Remembering Lohia in the Birth Centenary Year

March 23, 1910 - October 12, 1967

Guest Editors : Anand Kumar and Kurban Ali
Dr. Rammanohar Lohia was a towering and radiant personality. I saw him for the first time in 1948 at my native place Khurja. He came there soon after the formation of Socialist Party at Nasik for the election campaign of Prof. Raghukul Tilak, who was contesting a by-election from the Khurja Assembly seat at that time. Actually this election was caused by the resignation of Prof. Tilak, an associate of Acharya Narendra Deva. When Acharyaji resigned from the Congress party and from the membership of Uttar Pradesh Assembly, along with his twelve colleagues, Prof. Tilak also resigned. Dr. Lohia addressed a public meeting at NREC College Grounds and spoke at length for more than an hour. He explained the political situation of that time especially the circumstances of the aftermath of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. His speech impressed me very much and I decided to join the Socialist Party at that very moment. During my student life I was a member of the Students Federation, the student wing of Communist Party of India. Prof. K M Ashraf, a Communist leader who was a member of CSP also at that time was my mentor at Aligarh Muslim University and on his stimulation, I joined the British Army. Com. Ashraf had the opinion that our country cannot achieve independence by Gandhiji’s approach and can be liberated through an army revolt only. With this in mind, I joined INA under the leadership of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose when I was POW of the Japanese in 1942 in Singapore. During Second World War Communists changed their line and supported Britain and its allies. I got disheartened and distanced myself from the Communist ideology. When country achieved independence and we were released by the British Government, I came in contact with Dr. Lohia and liked his views and ideology and became his disciple. This association remained for almost twenty years till his death.

Lohia was a multi-faceted personality. He was a true nationalist who fought for the liberation of this country under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Although he was not always supportive of Gandhiji and had severe differences on the issue of his supporting war and his views on Socialist ideology, he was one of the most darling disciples of Gandhiji.

Dr. Lohia played a significant role in the Indian politics and society. He was a thinker, a philosopher who understood India well - after Gandhiji. It was he who compelled the ruling Congress party led by Pt. Nehru in 1955, to adopt Socialism as the main policy of Congress party and later on his daughter Indira Gandhi included the word Socialism in the preamble of the Constitution. He was a great champion of the poor, backwards, Dalits, women, minorities and other weaker sections of the society. He fought for the Justice, whether Social, Economic or Political. He called upon the people to donate one hour a day to nation’s reconstruction and gave a Talisman: ‘have spade in your hand, utilize power of the ballot and be ready for civil disobedience against any injustice’. Dr Lohia once said that in his opinion “there are five major aims of Indian politics: Equality, Democracy, Decentralization of powers, Ahimsa and Socialism”. He started many movements related to removal of poverty, abolishment of caste system and gender bias, removal of English, fixing prices of essential commodities, saving the Himalayas and for the Confederation of India and Pakistan. His most important contribution was, in my opinion, launching a movement for making a just society based on the principle of equality and his seven ideas of revolution called ‘Sapt-Kranti’.

He propounded the strategy of Non-Congressism and erased this misconception in the mind of the masses that Congress party cannot be removed from the power through ballot. With this strategy Congress party was defeated in nine states during the 1967 General elections and SVD’s governments were formed. Non-Congressism provided a unique opportunity to the downtrodden and weaker sections of the society to be a part of the government and define their own destiny. It was due to Lohia’s politics that Mandal Commission was formed in 1979 which recommended 27 percent reservation to the backward
classes of the country in government jobs. It was implemented in 1990 by the VP Singh government. Dr Lohia fought for decentralization of powers, “Chaukhamba Raj”, to strengthen Panchayati Raj and equal opportunities for the woman. He was a man of principles. On the issue of the police firing by his own PSP Government in Travancore-Cochin (now Kerala State) he demanded the resignation of his own party government led by Pattom Thanu Pillai. When PSP didn’t approve his move, he resigned from the post of General Secretary and demanded an open debate in the party. This issue boiled up and resulted in his expulsion from the party but he never compromised on his political line.

In my opinion Dr Lohia was the most pragmatic leader and a far-sighted visionary. His thoughts, ideas, views and political theories are very relevant today. He taught the poor and common man of this country to fight for their rights through democratic means. He fought for a just society, for social justice, equality, secularism and for democratic socialism. He coined a slogan ‘Sansopa ney bandhi gaaanth, Pichde pawain main sau main saath” (Sixty percent reservation for the backward-Dalits, minorities and women of any caste, in legislatures and Government jobs). We are still fighting for the thirty three percent reservation for the Women in legislatures!

In the last editorial of his monthly journal “Jan” of August-September 1967, Doctor Lohia appraised his strategy of Non-Congressism and the performance of SVD Governments.

He wrote “Non-Congressism is not delivering goods as much as was expected from it and somewhere it indulged in itself. One of the reasons of its failure is the Central government led by Congress party. In a way Patwari has changed but the Collector remains the same. But the biggest success of this experiment is that now people think that even the Congress can be removed from the

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A Visionary With Pratibha and Sahas

Krishna Nath

It is hard for me to just crystallize the memories of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia into a few words. But there is certainly an image of the union of two: pratibha and sahas, (a great vision and a courage to insist on it).

It seems to me that out of many contributions he made, the one of keeping the worlds of dissent alive and pursuing civil disobedience both against the imperial colonial rule and in a free state could be considered as a great contribution. He also demolished the one family rule in India and conquered the difficult course of democracy. These could be his other major contributions.

Politics is the wheel of impermanence. Nothing stays permanently here, especially in India. But he prepared the ground for a change, a total change. The non-Congress politics of 1967 paved the way for Total Revolution which was worked by his eminent colleague Jayaprakash Narayan, which came about in 1977. It again did not stay long as the vision of the total revolution did not come to logical conclusion.

What are the most relevant legacies of the vision of Dr. Lohia today? India of the 21st century is in a flux. It is in a constant movement. It is a kind of universal flux that we are in and there is an aspect of it at the international level. At the international level his idea of a world government responsible to a world parliament (it’s just not the assembly of the nations or the United Nations but a world government) elected from people of the world (not that coordinated in the committee of the governments of the world) that would be a universal framework. It is not globalisation which is in fact Americanisation. It is different altogether. At the national level, it is his quest for freedom, equality and democracy.

We must not just stick to memorials or rituals as the custom about the birth centenaries. We have to keep the word and vision of Dr. Lohia alive by protecting the torch of ideas and dreams as it is associated with our ancient sages and seers. He received it from the freedom fighters under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and passed on to his generation and the youth of his time. Now we have to actively pursue the ideals promoted by him and presented to the generations to come.
I remember, I started looking for a hero at a small age of, perhaps, under ten. My first attraction was to legendry hero Hanuman who helped me to win over my fears of ghost which I was told, was lurking in every dark place in the village. Later, it was Swami Dayanand whose message that all are equal by birth and it is foolish to discriminate between persons on the basis of castes, attracted me. After entering high school, I with some of my school-mates, was attracted to freedom fighters, especially of the Quit India Movement. The names of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Jayaparakash Narayan and Dr. Rammanohar Lohia were often discussed those days, but these names were like distant stars for us.

My first introduction to Lohia was in dismal and disappointing conditions. When Lohia was expelled from the Praja Socialist Party in 1955, some mill-workers in Kurla, Mumbai (where I was residing those days) organized a meeting which was to be addressed by Lohia. A friend of mine, Ramlal Shukla, who was a mill-worker, virtually dragged me to the meeting. I was disillusioned with Jawaharlal Nehru soon after the Independence but had not found my new ideal and so Ramlal Shukla, who was a Lohia-fan, was very eager to take me to the meeting. The meeting was arranged in a school play-ground. A chair and a small table were placed on the ground which served as stage. Drawing a wire from a nearby house, an electric bulb was hung over the table with some temporary device. The audience was sitting on the ground, in pitch dark evening. Lohia spoke for an hour and half. He neither spoke about the circumstances under which he left the party, nor he exhorted the audience in the style of a demagogue. He quietly and unemotionally analysed the present conditions of the country and explained that the essence of socialism was to fight poverty and inequality. What impressed me most was that he was speaking to the audience of thirty or forty people but that didn’t bother him and he spoke as if he was addressing a packed hall. The impact I got at the meeting was strengthened by my friend Ramlal Shukla’s deep devotion to Dr. Lohia. Whenever, we met he described to me some new and stimulating aspect of Lohia’s life. In fact, this was the only input I received about Lohia, till I moved to Delhi in 1961 and had occasions to attend his public meetings and see him from close distance.

This business of seeing someone from close distance without being seen by him or her in return, has its own ramifications like following the trail of beautiful girls, without being seen in return and consequently without being hauled up for stalking. I did it with a guilty mind and the same sense of guilt I experienced when I followed Lohia to the coffee-house or simply waited on the footpath of Curzon Road (now Kasturba Gandhi Road) where Constitution Club was then situated and where I once or twice saw Lohia, sipping tea at a footpath tea-stall and talking to his friends and admirers. It was like Boswell following Dr. Johnson; though I cannot claim to be a Boswell to Dr. Lohia, which privilege must go to Harris Wofford, who (in Lohia’s words) could call him ‘Son of a Bitch and could also bring a cup of coffee from a half mile way’. My guilt was also caused by the fact that I had not read any book written by him then. Lohia used to be generally surrounded by writers and artists in the coffee-house and although I had become a writer of some sort by 1961, having published three books, for children and several short stories and articles in the well-known magazines and newspapers, I was hesitant to meet Dr. Lohia without having read any of his books.

On transfer from government service in Mumbai, I had joined Central Hindi Directorate, in Delhi, where I met a fan of Dr. Lohia, who gave me some booklets written by Lohia, priced at few paise or annas. I had never expected any one in government service, admiring Lohia because I had found by then that most of the people belonging to the educated class and also in government service were either Nehruites or RSSites. Ramtap Pandey who gave me the books written by Lohia, was a wonderful man. He was not only an admirer of Dr. Lohia, but also his devotee, like
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Ramlal Shukla of Bombay. Later on another scholar joined Hindi Directorate, who was a committed Lohiaite. His name was Vinay Kumar, who later joined Delhi University and then became a full-fledged political leader in the Socialist Party. Tragically he died at early age and we lost a real socialist intellectual.

In the wake of Chinese invasion on India’s northern borders, a meeting of opposition parties was held at Theatre Communication Building ground (on which now stands LIC building and Theatre Communication building being replaced by Palika Bazar). This meeting was addressed by all opposition leaders such as Acharya Kripalani, Dr. Lohia, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, AK Gopalan etc. With Nehru government under attack from all side due to its miserable failure during Chinese invasion, Lohia drew the attention of the middle classes and even the English newspapers which were cold to Lohia’s views, started giving ample space to him. His election to Lok Sabha in a bye-election in 1963 was hailed as challenge to Nehru’s popularity. His entry in Lok Sabha was described by some newspapers (which were quite averse to him), as ‘bull in China Shop’, or a rowdy element in gentlemen’s gathering, but since he set the Lok Sabha afire with his original ideas and hard-hitting speeches, all these newspapers were compelled to assiduously translate his Hindi speeches into English and give them maximum space. His bouts with Jawaharlal Nehru in the Lok Sabha on his China policy as well as during the famous debate of three annas and twenty seven crore people’, unnerved Nehru government and after passing away of Jawaharlal Nehru, on May 27, 1964, the Congress Party started losing fast its popular base. This, combined with opposition unity fostered by Lohia’s Non-Congressism, brought the downfall of Congress in the general election of 1967 and it lost power in several states and hegemonic power in the Centre. When Nehru died, Lohia was in the USA under arrest for offering satyagrah against racial discrimination in a Mississippi restaurant. He issued the following press statement on May 28, 1964 from Jackson, Mississippi, USA:

“I sorrow over the death of India’s Prime Minister and the Congress Party’s most outstanding leader. I grieve over the passing away of a man, who led us with sensitive charm when we were young and he had at least the manner of a revolutionary. My thought goes out to his daughter who must be stricken with grief. I wish to tell her that I share her grief in whatever measure, for memories however much they are erased, leave their shadow. To those who are grieving, I say, overcome your grief by trying to unshackle the arrested revolution. I have delayed speaking on premier’s death, for when news first came I was already involved in an area of injustice and decided to go through with the involvement in memory of the warrior until 1946”.

Moreover, I had an impression that Lohia’s writings like Socrates’ dialogues, had the quality of sudden and unexpected explosion of new thought, a kind of new revelation, every time these were read and so I wanted to read all his writings. That is why when Pankaj Sharma, proprietor of Anamika Publishers expressed his desire to publish the Collected Works of Dr. Lohia, I gladly accepted the offer.

By the time Dr. Lohia was admitted in Wellingdon Hospital (Continued on Page 25)
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Evolutionary Socialism and The Twenty First Centuary

Bhagwat Prasad

The renowned Prof. S. H. Alatas in his inauguration lecture in Multiversity’s Penang-II conference made a good speech on ‘The captive Mind’, particularly in the context of the knowledge available amongst the scholars of the erstwhile colonial countries. He referred to “…. this tendency of our people to imitate the thinking of the West and the ideas introduced by the colonial powers.”

In the third world Gandhi and Lohia were original thinkers. No wonder, they were sidelined by the mainstream thinkers who were either the votaries of capitalism, communism, a semitized Hinduism or an aggressive Islam. To quote Prof. Alatas, “……in the university of Amsterdam, I remember being continuously bombarded with the idea of neutrality and the theory of relativity in social sciences. There is no such thing as objectivity without morality. Research must be based on objectivity, but it cannot be without morality…..If a cancer expert studies cancer cells objectively, he does not bring his private bias into the study. But having done that, he has to ask himself the question – does he want to promote cancer? The answer is - no”.

Every country in the world has its unique geographical and historical features. Traditions and cultures differ. Even in the fields of history and culture, scholars may make perspectival errors. A scholar, having the Marxist or an aggressive religious perspective cannot do justice to the ancient rationalistic, atheist, materialistic culture of India which Kautilya in ‘Arthasastra’ calls ‘Anwikshiki’. Leading historians and philosophers of India have ignored the evidence contained in the three important books: ‘Arthasastra’, ‘the writings of Megasthenes’ and ‘the Mahabharata (including the Gita)’. Our modern and post-modern ideas of human progress and development have been falsified by the latest research in the field of science. To quote from the article ‘Humans becoming more Stupid over Time, Finds Study’ (The New Indian Express, 3.01.2011 page-11), “Over the past 20,000 years, the average brain of the human male brain has decreased from 1500 C.C. to 1300CC The female brain has shrunk by the same proportion, the Daily Mail quoted a report in ‘Discovery’ magazine”. Among the few thinkers who question the modern civilizational ideas, Lohia is a prominent one. In his essay ‘A Philosophical Hypothesis’ he writes, “……those who adhere to God, demon or closed philosophies, be they Adam Smith or Karl Max, and adhere to them in a rigid classical style, become fanatic and have exclusive faith in their own mistaken notions…….. I wish for our country to have an experimental frame of mind”. Lohia wants revolutionaries who “will at least have tried to remove weapons of fear and hatred from their own armory.” Lohia criticizes modern civilization as it is based on poverty, hatred and war. People who study humanity through the recorded blood-soaked, exploitation-stamped history of the last 5000 years, forget that the advent of Homo sapiens was an event preceded by 3.7 millions years of mainly a monkey-type of non-violent gatherer community. Human mind grew from 500 CC to about 1500 CC within this period. The shrinking of the human brain shows that we are going in the opposite direction to the nature’s process of evolution. Writes Fritjof Capra in his book ‘The Hidden Connections’. “The design principles of our future social institutions must be consistent with the principles of organization that nature has evolved (deep ecology) to sustain the web of life. A unified conceptual framework for the understanding of material and social structures will be essential for this task.” Capra and scientists like Damasio rightly denounce the idea of the mind-body separation in Descartes’ philosophy. European science and philosophy could not shake up Descartes’ shadow for a long time. The idea of mind-body wholeness is expressed by Lohia in his quest for the integration of economic aims (equality in the field of basic necessities) and general aims (like democracy, freedom
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My Image of Dr. Lohia

Rajinder Sachar

My image of Dr. Lohia is very personal. He was very friendly and warm in his behaviour. Though we were very junior party workers he didn’t differentiate between him and us. We used to go for coffee in the evening after having critical discussions on socialism and on other different issues of politics and society.

