Chapter 5

Historical Phases of the Radical Humanist Movement

5.1 Introduction and Aims and Objectives

The Radical Humanist Movement was formally launched on 30 December 1948 after the dissolution of RDP at All India Conference of RDP held in Calcutta from 26-30 December 1948. This decision was in fact a logical deduction of abandonment of power politics and acceptance of 'Twenty Two Thesis' on Radical democracy two years ago in 1946. At the Calcutta conference Thesis 19 and 20 were amended deleting all references to the party. Radical Democrats were described as 'the guides, friends and philosophers of the people', who must be 'spiritually free men', whose objective would be not to capture political power, but initiate a renaissance or a philosophical movement without which grassroots democracy would only remain a dream. Roy now advocated 'party-less politics'. His ideas on Partyless democracy are contained in his book titled, 'Politics, Power and Parties' which was published posthumously in 1960.

As a result of accepting the philosophy of Radical Humanism, RDP had already ceased to function as a political party in the traditional sense and had been engaged in developing a comprehensive social movement for freedom since 1946. Roy had become an uncompromising critic of power politics as power becomes an end in itself for those trying to capture it through the instrument of party. About parties Roy wrote 'Politicians and Social engineers have created a monster which responds riotously only to appeals of passion, hatred, greed, lust for power', (Roy 1955: 273). Man's entity in such a game is no more than that of an unthinking beast and power seekers use him merely as a means to serve their purpose, Roy abhorred any system, any tradition, any
institution that debased the thinking individual to the level of unthinking, passive entity because the humanist Roy was upholder of individual freedom, individual dignity, and individual creativity. In fact ‘The very essence of RHM is to promote the unfoldment of all the creative potentialities of men, to bring them togethr in a spirit of cooperation so as to increase the strength of our efforts and to encourage the rise and growth of free institutions in and through which they may live and develop themselves. This is not a mere altruistic or humanitarian movement, it is on the other hand a struggle against the evil leading to the degeneration of the entire humanity’ (Joshi 1947:7).

RHM inspired by the philosophy of Scientific Humanism aimed at bringing about revolutionary changes in all aspects of human life which would create an atmosphere in which individual will exist as free, thinking individual not merely on physical plane but also at the level of emotion and intellect. Scientific humanism, said Roy, ‘is a comprehensive and complete Philosophy arisen out of the needs and requirements of man in our time and capable of providing intellectual satisfaction, emotional fulfillment and an incentive to activity. Being integrated in its approach and outlook, it indicates the way of transformation of every aspect of our life, and urges that all such transformations should be measured in terms of their liberating significance for the individual’ (Roy 1949: 1-2).

Launching of the movement for freedom and cultural renaissance did not by any stretch of imagination, mean their withdrawal from Politics. They only began to look at it with a new approach - a humanist approach. Radicals henceforth pursued politics with the objective, not of capturing power but of educating the people. Radicals now came to believe that politics need not necessarily be associated with power. They did no longer believe in the indispensability of power for reconstruction of society. As one of the main actors of RH observes:
The tremendous increase in power of the state, thanks to modern Science and technology, has gone to greatly increase the lure for power. Possibilities of liberation at the hands of political parties is completely ruled out. That precisely is the reason why the Radical Humanists insist that political activity, if it were to have any liberating significance, must be kept scrupulously aloof from the game of power. (Independent India, 16 January 1947, p15)

Thus we see RHM was in fact a movement for freedom whose primary task was to initiate the renaissance movement in the country, which would lay the intellectual and moral foundation on which an abiding structure of democratic freedom could be raised. Through the cultural renaissance or philosophical revolution Radicals wanted to usher in a spiritual upsurge in the country similar to European Renaissance as we have already discussed in the last chapter. Here it is important to point out that Roy recalling Plato believed that education is the essence and condition of democracy as it is only through education, through discussions and exchange of ideas on the basis of reason and modern scientific knowledge, that the thought process of individuals can be transformed and they can grow up into thinking individuals - into new men, spiritually free and detached individuals without any vested interests.

Roy devoted a good part of his time and energy to expounding the principles of his philosophy and developing the Radical Humanist Movement. At a time when country was plunged into worst kind of communal killings which were a consequence of strong national cum communal feelings of the people, where human reason, intelligence and morality were totally at a discount, the task of creating spiritually free individuals who would 'neither be Indians, nor Europeans, but Humanists and Cosmopolitans' (Roy 1947: 12) seemed quite utopian even to some radicals even though they were convinced about their philosophy at theoretical level. The feeling that renaissance work even if it did contribute to the promotion of revolution of their
conception will take centuries to consummate it, alienated a number of radicals especially the ones who were active in organizational matters during party days. An average member of the party incapable of accomplishing the renaissance work or the task of being the educator of the educators - could no longer conceive of playing a concrete positive role in the changed situation and came to believe that the new orientation phase marks a sharp break with their past activities. This resulted in a kind of inactivity particularly on the part of those who were not in favour of dissolution of RDP and were involved actively in political activity. Nature of political work and renaissance work attract different personality types was realized by Radicals themselves. As Nigam (1948) points out, our experience shows that as a result of our political activities we have attracted largely one type of people with some exceptions. As a result of Renaissance activities the RHM attracted quite a different type again with some possible exceptions. One cannot possibly write off one in favor of the other. The one is more of a Humanist; the other is more of a Jacobin. Although the Humanist and Jacobinist qualities need not be mutually exclusive, we nevertheless find these differences in quite a marked degree. The problem is to bridge the gulf. 'A good humanist has to become a good Jacobin and a good Jacobin needs developing into a good humanist'. Thus we see with the dissolution of RDP and abandonment of power oriented party politics, new objectives were laid down with the launching of the RHM.

**Aims and Objectives of RHM**

Religion has played a dominant role in all spheres of our life and as we have seen that in Roy’s scheme of things, a long delayed social revolution was a historical necessity, as without it, political freedom alone would be meaningless. He believed no nation could prosper and progress as long as the productive masses constituting its overwhelmingly majority languish in economic bankruptcy, social stagnation, intellectual backwardness and
culture reaction. RHM as a social movement is inspired by the philosophy of scientific humanism.

"Scientific humanism" said Roy 'is a comprehensive and complete philosophy arising out of the needs and requirements of man in our time and capable of providing intellectual satisfaction, emotional fulfillment and an incentive to activity. Being integrated in its approach and outlook, it indicates the way of transformation of every aspect of our life, and urges that all such transformation should be measured in terms of their liberating significance for the individual (Roy 1949:15).

In keeping with its philosophy, RHM aims at bringing about revolutionary changes in various aspects of human life, which would create an atmosphere in which individuals will exist as free, thinking individuals, not merely on physical plane but also at the level of emotion and intellect. Therefore the objectives and programs put forward by him and his associates for RHM aimed at bringing about revolutionary changes in all spheres of social life. So Humanist revolution as envisaged by RHM does not aim at destroying the existing organizations and various institutional structures of the society as, mere destruction can not be the aim of any movement, much less the aim of a humanist movement. Also, humanist revolution does not aim at mere reform of the existing organizations and institutional structures as this is not merely a reformative movement but is revolutionary in character. And more importantly it is interested neither in capturing power, nor in replacing one governing elite by another. On the basis of various writings by Roy and Royists, speeches delivered by them and discussions held at their study camps and conferences one could place the goals of RHM broadly in four main categories as follows:

1. To bring about what Roy calls the philosophical revolution by initiating a Renaissance movement in the Country,
1. Bringing about structural changes in the existing political structure, by establishing new power base (peoples power) thereby replacing Parliamentary democracy by radical democracy.

3. Bringing about structural changes in economic system, cooperative economy replacing the existing economy by more and more decentralizing it.

4. Establishment of a society where individual will be at the center and values of freedom, equality and fraternity will be supreme.

The primary task of the movement is primarily cultural, basically to initiate the renaissance movement in the country, which would lay the intellectual and moral foundation on which an abiding structure of democratic freedom could be raised. All India Conference of RDP adopted the fundamental principles of new humanism in the form of 22 thesis in 1946. These philosophical principles and their political deductions were formulated in an effort to offer solutions to the problems mankind was faced with. For Roy, in the post world war ii period the basic issue was no longer between capitalism and socialism but between dictatoreship and democracy. Dictatorial forces weather they emerge from right or left was immaterial to the final out come. The triumph of either, believed Roy, was equally harmful to the cause of freedom, democracy and general well being of mankind.

In initial stages of the development of the movement the emphasis was laid on the intellectual work as philosophical revolution was thought to be a precondition for the success of revolution on economic and political plane. Humanist movement all over the world suffers from a serious handicap of cultural lag that exists between Humanist Renaissance and the pace of scientific technological industrial revolution. Similarly in Indian context also Roy observes,

If we look beneath the surface it will be realised that we are a sixteenth century nation faced with the twentieth century problems. This temporal gap,
which is the cultural lag, requires to be covered up. Our people, in other words, must develop the outlook and the attitude that will enable them to solve the problems of today. Only then will these problems cease to be baffling. First things must come first; mental freedom must come before political and social freedom can be realized (Roy 1947a:607).

[...Yadava,...], an eminent Royist notes,

If our historical past could be a proper guide to us in this respect, it does not seem very likely that even XX century renaissance movement would be able to keep pace with and humanize XX century scientific technological revolution in order to be able to provide a safe harbor to human kind in the next century. So the crucial question is: Can the humanist renaissance be able to overwhelm the scientific technological revolution before it is too late; and if it really can, then how? (Yadava 1983: 33).

M.N. Roy believed and hoped it could, if the humanists could really become radical, rapidly multiply themselves, reorganize themselves and seriously try. Roy and his band of followers offered a concrete programme to realise that objective. In it’s All India Conference at Calcutta from December 26-30, 1948 the RDP adopted a statement on the practice of new humanism, which was published in January 9, and 16, 1949 issues of their weekly journal Independent India. This statement constitutes the movement’s basic objectives and programs for solving the basic crisis of our age. As is pointed out in the statement ‘the primary task of the movement will be to bring about a cultural renaissance by propagating the philosophy of new humanism and through its application to political economic and other social problems’ (Roy 1953:76).

Thus the task of the movement was basically cultural, one of educating the people in the cultural values essential for the realization of democracy in true sense, as it was believed by radicals that education is the essential condition of democracy. The purpose of education
through discussions, seminars, exchange of ideas on the basis of reason, modern scientific knowledge was to bring about transformation in the thought process of individuals so that they could grow up into thinking individuals. Thus one of the basic programmes of RH was that of educating the educators who in turn will be instrumental in spreading the values of renaissance. Roy strongly believed that there was no short cut to bring about revolutionary changes in societies. The only answer to human problems was provided by the kind of revolution the philosophy of RH called for - a philosophical revolution-which obviously could not be accomplished in a matter of year or decades. It is a long term, continuous, may be never ending process without any short cut.

Disgusted both with insurrectionary politics and constitutional appeal, as none guarantees real democracy because both negate the human individual, leading ultimately to mere scramble for power, Roy emphasized, that ‘ultimate aim of numerous activities is freedom and freedom is rather a path than a goal. One can continuously advance in the direction of realizing it in increasing measure rather than attaining it fully or in an absolute sense at any particular moment. There is therefore a basic fallacy in all thinking in terms of times so far as the realisation of the end is concerned. The end is infinite’ (Roy 1949:64). Thus the movement for human freedom essentially involved the consolidation of intellectual basis of the movement and Roy observed,

To consolidate the intellectual basis of the movement, radicals will continue to submit their philosophy to constant research, examine it in the light of modern scientific knowledge and experience, and extend its application to all social sciences. They will at the same time, propagate the essentials of the philosophy amongst the people as a whole by showing its relevance to their pressing needs. They will make the people conscious of the urge for freedom, encourage their self reliance and awaken in them the sense of the individual dignity, indicate the values of rationalism and secular morality and spread the spirit of cosmopolitan
humanism. By showing the people the way to solve their daily problems by popular initiative, the radicals will combat ignorance, fatalism, blind faith and the sense of individual helplessness, which are the basis of authoritarianism. They will put all the social traditions and institutions to the test of humanist outlook (Roy 1953: 76-77).

