

M.N. ROY

PHILOSOPHER REVOLUTIONARY

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Sudhin Datta and M.N. Roy

Ellen Roy

Sudhin Datta died on the 25th June, 1960. The essay reproduced here was published originally on the 28th August, 1960, in THE RADICAL HUMANIST (Vol. XXIV, No. 35), at that time brought out as a Weekly from Calcutta and edited jointly by Ellen Roy and me. Ellen's deep interest in literature and music brought her personally very close to Sudhin and his wife Rajeshwari (she was a well-known singer and musicologist), and their friendship survived Roy's death. Some of us had the great privilege of being present at those vibrant intellectual exchanges between Roy and Sudhin at the Theatre Road and Russell Street suites. SNR

One of the less known facts about Sudhindranath Datta is his friendship with M.N. Roy. Roy had few friends outside the political and ideological groups and movements at whose centre he found himself in all phases of his life. Personal loyalty, indeed, survived political friendships in some cases. But he rarely afforded himself the distraction of personal relations or any other subjective concerns unconnected with his singleminded concentration on impersonal and objective pursuits. Sudhin Datta was the most outstanding, and perhaps the only, exception. Not that he was opposed to the particular pursuits and ideas of M.N. Roy during the period when they knew each other. Indeed, I believe, if Sudhin had any interest in, or inclination for, political pursuits and ideas at all, it was for Roy's rather than for any others. And though he never participated in any of his political activities, he followed them closely and often entered into their critical discussion. But I hardly remember that his criticism ever tended to present an alternative point of view; his questions and critical observations rather intended to challenge and provoke Roy to

greater clarification, new formulations and further probing into the logical consequences of his statements and ideas. And in this he invariably succeeded. The quarterly journal, *The Marxian Way*, later renamed *The Humanist Way*, was jointly conceived by them in 1945 as an organised forum for this intellectual intercourse on a wider plane, and Sudhin was the author of the programmatic statement which was circulated as an advance announcement of the journal.

But for Sudhin politics was merely a marginal interest within the comprehensive scope of his literary vocation, both in theory and in practice. This fact, and perhaps his social and family background, had kept him aloof from the early revolutionary movement of Bengal in which Roy's political career and subsequent intellectual development had their origin. These different backgrounds were perhaps an added mutual attraction for the two men. If Roy appreciated the polished accomplishment of Sudhin Datta who had made such splendid use of all the opportunities of wealth and social status and security, Sudhin had expressed in writing his admiration for the creative vitality and unconventional originality of Roy's thinking. They enriched each other both for what was different in them and what they had in common. And there was enough in common between the two, in cultural tradition and background as well as in their intellectual make-up, for Sudhin Datta to have become M.N. Roy's greatest personal friend outside his own old circle during the last decade of his life. And, probably because this friendship was formed when both had already entered the age of maturity and it was unconnected with Roy's public activities—which created friendships and personal relationships of a different nature—Sudhin Datta understood Roy perhaps more deeply and knew more of him in many ways than anybody else among those of whom it is now expected to write a biography of M.N. Roy.

This had been my idea ever since 1954, and indeed even earlier, that Sudhin Datta should associate himself with, if not actually himself write, a biography of M.N. Roy. But Sudhin, with all his banter, wit and seeming cynicism, was shy and undemonstrative and reticent where he was emotionally engaged. Therefore I knew better than to jeopardise the chances of

my idea materialising some time by pressing it too early. And now it is too late. It was indeed discussed when I met the Dattas in London in autumn 1955, where a publishing firm had approached me with the suggestion of a biography of M.N. Roy, but we did not find an author on whom we could agree. Sudhin went with me to the publisher and we discussed the idea, but nothing came of it. I did not follow up the matter at the time because I expected that the M.N. Roy Archives, which were just then about to be started, would produce much new material that would make the writing of a biography more fruitful at a later stage.

Only late last year, when the Archives were as complete as they are ever likely to be, and we were planning to edit Roy's unpublished jail manuscripts, and Sudhin Datta had just returned to India after a long absence abroad, did I approach him with the request to associate himself with the editing of Roy's unpublished manuscripts. With the larger plan of a Memorial Edition of the collected writings he had associated himself already at the time when the appeal for the M.N. Roy Memorial Fund was first launched in 1954. He had even started editing himself the early chapters of Roy's memoirs, whose publication was planned, but abandoned at some time. But the editing of the unpublished jail manuscripts was a concrete and immediate proposition. Sudhin knew about those nine volumes and had seen them during some of his visits to Dehradun. His response to my request was spontaneous and moving. The bulk of those unpublished manuscripts deal with a subject on which none was more qualified to be heard in the planned panel of consulting editors than Sudhin Datta. Because, if their respective main preoccupations of politics and literature were marginal for each other, the interests and intellectual scope of both were so comprehensive that what they had in common was much more than what of the one's vocation eluded the other. "The Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science", which was the over-all title that M.N. Roy had given to the work he wrote during six years in jail, was the recurring theme of most of the many nights of discussions, explorations and spirited exchange of ideas, which are such an unforgettable treasure in the memory of those who

were there when it happened, and who are now left behind when both of them are no more.

The knowledge and the scope of the minds of both of them were encyclopaedic. Both had the kind of brains which to observe in the process of work and creation is to me the greatest and the finest of all the wonders of the world. The meeting of two such personalities is a rare thing. None of us is likely to experience anything like it again in a lifetime. What wastefulness of nature. Although both have left an impressive legacy of their thought in writings, what they were in living will fade away with us who knew them—and however great was what they have *done*, in writing and otherwise, how much greater was what they *were*, in living. The only measure of that is the pain and the enormity of the loss; and the only monument to it, pictures in our minds and memories of fleeting moments, encounters and situations. To communicate these in terms of bare facts does them no justice, because their significance lay not in anything particularly important or dramatic that happened, but in an atmosphere and in the spirit that prevailed and animated all those occasions. And how to describe the two talking till the small hours of a morning, on thermodynamics or artefacts or the sanctions of a secular ethics, in impassioned argument, jumping up from their seats, physically restless with the dynamics of thinking, walking about talking, and suddenly laughing in the exhilaration of a new idea, an agreed formulation, a fresh insight...

Our first meetings were when Sudhin visited us with Sheila Bonnerjee-Auden in the Store Road flat of Biren Roy, and another time with her sister Mrinalini in our host's Behala house together with a communist professor, if I remember right; and then when he invited us to a meeting of the literary circle grouped around his journal *Parichaya*, where we had our first "polite" meeting with Indian Communists to whom Sudhin later ceded the journal started by him, rather than remain associated with it in their company. And then he came with S.K. Dey to our office in Calcutta's Chandni Chowk. I cannot exactly recall the sequence of these first meetings, but they happened in fairly close succession, and the association, ever since, has been constant and intensive. Then came the time when we expectantly awaited Sudhin's

return to Calcutta with his newly wed young wife Rajeshwari. By that time we were already close friends, and most nights were spent either in their Russell street flat or in the Deys' in Theatre Road. Sushil Dey was then in charge of Calcutta's air-raid defences and Sudhin Datta was somehow officially associated with him in this assignment, which goes to show that he was not altogether non-political, at least in the sense that he had a strong consciousness of public responsibility in matters of consequence.

In later days, we often remembered the seemingly incongruous beginning of our future relationship and exchanged first impressions of this meeting in the office of the Radical Democratic Party, which was then the only popular organisation in the country to support the war. These impressions must have been striking since they led to a decade of such an intensive, close and warm friendship. Neither Sudhin Datta nor M.N. Roy were unprepared for the encounter. Both were wellknown men and had several common friends. Yet, something unexpected happened to both of them in their evolving relationship. The poet may have been surprised to find in the politician such interest and knowledge of science and concern with the fundamentals of human existence; and the latter learned that poetry can be inspired by the same concerns as source and for direction. The conception of Roy's last major work of original writing, the two volumes of *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* can be directly traced to the stimulation and inspiration of those sparkling nights in Calcutta.

Thinking was a passion with both, and their lives have proved that reason can be a source of inspiration and does not impoverish but can rather intensify the emotional life of man. There was nothing exclusive in this friendship. On the contrary, while they enjoyed each other's company in quiet talk, whether in the Russell Street flat or at Dehradun—Roy's secular ashram, as a common friend called it—they were in their best form in company of their widening circle of friends, and both gained new friends in the process.

Between these now, remains the shared grief and added bond of the common loss.

A Materialist on Fire

H.J. Blackham

A major figure in the British Humanist and Rationalist movements, H.J. Blackham was one of the founder-organisers of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) and served as its General Secretary for many years. He was also the editor of 'The Plain View' Quarterly, London, and author of books on Humanism. This is the text of an address given by him on the occasion of a memorial meeting in London on February 17, 1954. SNR

I did not know Roy personally, but his premature death has been a personal grief to me. I corresponded with him. I read and reviewed his books. I knew and valued several of his closest colleagues. I looked forward to meeting him. I deplore his loss to the International Humanist Movement in which he would have played a big part in shaping. Not least, I felt the current of his dynamic, his mixture of passion, imagination, thought and action.

We are here to make these tributes because we recognise his greatness. We cannot, I think, pretend that this was greatness of actual achievement, as usually measured. His greatness was the rarest kind of achievement, the consistent maintenance and development of his own living inwardness; his Shelleyan fire, his resistance to the world's slow stain and all that poisons or suffocates the living centre of personal being. He was, confessedly, a romantic. His romanticism was incarnated in the activity of political revolution, and was governed by reason. This unusual mixture gives us the man, and the ingredients are acutally on the label of his last book: *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*.

The master passion of his life was the urge for freedom.

"When as a schoolboy of fourteen", he said, "I began my political life, which may end in nothing, I wanted to be free... I began my political life with that spirit, and I still draw my inspiration from that spirit rather than from the three volumes of *Capital* or three hundred volumes by the Marxists. That is the basic urge of freedom, which created this world of men, which created the feudal as well as the capitalist world, and which will create a still better world of which we are dreaming." He described himself on the same occasion as "for forty years a tormented soul in search of freedom".

This freedom was for him an empirical fact, a psychological urge at the root of every man's personal being, and at the same time it was a cosmic fact, the evolutionary striving, just as man's rational nature answered to and was derived from the law-governed universe. In this view Roy found a massive metaphysical (strictly materialist) sanction for his human absolutes of freedom and reason. Therefore he was able to make freedom a moral absolute, or a permanent human value, by which to judge men and theories, institutions and policies. And he did use it thus to judge the performance of the Soviet Union and of the social democracies, and to condemn nationalism, and to separate what was living from what was dead in the philosophy of Marx. Obviously, dogmas, prejudices and passions were not going to unite the world and solve the present crisis. But he believed that freedom for the individual as the recognised primary value, guaranteed within and without, psychologically and logically, could furnish the basis of common effort and judgment of mankind for mankind.

Roy, then, was a materialist with a passionate belief in the efficacy of ideas and ideals, that is, in the creative power of man, the distinctive belief of the humanist. But, romantic though he was, his ideas were not fantasies, abstract ideas bombinating in a vacuum; they were historical ideas formed out of human experience and developed by the experience they guided. What he believed in was organised thought leading to planned action and revised in the light of the results and of events. That was the constant pattern of his incessant thinking and discussion. One sees his mind at work on these lines in the volume of speeches at

the political study camp at Dehra Dun in 1946, published as *New Orientation*, a development of ideas in relation to experience and events which led to the dissolution of the Radical Democratic Party and the formation of a Radical Humanist Movement. Whatever the wisdom or otherwise of that step, this empirical historical idealism (or Materialism) is the humanist temper and method, and is as far as possible from a merely literary romanticism.

With these ideas and ideals in his blood Roy was destined to end up a humanist. He craved the universality of the humanist. He could not be imprisoned in dogmas and prejudices and local passions, a dogmatic Marxism, a racial nationalism. His spirit was at home in the age of the Renaissance or the Enlightenment, the great creative periods of humanism. He went behind Marxism to recover the lost spirit of liberalism from which it has sprung. But with all this romanticism and rationalism to carry him away into the upper air, he did not leave the ground; he was at home in the business of making and judging political events, although the atmosphere often stifled him. As a romantic revolutionary, he did not like to see the revolution cool off and harden into another monstrous piece of reactionary actuality. But he recognised that history had to be like that, and that the time had then come to start a new revolution, not in the sense of a new armed insurrection but in the pursuit of new ideas. But the pursuit of new ideas was not just another bit of exciting experience for the incorrigible romantic, the intellectual voluptuary; these new ideas were nothing other than the old ideas improved by what had happened and thus become the starting point for new ventures nearer to desired possibilities. That is why he kept his imagination incandescent by re-reading and re-living history and projecting the lived history into the stream of living action still making history. He thus lived an inspired life and inspired others.

Roy's belief that freedom, and above all freedom of thought, ideas, is the urge to all human activity and all human progress, his vision of history as ideas moving men to great and heroic actions, is the clue to his affinity with the choice and brightest spirits of earlier European generations, men of the Renaissance,

the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the clue to his own political career which ended in the wilderness. This does not make him, however, an ineffectual Shelley. Although he drank deep and constantly at the sources of this earlier inspiration, and was not always happily at home in the midst of the contemporary scene, Roy was modern. Because for him all history was contemporary history. He saw the needs of our modern world in the light of that history; not only the outstanding concrete need of a universal civilisation yet to be achieved, but also the moral needs, the need to recover a liberal sense of human values, the need for a moral basis of political action, the need to shake ourselves free from the cynicism and violence and dogmatism and prejudice which beset political thought and action in the swamps of class struggle and of nationalism, the need to rise out of the boredom and apathy of what goes by the name of democracy and rationalism, all gone cold, stale, flat, and unprofitable, the need to recover the excitement of history as an unfinished piece and the confidence, courage, and creative energy justified by our great inheritance and open future. It was natural to him as a humanist to draw on all history and apply what he learned to present problems. If he was a romantic, he was that rarest of men, a disciplined romantic; he knew that reason and freedom which he valued above everything were not metaphysical attributes of man but had to be conquered, were difficult achievements which involved discipline and devotion, were a constant call to heroic action. He was determined for all he was worth that these achievements should not be bogged down in the necessary organisation of it, that man should not mar himself in the making, that he should not gain the whole world and lose his own soul. This was a healthier preoccupation for a modern politician than any which could have entered into the heart of a doctrinaire or an opportunist or even a respectable party-man. Roy was temperamentally not a politician, but he was no dilettante, and he had the most serious and relevant political message for the modern world.

In conclusion, Roy was a materialist on fire, and when materialism burns like that it is the most authentic human stuff alive.

First Philosopher of Modern India

Tarkateerth Laxman Shastri Joshi

Internationally recognised as a great orientalist for his authoritative edition of 'Dharmakosha' or Encyclopedia of Religion (in Sanskrit), Laxman Shastri Joshi became an associate of M.N. Roy in the forties. He made important contributions to the intellectual life of Maharashtra through his writings, his research institutions and public lectures. He died in 1994. SNR

His was a dedicated life, enriched by ennobling contemplation; it ended after contributing a great philosophy of life. It therefore belongs to the few instances of fulfilment afforded by human history.

As a matter of fact, his life could not have been regarded as a failure no matter when and where it ended since the age of fourteen when he was born in public life. Just recollect whatever he did or wrote, big or small; it is significant, an artistic whole. Like a beautiful verse, a lyric, a piece of scientific value or a quality produced by nature or man, it has its intrinsic value. The story of his life reads like an epic, the concluding chapter of which constitutes a philosophy of life, integrating the fundamentals of science and the moral experience of man.

Every important stage of the public life of M.N. Roy was inspired by one or the other of the leading ideals of the modern world. Nationalism and Communism are outstanding modern ideals elevated to secular religions. And Roy dedicated his thoughts and activities to these until his acute intelligence and profound understanding could find the way to a new, noble and liberating philosophy. Roy is one of the greatest champions of

reason of our times, a symbol of rationalism. But his life can be understood also as a life of pure and infinite faith. It would be otherwise difficult to explain how Roy the thinker could also be Roy the *Karmayogi*. It was a life of a great synthesis of faith and reason which could successfully emerge from all tragedies, always enriched, always without a scar.

While pursuing the ideals of nationalism and communism, Roy saw in them the elements of bondage which have thrown the world in great calamities. And the direction in which he moved clearly shows that unbounded love of humanity was the permanent basis of his character. His sublime spirituality prepared him for all adventures in pursuit of his ideals and also ultimately revealed to him their enslaving character.

Continual quest of freedom and endless search for truth are the foundations of humanist thought. They are the concrete manifestation of the supreme spirituality of man which ushered the modern scientific age into existence. Attempt to combat the enslaving ideals which have thrown humanity into a crisis is the only expression of supreme spirituality in our times. Roy departed after giving a new philosophical synthesis for overcoming the crisis. His achievement is unique.

India is known since ancient times as a land of philosophers and spiritual guides. But all of these until date have moved within the same limits of the Bhagwad Geeta. In M.N. Roy came the only thinker who could transcend these limits and offer a philosophy of life, fresh, rich and abiding. Realisation of this fact is and shall continue to be the proper homage to Manabendra-nath Roy.

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Freedom and Creativity

Freedom is not an abstract concept. It means the right of individuals to choose how best each can unfold his or her creativeness and thus make the greatest contribution to common welfare and social progress.

Platonism, Marxism and Roy's Philosophy

Philip Sparrt

Born in London in 1902, son of a Baptist schoolteacher Philip Spratt went to Cambridge on a university scholarship, was converted very early to Communism, and was sent to India in 1926 by the Comintern to help Indian Communists build their organisation, "launch a Workers' and Peasants' Party as a legal cover, and get into the trade unions and obtain the leadership of them". He proved himself to be quite capable and effective, but was arrested and tried in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy Case, sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment, released in 1934 but interned till 1936.

Spratt settled in India, worked for 'Mysindia', Bangalore from 1939-65 and then became editor of 'Swarajya', Madras. In the forties he became a member of the Radical Democratic Party and was associated with the Radical Humanist Movement. He authored several stimulating books, 'Gandhism: an Analysis'; 'Blowing up India'; 'Hindu Culture and Personality'; etc. SNR.

I. Platonism in Roy's Philosophy

All Revolutions are about God: some try to enthrone one God at the expense of another, and some try to dethrone all Gods. It was one of Roy's distinctions that he was always aware of this. He held that revolution is concerned with the ultimate things, and that the first necessity of a revolutionary is a philosophy.