For me, his major contribution is about the relation between socialism and the caste system of Indian society. He compares caste and class together and according to him in India we can not think of class without taking into account caste. His writings on casteism and leaders of backward classes are extraordinary. He warned leaders of the backward classes about their behaviour as they were behaving like the uppers caste people in society. According to him, that will be the most dangerous thing if our (backward) caste leaders do not correct it. He has also contributed towards preferential positions for marginalised communities. He believes that Muslims, women and the lower castes people should be given preferential positions in every sphere of social life. Only then our country will lead towards socialism.

His major contribution towards Indian politics is defeat of the Congress in the general elections of 1967. Congress monopoly was broken because of his political ideals and courage. He advocated that democratisation of politics cannot happen without breaking the Congress monopoly. But after his death, the socialist movement failed to deliver his vision.

He has a vision of four pillars state. He always believed that decentralisation of power is the only way of development at grassroots. According to him, empowerment of the common man is essential failing which true socialism can’t be achieved. He criticised socialism at the top. He talked about the mechanisation of agriculture but where the peasants have equal participation so they must not feel alienated from this process.

He never believed in statues and memorials for anybody. I think spreading his ideas and messages is much more important than any rituals since he was strong believer in unity of Kathni and Karni.
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in size, consisted of neurons (nerve-cells) which were connected with sociability and control of violence. Every revolution based on violence fails because the values needed in sustaining the ideal societies dreamt of by revolutionary thinkers are womanly virtues (values) that were prevalent during the long gathering phase of humanity’s existence on this earth. Even a non-violent revolution is sure to fail in a world where war preparations are common and greed dictates the progress of a nation – state. In such a country, there is no likelihood of a truly socialist society coming into being. The tragedy of humanity started with the hunter society of males gradually overwhelming the previous society of gatherers (females), thus bringing into being a strictly patriarchal society. Among the few thinkers of the world whose views tally with the values of a gathering society the foremost are Gandhi, Lohia and Einstein. Lohia’s stress on spade, vote and prison are the appropriate steps which, if implemented with sincerity and determination by the millions will, by emphasizing the values of a gatherer’s society, solve many of the problems of the suffering humanity. Women are likely to play a leading role in movements based on spade, vote and prison.

In the present war-preparing world, no single country can afford to accept non-violence as its creed by disbanding its army, navy and air force. Nature cannot be partial to any species and the evolution process as a whole as simulated in super-computers by eminent scientists of Santa Fe fame, indicate that all elements are freely taking part in the process of evolution (covering millions of years). They agree that there is no central controller and order evolves out of the free activity of every entity. In the words of Stuart Kaufman, Professor of Biochemistry, Pennsylvania University, “…… the research program was to find order for free. As it happens, I found it. And it’s profound.” Prof. Brian Godwin says, “… everything in New Biology changes. Instead of the metaphors of conflict, competition, selfish genes, climbing peaks of fitness landscapes; what you get is evolution as a dance.” Collective total freedom is another name for non-violence. That the gatherers’ society and also the hunter’s society in the first phase of its existence were free from violence and greed is confirmed from the study of primitive societies as found out by anthropologists. Human mind’s decline started when women were subdued completely through violence and patriarchy reigned supreme in modern advanced societies. In spite of living in a patriarchal society, Lohia never accepted women as the second sex, and went ahead of his mentor Gandhi in honoring the so-called fallen women who lived by selling their bodies.

Non-violence in action, the principle of Satyagraha, reached great heights in Gandhi’s able disciple Lohia’s writings and actions. The eye reddening at the sight of any injustice and the heart moved by sympathy, combine in the act of Satyagraha which is the true spirit of democracy. All leading thinkers of democracy agree that criticism is the essence of democracy. Lohia conclusively proved that criticism will be ineffective by remaining at the abstract level unless criticism concretized in the form of Satyagraha. Lohia’s idea of Satyagraha becomes relevant in the context of what Noam Chomsky says about modern societies. “In the advanced industrial societies the problem (tension with regard to the locus of power) is typically approached by a variety of measures to deprive democratic political structures of substantive content, while leaving them formally intact. A larger part of this task is assumed by ideological institutions that channel thought and attitudes within acceptable bounds, deflecting any potential challenge to established privilege and authority before it can take form and gather strength …. My personal feeling is that citizens of democratic societies should undertake a course of self-defense to protect themselves from manipulation and control, and to lay the basis for meaningful democracy. (Necessary Illusions).

Gradually evolutionary scientists are realizing that forces of nature work to preserve the entire living world as a whole. Where there is danger of a species dying through internal violence, nature’s defense mechanism controls it. Two wolves fighting each other do not bring it to the finish. The weaker party understands its danger and meekly surrenders to the stronger. Immediately the stronger wolf ceases its struggle and allows its opponent to depart in peace. (Constance Lorenz). As man has become the worst predator in nature and exterminates other species
cruefully, nature’s defense mechanism becomes active in taking away the power of the human brain thus making man more stupid or more self-destructive as ages pass.

The bell of human extinction is ringing loud and clear. Climate change is menacing human survival. There is little chance of humanity taking appropriate steps to halt it. The danger of war or preparation for war is devastating human resources and as long as group-selfishness masquerades as patriotism or god-devotion, disaster threatens the human species.

Lohia’s tiny essay ‘Fundamentals of a World Mind’ is a seminal one that guides an internationalist. Very few thinkers have written a better piece on the bankruptcy of human thought in the 20th century, “….thinking has ceased to be creative. Ideas are designed and tested for their value to one or other of the two power blocs. ... The question of all questions stridently urging an answer is which shall serve what; shall idea serve force or force, idea?... both (capitalism and communism) are doctrines of political and economic centralization, of technical and organizational efficiency.....”

Lohia was an ardent votary of a world government. He wrote, “Peace can come only via a world government.... All those who desire a world government must aspire to achieve a worldview of equality and against class, caste or regional inequalities.” Evolutionary Scientist F. Capra wrote, “....I also argued that the philosophical school of deep ecology, which does not separate humans from nature and recognizes the intrinsic values of all living beings, could provide an ideal, philosophical and even spiritual context for the new scientific paradigm. Today, twenty years later, I (still) hold this view”. Capra’s rooted views are those of a gatherer society. Very few countries, philosophies or religions forbade its inhabitants or adherents to shun meat eating and stop any sort of cruelty to animals. The worldviews of every country are important; amongst them are those that can provide humanity the right path to life and happiness. “...he (Habermass) points out that people’s interpretations always rely on a number of implicit assumptions that are embedded in history and tradition ..... social scientist should evaluate different traditions critically, identify ideological distortions and uncover their connections with power relations. Emancipations take place whenever people are able to overcome past restrictors that resulted from distorted communication” (The Hidden Connection). The whole of humanity suffers from distortions of its ideas because of its hunter mentality. Emancipation from it is needed, so that instead of power relations governing human communicative actions, humanity gets guided by sharing and caring relations that prevailed during its million years of existence in a matricentric (woman-centric) gatherer society.

Buddha, Gandhi, Lohia and JP are all products of a culture that was unique in the world. India had the only gatherers’ society in the world which produced advanced city civilizations. The rich fauna and flora of India which nourished the most leisured class of females and males was highly conducive to contemplation and compassion. Archeologists show surprise when they study the artifacts and weapons of pre-Vedic India. Writes the Harvard-trained famous geneticist Spencer Wells in his famous book ‘The Journey of Man’, “... India is unusual, since there is very little evidence of the upper Paleolithic there ... at least there are abundant tools from the earlier periods”. The upper Paleolithic age was the earliest age of great hunters because of the abundance of killer apparatus among these hunters in this age. Human mind’s innovative tendencies and skills thus led to the first great violation of nature’s design. Man’s journey of killership continued relentlessly from this age. All the animals other than men were subjected to cruel exploitation and slaughter. Men ‘too’ shared the same fate in later periods.

There is abundant literary and archeological evidence to prove that Mahenjodaro Harappa civilization was an egalitarian, atheistic, kingless civilization which was free of wars. The availability of fruits in abundance in India come out in Max Muller’s essay ‘Indian view of life’. “Bhartrihari says,” “There is fruit on the trees in every forest, which everyone who like may pluck without trouble. There is cool and sweet water in a river in the pure rivers here and there.”

No hunter’s society can produce a philosophy of praxis like the Yoga where the primary values are nonviolence and non-acquisition
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In this brief note I’ll refer to two/three incidents that, according to me, make Dr. Lohia an unusual political thinker in Indian history. According to me Dr. Lohia’s name will be written in golden letters because of his efforts to achieve these things:

1. Dr. Lohia’s attempt to bring round Dr. Ambedkar into his fold with a view to making him an all-India leader and dislodge the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty rule. In this context I refer to a letter that Dr. Lohia wrote to his friend and colleague, Mr. Madhu Limaye, ‘You can well understand my sorrow at Dr. Ambedkar’s sudden death has been and is personal. It had always been my ambition to draw him into our fold. That moment seemed to be approaching. Dr. Ambedkar was to me a great man in Indian politics and apart from Gandhiji, no caste Hindu leader came up to his stature. This fact has always given me solace and confidence that the caste system of Hinduism could one day be destroyed.’

This fact, that is Lohia’s earnest endeavour to abolish caste, is borned out by his talk with Dr. Ramaswamy Naicker Periyar. Dr. Lohia went all the way to a Madras hospital, where Mr. Naicker was being treated, to meet him. Their talks have been published in Dr. Lohia’s book on caste.

2. As I have written elsewhere, there are a number of points in Dr. Lohia’s book on caste with which Gandhi might not have agreed. I’m an admirer of Dr. Lohia for two reasons: his views on caste and his efforts to abolish dynasty rule with a view to cleaning up governance. This is particularly important in today’s context where each party is bent on perpetuating dynastic rule. Had Dr. Lohia been alive today, he would have forged an alliance of the Shudra leaders, the OBC representatives like Nitish Kumar and Lalu Prasad Yadav in Bihar, Mulayam Singh Yadav in UP, all of whom were products of the JP movement, with Mayawati, the Dalit leader, to create an alliance of the most oppressed classes in India and thus present a challenge to that representative of dynastic rule, the Congress party.

3. Another remarkable thing that Dr. Lohia did was in the AICC session which met to support the Congress Working Committee resolution to partition India for the sake of achieving independence from Britain. Dr. Lohia, along with another Congress member from Sindh, vehemently opposed the resolution. All the so-called Gandhian members/leaders of Gandhi’s Congress accepted the resolution.

4. Dr. Lohia wanted to reconstruct the Indian polity through parliamentary reform of democracy. Jayaprakash Narayan thought that true and genuine democracy could not be achieved through delegation of power. Therefore power must be given to the people through panchayats.

Some noteworthy books by and about Dr. Lohia are:

1. On Caste
2. The Guilty Men of Pakistan
3. Dr. Lohia’s US Tour (An incident of note is that Dr. Lohia, at the risk of being prosecuted, insisted on visiting a restaurant where non-whites were not permitted.)
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an all-powerful super king led to the conception of God whose favourite courtiers were the priests. In hunter societies, warriors and priests were the elite.

No king or super-kings (God or Gods) evolved among the Yoginis and Yogis. In Mohenjodara Harappa civilization, no such phenomenon took place. The Yoginis and Yogis occupied the highest place in society (as available from the writings of Megasthenes). Max Muller writes, “The greatest conqueror of antiquity (Alexander) stood in silent wonderment before the Gymnosophists, regretting that he could not communicate with them …..” (Indian View of Life).

Evolution used ‘the pleasure principle’ to direct all the living beings in the planet earth. Sigmund Freud made a great mistake in putting the reality principle above the pleasure principle. Today’s science falsifies Freud’s idea and proves that the culprit is not nature but culture. The knowledge of the absence of killer apparatus in the upper Paleolithic age in India and the lack of war weapons and domesticated animals in Mahenjodara Harappa culture are the discoveries of archaeology. Modern science establishes that we are genetically programmed to have a brain that accepts rationality. Scientist Antonio Damasio M.D., Ph.D., the writer of the famous book ‘Descartes’ Error’, examines in the laboratory the brain of a person called Elliot who had a big tumour in his right frontal lobe and comes to the conclusion that emotion and rational decision making are twins in the same areas of the human brain.

Generations of historians and philosophers in India and abroad, the flag bearers of hunter society philosophy and culture of the Greeks and other Europeans and Americans, failed to understand the pre-vedic culture of a gatherers’ society. The key word used in Buddhism and Jainism, Mahabharata, Samkhya, Yoga and Lokayat was SUKHA which precisely meant the pleasure principle of nature. Nature’s ‘pleasure principle’ got associated with ‘hedonism’ because European thinking was deaf to the true meaning of ‘SUKHA’. Had our historians and philosophers studied sincerely at least one book of the Buddha (Dhammapada) and read the Bhagawad Gita in the light of ‘Dhammapada’ and excluded the Gita’s massive scholarly violence-justifying and Brahminic interpolations, (Kosambi), there would have been no necessity for them to ignore Kautilya’s emphasis on ‘Anwikshiki’ in Arthasastra and Megasthenes’ emphatic declaration that Gymno-sophists had the highest rank in India among the seven categories of people who lived in India. Nature abhors the limitless cruelty and predation of humans leading to total extermination of other species. Pre-Vedic India, by making non-violence and APARIGRAHA (minimizing one’s wants) the supreme values, actually followed the dictates of nature.

Since the Upanishads are the philosophies of the hunters (the nomadic Aryans), their stress on SREYA (the good), against PREYA (the pleasant) is nothing unusual or unexpected. The Upanishadic seers replaced the philosophy of Anwikshiki by an inferior philosophy. Lohia wrote that the separation of SREYA from PREYA was wrong. Lohia’s stress on SAMA (equality at the level of mind also) and his unique experience of Samadhi in Lahore jail (when time stood still) speaks of his intuitive preference for pre-vedic Indian culture whose cultural progenies are Budhisim, Jainism and the other philosophies preached by thinkers like P. Katayayana, A. Kesha Kambali and others of their ilk. About Gandhi, Romaine Rolland wrote “…. There can be no genius of action, no leader, who does not incarnate the instincts of his race, satisfy the need of the hour and requite the yearning of the world”. The same words can be used for Lohia. The word ‘Sukha’ is central to ancient Indian culture and its discussion is particularly relevant in these calamitous nature-defying days.

Human brain has three layers. There is the reptilian brain which finds pleasure in indolence (examine the life of a crocodile or a Python). The second layer or the mammalian brain finds pleasure in incessant activity sometimes leading to limitless violence. The third layer or the pre-frontal cortex, almost half of the total brain, restrains the violent tendencies in the other parts of the brain and leads to increase of sociability. India’s Samkhya philosophy expresses these tendencies as the three GUNAS. ‘Not extended indolence, or incessant urge to work but ‘Sukha’ is the primary nature-given quality of the pre-frontal cortex (SATWA GUNA). Discontent or mental tension occurs when human actions that lead to
‘SUKHA’ are not indulged in by the man/woman. Explaining Sukha, Gita says, “The knowledge that all living beings are one, though they lead different lives in this world is known as Satwik knowledge.” (The Gita-18 -20). Love of all living beings must direct every action of a Satwik being. The contentment that lends special charm to the face of a Buddha, Mahavira or Samkara is rarely found in the faces of leading Western philosophers. Scientist Amitabh Chakravarthy in an article published in the Radical Humanist (February-2011) establishes the fact that modern science has discovered that human goodness is a gift of nature. Next in importance to the evolutionary approach which guided the pre-Vedic gatherers’ India, and whose legacy was milked by Gandhi and Lohia, there is the humanistic realistic approach of Latin America which is scaling great heights in the search for a new variety of humane Twenty First Century socialism.

