

CHAPTER \_ VII

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**RADICAL HUMANISM**

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## VII

RADICAL HUMANISM

Roy's life was a life of adventures, adventures in the field of action as well as in the field of ideas. To a large extent the two went together. His conversion from nationalism to communism would not have been possible without an adventure in the field of ideas. The journey that he began in the last phase of his life, the journey from communism to humanism, was more hazardous. There were many pitfalls on the way and few signposts and fewer guides. He had to blaze a new trail. Many disillusioned and frustrated communists have turned from communism to religion and some others have reverted to liberalism or nationalism. That path was open to Roy but he rejected it and went beyond communism, to humanism.

Roy himself could have completed the journey in a short time. But he was not alone. He had collected around him a large circle of co-workers, followers and admirers who looked up to him for guidance on all public affairs. A paraphernalia of a party and various other organisations had been built up and they all depended upon him to guide and direct their activities. Roy had a responsibility towards them, both persons and organisations. He had to make an effort to carry them along with him. That required a good deal of time and patience,

and in some cases it did not succeed. It stands to his credit that he never ceased to make that effort, irrespective of the result that it produced.

Developments that took place during the war and immediately thereafter in the political and the social field in the field of science technology and philosophy compelled Roy to re-examine all his ideas and to begin a fresh quest for truth. He found that many of his hopes had not been fulfilled, that some of his forebodings had proved true, and that the world was moving not in the direction of peace and progress but in the direction of war and destruction. Communism, which he had hoped would after its victorious fight against fascism assume the leadership of world forces of progress, had degenerated into nationalism and equated itself with the nationalist interests of Russia. That made Roy re-examine the basic concepts of Marxism and he discovered many faults not only in its political and economic programmes but also in its philosophical postulates. Roy who was never an orthodox Marxist found it necessary then, to begin a search for a new philosophy.

Roy's greatest disappointment was Russia and the policy that she adopted in international affairs. Roy pointed out various mistakes committed by Russia during the war. The

first was signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact which was not altogether " an emergency measure ". After the Pact, Communist Parties in many countries " actually operated as the fifth column of the Axis Powers," which happened he had reason to believe " on orders from Moscow". The next mistake was the policy of neutrality adopted when Hitler attacked France. Roy wrote : " The Russians passively watching and perhaps indirectly helping the Germans overrun France cannot be justified by any political consideration.<sup>1</sup> During the next few years Roy examined from time to time diverse actions of Russia in the field of foreign policies, such as, setting up of communist dictatorships in East European countries, opposition to Marshall Plan and general resistance to efforts to restore peace and stability, and became more and more convinced that Russia was not acting as a liberating or peace loving force. After examining the developments in East European countries dominated by Russia, Roy stated " National degeneration of communism is the common feature of the political life of those parts of Europe which today fly the Red Flag of proletarian world revolution under the protection of the Russian Army. Evidently, the revolution is defeating its own end, opportunist means adopted as revolutionary tactics were bound to corrupt the

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1. Roy, M. N. Russian Revolution p.p. 350, 352. Calcutta : 1949.

end also. This inglorious fate has overtaken the Russian Revolution because, thanks to a fallacious theory and incompetent, short sighted leadership, it failed to march abreast of time and seize the opportunities offered by epochmaking events which occurred very largely under the impact of the Russian Revolution."<sup>2</sup> In an article he described Russia's regress from communism to nationalism and concluded "The experience of the Russian Revolution has exposed the fallacies of Marxism as a theoretical system and the non-liberating implications of communism in practice. In order to be a turning point in the history of civilization, the revolution of our time therefore, will triumph not where it has created a new status quo of terror and voluntary slavery, spiritual regimentation and moral degradation it will succeed as a resurgent democracy, passionately holding on to the ideal of freedom undertaking the task of building a new order under the banner of a New Humanism."<sup>3</sup>

These developments in Russia saddened Roy and made him re-examine the basic principles of communism and Marxism which had guided him so long. If the product of faithful practice of those principles was so undesirable and so ugly, there must

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2. Ibid., p.p. 487, 488.

3. Ibid., p. 495.

be he argued something wrong with those principles. He was not prepared to place the blame for the distortion on any single individual like Stalin or Lenin. He applied himself to the task of discovering the defects in the principles. The quest which began in the closing years of the war ended in 1946 in the elaboration of a few basic principles of the new philosophy of Radical Humanism. The quest continued throughout the remaining years of his life and resulted in the further elaboration and refinement of the new philosophy.

Roy went on thinking about more fundamental ideological and philosophical problems. Why did communism degenerate into nationalism? Is it due to the collectivist approach of both? Is it possible to evolve a liberating philosophy on the basis of the freedom and happiness of the individual? What is the relation between the individual and the society? What is the relation between man and nature? Has scientific advance exploded materialism? Are wars inevitable? Has humanity reached a dead end? Is it possible to rationalize and spiritualize politics? Is pursuit of power through political parties the only goal of political activity? Is it possible to reorganize political and social structure and make it more compatible with individual freedom and social advance? These and many similar questions had tortured his

mind for several years. He had discussed them with some of his colleagues and also some others, prominent in the field of thought. By 1946 he had reached some tentative conclusions and was anxious to place them before a wider circle of his co-workers. The study camp held in Dehra Dun from May 8 to 18 according to a decision of the central secretariat of R D P gave him the opportunity. The camp played as big a role in the development of Radicalism as the first camp held in Dehra Dun in 1940. It had far reaching consequences. It paved the way for the dissolution of R.D.P. in December 1948.

