

M. N. ROY (1887-1954)

M.N. Roy was born in Bengal in 1887. He has unique distinction of having worked with Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. Like Aurobindo Ghosh, he began his political life as a **militant nationalist**. Roy thinking passes through three phases. In the first phase, which lasted up to 1919, he was a **nationalist and revolutionary**. In the second phase, Roy **became communist** and in the last and the final phase, he emerged as **radical humanist**.

Nationalist

Colonial government is exploitative. Befitting reply is needed against the British government. M.N. Roy wanted to uproot British government through **violence**. Irish revolutionaries were fighting violently against the British government. He believes in politics of **bomb and pistol**.

In the first stage of his life, he was a revolutionary and became a member of organization named 'Yugantar'. He was accused of dacoity in Calcutta for which he was jailed. Since he was influenced by revolutionary thinking he was opposed to Indian National Congress and its **peaceful constitutional** means of struggle. M.N. Roy was a nationalist and revolutionary during his first stage of his thinking.

Ardent Marxist

During his second stage he became a Marxist. In his work '**Indian problems and its solutions 1923**' he called Congress a **bourgeois party** with bourgeois leaders like Nehru. His inclination towards Communism began after visiting Moscow in 1920 to attend second Congress of Communist International.

1. He accepted all Marxist ideas and theories like **historical materialism**, dialectical **materialism**, theory of **surplus value and class struggle**. Moreover, he also accepted **Bolshevik method** of revolution, which was propounded by Lenin. Lenin said that Communist Party is the vanguard of the revolution. Therefore, method of revolution should be adopted same for each and every country. **M. N. Roy is a founder of communist party** in India.
2. M.N. Roy is a first thinker who undertook **class analysis** of Indian society. He believed in inevitability of **class struggle**. He said that, bringing about communist revolution is the responsibility of **communist party of India**, which represent the proletariat class.
3. Communism can be achieved only through **Bolshevism revolution**. He argued that failure of non-cooperation movement was hesitant approach of Congress towards revolutionary means of struggle.

He believed that there are two exploitative powers (a) **internal exploitative**: power congress (b) **external exploitative power** - (British rule) and accused congress of representing bourgeois class working in close communion with British government.

He never accepted any autonomous and specific strategy of revolution for any particular nation. For him Bolshevik revolution only method to bring about the communist revolution. In his work '**The future of mass movement**' he expressed his desire for mass movement but he wanted **national movement** to be converted into **class struggle**.

According to M. N. Roy Congress and Swarajist leaders like Moti Lal Nehru represented feudalistic class they antagonistic to interest of proletariat class which includes workers, peasants etc.

However, M.N. Roy's influence started fading when Bengal Krishan Party leader Saumendra Nath Tagore in his speech said that communist revolution cannot be brought to India because there are only few communist in India, insufficient to mobilize mass movement. In 1929, he was expelled from communist international and returned to India in 1930. Then he was tried in Kanpur conspiracy case and imprisoned for six years.

National and Colonial Question

Lenin propounded strategy for revolution across the world. He believes that revolution in the capitalist nation depends upon revolution in the colonial nations. He divided world in three groups:

- (a) Western Europe and United State
- (b) Eastern Europe
- (c) Semi Colonies and Colonies

Lenin said that communist revolution is suspended in the capitalist nation due to their exploitation in the colonial nations. Capitalist nation are exploiting the resources of **Africa**. Therefore, proletariats of the Capitalist Nation are not marginalized. Instead, proletariats in the Capitalist Nation are receiving some profit due to exploitation of colonies. This proves that revolution in the **Capitalist Nation is link with revolution** in the colonial countries.

Lenin says that democratic and bourgeoisie forces are fighting against capitalist forces in India. It is important to be noted that **Congress is the bourgeoisie force** in India described by Lenin. He supported abroad base alliance between bourgeoisie and **Communist Party**. Lenin recognize the importance of Congress as a bourgeoisie force against the capitalist forces. This alliance will be transitional said by Lenin. However **M.N. Roy** was not agreed with the idea of Lenin. M.N. Roy says that Indian Society now becomes capitalist since it is linked with the capitalist forces. Economically and financially **India becomes capitalist**. The proletariats are strong enough to bring about revolution in India. He said that Congress is reactionary and conservative therefore **alliance** with congress is not feasible. Proletariats are powerful to bring about communist revolution India. Lenin said that Gandhi is inspirer and leader of **mass movement** but M.N. Roy said that Gandhi is cultural and religious revivalist. **Gandhi** is popular due to the backwardness of people of India.

For communist revolution in India, Lenin argued that **alliance between Communist Party** and Congress in needed. Communist should lead the revolution. Alliances is essential because communist and Congress is fighting a common enemy, that is British government. After uprooting the British colonialism, communist shall snatch the power from the Congress. Thus alliance is traditional and technical. Roy did **not accept** the strategy of alliance with Congress.