At the close of the world social Forum -2005, Chavez declared, “We have to reinvent socialism”. He called it the socialism of the 21st century. Bolivar, Rodriguez and Zamora, Meszaros and Harnecker were some of the thinkers whose ideas gifted Marxian socialism new dimensions. Chavez often quoted them. Zamora had said, “Free elections, free land and free men, horror to the oligarchy”. Bolivar called equality ‘the law of laws’. He fought for the rights of the indigenous people. His fights led to the abolition of slavery in Latin America much earlier than the U.S. Rodriguez denounced division of labour in industries because it robotized and brutalized the workers. Meszaros stressed the elementary triangle of socialism: a) Social ownership of production, b) Social production organized by workers, c) Production for communal needs.

Lohia’s stress on small units of production satisfied almost all the aims of these great thinkers of Latin America. Lohia was a fighter for the equal rights of the oppressed people of the whole world and was imprisoned in several countries because he defied the unequal laws prevalent in them. Marta Harnecker denounced Vanguardism, ‘Verticalism’, ‘authoritarianism’, excessive centralism and opposed a ‘narrow workerist view of socialism’. Lohia believed in decentralized power and economy. He concretized his ideas in advocating the formation of maximum power-wielding village councils as the basic foundational part of the Chaukhamba (four-pillared) scheme of economic and political entities. Harnecker aimed at building a society that makes the full development of human beings possible. Lohia’s seven-legged revolution (Sapta–Kranti) is the best way to develop the full potential of every human being.

Kropotkin wrote to Lenin in 1920, “…. Without an organization from below of the peasants and workers themselves, it is impossible to build a new life”. The USSR did not follow this advice, but Chavez followed it to the letter. Thus writes Harnecker “Participation, protagonism in all spaces, is that which allows human beings to grow and increase their self-confidence, that is to say, to develop humanly.” Articles 62 and 70 of the Venezuelan constitution empower people at the lowest level to build self-managing institutions and co-operatives. Really autonomous power-wielding basic organizations called communal councils (generally consisting of 200 to 400 families in urban areas and fifty to one hundred families in rural areas) dotted all the regions of Venezuela. The ideas of Gandhi and Lohia have found a new home in Latin American countries. Leaders are giving a call to learn from indigenous communities the ways to communal solidarity and local empowerment. This new dawn of 21st century socialism can be enriched if the socialists of India and the Latin American countries interact with each other. Gandhi, J.P and Lohia’s ideas will undoubtedly help in the sprouting of healthy shoots of socialism in the lands of Bolivar, Chavez, Castro and Marcos. A great thinker, Labowitz says, “Every society has its unique characteristics - its unique histories, traditions (including religious and indigenous ones), its mythologies, its heroes who have struggled for a better world, and the particular capacities that people have developed in the process of struggle”. The only country in the world which can develop evolutionary socialism is India. Evolutionary socialism only can harness the pleasure principle of nature (Sukha) and thus stem the shrinkage of the human brain and the ecological devastations that threaten humanity. Values which developed among the matricentric gatherers which led to the formation of the love-dominated (non-violent) humane societies, can only save mankind from sure destruction.
India had heroes like Mahavir, Buddha, Gandhi and Gymno-sophist philosophers who had developed Yogic YAMA values and worked for the welfare of all living beings. Vedic India was a hunter’s land and the lavishly ritualistic caste-untouchability-ridden India of the Gupta age (the age of puranas) has not much to contribute to evolutionary socialism. If evolutionary socialism (ANWIKSHIKI) dies in the land of its birth, it will be the worst calamity that endangers the existence of all the species on this earth. Anthropology tells us that in Amazonian lands, communities still exist which give supreme importance to relationship.

“……towards the end of achieving health, wealth and safety, Amazonian people aim to master not nature, but as many as possible of their personal relationships with other beings, human or otherwise, in the world.” (Rapport and Overing).

Yogis and Yoginis, having plenty of leisure (The Original Affluent Society by M. Shahlin) developed the techniques of various types of meditations which enhanced their creative mental powers, giving them the capacity to have full control over their negative emotions. They had only loving attitude towards all living beings. They had perfectly tranquil minds which nothing could disturb. They developed all the qualities that make man /woman a uniquely creative individual and also an intensely social being. The Buddha was such a personality. Mahavir was another. There were many lesser personalities whom history did not take into consideration (Gandhi, J.P. and Lohia did not practice meditation but still were the worthy heirs of the most important Yogic values).

India’s rich legacy still awaits deep exploration by the thinkers and historians of the world. This Anwikhikian legacy alone can teach humanity the developed evolutionary path of nature. Many of Latin America’s indigenous people can guide us initially because their communities evolved naturally. But pre-Vedic India, free from the evils of the caste system and that philosophical aberration called ‘karmic rebirth’ proved that the supreme ideal ‘SUKHA’ was based on the twins: universal love for all living beings and tranquility of mind. The action or karma-transcending MOKSHA ideal which haunted all the post- Vedic philosophies of India was, though other-worldly, still culturally attached to the Brahminic rituals (The Gita- 18th canto). It hypocritically approved violence using the plea that renouncing the fruit of karma is equivalent to karmlessness (The Gita). It justified the caste system and untouchability. The hunter society thinkers invented it to displace SUKHA. They debased Sukha by throwing the patriarchal dust of ignominy on its matricentric value of equal sexual freedom enjoyed by women (Charbak). Lohia always welcomed matricentric values. He vehemently denounced untouchability and the caste system. He was this-worldly and never bothered about Moksha.

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Lohia is immortal. Future generations would find it difficult to believe that such a person too lived in this world, who did not own any property or didn’t have an iota of selfishness. He will remain in the hearts of the poor of this country. He once said that “I have nothing to give to the people of this country, except the fact that the poor and common people of India, believe that I belong to them and I am their voice”. He called himself ‘Kujaat Gandhivadi’. No institution, academy or a political party can claim to be the sole heir apparent of Lohia. He lives in the hearts and minds of the masses and whenever the history of social justice, civil liberty and dignity of mankind will be written, Dr Rammanohar Lohia will be remembered in golden letters.
The two-year programme, which was undertaken in 2009 to observe Dr Rammanohar Lohia’s birth centenary, is drawing to a close as we approach March 23, 2011, the day that marks his 101st birth anniversary. In these two years, I am certain, the life and activities of that remarkable socialist leader (who left an indelible imprint on the Indian political scene in both the pre-independence period and the two decades following independence, that is, till his untimely demise on October 12, 1967) have been propagated throughout the country in order to ensure the revival of a vibrant democratic socialist movement which is the imperative need of the hour in the present environment of market fundamentalism developed by the policies of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation originating from the structural reforms programme formulated by the Washington Consensus.

How do we remember Dr Lohia today? From his early youth he was a staunch fighter for the cause of India’s freedom and devoted his entire life for the upliftment of the teeming millions. But then there were countless others of the same mould who had plunged headlong into the independence movement spurred by the clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi, the real revolutionary in this nation having moved the millions for the emancipation of the motherland through non-violent mass struggles aimed at overthrowing the foreign yoke. However, Dr Lohia was endowed with a brilliant mind, a rare foresight and an exceptional resolve to break the status quo by fighting the Establishment through militant mass actions which alone, he was convinced, would eventually lead to the goal of socialism. And on this issue of breaking the status quo he was literally uncompromising. As the noted journalist C.N. Chitta Ranjan wrote in his tribute to Dr Lohia following the latter’s passing in October 1967:

“We can afford to forget the passing aspects of Lohia’s life, but we cannot do without his discontent with the inadequacies of the Left, his anger at the continuing poverty and suffering of the millions twenty years after the attainment of independence, his uncompromising struggle against the Establishment which symbolises the pernicious philosophy of the status quo.”
(Mainstream, October 21, 1967)

Thus, Dr Lohia was indeed quite different from the others.

Much has been written about Dr Lohia’s troubled relations with Jawaharlal Nehru. He was undoubtedly dauntless in lashing out at the first PM of independent India primarily because he found the hero of his youth had failed to live up to his expectations. (Lohiaji himself had disclosed this in as many words on one occasion.) And yet there was a time (that is, in 1936) when it was Nehru who appointed Dr Lohia, then just 26 years in age, the secretary of the foreign affairs wing of the Indian National Congress. That was also the time when Panditji used to describe Rammanohar as the “rising star” in Indian politics. But the two drifted apart when Dr Lohia found Nehru not being true to what he had declared in his early years, and this became increasingly evident in the post-independence era. On Dr Lohia’s release from prison in June 1946 Nehru had offered him the Congress’ General Secretarship but he refused to accept the post due to his serious differences on several questions relating to the functioning of Congress leaders in power as also the Congress organisation. Yet there was nothing personal in his sharp, and at times vehement, criticism of Nehru. As he himself explained in a piece in Mainstream within a couple of weeks of the weekly’s launch in September 1962:

“Some people have tried to twist the purpose of this pinpointing on the Prime Minister’s expenses as a move on my part to deny him, particularly in his old age, the comforts needed for him to carry out his duties as Prime Minister. Far be it for me to deny him any of the normal comforts in life. In fact, I have been raising this question of the Prime Minister’s expenditure as part of our campaign to achieve good planning, right taxation,
and just pricing. With such luxury expenditure, it would be impossible for India to achieve these.”

Thereafter he added:
“On a rough estimate, I believe that Rs 2000 crores are being spent annually as super luxury expenditure by the upper classes of India, numbering around 50 lakhs. This sum of money cold be easily transferred to planning or to reduction of indirect taxation on essential articles or the abolition of land revenue on uneconomic holdings, as also for the achievement of a price policy for essential articles that would fix sale price at no more than one-and-a-half times the cost price. When I try to take away Rs 2000 crores from India’s upper classes, I might mention that Rs 3000 crores will still be left with them to spend as they like.” (Mainstream, September 15, 1962)

Hence it was a matter of principle, not a personal issue for Dr Lohia. Here again he stood out among others.

The figures mentioned above are actually peanuts when set against the statistics available today. One wonders what Dr Lohia would have commented on witnessing the emergence of 54 largest billionaires of the world in India on the one side and the number of people below the poverty line growing by leaps and bounds with every passing day in this country on the other.

Dr Lohia’s close association with Mahatma Gandhi in the years 1937-48 are too well known to bear repetition. Gandhiji had deep affection for him. Once, when he was imprisoned, the Father of the Nation spontaneously said: “I cannot sit still when I see Rammanohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan in jail. I do not know braver and straighter men than them.” This was evidence of the unalloyed love the Mahatma had for both. And it also provided a measure of his trust in them. Through their deeds both of them proved that they were indeed worthy of his trust.

Dr Lohia’s legendary exploits during the ‘Quit India’ movement elevated him to the stature of a national figure of eminence. He was arrested in May 1944 after 21 months of clandestine activities and lodged in Lahore Jail where he was subjected to inhuman torture. But incarceration in prison could not shatter him or dampen his spirits. While he was in prison he lost his father but even then he refused to come out on parole. Here one notices the best streak of a principled freedom fighter. This was again witnessed in August 1954 when the PSP Government of Travancore-Cochin headed by Pattom Thanu Pillai fired on unarmed people resulting in some deaths; Dr Lohia, who was then the General Secretary of the party and was behind bars in UP for having participated in a mass movement there, strongly urged the State Government to resign on moral grounds, but when the request to that effect was rejected by Thanu Pillai he instantly resigned from the party post upholding principle over politics.

A man of action, he led powerful mass movements all through his life. He fought against Portugal’s colonial rule in Goa (1964), for restoration of democracy in Nepal (1946, 1949), for establishment of a State Assembly in Manipur (1955) besides leading numerous mass struggles on the various demands of the peasantry and toiling people. He was arrested in Arunachal Pradesh for protesting against the ban on entry without permit there (1958, 1959). In the USA, he was detained in 1964 when he protested against racial discrimination; ultimately the State Department was compelled to apologise to him, but in reply he asked them to apologise to the Statue of Liberty instead. Such was Dr Rammanohar Lohia.

A firm believer in grassroots democracy, he waged a concerted struggle against an unequal world order and propounded the theory of Sapta Kranti (seven revolutions) envisaging male-female equality, elimination of discrimination based on colour, and end to caste-based inequality, liquidation of colonialism and establishment of a world parliament, fight against inequality generated by private capital and for growth of capital through planning, struggle against armaments, mass civil disobedience.

Dr Lohia fought the second, third and fourth general elections from UP, the third one in 1962 against Nehru from Phulpur. He lost in 1957 and 1962 but came to the Lok Sabha by winning a by-election from Farrukhabad. In 1967 he was re-elected to Parliament from Kannauj.
Remembering Lohia in the Birth Centenary Year

Even today, after more than 44 years, one distinctly remembers his absorbing speeches in the Lok Sabha in 1966—even now one can hear his inimitable voice in Parliament hurling sharp and acerbic attacks on PM Indira Gandhi especially during the acrimonious debate on the devaluation of the rupee. Every word was measured and his unequivocal pronouncements, full of wit and substance, were listened to with rapt attention by all sides of the House—he commanded a kind of respect from friends and foes alike few have been able to claim since his demise.

Dr Lohia led several mass movements and was jailed on numerous occasions in both pre- and post-independence India. He was an uncompromising and indomitable fighter who could not be suppressed by either force or coercion.

His espousal of several causes, like the one of giving Hindi the status of national language while strengthening the regional languages for the benefit of the poor and the marginalised, evoked mixed reactions. But his arguments were always logical and factual.

He wanted to keep equidistance from both capitalism and communism but towards the end of his life he expressed a strong desire for Left unity in the country.

Lenin had once described Bukharin as the “darling of the Soviet revolution”. Dr Lohia can justifiably be characterised as the “darling of the Indian revolution”. He was essentially human in every sense of the word and far from being the run-of-the-mill politician. In the brief span of 57 years before his life was suddenly cut short, Dr Lohia played such a vitally important role in our political and social life!

Let me conclude this tribute with what Dr Lohia told two journalists, Ravindranath and Ayub Syed, while giving a recorded interview to them just before the fourth general elections in 1967, that is, precisely 44 years ago. Asked to describe the most thrilling moment in his political life, he briefly paused and then, with a far-away look in his eyes, said:

“There have been innumerable thrills. I don’t know; in a certain sense I am a somewhat immature person, more of an adolescent than an old person because every situation appears to me to be a fantastically novel situation. I am slightly nervous, still so, before making a speech, an ordinary speech—and I must have spoken thousands of times—but then each speech has an occasion and I like each speech to conform to that new occasion. Therefore, there is a novelty in it. But then if you ask me straight off, well, there were Goas, there were Nepals, there were those various peasant marches. Also actions during the Independence movement, of course…. During the 1942 rebellion days, there were occasions when I turned to stone—whether out of a firmness of resolve or paralysis of my faculties, it is not for me to decide. Oh yes, there have been thrills and too many of them.” (Mainstream, October 21, 1967)

That is the intensely human Dr Rammanohar Lohia for you, a man who could endear himself to one and all by his extraordinary qualities and who left such a profound impress upon our nation as a whole.

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(now Rammanohar Lohia Hospital) on 28th September, 1967 for a minor operation of prostate, I had dispelled all my hesitations and fears (due to my being in government service) and decided to see Dr. Lohia, and also had written a letter to him. I hoped to meet him when he would be discharged from the hospital within two-three days. But this hope was never fulfilled.

Everyday I would go to Wellingdon Hospital and join the people in the lawn outside, waiting for the good news of Dr. Lohia’s recovery. The lawn was always crowded by his well-wishers and admirers, including rehriwalla, rickshaw-pullers, hotel waiters, writers, journalists, teachers, politician and leaders. When someone came out, people looked at his face and tried to read what was written on it. On 11th October, in the evening I saw Madhu Limaye coming out. His face was so tense that it indicated something terrible. He drove fast in his jeep. By my side, Hindi writer Shrikant Verma was standing wiping out his tears. I knew the unexpected has happen.