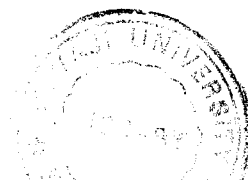
The ideas that Roy placed before the camp were forming in his mind " already for a long time ". He stated " I did not make a secret of them; they were hinted at, if not explicitly stated in my writings. You could not help noticing the importance I have been attaching to the need of a Renaissance movement to deal with cultural questions and philosophical problems. If I had absolutely no doubt about Marxism, why should I talk about a new philosophical movement ? I felt the necessity of further thought on certain philosophical problems which some may believe to have been solved once and for all by Marxism. I did not take that view."<sup>4</sup> He felt the

4. Roy, M. N. New Orientation, p. 161, Calcutta : 1946.

necessity of discussing those ideas because he found that many Radicals were suffering from what he called "two psychoses", the major nationalist psychosis and the minor communist psychosis. Many Radicals felt that they were either revolutionary nationalists or camouflaged communists. He had in the first place to clear that confusion. Radicals; Roy pointed out, were neither nationalists nor communists. He said, "We have chosen a new name because we are not satisfied with the philosophies underlying the theory and practice of other political parties. A group of people inspired by certain philosophical principles, by a certain view of life, logically has a distinctive approach to all problems of life, including politics, trade unionism, propaganda, agitation and every thing else. Radicalism is not revolutionary Nationalism, nor is it slightly heretical communism. It is a distinctive philosophy."<sup>5</sup> He then described as follows the distinctive features of the party and its philosophy. "Our party is not a political machine which holds that the end justifies any means. Its philosophy is not justice. Our political philosophy makes room for the individual, and moral value. Its basic principle is that man is the measure of all things. We judge the merit of any social order by the freedom it gives to its individual members. That

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5. Ibid., p. 34.





is our new philosophy ' which has enabled us to discover the new way of revolution. As a matter of fact, it is a very old philosophy. All prophets of human freedom, in all ages, were inspired by this philosophy, which places man in the centre of the world. ' Revolutionary ' philosophies which hold that freedom is conditional upon individuals sacrificing themselves on the altar of a collective ego, be that the state or the Nation or a Class, have debased politics and thrown the world in the present crisis. We want to revive the old philosophy of freedom to purify politics, so to say, and contribute to the solution of the crisis."<sup>6</sup> Roy asserted further that not socialism or communism but freedom should be the ideal of a civilized human being and that freedom could be experienced only by individual. He attached supreme importance to the individual and asserted that a society which gave the greatest measure of freedom to the individual was the freest society. That became the basis of the philosophy of Radical Humanism as it evolved in the ensuing years. Pointing out its essential differences from the philosophy and practice of communism, Roy said " We place man in the centre of our scheme of things, others would sacrifice him on the altar of the collective ego."<sup>7</sup>

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6. Ibid., pp. 38, 39.

7. Ibid., p. 160.

Some political problems were also discussed in the camp. The most important amongst them was the new way of revolution. Roy called it revolution by consent or by persuasion. The old way of revolution through insurrection was closed, he asserted, owing to the tremendous military power of modern states. But a revolution was a necessity and it was, therefore, necessary to think of a new way to bring it about. The revolution was needed not only by the working class but by other classes as well including the middle class. The revolution which is on the order of the day must be guided by a new philosophy, a philosophy which will not be a class philosophy but one which will appeal to all civilized human beings. Roy said : " We shall have to go ahead. But go ahead, we must have a new ideological equipment, a new philosophical vision, a new faith, so to say. In my opinion, this camp will serve no purpose unless it will give not only to the Radical Democratic party, not only to India, but to the tormented world, a new faith for civilized humanity. This is what humanity needs today."<sup>8</sup> It must be recorded that the camp did serve a useful purpose in the sense that it laid the foundation for a new philosophical vision which in course of time blossomed into the philosophy of Radical Humanism.

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8. Ibid., p. 21.

As a result of the discussions which took place in regular sessions as well as outside and as a result of Roy's psychoanalytical treatment of the two psychoses, a large majority of the campers accepted not only his political analysis but also his philosophical views. They also accepted the necessity of developing a new philosophy as the guiding light of developing a new philosophy, as the guiding light of their scientific, rational and moral politics. The camp showed the Radicals a new way and gave them a new outlook. It also brought them much nearer to Roy as their friend, philosopher and guide. They felt so indebted to him and so enthusiastic about his mission that towards the end of the camp they decided to raise a fund to purchase 13 Mohini Road, the place where Roy and Ellen were staying. Over Rs. 25000, were collected in the next few months and given to the newly established Indian Renaissance Institute for purchasing the house for the permanent residence of its founder Director, Roy. Roy liked the place and stayed there until his death. A few days after the camp the central political council of the party unanimously adopted a statement on the current situation based on Roy's formulations and philosophical outlook. It was significantly entitled "A New Orientation."<sup>9</sup>

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9. Ibid., pp. 233 to 255.