Thus we see Roy and his associates set before themselves the task of instilling among people a faith in their own ability to change the circumstances, to make them think rationally and enable them to get over their helplessness so that they could become more and more self reliant. The main objective of the movement was the development of man himself by instilling in him the spirit of freedom, rationality and secular morality. In an atmosphere of cultural stagnation full of contradictions what was needed was ‘a peaceful, creative, rational, cosmopolitan order which can produce an atmosphere in which every individual can rise to the fullest heights of his intellectual and moral personality’ (Joshi 1949:24).

And such a order could only be created by men of renaissance and therefore to develop individuals into good moral human beings was considered to be the primary task so that they in turn could create a better society as ‘institutions are in the last analysis not merely the creation of man, but also are run by men. Their proper functioning will therefore demand a change in man too. Ideal institutions cannot create an ideal society unless they are also run by ideal men. To produce such men is therefore an essential task of a movement for freedom’ (Roy 1949:16).

So, along with the development of man himself the movement also placed emphasis on a comprehensive and harmonious development of various aspects of social life, that is, its objective was to develop institutional structures which would provide to the individual increasing scope for exercise of his initiative, his spirit of enquiry and adventure. Therefore a profound planned democratic reconstruction of polity, economy and other subsystems of
society such as moral, legal, religion, family etc. on a humanist, democratic basis is an essential objective of the RHIM.

Roy was a bitter critique of political parties, and system of parliamentary democracy, which he regarded 'as only a veiled dictatorship' (Roy 1960:188) and political leaders whom he viewed as mere power seekers. He believed that only moral selfless individuals and organizations working for the welfare of the people without being power seekers could accomplish the task of achieving a really democratic society. For the purpose he outlined the political organization of the new society, which he called 'organized democracy', as is illustrated in the draft constitution of free India formulated by Roy. It advocated the decentralization of political power to the extent that the state and society would become coterminous and the real power will reside with people - in the hands of people's committees. So according to Roy, one of the basic objective of RHIM was the creation of 'state' which 'will be an organised democracy in which the people as a whole will exercise standing control and constant supervision over the legislative and executive functions of the state. The parliament will be the apex of pyramidal structure based on a network of peoples committees functioning as schools of political education of the people as well as organs of a popular sovereignty. The state will be manned by spiritually free men and women possessed of intellectual integrity and moral detachments (Roy 1953:75).

Roy strongly believed that it is not possible to improve the quality of individuals and social life so long as economic disparities and exploitation of man by man continue to exist. Progressive satisfaction of material necessities of the individual was conceived of as necessary precondition for the unfolding of intellectual and other finer human potentialities. Therefore one economic plane one of the major objectives of RHIM was the economic reorganisation of society on the humanist basis. Defining the economy of the new society as envisaged by Roy, he writes,
It will be planned with the purpose of promoting the freedom and well being of the individual. It will, on the one hand eliminate production for profit and the other hand avoids unnecessary concentration of control. It will not allow individual freedom to be jeopardised by considerations of technical efficiency. As such, the economy will be neither capitalist nor socialist, but co-operative. It will consist of a network of consumer's and producer's cooperatives, and the economic activities of the society shall be conducted and co-coordinated by the people through these institutions. The co-operative economy shall take full advantage of modern science and technology and effect equitable distribution of social surplus through universal social utility services (Roy 1953:73).

Thus we see building up of peoples committees as primary constituents of the Democratic state, and cooperatives as the primary unit of a cooperative commonwealth was an important task of the movement. However in the initial stages of its development the emphasis was laid on the intellectual work as it was believed that fruitful constructive activity has to be preceded by thought as action without thought leads no where.

So, we can see that on a very broad plane Roy’s main object was to give a call for humanist revival or what he called XX century renaissance in India. For the purpose he set before himself and his associates the above-mentioned objectives and programmes. The basic programme consisted of educating the people in the values of rationalism, freedom, human dignity, secular morality and stimulating in them the spirit of self-confidence, self-reliance and cooperative work. This is the only way that totalitarianism, fatalism, fanaticism, blind faith and other evils characterising Indian society like untouchability, casteism, lower status of women etc. could be combated and cosmopolitan humanism can be popularised which can enable one to deal with present day crisis and various problems encountered both at individual and societal level.
Setting up of a network of peoples committees as platforms of free political expression by individuals throughout the country, developing consumer’s and producer’s cooperatives with a purpose to reduce economic disparities, organising trade union as democratic institution increasingly managed by workers, organising women’s clubs, radical students and teachers unions with a view to propagate the philosophical ideas of a new humanism has been seen as the broad programme of RHM. Roy did not see at the contemporary crisis in local or regional context merely. He has studied and analyzed it in its full magnitude and all its dimensions and therefore the solution offered by him is not confined to any regional boundaries. It has relevance to the global magnitude and dimension of the crisis.

In the formative years of the movement the activities of the movement were more or less reduced to high-flown intellectual discussions about values which appeared at times to be most abstract. Immediate issues or real things no longer appeared to be of much concern to a handful of idealist radicals who were busy philosophizing and talking about things which were beyond understanding of not only the illiterate masses but also the so called educated sections of the society. By its very nature such a movement could not have had any mass following and was confined to a small group of intellectuals who for most of the time were busy in defending themselves against the best of intellectuals of different streams of thought. In such a situation those members of the party who could not be classed as intellectuals felt alienated and lost interest in the activities of the movement, as there no longer was any kind of organization, which could bind them together as a group. Thus one essential constituent of any social movement namely the organized activity was missing from the RHM from its very inception.
M.N. Roy Phase, 1948-54

If we see the history of the movement we can say that the period between 1948-54 i.e. the phase when Roy was alive, was basically a formative period and Roy was its founding father was at the center of the movement generating all the force. It was a formative period in the sense that Roy retired from active politics and devoted himself totally to expounding the principles of his philosophy as contained in 22 thesis and developing the movement at intellectual level. Since the endorsement of 22 thesis Radicals were trying to analyze the basic postulates of their philosophy at theoretical level and they were also asking a number of questions bearing on the practical implications of their philosophy. They were trying to find out the ways and means by which the movement could be developed as a powerful instrument for propagating the ideals and principles of radical democracy. For the purpose Roy emphasized the need to carry out the ideological propaganda - both oral and written - among the educated sections of the population throughout the country. Through his writings, lecture tours and study camps Roy was trying to explain to himself and to his followers his systematized ideas - ideas that were not entirely new but were found in a scattered form in his early writings - as well. Despite his bad state of health and severe and persistent attacks of asthma, Roy persisted, against the advice of the doctors, his regular schedule of hectic and tiresome lecture tours through the winter months each year. Between 1949 and the early months of 1952 he gave lectures on a wide variety of topics at Bombay, Poona, Belgaum, Dharwar, Hubli, Sholapur, Delhi, Hyderabad, Tenali, Vijayawada, Waltair, Calcutta, Uttar Pradesh, Dacca and other places.

Study camps were a regular feature of Radicals even during party days but with shift in emphasis from power politics to renaissance work, their need was emphasized
time and again and now they were held both at regional and national level with a purpose to create new ideas as ideas were the mightiest weapons of radicals. Study camps therefore constituted their most significant and important activity to some extent eclipsing all other activities. The most important study camp after the launching of the movement was held at Mussoorie, for ten days in May - June 1949, under the auspices of the IRI. Roy drew up the programme in detail. It involved a systematic and careful re-examination of basis formulations of radical humanism and included the following topics: Problems of cosmology and ontology; origin of life; Reason and Nature; Foundation of Ethics; Sanction of Morality; Historioloogy; Social evolution and its Dynamics; Freedom and Political organization; and Economic planning and Freedom. These topics reveal how a political movement had converted itself into a wide humanist movement. The camp was attended by a number of prominent intellectuals including university professors, schoolteachers, research scholars, writers, journalists, lawyers, trade union leaders, village level workers, doctors and young students. Discussions of the camp helped Roy to give a more definite shape to his philosophy.

Here it is an important to point out that the ideas presented by Roy in the form of a new philosophy were not entirely new. One can trace a considerable degree of continuity with ideas he held in the past. They did exist earlier also but the difference is that Roy at this stage was trying to bring these ideas into a sharp focus and was trying to present them in the form of a systematic, comprehensive and integrated philosophy. Individual freedom was most important to Roy, which is reflected in his constant criticism of any system, any ideology, and any institution trying to debase the human individual.

Metamorphosis from Marxism to Radical Humanism was not a sudden phenomenon. It took almost fifteen years beginning with Roy's imprisonment in 1931.
Prison experience had a profound effect upon his thought and his movement away from orthodox Marxism to radical humanism in fact began in prison. The basic theme of his new philosophy of RH namely the need for cultural renaissance, which took a concrete and systematized form in 1946, can be traced in his article, ‘Marxism is not a dogma’ (Roy 1938: 23-25) that he wrote shortly after his release. Here he tried to reinterpret Marxism, as a liberal humanist philosophy. Emphasis no longer is on economic determinism and historical inevitability but on the view that "foundation of Marxism is Rationalism" and the Marxist philosophy must be appreciated together with its great heritage, the European Renaissance. Therefore India too needs a 'Renaissance movement', a 'philosophical revolution' (ibid) - a theme that Roy developed and emphasized till his death. One can also trace the criticism of Marxism in his writings even ten years prior to his new philosophy. By 1946 however he became very open and blunt critic of Marxism. Even when radicals were functioning within Congress party, they were constantly highlighting and criticizing the fascist tendencies inherent in the party and were advocating the cause of establishing a truly democratic structure and for the purpose advocated the idea of people's committees as foundation of a new type of democratic state. Emphasis was always on conducting the agitations and struggles on the issues of people's grievances and helping the people become more aware and self-reliant so that they could live a more dignified life. ‘Motivation of new orientation is that all human beings everywhere should be enabled to live a dignified human life on the highest level that modern technology and modern civilization render possible --- our new orientation consists in intelligently applying the achievements of human genius, the positive outcome of human thought, and what we consider to be eternal human values to the field of politics, and thereby making the emotional desire of seeking mankind happier’ (Ellen Roy1947:34).
Thus one can trace the continuity of the movement with the past on number of accounts. However the movement in 1948 was equipped with a much more systematized and integrated philosophy, which could provide a sound basis for the future activities of radicals. Therefore Roy, while he was alive, dedicated himself totally to do the necessary spade work among his followers so that he would leave behind an army of followers fully equipped with a sound philosophy, which would put a new content and meaning to all their activities as radicals and the movement will not be orphaned after the death of its founder as is often the case with most of the reformist and revolutionary movements which have arisen world-wide from time to time.