Roy's first choice of a philosophy was Marxism, and he remained a Marxist up to the early 1940s. He differed however,

from the orthodox communists, even of the "right", in his application of the Marxian theory to India; and the difference originated in the high importance he attached to philosophy. He saw that while it is possible in economics, and even perhaps in politics, to skip over historical "stages", if an organised minority seizes power and coerces the rest, this process of forced skipping is inapplicable to philosophical revolution. The evolution of the ideas of the great majority in a large country can only proceed step by step. This change of ideas was, in his view, what India needs before everything else.

The events of the thirties and forties made it clear that a great many people, while talking, sincerely or not, of freedom, were establishing conditions which destroyed freedom. This was true of Marxists as well as others. In the hands of the orthodox communists, in fact, Marxism had become a philosophy of regimentation. The subjects hitherto discussed by revolutionaries began to recede into the background: the great problem of the coming generation was clearly going to be the problem of preserving or re-establishing individual freedom.

Most people were content to respond to this by saying that freedom is obviously good, and refusing to be impressed by the arguments against it. Marxists of the more liberal type recalled that Marx emphatically demanded freedom. Roy alone reformulated the Marxian philosophy in such a way that it appears as a philosophy of freedom. Roy's philosophy is at least affiliated to Marxism, though it diverges from it a good deal. In particular it is a materialism.

The great difficulties of materialist theories are to account for the emergence of mind or spirit, and to validate ethics. Marxism slides over the first by means of the dialectic, and ignores the second. Roy does not use the dialectic. His argument is mainly empirical, resting on the fact of evolution; but at the crucial points it becomes Platonic. Nature is law-governed, he says: therefore the human mind, which is a product of nature, is rational. Also, being rational, man is moral; and each individual, participating in the rational essence of humanity, can achieve his greatest good by self-realisation, the free development of his essential nature: from this follows the idea of liberty.

Thus Roy solves both problems by using Platonic doctrines. The first is that of universals. That nature is law-governed means that universals are part of the constitution of nature. Universals are of the character of thought: they are rational entities; and human rationality is duly ascribed to the fact that man is part of nature and so shares this rational character.

The second Platonic doctrine is that the world of universals culminates in the good. I was always puzzled by the argument that man being rational is therefore moral. Rationality as such seems to contain no implication of a moral kind. The merely rational man may quite well be an egoist, a hedonist or a tyrant. The argument from rational to moral follows only if we assume the Platonic doctrine that the world of universals does contain a moral factor.

This ethical assumption also appears in the doctrine of self-realisation and the political implication drawn from it. Without this Platonic assumption there is no reason why we should value the development of man's potentialities, for in a purely rational system there is no category of value; and of course there is no reason why we should regard it as obligatory to assist the development of other people's potentialities.

Roy, then, meets the difficulties of materialism by resort to Platonism. This may be thought a contradictory procedure, but whether it is so depends on what one means by materialism. It is perhaps best to say that materialism is a trend or an aspiration. It being admitted that the facts defy explanation by any simple formula, materialism is an attempt to comprehend things from a naturalistic point of view, without admitting too much that is alien to it.

Plato believed in God, but his God was not that of the orthodox of any religion, and in any event it is not an integral part of his system. His grounds for believing in God were empirical. The doctrine of ideas, which is all that is necessary for Roy's theory, does not imply theism, and seems to be almost the minimum that a materialist must accept if he is to make his theory presentable.

II. Marxism and Roy

Marxism holds that there is only one civilisation, and that what we regard as the different, parallel civilisations of India, China, Islam, Christendom etc., are really terms in a linear series, of which Christendom is, at the moment, the most *advanced*. It follows that India, China etc. must follow Europe or stagnate.

It also holds that the process of social advance involves radical changes, especially in what it calls the cultural *superstructure*. All Marxists regard religion, for example, as obsolete in the modern world and due for total oblivion. The theory of things most hostile to religion, viz. materialism, is *true* in the relativistic Marxian sense.

For the doctrine that the socio-economic *foundation* determines the cultural superstructure leads to relativism, the view that doctrines in science and philosophy are not true or false, but only socially convenient or not. The dialectic leads further to the view that political parties can decide philosophical controversies; that in fact all such controversies are really political.

Marxism exists in two main forms, with intermediate mixtures. On the one extreme it is almost pure theory. It studies social evolution with something approaching academic detachment, though Marxists never conceal their sympathy for *progress*.

Here progress coincides closely with the idea of it which has prevailed in the West since the dawn of the modern era: progress is change towards material prosperity, individual freedom, social and economic equality, political democracy, etc. There is a strong implication that change in these directions is *natural* if not inevitable.

On the other extreme is Marxism as practical politics. While the political assumptions of the Marxists were *de facto* democratic, the extremes were not too far apart; when their political assumptions became revolutionary the divergence widened.

Marxism tended with Lenin to become merely a technique for engineering *coups d'état*, and with Stalin this tendency was carried to its logical conclusion of subordinating the theoretical side of Marxism wholly to practical political opportunism.

Theoretical Marxism is *progressive*, a continuation and *fulfilment*, as the earlier Marxists said, of liberalism. Stalinism became indifferent, and with few short intermissions, bitterly hostile, to the liberal and humane heritage of the earlier ages.

The Older Marxists still felt themselves members of society; Leninists and Stalinists are wholly *alienated* and dedicated to its destruction.

When M.N. Roy learnt Marxism, there were among the Russian and German communists many men who were not pure Stalinists and retained much of the earlier Marxian tradition. This Roy absorbed. He never showed much interest in the technique of bringing off *coups d'etat*; he always showed a feeling for the broad social effects of political and technical changes—of course within the general Marxian framework.

His first controversy with Lenin, though quite friendly, showed the difference. Lenin was interested in destroying the bourgeois world, and accordingly persuaded himself that the Indian bourgeois nationalists would, or could be egged on to rise in revolt against Britain. Roy, speaking from knowledge of the facts, and also with an interest in Indian progress rather than in the destruction of Britain, maintained that the Indian bourgeois nationalists would not revolt but would gradually acquire *de facto* power. This is what was later denounced as the heresy of *decolonisation*. It has, of course, been justified by the facts.

It was in line with this prophecy that he proposed to Indian nationalists the method of calling a constituent assembly to define their purposes and exercise the maximum pressure on Britain. He knew it would be very difficult for British liberals to oppose a body with that name.

In 1928, largely because of the struggle for power in Russia, Stalin turned very far to the *left*, that is towards emphasis on *coups d'etat*. Roy, loyal to his broader view of Marxism, and to the facts of contemporary politics, which permitted of *coups d'etat* only by fascists, opposed him and was expelled. When in 1934 Stalin swung back again to a *united front* policy, which, verbally at least, acknowledged the value of the liberal tradition, Roy again tended to support Stalin, and he continued to repose hope

in the Russian dictator, whom he admired, until the swing to the left again after the Second World War.

Roy lived mostly in Germany for several years before his return to India in 1930, and he saw the Nazi movement in its earlier stages. In fact he met Hitler, and used to tell an extremely amusing but rather improper story about a lunch they had together.

The Nazi and the communist movements converged after taking power, but when in opposition they were very different. Outwardly at least, the communist movement concerns itself with political propaganda; the Nazis were from the beginning addicted to beating and murdering opponents, and they did so on a big scale, and far from concealing it boasted about it.

Roy was strongly repelled by this, and it confirmed, in his view, the Marxian doctrine that nationalism is now reactionary. He always had been suspicious even of Gandhian nationalism, and he now came to think of the *khaddarwalas* as potential *brown-shirts*. The neutrality of the Congress in what he regarded as the holy war against Hitler seemed to him to proceed from an ideological sympathy between Gandhism and Nazism.

On the other hand, he was impressed by the social changes in Britain during the war, and by some of the British officials he met in India who surprised him by their liberal outlook. By the end of the war he considered Britain, despite imperialism, more progressive than Indian nationalism, and he never ceased to regret that Attlee did not find a more progressive way out than to hand over India to Nehru and Jinnah.

America, however, made a bad impression on him. He was there about 1916, when Wilson was preparing to abandon his election pledge and enter the war. But his brief personal sight of the country probably did less than Marxian abstractions (imperialism is the last stage of capitalism; capitalism is the cause of war), interpreted by his Marxist mentors to accord with Russian national interests, to convince him that America is and must be, after Hitler's Germany, the citadel of world reaction.

Roosevelt unfortunately was no intellectual; he was the pure

American empiric, and so the last person to impress a brahmin, educated in the abstractions of Russo-German leftwing intellectualism. Roy never got over his hostility to America, though later he seemed to concede that as between the two blocks, domination of the world by America might be somewhat less of a disaster.

His ideological break with communism came sometime after the war, when he saw the danger of Stalin's left swing. He recalled that Stalin had once told him and Togliatti, when the three were alone together, that the communist parties were all useless, and that the instrument for the establishment of world communism could only be the Red Army.

This is, of course, a doctrine typical of Stalin, the leader of the *coup d'etat* or power-at-any-cost school of Marxism. Roy argued that Russia is far more backward than Europe and despite thirty years of communism remains so; accordingly a regime imposed on Europe by Russia would be a step back.

But about the same time his confidence even in his own liberal version of Marxism began to weaken. Specifically he repudiated the doctrine that the socio-economic foundation determines the cultural superstructure, or in Marx's still more abstract terms, being determines consciousness. Man's mind, he said, is free and creative. 'The Root is Man' is a half forgotten Marxian formula which expresses the new insight.

The first effect of this change was that he abandoned the Marxian relativism, the idea that man can not obtain truth, and hence a lack of interest in truth, a feeling that what matters is practical achievement. Roy henceforth laid much more stress on truth, as one of the great ultimate aims, the things that make life worth while, and by implication as a necessity in practical affairs.

This change also led him to judge that there are possible courses of development open before society other than that of the Marxian scheme. In particular, India need not resign herself to a choice between the alternatives of an orthodox capitalist development, which he regarded with horror, or a premature revolution such as Russia had shown to be possible and now wants to impose on the world, which he admitted to be extremely repulsive.

Freed thus from Marxian determinism, and recalling the liberal background of pre-Leninist Marxism, he proposed a reorganisation of Indian society which could retain the values of the liberal tradition and yet lead to higher material standards and less inequality.

In the Marxian terms, India, though formally a bourgeois democracy, is socially and mentally still in the middle ages. She needs to undergo the change described as the bourgeois-democratic revolution, which unlike (premature) socialist revolutions would be wholly beneficent. Russia was still in the middle ages in 1917. Lenin tried to combine the two revolutions in one, and in doing so cancelled the advances of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. India, Roy thought, can achieve those advances, but need not submit either to the fate of Russia after 1917 or to that of France after 1793.

India's was to be a new way, breaking out from the ironclad determinist scheme of the past, and showing a third and better line of development of the world. But the novelty of the new line appeared only after the bourgeois-democratic revolution, which *in principle* destroys religion. Roy retained his Marxian hostility to religion.

He also persisted in his original Marxian hostility to nationalism. This was not just a perverse relic of his unusual education. One of the stigmata which proves that both the French and the Russian revolutions failed is the retention and accentuation of nationalism, for both revolutions started out in the name of universal principles. Post-war Europe, enjoying conditions which permit of great social advance, is prevented from taking advantage of them mainly by nationalism. Communism, originally hostile to nationalism, has now adopted it, though hypocritically, and is making gains in Asia mainly by the use of nationalist war-cries. It is for India to show that man can overcome this atavistic prejudice.

At the back of this proposal to do away with nationalism there may lie the Marxian idea, seldom made explicit but often implied, that a step forward in the line of progress necessarily makes a society more fit to cope with competitors. It is especially tempting, no doubt, in the present era, when the place of war in

social affairs has been made so doubtful by the nuclear explosives. Here the Marxist approaches the Gandhist.

Marxism has always been political: more so in its *coup d'état* or Lenin-Stalin form, less so in its democratic forms. Roy had tended towards the latter forms. Now in the last years of his life he went still further : he abandoned politics. He persuaded his colleagues to disband their party and to confine themselves to propagation of ideas.

This is a gesture of confidence in man. Political parties by their existence imply that men need to be herded along the right path with emotional stimuli and offers of rewards; totalitarian parties imply that men need to be coerced along the path. To abandon party politics implies the belief that men can choose the path and proceed along it, actuated by their reasoned perception of the common good and loyalty to it.

Thus while Roy's ideas remained in broad outline Marxist—his conception of the course of evolution, of history, and of the future of man remained little different from that of Marx—he came step by step to diverge a good deal from Marx, and still more from the Marxism of the Boshevik school. Did his ideas, while thus gaining in breadth, lose in dynamism? That remains to be seen.

From the writings of M.N. Roy

Truth and Freedom

What is truth? It is the content of man's knowledge. Truth is a value. Our values are not autonomous deities; they are inter-related logically as well as ontologically. We say that freedom can not be attained by immoral means, nor an enlightened man ever be a liar. Freedom, knowledge, truth are values to be appreciated together by living them.

Prophet of a New Order

V.M. Tarkunde

An associate of M.N. Roy since 1936, Vithal Mahadev Tarkunde was General Secretary of the Radical Democratic Party from 1944 to 1948, and is currently editor of 'The Radical Humanist' and Trustee of Indian Renaissance Institute. He was a Judge of the Bombay High Court from 1957 to 1969, and has been practising as a Senior Advocate in the Supreme Court since 1969.

Tarkunde was one of the co-authors of "Peoples' Plan for Economic Development" (1943) and "People's Plan II" (1977). In co-operation with Jayaprakash Narayan he started the Citizens for Democracy in 1974 and the People's Union for Civil Liberties in 1976. During the Emergency he built up a strong resistance to arbitrary rule, and his contributions to the global struggle for human freedom and dignity were recognised in the Humanist of the Year Award of the International Humanist and Ethical Union in 1978. His most recent publication is: 'For Freedom' (1984). SNR

It is perhaps too early to attempt a dispassionate and balanced estimate of the contribution of M.N. Roy to politics and philosophy. An unusual combination of unique talents made him an incomparably fascinating and disturbing personality—irresistably attractive to those who knew him and equally forbidding to those who looked from a distance.

Had he been less gifted, he would certainly have been a very successful politician. Throughout his eventful life, he was passionately devoted to the cause of freedom and progress. Though he had varied interests and attachments, most of them were contributory to, and none conflicted with, his life's mission. He had an unusually large number of very firm and very tender

friendships, but those were built up during the course of his main work and consisted of his political co-workers and intellectual associates. His name, even before he started working openly in India, had already become a legend. His intellectual eminence was beyond question, and he was second to none in what was currently understood as self-sacrifice. He lacked none of the qualities that make for success in political life. But political success always eluded him, while it crowned several persons who could not be even compared with him in intellectual stature and personal attainments.

Many have been puzzled by this outcome, and some look upon it with regret and even bitterness. But no one deserves to be blamed for the outcome, least of all Roy himself. If he was a "political failure", it was precisely in the same sense in which, and for the same reasons for which, Karl Marx was a political failure. A prophet of a new order cannot be the leader of the old.

History alone will tell whether the New Humanism conceived and developed by Roy will play a role comparable to the role played by Marxism during the last hundred years. But the similarity between the two men and their times is too striking to be missed. And both had to pass a whole life-time in bitter and many-sided opposition.

It is not that a person having the intellectual and moral make-up of a prophet can never be a successful politician. He can, provided the times in which he lives and moves do not call for a radical displacement of established ideologies. Roy, like his revered Guru a century earlier, worked at a time when established ideologies required to be re-examined and largely displaced. It was an irony of history that by this time Marxism itself was an established doctrine which required to be tested in the crucible of reason, and Roy did this in the scientific spirit of Marx himself and with a profound reverence and a constructive approach which only a true sense of history could give.

From the personal point of view, the task of Roy was even more difficult than that of his illustrious predecessor. And this

for two reasons. He was born in a country which was languishing in the backwaters of history, hardly visited by the fresh currents of modern thought. Secondly, the tempo of change in modern times is far quicker than a century ago, and in consequence the crisis of the contemporary world is far deeper and more formidable than any in the past. Roy had therefore to pass, in one short life, through three historical epochs. Starting as a fervent nationalist, he soon became a fervent Marxist. However, he accepted Marxism, to quote his oft-repeated phrase, as "a mode of thought" and not as a set of irrefutable dogmas. In the course of time, like other acute thinkers, he saw the limitations of Marxism; but he did not stop at a mere negative criticism of Marxism, nor allowed himself to be transformed from a Commissar into a Yogi, but did what none else has done—he conceived and constructed a comprehensive and consistent social philosophy as the basis of a new social order and thus lighted a path through the crisis of our time.

He was eminently qualified to discharge this huge but essential task; and precisely those qualities which enabled him to measure up to it rendered him unsuitable for current political leadership. His intense love of freedom was coupled with an equally intense passion for truth. He disliked intellectual fog in any direction. Hence, he became a consistent iconoclast, a life-long crusader against cherished beliefs. This search for truth he conducted with a giant intellect which was both acutely analytical and massively creative—a combination which few indeed are fortunate to possess. To this was added that very rare virtue of complete intellectual integrity—the courage to think out his ideas without the least influence of crowd psychology, the courage to be in a minority of one and to express his conclusions however unpalatable they may be. This led some of his critics to believe that he failed to appreciate the value of emotion in human affairs, but these critics know little about the man or his philosophy. He was himself intensely emotional and knew that without emotion life would be drab and dreary; but he also knew that the place of emotion was to remain under the guidance of reason. He was in that sense an intellectual purist—a quality which gave

Marx in his lifetime the undeserved reputation of a quarrelsome and hairsplitting theoretician.

The comparison between the two is all the more striking because, since the day of Marx, no other philosopher or politician had attempted to build up a comprehensive social philosophy on the foundation of cosmology. There have been philosophers who have speculated on the nature of the world without bothering about man and his social problems. There have been others who have given penetrating thought to man and society, without trying to trace their roots in the biological and physical world. But no social philosophy can serve as an enduring guide to action unless it is rooted in cosmology, and it was the greatness of Marx that he realised this truth. Roy followed in the footsteps of that inspiring genius, and travelling on the "Marxian Way", as he himself called it, went much beyond Marx.

Those who followed the writings of Roy were struck by his insight into the future, which they thought to be "uncanny." A rigid intellectual discipline enabled him to anticipate future events. Despite the Russo-German Pact at the beginning of the Second World War, he anticipated that Russia would be involved in the war against Germany on the side of the Allies. Despite the manifest opposition of Churchill to the demand for Indian independence, Roy announced his apparently paradoxical conclusion that the victory of the Allies in the World War would lead to the political independence of India. While these and other "un-canny" forecasts are evidence of his extraordinary talents, they will not determine his place in history. He will live in history as the founder of the philosophy of New Humanism.

