

RAMMANOHAR LOHIA-A PROFILE BY DR MASTRAM KAPOOR

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia appeared like a burning star on the horizon of Indian politics as if the restless spirit of India, wandering through centuries caught fire and disappeared before anyone could understand what it was. Some viewed it as a fearsome celestial body bringing in tumult and chaos while others saw in it a hope and a message of new politics, a new world, a new civilization and followed it madly. Carrying on his shoulders the cross of infamy and total neglect by the established and ruling sections of the society, this messiah kept himself engaged in breaking the stonewalls and constructing something new with a creative obstinacy. With an aim of infusing life into an otherwise lifeless nation he spent his life as an *Aghori* penitent by the funeral pyre.

His biographer, Smt. Indumati Kelkar, who saw him from close quarters and tried to understand him as much as possible, described his personality as: "Darkish, short body in wrestler's mould, broad forehead, penetrating eyes glistening through the glasses, a chin indicating grit and self-confidence, a naughty smile playing at the comers of the lips, an open and appreciating mind free from affectations."

However, the facial look is not enough to understand the personality although it is generally accepted and the art of face-reading and also horoscope-reading and palmistry has grown out of this belief or superstition. Yet there are exceptions and these are authentic indicators of one's personality. For example, no one can say that the facial contours of Socrates, Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Jean Paul Sartre, Vyas (the author of *Mahabharata*) indicated the personality traits of these great men. Lohia probably would have rejected this belief seeing a casteist element in it.

It would have been easier for us to understand Lohia's personality, if he had written in detail about himself. Mahatma Gandhi in his autobiography gave a true picture of the evolution of his personality. Many other great men and authors have written their autobiographies. But Lohia perhaps never thought of that. Except in his letters or lectures in which he made some passing references about his life, he neither wrote his own personal account nor did he encourage others to write. He didn't share his inner life and experiences with others and kept a corner of his mind exclusively to himself. Bachelorhood might have been one of its causes but there must have been some other reasons also. Perhaps, his perceptions about man and life have something to do with it. Perhaps he wanted to see the man without his past. Perhaps he didn't like the idea of man being the creation of his past, since this perception has given birth to caste system and discriminations based on colour and sex which Lohia hated. To assess someone's personality on the basis of good or bad traits inherited from one's past like the accident of birth is to justify casteism, racism and sexism. He, therefore, liked to judge a man from his will and projections. In this, Lohia was very close to existentialists like Sartre.

Lohia's personality should also be judged by his action, his creativity and his resolve and will power. Perhaps he too thought so. That is why he said that statues and memorials of a person should be erected only after 300 years of his death, when the momentary fame fades and the person can be judged on the basis of his real contribution, without prejudice. About himself he said, "People will understand me but only after my death". It appears he also believed like the existentialists, that a man is not what he thinks he is, but what others think he is and that a man cannot assess himself objectively; this is possible only when he becomes an object of others' eyes.

It seems Lohia had chosen for himself some definite ideals and tried to adhere to them. In his small book on Rama, Krishna and Shiva, he discussed three ideals of life i.e. limited, unlimited and non-dimensional personalities. As against Camus'

Classification of Don Juan, actor, conqueror and creator and other western philosophers' classification like religious or moral, materialist and superman, Lohia looked into the long Indian tradition and found three ideals in the mythical personality of Rama, Krishna and Shiva. Rama was disciplined and limited by the rules, law and constitution; Krishna goes beyond all limitations and bestows his boundless love to all mankind. Shiva transcends all dimensions of time and space. It is, in fact, the life of the creator who converts a moment in flux into the moment of eternity without seeking its justification either in the past or in the future. Out of the three, Lohia was fascinated most by the life style of Shiva.

He tried once the style of limitations and discipline when he broke away from the parent Praja Socialist Party to form a separate Socialist Party. Very strict rules and regulations were prescribed for the party, which made some of his close comrades unhappy and leave the party. Later, he had to relax the rules and this relaxation went to the other extreme. From opposition to electoral alliances he switched over to grand alliance in the form of non-Congressism, inviting cooperation of parties basically opposed to socialist ideals. In his personal life, too, he tried to avoid responsibilities, which would have bound him to rules and routine. Some of his colleagues even accused him of doing so.

Krishna's life attracted him more than Rama's because he broke all bondages and distributed his love and affection to all in free spirit. What fascinated him was that Krishna had two or more than two relations: two fathers, two mothers, two names, two cities and an unknown number of beloved. Lohia too found himself in the same circumstances. He lost his mother at a very young age and got the love of many mothers. He didn't have his own village, own city, own province. His love for his country was also not bound by national or geographical boundaries. He stood and strived for man's unrestricted right to enter any country, settle there and get buried there in the event of death. His love for Mother India included love for the earth and love for the whole humanity.

But his personality was moulded more on the concept of Shiva who swallowed the poison for the well-being of humanity; who created Bhasmasura without caring for the result; who carried the dead body of his wife on his shoulders and wandered like a mad person; who destroyed the evil with his third eye; who made the earth quiver by his *Tandava*; who identified himself with the poor, exploited, neglected, downtrodden sections of the society and who led a life of utter disregard for his personal comforts. Like Shiva, Lohia's life was a strange mixture of destruction and construction, anger and compassion, materialism and spiritualism, concrete and abstract (*or Saguna and Nirguna*) politics and arts, immediacy and eternity, the seemingly opposite qualities.

The clash between two opposite cultures has been a main feature of Indian life. These two cultures can be termed as Vishnu culture and Shiva culture. The first belongs to prosperous and happy sections who form the ruling classes. The main features of this culture are worship of Lakshami, lust for money and pleasure derived from it in exclusive conditions prevailing in some *Ksheer Sagar* or *Vaikuntha*, out of reach of the beggars and sufferers. Its symbol is lotus, which keeps itself aloof from the mud in which it grows. It wields *Shankha*, the conch, an instrument of propaganda in one hand and *Gada*, a powerful weapon of killing in the other. In contrast, Shiva culture signifies a lifestyle indifferent to comforts of all sorts; inhabiting places which would generally be shunned by the rich and the elite; proximity to such people who are neglected and condemned by the so-called civilized and despite all the above, this culture is imbued with love and compassion encompassing all the human beings as well as different forms of life; a deep empathy that would prompt a person to swallow the deadly poison (*halahal*) for protection of the humanity and also the creative urge from which springs out all arts that liberate the mankind. Dr. Lohia represented this Shiva culture.

Lohia was one of those very few makers of history, who was above all dualities. He could deal an equal footing with

the rich and the poor, king and beggar, leader and volunteer, officer and peon, queen and washer-maid, Brahmin and Shudra, man and woman, white and coloured, and this was admitted even by his opponents. This quality of his was transparent not only in his speech but also in his deeds. He was always cautious not to show any disrespect even to the smallest person. At times, he used bitter words for the so-called big people, sitting on the throne or proud of their wealth (for their pomp and hypocrisy) but he took special care not to offend the feelings of the humble persons. He treated his servant, Shobhan, as his younger brother and addressed him so. Since he used to read till late night and in between desired a cup of tea, Shobhan also kept himself awake. On such occasions he would say to Shobhan, "Shobhan, I can see you are not getting sleep, your eyes are red. Why don't you prepare some tea for yourself? You can pass on the left over to me here."

Once Lohia was going in a taxi. The taxi driver was a Sikh. Incidentally Indira Gandhi was passing that way. The security personnel asked the taxi driver to stop and let the caravan pass. On Lohia's instruction, he didn't stop. As a result the taxi driver was lodged in police custody. Lohia was furious. He raised this matter in Parliament and the taxi driver was immediately released. The taxi driver came to Lohia to express his gratitude, but Lohia said, "Don't talk nonsense. It is my duty."

Lohia never missed an opportunity to establish a relation of equality with rickshaw-pullers, taxi-drivers and mahouts etc. Once he showed his annoyance with Rabi Ray when he addressed a rickshaw-puller as 'tu'. Once he, along with his followers dropped at a roadside hotel for meals. When he saw that the elephant-driver (mahout) was not in the company, he refused to sit for meals unless the elephant-driver (mahout) was called. On another occasion when he saw an old ill-clad Muslim acquaintance of Farrukhabad, in severe cold, he asked Janeshwar Mishra to bring his sweater. Lohia had two sweaters in his attache. Janeshwar brought the old one with half-sleeves. Lohia was annoyed. He said, "if you are giving something to

someone, give the best one you have."

In the matter of respect for women, it is hard to find a man like Lohia. He considered all women beautiful. He disliked the Indian customs that the housewives should serve meals to others and they themselves be content with whatever is left. When he went to someone's house for meals, he always insisted that the women must sit with others for meals. At times, he peeped into the utensils to see whether enough food is there. He never forgot to thank and praise the housewife after meals. He once visited the famine-stricken Basti district along with his friend Kaushalya Devi. He found dry mango kernels in an earthen pot. He insisted on eating *chapati* made of kernels. Ultimately the *chapatis* were made. A woman brought jaggery from her house. Lohia enjoyed the meals.

With children he preferred the relation of friendship. He loved to play with them and also take inspiration from them. According to Champa Limaye, whenever Dr. Lohia stayed with them he enjoyed kite-flying with her son Popat (Aniruddha). Once Popat said, "Like Ministers why can't Speakers of the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies, take oath to be impartial in their decisions?" Dr. Lohia put up this proposal before Parliament.

He didn't like to see women in *burka* or veil or remain aloof from men out of modesty. As a mark of protest, he sometimes lifted the *burka* or veil from their faces, which appeared to others strange. With educated women in public life he tried to be formal by placing his arm on their shoulders. Once he dragged Tarkeshwari Sinha to the Coffee House. Tarkeshwari said, "I feel embarrassed in this atmosphere." At this Lohia remarked, "Because you are a born VIP. Isn't it?" Tarkeshwari wrote in one of her reminiscences: "We went to the Coffee House. He asked the waiter to bring coffee and something to eat. Many people gathered around his table. Some observed, "Coffee House becomes listless in Dr. Lohia's absence." The waiter brought the bill. The amount was Rs. 43/-. Dr. Lohia emptied his pocket. There were only Rs. 7/-. Some more were collected from friends sitting round the table. The waiter too wanted to contribute

but Lohia said, "No, not from you."

Once Smt. Vijay Lakshmi Pandit delivered a very good speech in the Lok Sabha criticising the Congress government. Lohia appreciated the speech and said to Vijay Lakshmi, "Why are you sitting on the Treasury benches? Your right place is here in the opposition." Vijay Lakshmi said, "Who will sit with *junglies* (the uncivilized)." Lohia remarked, "Don't be afraid of *junglies*. Sita also stayed with them."

One of Lohia's admirers was a wrestler. One day he said, "Dr. Saheb, I like everything in you except one thing. You don't believe in God. But it doesn't matter. When you will grow old, you too will believe in God." Lohia said, "Your God troubles only in old age."

After a defeat in the Lok Sabha election, Raj Narain entered the Rajya Sabha through the backdoor. Lohia was very angry. When he came to see him Lohia said to him, "Go away or I will throw you out." Raj Narain remained seated from 7 O'clock in the morning till 1 O'clock noon. Lohia's anger subsided and he asked Shobhan to serve breakfast to Raj Narain.

Breach of discipline in the party enraged him. When Karpoori Thakur's government didn't do any work, Lohia decided not to see the ministers from Bihar. One day Karpoori Thakur came and kept sitting outside. Lohia said to Urmilesh (his secretary), "Give him tea and tell him that he should mind his business and not waste time in visiting me." On another day Bhola Prasad came. Dr. Lohia refused to see him too. Lohia was annoyed because Bindheshwari Prasad Mandal was made a minister in Bihar government even though he was elected a member of the Lok Sabha. Leaders from Bihar were coming to seek Lohia's approval. Lohia looked at Bhupendra Narayan and said, "Why don't you bring the Capital, Patna to Delhi? All your ministers remain in Delhi all the time." After some time the Bihar government did some good work like abolition of land tax etc. This time, when Karpoori Thakur came to see Lohia, he was welcomed saying, "Come, come Netaji; have a seat." Thus ended Lohia's six-month-old boycott.

Political differences never interfered with Lohia's personal friendship. Once he, along with P.N. Lekhi and Roma Mitra went to see A.K. Gopalan who was in Tihar Jail. Lekhi said to Lohia, "God forbid, if some day the communists form the government and they put you in jail, Gopalan will not come to see you because he will lose his position in the party if he does so." Lohia agreed with him but said, "I am today going to see my fast friend and not a politician and I will not regret if my friend is unable to see me in the jail for political reasons."

Snah Gorakhpuri was in jail for demolishing the statue of Lord Curzon. Dr. Lohia had given strict instructions to P.N. Lekhi that no false statement should be given in the court. Lekhi told the court that they had broken the statue but the statue belonged to none. No ownership of this statue is mentioned in the Government of India Gazetteer, nor it is mentioned in municipal records. Hence this statue is like a stone lying on the road and if someone kicks it or breaks it, it is no crime. At this the government issued a notification of ownership of the statue but the court did not accept and Snah Gorakhpuri was set free.

Lohia was very much disturbed when poor people became victims of injustice and he often fought for them even against big people. Haribhau Limaye narrated in an interview how Dr. Lohia took special interest in getting Baburao Kochale released from jail. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment for a murderous assault on the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru during his visit to Nagpur. It was said that he attacked the PM with a knife. Lohia wrote to Haribhau Limaye that he should see Kochale in Barla Jail and tell him that Lohia wanted to see him. Dr. Lohia had also written a small brief in *Mankind* with the heading, "Rickshaw-puller vs. Prime Minister." At that time Y.B. Chavan was the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Haribhau met Chavan and settled that whenever Dr. Lohia would visit Pune, the Collector would arrange his meeting with Baburao Kochale in the jail. Lohia wanted Haribhau to accompany him so that he could translate Baburao's version from Marathi. But,

since only Lohia's name was mentioned in the letter, he was permitted to meet alone. The Superintendent of Jail asked Lohia, how he knew Baburao Kochale. To this Lohia replied, "He and I are born in the same world."

Lohia met Kochale and enquired about his family, his economic condition etc. Later, he deposited some money with the jailor to meet the small needs of Baburao in the jail. After returning from jail, Lohia asked Haribhau Limaye to fight the case in the court. He said, "Baburao is handicapped. Polio had crippled his one hand. How could he attack the PM with a knife?" When Haribhau said that nothing would come out from fighting the case, Lohia asked him to write letters to Nehru and Vinoba Bhave. Eventually, Dr. Lohia wrote letters and Baburao was released after completing one year's sentence. Haribhau narrates this story and says, "In my view there will be very few persons in India who have so much concern for poor people."

Lohia's life was full of such episodes. He made direct contact with poor people. He used to visit them in their huts, sit on their broken cots and listen to their tales. He tried to know how many members were there in the family, what was their income, whether they were getting full meal twice a day or not. He used to see the children's clothes, women's tattered saris etc. This feedback gave him the courage to wage the battle of three annas and twenty five thousand rupees in Parliament.

In 1961, Dr. Lohia, along with Rajni Kant Verma, Ram Sagar Mishra and some other comrades, proceeded on a blind tour of some districts of Uttar Pradesh. Party functionaries were not informed nor was any programme pre-fixed. They toured several villages covering Allahabad, Kanpur, Farrukhabad, Pratapgarh and Benaras. They stayed in villages, met people in their homes or in their fields. They conversed with farmers ploughing the fields and also talked to women, children and old people. When Rajni Kant Verma expressed his desire to write Lohia's biography, Lohia advised him not to write it in English and also told him that the book should say more about people than him.

Among the people who came in contact with Dr. Lohia many

were scholars, writers, artists, politicians, judges, advocates etc., and they saw Lohia from different angles. Some saw in him great qualities of compassion, sympathy and equality. Some saw him as a unique thinker and philosopher. The well-known artist M.F. Hussain said, "I am overwhelmed by his language." Prof. Rajaram Shastri considered him a great thinker of a moment of flux and moment of eternity. Brij Mohan Toofan said, "Dr. Lohia was a different kind of thinker who possessed deep insight." Shiv Prasad Chandpuriya was deeply impressed by his art of expressing complicated things in simple language. He remembered Lohia's saying that politics is like sweeping the floor and if there is no *satyagraha* in politics, the litter will pile up. A volunteer from Andhra Pradesh, Shridhar Rao was impressed because Lohia could sleep on the platform after spreading a bed-sheet. Urmilesh Jha loved to remember Dr. Lohia's simplicity who while travelling carried his own bedding, attache, shaving kit etc., and who shaved on alternate days. Ambika Prasad Singh 'Dada' of Bihar would never forget that when Dr. Lohia came to Parsaganj, he instead of staying with some wealthy Thakurs, stayed in Ram Avtar Pasi's house and had meals there. Dhaniklal Mandal considers himself fortunate for playing host to Sukho Rani (who fought election against the Queen of Gwalior) when she came to Delhi to see Dr. Lohia, for which Dr. Lohia praised him.

