

POLITICAL THOUGHTS OF M.N. ROY'S AND ITS RELEVANCE IN MODERN TIMES

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ABSTRACT

M.N Roy, one of the eminent thinkers of modern India, has propounded a philosophy, which is distinct from other traditional schools of Indian thought. This research paper focuses on M N Roy's thoughts on his political philosophy, Radical humanism, and democracy. Western political ideologies, capitalism, and socialism unfit to the Indian context. Therefore, there is necessary to think of an alternative political system. The paper delves into Roy's views on anti-colonialism and nationalism, highlighting his advocacy for national liberation and his efforts to incorporate anti-colonial sentiments into his revolutionary ideology. Roy's interpretation of Marxism is explored in detail, with a focus on his perspective on class struggle, the role of the working class, and the adaptation of Marxist principles to the Indian context. His vision of internationalism and anti-imperialism is also discussed, revealing his endeavours to foster global solidarity among oppressed nations and his involvement in international communist movements. The research paper evaluates critiques and challenges posed to Roy's political thought and examines his enduring legacy on Indian and global revolutionary movements. By tracing the trajectory of Roy's ideas, this study underscores their continued relevance in contemporary political discourse and acknowledges his lasting impact on revolutionary theory and practice. Through an extensive analysis of M.N. Roy's writings, historical records, and scholarly works, this research paper provides a comprehensive understanding of his revolutionary perspective, shedding light on his dynamic contributions to the evolution of political thought and his role in shaping revolutionary movements on both national and international scales.

Keywords: Revolutionary, Democracy, Freedom, Morality, Rationality

INTRODUCTION

The significance of M.N. Roy's political thought lies not only in its historical context but also in its enduring impact. This research paper embarks on an exploration of M.N. Roy's political thought through a revolutionary lens. It delves into the contours of his ideas, aiming to unearth the motivations, inspirations, and aspirations that underpinned his intellectual journey. By closely examining his stance

on anti-colonialism, nationalism, Marxism, revolutionary strategies, internationalism, and more, this paper seeks to illuminate the multidimensional nature of Roy's revolutionary perspective. M. N. Roy was one of the most fascinating, though highly controversial modern Indian thinkers on politics and philosophy. In the evolution of his ideas, he shifted his position from a nationalist revolutionary to an ardent Marxist and from a Marxist to a radical humanist. Roy attempted to give a scientific

exposition of philosophy and distinguished it from religion. He said that no philosophical advancement is possible in the presence of religious beliefs and theological dogmas. He felt the need of a new and truly revolutionary social and political philosophy, which would infuse a fresh and re-invigorating ethical outlook, and realized the real nature of man. The philosophy of Radical Humanism, which Roy developed, was an effort in this direction. The present article endeavors to analyze his philosophy of Radical Humanism and its relevance in the present day. Right from the beginning till present, humanism as a philosophical movement concentrates on man and his power. The principles of humanism are such as: that man, by nature is good and capable of indefinite advances towards perfection; that there cannot exist, any insuperable barrier to the future progress of human civilization, human efforts can eliminate all barrier of progress; that if full liberty, is granted to the individual, he will use it for the betterment of the society as a whole. M. N. Roy preached a new approach to humanistic thought which is suitable particularly for man in any society. He realizes a number of problems and defects in prevailing humanism and establishes a new brand of humanism. His movement for a humanist revival, starting from the attempt to explain what is human nature. Manhood is the beginning of human existence, and man is an end in himself. To Roy, humanism cannot be based on, the belief that there is something higher than man. Roy claims that his new Humanism is integral Humanism, distinguished from older forms of Humanism, which were more poetic and romantic, by being strictly based on scientific knowledge of man and human nature. He adopts scientific approach to understanding human nature.

OBJECTIVES

- To Analyze Ideological Influences: Explore the ideological influences that shaped M.N. Roy's political thought, including Marxism, socialism, anarchism, and anti-imperialism, and their integration into his unique revolutionary framework.