Both Marxism and New Humanism are founded on materialist cosmology. The difference between them arises from the simple chronological fact that Marx developed his ideas at a time when the sciences of biology and psychology were in a state of infancy. Keen to distinguish his doctrine from idealism, Marx regarded ideas as mere "reflections" of matter, having no creativity of their own. Hence, in the Marxian scheme, man became a mere automation, impelled by historical necessity towards a pre-

destined goal. In such a doctrine, freedom could have no personal value—it became the freedom of a class; morality had no meaning, except as the impulsive behaviour of groups; and reason had no function except to recognize historical necessity, which is another name for man's helplessness. Marxism never had, and can never have, a personal (as distinguished from a social) philosophy.

Like several others, Roy realized the creative power of ideas, but he insisted that they have a purely material origin. They originated in the human mind, which is a function of the human brain, which itself is a part of the physical human body. Indeed he regarded ideas as the finest fruit of the long evolution of matter and the only creative force which made freedom possible. He gave up the doctrine of historical materialism which, containing a large grain of truth, was only a half-truth and therefore often misleading. He regarded the history of man as the history of man's struggle for freedom, in which environment and ideas acted and reacted on each other. By recognizing the creative role of ideas he was able to assimilate in his doctrine whatever he found true in idealist philosophies.

He built his social philosophy around man, the individual. Freedom and progress can be experienced only by the individual, not by any collectivity such as a nation or a class. Man is, therefore, the measure of things—freedom and progress in society can be assessed only as the freedom and progress of individuals. No democratic order is possible which does not place the individual at the centre of things.

New Humanism went much farther than this. It built up a personal philosophy, and around it a social philosophy. It is obviously impossible to describe them here, but it is necessary, in order to assess Roy's contribution to philosophy and politics, to indicate what is new in New Humanism apart from its comprehensiveness.

The personal philosophy of New Humanism is built round the three concepts of freedom, reason, and morality; and the characteristic achievement of New Humanism, which is only another name for scientific humanism, is to have traced all the

three concepts to their biological and physical origin. Freedom was traced to the struggle for existence which is the characteristic of every biological entity. "The quest for freedom", Roy wrote, "is the continuation on a higher level—of intelligence and emotion—of the biological struggle for existence". Reason, *i.e.*, individual reason was traced to the fact that the universe is law-governed and that consciousness, which consists of being aware of the environment, was inherently adapted to perceive in terms of cause and effect. "Rising out of the background of the law-governed physical nature, the human being is essentially rational". It is reason that enables man to learn, to acquire knowledge, to attain greater and greater freedom. Finally, morality was traced to the relation between the individual and society—to the fact that, throughout his long evolution, the freedom and progress of man have been made increasingly possible by social existence. Morality is largely instinctive, because "instinct is congealed reason". Man is moral because he is rational. Thus reason is the central pillar of New Humanism.

It follows that the object of social philosophy and of political and economic theories is to facilitate the creation of a society of free, rational and moral men and women.

In politics Roy believed that a truly democratic state should be organized from below, like a pyramidal structure based on local People's Committees, so that the people may participate in government from day to day. Believing that political power must remain vested in the people, and not be delegated by them from time to time, he came to the conclusion that political parties are antithetical to democracy, and will fade out as democracy becomes increasingly real.

In economics he rejected both state ownership as well as capitalist ownership, as being destructive of democracy, "Economic democracy is no more possible in the absence of political democracy than the latter is in the absence of the former". He believed that a truly democratic economic order can be built largely around the principle of co-operation, where the workers will also be the owners of particular units of production.

Finally, Roy insisted that appropriate democratic institutions

can be created only when the spirit of democracy permeates the people. People must become increasingly aware of the urge for freedom and develop rational and moral behaviour before democratic institutions can be erected or stabilised. He rejected the dogma that cultural improvement will follow institutional changes. Philosophical revolution must precede political and economic revolution, just as thought must precede action. Hence he gave the call for a "Twentieth Century Renaissance".

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Shankaracharya : ideologist of Counter-revolution

Shankaracharya is glorified as the greatest product of Indian culture. He was not only one of the greatest thinkers of India, but of the whole world. He was one of the greatest theologians of all time. But socially, he was a calamity. He was the ideologist of the counter-revolution which was the blackest chapter of misfortune of Indian history. He celebrated the sradh of Buddhism and since that funeral ceremony the history of India has been such a stunted growth as stultified and prevented the generation of revolutionary forces for a long time to come. That effect is in operation even today. Of course there were occasional shake-ups; but they took place under the impact of foreign invasion. During the last thousand years Indian society experienced revolutionary changes invariably through the instrumentality of foreign invasions. That peculiarity of modern Indian history was the consequence of the fact that, within its stunted structure, forces making for the periodically necessary revolutions never could grow strong enough; but unless there was some shake-up from time to time, Indian society would die out.

A Rationalist Libertarian

Amlan Datta

Economist and educationist, Amlan Datta was Vice-Chancellor of Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan and prior to that Vice-Chancellor of North Bengal University. He had been Professor of Economics, University of Calcutta, for many years and is the author of a number of books which include 'A Century of Economic Development of Russia and Japan', 'Socialism, Democracy and Industrialization', 'Education and Development', 'The Third Movement' etc., SNR

To the last of his published works, Roy gives the title, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*. In our time, the number of those who started by revolting against the existing social order and were transformed by the very ardour of their faith into worshippers of dogmas is tragically large. Roy was one of those rare revolutionaries who succeeded in maintaining his faith in reason as the one dependable guide to social revolution.

No doubt his personal experiences helped him in this matter. In his own country he had known, even from young age, what an authoritarian tradition means. The meek submission of the masses of the Indian humanity to the tyranny of privileged castes, their pathetic acceptance of the present state as the only one that they deserve, produced in his mind an opposition to authoritarianism which was only to ripen with the passage of time. When fascism raised its ugly head in Europe, Roy's appreciation of its danger was marked by a quality which contrasted strangely—in spite of his professed adherence to Marxism at that time—with the general diagnosis of the disease by communist intellectuals. While official exponents of the economic interpretation of history discovered in fascism only a special confirmation

of the crisis of capitalism, and, therefore, failed to make any qualitative distinction between countries like Germany, on the one hand, and the older imperialistic countries like Britain, on the other, Roy discerned in the new development a deeper crisis of human culture, and had no hesitation in choosing his side when the war broke out.

His final break with communism came as a necessary result of his anti-authoritarianism.

Even in his disillusionment with communism, Roy stands in a category apart from most other ex-communists. Out of the depth of his disillusionment he emerged with a clearer vision of the principles of social reconstruction. To secure the maximum possible freedom for every individual on the basis of voluntary and ever-widening co-operation of human beings—this is the central task of honest social reformers. Where the "togetherness" of human beings is secured through adherence to a set of dogmas, a two-fold result inevitably follows: on the one hand, within the community the individual loses his liberty and lies prostrate under the chariot wheel of high authority; on the other hand, the forced solidarity within every community finds its fitting complement in irresolvable hostility among the communities into which humanity is senselessly broken up. Dogmatism, in brief, is as irreconcilable with individualism as with a co-operative world order. In any tolerable social order, the basis of human relations must, therefore, be found in some alternative principle. The alternative principle, Roy contends, is none other than reason.

There are some who believe that the claims made by Roy on behalf of reason are larger than can be sustained in the final analysis. This may or may not be true. But it is no accident that all the leading variants of totalitarian tyranny in our time have been associated with either a frontal attack on reason or an attack from the flank. Privilege builds itself not on force alone, but on carefully natured illusions, which it must protect at all costs from the scrutiny of reason. The struggle against a privileged order works itself out not on the physical plane alone, but on the plane of ideas as well. And in every significant social revolution the more dramatic changes on the physical plane are preceded by a

philosophic revolution in course of which the ethical sanctions underlying the older order are subjected to rational analysis and their inadequacy exposed. When a revolutionary surrenders his faith in reason, he was already accepted the essence of traditionalism.

In a free society the accepted codes of social conduct must, as far as possible, derive their binding force from reason, and they must be amenable to change when the collective rationality of the thinking individuals of the community points to the need for change. If human beings must retain their individual distinctions and yet co-operate, they must be prepared to state their differences, in so far as these relate to matters of public importance, in a discussible form—that is, in rational terms. Where the differences relate to fundamentals, reason, we are sometimes told, is incapable of resolving the conflict. But it is extraordinary how often we imagine that our differences relate to “ends” while, in truth, we are disagreeing on “means”. In social life, most of the important controversies pertain to questions of means and are capable of resolution if we have faith enough in reason and patience enough to persist under its guidance.

Men do not have patience enough with reason if they lack faith enough in it. In our age there has been no dearth of theories trying to establish rationally that human beings are incapable of rational judgment. It does not require any extraordinary insight to understand that men are quite often moved by reasonless passion. But it is equally obvious that over a period they also learn from experience, and that the habit of this learning is, indeed, one of the basic traits of human nature. It is not by obscuring this fundamental fact, but by making people conscious of its presence and its value, that we can strengthen the foundation of a free society of the future.

It was one of the most remarkable achievements of Roy that he succeeded in retaining his faith in reason though he had to face, possibly more than any other man of our time, the heart-breaking hostility of organised irrationalism of the right as well as the left. Born in a country where the authoritarian tradition is strong and in an age of militant nationalism, he rose superior to

the left. Born in a country where the authoritarian tradition is strong, and in an age of militant nationalism, he rose superior to both; and he proclaimed his faith in a family of free human beings, worshipping no tribal gods, but loyal only to the universal principle of reason. In his life he embodied his teachings—for he was utterly devoid of all parochial loyalties—and in death he remains an example and a tower of strength to those who, sharing his ideal, may yet be occasionally dismayed by the surrounding gloom.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Universality of Cultural Values

Culture is a product of social environments which afford man the freedom and opportunity to develop all his potentialities. Cultural values are created by individuals living under social conditions which liberate man from moral and material limitations to his being and becoming. Social evolution qualifies man to produce cultural values. The advantages of social evolution in the past were monopolised by ruling minorities. Therefore, as a rule, cultural contributions were made by individuals belonging to the privileged classes. But only free souls can create abiding cultural values; they may physically belong to one particular class or geographically to a particular country; spiritually, they transcend all social or territorial limitations. True cultural values are universal. They do not bear the stamp of any class or nation. All cultural contributions are the common heritage of humanity.

Roy's Ideas on Freedom and Economic Development

G.D. Parikh

The late Professor G.D. Parikh (1915-1976) was a very distinguished economist and educationist. He was the Rector of Bombay University from 1958 to 1968. He became a close associate of M.N. Roy from the beginning of the early forties and co-authored with V.M. Tarkunde and B.N. Banerjee the 'People's Plan' in 1943. He was the editor of 'Humanist Review', Managing Editor of 'Navabharat', Chairman of World University Service, Chairman of Centre for the Study of Social Change, and a prominent member of various public institutions. His publications include 'General Education and Indian Universities', 'Alphabet of Fascist Economics' and 'Lokahitabadi G.H. Deshmukh'. SNR

The ideas of M.N. Roy regarding the relation between freedom and economic development were developed over a period of twenty years and more. Formulated in the course of debates and controversies over issues, economic and political, they are found in a large number of articles, some of which were brought together in the form of books and pamphlets soon after their publication. A comprehensive treatment of these is not possible in the course of an article like this; but what can be attempted is to bring out in relief his central arguments which, while gaining in clarity and soundness with more precise and concrete formulations of methods and techniques, have remained basically the same throughout the period.

The earlier writings, under conditions of an alien rule, were naturally of a programmatic character. Although influenced

largely by the Marxist approach and couched in its phraseology, their non-conformist character is quite clear. The 'Marxism' which inspired Roy was Marxism informed by the faith that "society will be free by freeing everyone of its members", that the social order will be "the voluntary association of free men, all contributing to the mutual subsistence and mutual progress, there will be a new culture, a new civilization. The human race will open a new chapter in its history". Socialism or Communism was not the issue of the day but we were to move "on the road to socialism through national freedom and democratic revolution". (*Our Task In India*, 1932, p. 125). The Democratic Revolution was to abolish the antiquated forms of property relations and create conditions for the free development of the means of production. As an integral part of this approach, he put his finger on what may be called the crux of the Indian economic problem and pointed out that "the solution of the agrarian problem is the essential condition for India becoming an industrial country. There can be no national prosperity so long as the great majority of people remain in bankruptcy". (*Our Task In India*, 1932, p. 74). The peasant had to be liberated from feudal, semi-feudal and akin forms of land ownership and the clutches of usury, and had to be enabled to retain a bulk of what he produces in his possession if we desired a rapid development of the economy as a whole.

The plea for reorganisation and development of agriculture as an essential precondition of economic progress, which found thus its initial expression in the early thirties, continued to be emphasised in the late thirties after his release from jail and was stressed again in the early forties in a paper written for the Pacific Relations Conference in which he wrote: "In an agrarian society, land is the main means of production. The bulk of social labour is performed on land. Cultivation of land under feudal relations of property does not permit introduction of the modern means of production. Consequently the productivity of labour remains very low. The bulk of the total social labour has to be devoted to the production of food, just enough for bare subsistence and reproduction. Under such economic conditions, society

stagnates. There is no appreciable increase in the creation of wealth. A considerable part of whatever is created is appropriated by a leisured class which enjoys a parasitic existence. Consequently, society as a whole remains in poverty. By and large that is the economic situation in India to-day... Indian labour, treated in this paper, includes the labour of the peasant masses performed on land. The diversion of a considerable portion of that labour into more fruitful channels of employment will enable India to become a decisive factor in world economy. Two things are to be done. Firstly, labour must be released from the primitive social function of producing food for a bare existence. For that purpose, it must be freed from the bondage of decayed feudal relations. And secondly, it must be more fruitfully employed through the introduction of modern means of production both in agriculture and industry". (*Indian Labour and Post-War Reconstruction*, 1943, p. 7-8). Soon thereafter the approach was embodied in the programme of economic development known as the *People's Plan*. It will be seen that it has gone a long way in influencing the nature of the first Five-Year Plan of development of Free India.

To those, unaware of the general conditions in which the argument was advanced initially, it may now appear to be simple, somewhat obvious. But its real significance can become clear only in its setting which it would be foolish to ignore. It was a period when nationalist India was wedded to industrialisation as the sovereign remedy for all our evils and communism was dreaming of 'soviets'. Fiscal autonomy was looked upon as the aim; protection appeared as the key to the solution of the problem of rapid industrialisation and the government of the country came in for criticism for its halting policies and measures. Agriculture was identified with poverty and to plead for agricultural reorganisation and development was to invite accusations of being a "henchman of Imperialism". It is well known that nationalist India on coming into office for the first time, expressed the opinion in 1938 that "the problems of poverty and unemployment, of national defence and of the economic regeneration in general cannot be solved without industrialisation", and went on

to appoint the National Planning Committee to "prepare a comprehensive scheme of national planning" which "should provide for the development of heavy key industries, medium-scale industries and cottage industries". Pending the preparation of such a scheme, it also wanted "steps to be taken to start large-scale industries of national importance" such as "manufacture of machinery and tools, automobiles, motor boats, electrical plant and accessories, heavy chemicals and fertilisers, metal production and industries connected with power generation and power supply". The resolutions appointing the NPC eventually found their logical expression in the Bombay Plan of Economic Development, three of the signatories to which were members of the NPC. No wonder then that Roy's emphasis on agriculture should have appeared as largely heretical in those days. The heresy has become respectable only now, after a lapse of twenty years.

It should be evident that this emphasis on agriculture did not preclude the need for industrialisation. In fact the latter occupied a significant place in Roy's earlier writings as also in the statements in *'Indian Labour and Post-War Reconstruction'* and the programme embodied in the *'People's Plan'*. But his has all along been an argument with a difference. The thirties were a period of hopes about industrialisation through protection, the late thirties and the early forties that of more comprehensive and organised state action. The pleas both of industry and nationalism had been for creating suitable opportunities for investment of capital. The disabilities and handicaps from which industry suffered on account of the alien rule were stressed; the arguments about the 'shyness' of capital were being combated. The pleas eventually developed into a demand for a National Government which could be depended upon to lay solid foundations of an industrial structure through the promotion of rapid development of basic industries, and was embodied in the *Bombay Plan*. This popular approach to industrialisation was criticised by M.N. Roy, more than once, as a source of grave danger. In *Our Task in India* he showed the possibilities of greater exploitation of the people through industrialisation with the help of protection. In the *Alphabet of Fascist Economics*, he pointed out how state-

sponsored development of basic industries could take place only on the basis of a 'protected market', the government appearing as the main customer of the products, and thus lead to fascism.

M.N. Roy's approach to industrialisation thus was not from the end of capital and profitable opportunities for its investment, but from that of demand and its expansion so as to create the basis for extension of division of labour and modernisation of the means and methods of production. "The growth of modern industry, on a large scale in any country", he argued, "depends primarily upon three factors. Firstly, an abundant supply of labour; secondly, accumulated wealth which could be converted into productive capital; and thirdly, a sufficiently large internal market. The first two factors are evidently in existence in India. The third factor is also there but only potentially. Therefore industrialisation of India, not only for her own economic advancement but for giving the rest of the world the benefit of her vast reservoir of labour, requires a rising standard of living on the part of the vast bulk of her population" (*Indian Labour and Post-War Reconstruction*, 1943, p. 23). Thus it has to be industrialisation which aims at equating production with human demand and would require for its purposes control of the profit motive. The emphasis on developing such consumption-goods industries within the framework of a 'controlled capitalism' was placed in the *People's Plan*. The approach did not ignore the need for basic industries either; but wanted them to come into the picture to the extent it was essential in order to realise a balanced and properly co-ordinated development of agriculture and consumption-goods industries, instead of being placed at its centre. The myth of industry creating its own demand had been exploded long ago. It was necessary for the demand to grow and thus create the basis for the growth of industry. The emphasis placed by M.N. Roy on the reorganisation and development of agriculture as an essential precondition of development did obviously influence the First Five Year Plan. But his other plea regarding industrialisation, with a rural, consumption bias, still remained to be duly taken into account. Moreover, the priorities in development shifted in favour of industry in the Second Plan

and the demand for placing basic industries at the centre of development again distorted our planning. Roy's analysis of the problem of industrialisation has therefore very significant bearings on the present situation and the sooner that is recognised, the better and the healthier will be the perspective of the future.