Six months after the camp R D P held its third conference in Bombay in the last week of December 1946. In that period intensive discussions had taken place in the party and the large majority of members had expressed their adherence to the new outlook and the new philosophy. In the meanwhile basic principles of the philosophy were formulated as Twenty two Theses. They were discussed in the conferences and were adopted unanimously. The organisational structure of the party as well as nomenclature R D P were not given up. It took two more years to realise the Basic contradiction between the existence of the party and the principles of the philosophy. The first step was, however, taken with the adoption of the Twenty two Theses.

A few days after independence R D P issued a manifesto entitled " Forward to Freedom ". It was addressed to the people of India as well as of Pakistan. It was drafted by Roy. The main point of the manifesto was, " The 15th of August opens a new period of struggle. One obstacle on the way towards freedom is removed. Other obstacles remain and they will not disappear voluntarily. They can be removed only through conscious purposeful activity." <sup>10</sup>

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10. Roy, M. N. ' Independent India ' ( Journal ) Sept. 28, 1947.

Attainment of independence had solved one problem, the minor problem of Indian revolution, which was to be both a national and a social revolution. The foreign power was removed which meant that the national revolution was accomplished. Its removal took place much more easily than visualized earlier owing to the conditions created by war. The same conditions, Roy had hoped, would enable India to make substantial strides in the direction of social revolution. He made strenuous efforts towards that end during the years of the war. They did not succeed owing to the narrow nationalist outlook of Congress and other political parties. They were in a sense an attempt to bring about a revolution from the top. As a result of their failure, India entered the new era with all her social and economic problems unresolved and with a system of government in which power became more and more concentrated. All the tasks of social revolution remained unaccomplished.

Roy directed his attention to them. He looked at them now with the new insight that he had gained through the philosophy of Radical Humanism. In the year that elapsed since the camp in Dehra Dun he had elaborated the basic principles of the philosophy in the form of a manifesto. The manifesto was considered by Central Political Council of the party at its meeting held in Dehra Dun in May 1947. It was adopted with

a few modifications and it was decided to popularise it as Humanist Manifesto. It was published a couple of months later under the new Humanism. It reminds one of the Communist Manifesto propounded by Marx a little less than a century earlier. It makes a powerful appeal to reason as well as sentiment and shows a new way to revolution appropriate to the conditions obtaining after the end of the second world war. It had a profound effect on all Radicals and on the thinking of many others. A second edition was published in 1958. Last three paragraphs were amended as R D P had by then converted itself into a humanist movement. In his preface to the second edition Roy pointed out that New Humanism, though presented in the manifesto " as a political philosophy ", would be " a logical integration of knowledge about the various aspects of existence, showing how it is in the nature of man to be rational and moral, and therefore capable of building a free, harmonious and just social order."<sup>11</sup>

The manifesto consists of seven chapters. The first three chapters deal with developments in the ideological field since the Communist Manifesto. They end with the statement :  
 " we must look beyond the deceptive ideal of Communism, if the threatened catastrophe is to be avoided. We must have faith in

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11. Roy M. N. New Humanism, Preface ; Calcutta, Second edition, 1953.

human ingenuity and the creativeness of the human mind, which are far from being exhausted. Revolting against the fatalism of the prophetic theoretical system of Karl Marx, the heralds of a new order of social justice must concern themselves with social technology and social engineering, such as would reconcile freedom with planning, autonomy of the individual with the promotion of collective welfare and progress."<sup>12</sup> The next chapter traces the liberal geneology of Marxism. Chapter V discusses Marxian theory of revolution and then arrives at the following conclusion. " The dogma of an uncompromising class struggle, and the false expectation of a polarisation of society into two classes, moved exclusively by economic incentives, led Marx and Lenin, particularly the latter, to visualize revolution taking place through an insurrection engineered by the so called vanguard of the proletariat, to be followed by its dictatorship over the people. This theory not only defeats its purpose, as proved by the Russian experience, by creating a new system of political domination, cultural regimentation and economic enslavement, but the uniform failure of communists all over the world, after their accidental success in Russia, proves its utter inadequacy even as a technique for the Capture of power. Scientific inventions since the days of Marx have vastly

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12. Ibid., p. 15.

increased the military might and coercive strength of the existing states, and have rendered the idea of a minority insurrection impracticable and out of date."<sup>13</sup> Chapter VI urges the need for a new philosophy and the concluding chapter describes how Radical Democracy could be attained through "the collective efforts of spiritually free men and women united with the determination of creating a new order of freedom."<sup>14</sup> Roy was engaged in developing those collective efforts of spiritually free men and women.