- To Explore Internationalism and Anti-Imperialism: Examine Roy's global perspective on revolutionary struggles and his efforts to foster international solidarity among oppressed nations, including his involvement in international communist movements.
- To Examine the Socio-Political Context: Investigate the socio-political conditions during M.N. Roy's lifetime, including British colonial rule in India and the global revolutionary climate, to understand how these factors shaped Roy's revolutionary perspective.
- To Understand Anti-Colonialism and Nationalism: Study Roy's views on British colonialism in India and his advocacy for national liberation, and analyze how he incorporated anti-colonialism into his revolutionary ideology.
- To Examine Marxist Concepts: Analyze Roy's interpretation of Marxism, focusing on his understanding of class struggle, proletarian revolution, and his adaptation of Marxist concepts to the Indian context.

METHODOLOGY

He advocates physical realism. The exploration of M.N. Roy's political thought from a revolutionary perspective necessitates a rigorous and multidisciplinary approach that combines historical analysis, textual examination, and critical interpretation. This research paper employs a methodology that draws from the realms of history, political theory, and comparative analysis to unravel the nuances of Roy's revolutionary ideas and their implications.

ROY'S NEW HUMANISM

Roy thought that philosophy of history often ignores the factors of human life and disregards moral problems which can unreliably guide for constructing social action. Roy's Humanism proclaims a new

philosophy of history which would be a very comprehensive in a nature and would show civilized mankind as the man way out of crisis, Roy did not like to agree with several things in Marxism specially questions of class leadership for example proletarian and dictatorship or class domination. His development in materialism is the post Marxian specially Physics and Biology. The new humanism of Roy tries to bring morality in social order or in a social revolution because without morality social revolution is meaningless and futile to the community. Roy regarded Marx as Humanist also thought that Marxist socialist society was not to be created by men rather it was the outcome of the forces of production of historical developments as a matter of fact it gives birth to socialist a new order in the form of new humanism. According to Roy, Marxist socialist society was not to be created by men; rather it was the outcome of forces of production of historical development. As a matter of fact, it gives birth to the socialist new order in the form of new humanism.

FREEDOM AND MORALITY

The archetype of freedom is nothing but the struggle for existence that is a universal in the worldly of living being. Human being in the pursuits of freedom also attains add to his knowledge. They want to liberate himself from the constraints of nature for continuing liberation continually new knowledge, that is the supporting mechanism of human life on the earth. His concept of morality is unique. Roy did not like the term materialism mainly materialism sometimes implies negation of morality. Materialist are not clear about moral postulate. M.N Roy avoids this and wanted to develop in physics to concept of humanism, that he usually used the term physical realism in place of materialism. He was most specific about the equation of morality. He argued that morality is not a divine faculty. God has nothing to do with morality even society does not guaranty morality because rationality is a natural development and rationality create society, but in according to Marxism society is molding everything.

Therefore, rationality is the essential faculty of human being.

SOVEREIGNTY OF INDIVIDUAL

According to Roy, Marxist humanism is called radical because it is based on moral appeal. Marx as a humanist stood for the freedom individual. Marx talks of socialism as a 'Kingdom of freedom' where men will be regarded as the master of social environments. In new humanism which will work under socialism, human reason will overcome irrational forces. As a rational being, here man will be in charge of his own destiny. Roy conceived Marxist humanism as the model of the builders of the future human life best on human legacy. According to Roy Individual is prior to any system social or any collective, Roy's position is not religious. Roy successfully establish this core of humanism by synthesizing the physicists postulate of the world as a causally determined and law-governed system and biological theory of the academic evolution of life culminating in the unique powers of Homo-sapiens.

MATERIALISM

Roy thought that materialism is not the cult of "eat drink and marry". It maintains that the origin of everything that really exist is matter, there doesn't exit anything but matter, and all other living or nonliving things are transformations of matter and this kind of transformations are govern necessarily by laws of inherent in nature. The fact of matter as classically conceived is not the ultimate physical reality doesn't prove maintains Roy, that ultimate reality as known today is immaterial, mental or spiritual.