Economic development of a country like India under the present conditions could be expected to proceed only along planned lines. And here comes in the third outstanding issue raised by Roy in this country viz. the problem of planning and freedom. The basic problem for us not merely to-day but for a long time to come would be that of overcoming at a rapid pace the difficulty of raising the living standards of the people while retaining the democratic framework. There are people who argue that that could not be done elsewhere and cannot be done here also. But such anxiety for imitation of others had no use for him. Addressing the Camp of radicals in 1940, he said, "Our experience should not be only a mechanical repetition of the experience of others. While making our own experience, we should not delude ourselves that we are living the life of others. In the midst of a revolution in India, we should not think that we are living in October, 1917 in Petrograd, or in Paris either in 1793 or in 1871. We must make our own experience. As the experience of a very large community of human beings, it is bound to be the basis of some contribution to human ideology, to the accumulated store of human knowledge. If that was not the real object of a revolution, personally I would have no interest in it. It would not attract me and I do not think that it would attract any civilised human being". (*Scientific Politics*, 1942, p. 212). Refusing thus to be led by others' experience though always prepared to learn from it, he continued his quest for over ten years and the result was the philosophy of New Humanism which led to a reformulation of the task of development in the economic field. The outlines of a Co-operative Economy as developed in *Radical Humanism* (1952) open up the perspective of building up a 'really socialised economy without the evils of regimentation and bureaucratisation', which can 'perform the social function of stimulating production for the use of the community—for raising the general standard of living.

The method shown by M.N. Roy of reconciling an organised developmental effort with the actual enjoyment of freedom by individual members of the community is bound to be remembered as one of his more abiding contributions. It shows a ray of hope in this age terrorised by the perspective of growing Leviathans. It points out clearly the path of building up free institutions in the economic field, which, if chosen, can be depended upon to help us realise both efficiency and welfare and thus make a significant 'contribution to human ideology' on the basis of experience all our own.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Significance of Renaissance

The renaissance was the resumption of man's struggle for spiritual freedom and search for truth undertaken at the dawn of civilisation, but confused and partially interrupted by the religious mode of thought which prevailed for more than a millennium. The Renaissance did not herald the rise of any particular class; it was the revolt of man, patronised and promoted by all the free spirits of the time belonging to the feudal aristocracy, the Church or the rising class of traders. Classicism was conservative. As against it, the romanticism of the humanists proclaimed the freedom of will, and faith in the creativeness of man. It liberated reason from the yoke of teleology. It maintained that the law-governed Universe did not preclude revolutions to be brought about by man's will to freedom and urge to create. It declared the spiritual liberation of man, and ushered in the era of modern civilisation, which immensely expanded the scope of human activity. Growing knowledge of nature increased the power of man to prosecute the struggle for freedom more effectively than ever before.

Gandhi and Roy: The Interaction of Ideologies in India

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Manabendra Nath Roy (1887-1954) was born into a Bengali *brahman* family in a village outside of Calcutta. Twenty-eight years later, as a terrorist revolutionary, he left India for an adventurous career in the Communist international movement. These initial twenty-eight years in Bengal were decisive for the shaping of his personality and thought. Three components of this early experience deserve mention. First, there was the influence of Roy's *brahmanical* family background and outlook. This inspired and reinforced his penchant for theory, his elitism, and his strong moral temper. Second, there was Roy's early, intense belief in Hinduism. His religious frame of mind, like the *brahmanical* spirit, never left him, but prodded him on in his quest for 'those abiding, permanent values of humanity'. Third, in this first generation of his life, the ideology of Indian nationalism exerted an immense influence on Roy as it did on many of his contemporary Bengali intellectuals and students.

'An ideology', writes Edward Shils, 'is the product of man's need for imposing intellectual order on the world. The need for ideology is an intensification of the need for a cognitive and moral map of the universe...' Roy's quest for an adequate ideol-

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

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

books and pamphlets on Marxist theory, and edited a communist newspaper. Therefore, the achievements of both Gandhi and Roy during this period were spectacular.

Yet, for all their respective achievements, there was never anything like a balance of power between these two figures. It was Gandhi and never Roy who dominated the Indian nationalist movement with his unparalleled genius for mass leadership. Whereas Roy would struggle long and hard to gain power in India, Gandhi acquired authority with ease and kept it. While Roy necessarily remained, throughout this fifteen year period, preoccupied with Gandhi's power, the latter never mentions Roy in his writings or speeches. Even after Roy's return to the political scene in the late thirties, Gandhi took scant notice of him. Roy, then, remained both a cultural and political outsider and suffered as a result. Gandhi, after his return to India in 1915, became rooted in the nationalist tradition and developed a style of political behavior which gained for him personal confidence as well as political power. Thus, while Roy, out of touch with his tradition, never ceased in his effort to come to terms with Gandhi and all that the Mahatma personified, Gandhi, secure in his surroundings, could remain aloof. In this sense, a consideration of Roy's view of Gandhi becomes part of a larger problem, that of the relationship of the Indian intellectual to his tradition.

The first detailed Marxist critique of Gandhi appeared in Roy's first major book, *India in Transition*, which was written in Moscow in 1921. The book grew out of discussions which Roy had with Lenin and other communist figures at the Second Congress of the Communist International. At this Congress, Roy had argued against Lenin that communist policy in the colonial areas must be to support proletarian rather than bourgeois movements. Lenin contended that bourgeois nationalist organizations like the Indian Congress could be considered revolutionary, and since no viable Communist parties existed, these organizations deserved the support of the International. Roy replied that the Congress and similar agencies could only betray the revolution: an Indian proletariat existed, and must be mobilized behind a communist leadership. The Roy-Lenin controversy was clearly

over fundamental issues, and had innumerable implications for communist strategy in the future.

Roy later reflected back upon his differences with Lenin and concluded that 'the role of Gandhi was the crucial point of difference. Lenin believed that, as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, he was revolutionary. I maintained that, a religious and cultural revivalist, he was bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically'. In Roy's view, 'the religious ideology preached by him [Gandhi] also appealed to the medieval mentality of the masses. But the same ideology discouraged any revolutionary mass action. The quintessence of the situation, as I analyzed and understood it, was a potentially revolutionary movement restrained by a reactionary ideology'. 'I reminded Lenin of the dictum that I had learnt from him: that without a revolutionary ideology, there could be no revolution'. These arguments formed the basis of the position on Gandhi that was developed by Roy in *India in Transition*.

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

Roy admits that under Gandhi's leadership, through the effective use of *hartal* and non-co-operation, 'for the first time in its

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

Roy's mistake cannot be explained wholly in terms of his Marxism. Rather, his Marxism may be explained as part of a desperate search for a new ideology, which was in turn prompted by a quest for a new identity. The identity that Roy sought in the critical period of his youth, was that of an urbane, cosmopolitan type, entirely at home with western civilization, fully equipped to appreciate and assist in its historical forward movement. Yet, he required as well an ideology that would allow him to criticize those aspects of western civilization which were responsible for the subjugation of his own people. The ideology must, in short, serve to liberate him from the sense of inferiority instilled by imperialism, and at the same time arm him in his struggle for the liberation of India. Marxism suited this purpose exactly. His total affirmation of Marxism, therefore, followed immediately after his total rejection of nationalism, and from this there emerged his total and unreasoning denial of Gandhi as a lasting political force in India. In this sense, *India in Transition* offers a clear example of an intellectual determined to reject his tradition. Not only Gandhi, but also extremist leaders like Tilak and Aurobindo, who only five years earlier had commanded Roy's allegiance, are now dismissed with contempt as examples of 'petty-bourgeois humanitarianism.' For the next ten years, until his imprisonment in 1931, Roy struggled to affirm himself in his new identity as an international Marxist revolutionary.

Throughout the twenties, as Roy rises to the peak of his authority in the comintern, his view on Gandhi set forth in 1921 is refined and elaborated. A series of excellent articles and pamphlets by Roy and his first wife Evelyn are devoted to Gandhism. In *One Year of Non-Co-operation*, for example, the Roys distin-

guished five 'grave errors' or 'great defects' of Gandhism. The 'most glaring defect' is the absence of an intelligent programme of economic reform. Next, there is Gandhi's 'obstinate and futile' emphasis on social harmony instead of a frank recognition of the real necessity of class conflict. Then, they find a senseless 'intrusion of metaphysics into the realm of politics'. The revolt against the Raj, they emphasize, 'is a question of economics, not metaphysics.' Further, they deplore Gandhi's reactionary view of history, his desire 'to run from the Machine-age back to the Stone Age'. Finally, they criticize the total lack of any revolutionary quality in Gandhi's approach to social change; they see only a 'weak and watery reformism, which shrinks at every turn from the realities of the struggle for freedom'. The entire critique is made with exceptional clarity and forcefulness, and it, together with other writings by the Roys on Gandhi, represent the most incisive communist criticism of him during this period.

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

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

in Roy will prevail, just as it had always prevailed in Gandhi, and Roy will abandon Marxism because he finds it devoid of ethics. However, even as early as the thirties, a first glimpse of the way in which Roy's moral outlook will erode his Marxism can be seen in his prison diaries. This appears in his reflections on the two concepts of freedom and revolution. Both of these ideas were to become key themes of Radical Humanism, and the basis of their later development is found here, in the dairies.

When Roy wrote about freedom and revolution as an orthodox Marxist in the 'twenties, he conceived them as economic categories. Freedom would come with the necessary changes in the economic mode of production, and revolution would be achieved through a violent seizure of power by the Party and the masses. Now, in the 'thirties, Roy begins to perceive other dimensions in these two ideas. In regard to freedom, he says that his aim is to 'indicate the way to real spiritual freedom offered by the materialist philosophy'.¹ For the first time in Roy's writings, the supreme goal of 'spiritual freedom' is distinguished from the lesser aims of 'political freedom, economic prosperity and social happiness'. It should be obvious that Roy, a Marxist, is not using the term 'spiritual freedom' here consciously in a metaphysical sense. Yet the term does not derive from Marxism; and it cannot be a mere coincidence that it was used often by both Vivekananda and Aurobindo, whom Roy had at one time read closely. The significant change in Roy's concept of revolution is evident in his increasing preference for the term 'Indian Renaissance', which means for him a 'philosophical' and 'spiritual' as well as economic revolution. His concluding essay, 'Preconditions of Indian Renaissance', in the second volume of the jail diaries emphasizes the need for a new philosophical outlook in India.

The above analysis of Roy's prison diaries is not meant to suggest that a reader of these volumes in the 'thirties, with no possible knowledge of the way Roy's thought would develop, could have perceived the affinities between Gandhi and Roy which eventually appeared. The fact, however, that these ideas can be found in the diaries in embryonic form indicates that Roy's movement towards a Gandhian way of thinking did not occur overnight. But while it is necessary to appreciate this degree

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

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

rationalism, technology, modern science, and 'an economy of abundance'. This latter position was maintained by Roy until the end, and it will always distinguish him sharply from Gandhi.

Soon after his discharge from prison, Roy decided that the sole route to political success in India lay in co-operation with the Congress. This meant a much more conciliatory attitude towards Gandhi. Subhas Bose had opposed Gandhi in the Congress with some initial success, but Roy, unlike Bose, had neither mass appeal nor a strong regional base of power in Bengal. Therefore, Roy made a brief but futile attempt to rise in the Congress through co-operation with the Gandhians. His article of this period entitled 'Gandhiji, A Critical Appreciation' reflects this spirit of conciliation. He begins with the claim that 'I appreciate Gandhiji's greatness better than any of his ardent admirers'. Gandhi, he says, is a great 'political awakener' of the masses and the highest tribute that one can pay him 'would be to regard and respect Gandhiji as the embodiment of the primitive, blind, spontaneous spirit of revolt of the Indian masses'. While Roy does mention, incidentally, that Gandhism may in the future come to stifle the revolution rather than promote it, he concludes that at present 'let us admire, respect, and properly appreciate him for the great services that he has rendered to the struggle for freedom'.² This article does not present a sincere statement of Roy's view of Gandhi at this time. As his personal correspondence shows, Roy regarded Gandhi in this period as his arch-enemy, who should be destroyed as quickly as possible.³

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

'Roy was highly critical of Gandhism from the very start, in 1920, and has never altered his opinion... Yet it is true, I think, that he has failed to make his criticisms intelligible to the Indian reader. His approach to Gandhism seems that of an outsider, an unsympathetic foreigner. He has never tried to get under the skin

of the Mahatma or his admirers and see where that extraordinary power comes from.'

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

Several factors influenced Roy's sweeping intellectual reappraisal in 1946. First, Roy's Radical Democratic Party, established in opposition to the Congress, was resoundingly defeated in the Indian general elections held throughout the country in the spring of 1946. If the historical importance for India of these general elections was to demonstrate that the League controlled the Muslims and the Congress the Hindus, then their importance for Roy was to show that his party, given the nation's polarization, was nowhere in sight. It meant the end of his political career. A second factor which affected his thinking concerned the direction and behaviour of the world communist movement under Stalin. Abroad, the brutal aspects of his leadership were becoming crudely clear; at home, Roy had long been under attack from the Communist Party of India and it became evident that neither practical nor theoretical reconciliation with Communism was possible. Roy expressed the nature of his dilemma in stark terms when he told his followers that they must beware of 'two psychoses' prevalent in India, those of Communism and of nationalism. 'Radicalism', he declared, 'is not camouflaged Communism. We shall have to get over the major nationalist psychosis as well as the minor Communist psychosis, if we believe that we have something new to contribute to the political thought and practice, not only for our country, but of the world as a whole.'⁴

An ideologist abhors nothing more than a moral vacuum, or what Roy liked to deplore as the 'moral and cultural crisis' of our

time. For such a vacuum or 'crisis' suggests basic uncertainty over the rightness and wrongness of fundamental moral values, and it is the element of moral certainty which the ideologist seeks above all else. In this respect, Gandhi was no less an ideologist than Roy; but whereas Gandhi had achieved certainty on such matters during his experience in South Africa, Roy underwent a series of such crises, the last and most serious in 1945-46. The final phase of his life, from 1946-53, represents a period of gradual resolution in which Roy delved deeply into his personal resources, trying to form a coherent pattern of thought to meet the demands before him. A close examination of Roy's prolific writings during this period could tell us much about problems relating to the intellectual between tradition and modernity or the relation of ideology to the quest for personal identity. The main purpose of the concluding section of this essay will merely be to suggest how Roy, while trying to purge himself of the 'nationalist psychosis', nevertheless moved far away from Marxism into a way of thinking which is significantly akin to Gandhi.

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

Gandhi's reaction to the Calcutta killing, unlike that of Nehru or Jinnah, was to perceive immediately the disastrous social implications and then to act courageously, in an attempt to quell the violence. Just as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre twenty-seven years earlier had shocked Gandhi into realizing the injustice of the Raj, so the Calcutta killing forced him to see the abyss of violence within his own society. When he learned of the appalling scope of the Calcutta tragedy, he exclaimed: 'Would that

the violence of Calcutta were sterilized and did not become a signal for its spread all over!' However, when the virus spread into Noakhali and Bihar, he moved fast and effectively. The ensuing fifteen months, culminating in his assassination, contain the finest hours of his entire career. During this period, he scored two brilliant triumphs for his method of *satyagraha* in his Calcutta and Delhi fasts against communal violence. Less dramatic than these, but equally impressive, were his 'walking tours' in Noakhali and his ingenious use of the prayer meeting to restore trust in a series of strife-torn villages. These final acts moved nearly everyone in India—British, Hindu, and Muslim, alike—to a higher appreciation of Gandhi's greatness. Roy in this case was no exception.

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

moral and humanist core of his teachings above the carnal cult of nationalism and power-politics.⁵

There are those who argue that Roy's tributes to Gandhi after the assassination were merely sentimental outbursts, entirely inconsistent with the main line of his thought. This argument is mistaken for several reasons. First, when Roy was attacked by some of his readers for calling Gandhi a humanist and cosmopolitan, he admitted that he had written the article while 'deeply moved' by the crime, 'in an emotional state'. But then he went on to defend his position with vehemence, deploring the 'insensitivity of the logical purists' who attacked him, and refusing categorically to retract a word that he had written. Gandhi, he insisted in this later article, 'sincerely wanted politics to be guided by moral considerations', and his 'endeavour to introduce morality into political practice was the positive core of Gandhism'.⁶ This made Gandhi, like Roy, a humanist. A second reason why this argument is mistaken has already been seen: glimpses of Roy's movement away from Marx and towards Gandhi can be found as early as in the prison diaries, and are clearly manifest two years before the assassination in the ideological changes of his 'new orientation'. Finally, far from Roy's tribute to Gandhi being a sporadic outburst, his changed attitude takes a permanent form in his later writings: as Philip Spratt remarked, a 'new respect' for Gandhi now infuses his thoughts. This can be seen clearly in an article which Roy wrote on Gandhi a full year after the assassination. In this piece, Roy pays respect to 'the immortality of his [Gandhi's] message' and then sums up the significance of Gandhi's thought in these remarkable words: 'Practice of the precept of purifying politics with truth and non-violence alone will immortalise the memory of the Mahatma. Monuments of mortar and marble will perish, but the light of the sublime message of truth and non-violence will shine forever.'⁷ The passage signifies a total departure from Roy's earlier denunciation of Gandhi. Equally important, though, is the relationship which Roy suggests here between the values of truth and non-violence on the one hand, and the goal of purifying politics on the other. For the formation of this conceptual relationship indicates a nexus of ideas in Roy's mind familiar to Gandhi's way of think-

ing, especially on the themes of politics and power, and the relation of the means to the ends of action.

'The implication of the doctrine of non-violence', Roy now believes, 'is the moral dictum that the end does not justify the means. That is the core of the Mahatma's message—which is not compatible with power-politics. The Mahatma wanted to purify politics; that can be done only by raising political practice above the vulgar level of a scramble for power'.⁸ This passage represents those ideas which Roy began to develop at a feverish pace in the last five years of his life. In a characteristically Gandhian manner, Roy wants now to purify politics by purging it of both the 'struggle for power' and the party system itself. 'Humanist politics,' he says, must be a moral force; 'it must get out of the struggle for power of the political parties.'⁹ Only in these circumstances can political power be transformed into moral authority. Leadership must come not from corrupt party bosses, but rather from 'detached individuals, that is, spiritually free men [who] cannot be corrupted by power... it is possible for the individual man to attain spiritual freedom, to be detached and thus to be above corruption. Such men should not hanker after power'.¹⁰ Thus preoccupation with the corruptibility of political power and the need for establishing a moral basis for leadership was, as Roy acknowledged, at the heart of Gandhi's thought. Moreover, their common preoccupation emerges from a similar set of ideological assumptions about the moral nature of men, and the possibility of creating a perfect social order of spiritually free men. The implications of this way of thinking for politics are far-reaching: they range from a vision of the ideal political leader as a *karmayogin* type, above the lust for power, occupying a position of pure moral authority, to a theory of social organization which urges party-less politics, and a highly decentralized system of government. This is a way of thinking which is fraught with paradoxes. There is a strong element of elitism or moral authoritarianism mixed with a marked strain of not only populism but a peculiar variety of Indian anarchism. Yet it is this paradoxical quality which makes the ideology of modern India so fascinating: as appealing, in its way, as the equally paradoxical thought of Calvin, or Rousseau, or Marx.