The period between 1948-54 was completely dominated by Roy who provided the intellectual leadership to the movement. Whatever development was there in the field of ideas, at intellectual level was the sole contribution of Roy and others contributed only in a very marginal way. Roy, by virtue of his original thinking and dynamism provided the inspiration and guidance to his followers who were always dependent on him psychologically as is evident from Tarkunde’s quote:

During the time comrade Roy was amongst us, many of us had developed the habit of looking to him for guidance and inspiration. He deprecated that attitude time and again, but the attitude persisted. This was not because we were blind hero-worshippers. But he was so much more experienced, so much more original in his thinking, so much more free from the dead weight of dogmas and previously held opinions, so much more responding to changing situations, that he was always much ahead of us. We were “Followers” simply because we could not find the way as quickly, nor walk as fast. The highly unorthodox ideas with which he came out from his Dehradun retreat from time to time were not accepted by us because of the will to believe; but critical examination justified them and subsequent experience to a larger extent verified them. The ideas were initially his, and become ours only later. It is true that some of us contributed to the further development of those ideas once they were propounded by him, but I think it is correct to say that whenever as occasion arose for a departure from old moorings of thought, the first step was taken by comrade, Roy alone (Tarkunde 1957:35).
Thus Roy provided the intellectual leadership and emphasized the fact that RHIM being an intellectual movement could not be judged in terms of mass following. It could only be evaluated in terms of spread of the spirit of freedom, rationality and secular morality amongst the people as the essential aim of the movement was the development of man himself, and to develop institutional structures which would provide the individual increasing scope for exercise of his initiative, his spirit of inquiry and adventure. Educational activity alone, believed Roy, can result in creation of society based on scientific humanism and therefore he devoted himself fully to the task. He travelled different parts of the country, addressed several meetings, had discussions with several group of intellectual and gave a call for Humanist revival. Roy and his associates kept themselves totally aloof from the mad scramble for power and devoted themselves to the task of converting masses into individuals-individuals capable of thinking for themselves and thereby creating conditions for a truly democratic structure. During the period Roy was alive, Radical Humanists in pursuance of 22 thesis on practice of New Humanism, decided to concentrate on propagation of their ideology through lectures, discussions and production of humanist literature, establishment of branches of IRI to function as research centres of the institute; Formation of renaissance clubs; organization of student's and teacher's clubs; increasing the circulation of Independent India and Marxian way; organization of consumer's and producer's cooperative societies; establishment and development of workers education league; work in trade unions. Right from its inception in April 1937 Independent India, later to be known as Radical Humanist, was their main instrument to carry and spread the message of political freedom, economic equality and cultural freedom. Though the immediate tasks and issues to which RHIM addressed itself were confined to problems pertaining to Indian Society and Culture, the philosophy which
formed the basis of this movement on Indian scene transcended time and space. Roy's emphasis was on the need for certain 'permanent values' a 'moral philosophy', a philosophy of freedom. As he observes:

Human life must be guided by a philosophy. The philosophy may change from time to time. But there are certain values, certain principles, which transcend time and space ... A philosophy, to be a guide for all forms of human action, must have some ethics, some morals, which must recognize certain things as permanent and abiding in humanity. And only a group of human beings - be it a political party or any other kind of organization primarily moved by these abiding (and I should say even permanent, as permanent as humanity itself) values, can claim to be the maker of the future ... we must know what is freedom before we can be qualified as the architects of a free world. What the world needs is a philosophy of freedom (Roy 1946:26-27).

Roy kept himself fully informed about the developments the world over and expressed his views on current affairs in both Indian and foreign journals. On the international scene, the direction the world communist movement was taking whether in Russia, Eastern Europe or Asia, was a matter of grave concern to Roy. In his own Country, Roy had been under fierce attack from the communist party of India; in Europe, eastern Europe had passed under Russian domination and the ruthless ambitions of Stalin's dictatorship had become abundantly clear, and the result was Roy's profound disillusionment with communism. He therefore wrote several articles on communism and world situation. Communist regime had been established in China and Chinese Communism was attracting many a young men, as it was believed to have triumphed with people's support. But Roy asserted, whether it be of Russian or Chinese variety, communism will bring in its wake a long period of terror, regimentation, suppression of liberty most probably civil war and chaos. 'It is sheer madness to welcome that catastrophe with the hope that the golden utopia may be waiting on the
...the side of the uncharted sea of blood and tears’ (Roy 1953:109). Roy was alarmed by the rapid strides that the communism was making in Asia, which he believed was nothing more than nationalism painted red. He remarked that ‘in Asia communism will be an unmixed evil, revival and oriented despotism with a thin veneer of modernism, marred by xenophobia, brutality and violence’. Apart from communism in Russia and China war in Korea was another important event on international scene in which Roy frequently wrote. A cold war raging between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R and world, believed Roy, was on brink of third world war. He appealed to Indian political workers to raise their voice against preparations for war.

Many intellectuals who stood for liberty and social justice were repelled by communism. In India an impressive conference of prominent intellectuals from various countries was held in Bombay in March 1951, with a view to mobilise intellectuals for the defence of cultural freedom. At the end of this meeting Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom as a branch of the worldwide congress for cultural freedom with its headquarters in Paris was established. Roy could not attend it but sent a message expressing his abhorrence for communism. He said ‘the alternative to communism is not a return to liberalism, but to go beyond it with a reaffirmed loyalty to the humanist tradition of modern civilization and a more steadfast adherence to the moral sanction of the ideal of social justice’ (ibid).

As the ICCF appeared to be more of anti communist in its attitude rather than representing any positive philosophy for freedom and democratic values Roy did not develop any close relation with it. In fact the most striking development in Roy's thought during his humanist phase is his unprecedented emphasis on the need for a moral philosophy, a philosophy of freedom. During the last years of his life Roy wrote

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1 See M.N.Roy, Radical Humanist, 8 April 1951
extensively on Science, education, morality, partyless politics, decentralized economy, physical realism and humanist ethics etc. with a humanist perspective, with a view to explain that radical humanism is a complete philosophy of life. One can see through his writings that his main endeavor was to make philosophy intelligible to common comprehension. He believed, only an all embracing philosophy can help improve the quality of life both at individual and societal level. He therefore looked upon philosophy as science of Sciences. The journal RH played a very crucial educative role and it was basically through his writings Roy was trying to diffuse knowledge, which he thought was an indispensable condition for success of democracy. He strongly believed that without the democratization of knowledge and rational thought democracy is not possible. As a result of his writings, his countrywide travels, Roy succeeded in attracting a number of educated persons, intellectuals, teachers, students, and social activists in the movement of Indian Renaissance. In a course of time Roy and his associates succeeded in establishing a publishing concern called Renaissance Publishers (RP) of a considerable size which produced and circulated renaissance literature systematically in India and abroad. Since 1946 a quarterly magazine 'The Marxian way' was published as an organ of Renaissance movement. As is indicated by its name itself Marxism was not to be conceived of as an ultimate philosophy but was to be conceived as a way leading beyond itself.

Indian Renaissance Institute (IRI) at Dehradun, a place where Roy lived till his death in 1954 was conceived of as a centre of rational thinking and intellectual freedom. Each study camps which was organized by the institute took the R.H.M. a step ahead in the sense that as a result of depth discussions during the camp new ideas emerged and were incorporated in the philosophy of Radical Humanism as it by no means was a closed system of thought. Roy's contribution to the growth of ideas was
gratest as the other radical humanists did not posses Roy's creative resourcefulness. They however took active part in discussions and made the study camps a great success. Nearly all the fruitful developments in the philosophy of radical humanism were the result of discussions in the study camps. Thus Roy and his associates tried to develop IRI as a centre of creative thinking and cultural renaissance. As part of renaissance movement, renaissance clubs were developed particularly in towns having universities. Lectures and discussions were organized by these clubs on subjects generally suggested by IRI. As a result of these activities a number of intellectuals were attracted to new philosophy and got involved in renaissance work. But the number of such persons was very small - perhaps too small to carry on the stupendous task of Indian renaissance. For Roy however number was not as important as the quality of persons. He strongly believed that even if a small number of radical humanists practiced in their personal lives and interpersonal relations what they had formulated in their philosophy, it will make an impact on the social and cultural life of India and will make a modest beginning in the direction of moral renaissance.

Thus we see from 1948 to 1954 there was a great effort particularly by its founder to develop the movement at intellectual level, at the level of ideas as it was believed that fruitful constructive activity has to be proceeded by thought as action without thought will lead us no where. Even though intellectual and social aspects of the movement were not conceived of as watertight compartments yet emphasis was laid on intellectual work eclipsing all other social activities. A revolution at the level of ideas was a precondition for the success of socio-economic transformation because of the wide cultural lag that exists in India. Roy wrote, 'If we look beneath the surface, it will be realized that we are a sixteenth century nation faced with twentieth century problems. This temporal gap, which is a cultural lag, requires to be covered up. Our
people, in other words, must develop the outlook and the attitude that will enable them to solve the problems of today. Only then will these problems cease to be baffling. **First things must come first; mental freedom must come before political and social freedom can be realized.**

This is not to suggest a total withdrawal of Radicals from politics. Roy was not oblivious of political developments on Indian Scene. The first general election on the basis of adult franchise took place in February - March 1952. Roy was always skeptical about Indian democracy. He wrote "The future of democracy in India is not bright. Popular mentality is still authoritarian, and politicians and political parties glorify that reactionary cultural heritage as spiritual genius. People with an authoritarian mentality can not establish democracy. If democracy fails in India that will not be due to conspiracy of political parties and leaders, the failure will be predeterminable by objective conditions, the mentality of the people which can not conceive of human freedom and human creativity." At the same time Roy was highly critical of congress party. He believed that the central theme of congress propaganda during election campaign of 1952 elections 'one country' 'one party' and virtually 'one leader' was a dangerous drift towards a totalitarian regime. He did not advise radicals to keep away from elections. He favored the contesting of elections by independents. His scheme of organised democracy based on people's committees endowed with constitutional rights was evolved with a view to build up centres of resistance to the menace of dictatorship. In spite of his opposition to parliamentary democracy he preferred it to dictatorship. He wrote, "In the transition period, parliamentary democracy, with all its manifest failure

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2 see M.N.Roy, *Radical Humanist*, vol, XIII 18 December 1949, p.607

and inadequacies, will be obviously preferable to dictatorship. Civil liberties will have a greater chance of survival as long as several parties alternate in power or contend for power, than under one party rule' (Roy 1960:94).

Thus we see the basic task to which Royists devoted themselves was one of educating the people in the values of freedom, justice, rationality and instilling in them a scientific outlook and self-confidence so as to counteract their mass mentality of what has been called fear of freedom or flight from freedom. Roy laid intellectual foundations of RHM by training his colleagues and associates and imbued them with a philosophy of life which could be practiced both at an individual and societal level. His own life dedicated to the pursuit of truth and freedom bore convincing proof of Roy's being a true radical humanist. A social renaissance movement believed Roy, could only be led by individuals who themselves have passed through, the process of psychological renaissance and therefore he fully devoted himself to the task of creating such moral, spiritually free and detached individuals who would be the philosophers, the guides and friends of people (rather than their leaders) Roy himself being one par excellence.

The RHM did not have any formal, rigid and bureaucratic organizational structure to propagate its philosophy, as the radicals believed the creation of such a structure would be contrary to the very philosophy of their work. They set up a coordinating committee consisting of important radicals in various parts and fields of activities. This coordinating committee was formed with a view to facilitate exchange of experiences of radicals in different fields so as to obtain a comprehensive view of the movement as a whole. They were however not against every form of organization. They believed that organization should not be artificially and mechanically created as it will have all the ills of a traditional political party and will become an 'instrument of
power. A healthy organization should grow naturally out of the activities of the radicals. As Roy observed, "the precondition of effective healthy organization is that its ideas must have grown first in one, then in some more and then in many human beings. Men must act and do something, but first there must be thought. We have seen enough of what comes of action without thought".  

However some radicals believed that this phobia towards organized action would prove to be disastrous for the movement and would soon result in a feeling of frustration in radicals functioning as totally scattered, isolated individuals with out a sense of belonging to any group and without any substantial and concrete achievement, as the goal of achieving a radical humanist society was an infinite and indefinite one. During this period the individual radicals attempted to build up some suitable institutions such as renaissance clubs, students and teacher's forums, people's committees, cooperative societies etc; some radicals participated in the existing institutions with a view to improve and purify their functioning; some used their work place as the platform for spreading the ideas and ideals of new humanism; some functioned actively in trade unions with a view to provide an effective leadership and perspective to the trade union movement in the country. However no effort was made by radicals to function as a united and cohesive force. The need for RH organization was felt by some radicals even when Roy was alive. In fact Roy's last article as dictated by him to Ellen published in the Radical humanist of January 24, 1954 was about Radical Humanist organization. Roy having breath his last on 25 January 1954 at ten minutes before midnight - it took Radicals, as we will see almost twenty one long years after the dissolution of RDP to form Indian Radical Humanist Association, a formal
organization of RHM. We shall discuss the nature of the organization of movement both before and after the formation of IRHA at a later stage.

53. Ellen Roy Phase: 1954 - 60

RHM like many other social movements could be identified with its founding father M.N.Roy as he after having retired from active politics, had diverted all his time, resources and energies to elaborate and develop the ideology of the movement, providing answers as to why the movement was right and what height it may achieve. He was at the center of the movement providing intellectual leadership to the movement. His associates being psychologically dependent upon him looked upon him as their source of inspiration. As a result with his death, its very source of inspiration and vitality having disappeared, the question of survival of the movement arose immediately. A doubt regarding its survival was there in the mind of each radical as is evident by Tarkunde's quote. "Soon after the death of Com. Roy, a reunion of Radical Humanists was held in Mussoories in May 1954. It was very well attended. But the gathering was largely the result of a psychological reaction, it was comparable to the gathering of orphans on the death of a beloved father --- A doubt whether the movement will survive at all was not absent from the reunion" (Tarkunde 1957: 35).

