it a matter of subjective experience. This being the case, spiritualism is really not the antithesis of vulgar-materialism. They are two sides of the same coin. Subjectivism, egocentricism, selfishness, predatory purpose—all these traits of vulgar materialism (together foreign to the materialist philosophy) are always, in the East as well as in the West, hidden by the lofty and sanctimonious cant of spiritualism. This real, native content of the mystic spiritualist view of life stands revealed through the practice of Fascism.\textsuperscript{33}

Roy’s essentially revolutionary, and probing self expresses itself tersely when he says:

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 20.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 22.
"... Long before Mahatma Gandhi appeared with his miraculous method of painless socio-political dentistry, the Russian-Swiss philosophy David Koigen preached what passes as Gandhism today. "Koigen confronts the 'men of revolution' with the 'men of Renaissance' in whom the positive element of life predominates over the negative, who are free from the disease of the revolutionary passion in thought and feeling, in whom all the forces and strivings vibrate together harmonically in a melodious symphony, for whom their own life is their ethics, that is to say, who need not think in terms of morality, since they are personifications of it."34

A splendid example of the capacity of Western civilization to compete with India in expressing reactionary thoughts in beautifull poetical forms! There we have the cult of superman differently stated. Fascist dictators, in order to act according to the expediency of capitalism in distress, must not be bound by any principles of morality; they must have their own codes of ethics. The practical application of all this neo spiritualist teaching and mystic ideas, is Fascism--this violent form of capitalist domination.35

In his concluding observations, Roy mentions the aberrations caused by fascist philosophy in practice: "From its very birth, Fascism, as an international phenomenon, was avowedly imperialist. Already in 1919, Mussolini wrote: "Imperialism is the eternal and immutable law of life."36

34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., p. 32.
36 Ibid., p. 101.
Fascists do not make a secret about the way to their expansionist ambition. Their cry is: "A war for space and employment." Colonies must be conquered in war which incidentally, will solve the problem of unemployment at home by consuming the masses of unemployables as cannon-fodder. In its period of decay, Capitalism cannot give employment to an increasing section of the working class. No relief can be given to the permanently unemployed, because of the falling rate of profit. Therefore, the solution of the problem of unemployment, born of the decay of Capitalism, is to be found in the abolition of the decayed system in favour of an economy free of internal contradictions. But the historical role of Fascism is to defend the outworn system, which has become antagonistic to the general welfare of the problem of unemployment in war. It has been correctly said that Fascism means war. . . 37

It was, therefore, in keeping with his convictions that World War II Roy urged India and the Congress Party to join the anti-fascist, shelving the bellicose anti-British, movement for the time being, a view to which Jawaharlal Nehru veered for a time.

The Russian Revolution as well the Chinese appeared to Roy to have halted and to have been diverted. In an article on Mao Tse-Tung, whom he had also known during his Chinese sojourn, Roy described him as one who placed ‘the Chinese reality’ above Communist utopia. This led to a generalization:

37 Ibid., pp. 101-102.
“So, the perspective is that communism in China and the rest of Asia, will take over all the ugly features of nationalism but for its own purposes.”

Scientific Politics

This phrase popularized by Roy in the forties should be understood in accord with his own formulation.

...The term scientific politics was not new. It is generally admitted that, being a branch of social science, politics is also a science. Political theories are considered to be scientific theories.

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38 Roy, M. N., Men I Met, Bombay, Radical Democratic Party, 1968, p. 130, article dated 3 September. 1951. On a similar strain was Roy's evaluation of the role of Nehru. Roy had met Nehru first in Moscow in 1927 and for a long time, there was a reciprocal admiration. But the disappointment appeared soon. As Roy saw it: Nehru confused issues by associating nationalism with vaguely conceived socialist ideals. He was instrumental in arresting the process of differentiation between the forces of progress and conservation by captivating the immaturity of the former with the lure of a socialist utopia. Conservative nationalism was rationalized as the means to social revolution. Nehru's socialist professions galvanized the antiquated cult just when it was losing its appeal to the progressive and democratic forces. Swayed by the silver-tongued oratory of the sea-green incorruptible people's tribune, they were fired with the fanaticism of reconverts, and herded back to the fold of Gandhism,” (Ibid., p. 9). This was written in 1952, and referred to the period following the failure of Gandhian civil disobedience in 1931. Roy was hoping for a leftist orientation, even a revolutionary upsurge. Just as he thought that Stalin had missed the grand chance of spreading the revolution over Europe after World War II, Roy viewed Nehru's "defection" as a lost opportunity.
Nevertheless, political practice is very largely a matter of emotion, and that is particularly so in our country. Political theories are also very largely determined by emotion, by our wishes, by our desires. In any case, we should admit in the very beginning that political practice is really a matter of emotion. Politics as a branch of social science is a science, but at the same time, political science is practiced by human beings. Human beings can be the object of scientific examination in more than one way. Yet, the basic urge of all human activity is emotional. Therefore, it is quite correct to say that political practice is very largely emotional, and it is very difficult to practice politics scientifically.39

In his plea for a philosophy of life guiding political action, Roy emphasized that otherwise ‘politics becomes a scramble for power and economics degenerates into selfishness.’ His other emphasis was on ethics in social intercourse. "Ethics must be given a high place in social philosophy including political thought, if the crying need of honesty and decency in public life is ever to be satisfied.”40

Though ‘Scientific Politics’ was published in 1940 and ‘New Orientation’ in 1946, the change in Roy’s thinking was not great. But when ‘New Humanism’ was enunciated, there was a change not only of emphasis but of fundamental thinking. Perhaps, the new line appeared to many a little divorced from realities and away from the activist's angle.