Roy had by this time pursued vigorously his studies of natural sciences and philosophical developments. They enabled him to trace the growth of consciousness and reason in man to the laws of nature and to establish the relationship between man and society. These became in course of time the basic premises of Radical Humanism. Radical Humanism, Roy stated, had taken over the tradition of the founders of modern civilization, the tradition of "the revolt of man against the tyranny of God and his agents on earth." Regarding Marxism he stated "Radical Humanism incorporates the positive contents of Marxism freed from the fallacies of its theory of revolution, from its postulation of dictatorship and from its greatest and

13. Ibid., p. 31.

14. Ibid., p. 48.



basic fallacy of dismissing the freedom of the individual as a meaningless abstraction."<sup>15</sup> Roy viewed Radical Humanism " as a philosophy which covers the entire field of human existence from abstract thought to social and political reconstruction."

Developments that took place in 1948 in the national and international fields were distressing. In the national field, communal riots continued and there was growing tension between India and Pakistan. Nationalism was in the ascendent and there was a clamour for making the country strong militarily and industrially. People's welfare was neglected and politicians quarrelled over loaves and fishes of power. In the international field the world became divided into two blocks and the danger of the third world war loomed large on the horizon. All these were, according to Roy, the signs of the spiritual crisis that had overtaken the world. Neither democracy nor communism was in a position to show a way out nationally or internationally.

Roy continued his search for a new philosophy. By this time he had succeeded in laying down the philosophical foundation of Radical Humanism. He was able to explain how growing out of law-governed universe man is engaged in quest for freedom and search for truth, how as a product of nature

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 15. Roy, M. N. Science and Philosophy, p. 31, Calcutta : 1947.

man is inherently rational, how morality develops out of rationality, how in quest of freedom, man established society and state and various other institutions and how, if he is not to lose his significance, he must retain his supremacy over all his creations like society, state and all other institutions. That brought Roy to a consideration of practical social, political and economic problems. He had already developed the idea of organised democracy. In the period following R D P conference of December 1946 he came to the conclusion that in organised democracy there was no place for a political party.

The obvious inference was that R D P should be dissolved. Two summer camps were held, one in 1947 and the other in 1948, where the issue was quietly and dispassionately discussed. Those who had accepted the Twenty two Theses and participated in the discussions that preceded them, realised that the dissolution of the party was inherent in the Theses. Gradually opinion in the party veered round to the view that ' here was no place for a political party in Radical Humanism.'

Opinion having thus crystalised, the fourth and the last conference of the party was held in Calcutta from December 26 to 29th, 1948. The Sanskrit Scholar Laxmanshastri

Joshi, presided over it. It was largely attended by delegates from various parts of the country. A thesis drafted by Roy entitled, " Practice of New Humanism " was placed before the conference. Opinion was already overwhelmingly in favour of the ideas incorporated in the thesis. A few doubts which remained disappeared after the speeches of the President, Roy and others. The thesis was adopted and R D P decided to convert itself into Radical Humanist Movement. It died as a political party, but arose anew as a broad-based, socio-political, cultural movement.

Having dissolved the political party, Roy now turned his attention to the development of the wider and more broad based humanist movement. The movement was to aim at not merely political and economic changes but at more fundamental social and cultural changes. He had realised a long time back, the necessity and urgency of the Renaissance Movement. He was the one political leader who in the midst of the national struggle had felt the need of a renaissance and had braved public criticism and opposition for championing it. Renaissance was to be now the major plan of his new movement. He was in demand all over the country and had to undertake a good deal of travelling. Moreover, 13 Mohini Road became more busy than

ever with scholars, Indian and foreign, dropping in from time to time to discuss intricate questions of politics and philosophy.

In January 1949, Roy delivered a speech in Bombay on " Humanist Politics ". It gave in a systematic manner his views on the new politics on which he had embarked. It is important for an understanding of humanist politics. It began by stating that the politics " which has of late become a veritable chaos can be cleared away only by introducing the human element into public affairs or rather by giving the human individual a prominent place in political practice." Society, it stated, was the creation of man and " originally politics was a concern of human beings with common interests and purposes." As societies became larger and larger and the state became more powerful the problem that arose was : " how to carry an organised social existence without encroaching on the liberty of the individual". Democracy was developed as the solution of the problem, but as nations became large it became representative government with the people delegating their sovereignty to their representatives. In this system " the individual citizen had no more right than to go to the polling booth and throw a slip of paper into it once in three four or five years. In the period between elections, the sovereign people was

completely helpless, and had absolutely no means or possibility to control their representatives who are virtually all powerful." The representatives belonged to various political parties and struggle between aprties, for capture of power became a standing feature of democracy. The party that made " the most glittering promises had the greatest chance of obtaining the consent of the people." The result was that " democracy degenerated into demagogy " that " the most irresponsible demagogue came to be the most successful democrat." In the meanwhile democracy had to face two challenges one of communists and the other of fascists. The fascist challenge was defeated in the war but the communist challenge still retains its appeal.

The speech then proceeded : Confronted with this situation a growing number of thoughtful men have been thinking hard and searching for a new way of democratic practice. And curiously enough, it was discovered that living in different parts of the world, often not known to each other, often guided merely by the experience of their particular countries in which they were living, unaware of conditions elsewhere, many men throughout the world had been moving towards one and the same conclusion, and that conclusion is that, that unless man, the individual, is restored to his proper place, that is, to his position of primacy and supremacy, there does not seem to be any way out of the present crisis." This was what Humanism proposed to do. Humanism arose in Europe in the Middle Ages.