Marxist Analysis of society

M.N. Roy is the first thinker, who analyzes Indian Society from the Marxist perspective. He said that Indian Society is divided in the following classes:

- a. Landed Aristocracy
-

- b. Bourgeois and Intellectual
- c. Petty peasantry
- d. Working class and landless peasants

Radical Humanism

In his essay 'New **Humanism, reason romanticism and revolution**,' Roy gave his thought about, 'New Humanism' or 'radical humanism.' Scientific or radical humanism owes its origin to renaissance. It is radical because rejection of Marxism. Radical humanism also known as a new humanism because it is different from liberalism and the Vedantic Philosophy. Radical humanism is also considered as a scientific integral humanism. Since Roy believes in scientific temperament and want to change society through scientific tools. His new humanism is against the following variety of ideologies.

M.N. Roy being Marxist said that Indian society is divided into opposite class. British Government represents the interest of big with **bourgeois**. Congress was smaller bourgeois. Congress does not represent workers and peasant. Roy did not accepted caste, religion as a factor of understanding the society. Class based analysis depends on economic factors. Class which represented ownership of means of production is bourgeois. Workers, peasants comprised of proletariat class. Relation between class is antagonistic to each other. Class based analysis is materialistic analysis of society. Without revolution class conflict can be not abolished.

1. Rejection of Marxism

In third phase he criticizes Marxist thought. He criticized theoretical basis of Marxism. Which believes in Economic Determinism? He said that principle of 'economic determination' and 'surplus value' is meaningless. He pointed out that means of production cannot determine all forms of human consciousness because they are creation of human mind. He said that liberty is suppressed by the notion of 'dictatorship of proletariat'. He holds that any form of dictatorships will lead to 'political domination' 'regimentation' and 'economic enslavement' of people. He rejected Marxist conception that state will wither away after formation of classless society. According to Roy, Communist Party stay in power will prevent state form withering away. He criticized theoretical principles as well as practical use of Marxism.

2. Reputation of Gandhi

M. N. Roy becomes radical humanist. He was critical of Gandhi and his moral and spiritualistic ideas. He holds that it was ignorance of masses and traditional, irrational thinking which was



responsible for Gandhi's popularity. M.N. Roy criticize Gandhian economic model based on decentralization, village based, cottage and small scale industries.

3. **Negation of Parliamentary Democracy**

He was critical of parliamentary democracy which was not true democracy because it represented party and not people. He supported party less democracy. He said that power of people is essence of democracy which is suppressed under the power of party and bureaucracy.

4. **Criticism of Vedantic Philosophy**

He said that vedantic philosophy is glorification of medieval conservative past of India. He also underline that there is nothing about spiritualism in India. He said that same kind of spiritual though was present in Europe during medieval age.

5. **Against Fascism**

M.N. Roy says ultra-nationalism is dangerous for liberty. Being a rationalist he was critical towards the idea of Fascism, which is based on anti-rationalism. Fascism is responsible for Second World War. Same time he also said that Marxist destroyed the liberty on the base of dictatorship of proletariat.

Basic Element of Radical Humanism

A. Liberty

- Liberty is essential for development of human life. It is most important after food. Without liberty no individual are society can develop fully.
- Liberty is supreme value which leads him to search for knowledge.
- Radical humanism of Roy Proclaims man to be **moral and spiritual**. Roy is opposed to coercive nature of state. It curbs man's freedom and therefore, he recommends 'minimal state.'

B. Morality

- Liberty and morality are two essential principles of radical humanism.
- For Roy, individual is supreme than nation or class. He endowed with reason Man and is 'Measure of everything.'
- He believes in pluralistic society which ensures peaceful co-existence of all cast caste, class or religion.

C. Scientific Temperament

- Human beings possess scientific temperament which enables him to question, inquire and not to believe blindly. He never accepted importance of religion. He refuted custom traditions of society. He believes society can be change through scientific tools. Therefore,
-

he supported industrialization and specially was in favour of industrialization of agriculture.

D. Decentralize Government

- Roy is against traditional form of democracy in which concentration of power is few hands. He proposed **decentralization of democracy**.
- Roy is **opposed to fascism** because it suppresses individual liberty on the name of **ultra-nationalism**.
- Roy is in favour of industrialization of agriculture.
- According to Roy, revolution should be brought about through **education** and not by violent means.
- He advocated '**rationalization of politics**' through **party less democracy**. Which is different from traditional '**Power Politics**'?? Party less democracy will uphold moral and ethical standards in politics.

E. Plural Society

- Society should not be defined in terms of class. Nationalism is also a monolithic way to define society. He supported a presence of multiple group an association in society. It is helpful for preserving liberty of Individual and strengthening democratic for of governance.

F. Party less democracy

- Roy was supporter of radical democracy. Which goes beyond making every citizen being informed and consulted about affairs of the state. In such a democracy danger of dictatorship of any class or elite is reduced. The basic feature of this democracy is that people must have ways and means to exercise sovereign power effectively. In party less democracy by M. N. Roy said that there would be maximum power at the grassroots level and minimum at the apex level.

Conclusion

M. N. Roy can be classified as utopian or romantic thinker. But still humanistic and moralistic in his thinking. He was ethical revisionist in the history of socialistic thought.