Glimpses of Dr. Lohia's personality given on previous pages are based on the book *Dr. Lohia Ki Kahani: Unke Sathion Ki Zubani*, compiled, edited and published by Shri Harish Chandra and his wife Smt. Padmini, both devoted to Dr. Lohia.

The most important aspect of Lohia's personality is that whoever came in contact with him, whether he was a political leader, volunteer, writer, artist or a man of humble status, became attached to him. He might have changed his political path later, but he remained personally devoted to Lohia.

Many rich tributes were paid to him after his death but they are not as important as the spontaneous expression of feelings of men who came in contact with him.

However we don't have sufficient material to know the strictly personal and inner aspects of his life. He neither wrote his own biography nor encouraged others to write one or peep into his inner self. We find some flashes of his inner life in his letters written to Roma Mitra. Some of these letters have been published in a book entitled, *Lohia Thru Letters*, published by Roma Mitra herself. But in these letters too, Lohia has disclosed very little of his inner self. His mind mostly remained pre-occupied with day-to-day problems and surfacial matters regarding party functioning, publication of journals and concern for workers etc.

He had immense faith in the younger generation. When he formed his Socialist Party after separation from PSP, he hardly had a senior leader with him. He had to prepare a new battalion of leaders for which he concentrated his efforts on training young people. Most of the leaders of the Socialist Party came via the youth wing of the Party i.e. Samajwadi Yuvjan Sabha. He remained present in the training camps and observed the young talent. He encouraged them to take part in discussions. He appreciated their good points and also criticised them wherever they went wrong. Most of Lohia's writings are the outcome of his speeches delivered at such training camps.

Lohia never had enough financial resources to organise and run a big party. His personal needs were limited. Two-three pairs of clothes, simple food of *dal*, *chapati* and one vegetable, a few cups of tea or coffee. He could travel in any class and by any means. If a vehicle was available, well and good, if not, he would take a bus, or sit on the back seat of some volunteer's bicycle and reach the venue of the meeting.

Dr. K.S. Karanth, Lohia's secretary, noted in his book "Aspects of a Socialist Mind" that when Lohia was first time elected to the Lok Sabha in 1963, he was having two pairs of clothes and Roma Mitra and two other colleagues had to wash the clothes every evening so that they were ready for the next day. Roma Mitra also wrote in an article that during election tour he used to get exhausted but his curiosity and hope always

remained fresh. If his car failed he would take a bicycle or even a bullock-cart. But he never sat on a rickshaw. In his young days he had taken a vow not to ride on a rickshaw. He considered a rickshaw-puller half man and half animal—a symbol of India's slavery.

Dr. Karanth wrote in his book: "It is a sad commentary on the public life of our country that a leader of his eminence and stature lacked the elementary necessities. He did not have till the end of his life a qualified secretary to assist him. He did not have a steno, he did not have even a full-time typist. He had no funds to pay for these facilities."

Dr. Lohia was against glorifying poverty. He always talked of decent life-standard. But he was also against costly and pompous life-style. He used to say that in a poor country like India, making a show of riches is inhuman. He once said, "If I want, some of my friends can offer me a car. But I don't want to take it, since I must do what I want to tell others."

Once Roma Mitra suggested him to have a room-cooler. He said, "For heaven's sake, not in my room. These luxuries are not for me, although it will facilitate my work." When he was first time elected a member of the Lok Sabha, some friends decided to purchase a car for him. Roma Mitra also saw the car and told him about it. He made some calculations about the monthly expenditure and then triumphantly declared that taxi would be less costly. Thereafter, it was planned that 6-7 friends should send their cars four days each in a month, which will cover 28 days. Ultimately, he got only one friend's car and his car too was not regular.

Lohia's admirers were not limited to the field of politics. Many people who had nothing to do with politics were attracted to him due to his simple life-style, his transparent character, his sense of equality and humanity. Among such people were waiters, taxi-drivers, rickshaw-pullers, washer-men, sweepers, barbers and so on. Once he was touring the country with his comrades. They stopped at a roadside shop where *jalebis* were being prepared. When the shop-owner knew that Dr. Lohia

was his customer, he refused to take money. But Lohia insisted and he had to accept. And the shop-owner became Lohia's follower for all time to come.

Similarly, a woman pan-vendor of Rewa (M.P.) offered Lohia, a pan which Lohia, gladly took though he was not a pan-eater and this woman pan-vendor became Lohia's follower.

Revati Kant Singh narrates an episode in a special number of the Hindi journal *Jana* (March-April 1968), which throws light on Lohia's rapport with political workers and other small people: "In 1965, Dr. Lohia was arrested along with his several followers and brought to Hazaribagh jail. He had filed a *habeas corpus* petition in the Supreme Court which was to be heard on 23rd August for which he was to be taken to Delhi. When he was taking leave from his comrades, he first went to those ordinary prisoners who were deputed to serve the political prisoners. He first met Yogi Hari who was deputed for cleaning the wards. Lohia embraced him and said, "I am going Yogi. I don't know when we shall meet again." Yogi Hari wept ceaselessly and Lohia patted his shoulders as if two members of a family were parting company. Thereafter, he met other servant prisoners one by one and then took leave from his political comrades.

Revati Kant was an ordinary volunteer of the party. In the 1967 election, he was the party candidate for election but he was pressurised to withdraw his name to make room for Mahamaya Prasad Sinha who had joined the party recently. Lohia didn't like this. He said to Revati Kant: "They are sinners. But I am also annoyed with you. You should have refused to withdraw your name. This soft bone attitude is not good in politics. You should make your bones strong."

Lohia was of the view that fighting elections and making others fight elections is a pious work which makes the bones strong, gives self-confidence and provides opportunity to establish rapport with people. Winning or losing election is not important but gaining self-confidence and reaching the people is important, he thought. He himself fought election

against Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru from Phoolpur constituency without consideration of winning or losing, when all newspapers were making fun of his action. In the 1957 election, he made Sukho Rani (a sweeper woman) to fight election against the Queen of Gwalior. When Sukho Rani was defeated he pulled up the party workers, especially the President of M.P Socialist Party, Jagannath Prasad Milind, for not putting in their best efforts in the election. Similarly, he asked Kanhaiya Lai Doongerwal, a young man of 25 years, to fight election against the Home Minister, Kailash Nath Katju and also gave him some tips on election propaganda against Mr. Katju (e.g., when Katju was Governor in Bengal he had his car air-lifted to Darjeeling). Doongerwal lost to Katju with 48,500 votes against 92,000 votes polled by Katju. But this effort made Doongerwal a hard-boned Socialist leader of M.P.

What is *satyagraha*, what is civil disobedience, how one should behave in jail, how to face bureaucratic excesses, these things were not only taught in words but also through action. He was not a politician working from air-conditioned chambers. He himself participated in the action. In 1957, thousands of volunteers were arrested in connection with a civil disobedience movement. When after suspension of agitation, the government did not release the prisoners, Lohia himself offered individual *satyagraha* and joined his party workers in the jail and stayed there for a month. There were old party workers like Ram Sagar Mishra, Ashwini Kumar, Krishna Nath Sharma, Karuna Shankar Dikshit etc., and also very young workers like Ram Kishore Shastri who was a student of 11th class. Ram Kishore Shastri narrates the scene of lathi-charge in jail in these words: "We were about 15 persons with Dr. Lohia. Suddenly, the jailor, deputy jailor and many [other] prisoners came and gave details of the cases to Dr. Lohia. After some time, about 300 constables attacked us. They were beating us mercilessly. They threw us into one barrack. Dr. Lohia was made to sit on a chair and brought before the magistrate. Lohia didn't speak a word. His thumb-impressions were forcibly taken. This was the treatment

meted out to a great leader. In the barracks we shivered throughout the night on account of severe cold. Krishna Nath Sharma was severely beaten in naked condition, after which he was immediately transferred to Rai Bareilly jail. Dr. Lohia also sustained injuries and he was kept in a hospital ward."

Dr. Lohia was paid rich tributes after his death. Among those who paid tributes there were some who hated Lohia till his death. Their tributes were a vain attempt to wash their sins. Yet some of his critics' tributes were genuine. The newspapers, which always made fun of Dr. Lohia, wrote and published long editorials and special articles. Morarji Desai, who was never an admirer of Dr. Lohia, said, "Next to Gandhi it was only Lohia, who had totally devoted followers and comrades."

Morarji was right. Whoever came in contact with Lohia, became deeply devoted to him. He was not a religious leader, nor was he in a position to distribute crumbs of power to others. The only thing he could give to others was a new and fresh thought or an inspiration that would shake the brain and make one restless. This he conveyed either through his speeches and writings or through his action and conversation. The impact was powerful enough to break open the closed doors and windows of the brain. There was always something new to think, to see through a new angle, which would attract writers, artists and other intellectuals towards him. He gathered around him a significant number of intellectuals who challenged the prevalent values and set in motion the cultural and literary movements reflecting new values based on freedom, equality and fraternity. Those who entered politics acquired a different angle to see things, with deep sympathy towards the poor, the disadvantaged sections of the population. Ordinary people were influenced by his unostentatious living, sincerity and other human qualities. Some of his admirers became so much attached to him that they would breakdown into sobs recalling their association with him. One such admirer was Late Dr. Haridev Sharma, who worked as his secretary and became Deputy Director in Nehru Memorial Museum. His relation with Dr. Lohia was aptly described by Gopal

Krishna Gandhi in his obituary in these words: "It is difficult to say whether Haridev was a *Ramanuja or Anjaneya* to this Ram (Rammanohar)." His another devotee, Ambika Prasad Singh 'Dada' of Bihar, could never recall Lohia without breaking down into tears and sobs. Ladli Mohan Nigam, who spent many days with Lohia, was another such follower who had written many beautiful articles on his association with Lohia. Harris Wofford was his American admirer, who followed him during his visit to America in 1951 and wrote a beautiful book *Lohia and America Meet* based on this travel. In the foreword to the second edition of this book Lohia wrote about Harris: "Harris was not an exact replica of an Indian devotee and I recall an incident which brings out the similarity as well as the difference. Harris was mad with me on one occasion, called me SOB (son of bitch in American) groaned loudly that he would not do for the President of the United States of America what he often had to do for me—but sheepishly carried out the job that had made him angry and brought me a cup of coffee from half a mile away."

In nutshell, Lohia's personality cannot be wholly grasped by reading books written by him or by other scholars about him. Historians and scholars with their own coloured glasses will be more prone to misjudge him. But the images formed in the minds of ordinary people through their personal contact with Lohia would last for a longer period. In fact, intermingling of these images is already creating myths around Lohia and some people have called it 'Lohia Cult' which is nothing but a crude attempt to devalue Lohia's thought. There is, however, no possibility of Lohia being subject of a cult although there is a possibility of emergence of a distinct ideology based on Lohia's writings.

THE STORY OF *SAFARMAINA*

In one of his speeches delivered in the Lok Sabha, Lohia called himself a *Safarmaina*. This beautiful word was coined by him in Hindi for the English words 'Sappers and Miners' who build roads and bridges for advancing troops. The story of this *Safarmaina*,

whenever it will be written, shall remain incomplete. Om Prakash Deepak tried to write Lohia's biography but it remained incomplete and the book was published in Hindi with the title *Ek AsamaptaJeevani*. Indumati Kelkar tried to write a complete one and despite being the best book so far written, it too left so many things for future generations to search and investigate. Rajani Kant Verma and Onkar Sharad's accounts of Dr. Lohia's life are also incomplete. The reason is that it is very difficult to write a complete biography of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia because his personal life is eclipsed by his public life. This generally happens in the biographies of public personalities but in Lohia's case it is too obvious. Lohia neither tried to write his own story nor he encouraged others to do so. Towards those who tried to write his biography, he developed an indifferent attitude. He didn't disclose himself entirely before others nor he allowed anyone to do that. In contrast to many public men of eminence, he didn't give much importance to his personal life.

Some of my friends suggested that I should write a biographical novel on Lohia. I knew this is beyond my capacity. I saw Dr. Lohia on a few occasions from a distance. I never met him. My understanding about Lohia was based on his books and articles and to some extent on others' words. In addition, I never liked the idea of writing a fiction on real life characters. This is like deifying or demonising a man which I do not like. I will, therefore, attempt here to give a brief account of Lohia's life mostly based on the book written by Indumati Kelkar.

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

Rammanohar Lohia was born in village Akbarpur of district Faizabad in Uttar Pradesh on 23rd March 1910. His father's name was Hiralal and mother's Chandri. Lohia himself was not sure about his date of birth perhaps due to non-conformity of Indian calendar and the Roman calendar. It is also not known whether a horoscope was prepared at the time of his birth or not. Generally this was done in well-to-do families. In ordinary families the birth date of a child was a matter of memory. At

the time of marriage, horoscopes are generally prepared on the basis of the supposed date of birth but in Lohia's case this occasion never came. Any way he accepted 23rd March as his date of birth but never celebrated his birthday because on this day Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were hanged by the British government. The family had migrated from Mirzapur to Akbarpur. Due to family business in iron, the word Lohia got attached to the name.

Rammanohar's grandfather Shivnarayan had four sons and Hiralal was the youngest. Many members of the family had died before age and so in order to protect Rammanohar from some imaginary curse, he was sold to a low caste or Muslim woman for half a paisa when he was only two years old. Rammanohar's mother died when he was two and a half years old. Thereafter his grandmother (who was in fact his father's elder brother's wife) took him under her care. Being a motherless child, Rammanohar got the affection of many women of the neighborhood among whom a woman belonging to the caste of goldsmith and another to the caste of barber showered immense motherly affection on him. Ramanand, the son of barber's wife, Sarjoo, was to Rammanohar like a brother.

These childhood days were very important in Lohia's life. The period between two and a half years and five and a half or six years is the formative age of the child in which his basic attitudes are formed. The marvelous human qualities in Lohia, like his unbound love, total absence of caste-prejudices and great respect for women were, perhaps, the product of these formative years. To him all women were beautiful because in his formative days he received love from women of different castes and different strata of society. He tasted the milk of their breasts and the scent of their bodies and experienced satisfaction and fulfilment. Similarly, he must have played with children of all castes, studied in the same school with them or even must have shared food with them which later made him completely free from all kinds of caste prejudices and he could say with conviction that the children of Rashtrapati and a peon must be taught in the same school.

In his letters to Roma Mitra, published in the book *Lohia Thru Letters*, Lohia has narrated an incident of his days in Germany. Roma Mitra was in Germany in connection with her research work and Lohia wrote a letter to her on 12th February 1960 from Hyderabad. He wrote:

"The armpits of women, even in an advertisement, have a strange fascination for me. Did I tell you of when I was about drowning in the Wandsee, the Berlin lake? Too proud to shout for being saved, the last bit that flashed across my mind was the thousands of glorious looking armpits and how, I was going away prematurely without knowing more of them and even having had a full and good look at them. I was then about 19 years (may be 20) old. I don't think I have quite got over that feeling for armpits. Is there something similar with the women? Does she feel churned up inside, after looking at something which does not belong to her own person?"

Lohia wanted this question to be investigated by Roma Mitra for which he advised her to interview some brilliant women in Germany like Simon de Beauvoir so that an interesting article for *Mankind* was in hand. The relevance of this episode here is that it makes us think whether the subconscious images of beautiful armpits has something to do with Lohia's childhood when he had experienced the warmth and beauty of armpits of many women.

Many similar aspects of Lohia's complex life can be traced to his formative days. Unfortunately, very little is known about that period and much work needs to be done before a complete biography of Lohia can be written.