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

NOTES

1. M.N. Roy, *India's Message*, p. 307.
2. *Independent India*, 16 October 1938, p. 453.
3. At precisely the time when Roy says he was expressing his 'appreciation' of Gandhi to one of the Mahatma's colleagues, we find him writing to a Marxist comrade abroad: 'Our real fight is against the right wing which is still very powerful thanks to the popularity of Gandhi... I am striking at the very root. Gandhist ideology must go before the nationalist movement can develop its enormous revolutionary potentialities. And Gandhi has recognized in us his mortal enemy. As a matter of fact, in his inner circle I am branded as the enemy No. 1.' (Roy to Jay Lovestone, 19 October 1937, Bombay.) Exactly one year after writing his appreciation, Roy wrote to an Indian associate for help in the great effort 'to destroy this curse of Gandhism'. (Roy to Makhan Lal Sen, 12 September 1939.) The quotations are from correspondence preserved in the M.N. Roy Archives of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
4. Roy, *New Orientation*, p. 56.
5. *Independent India*, 22 February 1948, p. 67.
6. *Independent India*, 18 April 1948, p. 176.

7. *Independent India*, 30 January 1949, p. 37.
8. *Independent India*, 22 February 1948, p. 67.
9. Roy, *Politics, Power and Parties* (Calcutta, 1960), p. 121.
10. *Ibid*, pp. 81-82. Compare this view with Gandhi's address to the Hindustani Talimi Sangh Group in December 1947, recorded in D.C. Tendulkar, *Mahatma* (Delhi, 1963), vol. 8, pp. 227-32.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Search for our Abiding Heritage

Those who have conceived the idea of a Renaissance as a historical necessity, know fully well that the great thinkers of ancient India made valuable contribution to the common human heritage. There are two aspects of human thought. One is temporary. That aspect of thought is valid for one particular period of history, but loses its force in another period of changed social environments. But there is an abiding under-current throughout the history of human thought. In the absence of that, culture, progress, civilisation would be impossible. Whenever mankind comes to a dead end, to what appears to be a dead end, it naturally looks back, trying to draw courage and inspiration from the abiding features in past traditions. It is necessary to discover the abiding features of the culture and thought-currents of ancient India. If they can help us to visualise what is in store for us in the future, it will surely be worthwhile to dig in the past. We must dig deep in the mountainous heap of rubbish which has been built up as the bulwark of age-long stagnation, and which is mistakenly cherished even today as our heritage.

Tagore, Gandhi and Roy: three Twentieth Century Utopians

Sibnarayan Ray

During the thirties and the forties it was customary with the radical intellectuals of my generation to use the terms utopia, utopian and utopianism in a highly derogatory sense. This usage we owed to Marx, probably even more to his colleague, Engels. The latter in his famous pamphlet *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* had contemptuously rejected utopian thinking as "a mish-mash" and contrasted it to the superior approach formulated by Marx and himself to which they had given the name "scientific" socialism. While utopian thinkers appealed to "truth, reason and justice", which were "subjective", Marxism was claimed to be "scientific" because it had "a real basis in the materialist conception of history".

The intellectual influence of Marx and Engels was very limited during their lifetime even in the western world. But the situation changed radically after a determined group of people under Lenin's leadership captured state power in Russia, and proclaimed Marxism to be the official ideology of the Soviet Union, and of the newly founded Communist International. The material and organizational resources of the Soviet State became available for the propagation of the new faith and for programs of proselytization. Besides, the political victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia gave to Marxism an authority within radical and socialist movements which it did not possess before. Utopianism was one of several victims of this historic development; it came to imply all that was vague, sentimental and impracticable. Not a few among us, especially in Bengal, grew up in this usage during the thirties and the forties.

The distrust of utopianism among change-oriented intellectuals was to an extent also reinforced by critiques made by several "revisionist" and non-Marxist thinkers. In his seminal book *Ideology and Utopia* (1929), for example, Karl Mannheim argued that both ideologies and utopias gave distorted views of the social reality, the former representing the interests of the Establishment and the latter expressing the aspirations of those who desire power but are not in possession of it. His was a plea for objectivity in social science. Later Karl Popper in his no less influential work, *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1950) condemned utopianism as being in its very nature totalitarian, chiliastic and dictatorial. To Popper, the only sensible approach to social change was that of piecemeal social engineering to which he contrasted the irrationality of utopianism.

I recognise the worth of piecemeal reforms, and I value the pursuit of objectivity in our study of society, but over the years I have developed a somewhat more positive appreciation of the role of utopianism in human history than I had during my salad-days. Social change may be brought about by a combination of circumstances over which the persons affected by that change have little or no control. But social changes are also initiated and guided by conscious human effort, and here utopianism would seem to play a not inconsiderable role. Some of these changes may indeed be piecemeal, but they may also be conceived as interrelated elements of an alternative lifestyle. The conception of an alternative lifestyle for the human race is what constitutes a utopia. A utopia by definition is nowhere; it exists only in human imagination; but since it is conceived as a *desirable* alternative to the social order that currently exists, it is both a critique of that order, and an incentive to change that order. This is what makes utopianism a dynamic force in human history. Despite his disclaimer, Marx himself was a utopian like Plato, More, Rousseau, Proudhon or Kropotkin. The moving power of their respective visions does not seem to have lost its potency with the passage of time. If man's ability to choose between alternatives is rooted in his existential freedom, then the function of utopianism as a creative force in history is unlikely to be superseded while human societies continue to exist and change. However, I would

add one major qualification. Utopianism, to be morally acceptable, must exclude coercion as a method or means.

During the last three decades, there has occurred in the West, especially among young people, a noticeable revival of interest in the utopian tradition. A very widespread disillusionment with both the American and the Russian models and their several variants, a deepening sense of alienation from their elders and the Establishment, and an urgent search for alternative lifestyles—these are some of the features which characterise contemporary youth in the West. I am not sure if a comparable development has been taking place in India, but I do consider it to be significant that three of the most outstanding and articulate personalities of twentieth century India were, in my sense of the term, utopians. Rabindranath Tagore, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Manabendra Nath Roy were as different from one another as any three individuals may conceivably be. But each developed his own distinctive vision of an alternative lifestyle in contrast to what they saw in the East and the West, and thereby enriched the utopian tradition which, in its nature and implication, is global.

What I find particularly striking is the fact that despite their very profound differences, they had much in common both in their criticisms of modern societies and trends, and in their proposed alternatives. The differences I have stressed in several of my published writings, and I shall return to them at a later stage. However, I now recognise that the similarities also require to be highlighted, particularly in view of what I consider to be their growing relevance to the crisis of our age.

Of the three Tagore (1861-1941) was the oldest, and many of his seminal ideas which have bearing on this discussion were formulated in the first decade of this century. Although primarily a creative artist, his writings on social and political issues were quite considerable. Some of his early criticisms and suggested alternatives were offered in *Atmashakti* (1905), *Bharatavarsha* (1906), *Raja O Praja*, *Swadesh* and *Samaj* (1908). These were further developed and elaborated in *Nationalism* (1911), *Creative Unity* (1922), *Kalantar* (1937), *Crisis in Civilization*

(1941), and other works. The earliest and most well-known formulation of Gandhi's (1869-1948) critique and alternative vision was made in 1909 in *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*; the formulation was refined, but its basic principles were never repudiated in his later writings. Roy (1887-1954) went through three successive phases—of militant nationalism, Marxism, and Radical Humanism, and although throughout his career his central preoccupation was human freedom, it was in the last phase that he presented his most definitive critique of modern civilization and his vision of an alternative social order. His major works in this phase include *New Humanism* (1947), *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* 2 Volumes (1952-1955), and *Politics, Power and Parties* (posthumously published in 1960), and I have in mind this phase when I speak of the similarities between his ideas and those of Tagore and Gandhi.

Tagore, Gandhi and Roy, each in his own way, saw in modern civilization some kind of a Frankenstein's monster which had become a threat to its creator, man. By stressing acquisitiveness and the pursuit of power as its principal goals, modern civilization has tended to reduce men and women into one-dimensional individuals, who are alienated from themselves and from other human beings, and who have become manipulable almost like machinery. The trend which all three of them opposed strongly was that towards centralization, whether in polity, in economy, or in socio-cultural life. Presumably this trend has always been there in civilized societies, but since the industrial revolution it has acquired a frightening momentum. This trend, in their view, had to be stopped if human beings were not to let themselves be mechanised or be transformed into objects without any subjectivity.

All three of them maintained that this process, however strong it might be in modern civilization, was in no sense inevitable or irreversible; that the so-called notion of historical or social determinism was derived from a false analogy with the laws of the physical sciences; that humanity had within itself resources which, if drawn upon, could change the course of social development and evolve alternative lifestyles more appropriate to basic human needs. With varying degrees of emphasis

they highlighted some of the fearful paradoxes of modern civilization—that in it individuals were atomised and then absorbed into reified collectivities; that they were given an illusory range of choices but denied effective participation in the decision-making process which was controlled by a few who were more one-dimensional than others; that labour was made more productive but also more empty of meaning or sense of fulfilment; that as life became more uniform and regimented, it generated more tension and conflict. At the same time, they held out the hope that these paradoxes were capable of resolution, that there were alternative possibilities, and that these alternatives could be realised provided the individuals were prepared to be inner-directed instead of accepting the dominant trend as irreversible.

The alternatives which they envisioned were in many respects different from one another, but they shared in common an unambiguous emphasis on decentralisation. The society they proposed would be a network of grassroots democracies, each of a size and structure in which all the members would be able to participate directly and effectively in the decision-making process. The really basic functions of community life—for example, production and distribution of wealth, housing, sanitation and education, resolution of conflict or dispensation of justice—would be assumed and discharged by the locally organised community as a whole which would seek consensus while protecting and respecting such differences as did not directly threaten the community or any of its members. These grassroots democracies would not be closed but be open to one another; the tiers which they would evolve to facilitate various types of relationships with one another would only have limited coordinating functions; the diffusion of power would make the authority of any particular centre so restricted as to be altogether marginal. Such a society could develop only by reducing the scope for any institution which thrived on concentration of power or on accentuated tension and conflict.

In economy they proposed production for use instead of production for profit, cooperative management and utilization of resources, and development of a network of small but viable units in which persons engaged in production would find a sense

of fulfilment in their work. Rejecting competition, monopoly and state capitalism, they advocated an alternative process of development where labour would control technology and use it creatively to meet the community's genuinely felt needs. In opposition to the contemporary trend towards gigantism, technocracy and rapid urbanisation, they offered the perspective of an emerging world order where small would be recognised as beautiful, where machine would be subordinate to man, where a variously interrelated network of thriving and harmonious communities would replace the overcrowded cities and stagnant villages of today.

None of these visionaries wrote out anything like a blueprint of their respective utopias although in Roy's case some details may be gathered from the *People's Plan* (1943) and the *Draft Constitution* (1944). But Roy prepared these documents before formulating the basic principles of his philosophy of radical humanism; at best they only foreshadowed certain features of that philosophy. In fact, no utopia ever offers or is required to offer, a blueprint; to expect one is to misunderstand the nature of utopianism. What a utopian vision provides are the principles and guidelines of a morally desirable society, and some indications of the process of its emergence. Tagore, Gandhi and Roy did offer such guidelines; the processes they suggested also had some striking similarities.

Central to the pursuit of their respective utopias was the self-training of the individuals who chose freely to dedicate themselves to this pursuit. Tagore saw them as teachers, cooperators and artists, Gandhi as *satyagrahis* and *sevaks*, Roy as friends, philosophers and guides. Common to them all was the insistence on such individuals becoming exemplars in their own lives and relationships of what they recognised to be the principles and values of a morally desirable order. Their self-training involved development of their conscience and understanding, of their concern for other's and the spirit of service and co-operation. It also required their divesting themselves of the desire for power, possession and personal gain, of fear, distrust and arrogance. They were to educate themselves into becoming universal individuals who were committed to the principle of unity in diversity,

and who thereby became sources of inspiration to others who were prisoners of exclusive self-interest or competitive group-loyalties. Only men and women of developing moral perception and dynamism could set in motion a process which would bring society nearer to a moral and harmonious order. Being individuals of conscience they could not be absorbed into reified collectivities; nor could they be members of political parties which by their very nature were committed to the pursuit of power, and which sought to subordinate both the individual and the community to the partial views and interests of these particular organisations. Instead, associations of such individuals were to be of a nature which would be in consonance with the principles of an open and cooperative community. From such individuals and their associations would grow a movement in the direction of a morally desirable society. The process underlying this development would be such that the persons involved would not have the desire to wield power or accumulate possessions, nor would there be such institutions into which power or wealth might be concentrated. The process as conceived by these three utopians was characterised by an integral relation between means and ends.

However, there were also very pronounced differences in their personalities, careers and basic postulates. The last concern us particularly in the present context. Tagore and Gandhi were, each in his own way, deeply religious men. To them man's regenerative role in history was derived from his time-transcending relation with divinity. Gandhi might equate God with Truth; he might acknowledge an agnostic like Nirmal Kumar Bose or even a proclaimed atheist like Gora to be a genuine *satyagrahi*; but central to his notion of morality was faith in a personal god who was taken to be the source of all goodness, and from whom man was supposed to derive his moral essence. His utopia was a return of humanity to the divine through *bhakti* and *Karma*. Tagore's religious faith was rather multivalent; it also underwent a certain change in the closing years of his life; but even his *mahamanav* or *visvamanav* was inconceivable without a divine or transcendent dimension. In contrast Roy was, in the words of H. J. Blackham, "a materialist on fire". To him, man was

but a complex product of the evolutionary process; his rationality and his morality, his search for truth and his urge for freedom, were rooted in his bio-social nature. Unlike Tagore and Gandhi, Roy totally rejected devotionism which he interpreted as a form of self-abasement; his celebration of the human was unambiguously secular.

In contrast to Gandhi both Tagore and Roy emphasised the positive role which science and technology could be made to play in the pursuit of human freedom and well-being. Gandhi began by distrusting science and technology, and although in later years he made certain concessions, this distrust was too profound to be overcome. His public controversy on several occasions with Tagore on this issue is well-known. To my knowledge there was no traffic of ideas between Tagore and Roy, but independently of each other they both sharply criticised Gandhi's negative view of science. With Gandhi, they too recognised that science and technology, unenlightened and uncontrolled by morality, could and did cause disaster. But unlike Gandhi they maintained that without growing scientific knowledge and its intelligent application, human life would be poor, dismal, stagnant and moronic. Gandhi's path to utopia was straight and narrow; and life in his *Ram-rajiya* was to be simple, homogeneous and rather austere. Like Rousseau and Tolstoy, he saw in science and technology forces which not only made life complicated and alien to itself but also led to concentration of power and exploitation. Tagore and Roy were not unaware of the danger; but they deeply appreciated the multifariousness of human needs and possibilities, and recognised that science and technology were essential for the satisfaction of these needs and for the realisation of these possibilities. To them an open decentralised and co-operative society would be inconceivable without scientific knowledge and its utilization. On this point Roy's position was more emphatic than Tagore's but, as the essays in the *Kalantar* volume indicate, Tagore's religious faith did not prevent him from acknowledging the crucial importance of science in human development. In his view scientific inquiry and the application of scientific knowledge, instead of being distrusted and discarded, had to be guided by regard for human

freedom, integrity and harmony. I do not think that Roy would have at all disagreed with him on this score.

Tagore, however, was a creative artist, and the alternative lifestyle which he visualised and personally exemplified derived much of its extraordinary richness and refinement from his profound appreciation of the aesthetic and the artistic dimensions of the human personality. Gandhi took a somewhat narrow, almost Tolstoyian view of art. It subjected the aesthetic to the moral; it distrusted whatever was sensuous and erotic and, even more, whatever was complex, subtle and ambiguous. Roy's approach was, on the whole, more liberal; he admired Goethe and enjoyed Beethoven; the poet Sudhindra Nath Datta was one of his closest friends; but Roy too did not give much importance to art or aesthetic experience. I have had quite a few arguments with him on this issue; he seemed to share some of Plato's distrust of poetry. If Gandhi positively disapproved Khajuraho, Roy took little interest in Kangra paintings, or even in his friend Sudhin's *Orchestra*. Tagore, on the other hand, was not only himself a very great poet; the theory and practice of his educational experiments in Santiniketan also highlighted his belief that the human personality replenished itself through its aesthetic relation with nature, and that art was one of the highest expressions of human freedom. Tagore intuited in the sensuous and the multivalent the presence of a richness from which to be deprived was disastrous. This presence he found both in nature and in works of art, but most distinctively of all, in the playful working of the human imagination. Historical analogies are never quite satisfactory, but I have sometimes been tempted to suggest that Tagore was, on the whole, closer in spirit to the European Renaissance, Gandhi to the Reformation, and Roy to the Enlightenment.

While I do not share the religious faith of either Tagore or Gandhi, and while I consider Roy's attitude to art and the aesthetic to be a weak point in his radical humanist philosophy, I am nevertheless deeply attracted to the vision of an open and decentralised society which these three utopians shared in common. The alternatives which they offered have, I think, universal significance, but they have also a particular urgency in the Indian context. Alienation and regimentation, atomisation and massifi-

cation, power-concentration and environmental pollution, are today global problems. Visions which project desirable alternatives which may be pursued without resort to coercion or violence are obviously of great relevance to us. In India, since independence, we have witnessed increasing centralization and bureaucratization, the rapid growth of lonely crowds in the big cities and of the rural proletariat in the countryside, accentuated polarization of wealth and poverty and proliferation of unemployment and under-employment, cretinization of the educated and erosion of human ties and sentiments,—a dismal spectacle of a repeat performance of processes with which industrialised societies are already tragically familiar. However, in India statism, centralism, gigantism and technocracy are not yet as thoroughly established as in a number of other countries. The opportunity for pursuing decentralist alternatives would seem to be comparatively greater here even at this stage. Tagore, Gandhi and Roy have, I believe, much to offer in our search for alternatives to the current drift towards disaster.