39 Roy, M. N., New Orientation, op. cit., p. 15
Roy's concept of how the dichotomy between state, society and individual could be reconciled is well stated below. He argues that: “...society is the creation of man. Society did not precede the appearance of man. Men appeared on earth as individual beings. The struggle for survival with their combined efforts resulted in the organization of society. The logical corollary of this view of the origin of society is that, since society was created by man for his own benefit and free development, social organization, however, complicated it; may be, even the social organization of our technological age, must make it possible to help every man as an individual to unfold all the potentialities latent in him... “The State is not necessarily identical, or coterminous with society. At the same time, if the State is to be regarded as the political organization of society, as it should be, then there is no reason why the State should not be coterminous with society, the conflict between man and State should be no more difficult of solution than the apparent contradiction between the individual and society.”

“The State is the political organization of society. As primitive communities grew larger and more complex, and various aspects of public life had to be coordinated, the State was created for this purpose. The function of the State was the public administration of society. Therefore, a democratic State must be coterminous with society. Today, the State has become an abstraction.’ In the written constitutions, the State is divided in three branches, the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. If that is all that the State is, then the States must exist only in the capitals and nowhere else. The State, supposed to be the political organization of society as a whole, has come to be completely divorced from the life of society, if you think of society in terms of human beings
constituting society. The individual has nothing to do with the State, that is the political administration of society. It exists only in some central place, and from there makes decisions and imposes its decisions and the people have no say in them. . . A democratic State in a large country is possible only on the basis of small organized local democracies which can remove the sense of helplessness of the individual citizens, and through which alone individual voters can exercise control over the State by means of an intelligent, active public opinion.  

Grass-roots democracy

Urging a philosophic re-orientation of the concept of democracy to enable it to 'resist the powerful onslaught of dictatorship', Roy proposed a party-less system, akin to what had been advocated by Gandhi and J.P Narayan in recent years. In fact, he dissolved his own party as such in order to build a movement to be spearheaded by devoted workers properly imbued with a rationalist approach to society's problems. But, lest it should be thought that he was reverting to Plato's ideas of philosopher-kings, he made it clear the citizen as individual will rule in his order of things.

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43 The step was taken on 29 December 1948 and it was decided to form a comprehensive cultural-political movement. Its programme was "to build up a society of free, rational and moral men, where no impediment will remain to the unlimited development of human personality."
What is suggested is not ad hoc establishment of a rule by Pareto’s "intellectual elite", but such an organization of the democratic society as will give unlimited scope for the unfolding of the creative genius of man, and place executive power of the State under the control of free intellectuals -free from the influence of vested interests and also from the vagaries of the collective ego so very susceptible to demagogic appeals. For this purpose, democratic practice should not remain limited to periodical elections. Even if elections are by universal suffrage, and the executive is also elected, democracy will still remain a formality. Delegation of power, even for a limited period, stultifies democracy. Government for the people can never be fully a Government of the people and by the people, and the people can have a hand in the Government of the country only when the pyramidal structure of the State will be raised on a foundation of organized local democracy. The primary function of these will be to make individual citizens fully conscious of their sovereign right and enable them to exercise the right intelligently. The broad basis of the democratic State, coinciding with the entire society, will be composed of a network of political schools, so to say. The right of recall and referendum will enable organized local democracy to wield a direct and effective control of the entire state machinery. They alone will have the right to nominate candidates for election. Democracy will be placed above parties representing collective egos. Individual men will have the chance of being recognized. Party loyalty and party patronage of other forms of nepotism will no longer eclipse intellectual independence, moral integrity and detached wisdom.44

**Strength of Counter-revolutionary Forces**

Roy's wide experience made him an alert advocate of revolution, but he was careful in later life to emphasize the pitfalls.