However, like other social movement on the Indian scene, the RHM did not die and soon radicals realized that they must carry on the movement for Indian renaissance - a course Roy had worked so hard for with transparent sincerity and total devotion. And the credit for keeping the movement alive and holding it together goes to Ellen Roy who had been a true partner of Roy in every respect for almost seventeen years. She worked for the movement with total devotion till her death in 1960 and played a role almost similar to that of Roy as far as the cohesion of the movement is concerned.
Sibnarayan Ray, a close associate of M.N. Roy and Ellen Roy writes "-- in retrospect I am more convinced than ever that the survival of the Indian Radical Humanist Movement after Roy's death owed more to her than to any other individual" (Ray 1979: 17).

Ellen was born in France on 15 August 1904 and educated in Germany. Her father, Oscar Gottschalk, was connected with the American consulate in Paris. He was an avid reader, equally at home in English, French and German and according to his son Robert 'read Latin and Greek until quite an old age' (Ray 1979: 20). Ellen in inherited from him a great love of books and fluency in languages. From her mother she acquired her love for music. She started piano lessons while still a small child and had an attractive singing voice. According to Robert, 'Ellen was a brilliant student, always at the top of her class at the lyceum, but she always had a will of her own and was, somewhat of a rebel. When our father's antiquated German ideas on how to bring up children became too oppressive, she sought, and usually found, ways of circumventing them which led to many head on collisions' (Ray 1979: 50). According to Louis, Ellen's younger sister 'Ellen's confrontations, preceding mine by about six years' difference in age, were, however on a one-to-one basis - a beating of Ellen as a teenager was followed by a daughterly kick in to my father's shin' (Ray 1979: 54-55). This eventually resulted in her running away from home in 1923. She was then nineteen. She went to Frankfort where her association with liberal political causes began. After a while she moved to Berlin where she was drawn into various political movements. This was the time of Weimer Republic characterized by instability, political unrest, ruinous inflation eventually culminating into establishment of Nazi regime in Germany. Ellen with her rebellious spirit, radical outlook and hatred for authority and social injustice was drawn into German Communist party for which she
worked actively in 1920. She met the Indian - philosopher - revolutionary M.N. Roy in 1928. Thus began a life long partnership in revolutionary activities. When Roy came to India in 1930, to be arrested in 1931, Ellen waited for seven long years to join and marry the man she loved in March 1937. During the intervening period, she established contacts with Indian Royists and contacted individuals of world eminence, like Russell and Einstein, who issued an appeal for Roy's early release. Shortly after their marriage on 10 March 1937, on 4 April 1937, appeared the first issue of the weekly 'Independent India' (later renamed the Radical Humanist). Ellen's little saving that she had brought from Europe went in to the journal which was referred to by Ellen as 'their child'. This marked the beginning of a period of intense political and intellectual activities, efforts to create an alternative to Gandhian leadership in the congress by forming the league of radical congress men, making the Indian people conscious of the dangers of Fascism; founding the Radical Democratic Party; setting up of Indian Renaissance Institute to bring about a cultural renaissance in India; starting the quarterly journal, The Marxist Way (later renamed the Humanist way); Formulation of the philosophy of Radical Humanism as a way out of the crisis of modern civilization; dissolution of the RDP and launching of Indian Radical Humanist Movement; participation in the formulation of the international humanist and Ethical Union. In all these activities Ellen had been Roy's true partner.

Ellen had varied interests. She had passionate love for nature, music, literature and aesthetic values of life. She possessed qualities and had interests, which were in no way parasitic on Roy but were independent and in many respects truly complementary (See also Ray 1979). Enumerating Ellen's attributes, Robert L. Park, one of Roy's close associates writes:
M.N. Roy was the major moving force at 13 Mohini Road - which certainly was - Ellen was the manager, the interior and exterior decorator, the chief cook and gardener, stenographer, typist, hostess, thrifted buyer, and protector. Much more than that she was an intellectual catalyst for her husband, an expert editor and writer, a fast and accurate reader, and a dynamo at organization. Her empathy with M.N.'s ideas and activities was so nearly perfect that she could answer to letters for Roy that he seldom changed - but always read with care. At Mohini Road they were a matched pair, it is difficult to imagine one without the other' (Park 1979: 57).5

Roy's death was a severe personal blow to all the radicals, most of all to Ellen for whom he had been the center of her life for seventeen years. Despite her loneliness and unbearable grief, Ellen faced the tragedy with fortitude. She received scores of condolence messages in the form of telegrams, letters, visitors, and newspaper tributes on Roy's death. In her letter to Robert on 10 February 1954, she wrote, ‘all the titles, crown and mantle of the philosopher - king that have been tried on me these days are much too big and heavy for me when I can't even bear the sight yet of the empty bed near which I seem to have spent my whole life for so long, and yet I may not let it be felt that Roy had the wrong wife, one not worthy of him, and so even now I can not crawl in a private hole and weep. There is more work than my life will be long enough to do it in, and though I can not think a single thought without it being blacked out by the pain, this work is perhaps the one thing that will help me live, or re-learn living - living without all that made my whole life and a rich life indeed, these 17 years’ (Ray 1979: 187). The extent of her agony and desolation and at the same time her determination to carry forward the IRHM is also reflected in the first piece she wrote soon after Roy's death and which was published in the Radical Humanist of 7 March 1954:

5 This relationship, however, came to an end on 25 January, 1954, ten minutes before midnight when M.N. Roy passed away following a third heart attack.
I am going through the papers on his desk, sorting them out into files. These papers are a very live contact with all that is now our past, once so full of future. It looks deplorably tidy --- If a new life could be opened, neat and tidy like new files, even if empty in the beginning, one might imagine it full again some day and at least to some use. But that is not so easy, and pelIRHAp's never to be ---. By writing about all this and the work that ought to be done, I am trying to give myself the courage to start doing at least some of it and to visualize some sense in what lies ahead. Whatever I do or write just now feels like a wall, and who will want to go on listening to this?" yet she ended on a hopeful note ---. "I hope there will be response particularly as regards the Reunion or conference in May, for which there has been a spontaneous demand from all sides, we must have a clearer idea soon in order to start preparation, both as regards its programs and practical arrangements.

As a psychological reaction, a reunion of Radical Humanists held in Mussoorie in May 1954 was well attended. Soon after, in 1955, Ellen went abroad for a few months. During this visit besides meeting a number of humanist groups in England, Holland, United states and Yugoslavia where she was a state guest, she established strong ties between IRHM and IHEU. From 1954 to 1960 Ellen represented the IRHM on IHEU. Roy's death came as an immediate set back for the weekly journal RH, the most important mouthpiece of the movement. Its readership fell alarmingly (from 5000 to 1500 according to M.V. Ramaswamy). But despite great odds and a growing sense of frustration, the journal continued to appear regularly even though during 1954-55 it was financially in a very desperate position. It ran into heavy debts despite the fact that its entire staff was honorary. Yet RH did not die like Harijan and it did survive the loss of its founder and credit for it goes partly to Roy who, 'had trained his colleagues in the school of adversity. He had imbued them with a philosophy of life which being realistic admitted of no despair. This training and this philosophy of life sustained the journal in the greatest crisis of its career. The radical humanist therefore did not die like Harijan. Its staff and its contributors knew that without it their lives would be
berft of meaning. Its readership recognized that there was no other journal, which could replace the RH. The more desperate its position, the greater was the need felt that journal must continue'. And we see it did continue despite heavy odds and it did not fail its founder and his philosophy. The loss of the founder - editor no doubt deprived its readers of his thought provoking and highly educative writings that had appeared regularly since April 1937. But still the journal was fortunate in having Ellen and Sibnarayan Ray as joint editors after Roy's death. Both of them being very close to Roy, had learnt a great deal from him. A survey of the paper between 1954-60 shows that it was able to maintain its previous standard and many a outstanding intellectuals of the country (G.D. Parikh, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, prof. Arun Ghosh, Dr. Haripada Chaterjee, R.L. Nigam, A.K.Pillai, Prof. A. Safdar, among others) continued to contribute regularly.

Sibnarayan's contribution to the IRHM was primarily to the intellectual side of the movement. In his writings and editorials he was trying to indicate, develop and apply Roy's ideas to various fields of Social life. Under the careful guidance of Ellen and SibRay, the RH continued to examine the Social and political problems of the country in the light of rational and humanist outlook as suggested by the philosophy of New Humanism. The stand of the RH in favour of cultural renaissance, academic freedom, individual freedom and secular ethics and against any kind of authoritarianism i.e. concentration of power, centralized economy, regimentation in education etc. is clearly represented in various articles published in the journal during the period between 1954-60. However what was lacking was the growth in ideas. Radical Humanism being integrated to science was not a closed system. As we have see earlier, the difference between Radical Humanist philosophy and earlier systems of

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thought lies in the fact that RH by its very nature and genesis provides for constant assimilation of new facts and hence it can be seen not as a system but as a process as it is integrated to science which is a continuous process of moving from unknown to known i.e. a constant search for truth and knowledge. Philosophy, believed Roy, is not evolved at any particular time, by any particular individual, but it evolves and becomes perennial. Just like science, philosophy is pursuit in which each new philosopher will carry further the work accomplished by his predecessors. And therefore the basic challenge that lay before the radicals was not merely one of carrying on the movement and its various organs, but one of broadening, deepening and developing the philosophy of RH by applying it to various fields of activity, the areas not touched upon by Roy. In other words what was required was the creativity in ideas in order to prevent the philosophy of RH from becoming a closed system of thought, a set of dogmas about ultimate truth. It was here that the loss of Roy was felt most, as none possessed the creativity, the dynamism possessed by Roy. So long as Roy was alive others had been content to be helpers rather than creators. so in his death the movement suffered an irreparable loss. Radical Humanism is an all embracing philosophy and therefore it was felt by some that, ‘we have not only to develop our ideas on party less politics and decentralized economy, on physical realism and humanist ethics; we have to extend our investigation to other fields like arts and literature, ancient history and modern sciences, education and jurisprudence, psychology and axiology’.

Between the period 1954-60 Sibnarayan Ray wrote regularly on various subjects with a humanist perspective. He contributed immensely to the intellectual side of the movement as he was trying to extend his philosophy to areas that had not been touched upon adequately by Roy. And therefore Sib Ray did contribute to the growth

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*See Sib Ray ‘Our Test’, *Radical Humanist,* vol XXI, 25 January, 1957, nos, 3-4, p.27*
and development of ideas to some extent. But his contribution to the I.R.H.M as a whole remained marginal as the areas in which he was basically interested (art and music) and he had a better understanding were of no or little interest to other radicals. He writes:

By and large the Indian radicals were, and to my knowledge still are, virtually obsessed with moral, political and intellectual issues -- Indian radicals have no more than a marginal interest in music, poetry, or the theater, and their sense of wonder or curiosity in the presence of nature has rarely been cultivated ---. Paradoxical though this may appear to be, neither nature, nor art is greatly prized by the majority of Indian radicals even though following Roy, they stress the importance of a renaissance in India; the sub continent's flora and fauna mean as little to them as the sculptures of khajuraho or the paintings of Kangra and Basholi. The renaissance they talk about is essentially moral and intellectual in its conception; the sensuous and the aesthetic have yet to gain proper recognition in their weltanschauung (Ray 1979: 14).