Decentralist utopias, of course, are not problem-proof, any more than other constructs which concern man in society. I may mention here only a few of these problems. The role of enlightened and dedicated individuals would seem to be crucial to the emergence of a cooperative order. The self-training of these individuals may divest them of any desire for power and possession; but do they not in the process, without ever wanting to do so, develop some kind of a charisma which attracts others to them and makes the latter to a large extent psychologically dependent on the former? In a very different historical context, this seems to have happened even in the case of the Buddha who had for over forty years preached and practised the doctrine of *anatta* or non-self. Of our three utopians, Tagore became a *gurudev* to his admirers, and the experiment in community living which he made in Santiniketan became a memory soon after his death. Gandhi's inability to share his charisma was tragically conspicuous in his own life-time. He stirred up millions who called him the Mahatma but who did not develop within themselves such inner-directedness as would sustain them in their pursuit of an alternative lifestyle. Even his life-long associates rejected his advice to

disband the Congress after independence. In Roy's case, the disintegration of the Radical Humanist movement in the sixties would seem to illustrate the dependence of even highly developed people on particular leaders. Charisma cannot be routinised, nor, fortunately, can it be inherited. But can it be dispensed with altogether, at least in the early phase of a utopian movement? Is elitism implicit in a utopia even when its stated objective is abolition of every type of elitocracy? The problem of charisma and leader-follower relationship may not be insoluble, but it is certainly a serious problem in utopian methodology.

Another problem relates to the place of different points of view within the framework of the community consensus. That tolerance of differences would be a basic principle of any decentralized society is, of course, obvious; but certain decisions which affect and bind the whole community may be seen by some of its members to be wrong. If they press their differences too hard, the community may divide into a majority and a minority, and the spirit of partisanship may reassert itself. If they do not, it will be a reluctant consensus which may be either ineffective or tyrannical. It is, of course, conceivable that a decentralised society will develop attitudes and devise ways for satisfactory accommodation of differences. But neither the system of *paterfamilias* nor that of competing ideological or interest-oriented groups provides any acceptable model within the decentralist framework. Nor is the Rousseauian hypothesis of the "general will" at all helpful; for, as Rousseau himself explicated its meaning, "whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be constrained to do so by the general body." The problem of reconciling consensus, effective and equal participation of all in the decision-making process, and articulation of differences is likely to remain a difficult one even in a cooperative community.

Somewhat more complex, though not necessarily intractable, would seem to be the problem of the relationship between the grassroots bodies and the evolving tiers of coordination. Delegation is obviously involved in the concept of tiers, and delegation is at least potentially a threat to decentralisation. I mentioned earlier that no blueprints were to be expected of any utopia, but since tiers of various types would seem to be necessary if units

were not to exist in isolation, consideration of guidelines in this regard might not be indefinitely postponed. What functions and resources may be legitimately apportioned or delegated to the various tiers, what principles will determine such delegation, what rules, devices and conventions may be expected to prevent concentration accompanying remoteness—are some of the questions which dreamers of a morally desirable alternative life-style may be rightly expected to consider.

There are other problems too, but I shall raise only one more before I conclude. A utopia, by definition, is nowhere, but those who envision any utopia and want to work towards its realisation in society are placed in a particular socio-historical context. In trying to change their context they run counter to entrenched institutions, vested interests, and established habits and mores. Their effectiveness as agents of change would certainly depend on the extent to which their own lives and relationships exemplify their ideals. But the widening influence of those ideals and persons is likely to be resisted by those who currently occupy centres of power. In the circumstances, tension and conflict would seem to be unavoidable. Although decentralist utopianism by its very nature has to be non-violent in both its ends and means, the systems which it seeks to replace are more or less coercive, and their responses are likely to be more or less violent. How would, for example, a decentralist movement emerge and survive in the context of a totalitarian dictatorship? Even in a non-totalitarian system there are formidable power-structures which are likely to be used as soon as decentralism is felt to be a threat to those structures. Martyrdom is hardly an answer.

Tagore, Gandhi and Roy, with different degrees of emphasis, advocated the patient construction of alternative units within the existing system. I am not sure, however, that they were able to indicate clearly and convincingly how such construction was to be undertaken and sustained without serious compromises with the existing order. Besides, when an existing system is felt to be highly oppressive, many may respond to a call for its replacement. But, as Jayaprakash Narayan sadly noted in his *Prison Diary*, the task of construction seems to appeal only to a few, while destruction attracts the masses.

I do not think, however, that recognition of these and other related problems takes away from the relevance or meaningfulness of the utopias envisioned by Tagore, Gandhi and Roy. I see these problems as challenges to our moral and imaginative resourcefulness, but the utopias offer us valuable directions towards worthy alternative lifestyles. They help us to see ourselves and others not as objects but as subjects; they deepen our understanding and extend our range of choice; they can be sources of inspiration and guidance in our anguished search for a morally desirable society.

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Natural Law and innate rationality

The conception of the Natural Law was a landmark in the history of man's struggle for freedom. It liberated him from the faith in the supernatural, a power which he can never comprehend nor overcome, because it is imaginary; on the other hand, the Natural law belongs to his world; therefore, eventually, he will be able to understand how it operates, and consequently live in harmony with it. The notion of the Natural Law is empirically derived; there is nothing mysterious about it. The regularities of nature are the facts of man's experience. The notion of Natural Law, therefore, results from the innate rationality of man.

M.N. Roy : A Biographical Chronology

Sibnarayan Ray

I have been working on a full-length biography of M.N. Roy for some time, but since his exceptionally eventful life was lived in three continents at different times out of which nearly three decades were devoted to underground revolutionary activities, first as a nationalist and then as a communist, it is extremely difficult to ascertain in each and every case the exact date and sequence of events. The police in many countries were on his trail; consequently he had to be very careful about leaving as few traces of his movements as a leading organiser of underground activities as possible. For a truly comprehensive survey of his career it is necessary to have free access to at least relevant archives in Mexico, Soviet Union, China, India, Britain, and a number of countries in Europe, West Asia and East and South-East Asia.

The first attempt at a biography of Roy was made by his very close associate and follower Tayab Shaikh writing under the penname of A.K. Hindi. Published under the title 'M.N. Roy: The Man Who Looked Ahead' (Allahabad, 1938) it occupies a position in Roy-studies similar to Joseph Doke's book on Gandhi (1907) in Gandhi-studies. Rich in inside information, it is, however, an incomplete account; it brings the story of Roy's political life to 1930; the promised second volume was never published.

Since then a good number of books have appeared on M.N. Roy, but either they deal with a particular period of his life, or are expositions of his ideas, or are very general accounts not based on comprehensive researches into archival and other primary source material. Patrick Wilson's Preliminary Checklist of the Writings of M.N. Roy (1955) was a particularly important contribution to Roy-studies. In 1959,

with the full cooperation of Ellen Roy, I prepared and published a short nine-page biographical note which was included in the first edition of the present work. That note has been the basis of virtually all subsequent biographical writings on M.N. Roy. In 1965 the late Swadesh Ranjan Das published the first full-length biography of Roy—in Bengali—still a very useful work. V.B. Karnik's more recent and ampler study, 'M.N. Roy: Political Biography' (1978), is useful for its extensive quotations from Roy's works, but it adds hardly any new information and commits several errors in dates and sequence of events. From the biographical point of view the really major scholarly contributions since the publication of my brief biographical note are R.C. North and Xenia Eudin's 'M.N. Roy's Mission To China' (1963) and J.P. Haithcox's 'Communism and Nationalism in India: M.N. Roy and Comintern Policy 1920-1939' (1971), but they deal with very specific periods in Roy's career.

The brief biographical chronology outlined below is admittedly incomplete. Specific dates have been included after checking with primary sources nearly in every instance. In a few cases where primary sources gave contradictory accounts I had to choose after careful consideration one date as being more likely to be accurate than another. There are important gaps which I hope may be filled as I progress with my researches in connection with the projected three-volume biography and six-volume edition of Roy's Selected Works. The first three volumes of the Selected Works have already been published by Oxford University Press, to the second volume of which I have provided an ampler chronology. The first part of my projected biography has been serialized in the monthly *The Radical Humanist* (1985-86) and a Telugu translation of the same has been published as a book 'Sweetcharveeshanlo M.N. Roy' 1991 from Hyderabad. The source materials which I have collected from many archives abroad will be gifted to the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library which currently houses the M.N. Roy Archives of the Indian Renaissance Institute. SNR

1887 MARCH 21 Birth of Narendranath Bhattacharya at Arbalia, 24 Parganas, Bengal, where his father Dinabandhu Bhattacharya was Head Pandit of local school; studied at Jnan-Vikasini School at Arbalia to the Sixth Class or Standard.

1898 Moved with parents to Kodalia, another village in the 24

- Paraganas, where his maternal grandparents had bequeathed their house and property to his mother, Basanta Kumari; father retired from Head Panditship.
- 1899-1905 Studied at Harinabhi Anglo-Sanskrit School; with some classmates began organising free and voluntary social service activities among the rural poor.
- 1902 Anusilan Samiti and other underground revolutionary groups formed in Bengal; Naren probably introduced to some of them.
- 1905 Death of Naren's father; partition of Bengal; Naren expelled from Harinabhi School for organising anti-partition meeting; joined underground revolutionary movement in Bengal, probably through his cousin Abinash Bhattacharya, himself already a close associate of revolutionary leaders like Aurobindo and Barin Ghose.
- 1906-1908 Passed Entrance Examination of Bengal National College (founded August 1906 with Aurobindo Ghose as Principal) and studied at Bengal Technical Institute (founded July 1906 by Tarak Nath Palit); also organised a close-knit underground revolutionary group at Changripota.
- 1907 DECEMBER Carried out first successful political dacoity (robbery) in Bengal at Changripota rail station.
- 1908 Arrested but released; death of mother Basanta Kumari.
- 1908-1909 Arrest, trial and conviction of the first generation of Bengali revolutionary nationalist underground leadership.
- 1909 Naren carried out political dacoity at Netra, together with Hari Kumar Chakravarty.
- 1910-1911 Arrest (January 1910) and trial, together with Jatindra Nath Mukherji and 44 others, in Howrah-Sibpur Conspiracy Case; discharged for lack of sufficient evidence in April 1911.

1911-13 Naren reorganised the revolutionary underground in Bengal under Jatin Mukherji's over-all leadership.

1914 AUGUST Outbreak of World War I; theft of 50 Mauser Pistols and 46,000 rounds of ammunition by underground revolutionaries at Calcutta.

1915 FEBRUARY Garden Reach robbery by Naren and his associates; his arrest and release on bail.

MARCH Promise of German assistance received by Indian revolutionaries in Bengal.

APRIL Naren sent to Batavia under assumed name Charles A. Martin to negotiate with German representatives for supply of arms, ammunition and money.

JUNE Returned to India, met Jatin Mukherji to finalise plans.

AUGUST Failure of German arms supply plan; Naren, alias Martin, set out for Batavia again to make new plans with the Germans.

SEPTEMBER Conspiracy plans discovered by the police; armed fight near Balasore between a group of revolutionaries and the police; the leader Jatin Mukherji wounded and died in hospital.

1915 SEPTEMBER-1916 MAY Naren in search of arms through China, Japan and the Far East; met Sun YatSen; advised by German Ambassador to proceed to Berlin to get his plan for purchase of arms from Yunnan approved by the German Imperial Staff.

1916 JUNE Reached San Francisco; arrival flashed in local dailies; the British intelligence agents were on his trail; he became guest of Dhanagopal Mukherji, met Evelyn Trent, changed name to Manabendra Nath Roy.

OCTOBER Moved to New York, met Lajpat Rai and got acquainted with American radicals.

1917 MARCH Arrested by American police, questioned and released with warning.

- APRIL U.S. declared war on Germany; Roy's 'Open Letter to the U.S. President Wilson'.
- JUNE Roy and Evelyn, recently married in New York, escaped to Mexico with letter of introduction from David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University, to General Salvador Alvarado, radical Governor of the province of Yucatan in Mexico.
- 1917 New Constitution of Mexico under President Venustiano Carranza (1914-20) which promised land to the peasants and put restrictions on the church.
- 1917 NOVEMBER Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership capture power in Russia
- 1917-18 Roy contacted by the German Embassy in Mexico and provided with funds; his plans to buy Chinese arms and transport them across the mountain frontiers to Indian revolutionaries did not work out; sent moneys to Rash Behari Bose in Japan and to Indian revolutionaries in the U.S.; met socialist and radical groups in Mexico and joined the local Socialist Party; learnt Spanish; contributed articles on India to the daily *El Pueblo*; introduced to President Carranza and soon became his friend; contributed to and was editorially associated with the English section of the daily, *El Heraldo de Mexico*; lectured at the Mexico University at the invitation of its Rector, Maestro Casas; converted Socialist Party organ *Lucha de los clases* into a regular weekly and bought the party its own printing press; ran and financed the journal *El Socialista*.
- 1917 Publication in Mexico of *El Camino para la Paz duradera del Mundo* (The Way to Durable World Peace); publication of *Carta Abierta A Su Excelencia Woodrow Wilson* (Open Letter to His Excellency Woodrow Wilson: Spanish translation of his 1917 'Open Letter' in English); publication of *La Voz de la India* (The Voice of India—80 pages, consisting of three articles which include the 'Open Letter' to Wilson).
- 1918 Publication of *La India Su Pasado Su Presente Y Su Porvenir*

(India--Her Past, Present and Future; 198 pages and ii preface), his first major work.

1918 DECEMBER Organised a conference of the Socialist Party of Mexico and was elected its General Secretary.

1919 MARCH Foundation Congress of the Communist International in Moscow.

AUGUST 25-SEPTEMBER 4 First National Congress of the Socialist Party of Mexico with Roy as organiser and moving spirit.

1919 Arrival of Soviet emissary Michael Borodin in Mexico; meeting and friendship with Roy.

1919 OCTOBER-NOVEMBER Founding of *El Partido Comunista de Mexico* under Roy's leadership. Elected as delegate to the Second Congress of the Communist International.

DECEMBER Left Mexico with Evelyn Roy from port of Veracruz by transatlantic liner Alfonso XIII carrying Mexican diplomatic passports with their names given as Senor and Senora Roberto Alleny Villa Garcia. Disembarked at Santandor in Spain; met Socialists and Anarchists at Madrid and Barcelona.

1920 JANUARY-APRIL Roy in Berlin; made friends with Thalheimer, Brandler, Mayer, Levi, Froelich and other leaders of the Communist Party of Germany; also met old-time Marxists and Revisionists, Bernstein, Kautsky and Hilferding; friendship with S.J. Rutgers and H.J. Sneevliet (alias Maring), founders of the Communist Party of Holland and closely associated with radical movements in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia); also met Karl Radek of the Comintern and Bhupendranath Datta of the Indian Revolutionary Committee in Berlin.

MAY Reached Moscow; met Chicherin and Karakhan, Commissar and Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs; also met Angelica Balabanova, first General Secretary of the Comintern, and Zinoviev, its Chairman; also met Lenin.

JUNE-JULY 'An Indian Communist Manifesto' written by Roy published in the *Glasgow Herald*.

JULY 19-AUGUST 7 Second Congress of the Communist International; beginning of friendship with Bukharin; met Gorky, Lukacs, Varga, Rakosi, Cachin, Rosmer, John Reed, Louis Fraina, Sylvia Pankhurst and others; Lenin's 'Theses on the National and Colonial Question' and Roy's 'Supplementary Theses' adopted by the Congress (28-29 July); briefly saw Trotsky at the Polish battle-front.

AUGUST-OCTOBER Provisional All-India Central Revolutionary Committee formed in Moscow with Roy elected as Chairman; Roy in Tashkent; established Indian Military School (INDUSKI KURS) for the training of the Muhajirs; hostility to Roy from Abdur Rabb and Prativadi Acharya of the Indian Revolutionary Association.

OCTOBER 17 Communist Party of India formed at Tashkent with Mohammad Shafiq as Secretary; Communist Party of Turkestan advised by Roy as Secretary-in-Charge, Turkestan Bureau (20.12.1920).

1921 FEBRUARY Roy and Evelyn returned to Moscow.

MARCH Closure of INDUSKI KURS at Tashkent.

APRIL 21 Establishment of Kommunisticheskii Universitet Trudiashchikhsia Vostoka (KUTV: Communist University of the Toilers of the East) at Moscow under Commissariat of Nationalities headed by Stalin; Roy one of its Political Directors; beginning of Roy's Friendship with Stalin.

APRIL-JUNE Delegation of Indian nationalist revolutionaries (Virendranath Chattopadhyay and others) in Moscow; their opposition to Roy; their views and demands rejected by the Comintern.

JUNE 22-JULY 12 Third Congress of the Comintern in Moscow; Roy's argument with Trotsky on 'the World Crisis

and the Tasks of the Comintern'; his differences with Chang T'ai-lei in the Eastern Commission over the role of the bourgeoisie in colonies and semi-colonies.

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER Roy wrote 'Manifesto to the 36th Indian National Congress, Ahmedabad, 1921' and sent bundles of printed copies with his emissary Nalini Gupta to India; Gupta met Muzaffar Ahmed, Nazrul Islam and others in Calcutta; Roy sent groups of trained Muhajirs to India.

OCTOBER Roy completed writing the text of *India in Transition*.

DECEMBER Roy's articles 'India in Transition Stage' and 'Present Events in India' published in the Comintern's multilingual journal *Communist International* No. 3; Roy's article 'Revolutionary India' in *Inprecor* (20 December 1921).

1922 JANUARY Russian translation of *India in Transition* published from Moscow.

JANUARY 21-27 First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East at Moscow; Roy and Safarov elected to its Presidium Safarov supported Roy's position.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH Roy's articles in *Inprecor*.

APRIL-MAY Publication of English Edition of *India in Transition* from Berlin (fictitious imprint Geneva); the Roys moved to Berlin and set up their headquarters there.

MAY 15 Publication by Roy of *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* from Berlin (fortnightly).

JULY 15 Roy's 'Manifesto to the All-India Congress Committee.'

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER Publication of German version of *India in Transition* from Hamburg; publication of *India's Problem and Its Solution*, and of *What Do We Want* (fictitious imprint Geneva).