It receded to the background because it failed to explain man. Man remained some mysterious elementary undefinable category." With greater knowledge it was now possible to explain man. The humanist principle that " Man is the centre of things, that is the creator of everything in his world, can today be revived and substantiated, and thereby a new inspiration given for that type of political practice which appears to offer the only way out of the modern crisis, namely, a really effective, humanist, radical democracy."<sup>16</sup>

Recalling Plato's words that democracy is not possible without education, the speech pointed out how modern democrats neglected education knowing through experience that " so long as the electors remained backward, it becomes all the easier for the political parties to deceive them by promises." As the large masses remained ignorant and backward a class of elites arose and became the ruler negating, infact, democracy, the rule of the people. Humanism, however, asserts, that " every single human being is potentially capable of developing his creative powers, his intelligence, his discrimination as much as any other human being." The speech stated further, " Education for democracy does not consist in teaching just reading and writing, but in making the people conscious of

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16. Roy, M. N. Politics Power and Parties, p. 115. Calcutta, 1960.

their humanness, to make them conscious of their right to exist as human beings, in decency and dignity. Education means to help them, to think, to apply their reason. That is to say, the new humanist political practice must begin as a cultural movement. It must get out of the struggle for power of the political parties."<sup>17</sup>

" In a country like India, where the state may not have those advantages of other modern and highly militarised and organised states, the security of the established order is based on the blind faith and backwardness of the people. In the case of any attempt to overthrow the present government by armed force, you will find the vast bulk of the population not on the side of the revolution meant for them, but rallying around the government which for all they are told is something almost divine, combining the qualities of father and mother, saint and worshippers of saints,"<sup>18</sup> His conclusion, therefore, was that the humanist way is the only way that leads " in the direction where we want to go."

Roy then outlined as follows the political practice of Humanism : " Needless to say, a democracy cannot be educated from today to tomorrow. But a beginning can be made here and

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17. Ibid., p. 121.

18. Ibid., p. 123.

now. For example, if in the next elections there would be only two hundred people throughout the country ready to practise humanist politics, they could begin work in a dozen constituencies and there begin the task of awakening the urge for freedom in the individuals and raise the intellectual and cultural level of the people. These are after all not just high-sounding phrases, they express themselves concretely in a change of outlook and of their backward habits. When election time comes, we shall tell them, you may vote for any party you like, but before you vote, think; don't be carried away by election speeches; use your brains, examine the programmes and promises, and the record of the people who make them. Anybody may come and say, for instance, that he will build socialism when in power. Ask him what socialism will mean to you, and then think if he can do what he promises. We don't say that he is telling a lie, but we shall also talk with the people about socialism, and about the conditions in the country as they are, and what changes the people really want, and they will understand that no party with the best intentions can make of Indian society a socialist society, not in few years time, assuming that socialism is considered to be the highest ideal.



" In this way, at least a few members in each community will be able to examine election promises in a critical spirit. Half a dozen of them in a constituency will act as a powerful catalyst. They will infect others with their habit of thinking and critical discrimination, so that perhaps already in the next elections one or two per cent of the Voters will cast their vote intelligently and with a point of view of their own from which to judge the persons and programmes for whom their vote is canvassed. A few independent men who are not professional politicians may not make themselves felt immediately in the legislatures. But the foundation will be laid for a really democratic practice. If this work will be continued in the five years until the next elections, the electorate of that constituency will have become a small democracy.

" If we were to go on doing this in one constituency after another, it might take a hundred years. But it will not be so. Once the example is set and the spirit gets abroad, the momentum will grow and the movement will spread much faster than any body can imagine today. The humanist political approach is that by creating these small islands of democracy and freedom, the nucleus of a humanist democratic society will be created, the kind of society in which a Humanist would wish

to live. Example is better than precept, and by creating these small democratic islands, we are recreating society as a whole. Humanist democratic education will not only create a discriminating electorate but also teach people to live a co-operative life, to transform their local democratic republic. As the example spreads, these will be the organised basis of the society we want."<sup>19</sup>

He asserted in conclusion : " We are not discouraged by the long way ahead of us. Every day of our life, by acting as Humanists, we approximate our ideal. This approach to political practice opens a new outlook and perspective before us, which can give us fresh hope and a strong conviction. When that spirit grows in a sufficiently large number of people and they begin to function as a new catalytic element in society that society is bound to be affected by their action and their spirit, and sooner or later by their whole philosophy. Because that philosophy does not just speculate and preach but is practised by the people who are spreading it, and who are spreading it living it. It has become axiomatic that environment shapes men. But a Humanist will prove that men can also shape their environments."<sup>20</sup>

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19. Ibid., pp. 125, 126.