More over Sib Ray has written a great deal in Bengali and there has been no attempt to translate his writings in English or other regional languages. As a result his original ideas have reached a very limited section and therefore we can say his ideas have contributed to the development of Radical humanist philosophy and movement in a very limited sense. Ellen Roy, apart from contributing frequently to RH weekly, went about collecting advertisements for the journal. She also sent regular transcripts of Roy's unpublished speeches, which had been preserved in shorthand by her. Ellen believes Sib Ray, with her varied interests and passionate love for music and literature could have contributed creatively to the growth of Radical humanist philosophy and the movement. But it was not to be as she was content to carry forward the movement as was initiated and conceived by Roy rather than opening up new frontiers by working for wider appreciation of her special interests and pursuits. As Sib Ray writes:

As a social critic and a utopian visionary, Roy was so original and unorthodox that his ideas are certain to stimulate and challenge people who may or may not agree with all of them ---. But like all original and
unorthodox thinkers Roy, too, has been subjected by his followers to "mythologisation" and "scriptualisation". In India, this, I guess, was almost inevitable; but after 1954, Ellen, I suspect, also contributed to an extent to the process. By temperament she was not a person to seek the limelight, this in fact, was a particularly attractive feature of her personality. But she had her own distinctive perceptions and interests, had they been given further articulation and public recognition they would have considerably enriched the philosophy of Radical Humanism. She chose, instead, to remain in the background, and after Roy's death she dedicated herself unreservedly to the task of serving "the cause" rather than to opening it up to explorations and inquiries. I do clearly recognize that but for her dedication the IRHM would most probably have disintegrated but she was also one of the few who might have given it new directions. Potentially she was much more than the most devoted "widow" of a great man. But the shadow between the potential and the actual is not easily exorcised. In any case, the paradox is that what made her centre of IRHM was not unconnected with what seems to be at least to me, some kind of spiritual self-immolation (Ray 1979: 17-18).

Apart from uninterrupted publication of RH, another major activity that provided momentum to the movement was annual study camps both at national and regional level that were organized by IRI. It was Ellen who with her inexhaustible energy kept in touch with radicals spread throughout the country and made these camps possible at Mussoorie and prevented the movement from becoming extinct. First study camp after Roy's death was held in May 1956. It was decided to hold it at a reunion of Radicals at Bihar after Ellen's return from abroad. Successful regional camps preceding the All India camp at Sasaram were held in Bombay, Calcutta and Maharashtra primarily to discuss the current problems in politics, economics and education. The reunion at Bihar was significant in the sense that by now radicals had more or less grown out of the state of shock and felt strongly the need and desire to do something for the spread of values and ideas for which their movement stood for, which without their initiative they knew would wind up. So Sasaram Reunion of Radicals proved to be fruitful in the sense that it "introduced a new phase in the
movement, characterized by greater self-reliance and a better sense of individual responsibility on the part of some Radical Humanists' (Tarkunde 1957: 35).

This camp was well attended and subsequently annual camps remained a regular feature till Ellen's death in 1960. These camps did provide enough evidence of sustenance even though limited growth of the RHM. The fact that radicals came from long distances, totally on their own expenses, to attend these study camps was highly significant in that it did reveal their commitment to the movement and its ideas. The discussions were devoted almost invariably to the most current and topical social, economic and political problems facing the nation. Apart from these problems, radicals also discussed the philosophy of New Humanism. Radicals were not orthodox Royists and did not believe that 22 thesis as propounded by Roy represented the ultimate truth. There were people who were not in total agreement with all the tenants of new humanism. Therefore these formulations were constantly re-examined, revised and reformulated. After Roy's death, the fundamentals of new humanism were discussed for the first time in 1958 camp as it was believed that with accumulation of data and experience, the philosophy or some of its tenants required some modification. Some of the radicals tended to be and even now tend to be orthodox Royists, accepting the 22 theses rigidly without allowing for any criticism. While others though broadly in general agreement with the basic spirit of the philosophy, did not accept each one of the 22 theses in toto as formulated by Roy. However these differences remained reconciled due to Ellen who provided the central link and organizational cohesion to the movement.

Apart from holding of annual camps another important task that the IRI had undertaken after Roy's death was "M.N.Roy Archives Project" which involved the work of collecting and ordering Roy's correspondence and manuscripts and
bibliography of all that he had written. And the credit for accomplishing this task also goes to Ellen who could finish the project with the assistance of a two years grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

IRI was founded basically to promote a renaissance movement in the country by developing the institute into a research centre - a centre of creative thinking. And for the purpose one of the main activities was to carry out the research work at the institute and publication of humanist literature. But despite their best efforts radicals could not develop it into a permanent research centre because of the paucity of resources and man power. However after Roy's death publication of Roy's unpublished works and other humanist literature was given priority by radicals. Renaissance Publishers brought out a number of books both by Roy and others. Thus we see the main activities of IRI were restricted to publication of some monographs and conducting study camps. There was no serious efforts on the part of Radicals to develop into a full - fledged centre for research and bring into existence a broad based renaissance movement, the need for which was emphasized over and over again by radicals in their meetings and study camps. It was primarily due to the fact the IRHM did not have any whole timers except Ellen and all the important radicals were engaged in their respective professional pursuits which left them with very little time for the movement and its various organs. Ellen however was negotiating with Agra University and working on the plan to develop 13 Mohini road as the Centre for Indian renaissance when she was brutally murdered by some insane elements in her own home on 13 December, 1960. And thus with Ellen's death came the end of an important chapter in the history of IRHM.
5.4. Groping For a Formal Organization 1960-1969

We have seen that IRHM survived the shock of the death of its founder philosopher M.N.Roy and radicals continued to contribute both individually and as a collectivity to the development and growth of the movement. And the credit for this goes primarily to Ellen who was the main uniting force and source of inspiration for other radicals after Roy's death. She carried forward the movement and its various institutions with utmost devotion, sincerity and a sense of urgency and prevented it from becoming extinct. But after Ellen's death every thing really seemed to have collapsed and the question of the survival of the movement once again loomed large. And this time there was no one who could replace Ellen as there were no whole timers and all the prominent radicals were engaged in their professional pursuits. The movement was really orphaned and the sense of purpose and direction that had sustained the movement all these years also seemed to have been lost. And one important reason for this unfortunate and pessimistic state of affairs was that radicals had not developed any formal organization since the dissolution of RDP, which could act as the main centre for coordinating the activities of radicals scattered all over the country. As a result they remained more and more atomized individuals without any sense of belonging. Writing in an article "To be or not to be?" published in RH of 4 April 1966, before the annual camp, which was to be held in May, R.L.Nigam writes, "By temperament I am not an optimist. But pessimism is not the alternative with me. I find it somewhat hard to believe that all the reservoirs of moral energy from which we drew sustenance in the past have finally dried up. From the little that I can see sitting anti-climax - wise at 13 Mohini Road, it seems to me that individually we are still very much the same as individuals - strike us and we ring true. But we have somehow ceased to belong together can we belong together once again? If we can have that sense
of 'belonging' returning to us in the next camp, it will be a real Re-Union, a new and purposeful beginning. We could then possibly, confidently decide 'to be'.

That 'the sense of belonging' so essential to sustain any movement was absent was revealed not only by the fact that there grew differences among radicals, at intellectual level, pertaining to fundamentals of the philosophy of New Humanism but also by the fact that the Journal RH, which had been the most vocal and important mouthpiece of the movement all these years, after Ellen's death strangely proclaimed that it did not hold any view. Strangely enough after Ellen's death the editorial in the RH was stopped and instead signed articles began to appear - The attitude and spirit that the journal represented was that if any body tried to apply the fundamentals of RH, philosophy to the various problems - did so at his own responsibility - others might or might not have been in agreement with the author. This shows that even the minimal commitment and consensus on the fundamental principles of humanist approach to the problems was lacking. Hence the journal could no longer be considered as the journal of the movement for coordination and guidance.

Thus we see as a result of growing differences among radicals and due to lack of sense of belonging and participating in some common mission, the movement come to a halt. No common programme for action at socio-political level could be drawn up for the movement as the differences among members widened and became louder. Association of some of the prominent radicals with congress for cultural freedom (CCF) and Indian committee for cultural freedom (ICCF) created further differences as these organizations were regarded as representing Ultra - rightist or pro-American views - more so because of the revelation of the fact that these organizations were funded by US central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Because some of the prominent and

\footnote{See R.I. Nigam, Radical Humanist, 4 April, 1966}
senior members of RHM, (who from time to time expressed their views in the columns of RH) also happened to be associated with CCF, it was alleged by some radicals that the journal RH had become an organ of CCF and the IRHM was going the American way loosing its own identity and sense of direction. A couple of seminars were organized under the joint auspices of CCF and IRI and it evoked expressions of anger and sorrow on part of those not in agreement with the objectives and modes of functioning of CCF. This differential attitude towards CCF created wide differences among radicals who began indulging in mudslinging at each other as is clear from the columns of RH between June 1967 and August 1967. It was indeed a pity that a broad based movement which arose as a protest against totalitarian ideologies, to promote understanding, good will and develop a sense of spiritual brotherhood at an international level, itself degenerated to this level and came to such a pass. The IRHM found itself in a real sad plight both at theoretical level and at the level of action. In face of criticisms and challenges to the validity of the Philosophy of Radical Humanism from various sections Sib Ray along with G.D. Parikh, V.M.Tarkunde, Laxman Shastri Joshi provided the theoretical defense. They continued to work for the spread of humanist ideas through their writings in RH journal. But then unfortunately both for the movement in general and the RH weekly in particular, Sib Ray the then editor of RH left the country and went to Australia in 1963, for seventeen long years.

For two years after Ellen's death he looked after IRL, the RP and RH journal. He also represented IRHM in IHEU. But then basically being an intellectual Sib Ray could not cope up with the tremendous amount of organizational work that was entailed in carrying forward the movement for Indian renaissance. Therefore he chose an escapist path and fled the country. Though at individual level he continued to work for the movement in his own limited way from outside but then it was not the same thing as
being actively involved in the various activities and institutions of the movement.

Each was on the verge of winding up and needed a person like Sib Ray more than ever before. Had he been at the helm of affairs, the things might have been different for the movement. V. M. Tarkunde, another stalwart of the movement, could have replaced Ellen to some extent in providing the sense of solidarity to radical humanists and in carrying forward the various activities of the movement. But he was working as judge in Bombay High Court from 1957 to 1969 and therefore he also could not devote himself fully to the cause - the humanists stood for so many years. 13 Mohini Road, which instituted the IRI had been a centre of vital importance to Roys and other humanists. After Sib Ray, R. L. Nigam, who then was teaching at D.A.V. College, Dehradun shifted with his family to its premises and looked after IRI till 1976. Being an introvert, R. L. Nigam however could not carry on the activities of IRI with the same vigour and enthusiasm, as was done by Roy and Ellen. Thus a place of historical importance for Roys and other humanists, a place which once had been a centre for lively discussions, study camps and intellectual discourses came to bear a forlorn and deserted look after Ellen was no more. Her death was a serious set back to annual study camps which had been a regular feature since the party days. We find in the period between 1960-69 there were relatively fewer occasions when radicals could come together, frequency of both regional and central study camps also reduced primarily due to lack of sufficient man power resources and also because of the loss of sense of belonging after Ellen was no more. In a way there was no effective leadership. There was something like a collective leadership on a very subdued level. There was hardly any communication among radicals scattered all over the country except personal letters. Coordinating committee that was formed with the dissolution of the RDP remained totally non-functional. Thus, the channels of communication both direct
and indirect, that existed before remained choked during this period and there was hardly any movement in existence worth the name, as one can not conceive of any social movement without an organization, without a unified leadership, without a sense of belonging among its members and without well defined goals. Most of these characteristics, essential for the existence of any social movement were lacking from IRHM. However, the only thing that remained was some vague urge at psychological level in the minds of the individual radicals to do something and the atomized radicals did continue to express this urge from time to time through the columns of RH and in very infrequent and thinly attended study camps also this feeling was repeatedly expressed. There was a need to revitalize this sentiment and give the scattered radicals a sense of belonging. And for the purpose after a lot of heart searching, deep thinking and discussions ultimately Indian Radical Humanist Association (IRHA) was founded in 1969. The period between 1960-69 is a period when Radicals were in fact groping for some kind of formal organization which they thought would revitalize and activate the movement by generating in them a sense of belonging which seemed to have vanished particularly after Ellen's death. However there was a sharp difference of opinion among radicals regarding the formation of IRHA. Even though desire to form some kind of organization was expressed from time to time both in the camps and in RH, a serious proposal was made for the first time in radical humanists reunion held from 27 May to 31 May 1968 and following it a working paper regarding the proposed organization of the RHM with details regarding its nature, its objectives, its programs, conditions of its membership etc., was published in the RH of June 23, 1968 with a purpose to hold discussions on the proposal at various regional conventions of radicals and to invite the reactions and opinion of those radicals who could not join the reunion for various reasons. Though for a majority it was a welcome step, some were opposed
It and they came out with arguments similar to the ones suggested by Roy for the dissolution of RDP for they could conceive of no fundamental difference between a political party and any other organization. The RDP was an instrument of power politics. So with the enunciation of new philosophy when the radicals abandoned the power motive altogether, the party had to be dissolved as their goal changed from one of capturing power to that of spreading the values of renaissance through education and enlightenment. It was felt by many radicals on the basis of their personal experience of almost twenty years that some sort of organization was absolutely necessary for moving on in a fruitful manner, an organization fundamentally different from a political party, in consonance with the new role the radicals had called upon themselves to play. The working paper on the proposed organization was discussed in conventions held in Patna, Calcutta and Delhi and there was a general agreement among radicals on the idea of forming a formal organization. Perhaps there was no objective necessity for forming an association, but the need was very much felt at psychological level as most of the radicals had become inactive as there no longer existed any platform for interchange of ideas, and experiences, there existed no group to provide them the pleasure of belonging.