He got his primary education in Tandon Pathshala in Akbarpur and later joined Vishwanath High School. He was a brilliant student and also took keen interest in sports and other activities. He liked playing flute and it is said Sarjoo Devi had kept his flute as a memento for several years. Lohia might have given this flute to his closest friend Ramanand while leaving the village. But

Ramanand is hardly mentioned in the available biographies of Dr. Lohia. Only his onetime private secretary Nand Kishore (with whose name his caste is invariably mentioned) tells us in his article published in *Jana*, that he along with Dr. Lohia once visited Akbarpur where Dr. Lohia introduced Ramanand (who was running a hair cutting saloon there) to him as his brother. Absence of material regarding Lohia's childhood is a major drawback in writing his complete biography. Perhaps his deep sympathy for poor people like rickshaw-pullers, drivers, sweepers etc., could be traced to his childhood impressions.

After the death of his grandmother, Hiralal had to assume the role of both father and mother. Lohia might have got the impression in those days that a home without women was like wilderness and this must have imbibed in him a very high respect for women. Sometime later his father left Akbarpur and settled in Bombay. Lohia joined the famous Marwari School in Bombay. Here he got the first impression of the freedom movement. His father took him to Mahatma Gandhi. Rammanohar was drawn to him at the very first sight. The young Lohia, who never touched anybody else's feet outside his family, touched the feet of Gandhiji and in turn the Mahatma patted him on his back. On 1st August, 1920 when the news of the death of Bal Gangadhar Tilak spread, the students of Marwari Vidyalaya boycotted the classes under the leadership of Rammanohar Lohia. They also indulged in some pranks like cutting of tram wires.

Rammanohar passed the matriculation examination in 1925 and stood first in the class. The next phase of studies began with his joining Benaras Hindu University established by Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya. Here too he became popular with students and teachers because of his brilliance, eloquence and charming personality. He convinced many of his friends and teachers about the importance of khadi and many of them took to this on his advice.

At the age of 16, he got an opportunity to attend the Guwahati session of the Congress. Although he went there as a visitor, Congressmen from Punjab included his name in the

list of delegates from their province. He was also asked to move a resolution there but he could not do so due to lack of time.

After passing Intermediate examination from B.H.U. Lohia joined Vidyasagar College, Calcutta where his father had also moved with some new business venture. Lohia stayed in Marwari Hostel. Here he became a member of the All India Students Union and led a procession in protest against the Simon Commission in 1928-29. In the conference organised by the Students Union, he met Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. In the first meeting itself Jawaharlal cast a spell over him. In 1929, Lohia passed B.A. (Honours) in good class and thereafter, as per his father's wishes he decided to go abroad for further studies. After taking financial help from some charitable institution he left for the U.K.

About his experience in the U.K., he wrote to a friend: "Here Indians are treated like dogs. I do not wish to stay here even for a day." One day, Rammanohar had gone to library where he met a person who advised him to go to Berlin if he intended to learn something new or original. Lohia thanked the gentleman and left for Berlin. He joined Humboldt University and became the student of Prof. Werner Sombart, who was the foremost economist of Germany. Since Lohia didn't have sufficient knowledge of German language, he promised to his professor to acquire proficiency in three months and did so.

Lohia had chosen the subject 'The Tax Act and Satyagraha' for his Ph.D. degree. The well known scientist Albert Einstein and Social thinker Prof. Schumacher were teaching in this University. Lohia stayed in Germany from the last days of 1929 to the beginning of 1933, a period of about three years. At the age of 20-23, his young mind was influenced by many ideologies and movements of that time. The Nazi party was rising in Germany. Economic depression and unemployment had moved German people towards this party's extremist policies. Social Democrat Party and the Communist Parties were also active. Lohia took keen interest in Germany's political life. He attended all meetings held in Berlin, including those addressed

by Hitler. Lohia was anti-imperialist and so communists showed a special regard for him. He was always present at the meetings held under the auspices of Social Democratic Party. He was most attracted to this party and took its membership also but he developed friendship with Nazis and communists too. Nazi friends tried to persuade Lohia to propagate their party's ideology. He told them categorically that none outside Germany would accept their philosophy based on the Herren volk concept which didn't have an iota of universality and equality. He said: "You regard the people of your Nordic stock as the purest in the world. Next in order come the Anglo-Saxons, the French, the Latin like Italians and Spaniards and then the Chinese and the Japanese, while Indians and other people with mixed blood are regarded by you as belonging to inferior race. Under these circumstances no patriotic Indian will accept the Nazi creed."

Rammanohar Lohia obtained his doctorate in early 1932. Prof. Schumacher had told him towards the end of 1931 that he should not live in Germany much longer. Perhaps he sensed the impending victory of Hitler.

The examiners of his thesis were Prof. Schumacher, Prof. Ludwig Vernard, Prof. Oncken and Prof. Desnaur.

About his experiences in Germany, Lohia wrote later, in a letter to Roma Mitra on 2nd May 1961 in reply to her query:

"Here is your answer. I was nineteen when I reached Germany and twenty-three on return. That is the age of enthusiasms. I made friends but not one who has endured except perhaps for Werner who is, I do not know whether alive or dead. Does that mean anything? Why should not friendship of those days have persisted? Most of the explanation lies in my age. I must have been a pretty hopeless person to my friends, when I was young. Part of the explanation may lie in German character. The individual German is a very likable person, as long as he is there and you are there, but you should never make the mistake of imagining that the moment would endure. More or less

like me when I was gloomy. You know the kind who is absolutely honest this moment and is likely to be misunderstood in any future moment. Have the Germans broken more treaties than is usual with other nations? If so, a part of the explanation may lie in this.

I did not like the German Socialists, but my intellectual kinship was with them. Emotionally, I was with the Communists for their warm-heartedness and the Nazis for their anti-British passion, which were to me partly at least pro-man passion. I may emphasize that the individual Nazi particularly in the Universities, was not a complete image of Hitler and was willing to disagree with the Feuhrer in some directions. The exclusive rigidities seem to have been a later phenomenon."

In his letter of 12th February 1960 referred to before, Lohia had asked Roma Mitra to collect some information for *Mankind* as well as for her research work. As suggestion he wrote:

"One such question I should like to ask about Weimar Germany is why the liberals and Social Democrats were so wooden, polite and correct, when the Nazis and Commis were all spirit and elan. If that is a permanent feature of the human mind in its liberal and its extremist state, the lesson of man's un degeneracy is unavoidable."

It seems that despite his attachment more with Social Democrats as compared to Communists and Nazis, Lohia was not happy with Social Democrats due to their laziness and wavering minds. In view of these weaknesses of European Socialism, Lohia in his later days gave a call for Asian Socialism.

During his stay in Germany there were some more developments, which are worth mentioning here. One such incident took place at the Geneva Conference of the League of Nations. In this conference, India was represented by Maharaja of Bikaner, Ganga Singh. The Maharaja, who was a stooge of the British imperialists, delivered a speech in which he glorified

the role of British Empire. Lohia with his friend had somehow gained entry into the gallery and as the Maharaja spoke, they blew a long whistle from the gallery. For this act of indiscipline, they were removed from the gallery and later let off. However, Lohia wrote an open letter to M. Titulescue, the Romanian delegate who presided over the session and had it later published in 'Humanite'. In the letter Ganga Singh's statement was ridiculed and, an account of British government's atrocities like hanging of Bhagat Singh and others and the brutal lathi-charge of Dharasana, was given. They also distributed copies of the magazine outside the League headquarters.

Berlin students took a keen interest in politics and Rammanohar Lohia could not keep himself aloof from this. He was the Secretary of the Central Europe Indian Association, founded by Indian students. It conducted powerful campaigns against British imperialism and advocated the cause of Indian freedom. The Communist-sponsored League Against Imperialism was also in the field but their attitude to the freedom movement and its leaders was reprehensible. In one conference organised by the Association, the communists also participated and they moved a resolution condemning Mahatma Gandhi for signing the Irwin-Gandhi Pact and betraying Indian freedom. Their resolution was, however, defeated.

Lohia has described this incident in one of his speeches, published in a Hindi book *Samajvadi Andolan Ka Itihas*. He said that "the organisation of which he was the Secretary, was the Central organization of Indians of Central Europe and it was dominated by Communists. They wanted that the organisation should pass a resolution calling the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi dogs of British imperialism. When our resolution on the Gandhi-Irwin pact and prisoners of Garhwal and Meerut was passed, they got rattled and staged a walk-out. After 4 or 5 days Virendra Chattopadhyaya was won over and resolutions were passed in the right manner in another meeting."

In early 1933, Lohia returned to India and thereafter plunged into the battle of freedom.

IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Three years' stay in Germany gave Lohia a new angle to see the social and political issues which made him different from politicians and intellectuals who were either educated through the English language and so seeing the world in the frames set by Britishers or Americans or from those who were steeped in Indian traditions. Even the knowledge of Marxism and Communism has reached India through the medium of English. Lohia not only studied this literature in its original form in German and French languages, he also got an opportunity to come in direct contact with movements going on in various European countries. He studied Marx and Engels in German. He found that social democracy of Central European countries was quite different from British or American capitalist democracy. The post-First World War economic depression had inspired a great churning of thought, which changed many traditional conceptions about communism, capitalism and social democracy. Being dissatisfied and disappointed with these traditional concepts, people were moving towards extremist ideologies like fascism and Nazism. Lohia passed through this churning of thought, keeping his feet firmly on the soil.

He studied European streams of thought in the perspective of the freedom movement going on in India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and tried to understand these streams in relation to Indian conditions. He thus was neither influenced too much by Fabian Socialism as Jawaharlal Nehru was nor became a staunch Marxist like Jayaprakash Narayan. He was also not much impressed by the Social Democrats of Germany because he found them cold in comparison to Nazis and fascists. He was impressed somewhat by the warmth of the communists and the anti-British feelings of the Nazis, but as an ideology he neither liked communism nor Nazism. Although the worst form of Nazism had not so far appeared, as a racial ideology, it had created revulsions in Lohia.

When Lohia returned to his country, the political

atmosphere here was of despair and depression. The Civil Disobedience Movement had more or less flopped. Senior leaders of the Congress had made up their minds to fight elections of the provincial assemblies and run the government under the 1935 Act. They had started putting pressure on Gandhi so that he might withdraw the Civil Disobedience Movement and allow relaxation of rules to enable the Congress to participate in elections. Gandhi had undertaken a long fast against the communal award, which culminated in the Poona Pact signed between Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the caste Hindus. To make the pact successful, Gandhi had diverted his attention and energy from the movement towards abolition of untouchability. After acceding to the wishes of the Congress leaders to fight election and join the government, Gandhi became disinterested in the Congress and totally dedicated himself to abolition of the untouchability programme.

When Lohia reached Madras Port, his pocket was empty. He had lost his luggage on the way. He didn't have even the train fare to go to Calcutta. He went to the office of *The Hindu* and wrote an article for them. With the remuneration he got from *The Hindu*, he was able to reach Calcutta where his father had been living. Hiralal had closed his business and was wholly devoted to Congress activities. Lohia too had decided that he would work for the freedom movement only. But financial conditions of the family forced him to search for some work. He tried for the post of a lecturer in the Benaras Hindu University but he was late and the vacancy had been filled. He was offered a job with the industrialist Rameshwar Birla but he refused it. Thereafter, Jamnalal Bajaj kept him as his son but there too he didn't stay for long. Coming back to Calcutta he, along with comrades of his student life, tried to enter active politics.

This period of 2-3 years which he spent with his friends of student life must have been very interesting. Wandering in streets, spending time in Coffee Houses, dreaming about the future, debating the national issues with mind filled with

enthusiasm and so on must make rich material for Lohia's complete biography. But not much information is available relating to this period. The condition of the family comprising the son and the father has been described by Indumati Kelkar thus:

"Both father and son had fully engaged themselves in active politics. Father stayed with some of his relatives and the son with one or the other of his friends. If the situation was favourable they had two meals a day, otherwise one would also do."

Among his friends of those days, Bal Krishna Gupta was the closest. He had since passed away. His younger brothers Jagdish Gupta and Vidyasagar Gupta, were very young. Lohia's relation with this family remained close till the end. A brief description given by Indumati Kelkar about his life of those days throws light on his carefree nature. It goes like this:

"An affluent friend once tried to persuade Lohia to change. He praised Lohia and advised him to give up the life of hardships. The friend urged him to take some gainful vocation and presented him Rs. 200. Both Lohia and the friend with whom he stayed first bought a dhoti, a shirt and a pair of chappals each. Lohia bought a Gandhi cap too. He spent Rs. 70 on books. They then dined in a hotel, bought a tin of cigarettes and moved along the Hooghly harbour studying the conditions of the dock workers till day-break. When they returned home they had only Rs. 30 left. A woman's voice in the next room woke up Lohia at about 10 a.m. the next day. She was a revolutionary's wife and had come to seek financial assistance. The friend gave her Rs. 5. Lohia went out and made his friend pay her all the money they had with them."

Sometimes his friends misused his words said in lighter vein. When Lohia came to know he was pained but could not check this. At times his relation with other colleagues soured on account of this. Later on, he checked this tendency.

Due to this mode of life, the thought of marriage never came to his mind. Nor his father insisted on that. One day

both father and son attended a wedding. The topic of Lohia's marriage naturally cropped up during the conversation there. Father of the prospective bride approached Hiralal with the proposal. As the two were engaged in their talk, Rammanohar took off his glasses and said, "Look, I am almost blind. Why do you want to marry your daughter to a blind man like me?" After returning home Hiralal remarked, "What a reply you gave to the gentleman!" Both father and son felt relieved.

On 17th May 1934, a conference of various Socialist groups, functioning in different provinces, was held which was presided over by Acharya Narendra Deva. In this conference it was decided to form the Congress Socialist Party. On 21st and 22nd October, the foundation conference, held in Bombay under the presidentship of Dr. Sampurnanand, gave a formal shape to the Patna conference's decision. The committee set up to prepare the Constitution, programme and policy of the Party, by the Patna conference, included among others, the name of Dr. Lohia. This committee was headed by Acharya Narendra Deva.

There were many young people working in the Congress who were attracted to socialism. Before the Patna conference was held, many socialist groups were functioning in various places. Extensive discussions were held among young socialists held in Nasik Jail. After their release from jail the process gained momentum. A Socialist group was formed in Bihar in 1931. Similar groups were set up in Orissa and Bombay in 1933 and 1934. Groups were also functioning in Benaras and Punjab. All these groups were merged in the Congress Socialist Party at Patna. Among the leaders of this party were: Acharya Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan, Yusuf Meheralli, Achyut Patwardhan, Minoo Masani, Smt., Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, Dr. Sampurnanand, A.N. Menon, Ramnandan Mishra, Munshi Ahmed Din, Faridul Haq Ansari, Ram Vriksha Benipuri, Shivnath Banerjee and Dr. Rammanohar Lohia.

The ideology of Socialism became popular after the Russian Revolution of 1917. Although all these men were influenced by the Russian revolution, they had substantial differences with

the Communists. The reason was that the communists were guided by the Communists Party of the Soviet Union and they opposed the freedom movement and used derogatory words for the leaders of the Congress. Lohia had also opposed this tendency among the Communists in Germany.

In the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were supposed to be the leaders of this group, although they never took membership of the Congress Socialist Party. Lohia was very much fascinated by Jawaharlal. He admitted this on various occasions. After 1947, when he got disillusioned with Jawaharlal, he started saying that he was influenced by one and a half person— one Gandhi and half Jawaharlal.

After the formation of the Congress Socialist Party, the weekly journal *Congress Socialist* was started from Calcutta. Lohia became its editor. Lohia's love for political journalism remained till the end and he continued to take deep interest in the publication of journals like *Jana*, *Chaukhambha* and *Mankind*. During his editorship of *Congress Socialist* he once wrote a piece criticising Gandhi's programme of village reform and sent it to Gandhiji for his comments. Gandhi wrote to him: "Since you don't have sufficient tolerance to understand others' viewpoint, don't expect my comments." Lohia again wrote to him saying: "I might have been careless in my language but my intention was not bad. I therefore, request you to kindly reply." At this Gandhi wrote him a letter with affection.

When Stalin started prosecutions against his party colleagues, Lohia wrote a bitter article in the *Congress Socialist*, criticising Stalin's policies. He brought out the contradictions of Communism in this article in a forceful manner and this became the subject of fierce controversy between the Socialists and the Communists. The arguments given by Lohia in this article were, later more or less repeated by Khrushchev.

Lohia's life in Calcutta was full of hardships. He did not have a place to live. He used to stay occasionally at the office of the Trade Union Centre, where there was no bathroom or a kitchen. Two tables joined together served as a bed at night.