SEPTEMBER Government of India proscribed *The Vanguard, India in Transition, India's Problem and What Do We Want.*

OCTOBER 1 Name of *The Vanguard* changed to *The Advance-Guard.*

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER Roy succeeded through his writings, correspondence and emissaries in establishing small communist groups in Bengal (Ahmed), Bombay (Dange), Madras (Singaravelu), United Provinces (Usmani) and the Punjab (Ghulam Hossain). According to Intelligence Bureau reports, Roy's articles in *The Vanguard*, though banned by the Government, were often reproduced, translated and approvingly used by various journals in India like the *Amritabazar Patrika*, *Vartaman* (Kanpur), *Navayugam* (Guntur/Telegu), *The Independent* (Allahabad), *Atmasakti* (Bengali), *Dhumketu* (Bengali) *Deshar Bani* (Noakhali/Bengali) etc.

NOVEMBER 5-DECEMBER 5 Fourth Congress of the Comintern (opened at Petrograd and then moved to Moscow); Roy elected to the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) as a candidate member (among other candidate members were Lenin and Trotsky); his views on the Eastern Question upheld in the Congress theses though opposed by Tan Malaka (Indonesia) and Van Ravesteyn (Holland); Roy wrote to his Indian communist contacts proposing formation of an underground Communist Party of India, and a legal 'revolutionary mass party' to include the 'left wing' of the National Congress, the Trade Union Movement and the oppressed peasantry; Roy's 'Programme for the Indian National Congress' at Gaya ('Complete Independence', 'Election of a National Assembly by Universal Suffrage', 'Establishment of a Federated Republic of India', 'Abolition of landlordism', 'Free and compulsory education', etc.) published in *The Advance-Guard* of December 1, 1922 and printed and sent out as a pamphlet to various persons and organizations in India; the issue of *The Advance-*

Guard banned, 540 copies intercepted by the police at Gaya, but Roy's programme cabled by Reuters and published in all major Indian newspapers.

1923 JANUARY 6 Private letter to Chitta Ranjan Das through intermediary.

1923 JANUARY *The Advance Guard* proscribed by the Government of India; from the issue of February 15, 1923 Roy changed the name of the journal to *The Vanguard*: Central Organ Communist Party of India (with fictitious imprint Bombay/Calcutta/Madras); thus *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* (Imprint Berlin/Paris/London/Zurich/Rome) had nine consecutive fortnightly issues (May 15-September 15); *The Advance Guard* had also 9 consecutive fortnightly issues (October 1, 1922-February 1, 1923); *The Vanguard* continued as a fortnightly till it was changed to a monthly under the new name *The Masses of India* in January 1925.

FEBRUARY 3 "Open Letter to Chitta Ranjan Das and his Followers" published in *The Vanguard*, vol. II, no. 1, February 15, 1923.

APRIL Moscow Conspiracy Case at Peshawar.

JUNE Roy elected to the Comintern Presidium; publication of *One year of Non-Cooperation from Ahmedabad to Gaya* by M.N. Roy and Evelyn Roy from Berlin (fictitious imprint Calcutta).

1924 JANUARY Death of Lenin; Roy expelled from Berlin; he removed his European headquarters to Zurich from where *The Vanguard* was published till March 1924; Roy's letter to Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald; publication of Roy's *Political Letters* from the Vanguard Bookshop, Zurich.

FEBRUARY Complaint filed at Kanpur against Roy and his Communist associates charging them with conspiracy to establish a branch of the Comintern in India and to deprive "the King of his Sovereignty of British India". Kanpur trial begun in April with Roy, in absentia, as

principal accused.

MARCH Roy moved headquarters to Annecy in France, and then to Paris.

JUNE 26-JULY 8 Fifth Congress of the Communist International; Roy elected full member of the Comintern Executive and candidate member of the Presidium; also member of Colonial Commission; Roy's sharp differences with Manuilsky; "the draft resolution on the National and Eastern Questions" drawn up by Manuilsky on behalf of ECCI not endorsed by the Fifth Congress; draft sent to Stalin for comments; on July 31 he wrote to Manuilsky endorsing Roy's view and criticising the Draft.

1925 JANUARY Publication of Roy's monthly *The Masses of India* from Paris; regular publication maintained till April 1928.

JANUARY 30 Roy expelled from France; moved to Luxembourg; unsuccessful efforts by French intellectuals under Henri Barbusse's leadership to get the expulsion order rescinded.

MARCH Death of Sun Yat-Sen; Wang Ching-Wei as leader of Left Kuomintang.

MAY Stalin's speech to the students of the University for the Peoples of the East supporting Roy's analysis of Indian politico-economic developments.

JUNE Death of Chitta Ranjan Das.

JULY Meeting at Amsterdam; called by Communist Party of Great Britain, to discuss the proposal of an "Oriental Conference".

SEPTEMBER Instructions from the Comintern's Colonial Bureau to constitute a Foreign Bureau of the Communist Party of India under Roy's supervision and control with Clemens Dutt of CPGB as one of its members.

NOVEMBER Labour Swaraj Party formed in Bengal under the leadership of the poet Qazi Nazrul Islam.

DECEMBER Communist Party of India formed at Kanpur.

1925-26 Evelyn's break with Roy and return to the United States.

1926 FEBRUARY Labour Swaraj Party changed to Peasants' and Workers' Party with Dr. Naresh Chandra Sen-gupta as President; Roy's *The Aftermath of Non-Co-Operation* published by Communist Party of Great Britain, London.

FEBRUARY-MARCH Sixth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern; Roy elected to Comintern Presidium as a full member (together with Bukharin, Zinoviev, Stalin, Togliatti and others); also elected member of Comintern Secretariat and Orgbureau; also member of the editorial board of *Inprecor*.

JANUARY-DECEMBER Roy's articles in his organ *The Masses of India* on "The Indian Communists and the Communist International", "Indian Bourgeoisie and British Imperialism", "The Hindu-Muslim communal riot at Calcutta", critique of "National communism", "How to organize a Working Class Party", and "Programme of a Working Class Party" provided guidelines to Communists in India.

MARCH-APRIL Roy sent a printing press to Pondicherry for the CPI to bring out its own publications from India.

JUNE-JULY Publication of Roy's *The Future of Indian Politics*, London, 1926; also its Russian edition, Moscow, and German edition, Hamburg and Berlin.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER Seventh Plenum of ECCI; Zinoviev removed from his post as Comintern President; Roy re-elected to the Presidium and Secretariat (with Bukharin, Kuusinen, Togliatti, Manuilsky and others); also elected member-secretary of the Chinese Commission with Petrov; fierce debate at the Plenum on the situation in China and Comintern's policy towards the Kuomintang; Roy advocated a programme of agrarian revolution in China and "revolution from below"; the Plenum resolu-

tion (Dec. 16) sought both collaboration with Kuomintang and agrarian revolution; after the close of the plenum Roy was sent to China as head of the Comintern delegation.

DECEMBER Philip Spratt, sent by CPGB, and Fazl Ilahi (alias Qurban), sent by Roy, reached India to help in organising the Communist Party, to promote the formation of a Workers' and Peasants' Party which would provide the communists with a legal cover and wider base, and to place communists in influential positions within the Indian National congress; "A Manifesto to the All India National Congress meeting at Gauhati" issued in the name of the Communist Party of India but published in London and written by Roy.

1927 JANUARY-DECEMBER Various articles in *The Masses of India* on India and China.

1927 JANUARY-AUGUST Roy in China, accompanied by Louise Geissler; divisions in the Chinese Communist Party leadership and among Comintern advisers regarding relations with the Kuomintang, especially Chiang Kai-Shek, and programme of an agrarian revolution.

APRIL 1 Roy reached Changsha, welcomed by the provincial government of Hunan and greeted by a "gathering of a hundred thousand people".

APRIL 12 Shanghai Communists rounded up and their labour unions decimated by Chiang Kai-Shek's armed squads.

APRIL 13-15 Roy's speech to the Chinese Communist Party leadership on "the Base and the Social Forces of the Revolution", advocating agrarian revolution which would provide "a revolutionary democratic base", and opposing the Northern Expedition; Roy's view opposed by Borodin and Chen Tu-Hsiu.

APRIL 16 Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party adopted a resolution supporting Roy's proposal, but two days later the CC retracted its resolution and decided to

support the Kuomintang's plan to despatch troops to the north.

APRIL Meeting of Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang Left; disagreement among the leaders over Roy's proposal of "revolutionary confiscation" and redistribution of land among the peasants.

APRIL-MAY Fifth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held at Hankow; Roy proposed a programme of "agrarian revolution, arming the peasants, rural self-government, creation of state-machinery for realization of democratic dictatorship and creation of a revolutionary army"; Roy's proposal opposed by Borodin who had been in China since 1923 and who advocated collaboration between the Communists and the Kuomintang; the "Theses", "Resolution on the Agrarian Question" and "Manifesto" adopted by the Congress, were very close to Roy's views, but the leadership continued to be divided and irresolute; spontaneous peasant uprisings occurred which were sought to be restrained by the Chinese Communist leadership on Borodin's instruction; frustrated by Borodin, who controlled the pursestrings and prevented Roy from raising an armed force and pushing the programme of agrarian revolution, Roy appealed directly to Moscow.

MAY 18-30 Eighth Plenum of Comintern Executive (ECCI) devoted entirely to the Chinese situation and the dangers of war; Stalin-Bukharin line strongly attacked by Trotsky and Zinoviev; resolution adopted at the Plenum advocated mass-mobilization by the Chinese Communists working within the Left Kuomintang and taking part in the Wuhan government of Wang Ching-Wei.

JUNE 1 Stalin's telegram supporting land-seizure by peasants and agrarian revolution but still requiring collaboration with Left Kuomintang; Borodin and the Chinese Communist leadership decided to "shelve" Stalin's instruction; Roy communicated to Wang Ching-Wei Stalin's

message expecting him to co-operate with the Communists against Chiang Kai-Shek and the Kuomintang rightwing.

JUNE 15 Roy presented to the Chinese Politbureau the "Draft Platform of the National Revolution"; Borodin demanded "withdrawal of the agrarian question" and restraining of mass movements.

JUNE 20 Roy's address to the Fourth Congress of the All-China Federation of Labour.

JULY 16 Kuomintang government at Wuhan began rounding up Communists and executing them; Borodin and Roy as representatives of Soviet Union allowed to depart.

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER Roy returned to Moscow crossing the Mongolian deserts and proceeding by way of Urga; submitted his Report and relevant documents on the Situation in China to Comintern.

SEPTEMBER Trotsky expelled from the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

NOVEMBER Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Soviet Union and met Roy; Trotsky expelled from the Communist party of the Soviet Union.

1927 DECEMBER Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; besides Trotsky and Zinoviev, seventyfive leading members of the opposition (to Stalin) were expelled (these included Radek, Kamenev, Rakovsky, Safarov etc.); Trotsky exiled; Publication of Roy's books *La Liberation des indes* and *Les Allies Internationaux de l'Opposition du P.C. et de l'U.R.S.S.*, Paris; Madras Session of Indian National Congress; adoption of "Complete Independence" as goal.

DECEMBER 30 Roy's letter to the Central Committee of the Communist party of India intercepted by the police and subsequently published in *The Statesman* of August 18, 1928 and made famous as "the Assembly Letter".

1928 FEBRUARY 9-25 Ninth Plenum of the ECCI at Moscow; extreme leftwing policy of 'class against class', and of 'social democracy as the main enemy' formulated; Stalin in control of the CPSU and the Comintern; Roy re-appointed a member of the Presidium, but incapacitated by serious attack of mastoiditis; the Plenum resolution on China vindicated Stalin's policy without in any way blaming Roy or Borodin, but Roy was virtually interned in Moscow and left without proper medical treatment.

MARCH 24 Roy's "Draft Resolution on the Indian Question".

APRIL Roy brought to Berlin from Moscow by his friends for medical treatment and care; period of convalescence at St. Moritz.

JANUARY-APRIL Articles in *The Masses of India* on "the Heroic Struggle of the Chinese workers and peasants"; boycott of the Simon Commission and the historic need for the "election of a Constituent Assembly"; on the Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU and the Ninth Plenum of ECCI, etc.; publication of Roy's *Die Internationalen Verbundeten der Opposition in der KPDSU*, Hamburg.

JULY 17-SEPTEMBER 1 Sixth Congress of the Comintern; adoption of extreme left policy, of total opposition to Socialists and Social Democrats in every country as having become "counter-revolutionary"; approval given to Stalin's doctrines of "Socialism in one country", planned industrialisation and "dekulkaization"; and total subordination of the Comintern to the needs and dictates of the Soviet Union; due to illness Roy did not attend the Congress; distorted versions of his views were presented and severely attacked by Kuusinen and others who charged him with the authorship of the "decolonisation thesis"; however, no penalty was proposed except that he was no longer a member of the Comintern Executive or any of its other bodies.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER Roy met in Berlin his future wife Ellen-Gottschalk.

1928 OCTOBER Roy's statement from Berlin to ECCI "On the Indian Question in the Sixth Congress" defending and explaining his position.

NOVEMBER "Communist Opposition" in Germany under the leadership of Brandler and Thalheimer began publishing their organ *Gegen den Strom* (Against the Current); during 1928 seven issues plus one special issue were published; it was a Weekly, and in 1929 fifty two regular issues plus nine special issues were brought out; the Opposition stressed the growing danger of fascism and Nazism in Europe and wanted the Comintern to give up the extreme left line of the Sixth Congress and to work for a united front with socialists and social democrats against Hitler's forces; Roy's assessment of the international situation was closer to the Brandler-Thalheimer Opposition but he did not join them till mid-1929.

DECEMBER Roy's article in *Inprecor* (Dec. 27, 1928) on "The Indian National Congress".

1929 JANUARY-MARCH Roy's articles published in *Inprecor* on "The German Communist Opposition", "The Ways of Indian Revolution", "Workers' and Peasants' Party of India", "The Bourgeoisie and National Revolution in India", etc.; also his articles on "The Indian Proletariat" and "The Situation in China" published in *The Daily Worker*, New York.

1929 Roy's Reports and Documents on China published from Moscow and Leningrad under the title *Kitaiskaia Revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii International*; Roy never saw this work in print but after his death a copy of the Moscow imprint was discovered, and an English translation with a long editorial introduction by Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin published by University of California Press in 1963 under the title *M.N. Roy's Mission to China*.

MARCH 20 Meerut Conspiracy arrests.

JULY 3-19 Tenth Plenum of ECCI; removal of Bukharin from the chief editorship of *Pravda* and his expulsion from the Comintern Presidium; social democracy equated with fascism; farther elaboration of the new ultraleft policy adopted at the Sixth Congress; Roy attacked by Manuilski and Kuusinen and his exclusion from the Comintern demanded and accepted.

SEPTEMBER News reported in *Gegen den Strom* (36.7) that Roy was "no longer a member of the Comintern". On September 7 Roy wrote "An Open Letter to the Members of the Communist International" explaining his position and points of disagreement with the policy of the Sixth Congress; the letter was published in *Gegen den Strom* under the title "Meine Verbrechen" (My Crime) in its 37th issue of 1929; from the 39th issue of the journal Roy began publishing a series of 12 articles on "Die Krisis der Kommunistischen Internationale" which was completed in the 13th issue of 1930.

DECEMBER 13 Formal announcement in *Inprecor* that "Roy, by contributing to the Brandler press and by supporting Brandler organisation, has placed himself outside the rank of the Communist International".

1930 Roy's contributions on India, China, Comintern Policy etc. continued to be published regularly in the Opposition journals *Gegen den Strom* and *International Nachrichten der Kom. Opp.* (INKOPP); in the former they appeared regularly right up to Issue no. 18 of 1932 and less frequently in later issues, and in the latter upto No. 6 of 1931.

1930 AUGUST Tayab Shaikh, Roy's most loyal associate among the Indians in Berlin, sent to India bringing from Roy a "Manifesto to the Revolutionary Vanguard of the Toiling Masses of India".

AUGUST-DECEMBER "Royist" group formed in Bombay and became active; Roy's major work *Revolution und*

Konterrevolution in China published from Berlin by Soziologische Verlagsanstalt; the German version was translated by Paul Froelich from Roy's original manuscript in English.

1930 DECEMBER 11 Roy reached Karachi by land-route via Istanbul and Baghdad with a stolen passport in the name of one "Banerji" and proceeded to Bombay where he adopted the name "Dr. Mahmud".

1931 JANUARY-JULY Roy organised publication of *"The Masses"*, his new organ; also *"Independent India"* under the editorship of Charles Mascarenhas from Bombay; with Shaikh and others he organised "The Committee of Action for Independence" and "League of Indian Independence" with units in Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Poona, Baroda, Benares etc.; travelled extensively in North India forming local units of an underground political organisation, "Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class"; helped his associates to organise trade unions and establish themselves in leading positions in the All India Trade Union Congress; met Jawaharlal Nehru, attended as Dr. Mahmud the Karachi Session of the Congress at Nehru's invitation and influenced Nehru in revising the draft of the "Fundamental Rights Resolution"; provided underground support and organisational guidance to the Central Peasants' League and to peasants' uprisings in U.P. (April-May).

FEBRUARY Roy's article on the Indian Situation in *Gegen den Strom*.

APRIL Roy's article on the Indian Situation in the *Revolutionary Age*, New York.

JULY 21 Roy arrested in Bombay.

NOVEMBER 3-DEC. 16 Roy's trial took place not in open court but in the jail behind prison walls; he was manacled and taken to the trial by force; he conducted his

own defence but was not allowed to put forward his Defence Statement.

1932 JANUARY 9 Roy sentenced to twelve years' transportation.

1932 Roy's Defence Statement smuggled out and published simultaneously under the titles "My defense" and "I accuse" respectively by Roy Defence Committee from Pondicherry and New York; also smuggled out and published *Our Task in India*.