20. Ibid., p. 127.

This was the essence of all that Roy wrote and spoke on politics in the period. He wrote regularly for Independent India and for many other Journals. The name of Independent India was changed to The Radical Humanist in April 1949. After Independence there was no point in calling the journal Independent India. The new name Radical Humanist was more in keeping with the ideology it was to propagate. Two years later, that is in May 1951, it was shifted from Bombay to Calcutta. The journal was constantly in financial crisis though everybody including the Editor worked for it without any remuneration. In spite of its wide circulation it was not patronised by advertisers. That was the cause of its financial difficulties. The shift to Calcutta was made in order to reduce printing expenses.

After R D P conference in Calcutta, Roy was in Bombay in the later half of January. In Bombay he gave two talks on philosophy and practice of New Humanism. He asserted : " New Humanism says that the desire to be moral is inherent in man, and it is so because this desire results from man's innate rationality. New Humanism does not admit that certain men are inherently superior to other men; that some are gifted with the ability of acquiring knowledge and virtue, and others must always remain lowly and mean, in blissful ignorance, and

forever be guided by their fortunate betters, Since Humanism starts from the fundamental principle that every human being is essentially rational and therefore potentially moral, the corollary is that every man is capable of knowing, as well as of behaving morally, if he is given the opportunity of developing his personality."<sup>21</sup> Pointing out that every Radical Humanist must begin from himself, Roy expressed the hope : " If the masses are regarded as what they are, namely individual men and women, endowed with the same potentialities that I possess myself, then it w should be possible to make them think and feel just as I do, and react in the same rational and moral manner that I endeavour to attain for myself. Increase the number of people who will not only dream of a better society, but immediately apply themselves to the task of living a better society, and you will be creating it in our own very midst, from where it will spread by virtue of being better and more reasonable."<sup>22</sup>

A reference may be made here to Roy's article in Radical Humanism of Sept. 25, 1949 in which he wrote about R D P and its decision to convert itself into a movement. He wrote : The decision of the conference at Calcutta was a logical deduction from the philosophy of New Humanism formulated by

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21. Ibid., pp. 149, 150.

22. Ibid., p. 152.

the Radical Democrats two years earlier. As a result, the Radical Democratic Party had already been engaged in developing a comprehensive social movement. Having abjured the aim of power, it had placed itself outside the scramble for it the only sense in which politics seems to be understood in our times. " The Radical Democratic party had the tradition of freedom and rationality in its own ranks. That enabled the party to take such a decision. Throughout the period of its existence, it functioned as a school for the education of its members to develop into better human beings, and never as a collectivity with a transcendental significance, demanding the sacrifice of their individuality from its constituents."<sup>23</sup>

By this time, the constitution was adopted and the country was preparing for the first general election on the basis of adult franchise. It took place in February - March 1952. Roy was not oblivious of these political developments. In an article in Radical Humanism he had written in September 1949 : " By resolving to dissolve their party, the Radical Democrats did not propose to retire into reclusories. The resolution simply was no longer to participate in a pattern of political practice which has done more harm than good, has soiled the fair name of democracy. It was to initiate other forms of public activity."<sup>24</sup> In spite of his opposition to

23. Ibid., pp. 98,99.

24. Ibid., p. 94.

parliamentary democracy, he preferred it to dictatorship. He wrote in the same article : " In the transition period, parliamentary democracy, with all its manifest failure and inadequacies, will be obviously preferable to dictatorship. Civil liberties will have a greater chance of survival as long as several parties alternate in power or contend for power, than under one party rule."<sup>25</sup> He did not advise Radicals to keep away from elections.<sup>1</sup> The article stated : " For these realistic considerations, Radical Democrats should have no objection to supporting parties which would challenge the system of one - party rule and the totalitarian claim of the Congress. This attitude will be consistent with the rejection of party politics and scramble for power, because of the difference between voting and soliciting votes. Radicals should support, and ask others also to support the most promising opposition party, not with the illusion that the situation would materially change if it replaced the Congress in power, but only to shake the foundation of one party rule, and provided that the opposition candidates are better even of proved integrity."<sup>26</sup> Two years later, on the eve of the general election, Roy issued a statement pleading for a disinterested opposition and the return of at least a few candidates not associated with any party and not desiring to occupy any office.<sup>27</sup>

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25. Ibid., p. 96.

26. Ibid., p. 96.

27. Radical Humanist ( Journal) Sept. 16, 1951.

Roy was not optimistic about the future of democracy in the country. In a lecture in Guntur (Andhra) early in 1950 he said " A democratic Constitution can be worked in an atmosphere where the democratic way of life is appreciated. A conscious will to freedom, the desire to take destiny in our own hands, a sense of responsibility and ability to judge what is good and what is wrong, and to examine critically the promises and programmes put before the people by parties and politicians these are the pre-conditions for a successful democracy. If we take a realistic view of the situation in our country, then we must regretfully come to the conclusion that, whatever be the letter and the spirit of our new constitution, the prevailing atmosphere is not conducive to a democratic society." <sup>28</sup>

Roy further said " Therefore, whoever is concerned with the future of democracy in India, should give up the comfortable habit of blaming others. They should apply themselves to the tasks of creating conditions under which democracy is possible. In the meantime, perhaps for another few years demagogy will vitiate political practice. The scramble for power will continue, breeding corruption and inefficiency. That cannot be helped until the foundation of democracy is laid. And that

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28. Ibid., p. 191.

means to promote in the people the feeling that they can be the masters of their destiny. Those who believe that democracy is the best form of government must apply themselves to the fundamental task of bringing about a revolution in the mentality of the people."<sup>29</sup> Roy devoted himself to the fundamental task of awakening the critical faculty of the people.