I came home. Children were not at home. Wife was busy in the kitchen. Finding myself alone I broke down. I don’t remember whether I wept before, on someone’s death.
At the very outset, let me state that it is with utmost humility that I have accepted this task of delivering this brief speech in this conference on Dr. Rammanohar Lohia and Civil Liberties. It can only be with utmost humility that one could possibly make an approach to one of the makers of modern India, to use the phrase of a recent book - after all, how does one seek to encapsulate the life, and works of a person like Dr. Lohia, who in the course of his life wrote prodigiously; as a young man, barely in his twenties, led a protest against the representation of India by Maharaja of Bikaner, at the League of Nations in Geneva; formed the foreign affairs department in the All India Congress Committee; helped lay the foundation of the Congress Socialist Party; was imprisoned and tortured by the British; and in a free India founded the Socialist Party and indeed the humanistic socialist movement in India? Where does one begin to comprehend the vision, the mind and the integrity of a person who throughout his life worked without respite and with only the remit of an unyielding conscience, to bridge the rich-poor divide, fought against the horrors of caste and gender inequality, warned us of the dangers of the big machine, not merely as a technological artifact but as a social machine, and above all the conditions of endemic inequality that perpetuates oppression of the many by the few, generation after generation, and lead to cycles of violence and repression?

As I began to think of what I should speak, about Dr. Lohia, I remembered an anecdote about him. In one of the elections that he contested, post-independence, he was approached by leaders of a particular community, asking him to deliver an election speech at a place of worship, assuring him that such an act would get him a lot of votes from that particular community. Dr. Lohia refused, and he lost the election very narrowly. His refusal was founded on the value that a space for worship, so intimately connected with the inner spiritual core of human existence, could not be used as a space for political propaganda. Fiercely independent, and never wavering from a concern for ethical implications of an action, and prioritizing the pursuit of the good of the broader society, within the framework of social justice, Dr. Lohia was indeed forever the “top-class scholar, civilized gentleman, liberal” and a person of “high moral character”. In these times of cynical and debased polity, the realism of power grabbing and its retention at all costs, and of rabid promotion of extreme “I, Me and Mine” culture, one cannot but help asking on recollecting that great man: “Jinhe naaz hai llind par who kahaan hai? Kahaan hai?”

Yet, I would not suggest that the life of Dr. Lohia is to be remembered for mere valorization and hagiographic speeches. It is precisely in these times of apparent noise, through an overload of information, the overarching conception that we, i.e.”, India and Indians, have arrived, and turning a blind eye to the vast hordes who were not even afforded the chance to begin, let alone “arrive”, that one needs to draw sustenance from the lives and works of great men and women of history.

I will humbly submit that one of the keys to the thought and life of Dr. Lohia is his lifelong struggle against the “Monotonic Mind”. Of course everybody agrees that he used that expression in this context of “big machine” technology and it then seems logically simple to conceive the political, economy suggested by Dr. Lohia as one with E.F. Schumaker’s “Small is Beautiful” and with the search for alternate technologies that enchance rather than eviscerate, role of labour in production. That would be a correct conception, but essentially an incomplete conception. After all Dr. Lohia also argued and fought for the empowerment, and capabilities enhancement of the downtrodden, Can any one claim that Dr. Lohia for instance would have disapproved of the use of internet by womenfolk in a village in India to direct their men folk to trading centers where they would be able to get higher price for their milk? In many instances, that comment of Dr. Lohia has been to
taken to imply a blind anti-science and anti-technology stance on his part, and often misused in the more notorious politics by lesser men of recent times. I believe that we need a more nuanced, and a more detailed appreciation of Dr. Lohia’s work, to go beyond the trivial, and contextual extensions. 

It is Dr. Lohia’s fear of Monotonic Logic and Mind, and its consequences for the society and especially for of the dis-empowered, coupled with his dictum that moral reasoning minus action would be like a sentence without a verb, that drove him to be one of the more ardent advocates of civil liberties and also be an agent provocateur throughout his life. In his thought, and in his actions, he was forever guided by the epistemic principles of Non-Monotonic logic, or rather a group of philosophical frameworks that encapsulate inferences. -i.e. where reasoning is expected to lead to tentative conclusions from everyday life, reserving the right to change those inferences in light of new information. The times that he grew up and lived in, and in which he led a life of civil disobedience, were marked by extreme and visceral horrors that were visited upon mankind by Imperialism, Colonialism, Fascism, Capitalism, and yes, even Marxist-Leninism. In a certain sense, they were all the products of Monotonic Logic, a pure deductive schema of conception, in which observable phenomenon could be explained from a-priori definitions of nature that hold universally and without exception. The danger of such conceptions, is that every consequence, howsoever horrific, could be rationalized away as being inevitable. Such a mind and logic, at the individual and at the level of collectives, blinds us to the adverse consequences, even impending massive human tragedies, because we have denied the possibility of fallibility of our assumptions, and denied the possibility of alternate conceptions.

The philosopher, John Gray, points to a fundamental cleavage in liberalism. On the one hand liberalism posits that there is one objective truth, which through exercise of rational thought, that is both comprehensible and also upon which consensus ought to be arrived at. On the other hand, liberalism also posits the view that toleration of different beliefs, experiences, views, and needs, and empathy for those who are deprived or left behind, is sine qua non for social stability, an indicia that justice prevails and the path to progress. The danger of the former view is that it is easy for us to come to the erroneous belief that the "truth" we have arrived at is the absolute truth. Consequently, it is easy to conclude that those who do not agree with us are the "others", the evil, the “disorderly” elements, the anti-progress luddites, and the anti-development anti-nationalists. Having conceived the "other" as irrational, it would but he a logical step to tyranny: elimination of voices of dissent. On the other hand, with the other view also we have problems: of argument for the sake of arguments, of every argument being posited as the right argument, and hence, denial of possibility of any action. The consequence is immediate: in the din of a million mutinies, the voices of cynical pragmatism, often called realism, advocate the loot and plunder of dis - embodied, de-socialized and de-humanized individuals, for whom the society has become but a market: a market of values, of ideas, liberties and rights. Again, the big machine takes over - the social machine of the elite comprising of, in Dr. Lohia's terms, those who possess at least two of the three attributes, viz., knowledge, wealth and felicity of speech in the language of power. This in turn seeks to create a collective monotonic mind, numb in its ethical value structures, dead to innate human empathy, uncaring of the suffering of fellow human beings, infantile in its demands on the social matrix, and blind to the impending doom of social conflagration.

History is littered with examples of social orderings and ideologies, that had promoted, and in turn been sustained, by such minds. The rise of fascism and the emergence of Nazi Germany are but particular instances, and arguably among the more gory ones. The singular aspect of German Nazi regime, we must remember, was that ordinary folks, like you and I, had turned a blind eyen to the rising tide of intolerance and inhumanity. People who otherwise were capable of ordinary countries, and indeed even great empathy for one another, had given into xenophobia, based on the singular belief that nothing overrides the redemption of their national pride, and development of the economy that projects their might abroad were to be the overriding goals. Further, they also believed that the path to such a goal was one, and anyone and who advocated an alternate vision or path was to be treated as immediately suspect - and indeed even to be eliminated - all debate, and conceptions of the alternate modes of social organization, were eliminated. A cultural blindness was created that failed even to perceive the holocaust - because the people being exterminated were made to be the others, and hence s stumbling block for the uni-dimensional.
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national goal popularized by the Nazi party. Indeed, we must remember that democratic elections brought the Nazis to power, and it was popular support that kept Nazis in power. Democracy, by itself, cannot be the arbiter of truth, and always necessarily conducive to promotion of human welfare. Preservation of alternate voices, the ones that question both the goal and the means, are vital for survival of understanding what is humane and inhumane.

Dr. Lohia was a student of human history - or more specifically, of the struggle of humanity against the monotonic minds of the elite that normalizes the indifference of rulers to the plight of the disempowered, and debasement of Civil Liberties. It is best to recall Dr. Lohia's own words in this regard: “The concept of civil liberty is an outcome of the struggle that the citizen has eternally waged against his State. Throughout history, the state and its laws have given rise to manifold types of abuses...... The wrath of the state fell on the citizen who tried to be critical. He suffered long and solitary confinements, quite often death, and his most precious possessions were snatched away from him. He, therefore stood in the need of basis of safety from where he could launch attacks on the abuses and evils of the times...... If a resistance of Civil Liberties prevails resistance to oppression is not attended with “frightful consequences”

It is such a historical conception that animated the thoughts and actions of Dr. Lohia. His was a nationalism that was based on an of the specificity of India's conditions, the particular needs, and the particular problems. Nevertheless, his was an open mind that could arrive at deducible inferences from the broad swath of human experiences, as a mode of guidance for immediate action, with a deliberately constructed appreciation of epistemic uncertainties, and fostering of monotonic mind sets by the big state to be experimental facts, that forever made him alive to the possibility of oppression. Hence for him civil liberties were never about mere textual promises, but about an actual existential necessity, far the individuals, the groups and the nation itself. For him, civil liberties were the essential foundations on which social stability, and a constructive and progressive democracy could be constructed. I would dare say that Dr. Lohia's thought and life are early precursors to the kind of deliberative and capability enhancing, democracy that Dr. Amartya Sen has been espousing for the past three decades. It pays to quote Dr’ Lohia himself in extenso: "Civit liberties comparatively smoothen society's march towards progress. Society is being eternally pulled between reaction and progress....In this pull, the state has more often been controlled by forces of stagnation and reaction..... Lest the State should turn into terrible obstruction to progress and continually block it by its repression, its supreme authority over the citizens stands in need of description and curtailment... In this manner orderly social progress becomes possible and society is not continually faced with the choice between tyranny and revolution. The concept of civil liberties is thus essentially a liberal concept which acts as a shock absorber of the cruel impact between state tyranny and mass revolts."

Given Dr. Lohia's justifiable fear of the monotonic mind, and its social ordering, whether of the Marxist kind, or of the capitalist kind, his greatest worry was about sustaining the feasibility of arguing for change, without resort to violence. In this regard, Dr. Lohia's thought and life, and more particularly his conception of the virtuous life, epitomizes what Paulo Freire, the eminent educationist from Brazil, as articulated as the search for a humanized condition. In every struggle for freedom from oppression, the quest for equality could and often does degenerate into an equal opportunity for the oppressed to oppress the oppressor in his or her turn. The dehumanized condition of oppression, thereby gets perpetuated. While violent agitations may be indicia of a social dialogue that has gone horribly wrong, one need to appreciate two facts. One, people normally do not take to violence if the society, and the state, had allowed the expression of dissent within the framework of diligently guarded civil liberties, which act as the safety valves. Second, the expression of violence cannot be met with unlawful and unconstrained violence of the state - for that will surely breed more resistance and violence. Dr. Lohia was actually alive to this, and in his book 'The struggle for Civil Liberties' he cites Senator Borah: “Repression is not only the enemy of free government, but it is the breeder of revolution'. It is the enemy of progress and human happiness. And above all, it is neither a test of error nor of truth."

Over the past few decades we have seen as a systematic demolition of the legitimacy, and validity, of civil liberties in many countries. We, I would submit, in this country are no exceptions to this rule. Even as neo-liberal economic thought took its evil roots again, as Washington consensus, and as
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necessary structural reforms in India, it systematically built a monotonic mind, ideology and culture. A knee jerk nationalism that condemns any expression of dissent as anti-national and anti-development has systematically been built into our popular discourse. Every expression of dissent has at some point or the other, and more often than not, been portrayed in our popular culture and elite discourses as a potential threat to a development that is conceived as billion dollar homes for the one or two, and shining towers of glass for the few, even as hundreds of millions are dispossessed of their land and livelihoods, of their water and clean air, of their social roots and the informal sector swells with hundreds of millions of displaced, dispossessed and dehumanized humanity. And when that humanity expresses its dissent, because the political process no longer properly encompasses its demands, the elite culture, in reaction, immediately asks for restoration of order, by use of extreme state repression, so that they can go back to their ever thinner TV's, a culture of glitz, and fads that define lifestyles, Dr. Lohia recognized the need for assiduous protection of civil liberties because they, in his words, lay "bare political and social abuses which are the fountainhead of all suppression..... An enquiry into a case of violation of civil liberties is simultaneously an enquiry into the particular abuse against which the individual had fought and for which the wrath of the State and other interests had descended upon him." Even as some of us recoil from the electronic media orchestrated demonstrations of the elite at the Taj, in which T-Shirts with messages such as "No Taxation without Protection", while the equal horror in Victoria terminus is ignored, and many people start to wonder why the masses appear to be disconnected with the woes of the elite, I think we would do well to recollect Dr. Lohia's words: "The special front of civil liberties maintains the backbone of the people, The spirit of opposition against injustice is kept intact. The individual gets strength from the knowledge that his resistance to police or executive oppression will awaken common interest. Again, such a common interest serves to convulse the conscience of the people against encroachment of their liberties. The people are taught to he vigilant so that they clear the road to progress "

In this regard I would be remiss not to contrast the wisdom of such thoughts and vision, against the reported observations of some persons holding high constitutional positions about protests by people against various repressive measures undertaken by the State. Some of these protesters have been likened to "private armies" and thugs in such observations. It has also been reported, by one eminent journalist, that one former judge of a High Court who visited a troubled spot, for verifying for himself about the actual conditions on the ground, was detained for five days, by the local police, and not produced before a judge within 24 hours as mandated by the law. Let us not be blind to the extent to which civil liberties can be systematically violated by the establishment, to pander to the desire for order amongst the elite, rather than conducting an enquiry into the violation of civil liberties as simultaneously an enquiry into the social and economic causes that have led the people to turn to protests. If even a former High Court judge is not afforded the protection of civil liberties, we can imagine the state of affairs for the common man, disempowered and disembodied by an establishment that dances to the tune of the elite segments.

Many years ago I visited the holocaust memorial in Boston, and what was engraved on that memorial has remained etched in my mind:

Quoting Martin Nimoeller it says:

They came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.
Then they came for me and by that time no one was left to speak up.

We are an increasingly young country - most of our population comprises of those below thirty. And most of those youngsters, while becoming increasingly aware of the differences in life's opportunities for a vast majority and those for whom life seems to be a well paved road to glass mansions, are also becoming increasingly disenchanted with both the political culture of calculated connivance, and popular culture of indifference. The avenues for expression of dissent are increasingly becoming narrower or non-existent. Even the media, that so often claims unbridled freedom of expression for itself, has taken to the extraordinary step of self imposed censorship so that the people at large remain in the dark about the seriousness, and legitimacy, of the deprivation and
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Disempowerment that drive social unrest in many parts of India. It would appear that the monotonic mind that Dr. Lohia has warned us against, may have become a tragic reality for those of us who still care about constitutional values and prospects.

In conclusion, let me say this: civil liberties are not some textual symbols on parchments to be discarded for maintenance of stability in the society so that we can escape into our Manidevellian modes of conspicuous consumption. They are the basic, and essential foundations of social progress, and hence of social stability. The life, and the works, of Dr. Lohia should always serve as a reminder of that fact. Dr. Lohia is also very famous for having initiated the Teen Anna, Pandra Anna debate, following a question in the Parliament about the cost per clay of the office of the Prime Minister. That was not some trivialized or petty attempt at denigrating another maker of modern India. That was an attempt to point out the fact that a culture which does not promote a spirit of humility, but only of propaganda initiated consensus, could spew out statistics that hide the prevalence of misery. Dr. Lohia was able to point out the fact that the Panning Commission hides the fact that if over 70 percent of Indians daily per capita income was indeed Teen Annah, and that Prime Minister Nehru's demurral that per capita income was pandarh Annah was a statistical fallacy - where the high income of the few had driven the average up. Such people are the need of the day, in all walks of our lives.

"Jinhe naaz hai Hind par, Wo kahaan hai, kahaan hai?"