Sometimes he used to stay at the Marwari Hostel also. Lohia and his friends were always in financial difficulties. There used to be meetings every day but they did not have money even to go to these meetings.

In 1936, Jawaharlal Nehru became the president of the Congress. He asked Lohia to take charge of the foreign department of the Congress. Lohia had to leave Calcutta and stay in Anand Bhavan at Allahabad. During his stay there, Lohia authored many important reports and documents for the Congress. A weekly bulletin was also started. In his report of the foreign department presented at the Faizpur session of the Congress, he said that the Congress must outline its foreign policy with Indian interests. He gave a detailed analysis of democratic systems of various countries like the UK, the USA, France etc. His comments on attack on Abyssinia by the fascist regime of Italy, General Franco's terror in Spain, Japan's attack on China were indicative of Lohia's insight regarding India's foreign policy. In fact there was a substantial contribution of Dr. Lohia in the foreign policy based on non-alignment which was adopted by free India. He had written a booklet on non-alignment for which Nehru had written the preface. In this booklet Lohia wrote that the Asian and the African countries should strive for a new world order keeping aloof from the conflict of Nazism and imperialism and forming a third bloc. In short Lohia was influenced in his approach to international affairs by a noble aspiration to create a new world order. Lohia gave it a concrete form outlining a foreign policy based on the elimination of imperialism, opposition to all wars, freedom and equality of all nations and peoples and a world parliament. He also succeeded in securing Gandhi's support to it.

An article published in the bulletin created a difference of opinion between Lohia and Nehru. The Congress government, under the leadership of Pandit G.B. Pant, had ordered indiscriminate police firing on political agitators in which some persons were killed. Lohia criticised this incident in the bulletin. This bulletin was also sent to foreign countries. G.B. Pant

complained to Jawaharlal Nehru and he in turn told Lohia that it was not proper since this would discredit the Congress in other countries. When Lohia disagreed with him, Nehru kept quiet. It is notable here that Lohia later asked the first Socialist Chief Minister, Pattan Thanu Pillai, to resign for similar action by his government.

Lohia, in Anand Bhavan, was not in his natural self. When the Congress Party took the decision that a member of the Congress Socialist Party cannot hold any post in the All India Congress Committee, Lohia immediately resigned.

Two incidents gave rise to major difference of opinion among the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party. The first was the attempt of sabotage by the Communists in the Congress Socialist Party. The Indian communists had been acting against the freedom movement as per directions from the Russian Communist Party (known as third party line) but in 1935, after the alarming rise of Hitler's power the foreign policy of the Soviet Union changed and the 7th Congress of the Communist Parties changed its direction according to which the Indian Communists were asked to form joint fronts and so they decided to join the Congress and the Congress Socialist Party. But after joining the Congress Socialist Party, they got busy in sabotaging and capturing the Congress Socialist Party. Alarmed by this, some leaders of the Congress Socialist Party approached Jayaprakash Narayan, who was the General Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party but he didn't heed their protest and therefore, Dr. Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Minoo Masani and Asoka Mehta resigned from the executive of the Congress Socialist Party. Ultimately, at the time of the Lahore conference of the party in 1938, when the Communists tried to set up their own candidates against the official candidates, Jayaprakash Narayan changed his views and the communists were expelled from the Party. But this gave a major blow to the Congress Socialist Party as the Communists captured the party units of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Lohia was well aware of the tricks of the communists.

During his stay in Germany, he had studied them from close quarters. Lohia could not tolerate their anti-Congress and anti-Gandhi actions. On the other hand, Jayaprakash Narayan, who considered himself a staunch Marxist, had a soft corner for the communists. This caused the difference between Jayaprakash Narayan and other Socialist leaders. After the expulsion of the communists from the Congress Socialist Party, the differences were settled. Madhu Limaye has described in detail this chapter of the history of Congress Socialist Party in his book, "Communist Party: Facts and Fiction."

In 1939, Subhas Chandra Bose decided to contest the presidentship of the Congress a second time. This was the time when the clouds of the Second World War were thickening. There were two opinions in the Congress with regard to the World War. One was that in the event of a war against Germany, the Congress should support the democratic force represented by Britain and France etc. against the fascist forces of Germany and its allies. This opinion was held by the senior leaders of the Congress. The other group in which the majority of the people were left-oriented thought that the Congress should make use of the war conditions and intensify the struggle for freedom. Most of the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party were of this opinion and Lohia agreed with them.

When Subhas Chandra Bose stood for election for the second time he made second opinion the major issue of his election. The other group fielded Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya who had the support of Mahatma Gandhi. Thus, this election became a challenge to Gandhi's leadership. The Communists and members of the Congress Socialist Party voted for Subhas and he was elected. Lohia remained neutral. He didn't vote with other colleagues of his party. He thought that challenging Gandhi and thus creating fissures in the freedom movement would be harmful at this stage. Lohia had many differences with Gandhi. Nevertheless, he firmly believed that the leadership of Gandhi was essential for the freedom movement. He thought that it was not proper for Subhas to challenge Gandhi on the instigation

of the leftists. He also must have had some fears that the freedom movement would be displaced from the path of non-violence because Subhas supporters accepted non-violence not as a matter of faith but as a matter of strategy. In Lohia's view this could be disastrous for the freedom struggle. After Subhas's election a vague resolution (known as Pant resolution) to express faith in Gandhi's leadership was moved in the executive of the Congress. The leaders of the Congress Socialist Party, who had voted in favour of Subhas Chandra Bose, had to retreat their steps and remain neutral. The resolution was passed and Subhas had to resign. The Congress Socialist Party leaders were blamed for opportunism but Lohia was spared because he remained neutral on the first occasion.

These two incidents show that Lohia didn't follow the party line blindly. He didn't compromise with the freedom of the conscience in the name of party discipline.

The conflict between Subhas and Mahatma Gandhi has been interpreted by different scholars in different ways. Some blame Gandhi for imposing his will on the Congress. The leftists still call it betrayal of Subhas by the Socialists. Even the Socialist leaders like Acharya Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan had regretted their decision to remain neutral because the Socialist base in Bengal was totally wiped out. But Lohia never expressed regret and his mind remained free from guilty feeling. Instead, he continued to believe that this was ultimately good for the freedom struggle. His faith in Gandhi proved valid when Gandhi led the Quit India Movement with the call of 'Do or Die'.

PREPARATION FOR 'QUIT INDIA' MOVEMENT

In early 1939, the political scene in Europe had become explosive and the possibilities of the World War were very much obvious. Lohia had clear views about the war. In an article published on 29th March 1939 he wrote that the war was "playing hide and seek with us." He said that it would be unwise on the part of India to be caught unaware by the outbreak of

war. He also said that, "At any point of time, British imperialism was as much a monster evil as Hitler and Japan. It was British imperialism that had given birth to fascism. India must therefore, resist both fascism and war. Free India could help protect world democracy."

In an article published on June 1, 1938, he had urged Gandhi to start Satyagraha immediately. After analysing the world situation he suggested a four-point plan as under:

1. All people will be free. Those newly acquiring freedom will determine their constitution through a constituent assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise.
2. There shall be equality in and among all nations. No one should have special privileges and every citizen should have the right to go and settle in any country without prior permission
3. All credits and investments of one country in another will be scrapped or submitted to international tribunals for an impartial review. They will then be owned not by an individual but by the state.
4. There will be total disarmament.

This suggestion of Lohia was immediately accepted by Gandhi but he was not ready to start a satyagraha. The reason he gave was that the country was not ready yet. About India's attitude to war, Lohia said that in the conflict of two evils, there should be no reason to support either. "Whoever wins among the warring countries, the victory will be meaningless in the context of freedom of the slave countries and world order based on justice", he said. He wanted that India should not get itself involved in this war and also persuaded other slave countries to keep themselves aloof from this. He believed that this war could be opposed through non-violence and for this wide support of the people could be gathered.

For these anti-war thoughts Lohia was arrested at Calcutta in May 1939. He himself defended his arrest before the Chief Presidency Magistrate who released him on 15th August

commenting on Lohia's ability to argue that had he been a barrister, he would have been very successful.

The attitude of the senior leaders of the Congress was different from that of Lohia. They thought that with the aim of opposing fascism and supporting democracy, India should suspend agitation against the British government. With this in view, the Congress President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, had sent a telegram to the World Peace Congress in Paris in which it was said that India would cooperate with the British if it was granted freedom.

The war broke out on the 1st September 1939, with Hitler's attack on Poland and England declared war against Germany on the 3rd September. France also joined England. The British government also involved India in the war without the consent of the Indian people. Viceroy Linlithgo had a talk with Gandhi. Giving a brief of his talk with Viceroy, Gandhi wrote in *Harijan*: "Having made my position vis-a-vis the Congress clear, I told His Excellency that my own sympathies were with England and France on purely humanitarian grounds. I told him that I could not contemplate without being stirred to the very depth, the destruction of London, which had hitherto been regarded impregnable. As I was picturing before him the House of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down."

Lohia was disappointed by Gandhi's statement. He thought Gandhi should have been as much disturbed by the possibility of destruction of Germany's Mauthausen Auditorium, Moscow's Kremlin or America's Jefferson Memorial as he was of Westminster Abbey. He also conveyed his reaction to Gandhiji in a letter and also met him. Gandhi told Lohia that he should write to him at once whenever he felt that Gandhi had missed some national or world issue in relation to the war. He gave him perfect freedom to write to him whenever he felt like on any occasion.

Gandhiji had not given any assurance to the Viceroy. He had only put up Congress's viewpoint before him. The Congress

in a resolution had asked the British government to make clear their war-intentions and their reasons. It was also stated in the resolution that if the British government gave an assurance about India's freedom, India would assist England in the war. Viceroy Linlithgo was prevaricating. He was trying to confuse the Congress with the assurance of some sort of autonomy in the future. Lohia was afraid the Congress leaders might give some kind of assurance. Hence, Lohia clearly said that India would think over extending support to England only if it was granted immediate freedom. Lohia was of the firm view that the democratic countries like England and France should eschew imperialism and grant freedom to their colonies immediately.

But the intentions of the British government were otherwise. It made clear that India would be granted dominion status after the end of the war.

The Congress was in doldrums. After much deliberation it asked its provincial governments to resign and the situation of confrontation with the British government continued. After the resignations of the Congress ministries, the Governors became all powerful and they started collecting war-contribution from the people forcibly. Lohia protested against this in a speech delivered at Sultanpur. He said that in seven provinces there was Governors' despotic rule. This should be considered sufficient to start a satyagraha. The edifice of the British imperialism based on exploitation of another country had shaken and the British government could not protect this for a much longer time.

For this anti-war speech, Lohia was arrested on June 7, 1940 at the Congress office, Allahabad. He was prosecuted under the Defence of India Act. He was kept in handcuffs and chains. In his defence Lohia gave a beautiful statement in the court, which was published by Gandhi in *Harijan* with his comments. Lohia had said in his statement that all their actions must be non-violent, because non-violence was not only the practical need but also a moral necessity. He said: "Those who rely on

weapons do not rely on their hearts. They turn into slaves of their weapons. They have no strength left in themselves. I am opponent of the cult of *lathi* and its modern equivalent, the bomb-dropping aeroplane. There is an inner contradiction between this cult and enduring human life, a contradiction, which is daily becoming more fierce."

Towards the end of his statement he said: "Let me in conclusion state that I have no ill will towards any people. I have lived among the German people and liked their thoroughness of inquiring, their scientific bent of mind and their efficiency of action. I am unhappy that today they had to carry on their shoulders a system which results in war and conquest. I have no intimate knowledge of British people. I dare say that they had their virtues. I do not want the destruction of Britain. The British had done evil to us but I do not want to do evil to them. Again I am unhappy that the British people had to carry on their shoulders today a system which enslaved the people of the world." The judge sentenced him to two years rigorous imprisonment but in his judgment he said: "The accused is a highly intelligent and educated gentleman, a man of high principles and morals whose honesty of purpose nobody can doubt. He does not mind suffering for his conviction and does not care much for his sentence or its duration."

Commenting on Lohia's statement in *Harijan*, Gandhi wrote: "Dr. Lohia's and other Congressmen's imprisonment are so many hammer-strokes that must weaken the chain that binds India. The government is inviting the Congress to start Civil Disobedience and deliver the last blow, it would have reserved for a better day, better for the British. It is a pity""

The British government started arresting Indian leaders and putting them in prisons. Soon Jawaharlal Nehru, Acharya Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan and hundred other leaders and volunteers were behind bars. Ultimately Gandhiji had to declare individual *satyagraha* with the call not to assist British government either with money or men. Between October 1940 and September 1941 about

25,000 satyagrahis courted arrest.

On 7th December 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and destroyed it in a lightning strike. This forced America to join the war and the whole scene changed. The war became the World War. Japan advanced like a storm capturing South Asian countries in a sweep. Within three-four months, it conquered Singapore, Malaya, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and Burma and reached the Indian borders. This turn of events demoralised the Britishers. They released the Congress leaders and started fresh negotiations with them. Sir Stafford Cripps was sent from London to discuss a plan with Congress leaders. Since his proposals contained vague promises in future, they were rejected by the Indian leaders. Gandhi commented on these proposals that it was a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank.

In view of Cripps proposals, Lohia wrote an article in *Harijan* in which he appealed to Gandhi to start mass *satyagraha*. On the other side, many Congress leaders were in two minds. They wanted to cooperate with the British government on some kind of assurance. People of India were increasingly attracted towards Japan, especially due to the advance of the Indian National Army, under the command of Subhas Chandra Bose in cooperation with Japan. On 26th April 1942, Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* that the Britishers should leave India because he thought they were unable to protect this country. This article was an indication of a revolutionary change in Gandhi. For three months or so Gandhi had been clarifying his stand through *Harijan*. During this period Lohia was in constant touch with Gandhi. On one occasion, Lohia suggested to Gandhi that he should write to the Viceroy demanding declaring all cities of India as 'free cities' so that they could be spared of bombing. Gandhiji liked this suggestion and decided to forward Lohia's letter to the Viceroy. Lohia wanted that these suggestions should go as Gandhi's suggestions. Later, Gandhi decided not to send the letter, since it would have put Lohia in trouble.

Some leaders of the Congress including Jawaharlal, Maulana Azad, Rajagopalachari etc., were still of the opinion that in the

decisive battle between democratic and fascist forces, the Congress should not start a major agitation. But Gandhi had made up his mind to wage the final struggle. He told the dissenting Congress leaders that if the Congress did not agree, the movement would be started without the Congress. This brought about a change in the Congress leaders and they decided to join the movement. Thereafter on 7th and 8th August 1942 in the historic session of the Congress at Gwalia Tank, Bombay, the 'Quit India' movement was launched.

It is worth mentioning here that from the beginning of the war and the declaration of the 'Quit India' movement, many ups and downs came in the relations of Gandhi and other Congress leaders. Even Gandhi's views changed but Lohia's views about the war and struggle remained unchanged and he succeeded finally to convert Gandhi to his views.

S.M. Joshi in his Hindi autobiography *Yadon Ki/ugali* had described the events from the beginning of the war to the declaration of the 'Quit India' Movement thus:

"At the point when the war broke out Gandhi had said that it would not be proper to put the British Government in difficulty by starting a mass movement. By September - October 1940, Gandhi even warned the Viceroy that it would not be possible for the Congress to stick to its old policy. Now, he was in favour of non-cooperation in the war efforts, while many senior leaders like Nehru, Maulana Azad, Rajaji etc., were in favour of conditional cooperation. Their condition was that the British Government should declare their war-objectives and tell how much power they could give to the Indian representatives immediately and how much after the war. Subhas's group and the Socialists were of the clear view that a mass struggle must be launched without delay.