In the course of a speech in February 1949 Roy had drawn attention to the "prevailing psychological tendency of seeking security in the mass." He said on that occasion "Helplessness creates in individuals the tendency of identifying themselves with others equally helpless, of merging themselves in some collectivity, be it called nation or class, in which the helpless individual constituents acquire an almost mystic power merely by losing themselves into a mass. Collectivism offers security against the helplessness to which the individual is condemned under the system of formal parliamentary democracy."<sup>30</sup> Psychologists and sociologists described that mass mentality, he said, as fear of freedom or flight from freedom. It could be counteracted, Roy asserted, by awakening man's faith in himself and by decentralizing power. His scheme of organised democracy based on people's committees "endowed with specific constitutional rights" was evolved with that twin objects in view.

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29. Ibid., p. 193.

30. Ibid., p. 56.



He said " Instead of atomised, helpless individuals enjoying an illusory sovereignty, groups of individual citizens will be discussing and planning the affairs of their localities in the framework of similar neighbouring localities, together constituting the country for whose administration they will feel themselves responsible. A growing network of such organised local democracies will be the instruments through which the electorate can assert its influence from day to day, and ultimately exercise a standing control over the state as a whole. The state will not then be able to become an all powerful Leviathan, because state power will be decent-ralised, being largely vested in the local republics.<sup>31</sup> With organised democracy, he stated, people can stand on their own legs and will not need political parties to represent them in the administration of the state. Later in the year Roy delivered several speeches on " Politics without power."

Early in 1952 the country went through the first general election under the new constitution and also the first on the basis of adult franchise. Congress put up the largest number of candidates. There were many other parties in field and there was also a large number of independents. The emergence of independents was regarded as disintegration of Congress and

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31. Ibid., pp. 60, 61.

lack of confidence in parties. Roy favoured the contesting of elections by independents. "As the first to suggest the idea of putting up independent candidates to challenge party rule," he suggested through an article in Radical Humanist the following as the pledge to be taken by independent candidates. "If elected I shall always remain directly accountable to my constituents, I shall not join any party which will stand between me and those who have elected me. Ordinarily I shall act according to my honest and independent judgement. In the case of far-reaching issues, I shall seek the advice and direction of my constituents, and votes accordingly in the Parliament. I unreservedly acknowledge the sovereignty of my constituents to demand my resignation whenever a majority of them will think that I am not representing them faithfully. At the same time ... I reserve the right to disagree with the desire of my constituents on any particular issue; but in that case, I pledge myself to resign so that the constituency may elect a substitute who would act according to its desire and direction."<sup>32</sup> Though the number of persons contesting elections as independents was large in the case of Lok Sabha the number was over five hundred and they polled over 15 percent votes - they were not of the type visualised by Roy, and many independent

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32. Radical Humanist ( Journal ) Jan. 6, 1952.

candidates joined congress or other political parties after winning the election.

Roy said " The present regrettable position has been created by the party system which undermines the authority of Parliament." The parties stand between the people and their elected representatives. The latter are not responsible to their constituents, they are subject to the party whip which can be defied only at the risk of expulsion from the party. It is obvious that loyalty to the constituents and loyalty to the party cannot always be reconciled. Party membership, therefore, is inconsistent with democratic responsibility.

In June 1952 Roy went to Mussoorie, the hill station near Dehra Dun, for rest and recuperation. Ordinarily June is not a pleasant month in Dehra Dun, that year it was particularly humid and unpleasant. Having put in a good of literary and intellectual work, Roy and Ellen needed little rest and holiday. A friend secured for them a small cottage in Mussoorie. It was therefore decided to spend a month in that place. The cottage, a little away from the town, gave a nice view of the mountains, Roy and Ellen liked the place and were happy at the little holiday that they were enjoying after a number of years. Every morning they used to go out after breakfast for a short walk. They preferred for their walks winding hill tracks on the

slopes of the mountain to paved roads of the town.

On June 11, Roy and Ellen were out as usual for their morning walk. After walking a couple of miles, they were on their way back to the cottage, Roy was a few paces ahead and Ellen was following him. And then he stumbled against something and fell down, and rolled down the hill some fifty feet. A rock stopped his rolling, otherwise he would have rolled into a steep valley. In a minute Ellen realised what had happened and raised a cry for help. She rushed down the hill, Roy was in a heap and had sustained many injuries. In a few minutes a number of labourers from nearby cottages gathered in response to Ellen's cries. They prepared a make shift doli; put Roy on it and transported him to his hut. Ellen immediately summoned doctors. One of them was a heart specialist from Calcutta, Sunil Bose living in a nearby cottage. He and many others gave Roy the best possible medical treatment. But it was months before Roy recovered and the recovery at its best was only partial. The accidental fall on June 11 proved to be the beginning of the end.