Ultimately after long discussions and controversies, IRHA was formed in December 1969, under the Chairmanship of Justice V.M. Tarkunde after his retirement. It was an association free from bureaucratic, organizational, authoritarian characteristics of political parties. It was conceived of as a centre for coordinating and regulating the activities of the movement in different parts of the country. The primary goal of the movement remained the same - an all-comprehensive social renaissance. Thus we see radicals once again felt the need and urgency to carry forward the
movement and propagate their philosophy a task, which had been neglected for almost a decade after Ellen's death.

5.5. Indian Radical Humanist Association Phase: From 1969 to the Contemporary Period

The formation of IRHA can be regarded as a landmark in the history of RHM in the sense that it provided the necessary impetus to revitalise the movement and its various activities that had been lying dormant after Ellen's death. Those who were opposed to the idea of forming an association have refrained from the activities of the association right from its inception as they believed it was against the very spirit of RHM revolving around individual freedom. They strongly believed the organisation was forbidden in the light of twenty-two thesis and that sooner or later association is bound to imbibe all ills of a traditional party system as the criterion of membership to association is a vague statement as it opens the membership or restricts the membership to those in general agreement to 22 theses. They believed that any organization with its restrictive rigidity can not promote the process of movement towards increasing freedom and it is bound to infringe the freedom of the members as in a collectivity individual ceases to think independently and thereby his creativity which demands greater and greater freedom is over shadowed by the organization.

The overwhelming opinion however was in favour of forming the organization free from the ills of political parties. Its main objective was to promote understanding between radical humanists so that they could once again come together and act together in order to develop the philosophy of new humanism and to promote a movement for educating the people in democratic and humanist values and devise ways and means to help people think rationally and become independent and self reliant both in their
thinking and action. For the purpose IRHA was found in 1969 under the chairman ship of V.M.Tarkunde who after his retirement in 1969 has worked for the movement on full time basis. The inaugural conference of the IRHA was held in Delhi on Oct 30,31 and November 1,1969 with a view to discuss the political situation in the country, define the objectives of IRHA. V.B.Karnik and C.T.Daru were appointed conveners of the inaugural conference. C.T. Daru and Suyash Malik were made the secretaries of the IRHA with 12 regular members, Maniben Kara and M.L. Sen being its two co-opted members. The main programme of IRHA as discussed in a statement on "Present Political Situation and the Task of Radical Humanism" presented by Tarkunde at the inaugural conference of IRHA consisted in the examination of the philosophy of new humanism in the context of recent experiences of radicals; activisation of existing institutions namely IRI, RH, RP and renaissance clubs; conducting specialised research pertaining to Indian problems; publication of journals and humanist literature in regional languages; organizing seminars, study camps and discussion meetings both at regional and all India level; participation in community development and cooperative activities; promotion of democratic alliance which they thought would provide a guidance for democratic political parties and support for them in their struggle against totalitarian subversion.

As far as the recruitment of members is concerned there are no rigidly defined conditions for its membership. Any individual with a rational, democratic and cosmopolitan outlook and in general agreement with the spirit of Roy's thought and ideas and prepared to work in its various programmes could become the member of IRHA. Members were also granted the freedom to join political parties committed to federal democracy with a view to influence and transform the parties from within. It was an organization of dedicated individuals having no lust for capturing power,
devoted to make the world a better place by educating and organising the atomised individuals at the bottom of our state i.e. establishing a radical democracy or democracy from below in which power will reside not with the state or any minority group but with the people themselves. Besides propagating the values embodied in the philosophy of radical humanism, it was decided that in order to have wider appeal, radical humanists should discover new forms of participation in local institutions and in order to transcend the limits of parliamentary democracy they took upon themselves the task of creating new forms of institutions at local level so that a more participant and grass roots form of democracy could be created. In connection with the activities of radicals it was felt that they should engage themselves in constructive social work and that the leading members of the movement should tour different parts of the country with a need to spread their movement. Here we clearly see the shift from emphasis on intellectual activities in pre-associational phase to social activities. After an experiment of over two decades the futility of preaching the philosophy of New-Humanism in abstract was realised. Now they came to believe that RHM couldn’t be developed purely as an intellectual movement confined to the task of spreading its philosophy through intellectual discourses. It was realised that in order to have some impact, ideas cannot be propagated in the air without reference to the life of the people and that intellectual movement can not be developed except as a counterpart of a social movement and vica versa. Therefore one can also see the change in the nature of activities radicals were involved in pre-associational and post associational phase. In the former, more particularly after Ellen’s death radicals seemed to be isolated from current social and political affairs of the country as their long-term utopian goal, one of achieving a radical humanist society, which they believed could be achieved by preaching the values of renaissance rather than by direct participation in concrete
socio-economic problems facing the people. And this attitude gradually led the movement to almost a state of extinction. After a lot of heart searching they came to believe, 'that mere books however cleverly written or pedagogy however brilliantly conducted are not enough without some examples to convince a common man about our socio-political conception. I have found from my twenty-two years of experience gained from the consistent and tenacious efforts of preaching New Humanism that it is very difficult to make the people understand all the implications of our philosophy only in abstract. If we could show them the truth and validity of our philosophy by an example, they would have understood it easily'.

If we see the functioning of the RHIM after 1969, we find that immediately after the formation of IRHA there was not much difference in its functioning and for a couple of years it remained in a moribund state. But still the post associational phase can be regarded as a functional phase in that the formation of IRHA resulted in the change in the organizational structure of the movement and gave it the momentum it seemed to have lost in previous years. Henceforth, study camps and conferences both at all India level and regional levels became more regular and frequent. These study camps which are regularly held till today not only help in spreading the movement but also provide a platform where radicals from different parts of the country come together, share their experiences, review Indian and International situation, redefine their tasks from time to time in a changing situation, objectively assess the functioning of their movement, and plan their future programme of action, tactics and strategies etc and thereby keep the movement going even though in a very limited sense.

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9 See Swadesh Ranjan Das, Article, Radical Humanist, 27 October 1968, p.385.
In the post associational phase the movement once again became a living force because of the peculiar conditions of the country couple of years before the imposition of internal emergency in India in June 1975 by the then PM Mrs. Indira Gandhi. A major factor that has contributed to the revitalization of activities of the movement has perhaps been, the role and responsibility assumed by Justice V.M. Tarkunde. He no doubt has been the moving spirit behind the movement since 1969. Justice Tarkunde retired in 1969 and therefore he was relatively freer and this made a tremendous difference to the movement since 1969, which incidentally coincided with the formation of IRHA, a formal organization of RHM, which Tarkunde had all along supported. The movement came into limelight especially during the dark years of emergency and importance of the movement due to personal status and resources of Tarkunde have been immense. Even prior to 1969 radicals had always relied very heavily in organizational matters and also for monetary resources on Justice Tarkunde.

In response to fast spreading Jayaprakash Narayan's movement, an emergency was proclaimed in India on 25 June 1975, resulting in suspension of many of fundamentals rights guaranteed by Indian constitution, arrest of thousands of political opponents (including many a prominent radical humanists) of the congress regime, for purpose no other than to retain the power by Indira Gandhi. As we shall see later Radicals played an important role in association with other non-party organizations like Citizens for Democracy (CFD) and People's union for civil liberties (PUCL) led by Jayapraekash Narayan (JP) created for the defense of democracy in India. Radical humanists through these organizations conducted a fearless and sustained campaign for defense of democratic rights and civil liberties throughout emergency and afterwards. It was primarily as a result of their activities during emergency that a number of radical humanists have become well known in India as self less, determined fighters for
Freedom and democratic norms. Thus we see as a result of Tarkunde's association with J.P., C.F.D. and P.U.C.L. organizations though political in nature without being at the same time the instruments of capturing power - resulted in an increase of contacts of radical humanists with other like-minded democrats in India. This definitely has resulted in increase in influence of radical humanists in India though not necessarily in the name of R.H.M.

As IRHA happens to be an organization of persons committed to or in broad agreement with the philosophy of Radical Humanism, its membership is very small and restricted. By its very nature it could not be a very large organization and therefore owing to its small number the impact of its activities has also been limited to the intellectual section of the society. Radicals have been very well aware of this limitation of theirs and therefore ever since the formation of IRHA, they have emphasized the importance of cooperation with a large number of people in the country cherishing democratic values without necessarily accepting the philosophy of radical humanism. And therefore we see the members of IRHA were even granted the freedom to join and work with other organizations including political parties, having a genuine concern for preserving and strengthening democracy in India. This they felt would provide them the opportunities to spread their message and will also lead to the growth of IRHA. As we have seen earlier also, IRHA was created with a view to revive the movement by emphasizing the importance of a definite programme of action rather than restricting it merely to carrying out intellectual propaganda in the air. And therefore we see in the post associational phase the radicals involved in the movement are actively involved in the task of social, political, economic and cultural reconstruction of the society. They are engaged at various levels in the task of transforming the idea or dream of people's committees and local cooperatives in to reality so that parliamentary democracy may be
gradually and peacefully converted into radical democracy and party government in to a people's government. This they are doing in cooperation with other like-minded organizations and individuals like CFD, sarvodaya and several limited purpose organizations and NGOs, as this stupendous task cannot be accomplished by a handful of radicals howsoever sincere their effort might be. Any democratic movement in a vast and complex society like India definitely calls for a collective effort by a number of individuals and organizations interested in strengthening and stabilization of democracy in India which faces a perpetual threat by authoritarian forces as represented by both political and socio-cultural climate of the country. Therefore in order to have a complete view of the history and functioning of the movement it is essential to analyze its relationship with other groups and movements in the country as any social movement essentially is a part of broader socio-cultural condition of a society and affects and is affected by other groups and movements. We propose to discuss the leadership of RHM and the shape and direction it has assumed in the contemporary context in the next chapter. However, before undertaking the analysis of leadership and actual functioning of RHM, it is important to point out the changing structure of the objectives and means and strategies of the movement, as it is a dynamic movement responding to the changing historical and societal situation.