RATIONALITY

Man is essentially a rational being. His basic urge is not to be believed but to question to know." Roy traces back to the origin of human rationality to the cosmos or the law govern universe that is why Roy

clearly defines Human Rationality of the individual as the ‘microcosmic echo of the macrocosm’. The reason in man is an echo of the harmony of the universe. Human being become a natural has a product of nature. There is nothing mystic about the rationality of human being. It is only the biological heritage or echo of the harmony in the universe.

IMPACT ON ROY'S REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

The confluence of British colonial rule and the global revolutionary climate shaped M.N. Roy's revolutionary perspective in several ways:

- Nationalism and Internationalism: The global revolutionary fervor led Roy to emphasize the need for solidarity among oppressed nations and to advocate for an internationalist approach to revolution.
- Anti-Colonialism: The oppressive nature of colonial rule intensified Roy's commitment to anti-colonial struggle, pushing him to envision a liberated India free from foreign domination.
- Marxist Influence: Roy's exposure to Marxist ideas, coupled with the success of the Russian Revolution, encouraged him to see class struggle and proletarian revolution as means to transform both Indian society and the global order.
- Tactics and Strategies: The oppressive colonial environment influenced Roy's consideration of tactical approaches, including the role of armed struggle and the formation of alliances to achieve revolutionary goals. In conclusion, the socio-political conditions of British colonial rule in India and the global revolutionary climate provided the crucible within which M.N. Roy's revolutionary perspective was forged. His exposure to both local struggles for self-determination and the wider context of global anti-imperialist and socialist movements profoundly impacted

his ideological trajectory and his vision for a radically transformed world.

M.N. ROY'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

Roy's political thought was a product of his engagement with a diverse range of ideological influences, which he skilfully synthesized into a unique revolutionary framework. His exposure to Marxism, socialism, anarchism, and anti-imperialism played a crucial role in shaping his perspective, allowing him to craft an innovative vision for societal transformation.

- Socialism: Roy's engagement with socialist ideas, particularly those espoused by figures like George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells, further enriched his political thought. Socialism's emphasis on collective ownership, social welfare, and the eradication of economic disparities resonated with Roy's vision for a just society. His exposure to socialist principles influenced his advocacy for socio-economic reforms and a reimagined structure of governance that centered on the welfare of the working class.
- Marxism: Roy's encounter with Marxism was instrumental in shaping his understanding of class struggle and historical materialism. He was influenced by the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, which provided him with a theoretical foundation to critique capitalism's inherent inequalities. Marxism offered Roy a lens through which he could analyze the exploitative nature of colonial rule and envision a proletarian revolution as a means to dismantle the capitalist system and establish a more equitable society.
- Anarchism: Anarchist ideas also left an imprint on Roy's revolutionary perspective. While not a strict adherent of anarchism, he appreciated its emphasis on individual freedom and opposition to authoritarianism. Roy drew from anarchist

principles when envisioning a future society that embraced voluntary cooperation and decentralized power structures. This influence can be seen in his promotion of participatory democracy and rejection of oppressive state control.

- **Anti-Imperialism:** Roy's exposure to anti-imperialist sentiments, fueled by India's subjugation under British colonial rule, was a central pillar of his political thought. He recognized that the struggle against imperialism was intertwined with broader global efforts to challenge capitalist exploitation. Roy's anti-imperialist stance propelled him to advocate for the emancipation of oppressed nations and the establishment of international solidarity among revolutionary movements.
- **Integration into Roy's Revolutionary Framework:** M.N. Roy's genius lay in his ability to integrate these ideological strands into a cohesive revolutionary framework that resonated with the Indian context. He synthesized Marxist concepts of class struggle with anti-imperialist sentiments, recognizing that colonial oppression was fundamentally linked to capitalist exploitation. Roy's vision for revolution combined the ideals of socialism, which sought to address economic inequalities, with an awareness of the need for anti-colonial struggle. Moreover, his willingness to adapt and evolve his ideas as circumstances changed allowed him to navigate complex political terrain. Roy's revolutionary framework was pragmatic, encompassing tactics such as mass mobilization, united fronts, and even armed struggle when necessary. His commitment to both nationalism and internationalism underscored his belief that local struggles were part of a broader global movement against exploitation. In conclusion, M.N. Roy's political thought was a mosaic of Marxism, socialism, anarchism, and anti-imperialism. By synthesizing these diverse