"... Fascism has been defeated in the battle-fields. Politically also, in many countries, it has been very largely weakened. Yet, an examination of the world situation, an unbiased appreciation of events, and a realistic view of the perspective of developments, which is opening up before us from day to day, do not allow us to be very optimistic. That will be clear to us when we come to the particular point on the agenda. However, the situation outside our country is not altogether unmitigated... The struggle between progress and reaction, between good and evil, if I may use this old-fashioned term, is still going on, and the chances may be appraised as fifty-fifty. That is a hopeful position for the contemporary world. If revolutionary crises, which, we have been taught, make revolutions inevitable, the chances are usually fifty-fifty. Any revolutionary crisis is also a counter-revolutionary crisis. The counter-revolution is as likely to triumph as the revolution. In the modern world, the forces of counter-revolution are incomparably stronger than the forces of revolution. That is a lesson of experience, which should compel every revolutionary not only to be sceptical about his theoretical presuppositions and postulates but also...?; if he is bold enough and is a man with scientific spirit, he will be persuaded even to reject some of his cherished ideals.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., pp. 20-21.
The liquidation of the Comintern was an admission, according to Roy, that the old way of revolution was ‘closed’. This matter Roy had also discussed in his ‘The Communist International’:

“... The development of capitalist economy did not take the pattern set by Karl Marx; the modern State is too powerful to be overthrown as at the time of the French Revolution or of the Russian Revolution; the modern weapons and the modern technique of military operations have rendered the old technique of revolution - seizure of power through insurrection - impossible. That being so, if a radical reconstruction of society was still a historical necessity, there should be other methods of attaining the object, a new way, or new ways, of revolution must be discovered. Fanatically holding on to an untenable faith won't do. It is permissible for revolutionaries to be intelligent as well as indomitable.”

“...The most red-hot revolutionaries no longer go to the barricades, but to the polling booths. Parliamentary electoral campaigns have replaced insurrection. The demand for proletarian dictatorship has been quietly set aside; Communist Parties now are participating in coalition governments with non-proletarian parties. They are travelling the new way of revolution, even in countries occupied by the Red Army. There, proletarian dictatorships could be established any day. But they would most probably precipitate an international clash, which might put an end to all revolution. Therefore, revolutionary dogmas are discarded.”

“The success of revolution depends on three conditions. One of them is the breakdown of the established State. What does that mean? It
means decomposition of the social basis of the established political regime. When the particular social order decomposes, all its members do not go over to the camp of counter-revolution. Decomposition of a social order creates an atmosphere of psychological confusion, helplessness, hopelessness, frustration. Revolution opens up a perspective; so does counter-revolution also. Now, if revolution is better than counter-revolution and offers greater freedom, and if human nature is not essentially bad, then, in a great social crisis, the perspective of revolutionary changes should have a stronger appeal for all but the morally depraved. If we believed that the human being is a thinking animal, then we should also believe that, in that crisis, revolutionaries have at least as much chance of winning over the atomized members of the dying social order as counter-revolution. Only, revolutionaries should have patience and perseverence, instead of being swayed by passions like hatred."

“. . Revolution and counter-revolution are both an the order of the day. If force is the deciding factor, then the dice are loaded against revolution. Its success is conditional upon the ability of its votaries to act as the personification of the high ideals cherished by humanity since the dawn of civilization, as the defenders of imperishable human values. That is the new way of revolution: revolution by consent, or by persuasion, if you like. But that will not be persuasion by propaganda, but persuasion by history…”

“In a postscript to an article written on the eve of the Calcutta Conference of our party at the end of 1944, I wrote that, whatever might be the relation of forces in Europe at that time, revolution would march
forward but no longer under the banner of Communism. Four years earlier, I had written that Communism was among the first casualties of the war. The march of events in Europe during the previous decade should have driven any critical student of history to that conclusion...."46

Economic and Political Blue-prints:

During the militant anti-fascist stage of Roy's activities in India, especially those related to world war II, two documents were produced giving concrete shape to his socio-economic ideas of reconstruction. In fact, he was clear in his mind that, though prepared in the Indian context, the People's Plan for Economic Development (1944) and Draft of the Constitution of Free India (1945) were not meant only for India. Regarding the Constitution, he said:

"It is offered as the model of new democracy, with the hope that progressive world opinion, tormented by doubts and pessimism about the future of mankind, and haunted by the dreadful spectre of a new war, will give it a careful consideration."47

He was also experienced and honest enough to confess that none of the ideas in these schemes could be manipulation-proof, nor could the future lines of development be predicted, with so many imponderables in human organization.

Briefly, the principles guiding these two documents were summarized in the theses adopted in 1946 by the Party at his instance. Some of these are quoted below:

46 Ibid., pp. 52, 53, 54-5, 57.
“Dictatorship tends to perpetuate itself. Planned economy under political dictatorship disregards individual freedom on the pleas of efficiency, collective effort and social progress. Consequently, a higher form of democracy in the socialist society, as it is conceived at present, becomes an impossibility. Dictatorship defeats its professed end.”

“The defects of formal parliamentary democracy have also been exposed in experience. They result from the delegation of power. To make democracy effective, power must always remain vested in the people, and there must be ways and means for the people to wield sovereign power effectively, not periodically, but from day to day. Atomized individual citizens are powerless for all practical purposes, and most of the time. . . The alternative to parliamentary democracy is not dictatorship; it is organized democracy in the place of the formal democracy of powerless atomized individual citizens. The parliament should be the apex of a pyramidal structure of the State reared on the base of an organized democracy composed of a countrywide network of People's Committees. The political organization of society (the State) will be coincident with the entire society, and consequently, the State will be under a standing democratic control.”