5.6. Changing Objectives of the Radical Humanist Movement

Radical humanism as the philosophy of a new renaissance was proposed in 1946 and since then new historical developments have taken place; new problems have emerged; continuing problems have become more acute and complex and new issues have acquired prominence. A continuous re-examination of the theses in the light of advancing knowledge and new experience is inherent in the philosophy of radical humanism, and radicals do
believe that it is obligatory on their part to undertake such an exercise for clarification and
growth, if it is not to suffer the fate of earlier philosophies. An attempt to enrich philosophy
in the context of changing situation both at national and global level is reflected at theoretical
level in the writing of many radicals. A shift in orientation and priorities also finds
expression in the functioning of the movement, which we propose to discuss in the next
chapter. As we have seen earlier also, Sibnarayan Ray, who shared a very close relationship
with Roy since 1946, has contributed immensely to the intellectual side of the movement for
more than fifty-five years now. We can compare his important books that were written under
the inspirational guidance of Roy, like Radicalism (1946) and In Man’s Own Image (1948,
jointly with Ellen) in which radical humanism was proposed as a philosophy of a renaissance
and his recent writings where he still emphasizes the need for what he calls ‘A New
Renaissance’ we can clearly see the growth in his perspective and ideas which definitely have
a bearing upon the new issues and problems that have emerged with changing times and
situation both in Indian and global context. In the changed scenario he and other radicals like
Yakunde, Yadava, Indumati Parikh, etc. talk about the need for a new renaissance which
goes beyond the philosophical realm and emphasizes the involvement of common people at
the grass roots level as they have come to believe that without the free, intelligent and
effective participation of common people, a new renaissance will end in a cul-de-sac. Unlike the
proposed earlier renaissance, a new renaissance will have to reject every variety of
existent attitudes and hierarchical relationships. Sibray writes that it is only through the
conscious participation of common people in the restructuring of civilization, will such
renaissance gain nourishment and momentum. Our knowledge, imagination and
technological resources and skills have to be oriented towards an awakening of the people to
their own reasoning power and creative potentialities. Pioneers of a new renaissance will

have to be men of integrity, not interested in capturing power for their own narrow gains. A New Renaissance will have to address itself to the complex problems, which are leading our civilization towards a global catastrophe. In the contemporary context, the following objectives, policies and programs constitute the major agenda for radical humanist democrats:

1. The threat posed globally by nuclear plants, horrific weapons of destruction of enormous range and power and their stockpiling, are too grave to be ignored. The horrors of Hiroshima, disasters at Chernobyl have revealed the far-reaching hazards of nuclear plants. With the disintegration of Soviet Union, cold war between the two super powers has been suspended but the senseless, destructive wars in modern era continue (Afghanistan, Iraq). Despite efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation, we see number of countries joining the nuclear club is growing, and no way has been found to safely dispose of stockpiles of weapons or highly radioactive nuclear waste. This problem can be countered only at global level and it requires the co-operation of all the saner forces at international level.

2. The problem of ecological imbalance needs a special attention as deforestation leading to air pollution; enormous increase in burning of fossil fuels for industry and transport, depletion of ozone layer threatens the survival, not only of human race but all forms of life. Here the issue of excessive human greed, intemperate consumerism, total indifference to the need for harmony between man and nature have to be dealt with using humanistic perspectives in order to ensure a more thoughtful utilization of natural resources so that ecological balance is not upset to the detriment of future generations.

3. The problem of overpopulation more particularly in developing countries seems to be as serious a problem as the current drift towards ecological disaster. It more than nullifies any progress made towards amelioration of the pathetic condition of common men. Educative,
Evasive efforts and incentives have to be used to mobilize people to take recourse to scientific methods of self-control in order to bring down the rate of population growth.

We live in a very iniquitous and unjust world and the economic polarization between countries and within countries is becoming more and more pronounced. Revolutionary improvements in the technology and means of communication, the processes of globalization and liberalization have brought the different regions of the world closer but it has not resulted in greater equality in socio-economic terms. On the contrary rich are getting richer and poor, poorer. A new renaissance has to address itself to this formidable task of reduction of inequalities both within nation states and among nations. It has to be ensured that the rich and powerful share their resources and power with the 'wretched of the earth'.

4. Decentralisation in every sphere of life is imperative, more particularly in the political field, so that there may be increasing personal contact between the elites and the people. This is essential to arrest and reverse to a reasonable extent the contemporary drift towards centralization and uncontrolled totalitarian regimentation of the masses by selfish ruling elites. The task of reversing the trends towards centralization calls for formulation and popularization of social theories and political economies which stress devolution of power and decentralization of planning and setting up of institutional structures and institutions at the grass root level where average citizen will effectively participate in the decision making process.

5. The process of reduction of socio-economic inequalities would simultaneously necessitate a profound cultural renaissance and emphasis on 'pluralism' and cosmopolitan outlook. As the societies are moving from modernism to post modernism, emphasis has to be on unity in multiplicity rather than on uniformity which imposes mould of the big and the powerful on the weak and small, and denudes humanity of its in exhaustively multiform creative potential.
This in nutshell broadly constitutes the objectives and programs of radical humanists in the changed contemporary context. Needless to say, as the problems are global, the solutions needed, have to be worked out at international level. Therefore no single school of thought can claim to provide comprehensive solutions. Any effort to change the disastrous course of modern history requires a sustained and cooperative effort on the part of many competent persons, groups and institutions. So the objectives and programs of RHM can be seen as a part of various new social movements whose boundaries go beyond nations. How to realize these objectives or at least move in the direction of approaching the above stated goals is of crucial importance as it calls for an effort at various levels involving multitude of actors, groups and institutional structures at local, regional, national and transnational level. An attempt will be made to throw some light on the humanist means and strategy and tactics, which are deemed appropriate by the actors involved in the RHM to approximate their goals.

5.6.1. Change in the Means and Strategies of the RHM

We have seen that RHM can be viewed as a conscious, radical, profound and vast movement aiming to create a new society. It is not an abstraction; it is a total, well thought out, orderly, oriented process. It involves people—people in action, struggling, questioning their achievements, and improving upon themselves to realize the future of their vision. The aim, objective, means, strategies of different movements are bound to differ depending upon the ideology, historical and social circumstances. RHM does not simply envisage a new social order but also suggests means and methods to realize it. It is a revolutionary movement which fundamentally rejects human enslavement, exploitation, alienation, and aims at man’s gradual liberation, at developing man’s creative genius, dignity and individuality so that such an individual can contribute to the creation of a new social order as envisaged by the philosophy of RHM.
Intellectual odyssey of Roy can be traced from a militant nationalist to a Marxist and from Marxist to radical humanist. Throughout the journey the ultimate goal of freedom and truth remained constant: only his conception of how to achieve these differed. In Yadava's view it was the 'inner fire' of a 'new vision' and the 'perpetual zeal' for its realization that had kept the unique personality of Roy 'restlessly burning' in 'quest for freedom' and 'search of truth' which are ever expanding because both freedom and truth always acquire new horizons as the interrelated dynamic human individuals and their dynamic environment unfold themselves in newer and newer forms and ways. The core of radical humanist strategy and tactics lies here 'How to ignite this ever burning fire of ever new visions among human individuals in ever increasing numbers is the central strategic concern of all radical humanist revolutionary democrats. The task however seems to be Herculean, a never-ending one. But Roy and his associates believed there is always a scope for modifying human nature, his way of thinking through ideological propaganda, and so also environmental conditions can also be modified and democratic structures set up in the interest of increasing human freedom. The only workable strategy to achieve this goal was education to humanist Roy. So we see the overall broad objective of the movement was one of educating the people in the basic values of cultural renaissance. In keeping with this broad objective the synoptic view of the radical humanist strategy in our contemporary existential context is one of propagating 'radical humanist ideology' so that radicals can multiply themselves by creating a large number of people who not only will have the conviction of their ideas but also will have the ability to expand these ideas before the public so that their revolutionary consciousness is raised. This is important as without revolutionary consciousness there can be no revolution. History teaches us that it is created and developed through ideological education. The first exigency of the revolution, in fact the most important of all exigencies is that of creating new men, men who have freed themselves and have opted for the general well being of the society on
humanistic bases. Ideological training in revolutionary ideas is the only method to meet the
crises of the exploiting powers—it is the infallible weapon that can reveal and develop the
people’s genius and bring them to the fold of revolutionary movements as in the absence of
the subjective conditions which motivate people to join any movement, mere objective
conditions like poverty, relative deprivation, frustration, alienation etc. are not sufficient to
motivate people to join the movement. Bringing out the importance of the subjective factor
Roy writes, 'an important condition of revolution is the rise of the subjective factor. In
context of modern times subjective factor cannot be merely a mass of people howsoever
mobilized. In cultural crisis of the age with the entire intelligentsia disillusioned and
spiritually discontented, with the state divided in terms of those seeking power for its own
sake and those to whom power is only a means for a better social and cultural development
of society, the content of subjective factor must be a comprehensive ideology, an ideology
that goes beyond economics and politics—such an ideology can not be a class ideology. It
has to be a human appeal, appealing to the intellect and conscience of every man as an
individual in society and not as a representative of this or that economic sector or the
community.'

RHM from its inception has emphasized this task of ideological training for the
emancipation of people from conditions such as ours—characterized by cultural backwardness,
ignorance, fatalism and superstition etc. Roy therefore dedicated himself totally to the
intellectual task so that he would leave behind an army of followers fully equipped with a
sound philosophy which would put a new content and meaning to all their activities and the
movement would not be orphaned with the death of the founder as has been the case with
most of the reformist and revolutionary which have arisen from time to time.

\[1\] See M.N Roy, New way of revolution, Independent India, 23 February 1947
The task of ideological training is essentially a long-term enterprise and results can be expected only if the task is carried out on a persistent and continuous basis. The birth of a new society as envisaged by Roy will not be a traumatic and violent event of the kind that characterized Russian or French revolution in which the old institutions collapse and the political power is transformed from the old to the new governing elite. The process is painfully slow as the focus is not on any partial or short-term change, but on creating a radical humanist society. This is an ideal which being utopian may never be realized but only progressively approached. The strategy of RHM is also a gradualist one as being intellectual in character it is bound to remain confined to a narrow circle of intellectuals. Keeping in mind the Indian situation despite the best efforts of dedicated band of radicals it is unlikely that the new thought will grip the imagination of the illiterate mass of people.

For radicals the instrument of transformation is neither a state nor political parties but the 'people'—composed of individuals, as it is the individuals who think and act either individually or collectively; and except when action is wholly irrational, thought always proceeds action. Only right thinking can lead to correct action. Individuals do differ in their mental capabilities and it is the primary responsibility of those having a better understanding of humanist strategy to communicate their ideals to others and thereby multiply themselves and build up the movement. As the movement is not a power oriented one its members constitute a moral elite in the sense that they exemplify, in varying degrees the values of a new society. So an important step in the humanist revolution is the conversion of ever increasing number of individuals to humanist values by appealing both to their intellect and emotion.

Roy as a Marxist did not have much faith in the moral aspect of human beings and found the very idea of nonviolent revolution to be paradoxical and ridiculous. The collapse of Tsarist regime in Russia and seizure of power by Bolsheviks led by Lenin was viewed as the
establishment of the first alleged proletarian state. To the most revolutionaries, Bolshevik revolution appeared to vindicate the Marxist-Leninist strategy. As a Marxist Roy strongly believed in the Marxian theory of inevitable class struggle and dictatorship of the proletariat. But as a radical humanist Roy denounced the Marxian theory of class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat. He came to believe that the society could not survive without some kind of social cohesive force and accordingly, class struggle could not be the only reality. His philosophical approach as a radical humanist was individualistic. He rejected both the cult of nationalism and the theory of class struggle as in both the individual loses his identity either in the collective ego of the nation or the class. As against the pivotal position given to working class as a revolutionary force in Marxian theory, Roy as a humanist recognizes the revolutionary significance of the middle class and characterized the proletariat as the most backward stratum of society, which could never play a progressive role in modern times. Roy evolved a new concept of revolution—revolution by consent. Now he came to realize that in modern times the mighty powerful states with modern weapons and techniques had rendered the old insurrectionary technique of revolution obsolete. Education appeared to be the only viable instrument to bring about the desired change and this method as has been pointed out by Shankar Ghosh was not very different from constitutional method that the early moderates and liberal thinkers such as Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G.Ranade, Surendranath Banerjea and Gokhale had advocated. ‘It is a curious irony of history’ writes Ghosh that Roy, who started as a militant nationalist and who later embraced the Marxian doctrine of revolution, came eventually to believe in the gradual and constitutional method which the early liberals pursued. (Ghosh 1975: 433). And interestingly the latter half of 19th century, which produced the early liberals of India, was characterized by Roy as the golden age of Indian history. ‘I believe’ he wrote in Dec 1954, ‘that if there ever was a Golden Age
it the history of India, it was the latter half of the nineteenth century, a historical past about which we can make no mistake.\textsuperscript{12}

Thus we see Roy advocated the concept of nonviolent revolution and began to emphasize the purity of means and came to believe in Gandhian doctrine that evil means cannot lead to good ends, and ends do not justify the means. He came to believe in the success of only nonviolent movements in modern times as ‘failed violence is bound to demoralize the revolutionaries, intensify their alienation, disrupt their ranks and fizzle out their whole movement in due course. What is worse, by provoking counter-violence by the state it encourages a counter-revolutionary backlash and finally leads to the success of naked abhuman counter revolution—therefore it should should be incumbent upon radical revolutionaries to base their strategies on non-violence’. (Yadava 1983: 57-58). Roy who had been a consistent critique of Gandhi came to incorporate in his philosophy certain elements which appear to be characteristically Gandhian such as truth, morality, decentralization of power, party less democracy and above all nonviolent revolution. We have pointed out earlier also this similarity can not be stretched too far as their philosophies spring from basically two different outlooks towards life. Radical humanist strategy is populist in character and is universalistic in nature as it seeks to promote the interests of all; its appeal is directed to all irrespective of distinctions of caste, creed, sex or nation. Its philosophy expresses the overriding unity of humanity and the world. Since educational activity alone could result in creation of a society based on scientific humanism, Roy devoted himself fully to the cause.