The Viceroy called a meeting of the caste-community leaders. Since their number was 52, they were called '52 playing cards'. In this meeting, the Viceroy declared that India would be given dominion status after the war and during the war an advisory council would be constituted with the representatives

of the political parties and princes. The Muslim League welcomed this statement but the Congress had to do something to oppose the plans. It asked its provincial governments and 44 representatives in the Central Assembly to resign. Some Congress leaders did not like this decision of the Congress. Among these leaders, Rajaji, K.M. Munshi, B.S. Kher, Premier of Bombay and Khan Saheb, Premier of N. W.F.P. were included. They were of the view that the governors would become despotic after the resignations. But their opinion was ignored. Provincial governments resigned and the Muslim League observed this as 'Day of Deliverance.' The Congress declared its intention at the Ramgarh session of the Congress held in March 1940 that it would not accept anything less than complete independence. Immediately after that the Muslim League at its Lahore conference passed the resolution for a separate country, Pakistan. At the time of the Ramgarh session, Subhas Babu had also called an anti-war conference under the auspices of the Forward Bloc in which it was decided to launch the anti-war *satyagraha* with effect from 6th April 1940. Thereafter, Gandhi, hurt by attack on London, made the famous Westminster statement (which was criticised by Lohia). At this point, Gandhi wrote a letter to the Viceroy suggesting that Hitler should be opposed not by arm-power but by moral power. When this suggestion was not heeded either by the Viceroy or by the Congress, Gandhi requested the Congress to free him from the responsibility of leadership. The Congress executive accepted his request with regret.

After Gandhi was sidelined, the Congress leaders got the opportunity. At a meeting held at Delhi in July 1940, a resolution was passed with Rajaji's initiative which stated that if the British government declared that freedom would be given to India after the war, the Congress would cooperate with the government in every manner. At the meeting of the AICC held at Pune, this resolution known as 'Rajaji Plan' was approved by 95 votes as against 45 votes. This was the occasion when not only Nehru, Azad and Rajaji but also Patel and Rajendra Babu deserted

Gandhi and Gandhi became alone. (This was also the time when Lohia and other Socialists came close to Gandhi.)

After the Pune resolution was passed, some members of the Congress executive felt remorse. Sardar Patel and Rajendra Babu decided to resign from the Executive. Some more members too joined them. When Maulana Azad received the letter with signatures, he found that there were only five people left in support of Rajaji Plan. Thus the Congress was in dilemma. The Viceroy announced his 'August Plan' in response to Pune Resolution in which the Muslim League was given a clear assurance that it would not hand over power to that government which the Muslim League opposed. In this statement the word 'Muslim League' was not actually used, only the words 'powerful section of national life' was used. But it was made clear in the statement of Secretary of State for India, Mr. Amrey, that nine crore Muslims of India form this Section. This was accepting the demand for Pakistan. The Congress rejected the August Plan and in the AJCC meeting held at Bombay in September 1940, Gandhi again assumed leadership.

On 17th January 1941, Subhas Chandra Bose suddenly disappeared from his house in Calcutta, where he was interned. In cognito, he reached Germany via Kabul and Russia. This event surcharged the atmosphere. Another news came from Deoli Jail where Jayaprakash Narayan was kept, that his letter containing direction to Socialist Party, sent through Prabhavati, had been seized by the police. On 22nd June 1941, Hitler attacked the Soviet Union. The Communists and the Royists declared that the imperialist war had become people's war and they decided to cooperate fully with the British government.

Deoli Jail prisoners, under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan put up the demand that they should be transferred to jails in their respective provinces and with this demand 208 prisoners went on a hunger strike with effect from 23rd October. A settlement was reached after 33 days. Jayaprakash broke his fast and he was transferred to Hazaribag Jail. In December, the Pearl Harbour event took place which shook the whole world.

America joined the war against Japan and the war became world war. On the advice of the President of the USA, the British government reopened the negotiations with Indian leaders and released the members of the Congress Working Committee. The Congress again expressed the desire for conditional cooperation. But when the Japanese army reached the Indian borders and with them Subhas's forces entered the Indian territories the situation became too critical to be handled by the Congress. Jawaharlal declared that he would fight against Subhas with sword in his hand. Gandhi called Nehru's outburst as nine days' wonder. The Congress had to handover leadership to Gandhi. He issued an ultimatum to the British Government that it should quit India and leave Indians to their fate. In the Working Committee meeting held at Allahabad and Wardha, the 'Quit India' resolution was debated. Gandhi declared that the movement could be carried on even without the Congress. At this all Congress leaders fell in line and the 'Quit India' movement was launched from the historic Congress session held at Bombay."

UNDERGROUND STRUGGLE

Dr. Lohia was not a man of organisation. He himself said so many times that he didn't feel at home in the work of running organisations. In this he considered Jayaprakash Narayan, an ideal. Lohia was mainly a thinker, an intellectual. But when there was a challenge he threw himself into the field of action. Till the 'Quit India' movement started, Lohia mostly did intellectual work in the CSP and in the AICC office. His intellectual input through the journals *Congress Socialist* and *Harijan* was remarkable. The 'Quit India' struggle called upon him to play a different role. On the night of 8th and 9th August, all members of the Congress Working Committee, were arrested by the British police. Lohia was not a member of the CWC. Although he had delivered a speech in that historic session, he somehow escaped arrest. Madhu Limaye has given a graphic account of the situation in his book *August Struggle* in these words:

The Socialists, who had assembled for the AICC meeting at Bombay decided not to court arrest passively. They resolved to build an underground movement. Yusuf Meherally and Asoka Mehta had been arrested. Jayaprakash Narayan was in prison. Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Purshottam Trikamdass, S.M. Joshi (N.G. Goray was in Nizam jail). Shiru Limaye and all the rest of us went underground. Aruna Asaf Ali joined us later. Some Gandhian Congress leaders, presumably under Acharya Kripalani's direction given prior to his arrest along with other working committee members, had also taken counsel and had proceeded to establish an underground AICC. Among them were Sucheta Kripalani, Sadiq Ali and Girdhari Kripalani. Lohia, who had previously worked with these people in the AICC office, was a common link between this group of Gandhian AICC workers and the Socialists.

According to S.M. Joshi, the underground office was headed by Sadiq Ali and Dr. Kelkar and D.N. Kachru too acted as incharge of office. According to him, a meeting was held on 19th or perhaps 20th of August in which the following participated: Ramnandan Mishra, Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya, Poornima Bannerjee, K.D. Malviya and S.M. Joshi. In this meeting Purshottam Trikamdass suggested that a parallel government be set up immediately and a statement issued in this regard. But the rest of the persons did not agree. They thought that they should wait for some time since they were not in a position to lead the countrywide struggle. No such secret meeting of the big leaders was held at any time later.... When the underground office to issue directions to the workers was set up, there were three leaders in this, in the beginning. Sucheta Kripalani, Achyut Patwardhan and Dr. Lohia, Jayaprakash and Aruna Asaf Ali joined later in November. Achyut Patwardhan has given the credit for preparing a sound base of the underground struggle to Dr. Lohia. It was Lohia's plan to destroy police stations, railway stations, post, telegraph

and telephone offices, since he thought that by capturing these symbols of British rule would make it possible to drive out the Britishers. While doing all this, no one should be killed or hurt, it was stipulated.

Dr. Lohia remained underground from 8th August 1942 to 20th May 1944. He spent most of the time in Mumbai or in Kolkata where it was comparatively easier to avoid the police. From these places he directed the underground Congress Radio. Vithaldas Khakar (Babubhai) was the whole and soul of the Congress Radio. He was in business at the age of 20 and he was not a Congress worker before this. His main lieutenant was 22-year old, Usha Mehta. Chandrakant Zaveri (23 years) and Vithal Zaveri (24 years) were also the members of this team. A press with which Vithaldas had business relation, took the responsibility of the technical aspects of the Congress Radio. The formal announcement of the broadcast was made on 3rd September 1942 at 71 -78 meter band from an unknown place in India. This broadcast continued till November 11, 1942. In between it remained closed for two days on 15-17th October. When this radio was seized, the police commissioner wrote in his report that this team was directly responsible to Dr. Lohia, to make the plan successful. The financial support was also provided by him. Most of the messages broadcast from Mumbai or Kolkata were written by him. In his statements Lohia called upon all freedom-loving countries of the world to extend their maximum support to the freedom struggle of India.

On several occasions, Lohia escaped narrowly from the police. On one occasion, Lohia, Achyut and Aruna were together in a room but by chance they escaped without any harm.

The facts given in British government's, documents in connection with the movement are astounding. According to Madhu Limaye the main targets of the revolutionaries were government offices, police stations, courts, district headquarters, train-traffic, telegraph and telephone establishments etc. In other words, all symbols of the British Raj on which the Union Jack was flying. The underground leaders had learnt lessons from

the revolt of the 1857. Although the people at the time of 1857 revolt were armed and people during the 1942 struggle were without arms, the way the government set-up was destroyed, surprised the British authorities. In several areas, all traces of British rule were destroyed. At several places, a parallel government was functioning. These parallel governments, known as party governments were also collecting tax from the people. Viceroy Linlithgo sent a telegram to the Secretary of State for India on 15th August stating that Bihar was the centre of the storm where due to widespread sabotage a serious situation had developed in areas around Patna. He also informed that troops had been deployed and contact had been established with the Governor through wireless. It said that all attempts were being made to bring normalcy but it would take time to bring the situation under complete control. The virus of Bihar was spreading in the eastern districts of Benaras and Allahabad, which were adjoining Bihar. It was also difficult to trace the centres of revolt in Bihar. The students of the Benaras Hindu University were responsible for the situation in eastern Uttar Pradesh. In the rest of the provinces, the situation was for the time being normal. In his report of 17th August, the Viceroy admitted that in UP and Bihar the movement had taken a revolutionary form. On 19th August, he wrote that in Bhagalpur, the situation had become out of control and in the region north to Ganga too the situation was serious. The conditions were also bad in Madras Presidency. On August 22, the Bihar Governor T. Stewart sent a general report to the Viceroy: "With rail, telegraph and telephone connections out of order we lost immediate touch with other districts except Gaya with which we at an early stage established a daily shuttle service by Tiger Moth planes. The Tirhut Commissioner had to order the abandonment of less important police stations and posts and the concentration of their garrisons at more strategic points." The Governor strongly suggested that the revolt and the form it took was "carefully planned and our intelligence system was badly at fault." He was not able to

determine whether the plan was one of the official Congress or the Congress Socialist Party.

By the end of August, the Viceroy was in a position to give Prime Minister Winston Churchill a more realistic appraisal of the nature of the challenge the government had been called upon to meet in India following the arrest of the Congress leaders, in a personal communication to Churchill on August 31, 1942, Linlithgo said

"I am engaged here in a meeting by the most serious rebellion since that of 1857, the gravity and extent of which we have had so far concealed from the world for reasons of military security. Mob violence remains rampant over large tracts of the countryside and I am by no means confident that we may not see in September a formidable attempt to renew this widespread sabotage of our war effort. If we bungle this business we shall damage India irretrievably as a base for future allied operations and as a thoroughfare for US help to China."

Max Harcourt's account of this struggle runs like this: "After the arrest of the first line of leaders, the Socialist leaders of the second line took command. These leaders proved effective because they had foreseen things and they were ready for the revolution. The workers of this Socialist Party and the Kisan Sabha spread in the villages and they led the dissatisfied farmers. Thereafter they attacked government institutions and town headquarters. British administrative authority in most of the area had collapsed in August. It could be re-established with army corps, planes and armed vehicles and that too temporarily. In the areas where people had taken control of government posts, parallel governments were set up. Attempts were made to set up modern states. This was different from the 1857 situation when the rule was handed over to the princes and landlords. The freedom fighters of 1942 were connected to a well disciplined political party and the temporary government set up by Jayaprakash and Lohia in the Terai region were loyal to inter-provincial and All India Government. Their contact with the freedom fighters of Western India indicated

that this rebellion had inter-regional awareness, which was quite different from pure farmers revolts."

In this great struggle, known as August Revolution 60,229 persons were arrested. Out of this 18,000 were arrested under the Defence of India Act, 940 persons were killed by bullets of the police or the army and 1630 were injured. Forty-four persons were sentenced to death. The role of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia in this great movement can easily be perceived.

Lohia was arrested on May 10, 1944. He was kept for one month in Bombay and then shifted to Lahore Fort which was known for the worst kind of torture. Jayaprakash Narayan was also kept here. We have now the account of the atrocities they suffered here. Dr. Lohia has himself described some in his article 'An Episode in Yoga'. During the long torture lasting for several months, Lohia experienced the moment that comes between life and death. This experience helped Lohia to define the time in its states of flux and eternity.

When the news of torture of Lohia and Jayaprakash in Lahore Fort reached outside, the British government transferred them to Agra jail. Gandhiji made a special appeal to the British government for their release and they were ultimately released in April 1946 while the other leaders were released about one year before in June 1945. Gandhiji welcomed their release and made this statement at his prayer meeting on April 13, 1946: "You know Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Lohia. Both of them are daring men of action and scholars. They could easily have become rich. But they chose the way of renunciation and service. To break the chains of their country's slavery was their sole passion. Naturally, the alien government regarded them as dangerous to its existence and put them into prison. We, however, have different scales to weigh merit, and we regard them as patriots who have sacrificed their all for the love of the country which has given them birth. That they would be found wanting in the scales of non-violence is irrelevant today. What is relevant is that independence of India is today a common ground between the British and ourselves. Their freedom,

therefore, is no longer considered dangerous by the government. Viewed in that light, their release as also the release of INA men yesterday, must be regarded as an earnest of the honesty of the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy. We must be thankful to them for this earnest and prayer of thankfulness should ascend to heaven for the wisdom with which God seems to be endowing them."

AN OTHER BATTLE

When Lohia was released from jail his health was in shambles. Many ailments had made their home in his body and some of them remained with him till his death. In the last days of his underground life he had written his famous essay 'Economics After Marx', probably after seeing the peculiar behavior of the Communists during the 'Quit India' Movement. In the preface to this book he said that in the 1942-43 movement against the British government when the Socialists were either in jail or being trailed by the police and the Communists, on the directions of their foreign masters, had declared imperialist war as people's war, he was upset to see the contradictions of Marxism and its practice and decided to write a critique of Marxism. He could only write on its economic aspects before he was arrested and sent to jail.

After his release he probably wanted to continue this venture but he got entangled in many other problems. His father had passed away when he was in Agra jail and he could not attend the funeral since he refused to be released on parole.

The World War had come to an end. After destroying Hiroshima and Nagasaki by atom bombs America by its arrogance had thrown a challenge before humanity, which had to be faced by Lohia in the days to come. The Indian political situation was rapidly heading towards partition of the country. In England the Labour Party had come to power and it had declared its intentions to give freedom to India as soon as possible. Tired of struggle and fed up with jails, the Congress leaders had heaved a sigh of relief and they were eager to assume

power at all costs. Lohia commented that the Cabinet Mission came to India after seeing the power of the people. He was of the view that in the event of failure of the talk, people should have the courage to continue the struggle with determination.

Almost all Socialist leaders were of the view that they would have to launch a fresh battle. Some leaders of the August Revolution had even decided to form a group for the purpose. But the leaders of the Congress were clearly seeing power coming into their hands. In view of the coming negotiations with the British government, the presidentship of the Congress was taken from Maulana Azad and given to Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru offered the secretaryship of the Congress to Lohia in June 1946. Lohia laid down the condition that the President of the Congress would not accept the office of the Prime Minister, nor any member of the Working Committee be a minister at the Centre or in the states. Nehru was not ready for this and the matter ended there. Nehru was, however, inclined to agree to the first condition provided he was exempted from this.

In June 1946, Lohia went to Goa to spend time with his friend Dr. Menezes. There he heard the stories of suppression of citizens' rights by the Portuguese government. There were strict restrictions on religious processions and functions, marriages etc., and there was no freedom of the press. The citizens of Goa decided to start a satyagraha against these restrictions on the directions of Lohia. A meeting was held at Madgao on June 18, 1946 in which people participated without any fear. The Portuguese police used force to scatter the crowd. One officer drew a pistol. Lohia caught hold of his hand and said, "Don't you see the crowd?" The officer was rattled. Lohia delivered a speech. Its copies were already distributed. Lohia was arrested and released the next day across the border. He made a statement there that if the Portuguese government did not restore the civil liberties in Goa within three months, he would again enter Goa. At that time an interim government of Congress and Muslim League was functioning in Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru was its Prime Minister. He said, "Goa was

only a small pimple on the face of India which could easily be plucked out and, therefore, there was no need for any agitation."

But Gandhi supported Lohia's action. He wrote in '*Harijan*' that Lohia had rendered a great service to the people of Goa and their civil rights. As per his promise, Lohia went to Goa after three months. He was arrested at the station and taken to Aguad prison. The news of his arrest created a storm in Goa, which set in motion a long process of processions and arrests. At last due to pressure from the Viceroy and religious leaders of Goa, Lohia was taken to the Indian side and released.