“The economy of the new social order will be based on production for use and distribution with reference to human needs. Its political organization excludes delegation of power which in practice, deprives the people of effective power; it will be based on the direct participation of the entire adult population through the People's Committees. Its culture will be based on universal dissemination of knowledge and on minimum control and maximum scope for, and
incentive to, scientific and creative activities. The new society, being founded on reason and science, will necessarily be planned. But it will be planning with the freedom of the individual as its main purpose. The new society will be democratic, politically, economically as well as culturally. Consequently, it will be a democracy which can defend itself.\textsuperscript{48}

The culmination of this line of thinking led to the moral and revolutionary doctrine of politics becoming a vehicle of service and development and not a game of exercise of power.

\textbf{Politics without Power}

One of Roy’s cardinal tenets was to establish organized democracy leading to a regime of politics without power. He went on record: "So long as parties stand between the state and the people, the latter can never be the sovereign power."\textsuperscript{49} The same reasoning is elaborated elsewhere:

“By merging man into the masses, politicians and social engineers have created a monster which responds riotously only to appeals to passion - hatred, greed, lust for power. Man has been debased to the unthinking beast, to serve the purposes of power politics. Political parties need votes to come to power. It is easier to sway the people by appeals to their emotions and prejudices than to their reason. The more backward a people, the more easily they are swayed by appeals to


emotions and prejudices than to their reason. Therefore, to keep the people in backwardness has become the result of modern democratic politics. They say that power corrupts. But it is believed that power corrupts only the corrupt people. The incorruptible have never any chance to come to power. Therefore, democracy has everywhere degenerated into demagogy. The other alternative of capturing power through violent revolution, and then imposing social changes from above, has also not produced any better results.\textsuperscript{50}

A clear statement of his reasoning was lately made by a close associate, V.M. Tarkunde, a retired judge of the Bombay High Court.

“... Roy was of the view that delegation of power should as far as possible be replaced by direct exercise of power by the people themselves. For this purpose, he suggested that the people in villages and towns should be organized in primary democracies which he called, People’s Committees. These People's Committees should have a constitutional status of organs of People's power. The Parliament should be an apex based on a network of such People’s Committees.”

“It will be noticed that Roy's idea of organized democracy was not confined to rural areas, nor did it visualize the disappearance of Central Government. It implied political decentralization and a fair degree of direct exercise of power by the people themselves. . .”\textsuperscript{51}

Roy appears to have developed these ideas as early as in 1936. However, as soon as it became clear to him that India would attain independence as a result of the defeat of the Axis Powers in the last World War, he prepared a Draft Constitution of India which was published in December, 1944. His idea of organized democracy was given a concrete shape in the Draft Constitution.

By 1947, Roy had realized that the existence of political parties was inconsistent with the concept of organized democracy. The main reason is that political parties strive for the power which is delegated by the people in a parliamentary democracy, whereas organized democracy implies the direct existence of political power by the people themselves. The functioning of political parties leads to party government, whereas organized democracy implies people's government. Roy did not imply that political parties should be dissolved by force, much less that they should be replaced by one party. He felt that as people's power grew in a country, the existing political parties would become increasingly irrelevant. He placed these views before a Study Camp of the Radical Democratic Party held in Dehradun in May, 1947, and his lectures in that Camp and on subsequent occasions were later published in a book entitled Politics, Power and Parties. These and allied views led to the dissolution of the Radical Democratic Party in December, 1948.52

The same article gives the social and economic concomitants of his political philosophy.

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In the economic sphere, Roy's ideas of planning for India were given a concrete shape in the ‘People's Plan for Economic Development of India’ which was published in April, 1944. Contrary to the then prevailing opinion, the People's Plan gave the first priority in economic development to agriculture, second to consumers’ goods industry, and third to basic industry. In justifying this order of priorities, the People's Plan said, "Whatever the development of industries that we can visualize within a period of ten years, agriculture will still continue to provide employment to a major portion of our population. That being the case, it is essential that labour employed in it must be made far more productive than what it is at present."53

Another idea in the economic sphere which Roy suggested in and after 1949 was that of "cooperative economy" as an alternative to both the capitalist economy characterized by private ownership and the socialist economy characterized by State ownership. Roy developed the view that land and industry should be owned by autonomous cooperative associations, and not either by individuals as in a capitalist society or by the State as proposed by "scientific" socialists. Cooperative economy, Roy said, "will be a really socialized economy without the evils of regimentation and bureaucratization." Roy went on to say: "State ownership of the means of production, called nationalization, and State control of the economic as well as other aspects of social life, means so much concentration of power as rules out the possibility of democratic freedom. An autonomous cooperative economic organization

53 Ibid.
of society will prevent political power becoming totalitarian, and the State the dreaded Leviathan."54

There have been critics who consider Roy's denunciation of power as a 'futile exercise in politics'. One of them even warns that Roy's organized democracy may lead to a paternal type of government. He adds:

"... Can a theory that holds that the individual self and the social self lend to coalesce, stop short of making the state dominant? The sophistries of Roy's political management are presumably dangerous because they are likely to end in that dominance. There is reason to disbelieve that in Roy's direct democracy, the devices of propagandists and the art of advertiser will not be used to make palatable to the citizens policies about which he may in fact have serious doubts."55

Philosopher of Indian Renaissance

Finally, we enter a controversial area. In what way was Roy a non-conformist, a rebel who had cut himself off from Indian traditional approaches as well as Western liberalism - a philosopher of the Indian Renaissance? It would depend on how you spell out the idea. The idea of the Indian Renaissance, in this way, can be linked up with the Renaissance historiography in general. The Orientalists consciously drew a parallel between the discoveries of the two antiquities, European and Indian, though in different ages. The European enthusiasm for the

54 Ibid., Roy is quoted from his Eastern Economist pamphlet - Radical Humanism", pp. 54-55.
newly discovered riches of Sanskrit literature and for the pristine Indo-European civilization of the Vedic era, in turn was ploughed back to India leading to her self-awareness of her own Renaissance.\textsuperscript{56} Roy, of course, belonged to an age when these issues had been resolved, but he was no revivalist. To him, for instance, the concept of Renaissance enunciated by Tagore had no appeal. For the poet had observed that "the great ages of Renaissance in history were those when man suddenly discovered the seeds of thought in the granary of the past. The unfortunate people who have lost the harvest of their past have lost their present age. They have missed their seed for cultivation and go begging for their bare livelihood."\textsuperscript{57} Roy was in a way one of such unfortunates, but he not only did not have to beg but blazed a new trail in theorizing and developing a scientific approach to all mundane problems. He was a harbinger of a new Renaissance, in action as well as philosophy. Competent scholars who had known him have gone so far as to say that he was "the first philosopher of Modern India... integrating the fundamentals of science and the moral experience of man." While Indian thought had moved within the limits set by traditional texts like the \textit{Bhagawad Gita}, Roy became the "only thinker who could transcend these limits and offer a philosophy of life, fresh, rich and abiding." Self-educated and learning from life's varied experiences in four continents, he towered over his contemporaries in originality, critical faculty, revolutionary fervour and even in physique. Yet, after a stormy though lonely career in Indian politics (1937-40), he established, in


1946, as a characteristic gesture, the Indian Renaissance Institute at Dehra Dun, to develop, organize and conduct a movement to be called the Indian Renaissance Movement, whose object would be:

- to rescue the positive contribution of ancient Indian thought and learning so that they may inspire a great intellectual and cultural resurgence;
- to discover what is true and imperishable in the Indian tradition;
- to organize historical research with a critical and scientific spirit to rescue the intellectual attainments and cultural traditions of India from the ruins of bigotry, orthodoxy and, ignorance;
- to delve into the past so as to discover an inspiration for the future;
- to revaluate old values in the light of modern knowledge and experience;
- to elaborate a system of philosophy adequate to present problems and future developments;
- to examine all current traditions of thought and behaviour as well as problems with a critical and scientific attitude;
- to spread the spirit of enlightenment, Humanism, and search for the truth.58

This was evidently a cultural-educational venture, the legacy of a war-weary thinker who appeared to be keen on delving even into ancient India lore. In 1948, he dissolved his political party and concentrated on the humanist movement.

58 The Indian Renaissance Institute located at 13 Mohini Road, Dehradun, (U.P. India), has a research library, comprising mainly of Roy’s books and papers.
Were the researches into the Indian tradition with a view to "find an inspiration for the future", written into the objectives of the Indian Renaissance Institute in 1946, meant to be a genuine search for basic (if any) Indian insights? One does not know. But Roy, it appears, was finding himself back home, though certainly not to his priestly boyhood religious outlook, mentioned by a village friend of the early days! All the same in an unauthenticated account of his visits during 1908-09 to two Vaishnava Swamis, and in later references in his Letters from Jail, to his nostalgic, contacts with Hindu religious practices, one notes also Roy's complex 'atavistic soul'. It is that, as a conscious thinker, he did not think that "there was any synthesis in Indian culture as such", a point he elaborated in his 'India in Transition and Materialism'. The traces of free thinking in early Indian lokayata and other systems flowered again in Buddhist thought, to be later submerged by "the arrogant challenge of Brahmanism". It was the older, empirical tradition he sought to revive through the researches of his Institute.