Dr. Lohia answered that question, Trust the people. Build their capabilities to question and to participate in debate. Build bridges of empathy and genuine dialogue, demolish the walls of inequality, and of elite centric cultures and I

"Jinhe naaz hai Hind, woh yahi hai, yahi hai."

Minds. And we will have a country full of such people. And we would be able to say;

"Jinhe naaz hai Hind, woh yahi hai, yahi haiai."

On this birth centenary year of a great Indian - Rammanohar Lohia - how do we observe it? Is it just a ritualized day that we observe? A proforma, routinised gesture empty of content, or is it the substance of what Lohia stood for that inspires us?

Globally, birthdays and centenaries are mostly observed to remember those that have left behind an imprint on succeeding generations. That is why it is important to remember not so much the personality as his/her qualities, attributes and contributions to the society, the people and the nation that the deceased has left behind. Stone memorials, a newer form of ‘murti pooja’, idol worship, would, to my mind, be most inappropriate for a person like Lohia. Equally so, making out of stone memorials etc. That is why it is important to remember how essential Lohiaji and his thought remains in our nation’s life today. Principally, as a questioner; a prompter; a guide; an original thinker, an iconoclast, a debunker of humbug and falsities like family succession in a democracy. That is why Lohia could, therefore, be nothing else but a true socialist. And that is what we ought to reflect upon: how to rediscover the relevance of ‘Socialism in today’s world’. What does the word really mean, what is the essence of this political thought?

That is why the best way for us to remember Dr. Lohia is to not venerate or ‘personality worship’ him. Let us attempt to revive the qualities of independent thought and spirit that he truly represented: of moral courage in our country’s public life today, of the equality of all human beings; of free thought, free speech, free expression.

As for honouring his memory, I would recommend instituting an annual essay prize – in any Indian language – of “Lohia the person; the politician; the message”, for students but only, of the age group of 17 to 19.

A Questioner

Jaswant Singh
March 23, 1910 - October 12, 1967

Guest Editors: Anand Kumar and Qurban Ali
Dr. Lohia was not only an eminent political leader but also a scholar, a writer, and a thinker. He wrote and spoke about language, concepts of equality and freedom, foreign policy, history, aesthetics, caste in India, Indian women, Indian farmer, and the need for perpetual civil disobedience and mass struggles for transforming society. He also wrote on international relations and racial discrimination, Communism, Gandhi and Marx, crisis of modern civilization, non-violence, etc. Above all, Dr. Lohia contributed to the development of democratic socialist thought and the socialist movement in India at a stage of history when civilizational values and socio-economic conditions were not conducive for the birth of socialism. Some of Lohia's important writings are: Wheel of History, Will to Power, Guilty Men of Partition, Marx, Gandhi and Socialism, Foreign Policy, Kranti Ke Liye Sanghtan, Rama and Krishna, Valmiki and Vashishtha.

Dr. Lohia, participated intensely in the national movement from early 1930s to 1947. He is also remembered for his pro-peoples struggles in independent India. He went to jail thirteen times. He engaged himself in the satyagrah campaign in 1951 against Portuguese rule in Goa, and was arrested thrice and put in Portuguese jail. He campaigned in 1949 against the Chinese occupation of Tibet. And against Rajshahi in Nepal. Dr. Lohia raised his voice against atrocities against Nagas and Manipuris in North-East India and against the repression of Bengalese and Pathans in Pakistan in 1953. He campaigned against attempts of the USA to dominate India.

Today, Lohia’s thinking is relevant in regard to US-India relations, socialism in India, the role of opposition political parties in Indian democracy, flaws in the Indian polity and the prevailing political culture, anti-people role of the dominant middle classes in India and the official policy of science and technology policy of government.

India-US relation

A worrisome feature of India’s foreign policy today is it’s pro-Americanism. The 2008 India-US agreement regarding peaceful uses of atomic energy was a loud announcement of India’s well planned strategic tilt towards USA. The Government of India was unusually keen to allow nuclear energy industries in India and to offer concessions and facilities to US investors to set up nuclear power plants. Even in cultural field the US culture is penetrating the life of ruling middle classes and the power elect. In these circumstances Dr. Lohia’s perception of US and India relations is particularly relevant. He was the first political leader at the national level to caution the people of India about the consequences of intimate strategic relationship with USA.
to start its section in India”. In May 1874, Sasipada Bandyopadhyay started an illustrated monthly "Bharat-Sramajibi" (Indian Toilers). In 1900, Satis Chandra Mukerjee, the editor of a famous magazine mentioned in one of his articles, Engels’ State of Working Classes in England in 1844, Reference to Marx for perhaps the first time in the media was made in Amrita Bazar Patrika in 1903. An essay on the history of the socialist doctrine written by Prof. Ram Dev, an ardent Arya Samajist, was published in Vedic Magazine in 1909. The Modern Review published in 1910 Naginlal H. Setalved’s article on ‘Socialism and Social Movement’ and in March 1912, appeared Dr. Har Dayal’s “Karl Marx a Modern Rishi.” The first biography of Marx in an Indian language was published by K. Ramkrishna Pillai in Malayalam. In October 1916, Ambalal Patil wrote an article on Marx in Navajivan Ane Satya, a Gujarati, magazine.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 made a profound impact on India. S.A. Dange, in spite of paucity of material, published the book, Gandhi vs. Lenin in 1921. It gives “elementary principles of the movement in Russia”. In the following year, he brought out a weekly called The Socialist.

The Communist Party of India was formed in 1925. It is recorded that the British Government, as a matter policy, allowed books on Marxism to the revolutionaries who were arrested in connection with the Kanpur and Meerut Conspiracy cases. It is believed that the British rulers thought that the revolutionary ideology might serve as an antidote to the cult of violence. As regards the Indian National Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru, after his return from Europe after 1927, played an important role in encouraging Congress youth to think about socialism. In fact, it was at the Lahore Congress in 1929 that he declared himself to be a socialist and a republican.

It is in the above mentioned circumstances at the beginning of the thirties, many a young man, undergoing imprisonment in different jails, became critical of the Congress leadership and the way it was conducting the national struggle. They were not satisfied with the Karachi Resolution on Fundamental Rights. They wanted to go beyond it and felt that “a redefinition of [Congress] objectives and revision of its methods” was necessary to make Swaraj meaningful to the masses.

In 1934 thirty-two young men formed an All India Congress Socialist Party (CSP). The prominent among them were Acharya Narendra Deva, Sampoornanand, Jayaprakash Narayan, Rammanohar Lohia, Dr. Abdul Alim, N.G. Ranga, Faridul Haq Ansari, Minoo Masani, N.G. Goray, Kamla Shanker Pandya, Achyut Patwardhan, Iswherlal Desai, Saurabh (Soli) Batliwala, Prof. Abdul Bari, Purshottam Tricundas, Dr. K.B. Menon and Asoka Mehta. During the period 1934-47, the socialists in India concentrated on national struggle. After independence, the socialists emerged as an opposition force in Indian politics. But organizationally they suffered from divisions.

It is noteworthy that by mid-1950s the ranks of leaders of the Socialist Party depleted substantially. Jayaprakash Narayan became a jeevan dani and joined Vinoba's Bhoodan Movement. Achyut Patwardhan became a theosophist; N.G. Ranga joined the peasant movement. Asoka Mehta joined the Congress and propounded the theory of "compulsions of backward economy", Acharya Narendra Dev who was inclined towards Budhism, died in mid-fifties.

It is clear that only Dr. Rammanohar Lohia stuck to the socialist movement in India and led it up to 1967 and made substantial contribution to the formulation of philosophy and polices of the Congress Socialist Party. For example, as president of the Congress Socialist Party he devoted the entire presidential address to the doctrinal foundations of socialism. It was during Lohia's presidency of the CSP that the word “Congress” was removed from the party’s name.

Parliamentary politics

Dr. Lohia was initially opposed to the Constituent Assembly. But he and the Socialist Party actively participated in the system of governance envisaged in the Constitution both in the state's assemblies and in the Parliament. The objective was two-fold (a) if possible, to come to power at the centre and in the states (b) to act as an opposition party singly, or in cooperation with other opposition parties in the legislatures because the Indian parliament was characterized by one-party dominance. Dr. Lohia formulated a seven-year strategy to oust the Congress from the position of pre-dominance. He propounded
the policy of non-Congressesism and anti-Congressism in order to build a two-party system in India.

Dr. Lohia entered Parliament in 1963 in the third Lok Sabha; he activated the opposition parties in parliament, to act as a watchdog of the nation’s and people’s interests and to question the flawed policies of the Government. In the parliament he also focused attention on the conditions of the poor and the marginalized. For example, in 1963, the Lok Sabha was virtually shaken by the debate which Dr. Lohia initiated on the desirability spending 2500 rupees a day on Nehru as P.M. in a country where a majority of the people lived on three annas (less then one quarter of a rupee) per day. Nehru defended this expenditure and quoted India's Planning Commission statistics to show that the daily average income was more than 15 annas (a little under a rupee per day). But Doctor Lohia insisted on having a special debate, in which he captivated the members of Parliament to such an extent that many members of parliament gave up their time to Dr. Lohia to present his case.

Further, the views of Dr. Lohia are relevant in respect of the following issues which have been a subject of widespread public debate in recent times: (i) The functioning of Lok Sabha and the cost involved; (ii) India-Pakistan relations and India-China relations; (iii) lektokn ds fy, jktuSfrd vkSj llrOkaf dr dk la?kVu (iv) oa’k0kn in politics; (v) the present national crisis which is reminiscent of a similar crisis during the life-time of Lohia.

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The anti-imperialist struggle against the British started in 1920, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He introduced the new methodology of non-violence and non-cooperation into the framework of the struggle. The freedom fighters were largely scared of the might and power of the British, namely, its modern arms, weapons and bullets. They were trapped by the fear of injury and death but the salt Satyagraha of Dandi march, a major step in non-cooperation movement was led by Gandhiji as a forlorn soldier with tremendous success. The masses were a witness to the fearless march of Gandhi which emboldened them to become fearless.

After this, the major event which turns out as a landmark in the freedom struggle is the "Quit India" movement. On 8th August, 1942, the Indian National Congress passed a resolution almost late in the evening and called on the British "to Quit India", once for all. They were no longer prepared to support the British war against Fascism. All the top national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Sadar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and Azaad were arrested on the morning of 9th August, 1942. Vinoba Bhave was the first to court arrest.

Gandhiji gave a stirring call for the masses of India to participate in the movement with a "do or die" slogan. The response was enormous. The unarmed men, women, youth and children courted arrest in the midst of violent attack of lathies and bullets. From among those, who were arrested many were brutally tortured and maimed.

There was no second line of leadership left to carry on the anti-imperialist struggle. The plan of the British was to crush the movement with an iron hand; to some extent, they have succeeded, to begin with. But soon this was proved false with the entry of valiant socialist leaders like Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali Achut Patwardhan and others. They formed their underground network and united all the underground freedom fighters to keep the struggle alive and the flag flying.

Dr. Lohia used the Congress Freedom Radio and made fiery speeches to awaken the fire and enthusiasm of the masses. He also wrote booklets and edited bulletins about the national struggle and provided a proper direction to the freedom movement which otherwise would have been like a boat without rudder.

The socialist fighters led by Dr. Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan developed a programme of sharpening the struggle in terms of mobilization as well as the realization of the objective of freedom, 1) They first concentrated on destroying the system of communication and paralyzing the administration, 2). They planned for either seizing the offices of British administration or damaging them, 3). They developed a plan of blowing of those trains which carried the British arms and ammunitions used against the freedom fighters.

Dr. Lohia was a very good visionary of foreign policy and he was appointed as the secretary of foreign policy department of the Indian National Congress by Pandit Nehru in 1934. With his vast erudition he related the freedom struggle of India with the struggles of other nations. He was not an isolationist but believed in Universalist view of the freedom struggle. Thanks to his teachers Prof. Onken, he had a good grounding in history and could relate the past with the present and future. About the Indian freedom struggle, he said: "India has been the subject of world history during the last 150 years. Free India must not remain merely a subject of world history", it must become its creator.

The underground movement was an interval between 1942 arrests of leaders and the open politics of negotiations in 1944. Dr. Lohia led the underground movement from 9th August, 1942 to 28th May, 1944. He managed to escape the clutches of British police and intelligence with great skill and courage. As stated earlier, he operated the Congress Freedom Radio from underground with the help of other friends and spread the idea of revolution for 94 days from 13th August to 14th November, 1942. Dr. Lohia was
a dauntless speaker and a selfless fighter. He burnt with freedom and kindled the fire of emancipation in youth and students as well as the government employees and the police of the British administration. In his speeches and writings he attacked the arrogance of the British and their strategy of terror. For sometime, he propagated on the radio from Calcutta.

Many people from different parts of India participated in the freedom struggle with great gusto and dedication to his astonishment; he found the communists and their party overnight changing their stand towards the British. Earlier, they were calling it as an 'Imperialist War' but under the inspiration and guidance of Moscow, they changed their terminology and called it a "People's War". This was shocking and traumatic and Dr. Lohia was forced to have a second look at the doctrine of Marxism itself because he suspected that there was something lacking in the fundamentals of Marxist ideology. During this period, he wrote a long but unfinished treatise titled "Economics after Marx". In this, he came up with the formulation of the twin origins of capitalism and imperialism/colonialism.

During this period, an underground publication called "Do or Die" was started with his inspiration. Dr. Lohia wrote profusely on the future economy of India, decentralization of power and the power-operated spinning wheel etc. He cautioned the leaders that India should not become a 'slave' to the 'machine'.

In his underground life, Lohia changed places and also changed faces. In Bombay, he was dressed up in Pyjama, Sherwani with a cap while in Calcutta he was immaculately dressed in western attire. These were the tactics needed to escape the gaze of the British spys and police.

Dr. Lohia came to know that Jayaprakash Narayan was in Nepal continuing his underground activity. Then he went to Nepal and met him in a camp where the youth were being imparted training in the use of fire arms. He was very much excited by the activity but it was against his credo of non-violence.

After some time, the Nepal government at the instance of the British, ordered their police to arrest Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan and others. Having arrested, the Nepal police lodged them at Hanuman Nagar camp 70 miles away from the main base camp. The guerilla wing of the freedom fighters known as "Azaad Dasta" decided to liberate Lohia and JP. They came in the early hours at Hanuman Nagar and burnt the huts; they also heavily fired in the air in all directions. This created confusion in the Nepal's police as they thought that a large number of armed men had attacked them. They were demoralized and could not stop the operation of setting Dr. Lohia and JP free. After travelling few days Dr. Lohia reached Calcutta safely.

The British government was chagrinned with this development and was furious about the escape of Dr. Lohia from the clutches of Nepal police. They announced big prize money on the head of Lohia and for providing information leading to his arrest.

While staying in Bombay on 19th May, 1944, Dr. Lohia was caught and arrested in a flat located in a building in Babulnath road in Bombay. Thus, the adventurous and courageous saga of underground life came to a halt.

He was kept in Bombay jail for one month and later was transferred to Lahore fort which is now in a part of Pakistan. The Lahore fort was notorious for its methods of cruelty and torture. Dr. Lohia was subjected to third degree methods and new methods of torture were tried on his body to extract information from him about the underground movement. He used to be taken from the prison to Jailor's office with "hand cuffs" around and used to be ordered, to sit in a chair for hours together and ask him the same question "where are your comrades?", "tell us, we will be nice to you". After long hours of questioning Dr. Lohia used to get tired and sleepy. Immediately the chair used to be kicked out and he was forced to be awake, although against his will. The sleepless torture initially started with 3 days but later savagely inflicted for more than 30 days on him. Dr. Lohia felt lonely, despondent and helpless. He told the Jailor and his constables that he was prepared to tell everything about himself but did not know about the other freedom fighters and comrades in arms. But the Britishers were not prepared to believe his version and continued the torture.