influences, he constructed a revolutionary framework that addressed the complexities of colonial India and the broader global struggle for justice. Roy's unique integration of these ideologies demonstrates his intellectual depth and his ability to forge a path toward societal transformation that was both relevant and visionary.

ETHICAL THEORIES

Roy implies that man is a creature, is determined by nature. And nature, Roy argues, is a law-governed causal system. Further, this law-governed system is a moral order. Roy states this clearly, —The universe is a moral order governed by laws inherent in itself, Man grows out of that background. || Since man as a part of nature, he is also determined therefore, he is rational and consequentially moral. Man according to Roy is innately and constitutively rational and therefore, moral. Reason which is causality is also morality. He writes -All ethical values are determined by the nature and are derived from the biological heritage of man. || Roy holds that ethical values are determined by nature because the psyche is a daughter of the mother earth. Having argued that rationality is morality, and that is an ontological fact. Roy believes, he has evolved a correct moral theory. For he says-Moral values are placed on a firm foundation when they are referred back to the innate rationality of man. They need no other sanction of conscience which is not the voice of God, but result from rationality. The discovery of the physical basis of reason and rationalist secular sanction of morality free humanism from the mystic connotations traditionally associated with it.|| Roy perceived no distinction between morality and ontological reality.

PARTY-LESS POLITICS

Roy was the first political scientist in India who conceived and developed the idea that the party system is inimical to the maintenance of a genuine democracy, if by democracy, it is meant, a rule of the

people and by the people and, not merely a rule for the people.¹³ M.N. Roy developed the theory of party-less politics as the emergence of political parties in the working of democracy has brought in its wake all the evils of party politics. The main drawback of the party system is that it is based on the delegation of power by the people to party candidates who after their election remain responsible only to their respective parties instead of their voters. Under the party system, the people lose their power completely and remain powerless till the next election takes place. According to Roy, if democracy consists of the widest diffusion of power, the party system functions in just the opposite direction by concentrating power in a few hands, if not in hands of a single leader. Roy maintained that under the circumstances associated with the party system, politicians cannot appeal to the intelligence judgment of the people. On the contrary, false and imaginary issues are raised, passions incited, mass hysteria created. Whichever party possesses skill in election manoeuvres and has the largest party machine and best organs of propaganda, has the greatest chance of capturing power. It is the necessity of the party system to confuse, deceive and mislead the sovereign people. These practices being palpably immoral, party politics cannot be purified. In the words of Roy, party politics is not only unnecessary for a democracy but is actually antithetical to it, party politics has become a terrain in which decent men and women fear to lead. According to Roy "a constitution structure based on an even distribution of power alone can purify politics and such a system is said to be really democratic". In the place of the political parties, M.N. Roy proposed to place the professional groups. These experts will help for forming opinion for good government in a democracy and the political parties can be easily eliminated.

