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Awakening Toppers

Political Science & International Relations Crash Course

Lecture - 19

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1) Trace the role of revolutionary and militant national movements in Indian national movement. [2020-15]

Structure:

Intro – Brief about revolutionary nationalism and where it was prominent

Body – 1) Growth of revolutionary nationalism
2) Significance of revolutionary nationalism

Conclusion – Limitations of revolutionary approach

- Revolutionary nationalism was one of the several political strands that went into the making of the Indian national movement. Maharashtra, Bengal and the Punjab were the nerve centres of a pan-Indian network of revolutionary societies that, emerging independently in the early 20th century, often collaborated with one another in the cause of Indian independence.

Growth of revolutionary nationalism

- The most vital factor was the growth of religious revival of the late nineteenth century. Besides this, there were several foreign influences, like the impact of the American War of Independence, the Irish struggle for freedom, the unification of Italy, the lives of Mazzini and Garibaldi, the Japanese victory over Russia and last but not the least, the revolution against the Tsarist regime in Russia.
- The revolutionary movement in Bengal derived its inspiration from the works of Bankim Chandra Chatterji and the exhortations of Swami Vivekanand. The other notable contributor to the revolutionary creed was Aurobindo Ghosh.

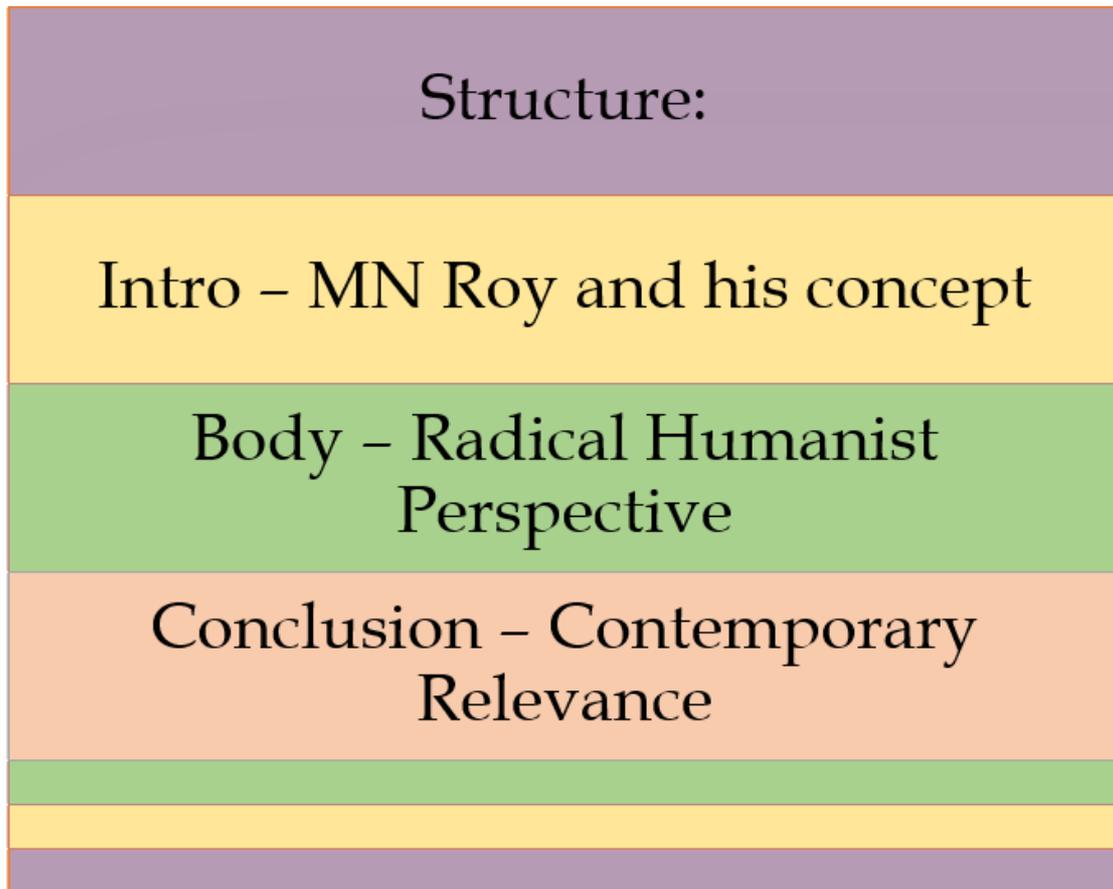
Significance of revolutionary nationalism