1933 MAY 2 On appeal Roy's sentence reduced to six years' rigorous imprisonment.

1931 JULY-1936 NOV. 20 Roy's jail period of 5 years and 4 months were spent first in Kanpur jail, then Bareilly, Almorah and Dehradun jails; inspite of severe restrictions, he managed to keep in touch with his radical associates in India and abroad by smuggling out letters, instructions and articles; many of his articles were published under various assumed names in a number of periodicals; several of his radical associates became leading members of the Congress Socialist Party (founded 1934) and his *Letters to the Congress Socialist Party*, written and smuggled out in 1934, 1935 and 1936, were published as a book in 1937; his letters to Ellen Gottschalk were published subsequently as a book in 1943 under the title *Letters from jail*; some of his loyal supporters in the Indian Trade Union movement consolidated their position in the All-India Trade Union Congress; the Communist International and the Communists in India, however, conducted a vilification campaign against Roy; the change of official Comintern policy from the extreme leftism of the Sixth Congress to the "United Front" line of the Seventh Congress (25 July-20 August, 1935) was not reflected at all in the Communist attitude and behaviour to Roy; in jail Roy occupied himself with systematic and extensive studies in philosophy, history and physical and social sciences, and wrote down his reflections on sheets of paper which grew into nine large

manuscript volumes; selected portions from these manuscripts were published in book form after his release from jail (e.g., *Fascism; The Historical Role of Islam; Heresies of the Twentieth Century; From Savagery to Civilization; Materialism; Science and Superstition*, etc.) but the "Prison Manuscripts" as a whole have not been published; they are currently preserved in the Nehru Memorial Museum Archives.

1936 NOVEMBER 20 Roy released from jail.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER Elected member of All-India Congress Committee; attended as a delegate the Faizpur Session of the Congress; spoke about developing Congress Primary Committees as organs of struggle against imperialism and for social justice, and about the Congress functioning as the Constituent Assembly.

1937 FEBRUARY-MARCH Elections held under the Govt. of India Act of 1935; Roy toured extensively in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

MARCH 4 Ellen Gottschalk joined Roy in Bombay.

MARCH 10 Ellen and M.N. Roy got married.

APRIL 4 Publication of *Independent India* weekly from Bombay under Roy's editorship.

APRIL-AUGUST 'Royists' resigned from Congress Socialist Party.

1937-38 Travelled and lectured extensively in both North and South India advocating the need for an alternative democratic and modern leadership within the Congress which would be committed to full independence and agrarian revolution; presided over Youth Conferences in U.P. (May, 1937) and Madras (July, 1937), over Agricultural labourers' Conference in Andhra (August); visited Bengal (January, 1938) after 23 years; finally decided to establish his headquarters in Dehradun (1938).

1938 SEPTEMBER Munich Pact; betrayal of Czechoslovakia by

Britain and France to Germany in the hope that Nazi aggression would be direct towards the Soviet Union and not towards the West; Anglo-French appeasement policy severely attacked by Roy.

1938 Publication of *Our Differences; My Experiences in China; Fascism; Congress and Kisan*.

1939 JANUARY-DECEMBER Repeated warnings in Roy's speeches and writings against fascism in Europe and fascist forces and trends in India.

MARCH Congress Session at Tripuri; rightwing Congress leaders refused to cooperate with Congress President Subhash Chandra Bose; Roy proposed to Bose that the President should constitute his own Working Committee; Bose fumbled while the right wing got a resolution moved and passed which required the new Working Committee to have Gandhi's approval; Roy and his radical supporters decided to form a body within the Congress which would provide a modern and democratic alternative leadership to Gandhi's.

APRIL-JUNE Resignation of Subhash Bose and election of Rajendra Prasad as President; formation of the League of Radical Congressmen (May 1); first All-India Conference of the League under Roy's Presidentship in Poona (June 27-28).

AUGUST Nazi-Soviet Pact; Roy argued that the Pact had been forced on Russia by the Anglo-French appeasement policy and it would be shortlived since Nazi Germany's *raison d'être* was to serve as an instrument of England and France for the destruction of the Soviet Union.

SEPTEMBER Outbreak of Second World War.

OCTOBER Roy's thesis on "India and War" adopted by LRC; it considered the war at this stage to be neither "antifascist" nor "imperialist" but "internecine" having alternative possibilities; however, it clearly rejected the

line of "war resistance in the countries involved in a war against Hitlerism" as that "will reduce the chances of the defeat of Nazi Germany".

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER Congress ministries in the provinces resign; preparations begin for Satyagraha under Gandhi's leadership.

NOVEMBER Comintern Executive's Manifesto of November 11 characterising the war as "an imperialist war" and asking Communist Parties to oppose the war.

1939 Publication of Roy's books *Historical Role of Islam; Heresies of the Twentieth Century; From Savagery to Civilization*.

1940 MARCH Roy contested election to Congress. Presidency; defeated.

APRIL Gandhi asked every Congress Committee to be converted into a Satyagraha Committee and every Satyagrahi to sign a pledge.

APRIL-MAY Nazi occupation of Denmark, Norway, Belgium and Netherlands.

MAY Summer Study Camp of LRC at Dehradun (Roy's lectures at the Camp subsequently published as a book in 1942 under the title *Scientific Politics*); the concept of "Twentieth Century Jacobinism", and the implications of antifascism developed.

JUNE Nazi occupation of France.

AUGUST War characterised by Roy as "antifascist war."

SEPTEMBER Antifascist meetings and demonstrations organised in different parts of India by LRC; Roy suspended by the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee from all elective positions in the Congress.

OCTOBER Meeting of LRC Central Executive in Meerut; decision taken to break with the Congress and form a separate political party which would support the antifascist war and work for "the programme of National Freedom

and Social Emancipation".

DECEMBER 20-22 Inauguration of the Radical Democratic Party.

1940 Publication of Roy's books: *The Alternative; Materialism; Science and Superstition; Letters to the Mahatma; Gandhism, Nationalism and Socialism.*

1941 Roy travelled throughout India addressing public meetings and local units of the RDP.

JUNE 22 Hitler attacked the Soviet Union; Communist parties were told by the Communist International to support Great Britain in the war against Fascism.

JUNE Roy's Letter to the British Labour Party.

JULY Roy's proposal to the General Council of All-India Trade Union Congress to support the war; his proposal opposed not only by the nationalists but also by the Indian Communist leaders who had not yet received Comintern instructions and maintained that war between Britain and Germany was imperialist but war between Germany and Russia was antifascist; Roy and his supporters decided to form a separate antifascist All-India Trade Union organisation.

OCTOBER Comintern headquarters removed to Ufa.

NOVEMBER Indian Federation of Labour founded in Lahore with Roy as General Secretary.

DECEMBER All-India Anti-Fascist Students' Conference at Delhi; America declared war on Japan; Germany and Italy declared war on U.S.A.; Soviet Union, Britain and U.S.A. became allies in the war against Fascist powers; Moscow's instruction at last reached the leaders of the Communist Party of India and the CPI became war-supporters.

1942 FEBRUARY Fall of Singapore.

MARCH-APRIL Cripps Mission and its failure.

APRIL Evacuation of Burma.

AUGUST "Quit India" movement launched by Gandhi.

DECEMBER Second Conference of the Radical Democratic Party held at Lucknow.

JANUARY to DECEMBER Roy's speeches and articles in *Independent India* and other periodicals explaining the notion of people's war and the methods of guerilla warfare in case of Japanese invasion of India; publication of Roy's books: *Freedom or Fascism?*; *War and Revolution*; *Scientific Politics*; *India and War*.

1943 FEBRUARY German Army's capitulation at Stalingrad.

MAY 15 Comintern Presidium announced "dissolution" of the Communist International; Stalin explained that "this will result in a further strengthening of the United Front of the Allies".

1943 SEPTEMBER RDP headquarters and the weekly *Independent India* moved to Delhi; RDP London office opened with A.K. Pillai in charge.

1943 DECEMBER IFL Conference at Bombay; committee set up to draft a Plan of Economic Development based on Roy's ideas on social and economic reconstruction.

1943 Publication of Roy's books; *Communist International*; *Nationalism an Antiquated Cult*; *Indian Labour and Post-War Reconstruction*; *Nationalism, Democracy and Freedom*; *Poverty or Plenty?*; *Letters from Jail*; *National Government or People's Government?*

1944 APRIL-MAY Publication of People's Plan and its adoption by a special conference held at Jharia.

JULY RDP Manifesto demanding General Elections, Universal Suffrage and Responsible Government.

SEPTEMBER Breakdown of Gandhi-Jinnah talks over issue of Pakistan; Roy proposed a federal democratic Indian Republic and prepared a draft Constitution of Free India.

- OCTOBER Roy's message to British Trade Union Congress to build an Indo-British democratic alliance against Fascism.
- DECEMBER IFL Conference at Jamshedpur; Maniben Kara elected President, V.B. Karnik General Secretary; Calcutta Conference of RDP; release for public discussion of *Constitution of India, a Draft*, prepared by Roy.
- 1944 Publication of Roy's books: *Alphabet of Fascist Economics*; *Planning a New India*; *Indian Renaissance Movement*.
- 1945 MAY German surrender.
- JUNE Release of Congress leaders from prison.
- JUNE-JULY Simla Conference and its failure.
- JULY Elections in Britain; Labour under Attlee's leadership voted to office.
- AUGUST Japanese surrender.
- NOVEMBER INA Trials in Red Fort, Delhi.
- DECEMBER Elections on the basis of a very limited franchise to the Central Legislative Assembly; Muslim League under Jinnah won every Muslim seat and proved itself to be the second most powerful political party in India.
- 1945 Publication of Roy's books: *Problem of Freedom*; *Last Battles of Freedom* (Report of the 1944 RDP Conference); *Jawaharlal Nehru*; *Constitution of India, a Draft*; also publication of *The Marxian Way* quarterly under Roy's editorship with the collaboration of Sudhindranath Datta (July 1945).
- 1946 Elections also on a very limited franchise (13 p.c.) to the Provincial Legislatures reconfirmed the Congress and the League as the two major political parties; Radical candidates defeated in the elections; throughout 1945-46, Roy warned repeatedly in his writings and speeches against the manner in which politico-economic power was being transferred from British to Indian vested

interests without any social revolution and without benefit to the majority of the Indian people; he also expressed his complete disillusionment with the Soviet Union which had shown itself to be totalitarian, chauvinistic, exploitative and imperialist.

1946 MARCH-JUNE British Cabinet Mission in India.

MAY 8-18 RDP Study Camp; Roy placed before the Camp his 'New Orientation', which clearly rejected both bourgeois liberalism and Marxism, and proposed Radicalism as his alternative philosophy; some of the central ideas of radical humanism emerged in the course of lectures and discussions during this study camp.

1946 JUNE Publication of the first complete English edition of Roy's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*.

JULY Conflict between Nehru and Jinnah over interpretation of Cabinet Mission's constitutional plan; the Muslim League's call for 'Direct Action'.

AUGUST Foundation of the Indian Renaissance Institute at Dehradun with Roy as Founder-Director; large-scale communal riots and killings in Calcutta following upon the League's call for 'Direct Action'.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER Interim Government formed at first by Congress and then in October joined by the Muslim League.

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER Draft of the 'Theses on Radical Democracy' circulated and amendments and additions incorporated.

DECEMBER Constituent Assembly met without the Muslim League; RDP Conference at Bombay; adoption of 'Twenty-Two Theses' or 'Principles of Radical Democracy'.

1946 Publication of Roy's books: *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*; *INA and the August Revolution*; *New Orientation*; also publication of *Radicalism; philosophy of demo-*

cratic revolution by S.N. Ray with 'Introduction' by M.N. Roy.

1947 MARCH-APRIL Asian Relations Conference at New Delhi; Roy's Manifesto to the Conference delegates 'Asia and the World'; Mountbatten as Viceroy.

APRIL-JUNE Plan for partition of India accepted by Congress, League and Sikhs.

MAY Summer Study Camp of Radicals at Dehradun; Draft Manifesto of New Humanism presented by Roy and approved by the Central Political Council of RDP.

AUGUST Indian sub-continent partitioned; India and Pakistan became independent; communal riots, large-scale killings and mass migration took place in both States; RDP issued a manifesto 'Forward to Freedom', emphasizing that political independence was only a phase in the continuing struggle for freedom of the people and for social justice.

SEPTEMBER Andrei Zhdanov announced 'Cold War' and militant left line at Cominform's first session in Poland.

1947 Publication of Roy's books: *Beyond Communism* (with Philip Spratt); *New Humanism, a Manifesto*; *Science and Philosophy*.

1948 JANUARY Assassination of Gandhi.

FEBRUARY *Independent India Weekly* transferred to Bombay; Roy's tribute to Gandhi 'The Message of the Martyr' published in I.I.

FEBRUARY-MARCH Communist Party of India adopted the Zhdanov insurrectionary militant left line.

MAY Summer School of Higher Studies of the Indian Renaissance Institute; Roy begins developing the idea that political parties were incompatible with radical democracy, that for a renaissance movement and democratic revolution a political party was an unsuitable institution.

AUGUST Publication of *In Man's Own Image* by Ellen Roy and S.N. Ray with Foreword by M.N. Roy.

SEPTEMBER Communist insurrectionary activities in Andhra and West Bengal; India Government's 'police action' in Hyderabad; death of Jinnah.

1948 Intensification of 'cold war' between the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union; Roy's sustained criticism of both super-powers and opposition to any involvement in 'cold war'.

DECEMBER 26-29 Calcutta Conference of RDP decided to dissolve RDP and develop the Indian Radical Humanist Movement; Theses 19 and 20 of 'Principles of Radical Democracy' and last three paragraphs of *New Humanism* manifesto were accordingly amended.

1949 APRIL Name of *Independent India Weekly* changed to *The Radical Humanist Weekly*.

MAY-JUNE Indian Renaissance Institute Summer Camp for Higher Studies at Mussoorie: very detailed discussion of the philosophical implications of Radical Humanism.

AUGUST Name of *The Marxian Way* quarterly changed to *The Humanist Way*.

OCTOBER Mao Tse-Tung proclaimed People's Republic of China.

NOVEMBER Formal adoption of the Constitution of the Indian Republic.

1949 Publication of the every substantially enlarged edition of *The Russian Revolution* incorporating the earlier book published under that title in 1937 plus his writings on the Soviet Union and the Communist International during the forties, thus giving a "record of my reactions to contemporary events in the process of unfolding"; also started writing his 'Memoirs'.

1950 JANUARY Constitution of India came into force; Cominform line changed from insurrectionary leftism to anti-American 'United-Front'; however the CPI, torn

and paralysed by internal dissensions, did not change its tactical line till mid-1951, when its election manifesto (August) marked the beginning of 'constitutional communism', and the unconditional surrender of Telengana insurrectionists (October) ended the extremist phase.

FEBRUARY Radical Humanist Study Camp at West Bengal.

JUNE Outbreak of Korean War; Roy's writings criticising both the Soviet Union and the United States for their policies and action.

1950 OCTOBER Chinese Communist troops entered Tibet.

1950 Publication: *India's Message*.

1951 FEBRUARY First All-India National Convention of Indian Radical Humanist Movement.

MAY *The Radical Humanist* weekly shifted from Bombay to Calcutta.

1951 First Five-Year Plan inaugurated; Roy's critique of the Plan Approach; Series of Roy's writings in various periodicals and *The Radical Humanist* on Communism in Asia and on his recollections of prominent political contemporaries in Asia and Europe; also he worked on the manuscript of his magnum opus, 'Reason, Romanticism and Revolution', and his 'Memoirs'; contact established with several Humanist organisations in Europe and the U.S.A.

1952 JANUARY Roy's article on 'Communism in Asia' in *Pacific Affairs* reprinted in *The Radical Humanist*; also Roy's article on 'Indian Communists and Elections' in the *Manchester Guardian*.

FEBRUARY-MARCH First General Elections in India on the basis of adult franchise; Congress in full control of Central and State governments.

APRIL *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* completed; plans for the Inaugural Congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union announced with the Indian Radical

Humanist Movement as one of its foundation-members; Roy invited to play a major role in the Congress, and preparations began for his travels and lecture tour in Europe and the United States.

JUNE 11 Roy had a serious accident in Mussoorie; he fell fifty feet down while walking along a hill track; moved to Dehradun for treatment.

AUGUST First volume of *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* published; International Humanist and Ethical Union established at its first Congress in Amsterdam; Roy elected, in absentia, as one of its Vice-Presidents.

AUGUST 25 First attack of cerebral thrombosis resulting in a partial paralysis of Roy's right side.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER Slow and gradual recovery; resumed reading, dictating articles to Ellen, even occasional writing of correspondence and short articles.

1952 Publications: *Radical Humanism; Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* Volume I.

1953 JANUARY-FEBRUARY Publication of Roy's articles in *The Radical Humanist* resumed: New Years Message, 'Our Creed', 'Indo-Pakistan Relations and Middle East Defence Organisation'.

FEBRUARY First instalment of Roy's *Memoirs* published in *The Radical Humanist* under title 'The Quest of Golden Fleece' (February 1).

MARCH Stalin's death; Roy's tribute to Stalin (*The Radical Humanist*, March 15); article 'Stalinism survives Stalin' (*The Radical Humanist*, April 26).

MAY Plans made again for Roy's lecture tour in the U.S.A. in October.

AUGUST Second attack of cerebral thrombosis; left side paralysed.

DECEMBER Nehru visited Roy at Dehradun; signs of recov-

- ery; dictated article for *The Radical Humanist* on the Movement and its organisation.
- 1954 JANUARY 24 Roy's last article as dictated by him to Ellen published in *The Radical Humanist*.
- JANUARY 25 Last and final attack; death at ten minutes before midnight.
- SEPTEMBER Last instalment of *Memoirs* ('Communists Among Themselves') published in *The Radical Humanist*.
- 1955 MAY Second Volume of *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* published.
- 1956-58 Organisation of M.N. Roy Archives of the Indian Renaissance Institute by Ellen Roy.
- 1957 Publication of *Crime and Karma; Cats and Women*.
- 1960 APRIL Publication of *Politics, Power and Parties* (lectures and essays 1947-52 edited by Ellen Roy).
- DECEMBER 14 Death of Ellen Roy.
- 1964 Publication of Roy's *Memoirs* in one volume.
- 1968 Publication of *Men I Met* (posthumous compilation of sketches, some of them already published in journals, others taken from the MNR Archives).

From the writings of M. N. Roy

Detachment, Integrity and true Democracy

Until the intellectual and moral level of the entire community is raised considerably, elections alone cannot possibly bring its best elements to the forefront, and unless the available intellectual detachment and the moral integrity are brought to bear on the situation, democratic regimes cannot serve the purpose of promoting freedom. Firstly, the economic life of society must be progres-

sively freed from the paralysing and corrupting control of vested interests. In consequence thereof, intellectual independence will be accessible to a greater number. Secondly, these latter should be regarded as the most trustworthy custodians of public welfare, and afforded the opportunity to function as such. If, before democracy has come of age, their intrinsically representative character is to be measured by counting heads, society will remain deprived of the best available leadership which alone can guide it towards true democratic freedom.