His criticism of party system, has also been fully justified in context of contemporary Indian politics. He described political parties as antithetical to the preservation and development of a genuine democracy. Soon after independence, when the Indian National Congress came into power, the

limited amount of internal democracy which existed in the party disappeared. Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader of the ruling Congress party, became virtually the absolute ruler of the country. Some internal elections in the Indian National Congress used to take place at the beginning, but in the course of time, they disappeared. Centralisation of power reached to its climax during the regime of Indira Gandhi. No internal elections took place in the Congress for many years, including the years after the supreme power passed from the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty into other hands. It has also proved to be true regarding other political parties. Thus, the first objection of Roy that the party system would result in concentration of power and virtual negation of democracy, is borne out by practical experience. Roy's warning that party politics would bring about a divorce between morality and political practice has been borne out even more vividly and in a frightening form. For meeting the mounting expenses of periodic elections, the whole political administration of the country has reached a level of corruption which is truly alarming. An unholy alliance has also developed between politicians, the local administration and the anti-social elements and downright criminals. This criminalization of politics is not confined to a few parties, but has infected even those parties which were known to have been firmly based on political principles. Further, due to political parties, India has reached a stage when a genuine apprehension has arisen those communal animosities, particularly between Hindus and Muslims, would be fomented for political gains to such an extent that Indian democracy itself, may be replaced by an indigenous variety of fascism. His idea to that primacy should be given to the development of agricultural and small-scale industries, and that the large-scale industry will develop on the basis of the increased demand generated by the increased income of those engaged in agriculture and small undertakings, is borne out in both theory and practice. A number of economists in India accept the type of development which Roy had visualized, as the only way in which employment can be increased and mass poverty be reduced. The phenomenal economic growth which is taking place

in China at present is based on the type of development which Roy had visualized. In Roy's opinion, cultural transformation must precede a social revolution otherwise any revolution brought about by a political party in a culturally backward society would result in the establishment of an authoritarian state. In the post-independence period, this has been proved true in India. During the period, all party leaders who have been Prime Minister of India, including Jawaharlal Nehru who had an uninterrupted regime of 17 years, and Indira Gandhi were socialists by profession. There are several reasons why these leaders could not achieve required progress in the direction of democratic socialism.²⁸ Firstly, they themselves constituted the main vested interest in the country, the liquidation of which was necessary if democracy was to be realised by a radical decentralization of power. Second, they were actively engaged in the inter-party struggle for power, with the result that their political practice was at variance with their professed principles. Lastly, exploitative economic structure required for their removal a strong popular initiative, which neither the ruling party nor any of the opposition parties could possibly generate.

Therefore, socio-political transformation in society can be brought about from below by the initiative of the people at the local level, striving for freedom and not revolution imposed from above, by a political party which succeeds in capturing state power. The state legislature cannot solve all the problems. As proved in India, that in spite of large scale legislation to curb corruption, crime, dowry system, crime against women, infanticide, foeticide have increased because of lack of cultural awareness in the masses.

CONCLUSION

M.N. Roy's contributions stand as a testament to the enduring power of ideas that transcend time and borders. This exploration of M.N. Roy's political thought from a revolutionary perspective has uncovered a wealth of insights that illuminate his dynamic vision for societal transformation. Roy's

purpose is to bring back reason primarily to provide a solution to crisis which he maintains confronting the world. Reason according to Roy is a biological function in a man or an ontological fact of nature; because man is a natural being he also rational subsequently. Roy deduces that man is a moral because he is rational. Roy attempts to solve the moral problems through reason and says that which is rational is moral and his search for rationalistic humanist ethics based upon materialism and questions of morality emerges as an answer to man's quest for social harmony and beneficial social accommodation. As the pages of this exploration turn, the resonance of Roy's ideas with contemporary struggles becomes evident. His call to bridge the gap between nationalism and internationalism, his advocacy for global solidarity, and his emphasis on equitable transformation remain relevant in a world grappling with inequality, environmental crises, and ongoing quests for justice. In conclusion, M.N. Roy's political thought leaves an indelible mark on the landscape of revolutionary theory. His legacy is one of dynamic synthesis, unwavering commitment, and a vision that extended far beyond his lifetime. As we reflect on his contributions, we are reminded that the torch of revolutionary thought continues to burn brightly, inspiring generations to challenge oppression, seek justice, and envision a transformed world. M.N. Roy's revolutionary perspective remains an enduring beacon, illuminating the path toward a more equitable and just future.

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