To him, the Renaissance in Europe was a 'revolt of man against God.' By going through Roy's speeches and writings, we get an inkling of what sort of a Renaissance and what results he might have envisaged from the line of research to be followed at the Institute. For instance, speaking soon after, to party members, on the possibility of filling in gaps in social and political history by 'deductions from the history of thought,' he observed that:

“Movements of thought always preceded epoch-making social and political events. Let it be repeated that, at no point in history, ideas

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were divinely inspired. From any point in their history, ideas can be traced back to their biological origin, which is embedded in the background of the physical Universe. To illustrate my argument, I may refer to the history of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Both were considered to be bourgeois movements. That is to say, these ideological ferments were produced by the rise of the commercial classes. That is simply not true, historically. Genoa was the most prosperous trading Republic of the time; it did not produce a single man of the Renaissance. It was untouched by the spirit of Humanism. So was Venice until the late Renaissance. On the other hand, Florence, where the great men of the Renaissance were born, was not a trading Republic. The Medics were not bourgeois; socially, they were classical representatives of mediaevalism. There was no connecting link, no causal connection, between Renaissance Humanism and the rising bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie of the time did not support the Renaissance. Therefore, some modern sociologists have condemned the Renaissance as a reactionary aristocratic movement. But if we want to regard history as a progress process, we shall have to look for the source of inspiration of the Renaissance. It was in the ancient pagan culture of Greece and Rome. The Renaissance was the revolt of man against God; as such, it heralded the modern civilization and the philosophy of freedom, Materialism.  

Perhaps Roy was keen on picking up the threads of India's abortive Renaissance of the nineteenth century and bringing about the unfulfilled revolution in society to be preceded by a real re-thinking and

60 Roy, M. N., Beyond Communism, op. cit., p. 52.
re-education on a basic all-inclusive level. It is clear that Roy did not believe in cultural chauvinism, obscurantism and revivalism. He did not subscribe to the oft-repeated claims of India's cultural mission and even characterized Vivekananda's statements on the subject as ‘cultural imperialism’. He wanted a movement like the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century France to pave the way for his type of people's rule: a resurgence of the mind freed from past cant. The age old structures and traditions are responsible for the weakness of Asian societies: “A critical examination of traditional cultural values, an iconoclastic attitude towards the gods of legendary past and a realization of the necessity of pulling down fossilized social institutions will eliminate the weaknesses and set the Asiatic peoples on the road to freedom and progress.”

His faith in man's rationalism, however, was conditional upon economic as well as educational factors making a moral advance possible. Thus, it was not only in the realm of thought, but also the material realm that Roy wanted progress to secure the new humanism of which he was the prophet. But, alas, his was a lonely voice almost forgotten in the hurly-burly of catch phrases abounding all around.

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61 The Radical Humanist, September, 1976.
62 Beyond Communism, Thesis 16: A social renaissance can come only through determined and widespread endeavour to educate the people as regards the principles of freedom and rational cooperative living. The people will be organized into effective democratic bodies to build up the social political foundation of the post revolutionary order. Social revolution requires in rapidly increasing number men of the new renaissance, and a rapidly expanding system of People's Committees, and an organic coordination of both. The programme of revolution will similarly be based on the principles of freedom, reason and social harmony. It will mean elimination of every form of monopoly and vested interest in the regulation of social life."
Roy has been regarded as an atheist. God had certainly no place in his new materialist or new humanist way of life. Yet gradually, after his return to India late in life, Roy established contacts with old friends, close relatives and co-workers. He could thus not only recall but perhaps also feel a subtle affinity to his roots which seemed to have been severed during his wanderjahre. It is interesting to note that, in the course of a talk in Bombay in 1950, he had evinced some tolerance for the man of religion:

“Religion originated as a hypothesis... There is before us some phenomenon which we cannot understand, and we have to assume an explanation... Religion was the primitive man's innate rationality... Anthropomorphic gods were a necessity for man's mind at a certain time of human development...”

“Today, it is not necessary to assume that the concept of human sovereignty, the notion of and the confidence in man's endless creativity are inherent, innate in man, because of the simple fact that man is the highest expression of the process of human evolution.”

Again: “Some people have come to the conclusion that man cannot be moral by himself, that moral judgment, moral sensibility are something mystic which come from somewhere outside man... As a matter of fact, while myself holding an entirely different view, I would certainly rather choose a religious man who is kind and loyal and decent than one of the twentieth-century Neanderthalers. If some degree of
moral sense could be awakened in public life on the authority of
religion, one should have no objection.”

This pragmatic attitude could well be reconciled with Vivekananda's statement before a London audience: “The old religions
said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion
says that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not
selfish faith, because the Vedanta, again, is the doctrine of oneness. . .
Love for yourselves means love for all, love for animals, love for
everything, for you are all one.”

Admired by a handful, neglected by many, misunderstood by
most, the mind and works of M. N. Roy, a wanderer in charted and
uncharted ways, adds a new dimension to modern life and thought,
especially in the Indian context.