In the meantime, communal riots had started in Noakhali and Gandhi had proceeded on his peace march. Lohia had a talk with Gandhiji who advised him to postpone the Goa agitation in view of difficulties being faced by the interim government. Lohia, being disappointed, had to appeal to the citizens of Goa saying: "Since Gandhi and Jawaharlal do not like my participating in Goa agitation, I appeal to the people to continue their struggle whether I come there or not." Later in 1954-55, a powerful movement for freedom of Goa was built up in which the Socialists played a significant role. Ultimately Goa was freed in the sixties with the intervention of the Government of India and Goa became free. The people of Goa still observe 18th June as their freedom day, a day on which Lohia had his first meeting in Goa.

After the restrictions imposed on the Congress Socialist Party during the Quit India movement were lifted, the party held its conference in February 1947 at Kanpur. Lohia presided over the conference. In this conference the word 'Congress' was removed from the name of the party making it possible for others, who were not members of the Congress, to join the party but the party's intimate relations with the Congress continued. The resolutions passed in this conference mostly reflected Lohia's views. It was stated in one resolution that the Socialist Party believes in the objectives of establishing a classless and casteless society. Thus the goal of abolition of caste was included in the programmes of the Socialist Party for

the first time. In addition, Lohia's concepts like decentralised industrial economy based on small machine were also included in the programme. The communists' concepts of armed revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat were abandoned. This was an indication of disillusionment with Marxism and moving towards Gandhi in addition to the party's inclination towards fight against social inequalities.

But Lohia was very much disturbed to see that the country was advancing towards partition, bloodshed and anarchy. Hindu and Muslim communities who had shared their sorrows and pleasures for centuries, had become blood-thirsty in relation to each other. For causing this tragic situation, the self-interest of British imperialism as well as the short-sightedness and lust for power on the part of the leaders of both the Congress and the Muslim League, were responsible. The interim government of the Congress and the Muslim League was proving thoroughly useless. Neither the Congress nor the Muslim League leaders had the will or proper understanding. The British government was playing the role of the monkey between the two fighting cats. It was trying to secure their imperialistic interest before leaving the country. In this situation there was one person who could stand like a wall between them. He was Gandhi; but he was sidelined. When the British Prime Minister announced that they would leave India in 1947 and if there was no central authority to take over, they would confer full freedom to the provinces and the princely states, this was construed as a prelude to partition and formation of Pakistan. Before this, the Cabinet Mission plan had proposed grouping of Muslim majority and Hindu majority provinces with a loose centre. This plan was accepted and later rejected on flimsy grounds by both Congress and Muslim League leaders. Now Lord Mountbatten came with a plan of straight partition. The meeting of the Congress executive was held in June 1947 to consider the Mountbatten plan to which Lohia and Jayaprakash were also invited. Both opposed the plan and except for Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, all members of the executive voted for partition. At last Gandhi said, "now that you

have committed yourself to this, you have accepted partition, I do not want to go back on your words. But will you consider the suggestion I would make? Write to the Viceroy that the principle of partition has been accepted by the Congress Working Committee, but for working out the principle, there shall be no British authority and representatives of the Congress and those of the Muslim League would sit down in order to work out the principle and concrete details."

Lohia thought this suggestion was a grand tactical stroke. If it had been accepted, it would have saved the face of those who had already committed themselves to the principle of partition and would have meant complete turn in the destiny of the country. Gandhi hoped that if the Congress and the Muslim League negotiated directly without the interference of the British government, partition could be averted. But the working committee did not find this suggestion worth considering and rejected it out rightly.

Lohia wrote in his book *Guilty Men of India's Partition* that Gandhi complained to Nehru that before accepting the plan of partition he was not informed, Nehru strongly contradicted him and when Gandhi repeated his statement, Nehru told him that Noakhali was so far off from Delhi.

The resolution of the Congress Working Committee was to be approved by the AICC. Congress Socialist Party had decided that when the resolution would come for voting, the Socialists would remain neutral. Later, Lohia, Jayaprakash and Acharya Narendra Deva explained this by saying that since they did not have an alternative plan, they decided to remain neutral. But Lohia did have a feeling of remorse which he later admitted in his book, *Guilty Men of India's Partition*, saying:

"My own opposition to partition was persistent and vocal but it could not have been serious enough and I now recollect some false notes. In any event, my opposition could not have moved mountains. It could only have been on record as the healthy opposition of a fighter for freedom

without much influence. Nevertheless, the absence of serious opposition to partition even from a man like me, who had no selfish axe to grind, showed the depth of weakness and fear to which our people and I as an ordinary one among them had fallen. It is a matter of great sorrow to me today that not one man died or went to jail when this great land of ours was partitioned. I regret greatly that I did nothing to get into jail at India's partition."

In fact, the question of partition disturbed Lohia so much that after some time when Maulana Azad's book *India Wins Freedom* was published, he felt pain as well as anger and wrote his book *Guilty Men of India's Partition*. In this book he enumerated eight causes of partition such as: British chicanery, declining years of Congress leadership, objective conditions of Hindu-Muslim rioting, lack of grit and stamina among the people, Gandhiji's non-violence, Muslim League's separatism, inability to seize opportunities as they came and Hindu hauteur.

In this book Lohia refuted the contentions and facts of Maulana Azad; accused Nehru, Patel and Maulana Azad that they kept Gandhi in the dark and accepted the scheme of partition on his back. He expressed the opinion that many Congress leaders were tired of the struggle and they had become over-enthusiastic to acquire power. He said, "Even if they had acted like coy maidens at the prospect of holding power, they could not have hurt the country so much. They could have waited and continued to strive. Another generation would have come to whom governmental power would have been given as a genuine translation of people's power." He further said: "The Maulana has released the full steam of his spite of Sardar Patel. This was only natural. Sardar Patel was as undoubtedly Hindu in his political motivations as Maulana Azad was Muslim. To these divergent outlooks was added the degrading conflicts of personal position and power"

The account given by S.M. Joshi of this event is similar to Lohia's. According to his book *Yadon Ki jugali*, the Mountbatten

Plan of 3rd June 1947 was neither acceptable to the Socialists nor to Gandhi. Some Socialists went to him and asked him why he gave his consent to the plan when he was opposed to it. At this Gandhi replied, "my people who had been close to me so far had left me and I don't have sufficient energy left in me to build a new movement with new leadership from you." Those were the days when Gandhi was very disappointed and hurt. In this condition Lohia, Jayaprakash and Acharya Narendra Dev came very close to him. As far as Lohia was concerned, Gandhi became more or less dependent on him during the communal riots. Lohia wrote in his book, referred to before:

"I had been part persuaded and part compelled to stay in the riotous areas of Delhi, as I had earlier been made to stay in the area of Calcutta and Noakhali. I do not know what made Gandhiji do this. I sometimes suspect that he used me as some kind of safety valve, something similar to the attachment of a grandparent to his grandchild essentially for the purpose of relating stories when he is hurt at his sons and daughters straying away from him. I shall pass over the entire story and come to the morning when the newspaper report of the discovery of 303 rifles in a Muslim area enraged me.... The news of one rifle with a specific marking has been falsified into news of 303 guns."

On one occasion, Lohia, along with some comrades, including one Muslim comrade, was on round in a riot-hit area of Delhi. In Faiz Bazaar area they saw a crowd of Muslim men, women and children running about helter-skelter in terror. His vehicle stopped and the Muslim comrade came out of the vehicle to exhort the terrified people to return to their homes. Meanwhile a crowd of Hindus and Sikhs gathered there and they were about to attack the Muslim young man when Lohia came out of the vehicle, pulled the Muslim comrade inside the vehicle and stood on the foot board. The crowd was pulling Lohia repeatedly to reach the Muslim young man, but Lohia defied them again and again. At last the armed police arrived and a tragedy was averted.

What happened at Chittagong on 17th August 1946 was more terrifying. Some Muslim goons attacked Lohia's meeting. The audience ran in terror. One man showed self-respect and kept standing. He was killed. Now Lohia and his three comrades were before them. Bricks were flying from all sides. The three comrades had surrounded Lohia. Lohia was hit on his arm back and chest. Lohia recalled this incident later and said:

"What amazed me then and is still a source of wonder, whenever I remember the incident, was the agile and turnabout frequency with which my head ducked the bricks."

Socialist leader Brijmohan Toofan has also described similar incidents in his *book Freedom on Trial* in which Lohia stood firm and courageously faced the rioters.

On one occasion Lohia asked Gandhi if he would be willing to conduct a meeting of the representatives of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in riot-torn Delhi. He was ready. It was decided that this meeting be called under the Congress banner, but when the Congress leader did not show interest, the meeting was called under the Socialist Party banner. When the Congress leaders saw that Socialist Party would get the credit, they decided to call the meeting under the banner of the Congress but they also tried to make it a failure since the meeting was being called on the initiative of Dr. Lohia. Gandhiji had to stay in the meeting for four hours and he had to speak without microphone. In Gandhi's own room, which was next to one in which the meeting was held, Congress Working Committee meeting was about to be held and all leaders had gathered there. Gandhi offered them cold drink and told them to conduct their business without him. The leaders waited for one hour and then left. Before going out they came to the meeting, which was, being addressed by Gandhi, listened to his speech for sometime and then went out.

After the meeting was over and Nehru and Lohia were alone, an interesting conversation was held between the two. Lohia has described this in his book *Guilty Men of India's Partition* in

these words: "When all was over, two of us alone were left in the room and we walked towards each other. The Prime Minister told me that I was learning to become crafty. To this day, I do not understand what on earth he could have meant. He must have seen the disgust or anger on my face and, disregarding my vehement question as to what he meant, he put his arm round me in that gesture of affection which I wish I could also command whenever there was need for it and desired to reach me wherever I wanted. I reached him to the door and bowed myself away."

Explaining his alleged craft, Lohia wrote: "I was pursuing no personal interest whatever. I was simply seeking Hindu-Muslim peace. But the Prime Minister beheld some craft in me, for I had managed to bring off something, which he himself had not been able to do. He could only see the world in his own image."

In fact, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were becoming suspicious about Lohia's proximity to Gandhi. Once Sardar Patel told Gandhi, on the basis of intelligence report that some leader was planning to overthrow the government by underground movement. Because the suspect was Dr. Lohia, Gandhi asked him about it. Lohia was crest-fallen. He said, "Bapu, this is sheer madness, this is foolish. I opposed killing in the Quit India movement how can I think of this? It is true that in my party's view this government is useless. But does it mean that I want to finish it by violent means?" Gandhi asked him to give the same statement in writing to Sardar Patel. Lohia refused to give it to Patel, but he gave it to Gandhi.

Lohia's ire against Nehru-Patel government and later against Nehru government was due to strange behaviour of Nehru, Patel, Maulana Azad and other Congress leader after 1942. Lohia was a very sensitive man. In addition to having been endowed with sharp intelligence, he had loved Congress, for its role in freedom struggle. He had great respect for these senior leaders. He loved Nehru very much and he could even call himself his fan. He once regretted that he didn't show as

much love towards Subhas as was shown by him towards Nehru. But during the days of 'Quit India' movement or even before it in the days of conditional cooperation with British government and thereafter at the time of transfer of power, Lohia saw in them great change in the form of lust for power and mutual conflict inspired by it and this deeply hurt Lohia's sensitive mind.

With regard to the meeting called for discussing the partition proposal, Lohia wrote: "Messrs. Nehru and Patel were offensively aggressive to Gandhiji at this meeting. I had a few sharp exchanges with both of them some of which I shall narrate. What appeared to be astonishing then as now, though I can today understand it somewhat better, was the exceedingly rough behaviour of these chosen disciples towards their master. There was something psychopathic about it. They seemed to have set their heart on something and, whenever they scented that Gandhiji was preparing to obstruct them, they barked violently." . After seeing that the power is coming to their hands, the big leaders of the Congress, the feelings of jealousy and competition developed among them (which found expression in Maulana Azad's book) and started treating Gandhi as an inconvenient burden. The work relating to post-partition riots was left to Gandhi and some of his colleagues and they themselves got busy in taking over the British legacy and strengthening the same set up. The dreams and programmes of Gandhi were abandoned by them as impractical and obsolete. After coming to power they started giving preference to the exigencies of power neglecting the moral principles. All this was disgusting to Lohia. Lohia was deeply attracted to Gandhi not only for his pure and transparent heart but also because he saw him as a messenger of the new human civilization based on great human values of love, compassion, non-violence, satyagrah etc. Lohia was against touching others feet but he touched Gandhi's feet with an inner urge at the first introduction to him. One day Gandhi was taking a stroll holding Lohia by the shoulder. Suddenly he said, "You should not smoke because

with this you will not be able to identify yourself with the people." Lohia did not like his argument but due to reverence for Gandhi he gave up smoking.

Lohia went to see Gandhi on 29th January 1949. Gandhi wanted to discuss a lot of things but he only said, "We should take some decision with regard to the Congress and your party. Come tomorrow, we will talk as much as we want."

And next day when Lohia was on his way to Gandhi's place of residence, he got the news of his assassination. When he reached Birla Bhavan he could only see his dead body.

Analyzing the causes of Gandhi's murder Lohia observed: "The reason for which Gandhi was murdered was not merely his convictions about Hindu Muslim unity, behind his murder there is also the centuries old conflict between the liberal and fanatic traditions of Hindu Society. This murder was the biggest gamble of the fanatics defeated and despaired by the liberal traditions." The fanatics tried to kill Gandhi on three occasions before this. Recalling this Lohia said, "People who killed Gandhi were desperate because of Gandhi's work against caste hegemony and love for riches and in favour of women and for tolerance."

STRUGGLE AND NATION BUILDING

Gandhi's murder brought about a big change in Lohia's life. In a way he became free from the past links. He got rid of his infatuation with the Congress. At the time of attainment of freedom there were two opinions among Socialist leaders with regard to their relation with the Congress. Some of them wanted to stay in the Congress and the others thought that they should sever their links with it. Jayaprakash Narayan, Asoka Mehta and so on were of the second opinion, while Dr. Lohia and Acharya Narendra Deva were in the first group. They thought that by staying in the Congress it would be easier to change the Congress character and make it more radical. After the assassination of Gandhi this duality ended. In March 1948 the Socialist conference at Nasik decided to formally separate. The

reason was that the Congress had amended its constitution barring other groups from the Congress.

To form a new party and make it strong enough to be the main opposition party against the Congress was a very difficult task. Gandhi one day before his murder had told Lohia that he wanted to discuss with him some important matters. What these matters were nobody could say for certain but his last wish was later known. He had advised the leaders of the Congress to dissolve the party and convert it into Lok Seva Sangh and form a new party for electoral politics. Perhaps, he wanted that the Congress, which was the common platform for many streams of thought during the freedom movement, should not be monopolised by one party. But the Congress leaders ignored his wish and monopolised the common platform. Thus the Congress leaders got a ready-made and well-organised party equipped with all the necessary means. The communists too had a well-knit and well-equipped party of about 25 years' standing. The Jana Sangh, which was formed after some time too inherited a well-knit structure of organisations like RSS, Varnashram Swaraj Sangh and Hindu Maha Sabha. But the Congress Socialist Party and all its front organisations like youth organisation, trade union and Kisan Sabha, were shattered during the '*Quit India*' movement and many of them had been captured by the Communists when the Socialists were underground. In this situation it was really difficult to form a new Socialist Party, especially in view of the fact that Socialists were always financially handicapped. Perhaps Gandhi was aware of this when he told Jayaprakash Narayan that it would be very difficult for them after going out of Congress.

But the Socialists had another kind of capital in sufficient quantity. They had dedicated leaders and workers trained in ^{stru}uggle and sacrifice and they also had a powerful ideology and sound programme and genuine concern for poor and disadvantaged sections of the population. They also had earned people's love and affection on account of the heroic struggle during the '*Quit India*' movement. The popularity of leaders

like Lohia and Jayaprakash surpassed even that of Nehru and Patel. Immediately after formation of the new party Corporation election in Mumbai and several by-elections were held and Socialist Party performed very well in these elections. Socialists were also respected for their adherence to moral values. After splitting from the Congress, the socialist leaders who were earlier elected on Congress tickets, resigned and fought fresh elections. Although many of them were defeated, they set an example of moral values in politics.