The injuries sustained in the fall were mainly external, to ribs, head, face, hands and legs. They were treated by experts and in a few weeks Roy was moved back to Dehra Dun. There were ups and downs in his condition but it

appeared at that time that he would be soon out of bed. On August 25, however, there was a serious set-back. Roy suffered on that day an attack of cerebral thrombosis resulting in a partial paralysis of his right side. But as a result of the expert medical treatment that he received and the tender care showered on him by Ellen and others, Roy began to recover in the latter part of November. Gradually he recovered the movements of all his limbs and early in the next year he was able to move about in the house and the garden which surrounded it. Very soon he resumed his usual activities particularly of reading and writing.

Roy's first contribution to Radical Humanist after his recovery, was a new year message. In the course of the message he stated " However, I am back to this life, and shall be with you personally again before very long. Spiritually, I have always been Death has no terror for me. Indeed, in these days of despair, it might be a liberation for those who are feeling frustrated by difficulties. But the idea that I might not again be able to meet you all was painful. Although I am on the road to recovery, it will be yet some time before I shall be able to move about freely, and do sustained work."<sup>33</sup>

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33. Radical Humanist ( Journal) Jan. 11, 1953.

A few days later he dictated an article which appeared in *Radical Humanist* under the title " Our Creed ". It was a restatement of the fundamental principles of New Humanism."<sup>34</sup>

The philosophy of New Humanism was further elaborated. After tracing its roots in history and nature, Roy concluded " New Humanism is a social philosophy, but as such, it is deduced from a general philosophy of nature, including the world of matter and the world of mind." Its metaphysics is physical realist, and its cosmology is mechanistic. Conceptual thought and sense perceptions are harmonised in its epistemology. It merges psychology into physiology, and relates the latter to physics through chemistry. It bases ethics on rationalism, and traces the roots of reason in the orderliness of nature and harmony of the physical universe. By tracing will and reason, emotion and intelligence to their common biological origin, New Humanism reconciles the romantic doctrine of revolution, that man makes history with the rationalist notion of orderly social progress."<sup>35</sup> Emphasis is again laid on the fact that " man is the maker of his world" which he can be only as " a thinking being ", that he can be a thinking being only as an individual

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34. *Radical Humanist* ( Journal ) Feb. 1, 1953.

35. Roy M. N. *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*, Vol. II p. 309. Calcutta : 1955.

and that " brain is the instrument of thought " which again can be owned only by an individual and not by a collectivity. Stating that " New Humanism advocates a social reconstruction of the world as a commonwealth and fraternity of free men, by the co-operative endeavour of spiritually emancipated moral man ", Roy expressed the hope that " boundaries of national states - capitalist, fascist, socialist, communist, or of any other kind will gradually disappear under the impact of the twentieth century Renaissance of Man."<sup>36</sup>

By May, there was such a remarkable improvement in Roy's condition that plans were made for his visit to the United states for medical treatment as well as for speaking engagements. Some American Universities and other organisations had invited him to deliver lectures on a variety of subjects. But the trip could not take place. On August 15, when a few intimate friends from the city, Delhi and Bombay had gathered together to discuss about the visit and to celebrate Ellen's birth day, all of a sudden, Roy got his second attack of cerebral thrombosis. The left side was paralysed on this occasion. Dr. Durga Prasad was immediately summoned and he began his treatment. There were many ups and downs. The first crisis came on August 24. But Roy survived it. There after there was some improvement. It continued for some weeks and again there was a set back. In December he was again better.

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36. Ibid., p. 310.

In the new year there was a progressive deterioration in Roy's condition. The end came on January 25, ten minutes before mid-night and the dawn of the Republic Day of January 26. Earlier in the day there was a heart attack which proved fatal.

The news of Roy's death grieved people all over the country. Messages of sympathy poured into 13 Mohini Road. Prominent amongst them were President Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Nehru, Governor of Bengal. H. C. Mookherjee and Public figures like N. M. Joshi, Jayaprakash Narayan, S. M. Joshi and many others. There were messages from Pakistan, England, U.S.A. Canada, France and Holland. Many condolence meetings were held throughout the country.

Thus came to an end on that night on January 25, 1954 a very eventful life which began in 1887 in an obscure village in Bengal. There are few people in India and may be in the whole world who had as eventful a life as that of Roy. As a boy in his teens he joined the ranks of militant nationalists and through his exploits and organisational ability rose to a position high enough to be sent as a representative to negotiate an arms deal with the authorities of the German military command. The search for arms proved futile, but it took him to



the New World and to a new world of ideas and ideals. A militant nationalist turned into a dedicated communist. He rose high in the communist hierarchy, but did not hesitate to leave those high positions when he disagreed with the policies that were laid down. He returned to India, sixteen years after his departure in search of arms, a lone fighter for freedom with a concrete programme of national revolution. He had to face the opposition of the British government, Indian communists and orthodox nationalists. In spite of that opposition, he built up a sizable political party, but dissolved it when in the course of his search for truth he came to the conclusion that political parties obstructed the growth of democracy.

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