Several factors influenced Roy's sweeping intellectual reappraisal
in 1946. First, Roy's Radical Democratic Party, established in opposition
to the Congress, was resoundingly defeated in the Indian general
elections held throughout the country in the spring of 1946. If the
historical importance for India of these general elections was to
demonstrate that the League controlled the Muslims and the Congress
the Hindus, then their importance for Roy was to show that his party,
given the nation's polarization, was nowhere in sight. It meant the end of

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63 Reproduced in The Radical Humanist, Roy Memorial Number, 25
January, 1954. also Swami Agehananda Bharati, The Ochre Robe
(Allen and Unwin, 1961), pp. 185-86, 275-76.
64 Practical Vedanta (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1947), p. 16, being
the Swami's lectures in London in 1896.
65 Sisirkumar Ghose, Mystics and Society (Bombay: Asia Publishing
House), 1968, p. 62.
his political career. A second factor which affected his thinking concerned the direction and behaviour of the world communist movement under Stalin. Abroad, the brutal aspects of his leadership were becoming crudely clear at home, Roy had long been under attack from the Communist Party of India and it became evident that neither practical nor theoretical reconciliation with Communism was possible. Roy expressed the nature of his dilemma in stark terms when he told his followers that they must beware of ‘two psychoses' prevalent in India, those of Communism and of nationalism. ‘Radicalism', he declared, ‘is not comouflaged Communism. We shall have to get over the major nationalist psychosis as well as the minor Communist psychosis, if we believe that we have something new to contribute to the political thought and practice, not only for our country, but for the world as a whole.”

An ideologist abhor, nothing more than a moral vacuum, or what Roy liked to deplore as the 'moral and cultural crisis’ of our time. For such a vacuum or 'crisis' suggests basic uncertainty over the rightness and wrongness of fundamental moral values, and it is the element of moral certainty which the ideologists seek above all else. In this respect, Gandhi was no less an ideologist than Roy; but whereas Gandhi had achieved certainty on such matters during his experience in South Africa, Roy underwent a series of such crises, the last and most serious in 1945-46. The final phase of his life, from 1946-53, represents a period of gradual resolution in which Roy delved deeply into his personal resources, trying to form a coherent pattern of thought to meet the demands before him. A close examination of Roy's prolific writings during this period could tell us much about problems relating to the

intellectual between tradition and modernity or the relation of ideology to the quest for personal identity. The main purpose of the concluding section of this essay will merely be to suggest how Roy, while trying to purge himself of the 'nationalist psychosis', nevertheless moved far away from Marxism into a way of thinking which is significantly akin to that of Gandhi.

On 16 August 1946, while Roy, residing in Dehra Dun, was appraising and reappraising his New Orientation, and Gandhi was busily commenting on Nature Cure from Sevagram, there occurred in Calcutta the worst catastrophe that British India had known. The Muslim League's 'Direct Action Day' in Calcutta was accompanied by unprecedented communal riots: the great Calcutta killing lasted until 20 August, and in these four tragic days, 4000 Hindus and Muslims were slaughtered. The event marks a horrific watershed in the study of the Partition; and its consequences were to have a profound effect upon Roy's view of Gandhi.

Gandhi's reaction to the Calcutta killings, unlike that of Nehru or Jinnah, was to perceive immediately the disastrous social implications and then to act courageously, in an attempt to quell the violence just as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre twenty-seven years earlier had shocked Gandhi into realizing the injustice of the Raj, so the Calcutta killings forced him to see the abyss of violence within his own society. When he learned of the appalling scope of the Calcutta tragedy, he exclaimed, 'Would that the violence of Calcutta were sterilized and did not become a signal for its spread all over!' However, when the virus spread into Noakhali and Bihar, he moved fast and effectively. The ensuing fifteen
months, culminating in his assassination, contain the finest hours of his entire career. During this period, he scored two brilliant triumphs for his method of satyagraha in his Calcutta and Delhi fasts against communal violence. Less dramatic than these, but equally impressive, were his 'walking tours' in Noakhali and his ingenious use of the prayer meeting to restore trust in a series of strife-torn villages. These final acts moved nearly everyone in India - British, Hindus, and Muslims, alike--to a higher appreciation of Gandhi's greatness. Roy in this case was no exception.

'What changed Roy's attitude [towards Gandhi]', writes Philip Spratt, 'was Gandhi's campaign against the communal massacres, which came at the time of his own final disillusionment with Communist political methods.' Spratt observes the similarity in Roy’s and Gandhi's mutual opposition to Partition, and the common spirit of their response to the communal riots. He remarks that on hearing the news of Gandhi's assassination, 'Roy was deeply moved ... henceforth a new respect for Gandhi showed in his writing.' There was indeed a striking change in Roy's attitude towards Gandhi following the assassination. In two articles of February and April 1948, entitled 'The message of the Martyr' and 'Homage to the Martyr' Roy sets forth for the first time the extent of his ideological agreement with Gandhi. He now discovers that Gandhi's revivalist nationalism was neither the essential nor the greatest element in Gandhi's teaching. Essentially, [Gandhi's message] is a moral, humanist, cosmopolitan appeal... The lesson of the martyrdom of the Mahatma is that the nobler core of his message could not be reconciled with the intolerant cult of nationalism, which he also preached. Unfortunately, this contradiction in his ideas and ideals was not realized.
by the Mahatma until the last days of his life. In Gandhi's final phase, what Roy repeatedly calls the 'moral and humanist essence of his message' appeared, and it is precisely this which is 'needed by India never so very urgently as today'. Thus, Indians can do justice to their Mahatma when they learn 'to place the moral and humanist core of his teachings above the carnal cult of nationalism and power-politics.'67