Dr. Lohia devoted himself with full energy to building a new socialist movement. The burden of running the party collecting subscription and giving direction mainly fell on Jayaprakash Narayan. Lohia was not much interested in this work of running an organisation but he was ever ready to wage a new struggle and keep the party warm and active. It can also be said that the task of struggle mainly fell on Lohia because the other leaders were not in favour of inviting any confrontation with the ruling party.

After his release from Agra jail, he had started the Goa freedom movement. Similarly, after formation of the new Socialist Party he started a movement for people's democratic rights in the princely states of M.P., Rajasthan, Orissa, Hyderabad and Maharashtra etc. Despite their merger in the Indian Union these princely states were working under the influence of their former rulers and representative democratic system was not properly functioning there.

The first struggle was started in Rewa (M.P.). The police fired on the demonstrators in which four persons were killed. Lohia went to Rewa where he was arrested and later released on Rewa-Mirzapur border.

The Socialist Party had prepared a programme for betterment of conditions of farmers, artisans and landless workers. For this the Hind Kisan Panchayat was formed in 1948, with Lohia's inspiration. In 1950, the first conference of the Panchayat was held in Rewa, which was presided over by Lohia. The demands passed in this conference became the future

agenda of farmers' struggle. The main demands were: land to the tillers; land distribution with minimum ceiling of 12.5 acres and maximum of 30 acres; parity in the price of farm products and industrial products. The programmes of land army, foodgrain army and four-pillar state were also put before the people in this conference.

After the revolution, China in 1949 put up its claim over Tibet. This was opposed by Lohia and he asked the government of India to take note of the expansionist policies of China and strengthen its northern and north-eastern borders. He said, that China was inspired with new zeal to expand its border and it could attack India. The government of India, however, remained lost in the euphoria of Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai slogan. Soon, China attacked Tibet and grabbed its control. Lohia called it infanticide. Later in 1962, in view of China's attack on India, Lohia declared his Himalaya Policy which aimed at establishing intimate relations with the people of Kashmir, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and other north-eastern regions and thus strengthening the northern borders of India.

In 1949, Nepal Congress, under the leadership of Visheshwar Koirala, started a movement against Rana rule in Nepal. When Koirala went on fast in jail, the Socialist Party observed Nepal Day on 25th May 1949. A procession, led by Dr. Lohia, went to the Embassy of Nepal to hand over a memorandum to the Ambassador. When the procession was blocked under Section 144, the processionists squatted on the road. In this demonstration 49 persons including Lohia, were arrested and sent to jail. This was the first jail term of Dr. Lohia in Independent India. Lohia gave a statement that even Stalin had not arrested his colleagues so soon. When there was roar in the newspapers, exchange of letters between Nehru and Patel took place on the initiative of Acharya Kripalani. At last, Lohia and his comrades were sentenced to two months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100 and in case the fine was not paid to six weeks more jail. When these people were in jail, Nehru sent a basket of mangoes to them, but it was refused.

Later on, Nepal Congress, under the pressure of government of India adopted the policy of compromise with Nepal King Tribhuvan which resulted in the re-establishment of monarchy in Nepal. Lohia was very much disappointed.

The Socialist Party had not so far acquired the necessary teeth. The reason was attraction of many leaders towards Nehru's Congress and uncertainty about the ideology and programmes. Acharya Narendra Deva and Aruna Asaf Ali were inclined towards Marxian thought. Jayaprakash had not come out of Nehru's spell. Asoka Mehta and others were more interested in electoral politics. Lohia spelled out his views about the socialist programmes in his speech delivered at Patna conference of the party in 1949. In his resolution entitled 'March Forward' he presented his original views on democratic Socialism, Capitalism, Communism, agriculture, industrialization, world order etc. On Kashmir and Pakistan problems also he expressed his convictions for the first time. Jayaprakash was for division of Kashmir, while Lohia considered Kashmir as a symbol of negation of the two-nation theory and plural nationalism. With regard to Indo-Pak relations Lohia was of firm opinion that India and Pakistan though free and sovereign nations are part of the same country. He believed that exchange agreements at trade and cultural levels as well as political efforts like forging a confederation would not be successful till the 700 year-old system of Hindu-Muslim co-existence did not culminate in mental and cultural uniformity of both Hindus and Muslims. With this in view, Lohia wanted that all restrictions in both countries should be removed to enable the people of these countries to meet each other at different levels. He advocated Indo-Pak unity with this spirit.

Under the auspices of Hind Kisan Panchayat, Lohia made an extensive tour of UP, Rajasthan, Vindhya Pradesh, Bihar, etc. He organised successful fronts and started several movements on issues like eviction of farmers, famine, low prices of foodgrain, canal water etc. In the Rewa conference he had given the slogan 'One hour for the Country'. Under this

programme village reform and construction works were launched and successfully completed. On his call 'construction week' was observed in June 1951. Lohia also toured Punjab, U.P, Central India. At Bulandshahr, a canal work was undertaken which was to provide irrigation to 300 acres of land. This dam at Pathredi village was named Lohia Sagar.

In Kagodu (Mysore) the farmers had started an agitation against eviction. Lohia joined them and he was arrested. He filed a writ in the High Court against his illegal detention. When the government saw that the case would go against it, it released Lohia within 7 days. Later on Lohia and his colleague Madhu Limaye used effectively the method of judicial intervention several times.

During this period Lohia got involved in world politics. He went to Stockholm in September 1949 to attend a conference on World Government. He presented his views with regard to the new world order, third power and international peace and security. From here he went to Copenhagen on the invitation of the Denmark branch of World Government and later to West Germany. Here he had important discussions with the senior leader of the German Social Democrat Party, Dr. Schumacher. Lohia said that European Socialism had severed itself from the universal aspect of socialism by its behaviour during the first and Second World Wars. He said, "Due to their sectarian loyalties during the war they supported their imperialist and capitalist governments. Today these Socialists are busy only in raising the living standard of their workers through the welfare measures of the governments. The concept of international socialism is merely a showpiece for the European socialists." Dr. Kurt Schumacher shared his thoughts with Lohia, saying, "European socialism is outdated now. Asian socialism is new. And hence, while it is somewhat immature, it is resonant and courageous. European socialism cannot build a new world. Asian Socialists can yet do something"

Lohia also toured France, West Africa, South-West Asia, Israel, Morocco etc. After this tour of two months, Lohia again

visited several foreign countries in 1951. He first went to Frankfurt (Germany) to attend a world conference of the socialists. In this conference, a resolution supporting military alliance like NATO, SEATO and Warsaw pacts were being discussed. Lohia opposed this saying: "Are we going to strengthen the hands of those few who own steel and oil industries? What kind of world are we going to make with these pacts? There is no two opinions that all aggressions should be met. But we are not sure that with present security systems we can provide security to the whole world."

Many scholars expressed agreement with Lohia's views but the resolution was ultimately passed ignoring Lohia's objections.

Thereafter, Lohia went to the USA on the invitation of some friends. This tour proved very successful and interesting. Its account is given by Harris Wofford, an admirer of Lohia in his book *Lohia and America Meet*.

In this period, he also got an opportunity to give a concrete shape to his thought of Asian Socialism. After the stagnancy of European Socialism, he was seeing some possibility in Asian Socialism. He thought that this would shape the new world.

Jawaharlal Nehru had called a conference of the Asian countries to support the freedom movement of Indonesia in 1949. In this conference Lohia had talks with the Socialist leaders of Indonesia and it was decided to form an organisation of Asian Socialists. In 1952, the preliminary meeting of the representatives from India, Burma, Pakistan, Indonesia, Lebanon and International Youth Organisation was held in Rangoon in which representatives of Japan also took part. In this meeting it was decided to call a conference of Asian socialists and for its preparation a committee was set up. Lohia prepared the memorandum for consideration of this committee in which he gave a detailed programme for solving the problems of free Asian countries in the context of irrelevancy of capitalist and communist systems and search for effective socialist alternatives. He spelled out four weaknesses of Asian politics as under:

- 1 Use of religion, caste, dynasty and language as means of politics.
- 2 Lack of total perspective and discrete thought and action.
3. Progressivism in words and reactionary actions.
4. Firm grip on politics and bureaucracy of white-collar middle classes who are slaves of European habits and tastes.

Lohia thought that the people of Asian countries had lost faith in politics because it had been deeply infected by considerations of religion and dynasty and the leaders on whom people put their faith betrayed them. He said, "Asian Socialism must work out a system of universal ideals, according to local conditions under which the dream of the world government based on equality of all nations can be realised. Only this system can rid the world of the problems of wars, hunger and slavery. For this it is essential that a third force of Asian and African countries comes into existence."

In January 1953, the first conference of the Asian socialists was held in Rangoon. But the founder of this conference, Dr. Lohia could not attend this. The war between North and South Korea had begun. Lohia was of the opinion that the socialists should remain neutral in this conflict because this war had taken the form of a rivalry between the USA and the USSR. Under pressure from the USA, the United Nations had passed a resolution against military action by North Korea. Nehru government had also supported this resolution and Jayaprakash had dittoed Nehru's opinion. The delegation of Indian socialists was being led by Jayaprakash. Lohia abstained so that difference of opinion between these two socialist leaders might not come out. In the conference no serious thought was given to Lohia's suggestion of the third power because there was a majority of Asian representatives who thought like Nehru and who were under American pressure.

Lohia was disappointed but he did not sever his relations. He attended the meeting of the Bureau of the Conference held

at Kalva. Lohia's suggestions were against the interests of the American—Atlantic group. They were therefore, vehemently opposed to the meeting. Lohia was convinced that the Socialist Parties of India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia etc. had become slaves of America and like European socialism, Asian socialism too had lost the capacity to do something new. After the failure of Asian socialism, when Lohia was asked to comment he said, "I will not stop creating Bhasmasuras. In this country they had to be created; again and again after thorough preparations. I started Asian Socialist Conference, but didn't know that this will prove impotent." Later on, Lohia admitted that to think of this kind of organisation was a futile effort.

DESPAIR AND FISSURE

When the Socialists formed their separate party, two things were clear. One was that the Communists cannot be trusted and the second was that it would be impossible to work with the Congress. The Socialists at that time were full of self-confidence which was strengthened in the elections of Mumbai Municipal Corporation and in several by-elections. But the first general election held in 1952 demolished their confidence and some of the socialist leaders were totally disheartened. Although the Socialist Party got the highest percentage of votes (10.6) among all opposition parties, their position in the Lok Sabha and State assemblies remained below that of the Communist Party. The Socialist Party got 12 seats in the Lok Sabha and 126 seats in the assemblies though it had contested 256 seats and 1299 seats respectively. In comparison to this, the Communist Party won 16 seats in the Lok Sabha and 106 seats in the assemblies after contesting 46 and 465 seats. Except for Lohia and Acharya Narendra Deva, for other socialist leaders these results were thoroughly disappointing.

Before the general election two leaders of the Socialist Party; Achyut Patwardhan and Aruna Asaf Ali had left the party and Yusuf Meherally had died. Jayaprakash Narayan thought that he was mainly responsible for the debacle of the party.

With a view to analysing the election result and also devising new programmes for the party, a conference of the party was held at Pachmarhi in May 1952. This was a historical occasion for the Indian socialist movement when it was given a new direction and purpose by Lohia's presidential speech. The idea of the irrelevancy of both capitalism and communism in relation to India and other Third World countries was forcefully put forth by Dr. Lohia in his speech.

It was said in the beginning that Indian socialism had drawn its economic aims from communism and non-economic general aims from liberal capitalism. This resulted in a serious contradiction. Socialism should search for new economic and general aims and establish a proper correlation between these two kinds of aims. Lohia defined economic aims as those pertaining to economic set-up and general aims as pertaining to national freedom, democracy, human rights, peace and culture. He forcefully rebutted the argument that by merely joining together the political democracy of capitalism and the economic democracy of communism, social democracy would come into existence. He said that capitalism and communism had their own correlations and they could not be joined together. "Until and unless socialism discards the postulations on which capitalism and communism are based and sets up a new correlation between the economic and general aims, it will remain incongruent and will not develop fully", he said.

Analysing capitalism, he said, "Poverty and war are the two evil progenies of capitalism; poverty for the two-third humanity and war for the rest. It is engaged in destroying these two. But amidst the direst poverty of the coloured world, it will be impossible to achieve democracy by combining free enterprise and admixture of morality and greed."

He further said: "Communism is the doctrine of social ownership and abolition of private property. The general aim of its culture is as sublime as of any other doctrine. Its immediate aims are centralised party and centralised government. But the general aims and the immediate or economic aims of

communism have developed such relations that the general aims automatically flow from the economic aims. It sees no contradiction in the co-existence of morality of the stateless society and immorality of authoritarian party and dictatorship of the proletariat"

He said, "Communism gets its means of production (technology) from capitalism. It only destroys the capitalist relations of production but not only keeps its technology but also boasts of developing it further (when its growth will be stopped in capitalism). But what this technology has meant for the two third humanity is not understood by the communists. In this part of the world, production forces are insignificant and population is enormous. In these economies of the Third World, communism's rationalisation and its green house preservation of production forces is impossible even with unprecedented killings".

'According to the principles of communism, the general aims essentially follow from economic aims. According to communism, freedom will essentially follow the aim of bread. Communism can neither give freedom nor bread to two third humanity of the world", he said.

After analysing the essential features of capitalism and communism, Lohia said that socialism would have to devise such a setup which would destroy capitalism in both its aspects—production means and production relations. "The class struggle must express the long term as well as immediate criteria and every step of the struggle must have its own justification. Its immediate quality should be such as would serve the long-term aim. It should not justify today's untruth with the argument of *satyug* in the long-term, today's bureaucratic rule with future democracy, today's murders with tomorrow's beautiful world and today's slavery with tomorrow's classless heaven. Capitalism hoped that its ideal state would be realised under conditions of perfect competition, when everyone will work for his own welfare. The communists still believe that their ideal state will follow the socialisation of the production

means. The disillusion of both has proved that general aims do not automatically follow the economic aims. Man must establish the correlation between the two. Similarly, the political, social and economic equality has reached such a height in this civilization that the difference between a queen and a washermaid has more or less disappeared. But this civilization is at the fag end of its life because no attempt is made to achieve equality in the spiritual aims of life. Just as the old civilizations died on account of excessive load of spiritual equalities and social inequalities, the present civilization is dying on account of excessive load of social equalities and spiritual inequalities." (*Samajvadi Andolan Ke Dastavez*, Edited by Vinod Prasad Singh and Sunilam)

The main message of this speech was that for India both communism and capitalism are irrelevant. As an alternative, he outlined a new set-up based on Gandhi's principles of non-violence. Satyagraha, civil disobedience and decentralisation and also on small machine of less energy-consuming and labour-intensive technology. This speech was the fruit of his long deep thinking between 1936 and 1952. It also contained his thought, developed in his books *Economics After Marx* and *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*. Lohia was disillusioned with communism in the third decade itself when he wrote an article in *Congress Socialist* on Russian Trials. He said that Russian Trials were temporary moments of the history of socialism and humanity. "Above these and above the Russian judiciary there is one thing called human conscience. The democratic freedom and civilisation of free use of human intelligence is a part of human conscience. If we have to keep Socialist progress aloof from fascist methods, then we cannot ignore democratic freedom."

This article was very bitter and many communist leaders (who were at that time in the Congress Socialist Party) reacted sharply to this. But when after the fall of Stalin, Khrushchev visited India and repeated the same argument, the Indian communists meekly swallowed his words.

Lohia's Pachmarhi speech gave a new perspective to the

socialist movement and the young workers were filled with new enthusiasm. But socialist leaders were somewhat shaken. Till now they were fully dependent on Marx as a source of thought and inspiration. Acharya Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan were staunch Marxists and they considered their socialism as a true picture of Marxism. Lohia's speech put an interrogation mark on it.

In 1952, Jawaharlal Nehru had written a letter to Jayaprakash expressing his desire to seek cooperation of the Socialist Party and many socialists were seeing this as an opportunity to share power. The process of cooperation with the Congress gained momentum later. But when Jayaprakash gave Nehru his 14-point programme, Nehru withdrew. This process sowed the seeds of discord in the party. Lohia disliked the idea of cooperation. Acharya Narendra Deva, too, did not like it. It was surprising that these two leaders were in 1947, in favour of staying in the Congress while those who were eager to leave the Congress, were now in favour of cooperation with it.