During this period, Dr. Lohia tried to inform the central government and its under-secretary Mr. Arthur Anderson at Delhi, but the Punjab police suppressed the information from reaching the higher authorities.
Lohia wrote a detailed account of his torture but it never came to the light of the people as the information was 'killed' by the Punjab government in collusion with the Federal government.

In December 1944, he was allowed to file a Habeas Corpus petition in the High Court. He added an addendum to his petition but it was heard in camera preventing the press from highlighting the information to the people of India. The petition, however, was dismissed by the local as well as the federal court.

Dr. Lohia vividly remembered the days of his torture in Lahore Fort and said that the suffering was painful and intense; it was a "Stodgy Situation" through which he passed and became further stubborn in his resolve to keep the 'information' about the movement 'close to his breast'. In a letter to Prof. Harold J. Laski, he described the suffering and torture in detail exposing the barbarous character of the British police and administration.

After a long duration of anguish and isolation he was set free at the intervention of Mahatma Gandhi. When Gandhi heard about Dr. Lohia, he was moved and tears rolled off his cheeks. He had a great regard and love for his fearless conduct and spotless integrity. In a press conference he said: "Whenever I find Dr. Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan in prison, I feel very sorry, for I have hardly known straighter and braver men than they".

Coming out of prison later Lohia wrote an account of this torture that

I personally did not get to meet Dr. Lohia. My image of him was constructed by my reading of his works and speeches and by anecdotes about his persona which people shared while I was studying in Delhi University and later at JNU. The image of Dr. Lohia that comes to my mind is of an intellectual visionary who could take the best of Indian and western ideas (like his explanation of the distinction of caste and class) to analyse reality and put forth an alternative to the problems faced by India. He was an extraordinary humanist, who seemed to have the ability to view reality from angles which hitherto had not been thought of.

The assessment of the contribution of Dr. Lohia needs an in-depth critical study and analysis; and I have not made such a study as yet.

Dr. Lohia’s impact is seen in the events that have unfolded in the last four decades after his passing away. During the last four decades, the power of his political ideas has borne fruit. Various strata of Indian society especially the oppressed castes, have been able to mobilize themselves into a formidable political power group so much so that now in northern India, power has shifted to them. Today, the emergence of great leaders belonging to Dalits and OBCs in northern states owes to the power of his ideas. But unfortunately, many of these leaders while riding the crest of the transformation in the political sphere have not carried forward his vision and ideas to bring about changes in the social sphere.

The following ideas of his are still relevant and perhaps need to be reinvented and made ‘relevant’ to the 21st century. His conceptions of ‘equality’ and visions of ‘humanism’ are still relevant especially given the looming environmental crisis, and growing inequality we in India and our planet seems to be facing. Further Dr. Lohia was a leader who practised what he preached and preached what he practised, whether in his personal life or public life. Ethical Leaders of his kind are becoming a rare breed in India today. Lastly, his emphasis on the need to have concepts and categories which emerge from the cultural context of India for people to make sense is still relevant; and this is a challenge we still face.

A few things could be considered to honour the ideas and contributions of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia for the coming times:

a) DIGITAL ACCESS: A digital access of his works would enable his ideas to reach further; and this would enable activists and scholars to have access to them. A digital web site is needed where all his works could be made available.

b) SCHOLARSHIPS: Scholarships for those working on his ideas. This could be for

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Equality between Men and Women

Ranjana Kumari

Dr Lohia presented equality between men and women as a central part of his socialism and wider philosophy. If these could be reduced to one idea, it would be equality. For him, it was the central ethical principle around which the entire complex of the theory and practice of socialism revolved.

His ideas of equality between men and women were linked to wider inequalities he saw within society. He believed that discrimination based on sex was inescapably linked to discrimination based on caste, and together they were seen as the cause of much suffering and of the depriving of all positive motivation. He wrote, “I am convinced that two segregations of caste and women are primarily responsible for this decline of spirit. These segregations have enough power to kill all capacity for adventure and joy”.

Dr Lohia maintained that the hierarchy of caste and gender discrimination stemmed from the same ideological perspective. He argued that history showed that in India the process of segregation along these lines had taken place at the same time, and that the principle that operated in these two forms of segregation were the same. Therefore the agitation he envisioned to end caste discrimination would invariably represent voices against gender discrimination as well.

Dr Lohia had no illusions about the status of women in our society: “Woman is undoubtedly among the most exploited sections of humanity, together with poorest and lowliest of men. She may try to forget her condition with love or trinkets and her charitable generosity. But ugly practices of society and certain dark recesses of the soul have both combined to turn woman into a sphere where socialism is most needed. If socialism and democracy are a battle for equality, they are cut out specially as creeds of women.”

In presenting the actual condition of women Dr Lohia said that of all the injustices plaguing the earth, the foremost were those arising out of inequality between the sexes. He argued that while most of humanity suffers from one inequality, one half of it is weighed down further.

In this centenary year we must not forget how relevant Dr Lohia remains today and how many of his arguments and ideas were ahead of his time. His views on the position of women and gender equality not only recognized the terrible state that so many women find themselves in but also presented hugely ambitious goals for the equality of all. At both times he remained realistic in what was needed, but optimistic in what could be achieved.

For social development and nation building

While he was not the first to raise the question of gender equality, nor was it new to the national movement, Dr Lohia contribution has been in his capacity to raise the concern for women into a political doctrine.

He was also crucial in linking gender inequality to other challenges such as caste discrimination and therefore ensuring it remained an important part of the collective struggle for progress. Overall making the issue of segregation of women a major issue was a very important input from Dr Lohia as it helped contextualize the post-colonial challenges before Indian society and Indian women.

Dr Lohia’s impact can also be seen in how it helps us understand the persistent problems that remain with us and what can be done to eradicate them. By insisting that equality, poverty and gender problems remained interlinked, he recognized the complexity of the problems faced by society, and how any solutions cannot only address one issue if they are to be successful.

By considering the segregations of caste and gender as primarily responsible for the decline in spirit of Indian people and society, Dr Lohia made the emancipation of women completely crucial to social development and nation building.

He said that gender inequality is the most difficult barrier towards progressing to an egalitarian social system. He refused to see the removal of poverty through economic
modernization as automatically meaning that such inequality would disappear. Women’s emancipation was also crucial and necessary as “poverty and the two segregation of caste and sex thrive upon each other’s worms”.

**Modern Feminism and Lohia**

When compared to modern feminism, it is important to remember that for Lohia, like Gandhi, the process, the tools and the ethics of transformation were as important as the change itself. While his own most important contribution lay more in his capacity to raise the concern for women to a political doctrine, there is little doubt that he was honest in pursuing solutions to the layers of difficulties that made social equality for women so elusive.

Lohia was in many respects modern in his desire to look at the new questions of submissiveness, marriage and motherhood among women. He made arguments about the right of women to divorce and remarry in the 1950s, and supported making birth control facilities available to all regardless of marital status. He also raised issues regarding female sexuality before most.

He spoke on modern topics such as monogamy and supported the right of women to control their own relationships. “Don’t mistake me as valorizing a woman who has more than one lover,” he said. “But I am condemned to search for equality.” Lohia did not accept the position that the ideal of faithfulness and undying loyalty had been created with only women in mind.

He also wrote on the situation of single women, whom he did not perceive as odd members outside of normal society. He wrote that women did not need a social relationship to make them complete, and that single women were “probably no more unhappy than very married women”.

Dr Lohia also held views regarding how women are treated that relate to modern feminist thinking around possession and women as communities. He found that the conventional image and identity of women was basically perceived as physical, and that her ‘purity’ was the embodiment of the dignity of the social unit to which she belonged. As such, she becomes property and not human.

**Sita and Draupadi**

Lohia used various mythological characters such as Sita, Savitri, Draupadi in his discussions, often going beyond their mythological roles and representing categories or symbols of social roles and values. Using mythological terrain was an attempt by Dr Lohia to find a more permanent way out of the old bias against women in Indian society. It was in mythology that countless behavioral and moral touchstones had been created and nurtured.

Dr Lohia discussed Draupadi in his famous essay “Draupadi or Savitri”. He maintained that “It is very much possible that these two women are imagined. There is also the possibility that they did exist in reality.” Dr Lohia never described Draupadi as a goddess. He humanized the character, and never tried to thrust divinity upon her. He also insisted that no personality was to be accepted and venerated as a perfect or unquestionable ideal. Her character was to be considered only as a starting point of a wider discussion.

The foremost point of comparison and contrast between Savitri and Draupadi was embedded in their social roles as wives, in conformity with the social institution of marriage. Dr Lohia criticized the tendency to sensationalize the debate by those who perceived Draupadi primarily as the wife of five husbands.

For Dr Lohia, Savitri and Draupadi were not opposites or two contrasting role models. He felt that if chastity and fidelity were highlighted and upheld as female virtues at the cost of other accomplishments, it is difficult to view this as ideal.

Dr Lohia wrote that with the exception of Krishna, “Draupadi is perhaps the one woman of myth or history in the wide world, who was wiser and wittier than all the men of her time.” There are numerous episodes in which Draupadi’s wisdom is seen as being revealed and she refused to be defined only by her social relationship to men. By also refusing to name all her
relationships, she represented a degree of social emancipation and equality that was close to Dr Lohia’s vision of socialism. “Krishna and Krishna (Draupadi) are the two heroes of Mahabharat, of equal merit, companions without a shadow of conflict”, he said.

He also emphasized the importance of the color of her skin. That she was the opposite of the conventional “fair” beauty was used by Dr Lohia to suggest that such skin-deep considerations – in life, values, priorities, knowledge, relationships, etc. – do not lay any lasting foundations in society, least of all that of a socialist civilization. “The accepted tyranny of color can be seen in its most accentuated forms. All the world suffer, this tyranny of skin’s color …The distance between dark and fair and between rich and poor is covered by innumerable intermediate points so that the restoration of a valid aesthetic judgment has become as difficult as that of a proper economic of moral standard.”

However, the canonization of any mythical, social or historical personality was absolutely counter to Dr Lohia’s vision of a socialist society. Although Draupadi fulfilled many of the expectations of women as equal members of society, Dr Lohia did not accept her unconditionally. He used flaws in her character to reiterate his belief that no halo should be assigned to anybody.

“I have great regard for Savitri but only in one respect” he said. “But a woman is not confined to one virtue. There are 20 others.” He argued that

the ideal of womanhood could not be built on a single virtue of fidelity and chastity. As such we must reject any character or figure that represents only one dimension and does not reflect the complex nature of women or men.

By emphasizing only good qualities in relation to men and their role as wives, Dr Lohia believed that women’s full potential could not be met and as such equality would be unachievable. Women, as equal members of society, should aim for the same complex mix and range of virtues and attributes that men do.

**Relevant aspects of his legacy**

Many aspects of Dr Lohia’s legacy remain relevant today. Some have argued that both his economic agenda and his consistent and uncompromising advocacy of gender justice are being almost forgotten. While the feminist strand of thinking has strengthened in Indian academia, Dr Lohia’s thoughts have been largely forgotten.

His thoughts and arguments on issues relating to gender and sexuality have remained highly relevant. He argued that sexual ethics based on the bondage of women ultimately created all sorts of perversion, and that only a frank, free and clear approach to sex can engender healthy ethics. He also maintained that it is a mistaken notion to think of the women as merely a machine for producing children. He wrote on abortion, sterilization, birth control and the concept of ‘promiscuity’, all of which remain very relevant today.

Unfortunately his views on discrimination based on race and skin cover also continue to be relevant. Dr Lohia felt great concern over the fate of women who suffered greater oppression because of the color of their skin. He maintained that women should not be considered inferior on the basis of skin color and that “the color of the skin is certainly no criterion of beauty.”

In spite of the fact that most of political followers failed to understand his idea on women’s emancipation Dr Lohia’s views remain as relevant as ever as he maintained that it was the responsibility of all men and women to work for progress. The idea that we all have a responsibility towards contributing to progress can be found within his work: “Women have to be conscious and aware to feel and realize at every step of their life that they are builders of their nation and peaceful world.”

Dr Lohia wrote on the importance of what might be called practicalities in ensuring progress towards gender equality, and to carry forward his vision it is crucial that they are not over looked. He identified key areas in the life of Indian women that needed immediate attention, including the slavery of the kitchen, the hypocrisy involved in sex and marriage. He also underlined the need to make use of the institution of marriage to overcome caste and gender discrimination by promoting inter-caste marriages and offering government jobs to only such couples until there was real change. Clearly such issues still remain important in the modern struggle for gender equality and so continuing to carry
on campaigning on these is crucial to carrying on Dr Lohia’s approach.

Taking real action to work towards equality was obviously seen as important by Dr Lohia, and this included reservation and quotas for women in government. Participation was seen as crucial, and involvement in the decision-making processes at the domestic and public levels was seen as the most important indicator of women’s empowerment. In order to carry on Dr Lohia’s vision and approach, it is vital that we do not lose sight of the importance that he placed on this issue.

Overall efforts to make Dr Lohia’s ideas and programs popular beyond the centenary program should focus on the continued relevancy that his ideas and work have. Despite progress in many areas, many of the problems that Dr Lohia encountered are still with us. If we are to continue to make progress we must remember the huge importance that he placed on equality, recognize the importance of history and mythology in formulating perceptions regarding gender and take real steps to helping achieve equality. While these may include reservation, increased resources for marginalized women or making new efforts to ensure economic equality, it is clear from the legacy of Dr Lohia that we must take real, concrete and practical steps to achieve our goals.

Note: I am thankful to Donald Graham for his help in this article.

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Economic & Political Weekly, October 2, 2010, Vol xliv no 40, Understanding Lohia’s Political Sociology: Intersectionality of Caste, Class, Gender and Language, Anand Kumar

I was drawn to Rammanohar Lohia’s writings as a student activist at JNU. I did my graduation at Berhampur town in Orissa which was then a citadel of communist politics; the CPI was the major political force and its student wing, the AISF, was the most influential student group. But like most other campuses, the student politics in Khalikote College in Berhampur lacked the democratic culture. Violence was the order of the day.

JNU presented an alternative culture, though the communist groups dominated the students’ union there. I was a leftist at heart, but, despite strong persuasion by the communist student groups, I did not want to be a part of them. My experience with their violent means in Orissa may have been a factor, but, I was more disillusioned with their political discourse in JNU. They emphasised the significance of the democratic culture in India, but justified the mass killings abroad in the name of ideology. The double standard was evident.

Some of us, left-leaning idealists, were in a dilemma; our social science training convinced us that untramelled capitalism would create an island of prosperity in the ocean of poverty. But communism was no panacea for those who value their freedom. We were attracted to the doctrine of Fabian Socialism that married the goals of communism to the democratic underpinnings of capitalism, but we were not sure if any variant of Fabian Socialism will work in a country like India.

A chance meeting with Dr Anand Kumar, a former president of JNU students’ union, who was schooled in the Lohiaite ideology as a student leader in BHU, drew us to the writings of Lohia. The socialist ideologue provided answers to many of the questions that troubled us then. But we realised that after Lohia’s death, many of his followers had largely abandoned the doctrinal foundation of the Indian variant of socialism laid by him, in their cold pursuit of power. That is why, we chose to create an autonomous student group called Students for Democratic Socialism rather than align with the student wing of any of the political parties that claimed to inherit Lohia’s legacy.

Lohia clearly distinguished himself from Fabianism in creating an alternative ideological framework for socialist politics, alternative to both capitalism and communism. As he wrote, “Socialism should cease to live on borrowed breath. Too long has it borrowed from communism its economic aims and from capitalism (or the liberal age) its economic and general aim. An acute disharmony has resulted.... This grafting of one on the other is full of peril to the future of socialism, for it encourages the disastrous belief that economic democracy prevails under communism and political democracy under capitalism and all that needs to be done is to join them....Both capitalism and communism have their own integrations and whatever disasters they might yet heap on mankind, they are at least logical monsters. Unless socialism is able to disintegrate the premises on which capitalism and communism are founded and arrange instead its own harmony of economic and general aims, it would continue to be an illogical doctrine that refuses to come of age... To explore once again the economic and the general aims of society and integrate them into a harmony should be a high endeavour of the socialist doctrine.”