There are those who argue that Roy's tributes to Gandhi after the assassination were merely sentimental outbursts, entirely inconsistent with the main line of his thought. This argument is mistaken for several reasons. First, when Roy was attacked by some of his readers for calling Gandhi a humanist and cosmopolitan, he admitted that he had written the article while 'deeply moved' by the crime, 'in an emotional state'. But then he went on to defend his position with vehemence, deploring the 'insensitivity of the logical pursuits' who attacked him, and refusing categorically to retract a word that he had written. Gandhi, he insisted in this later article, 'sincerely wanted politics to be guided by moral considerations' and his 'endeavour to introduce morality into political practice was the positive core of Gandhism.'68 This made Gandhi, like Roy, a humanist. A second reason why this argument is mistaken has already been seen: glimpses of Roy's movement away from Marx and towards Gandhi can be found as early as in the prison diaries, and are clearly manifest two years before the assassination in the ideological changes of his 'new orientation'. Finally, far from Roy's tribute to Gandhi being a sporadic outburst, his changed attitude takes a permanent form in his later writings; as Philip Spratt remarked, 'a new

67 Independent India, 22-02-1948, p. 67.
68 Ibid., 18-04-1948, p. 176.
respect for Gandhi now infuses his thoughts. This can be seen clearly in an article which Roy wrote on Gandhi a full year after the assassination. In this piece, Roy pays respect to 'the immortality of [Gandhi's] message' and then sums up the significance of Gandhi's thought in these remarkable words: 'Practice of the precept of purifying politics with truth and non-violence alone will immortalise the memory of the Mahatma. Monuments, mortar and marble will perish, but the light of the sublime message of truth and non-violence will shine forever.' The passage signifies a total departure from Roy's earlier denunciation of Gandhi. Equally important, though, is the relationship which Roy suggests here between the values of truth and non-violence on the one hand, and the goal of purifying politics on the other. For the formation of this conceptual relationship indicates a nexus of ideas in Roy's mind familiar to Gandhi's way of thinking, especially on the themes of politics and power, and the relation of the means to the ends of action.

'The implication of the doctrine of non-violence', Roy now believes, 'is the moral dictum that the end does not justify the means. That is the core of the Mahatma's message which is not compatible with power-politics. The Mahatma wanted to purify politics; that can be done only by raising political practice above the vulgar level of a scramble for power'. This passage represents those ideas which Roy began to develop at a feverish pace in the last five years of his life. In a characteristically Gandhian manner, Roy wants now to purify politics by purging it of both the 'struggle for power' and the party system itself. 'Humanist politics,' he says, must be a moral force, 'it must get out of the

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69 Ibid., 30-01-1949, p. 37.  
70 Ibid., 22-02-1948, p. 67.
struggle for power of the political parties. Only in these circumstances can political power be transformed into moral authority. Leadership must come not from corrupt party bosses, but rather, from 'detached individuals, that is spiritually free men [who cannot be corrupted by power. It is possible for the individual man to attain spiritual freedom, to be detached and thus to be above corruption. Such men should not hanker after power. Thus preoccupation with the corruptibility of political power and the need for establishing a moral basis for leadership was, as Roy acknowledged, at the heart of Gandhi's thought. Moreover, their common preoccupation emerges from a similar set of ideological assumptions about the moral nature of men, and the possibility of creating a perfect social order of spiritually free men. The implications of this way of thinking for politics are far reaching: they range from a vision of the ideal political leader as a karmayogin type, above the lust for power, occupying a position of pure moral authority, to a theory of social organization which urges party-less politics, and a highly decentralized system of government. This is a way of thinking which is fraught with paradoxes. There is a strong element of elitism or moral authoritarianism mixed with a marked strain of noisy populism but a peculiar variety of Indian anarchism. Yet it is this paradoxical quality which makes the ideology of modern India so fascinating: as appealing, in its way, as the equally paradoxical thought of Calvin, or Rousseau, or Marx.

It should be stressed in conclusion that the perception of a great tradition of ideas in modern India need not detract from the variety of

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72 Ibid., pp. 81-81.
little traditions of thought which co-exist beside it. Nor are the latter necessarily subsumed within the former. There is much in Roy's thought, for example, that is not encompassed by Gandhi. Radical Humanism, as set forth by Roy and developed by his associates, cannot be fairly presented as merely a variation on Gandhism. For Roy's persistent emphasis on atheistic humanism, rationalism, and materialism must distinguish him from Gandhi, indeed, from any other tradition of thought in modern India. The focus of the present study has been on an ideological movement of congruence and not divergence. It is this movement of thought, shared to a notable degree by such apparently divergent figures as Gandhi and Roy, that can be seen as the dominant ideology of modern India.