But as we have seen things have changed significantly since Roy’s departure and in the light of their experience over a long period of their involvement in the movement radicals have not only incorporated the new issues like environment, overpopulation, nuclear proliferation, economic polarization, increasing centralization etc. in their immediate agenda.
but have made amendments in the means and strategies adopted to address the above issues. New renaissance, they now emphasize goes beyond the philosophical realm and calls for involvement of common people to achieve their objectives. They have come to realize the inadequacy of the ‘educational strategy’ alone as a means to transform society as was recommended by Roy and his associates at the time of the launch of the movement. The synoptic view of the radical humanist strategy in the contemporary existential context is that of a judicious combination of organized efforts to propagate ‘radical humanist ideology’ i.e. education and participation in the struggles of the deprived and the exploited. The central purpose of this ‘education-struggle strategy’ is the gradual but rapid expansion of human freedom and more particularly emancipation of underprivileged individuals and sections of society by helping them realize their dignity and potentialities to become more and more self-reliant.

Another main concern of radical humanist strategy is concerned with the need to overcome the widespread ‘alienation’ of contemporary human individuals, more particularly the ignorant common masses, who for centuries have accepted the domination and authorities of the powerful without questioning it. Radicals believe it is important to expose and demystify all ideologies of domination so that the masses may shed off their illusions and a widespread moral revolt against the status quo may gradually be built up. This has to be done by on a realistic basis by exposing both, the inadequacies of formal democracy, as it exists, and also the dangers of all kinds of authoritarian systems. For this purpose all existing liberal institutions and organizations, artistic, literary, cultural, social, economic, political etc. should be fully utilized. As the members of the RHIM are scattered and are engaged in multitude of activities in various fields of life, it was realized that it was necessary to have a central nucleus of the movement to coordinate the activities of scattered radical humanists at local, regional, national and even international levels. Since its formation in 1969 we have
IRHA has been providing such a nucleus. As the task of transformation of society on humanist basis is stupendous, radicals since 1975 have realized the necessity of working through a number of limited purpose organizations or non-government organizations in different spheres of life, according to their tastes and competence. It has been acknowledge by a number of activists involved in the movement, that neither ideological propaganda alone nor mere formation nor joining of organization will not yield the desired results. It is only by undertaking organized activities, involving common people that the humanist movement can be strengthened, authoritarianism in all its forms can be defeated and various problems gripping the society at local, regional, national and international level can be effectively dealt with. In radical humanist way of thinking it is incumbent upon the radical revolutionaries to base their strategies on non-violence, as there is no alternative to non-violent struggles in liberal states today. Most of the relatively liberal governments are afraid of non violent movements, more particularly if they assume mass dimension, because their very legitimacy is then at stake. Thus, we see in pursuance of their task, the main activities to be adopted by radicals to carry forward their movement are of two kinds. Firstly, at theoretical level they pertain to Research and Educative work and secondly at pragmatic level it calls for organizational activities like setting up of people's committees and working through various limited purpose organizations within the overall framework of radical humanist philosophy, for carrying out different kind of activities different institutional structures and modes of communication and organizations are required.

5.6.2 Institutional Structures of RH

The main institutions through which RH has been functioning in India are the Radical Humanist (RH) the Indian Renaissance Institute (IRI), the Renaissance Publishers (RP), and the Indian Radical Humanist Association (IRHA). These institutions are created
Having given up the aim of attaining power, primarily educative and cultural task formed the core of RHM in its early stages. As this kind of work required a good deal of research and study which could not be done by an average member of radical democratic party, it was felt that it was necessary to set up an institution which will be an effective instrument for expanding the ideas of new humanism and to facilitate research on Indian history and social movements. Historical task of IRI was one of submitting Indian traditions to a critical examination and revaluation that was necessary for the rebirth of Indian people after centuries of cultural stagnation and backwardness. This was undoubtedly a stupendous task, which could not be accomplished by any single individual, but required collective efforts of numerous scholars imbued with iconoclastic spirit of inquiry and learning and trained to carry on historical research according to modern scientific methods. IRI was proposed to be center for such an intellectual activity.

The study camps, which were organized by the institute, were a means to attain this end and during Roy’s time each camp took the RHM a step ahead in the sense that as a result of in depth discussions new ideas emerged and were incorporated in the philosophy of new humanism. Roy and his associates tried to develop IRI as a center of creative thinking and a truly creative center of cultural renaissance. As a part of renaissance movement, Radicals in various towns having universities developed renaissance clubs and one of the important tasks of IRI was to establish a close contact with these clubs and coordinate their activities. These clubs on subjects suggested by the institute organized lectures and discussions. IRI continues to hold annual study camps, several regional camps and seminars even now so many years after Roy’s death, which has kept the movement alive.

Apart from holding annual camps another important task that IRI undertook after Roy’s death was “M.N. ROY ARCHIVES PROJECTS” which involved the work of collecting and ordering Roy’s correspondence, manuscripts and bibliography of all he had
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Apart from holding annual camps another important task that IRI undertook after Roy's death was "M.N. ROY ARCHIVES PROJECTS" which involved the work of collecting and ordering Roy's correspondence, manuscripts and bibliography of all he had
written. Ellen could accomplish this task with assistance of two-year grant form Rockefeller Foundation. So the basic objective of IRI was to promote research work and its publications were aimed at developing and spreading humanist ideas in India and abroad. But despite their best efforts radicals could not develop it into a permanent research center because of paucity of resources both financial and human.

Renaissance Publishers: The publishers was located at 15, Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta, was the principal publishing house of RHM. Publication of humanist literature was given a priority by radicals after Roy's death because it was believed that in order to create a new cultural climate, spread of ideas was absolutely necessary. R.P has published more than hundred titles in English on various aspects of humanism and contemporary problems. Many of these books have been translated and published in Indian regional languages. It is a cooperative venture, all its shareholders and directors being radical humanists. For circulation and sale of its publications RP depends a great deal on the cooperation of radical humanists in different parts of the country.

Radical Humanist Journal: Another important instrument through which the theoretical and practical aspects of humanism are popularized is the monthly journal radical humanist previously known as Independent India, started as a weekly in April 1937. Right from its inception the weekly carried the message of political freedom, economic equality and cultural progress. After independence the name of the journal was changed from II to RH firstly because India having attained independence, name II ceased to be appropriate and secondly the name was incongruent with the broad, cosmopolitan and internationalist outlook for which the movement stood for. RH was initially published from Bombay and publication was shifted to Calcutta in 1948 and from Calcutta to Delhi in 1970 and from Delhi to Bombay in 1998.
Roy's contribution to the journal was greatest even though many helped and collaborated with him. He wrote extensively on varied subjects like science, education, morality, party less politics, decentralized economy, physical realism, humanist ethics etc. Through his writings he was trying to defuse knowledge as he strongly believed that democracy is not possible without democratization of knowledge and rational thought. Roy was the editor of RH till his death in 1954, which came as a severe blow to the paper as Ramamurthy mentions, its readership fell alarmingly from 5000 to 1500. Financially the paper was in a desperate position and yet it did survive the loss of its founder editor and credit for it goes to Roy who had trained his colleagues in the school of adversity. He had imbued them with a philosophy of life which being realistic admitted of no despair. This training and philosophy of life sustained the journal in the greatest crisis of its career. The RH therefore did not die like 'Harijan'. Its staff and its contributors knew that without it their lives would be bereft of meaning. We see that despite heavy odds it continued to be published uninterruptedly and did not fail its founder or his philosophy and it gradually became self-sufficient as well. The journal was fortunate in having Ellen Roy and Shibnayan Ray as its editors from 1954-1960 followed by V.B. Karnik and other leading radicals. The RH is currently edited and published from Mumbai through the collaboration of Centre for Human Development and Humanist House.

Till date we see that RH is the principal organ of RHM. It is through its columns that ideas and information is diffused and it regularly publishes news on humanist activities and announces in advance the information about humanist programmes like study camps and conferences. Distinguished liberal thinkers both from India and abroad like Bertrand Russell, Eric Fromm (Mexico), Robert North (U.S.A.) H.J. Blackham (U.K.) Stanley Maron (Israel) Max Harkheimer (Germany) etc. have contributed to it from time to time. The entire staff of the journal since its inception has been honorary. Committed radicals look after its
production, editing, advertisement and sales. Thus we see RH continues to play an important role in carrying on the RHM, examining the current socio-political problems both at national and international level in the light of rational and humanist perspective. IRHM owes its unity and dynamism to a great deal to the journal along with IRI and renaissance publishers.

**Indian Radical Humanist Association (IRHA):** This body was formed in January 1969 under the leadership of V.M. Tarkunde with a view to coordinate the activities of the scattered individual radicals working in different fields and in different parts of the country. It is an association free from bureaucratic, organizational, authoritarian characteristics of political parties. The main programme of IRHA consists of examination of the philosophy of new humanism in the context of contemporary experiences of radicals, activisation of existing institutions like IRI, RH, RP, conducting specialized research pertaining to Indian problems, publication of journals and humanist literature in regional languages, organizing study camps, seminars both at regional and all India level, participation in community development programmes, promotion of democratic alliance which they thought would provide guidance for democratic parties and support for them in their struggle against totalitarian subversion. The association did not have any rigid conditions for its membership. Any individual with a rational, democratic and cosmopolitan outlook and in general agreement with the spirit of Roy’s thought and ideas could become its member. Members were also given the freedom to join political parties committed to formal democracy with a view to influence and transform the parties from within. IRHA was thus an organization of dedicated individuals having no lust for power but were devoted to educating and organizing the atomized individuals at the bottom of our state. Since the formation of the association, study camps and conferences both at regional and all India level have been a regular feature of the RHM.
it provides a platform to radicals, who come together, share and discuss their experiences, review Indian situation in the context of shrinking global world, define their tasks and strategies from time to time in a changing world. In such forums radicals assess the functioning of their movement and plan their future programme of action. These in short constitute the main of channels of communication through which RHM tries to spread its ideas and keep the movement alive. Apart from collectively organized activities at national level, we find that a number of radical humanists, particularly those who were opposed to the very formation of IRHA and who do not involve themselves in the activities of the organization, have been actively working at individual level in various fields of activities. They have been working for the propagation of their ideas in accordance with their understanding of Roy's humanist philosophy. At local level many of them have found acclaim and appreciation for their activities in different pursuits and different fields of activities.

As is the case with most social movements, more so in India, we find the RHM and its various activities have revolved around personalities. M.N.Roy was at the center till his death in 1954, followed by Ellen till 1960, and then we see a vacuum is treated till 1969, followed by revitalization phase with V.M.Tarkunde being the central figure. But for his efforts Roy and RHM would have remained in the oblivion. And yet, more important than personalities perhaps is the functioning of the various institutions and organs installed for spreading the humanist message, both during Roy's and Ellen's lifetime and afterwards.

References