Lohia’s exploration led to the following conclusion: “Communism alters only the capitalist relations of production and seeks to reproduce its forces; socialism must alter them both. This is no rejection of the machine, but it is a rejection of the situation in which the heavy machine, and its counterpart, the Leviathan state, predominates”.

Lohia argued that in Europe, capitalism had built a reservoir of productive wealth, which socialism could distribute. But socialism in the rest of the world must build the reservoir before it goes on to distribute. There lay the difference in the challenges before the Indian socialists.

While expounding on this challenge, Lohia wrote: “Where such a productive apparatus has yet to be created, socialism needs to be drastic and in order to be that,
it cannot always adhere to the slow processes of constitutionalism. While European socialists have earned lasting credit for their refusal to misuse power of government to defeat their opponents illegally and for their faith that to lose democratically is better than to win dictatorially and set up a model of constitutional action when socialism in office, socialism in opposition must often contend with ways of struggle. The processes of persuasion and law-making are not always available or timely; to them must be added the methods of class struggle, particularly in the underdeveloped areas. Class struggle hastens the destruction of capitalism, without which two-thirds of the world cannot even make the first move.”

To assure his followers that he was not getting into the trap of the communist logic, Lohia said: “there are two kinds of class struggle, one that destroys capitalism in one of its aspects (private property) but reinforces it in another (capitalist technology). This is the class struggle that the communists vouch for. Socialism must devise forms of struggle and organisation which destroy capitalism in both its aspects. Decentralisation of both the productive technology and the political power should be the motto of socialism.”

How do we achieve it? There has always been a binary view: electioneering or insurrectionary activity; Ballot vs Bullet. It is a false dichotomy, Lohia said: “The task is activity; Ballot vs Bullet. It is a false electioneering or insurrectionary activity; two-thirds of the world cannot even make the first move.”

Lohia gave us the answers we were looking for, but some doubts persisted. What did he mean when he said that “socialism cannot always adhere to the slow processes of constitutionalism”? Was he advocating violence as the justifiable means in exceptional circumstances? He spelled out the objectives of class struggle. But how was socialist class struggle to be carried out? Was it likely to lead to insurrectionary activity? These were some of the questions which kept troubling me then. But I am sure, Lohia had the answer to these questions.

**Political culture**

Several commentators have examined the weaknesses of specific institutions of democracy, viz, judiciary, executive and legislature and less attention has been given to the overall “political culture” of India. Dr. Lohia focused attention on the political culture of India after 1947. For example, the political culture of India after 1947 could be a basis of reviewing the functioning of democracy in India and remove its aberrations.

**Academic culture**

Several academics have examined the weaknesses of specific institutions of democracy, viz, judiciary, executive and legislature and less attention has been given to the overall “academic culture” of India. Dr. Lohia focused attention on the academic culture of India after 1947. For example, the academic culture of India after 1947 could be a basis of reviewing the functioning of democracy in India and remove its aberrations.

**Exhibition site**

A special place in Delhi which could exhibit his life in photos (or audios and videos) for younger people to visit, come to know and learn.

d) **AWARD**

An annual or a bi-annual Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Award to any person in the world, who works for the improvement of the lives of the marginalized people especially in developing countries. This award may be given by the President of India.
As the political situation in Nepal has been in turmoil for a long time, some scholars used to say that Nepal is in a permanent transition. Even 60 years after the end of the Rana hereditary prime ministerial system in 1951, the political situation has neither been stable nor has improved. In fact, the Nepali democracy struggle gathered momentum from the 1940s, especially after four Nepali youths were sentenced to death by hanging, by the government in 1942, as they were involved in protesting against the Ranas. It can be said that the movement in Nepal was inspired by the anti-British movement already going on in India. The Nepalese, especially those who were in India as students, were the key factors which led the anti-Rana movement. Formation of Nepali Congress (NC) and adoption of a strategy of the armed revolution to overthrow the Rana regime at its Bairgania (India) Conference of September 26-27, 1950 were the two bold decisions which helped and inspired the Nepalese to strengthen the movement. Later, the revolution was supported not only by the then King Tribhuvan, but also by Indian and Burmese socialists, as the former put the throne to risk and went into exile in India; and the latter fought as comrades-in-arms physically too.

The anti-Rana revolution successfully ended on February 18, 1951. It was followed by a tripartite agreement that led Nepal on the path to democratization. But after two years of the successful movement, the then king Tribhuvan started violating the mandate of the movement, agreements and constitutional provisions. Later in 1959, the King agreed to hold general elections for parliament, only after strong pressure by the political parties. The election had paved the way for formation of the first elected government in the country. The king, however, dismissed the government on December 15, 1960 after one-and-a-half years of its formation, and imposed partyless political system - Panchayat - claiming that he (the king) is the source of the constitution, and sovereignty also belonged to him. Nepali people once again threw out the authoritarian Panchayat regime through their continued struggle followed by the successful Jana Andolan II in 1990, and restored the democratic set-up. However, this struggle could not be sustained for long as it was challenged by both extremists - the extreme left (the Maoist), and the extreme right (the royalists). Again, people came out on the streets to protest against the violent and authoritarian activities of both the extreme mists in 2006; and succeeded in a democracy struggle by winning over all the threats - the institution of monarchy, the political parties, the Maoists, and the international community. However, though Nepal witnessed a historical political transformation after 2006, it is yet to overcome the political crisis. In fact, there are still challenges ahead before ending the ongoing political transit by drafting a new constitution. Why? What were the major deficits in Nepal and Nepali leadership on account of which the democracy struggle did not succeed? It failed to institutionalize the achievements of the various successful and historical movements. Weak, vision-less and inefficient delivery systems of the subsequent governments formed after the revolutions, "unnecessary" dependency over external powers, especially India, and lack of clarity of political parties about how to deal with the issues of minorities and deprivations, are the major faultiness of Nepali political parties which directly and indirectly weakened them at local level. Lohia was the one who sensed the likely failure of Nepali leadership in consolidating democracy. The following section discusses some of Lohia's thoughts which are not only directly related to the crisis that is being faced by Nepal, but are also very relevant to deepening democracy in the country.

**Political Transition and Delivery System**

In fact, Lohia was the one who engaged himself with the struggle of Nepali democracy since he met B. P. Koirala for the first time in 1946. According to Lohia, they had a very close relationship, as if they were two colleagues of the same party, or two brothers of the same family. He was one of few Indians who were imprisoned in Nepal during Nepal's democracy struggle. Along with his close association, he
had given a couple of suggestions to Koirala, which according to Lohia, could help in consolidating democracy in a society like Nepal. The three major suggestions given by Lohia were: distribution of land, start campaigns to hold the election of the constituent assembly, and fight against nepotism. Lohia was of the view that socio-economic reforms, such as land distribution or land reform, would be possible only if undertaken immediately. He said these could not be achieved if the issues were delayed after the revolution. With this objective, Lohia kept suggesting to Koirala to start land distribution and campaigns for constituent assembly election right after the NC controlled Biratnagar, and came into power in 1950-51. But Lohia was disappointed with the Nepali leadership, especially B.P. Koirala when NC joined the interim government in 1951 just after the revolution against Rana oligarchy, and Lohia saw no indication of implementing the programs suggested by him. Perhaps Lohia mistakenly read the tripartite agreement of 1951 and blamed B.P. Koirala only for not taking initiative for implementing the progressive programs such as land reforms. This is because NC, though it mobilized Nepali people and defeated the autocratic Rana regime, it did not have more say in the interim government since it was one of the three coalition partners of the cabinet without the prime ministership. And, it time and again witnessed that the other two coalition partners - the royalists and Ranas - jointly opposed it, when the NC proposed to go for people-oriented programs. And when the NC came into power with two-thirds majority in the firstly elected parliament in 1960, it introduced various people-oriented socio-economic reforms, including land reforms. However, the NC government led by Koirala was thrown out.

In fact, Lohia should be recalled for aptly saying that every program would be possible if it is introduced just after the revolution is over. And, that has been the missing link of Nepali democracy struggle time and again. One could easily argue that if the interim governments - in 1990 and in 2006 - formed just after the revolutions (people’s movement) were over, introduced pro-people socio-economic policies and programs, it would have been a different situation than at present. In fact, such a program could have helped the common people to own the system, and thus it was the best way in deepening democracy at local level. It was fortunate that the same NC party could lead two major mass movements in Nepal after 1960 – led by the NC leaders K.P. Bhattarai in 1990, and G.P. Koirala in 2006, and the interim governments after the movements. And it was unfortunate that both the governments could not come up with the programs which could encourage commoners to support the changed situation, and weaken anti-democracy elements in the country. Rather, it eventually led to instability and misgovernance as the democratic set-up after the revolution was comparable to ‘old wine in a new bottle’. The country has time and again faced difficulty in saving even the essential democratic rights, due to non-implementation of socio-economic programs, which created frustration among people. And, today's anxiety over whether the contry can complete the institutionalization process of democracy, has also been squarely related to the failure of the interim government to introduce and implement the people-centric programs suggested by Lohia.

**Nepal-India Relations**

It was Lohia who could sense the real tendency of Nepali leadership in terms of Indo-Nepal relations. He once stated that leaders of India’s neighbouring countries often visit people like him if they are not in power. When they are in power, they stop being in touch with Indian people who helped them in their democracy struggles, and they confine their contacts only to the Indian government. What Lohia said about the behaviour leadership in neighborhood in the past, is still valid after 60 years. Also, it is witnessed in the later days that Nepal's relations with India have been somehow confined to the level of bureaucracy in India. And, unfortunately, it is not due to India but due to Nepali political leadership's choice to avoid having a dialogue with their Indian counterparts.

Even today, Indian civil society blames the Nepali political parties and leaders for using their Indian counterparts merely as a ladder to capture power in Kathmandu. Once they are in power, they prefer not to maintain such relations. The trend has created severe problems in respect of Nepal-India relations also, as it results in misunderstandings among the political forces, including civil society of two countries. Nepal should understand that it is the political parties which could help in consolidating the achievements of democratic struggles. They also
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need to understand the limitations of bureaucracy; unlike political parties and their leaders, it has nothing to do with any radical/progressive agenda. It is only an institution to run the system. Here, we Nepalese should learn from Lohia that Nepal should be able to differentiate between people-to-people relations and government-to-government relations, and should not think of using one against the other, but engage with both on the issue of deepening democracy in the country and region – the South Asia.

On Minorities and Caste

Nepal’s major problem today is how to handle the issues that have been raised by minorities and socially excluded groups. Lohia’s ideas on minorities and caste should be useful to Nepal today. He not only talked about the issues of religious minorities, but also strove for the cause of social equality for women. Regarding women’s oppression, Lohia not only talked upon the issue of representation and participation, but also discusses about how to compensate them for the work they perform in the kitchen. He states:

“The women's problem is undoubtedly difficult. Her slavery to the kitchen is an abomination, and the stove that smokes horribly. She must be given a reasonable time-table for food and also a chimney that spirals the smoke away. She must indeed take part in the agitations against under-feeding and unemployment.”

Lohia was of the view that affirmative action programs were essential to bring the excluded communities in the mainstream. However, he was aware of the various limitations of affirmative action for the emancipation of Dalits from caste-based social order. That is why he came up with a conclusion that no reform is possible unless the problem of caste is tackled. “It is certain that without first tackling this problem [caste], no reconstruction of the country is possible, not to say anything about the advent of socialism”, Lohia mentions in a letter to a Sudra, in March 1953.

In fact, both Ambedkar and Lohia shared a common approach to dealing with caste related issues. They were both very keen to eradicate the evils of caste system so that caste-based prejudice could be eliminated and other social reform programs could be implemented systematically. On the one hand, they both were together in regard to advocating one or other model of the reservation policy. At the same time, they were convinced that such a policy, in a long-run, would not be helpful for the depressed classes to overcome caste-based atrocities and prejudices. With this objective, Ambedkar published the essay titled ‘Annihilation of Caste’, in which he defined caste similar to a monster, and said that you “turn in any direction you like, caste is the monster that crosses your path. You cannot have political reform; you cannot have economic reform; unless you kill this monster”.

On the other hand, Lohia repeatedly advocated a proposal to enhance the trend of inter-caste marriages. He was of the view that the government should provide jobs only to those who marry out of caste. He states:

“On the day that marriage between Sudra and Dvija is designated as a qualification, among others, for recruitment to the administration and the armed forces and refusal to interdine as a positive disqualification, the war on caste will begin in earnest.”

His other proposal was Jati-Todo (break caste barriers) campaign, which included not wearing the sacred thread and dropping caste names. According to him, inter-caste marriages and inter-dinning would be the first and foremost step for the purpose of annihilating the caste system.

To conclude, Nepal has to first handle its disparities with comprehensive packages, and a “strong political will” to strengthen the democracy in the country. Since there are different marginalized groups with different scales of marginalities, Nepal has to come up with policies and programs to tackle all the problems on priority basis. Dalits, as the most marginalized groups, should be given priority to bring them in the mainstream by removing all hurdles. For that, Lohia’s thought to introduce parallel programs such as Jati-Todo to annihilate the caste from the society, and affirmative action programs to bring the marginalized section in the mainstream, would be a path-breaking step for Nepal. Then only the caste-based prejudices and caste-based marginalization could be wiped out. Secondly, pro-people policies and programs such as land reform should be immediately introduced to stop frustration of people towards new but democratic regime.
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“Annihilation of Caste” is the speech prepared by Ambedkar for the Annual Conference of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore but not delivered owing to the cancellation of the Conference by the Reception Committee on the ground that the views expressed in the Speech – linking caste to the Hindu religious tenets and calling for their destruction if caste is to be eradicated - would be unbearable to the Conference.


With Best Compliments from

A Well Wishers
Remembering Lohia in the Birth Centenary Year

Relevance of Dr. Lohia’s Approach

Prafulla Samantara

1. What is your image of Dr. Lohia?

Dr. Lohia is a true Gandian beyond Gandhiji’s vision of politics. Gandhiji is worshipped as the highest moralist in public life whereas Dr. Lohia is regarded as the most sincere political moralist. To understand Mahatma’s mission of humanity and his Hind Swaraj one has to read between the lines of dynamics of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia’s socialism in Indian culture of unity in diversity.

Dr. Lohia was an ardent socialist and nationalist being an advocate of world citizenship as a champion of universal humanity and freedom.

2. What is your assessment of the contribution of Dr. Lohia?

His contributions are mani-fold. His unique leadership on caste system as the root cause of poverty and exploitation was a lighting candle in Indian politics. What he believed, he strived to implement. He never tolerated any compromise on mother language as the medium of education and administration and casteless society. As the party General Secretary he advised his Kerala Government of his party led by Tharu Pilai to resign after people were killed by police firing. At that time he was in Uttar Pradesh jail. But his party didn’t listen to him. He was firm that no government has right to take life of any citizen. If the socialist party could have accepted his advice, there would have been a principle tradition and political morality that the democratic governments would not have dared to kill their own children. Really Dr. Lohia was a great humanist politician with statesmanship.

Even what independent India’s government under prime ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru could not do the dynamic leadership of Lohia’s contribution could liberate Goa and made the integral part of India.

He proved himself as a selfless leader having no property, not even a bank account. Everything was for the service of his motherland. Dr. Lohia’s interpretation of history has a new dimension. Draupadi of Mahabharat was his ideal woman rebel to bring gender equality.

3. What is your view about the impact of Dr. Lohia on Indian politics and society?

Dr. Lohia’s politics of social change and equality has long-run impact even after his death. In the parliamentary democracy there was monopoly of the Congress Party rule. What he experimented in 1967, was realized in 1977 when dictatorship of Indira Gandhi was defeated and monopoly of one-party rule was broken. His advocacy for weaker sections in caste hierarchy was again and again endorsed by Mandal Commission which was partly implemented by V.P. Singh government in 1990.