- Participation of Youth: The revolutionary groups had an important role in creating an upsurge and awareness among the youth, which was constructively harnessed by mass movements led by the Mahatma Gandhi.
- Growth of Nationalism: Bipan Chandra writes that even though revolutionary movement gradually petered out due to lack of a mass base, the individual revolutionaries or small secret groups, suppression by the still strong colonial state, they made a valuable contribution to the growth of nationalism in India. *As a historian has put it, 'they gave us back the pride of our manhood.'*
- Major political force against British: Shukla Sanyal argues that Revolutionary nationalism emerged as a potent political force in Bengal in the wake of the Swadeshi Movement in the first decade of the 20th century and thereafter it worked alongside mainstream nationalism that was represented by the Congress party, sometimes in cooperation, at other times along parallel tracks.
- The political message that the movement sent across was that if the British government refused to negotiate with their discontented subjects, they would be pressurised into doing so. It is within this context that we have to view the rise of the revolutionary nationalist movement that emerged as the most radical strand within the Swadeshi movement after 1907.
- Introducing new techniques of struggle: The idea of revolutionary violence introduced a new and unsettling element into the political culture of Bengal that was more familiar with boardroom intrigues than with bomb-throwing. The *Jugantar* writers skilfully deployed a political language, the aim of which was to legitimise the ideology of political violence and make acceptable the use of violence as a technique for the attainment of independence.
- Support to INC: Revolutionary politics had a clandestine nexus with the Congress. It strengthened the latter's claim to be a barrier against the spread of violence—and also provided auxiliary support should the British try repressive methods.
- Embodiment of National Unity: Revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and their sacrifices provided an incentive to the people. They were regarded martyrs and became the symbol of national unity and aspirations.
- Women Empowerment - the most important aspect of this movement was the participation of a large number of rural women taking their own initiative to liberate their country. Some women in Bengal got involved in violent revolutionary movement, and this time, unlike the Swadeshi period, they were not in supportive roles; they were now actually shooting pistols at magistrates and governors.

Conclusion

- Shivaji Ganguly argues that there were obvious contextual constraints which did not permit the Indian revolutionaries to operate effectively in pursuance of their goal of India's independence.
 - First, there were numerical limitations; only a small segment of the Indian bourgeoisie actively participated in their endeavor, or morally supported them.
 - Second, the Indian revolutionaries' bases of operation abroad were quite far off from the Indian borders. British ruling the High Seas and lack of internal support led to only ill-coordinated, half-hearted sympathy and help from limited external sources.
 - Third, even if the revolutionary groups were struggling for a free India, they were at the same time feuding among themselves regarding the proper course of action.

2) Critically examine the Radical Humanist perspective on Indian National movement.[2016-10m]



- **M.N. Roy** as a political thinker of Modern India is a Radical Humanist. His political views are founded on reason and morality and not on any dogma. His idea of Radical Humanism could be summarized from his sayings like, "In any revolutionary social philosophy sovereignty of man must be recognize."

Radical Humanist perspective on Indian National Movement

- Alternative to the congress-Radical humanists did not articulate a clear perspective of Indian National Movement. However, their philosophical and ideological orientations help us understand their perspective. Roy provided a critical alternative to the Congress- led nationalist movement that was more 'reconciliatory' and less 'revolutionary.'
- **MN Roy** presented at elaborate **programme at the 1922 Gaya Session of INC** with emphasis on modernization of agriculture, abolition of landlordism and indirect taxes, need for minimum wages etc. which he considered as essential elements of Radical Humanist. He emphasized on the need for a mass based political party that would mobilize the workers and peasants for collective action.

- **Critical of Gandhian programme**-He was critical of both Congress and Gandhi and sought to reinvigorate Marxism by adding his thoughts on morality and freedom to it.
- According to him, Congress lacked a revolutionary leadership due to which it lost the support of masses. MN Roy was opposed to the congress regarding World War II. They favored Indian support to the British to defeat the German fascist. They criticized the congress for the launch of Quit India Movement in 1942 and remarked it as Congress callous criminal neglect of national defense. Roy was criticized for his unpatriotic stand.
- Gandhism was, according to him, the most important of all the ideologies of class collaboration within the nationalist movement. Since it 'will fall victim to its own contradictions', the **national movement, actuated by the spirit of non-violence was bound to fail.**
- Roy also criticized Gandhi's calling off the Non Cooperation Movement. As per him, Gandhi blows up the single beautiful castle built so laboriously. He was also critical of Gandhi's idea of Swaraj that was doomed to fail because 'the time is gone when the people could be inspired by a vague promise of swaraj.'
- He held that Gandhi constructive programme was absolutely inadequate for India's economic salvation. The requirement of Gandhian strategy was based on two requirements, Charkha must be introduced into every house and Khaddar must be worn by all. As per Roy, these conditions could never be met since Charkha was not popular as was conceived and the price of Khaddar was higher than that of the mill-made cloth.
- Roy believed in revelation by concert persuasion. He called this **New Orientation**. He advocated party less organized democracy and co-operative economy. Radical humanists placed individual at the center of their philosophy. Individual was to be on and in himself. Society and all other things were means to achieve this end. They were against supervisions and supernatural power.

Conclusion:

- Although the Radical Humanist perspective could be criticized for being partisan and not free from Marxist bias, but at the same time it has significant contemporary relevance.
- Putting individual at the centre of debate is what our society needs more than ever. Curbing the rising extremism, human rights violations, and rising terrorism requires the radical humanistic approach.



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