4. What is the most relevant aspect of his ideas and programmes for the India of 21st Century?

The most relevant aspect of his ideals and politics is to resist injustice, inequality, exploitation through democratic resistance. He lived as a rebel till his death. Now majority of the people of our country are being deprived of their right to life and livelihood, right to food, right to education and health as fundamental right under a socialist, democratic, sovereign republic. Global capitalism is threat to our polity in which the mainstream political parties have become part and parcel of corporate world.

Dr. Lohia’s politics of social Change can build a road to alternative political force by the people’s movements to replace the present process of development which is the weapon of global imperialism. Dr. Lohia’s philosophy of small machine and little technology can make labour skilled and efficient for mass production. Today the global capital with big technology is threat to natural resources which are primary sources of livelihood of millions of marginalized people. Therefore, Dr. Lohia’s synthesis of Gandhiji’s village economy of self-reliance and Swaraj is the need of time to be the guiding principle of people’s movements against displacement in our country.

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It is a sad fact that many of our greatest freedom fighters, who pioneered the freedom struggle in India, could not bask in the glory of their success, when we finally achieved Independence in 1947. Consequently, only a tiny segment of the statesmen, who were instrumental in shaping the future of our country in the immediate aftermath of our Independence, comprised of those who had actively taken part in the freedom struggle. In that short list, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia’s name stands out as being one of the greatest Parliamentarians we have ever witnessed, or are likely to witness in future.

The pre-Independence Gandhian façade of Dr. Lohia is rather well-known. Being an erudite scholar, well-versed with contemporary political ideology, Dr. Lohia played a significant role in popularizing Gandhi’s teachings through his writings and essays. He also had a great capacity for thinking ahead of his time, which is evident not only from his writings but also from the manner in which he exhorted the nascent Indian Parliament to formulate sweeping policies for the social and economic development of the nation.

Dr. Lohia is well-regarded as one of India’s greatest progressive socialists, but even that description reveals only a limited aspect of his character – his expertise and contributions, both as a leading member of the pre-Independence Congress as well as a Parliamentarian subsequently is one worthy of emulation and our present-day political leaders would be well advised to take a leaf out of his book in this regard.

The following lines, from William Shakespeare’s timeless play, Julius Caesar, have been mentioned in a similar context in respect of leaders of great stature, and it is equally applicable to Dr. Lohia as well.

“He only, in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix’d in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world This was a man!”

As mentioned hereinabove, Dr. Lohia is renowned for his significant contributions to the upliftment of Indian society. It is indeed no mere coincidence that one of Delhi’s (and in fact, the nation’s) most famous public hospitals is named after Dr. Lohia, because the fundamental principle upon which the hospital discharges its basic functions is based on the same ideal of selfless public service that Dr. Lohia advocated in his writings and speeches.

It is hard to do complete justice to the full extent of Dr. Lohia’s contributions to Indian society in such a short space, such was the degree of his towering influence over Indian politics and governance in the country. His efforts to emancipate the poor and the downtrodden, to unite farmers so that they may have a common voice (by the formation of the Praja Socialist Party) and his eagerness to embrace the induction of the country’s intellectual youth into the political system speaks volumes about his resourcefulness. In fact, his devotion to the Socialist principle is remarkable, considering the fact that he was willing to defy the Congress as well as his own party, the Praja Socialist Party, later on, when he felt that they were not as sincere in delivering public service as they had promised.

It is a tragic truth that many of our socialist parties today have resorted to discriminating people on the basis of their caste and religion instead of focusing on the larger public good. The common excuse given for this is that some communities need more State assistance than others. While that may be true in some sense, Dr. Lohia showed that ‘integrated development’ is quite possible in a socialist set-up, and that anyway, no true socialist State ignores the welfare of a particular class of its own citizens. It is high time that our present-day leaders wake up and accept the fact that the nation can become a global superpower, only if it develops as a whole, and not in bits and pieces.

With the turn of the Millennium, our nation’s economic goals have been sharply influenced by capitalist thought. I do not wish to launch into a full-fledged debate about the benefits and perils of following such a philosophy, but suffice to say that the so-called development policy of the Government is increasingly
marginalizing the poorest of the poor. Having been a Judge for a long time now, I have witnessed myriad cases where scarce and precious public wealth is squandered by a reckless few. Constitutionally, we are supposed to be a ‘Socialist’ State, but the ground reality is entirely different. Indeed, it is very likely that had he been alive today, Dr. Lohia would have looked askance at our shift from being a welfare State, devoted to the cause of the poor, to being a lukewarm entity which has shut its eyes to its basic duties, and where lives of individuals are relentlessly cast aside by an elite, still in the quest for power and control. A lot of our present day problems have arisen because we did not heed the wiser words of visionaries such as Dr. Lohia.

A distinction must be made between a Socialist like Dr. Lohia on one hand, and those who preach socialism with blinkered eyes. Unlike many of his contemporaries, (especially amongst the Communists) Dr. Lohia was not averse to the creation of wealth, and the establishment of basic infrastructure – all he wanted was that such public wealth and such infrastructure should be utilized for public good as a whole. In this way he was a progressive thinker, and he rightly emphasized on the need to promote economic progress simultaneously with the removal of social evils and orthodox obstructions.

While the world has undoubtedly undergone a great transformation since his times, some of Dr. Lohia’s ideas are still as relevant today as they were in his day. These are as follows:

1. Promoting education. Education alone will empower people and enable them to raise their voice against draconian State policy.

2. Resolving disputes through non-violent means. Understandably, there are a significant number of people who criticize the Government for being a ‘soft State’, for not being strong enough to tackle terrorism, violence brought about by separatist and communal elements etc. by replying in kind. In this context, if one were to tread in the footsteps advocated by Dr. Lohia, who was a strong believer in the Gandhian concept of ‘non-violence’, the only way to achieve a permanent solution is to address these problems from a conciliatory angle and go to the heart of the matter. Admittedly, this is not an Utopian world, where disturbing elements can be brought to order simply by reaching out to them – so it may take a long time and we may have to endure much human suffering before lasting peace can be achieved. Nevertheless, wherever there is an opportunity to heal and move on, we should grasp it immediately.

Thus, the best way in which we can show our gratitude to Dr. Lohia for his stellar contribution to the nation, is simply by respecting and following his words. It is not necessary that we agree with him entirely on any aspect, but nonetheless, all his opinions, merit thoughtful consideration. Sometimes the best ideas and solutions come from a synthesis of two opposite viewpoints. At any rate, decisive action is the only way we can move forward as a society, and such decisive measures can be implemented in the broadest sense only if we heed the words of those like Dr. Lohia who helped forge the destiny of this great land.

What we have narrated about Dr. Lohia's participation in the "Quit India Movement" is only "a tip of the ice burg". In fact many events and achievements of his life in this movement have not been fully recorded and passed on to posterity. Yet from the small snippets of the narrative any nationalist Indian would feel that Dr. Lohia carried on the freedom struggle during the quit India movement with incredible courage, selfless sacrifice and immense suffering. In fact he emerges as a fiery speaker and fearless organizer who inspired the countless men, women, and youth of India to keep the lamp of the freedom struggle burning and endlessly moving towards the crescendo! In fact, we are all now witness to the great signature of Dr. Lohia and his comrades on the luminous pages of the history of the "Quit India" movement.

The lesson for us to draw is this that we should fight for the freedom of the poor, deprived and exploited people of India with integrity, fearlessness and dedication and usher in a society of equality and brotherhood!

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Remembering Lohia in the Birth Centenary Year

Fiery Crusader

G. G. Parikh

The vision of Dr. Lohia that I wish to cherish is that of a fiery crusader against injustice, wherever it existed and in whatever form it existed, and who did not just reveal or expose it to his followers, colleagues or countrymen, but acted to protest non-violently. He did it without fear for life or comfort, but often even without fear of reprobation of his colleagues and followers.

If socialists in this country, Congress socialist brand of socialists, whom elsewhere I have called Indian socialists to distinguish them from those socialists in India who imbibed more of Marx than of Gandhiji and had little understanding of Indian reality, and also those of European variety who could not, even with some effort, shed their imperialist leanings, get somehow excited by this aspect of Dr. Lohia, this country, even when it is at its Nadir, will be a better place for the poor, for the victims of so called development, for the deprived, for the have-nots, to live in, and be a juster society as visualized by the freedom fighters including socialists who were all Congressmen, and as enshrined largely in the constitution that free India gave to itself. If this happens, and those who wish to carry forward his legacy have to make it happen, his followers, who are not in power in any state or are not with one or the other political formation, even if old and ailing, will leave their homes and take to streets and set an example to the younger generation of socialists for what needs to be done to fight injustice. And India is much more unjust than it was when Dr. Lohia was alive.

The country today is much different, the world too. Capitalism has changed, perceptibly, for worst, but even worse is that this change for the worse has been accepted by a large section of the society everywhere, if not as good, at least as something which has to be suffered as there is no alternative. Even some socialists have succumbed to this fallacy. In Europe, socialists have started talking of more humane kind of neo-liberalism, and in India, many socialists have started seeking comfort in whatever ‘good’ work they are doing, often this good work is running an institution in memory of a freedom fighter or a socialist stalwart, a socialist magazine, an institution that builds character, even socialist character, a trade union or a co-operative, forgetting that these were for socialists, instruments for creating a socialist society. While all this is good, what is needed today is a commitment to fight injustice, a pro-active civil resistance risking jail or worse.

In India, as in many parts of the world, victims of current model of development, which can largely be described as government sponsored private corporate sector led growth, are protesting, protesting to protect their lands, their livelihoods, their habitats, their water and other natural resources and are questioning the very concept of growth by asking a simple question; growth for whom. But only a rare socialist is at the forefront of these protest movements. What is required, if Dr. Lohia is to be followed, is that socialists, young or aged, have to be on the forefront of the protest movements. And they should also give a theatrical underpinning to the protests, without making this intellectual activity a substitute for action. Both have to go together. And one more thing is required and that is to bring on a common platform all socialists, even those who are tainted, if they are tainted for their dubious political strategies, but not for their moral turpitude. And the common platform should not be interpreted as spatial but an intellectual platform, a philosophical and programmatic platform. This is the need of the hour. What socialists of all hues should remember is that the socialist stalwarts definitely succeeded in inspiring the Indian youth of those days to believe in equality, social and economic, in communal harmony, in democracy and socialism being two sides of the same coin, in seeking power for transformation and not for power itself and in unity of means and ends. And it is this grounding, even if some of the followers have strayed, is the best material for a socialist transformation.

And Dr. Lohia’s emphasis on decentralization in polity as well as economy, should lead us, the socialists who are still there, to a paradigm shift in developmental
Remembering Lohia in the Birth Centenary Year

thinking. The elite and city based capital intensive and employment sparing paradigm of development has to be replaced by a development model where villages, commonmen and their technologies matter and where employment becomes the yardstick of growth. If these ideas, derived from a reflection on his thinking as well as on the thinking of his mentor Gandhiji is pursued, the other world will certainly become possible.

And while all this will be a tribute to him and a way of remembering him, one more thing should be done. Having emphasized the paramount need to protest against injustice as Dr. Lohia and most of his colleagues did in those early post-independence days, it is time to look at many of his other ideas and pursue them.

His passionate advocacy that state shall not kill the unarmed protestors which got side-tracked because of the manner in which it was presented, needs to be made an absolute principle of the socialist governments and the trigger happiness of all states, not only in India but elsewhere, has to be condemned and opposed. His idea of forming a confederation of the Indian sub-continent has to be taken out of the stable and made an active ingredient of socialist programme. And his search for social justice which led him to advocate preferential treatment to the deprived castes within the party organization, should be taken to mean composite leadership and abandoning of the positions of power by the upper caste leadership in the organizational set up and it should also result in a search for an economy of abundance so that the preferential treatment will become redundant. If supply is more than demand, all distortions which Dr. Lohia feared while advocating preferential treatment, will disappear. And his inclusion of women of all castes for preferential treatment should make those of his followers, who are opposing the reservation for women in the name of justice to lower castes, abandon their opposition and work for a polity, economy and society which has so many opportunities that reservation itself will be unnecessary.

A Tribute

Subhash C. Kashyap

1. An intellectual giant nothing short of a genius, an accomplished parliamentarian with a keen sense of wit and humour, a selfless and fearless fighter, a life-long bachelor and a colourful personality, a brilliant and engaging conversationalist, a man with strong likes and dislikes, a person with a vision, along with Nehru, J.P. and Narendra Deo, Dr. Lohia was among the most endearing leaders I had the pleasure of knowing somewhat closely.

2. His greatest contribution was that of giving a new Four Pillar political philosophy, the concept of a total revolution - social and economic - and a perspective of ‘Economics After Marx’ and of equal irrelevance of Capitalism and Communism. Dr. Lohia also created a bunch of committed young leaders.

3. I wish it was much more and he was allowed to live longer.

4. His Gandhian emphasis on decentralization, social justice and massive employment generating small scale enterprises and development of appropriate technologies and new small unit machines to serve their needs.

5. Recapturing Lohia’s “spirit of constructive militancy” and reinvent the nation-wide neo-socialist movement on lines of “permanent Civil Disobedience” against the prevailing menace of corruption.

On a more modest and practical plane, as a tribute to the intellectual par excellence, a prestigious Dr. Lohia Memorial Lecture by an outstanding personality may be organised each year.

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5. What should be done to honour the contributions and memories of Dr. Lohia?

In honour of Dr. Lohia’s memory, we as followers of his ideology should strive for an alternative politics which would be free from corporate and communal forces. Let us build new roads to reach youths and students through Lohia’s new ideas of socialism for casteless and classless society; where equality and freedom can co-exist.

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**Contributors**

3. **Mastram Kapur** - Creative writer and socialist thinker. Edited collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia in Hindi and English (8 in 9 volumes).
5. **R. M. Pal** - Radical humanist thinker and civil rights movement leader. Former Editor of Radical humanist and Vice President of Peoples Union Of Civil Liberties.
6. **Devdutt** - Senior Journalist. Founder Editor - Point of View (New Delhi).
7. **Jaswant Singh** - Member of Lok Sabha. Former Minister of Defence and Finance in the Union Cabinet.
8. **Subhash C. Kashyap** - Author and Constitutional Expert. Former Secretary General of Lok Sabha.
9. **B. Sudarshan Reddy** - Justice, Supreme Court of India.
10. **Deepak Verma** - Justice, Supreme Court of India.
11. **Bhagawat Prasad** - Political thinker and writer. Close bonds with the Gandhian and socialist movements in disha.
12. **Raghavendra Rao** - Senior sociologist. Worked for a long number of years at Osmania University, Hyderabad.
13. **Sumit Chakravarty** - Journalist. Editor, Mainstream (English Weekly from New Delhi).
14. **N. Rajaram** - Sociologist. Dean, Faculty of social Sciences, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhi Nagar.
15. **Nandana Reddy** - Poet and writer. Close bonds with Dr. Lohia and his movements since childhood. (Her article 'Women, Socialism and Liberation' was published in *Janata* dated March 6, 2011 to mark the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day).

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Prof. Anand Kumar and Qurban Ali have done an excellent job of putting together material for the special issue of Janata to coincide with the conclusion of the Dr. Rammanohar Lohia’s birth centenary programme at a short notice. Unfortunately due to certain constraints and difficulties we could not bring out the special number in time and in one volume.

**However we will bring out a special edition, as a sort of collector’s item, containing all the material in one volume shortly. This edition will be priced at Rs.60/- per copy. Those who wish to have this special edition should send the amount by M.O., Demand Draft or cheque payable at Mumbai in favor of Janata Trust at D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir Bharucha Marg, Mumbai 400 007.**

We wish to record our special thanks to Sarada Prasann Das and Pankaj Sharma for giving their assistance and valuable time to the guest editors for collecting the material for the special issue.

— G.G.Parikh
Publisher