At the time of the Pachmarhi conference, some negotiations were going on for merger of Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party formed by Acharya Kripalani, P.C. Ghosh and T. Prakasam etc., after quitting the Congress. Lohia and Jayaprakash both were for merger but Acharya Narendra Deva (who was at the time in China on a tour) was not in its favour. He thought that after merger with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, the Marxian character of the Socialist Party would be diluted. After the merger of the two parties and formation of the Praja Socialist Party, Acharya J.B. Kripalani became its president. He was deeply immersed in Congress culture and was not particularly impressed by socialism. Jayaprakash Narayan somehow persuaded Acharya Narendra Deva to accept the merger. During the first general election, the Socialist Party had made adjustments with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He now severed his relation with the Socialist Party. The merger also broke the perfect understanding among the socialist leaders, which was later confirmed by Surendra Nath Dwivedi in his letter to

Jayaprakash Narayan. Jayaprakash Narayan was thinking of retiring from politics and talking about partyless democracy. Failure of talks of cooperation with the Congress made him more inclined to retiring.

Asoka Mehta's thesis of 'Compulsions of Backward Economies' was the topic of the day. It meant that in countries of backward economies the opposition's role should not merely be opposing the ruling party but also to extend it constructive cooperation. This was criticised by Lohia and his colleagues. To settle the difference of opinion a party conference was held at Baitul (MP) in June 1953 in which it was decided that the party should appoint a committee to prepare its policy and programme for the party. In the regular session of the Party at Allahabad in December 1953, this Committee's report was presented. The meeting approved a 6-point policy for elections. In order to avoid division of votes among opposition parties it was decided to make electoral adjustments with some conditions. Lohia was elected general secretary of the party. Lohia as usual wanted to avoid responsibility but Kripalani's remark, "You will inspire and we will perspire" changed Lohia's mind and he accepted the responsibility.

After assuming responsibility of general secretaryship of the party, Lohia intensified the process of *Satyagraha* and civil disobedience against government's corruption and creation of famine conditions. These agitations were in full swing in Rajasthan, Vindhya Pradesh, Bihar etc. Lohia joined the agitation against increase in canal-water tax in UP. At Kalyanganj he was arrested by the police. Lohia challenged his arrest in a writ filed in Allahabad High Court. He said in his application that the Special Powers Act of 1932, under which he was arrested was against the Constitution. He said that to disallow satyagraha and civil disobedience in a democracy was to disown the tradition of Prahlad, Charvak, Socrates, Thoreau and Gandhi etc., and also to invite armed revolt. At last, the court decided that the Special Powers Act of 1932 was *ultra vires* of the Constitution. The court also said that under the

Constitution, every citizen of the country has the right to offer *satyagraha and propagate it*.

Lohia came out of jail after six months. With him about 1500 other *satyagrahis* were also released. This event upset Lohia but there was more in store for him.

In 1954 the mid-term elections for the Travancore-Cochin Assembly were held. The Praja Socialist Party had made electoral adjustments with the Communist Party of India against the Congress. No party got a clear majority. The Praja Socialist Party with 19 seats formed the government with the support of the Congress. This government ordered police firing on a procession of workers in which seven persons were killed and several injured. Lohia had always believed that police firing on demonstrators was a barbaric act. He was at that time in a UP jail. On 16th August 1954 he sent a telegram to the Chief Minister, Pattam Thanu Pillai, asking him to resign and also suspend the police officers concerned and to set up a judicial inquiry. A copy of the telegram was also sent to party president J.B. Kripalani.

This created a furore in the party. Pattam Thanu Pillai refused to resign. The President did not pay any heed to the telegram: Asoka Mehta issued a statement that it was the working committee which could ask the Chief Minister to resign his post and the general secretary had no authority to do this. At this Lohia resigned from the working committee and also the general secretary ship. To consider the matter, a meeting of the working committee was held at Delhi in which Asoka Mehta, H.V Kamath and Sucheta Kripalani and some others tried to prove on legal technicalities that Lohia had no authority to call for the CM's resignation. Neither Jayaprakash nor Kripalani could deny the high moral spirit behind Lohia's action but they did not support him. At last, this matter was decided in a special session of the party held at Nagpur in which 303 members voted against and 217 in favour of Lohia's action. The session was presided over by Acharya Narendra Deva. The split in the party was averted but the chasm continued.

After some days, the Congress Party at its annual session held in January 1955 at Avadi (Madras), passed the famous resolution of 'Socialist Pattern of Society' moved by Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Asoka Mehta warmly welcomed this resolution and said that the Socialist Party no longer needs its separate existence since the Congress is drawing near the Party. When Madhu Limaye criticised Asoka Mehta's statement, the Bombay branch of the Socialist Party suspended him on the ground of indiscipline. Madhu Limaye approached the national executive of the party but the executive dismissed his appeal saying that the national executive could not interfere with the decision of the provincial party. The surprising thing was that the national executive did not take any disciplinary action against Asoka Mehta who had clearly violated the party discipline and who encouraged some members to join the Congress but supported the action of the provincial committee against Madhu Limaye.

Lohia didn't like this. He issued a statement in support of Madhu Limaye. He said there should be "freedom of speech and controlled action in the party. No one should be punished for simply criticising the policy, but he should be punished for acting against the policy. Freedom of speech is the fundamental principle of democracy. Without this, democracy cannot survive."

When this controversy took wings, the UP branch of the party called a conference in which Madhu Limaye was invited. The national executive was piqued by this and it dissolved the UP committee of the party and also declared the Gazipur conference illegal. This added fuel to the fire. Lohia said that action against the UP branch of the party was against the party constitution.

The UP branch of the party stood firm on the Gazipur conference. The Orissa Samajvadi Yuvjan Sabha also called its conference in Puri and invited both Madhu Limaye and Asoka Mehta. Asoka Mehta said, "The purpose of disciplinary action against Madhu Limaye is that he may not get any platform."

In Manipur the party workers were agitating for a representative government. Lohia was arrested in connection with this agitation. On a *habeas corpus* petition he was released by the court but after coming out of the court he was again interned. He again filed a petition but before one hearing of the petition the government released him.

During the days of Manipur agitation, the leaders of the Praja Socialist Party who thought Nehru was the paragon of socialism were planning to oust Lohia from the party. Speaking at the Gazipur conference, Lohia declared: "Praja Socialist Party is unable to stand on its legs. It has to lean sometimes on the Congress and sometimes on the Communist Party. Merger with the Congress, cooperation with Congress or coalition with the Congress, all are dangerous propositions which are weakening the party. It is therefore, necessary that a new party may be formed for socialism."

The Praja Socialist Party issued instructions to their provincial branches that they should not invite Lohia to any of their programmes. Jayaprakash who had retired from active politics again assumed a partisan role and said that Lohia should be given a gold medal for creating a rift in the party. Acharya Narendra Deva and Acharya Kripalani did not make any effort to settle the internal differences (which were ideological and not personal). At last in June 1955 the national executive of the party met at Jaipur and by a resolution moved by Jayaprakash, Lohia was expelled from the party. The party split into two. The workers who stayed with Lohia held their conference at Hyderabad in the last week of December 1955 and a new Socialist Party was born.

This split in the party was of historical importance. The causes and the ramifications of this split have not so far been analysed in an impartial manner. The Praja Socialist Party leaders still blame Lohia for all this. They thought that Lohia's arrogant and rebellious behaviour were responsible for this. They considered themselves blameless, refined and cultured (as against Lohia's roughness). They were not prepared to

accept (nor they are today) that the real cause of the split was the tendencies of dependency on others in the name of cooperation, avoiding the path of struggle and seeking comforts of life. In fact, the split was the result of a tussle between the tendency to cross *Vaitarani* holding a cow's tail and that of struggle with self-confidence. This was also a conflict between the mentality of urban middle classes and the one of identifying with people exploited and marginalised for centuries. After the defeat in the first election, some leaders were so much disappointed that they saw no future except in cooperating with the Congress. For this cooperation they invented so many arguments and excuses. When Lohia wrote the article 'The Will to Power' and said "Living people do not wait for five years" and therefore, the socialists should prepare themselves for capturing power and not merely aspire to play the opposition role, this was called lust for power on the part of Lohia. Lohia wanted to say that if a political party did not aspire for capturing power, its decay was inevitable. "The first objective of any democratic action should be to enthuse people and prepare them to hold their destiny in their hands instead of becoming its tool," he said.

Lohia wanted to wage a continuous struggle. The Praja Socialist Party leaders were tired of struggle. There was also another reason. To run an organisation or a system we generally need three types of leaders. First who give the system, the second who actually run the system and the third who keep the system lively by introducing new thoughts and weeding out the obsolete ones. This role of trinity-*Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh*-was played in the socialist movement by Acharya Narendra-Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Lohia. After the Pachmarhi conference, this balance was disturbed. The young generation started looking at Lohia for setting the agenda too. This made some leaders fear that the party would be hijacked by Lohia. The situation that developed further made it clear that the Praja Socialist Party leaders had lost the capacity to carry on the struggle for socialism independently and they only wanted to

maintain their existence by hanging to someone's coat-tails. Asoka Mehta and many of his colleagues joined the Congress after some time. Those who remained in the Praja Socialist Party also played second fiddle to some powerful leader instead of setting their own agenda and working for it. The surprising thing was that they were always ready to cooperate with all others except Dr. Lohia or his followers. Whenever there was an attempt to bring unity between these two factions (the initiative was always from Lohia's side), it was defeated on some ideological or personal grounds by the Praja Socialist Party leaders. The attempt at unity at the Varanasi conference was thus aborted for which S.M. Joshi (who himself was from Praja Socialist Party) blamed the Praja Socialist Party leaders. Similarly, when an attempt to revive the Socialist Party after the disintegration of the Janata Party was made, it failed because of the unwillingness on the part of some senior leaders of the erstwhile Praja Socialist Party.

ON THE PATH OF REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE

The new Socialist Party was launched at the convention of the militant socialists held at Hyderabad from 28th December 1955 to 2nd January 1956. Dr. Lohia in his presidential address referred to the march of events from Pachmarhi to Hyderabad. He alluded to the issue of internal democracy, which led to large-scale suspensions and expulsions of militant socialists from the Praja Socialist Party and culminated in the decision to form a new party. He said that the socialist movement should learn an unforgettable lesson from these developments.

The new Socialist Party announced its clear policy. It was said that cooperation with the ruling party under the cover of any principle would be condemned as opportunism. It was stipulated that the socialists would form their own government only when they had clear majority and in case they didn't have clear majority they would support the party with lesser evil and continue to tolerate it till it did not work against the interests of the people and the workers. The Socialist Party had to build

its structure afresh. Many Praja Socialist Party workers were ready to go to the Congress. In the second general elections in 1957, both the socialist parties together polled 12.4 per cent votes but due to division both were weakened. When the unity talk began Lohia said, "I am interested in the unity due to and to the extent that Jayaprakash should himself come and lead the party. I am finding it difficult even to run a small party and I do not know what I will be able to do in a bigger party. Therefore, Jayaprakash must come." Lohia had written to Jayaprakash even in 1954 that only he could shake the country provided he himself did not shake. Lohia repeated this offer but Jayaprakash was not impressed. He said that he did not believe in this sort of process nor he was interested in this. (*Sankraman Kalin Raajni* by Madhu Limaye; article 'Jayaprakash Aur Lohia').

It can be imagined how much Lohia had to bear on his shoulders when he had to perform the duty of an ideologue, an organiser and an inspirer all alone. He set down strict rules for the party but it became increasingly difficult for him to enforce adherence. Due to the strict rule that the defeated candidate should not enter the Upper House through the back door, Mulka Govind Reddy and P.V.G. Raju left the party and the party suffered badly in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. He was also against electoral fronts and when on the advice of Jayaprakash Narayan, the Praja Socialist Party forged fronts in Bengal, Maharashtra etc., he criticised them but in 1962, he had to relax these rules when he campaigned for non-Congressism.

The party's financial condition was very bad. The number of persons who promised a monthly subscription of Rs. 10 fell to 60 after some time. The annual subscription which was rupee one in 1948 was reduced to 50 paise. Even then the number of subscribers did not increase and maintaining of members' register had to be discontinued.

In spite of all these handicaps, the Socialist Party, led by Dr. Lohia, made its impression in the public mind of its fighting

character. *Mankind* in English and *Jana* in Hindi were started. The first conference of the party was held in Sehore (MP), a geographical central point of India. In his speech delivered at the conference Lohia said, "Things will not change by devious methods. Unless the change occurs in party workers' minds, the base of the politics will not change."

In the second general election, the party contested 33 seats for the Lok Sabha and won 9 of them while for assemblies it contested 335 and won 55. For the new party this achievement was not bad. Commenting on these results, Lohia said, "Only our party has fought election alone and won double the seats. It has stamped its name in the Ganga-Godavari area." To encourage the defeated candidates, he himself fought election from Chandauli (UP) and lost by about 30-35,000 votes. On this occasion, he said, "I and my party must have the courage of Mohammed who after being defeated 17 times, was ready to fight the 18th battle."

Lohia was arrested in UP in connection with the sales tax agitation. Without being produced before magistrate, he was put in jail on 15 days remand. Many other *satyagrahis* were also lodged in the jail. After 15 days, when the police was taking him to the magistrate, he refused to go. He said to the police, "Have you opened an illegal remand factory in connivance with the court?" At last when the magistrate came to jail, Lohia refused to go before him. At this 30-35 prisoners and 18-20 warders, manhandled and lathi-charged the *satyagrahis* and pushed them into the barracks. Lohia was forcibly made to sit on the chair and brought before the magistrate. He did not speak a single word. At this his thumb impressions were forcibly taken. Raj Narain filed a petition in the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court. At the hearing Lohia said, "I am not given to habitual law-breaking. But the government arrests a man in an erroneous manner. My only hope is the high courts of the country. Not as a leader but as a common man, it is my request to the court that the encroachment upon civil rights may not be allowed. I hardly enjoy jail terms. I have suffered

enough in the British Raj. Now even a minute's detention becomes unbearable. But I am helpless. Having been brought up in the Gandhian tradition, I cannot but resist injustice and exploitation." (*Rammanohar Lohia* by Indumati Kelkar).

There was no concurrence between the two judges of the bench, hence the Chief Justice delivered the judgment and he dismissed the petition. An appeal was filed in the Supreme Court but on the first day of hearing, Lohia was released. This ill-treatment of the top most leader of the party by the Congress government increased the popularity of the Socialist Party which became famous for its fighting character. This episode enthused the party workers further.

An important achievement of the period of 1957-1962 was that the party gave a concrete shape to socialism so that the people could grasp the real meaning of it. The abstract was converted into concrete or *Nirgun* into *Sagun*, as Lohia called it, in party's programmes such as abolition of caste, fixation of prices, removal of English, man-woman equality, four-pillar state, Indo-Pak unity etc. For abolition of caste, the party gave the slogan of 60 per cent reservation for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backwards (including backwards of minority communities) and women of all castes. The principle on which reservations were to be secured was that to achieve equality among unequal's special opportunities should be provided to them. Before this, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had given a call for annihilation of caste but his movement remained confined to scheduled castes and that too was gradually fading out on account of the mischievous policies of the upper caste political parties. Before Ambedkar's death Lohia had exchanged many letters with him and both had agreed to start joint political struggle. The negotiations, however, remained incomplete because of the sudden death of Dr. Ambedkar. Now Lohia made it the main programme of the Socialist Party. This programme enthused the people of these neglected sections of the society and aroused in them the will to power and self-respect. This changed the whole atmosphere of Indian politics. The effect of this programme was seen 33 years later when the Janata Dal

government, led by V.P. Singh, partially implemented the programme in the form of Mandal report. The plan was not implemented as it should have been and there was virtually a civil war waged by the upper castes, but it changed the political scene completely. Even after the Supreme Court's judgment holding reservations valid, the scheme is not being properly implemented but this is our only hope for achieving the goal of abolition of caste, if and when the scheme is properly and honestly implemented.

In addition to giving a sound base to the party by ideological formulations and solid programmes, Lohia always looked for opportunities to start a satyagraha or civil disobedience movement under his programme of jail, spade and vote.

During his tour of the north-eastern regions, he entered NEFA (which today is known as Arunachal Pradesh and to which Lohia gave the name of '*Urvasiam*'). He was detained on the border. He accepted his detention but declared that he would again enter the region after one year and break the law under which the entry into the region was prohibited. On 25th November 1959 he again entered the border. He was arrested and taken to Dibrugarh where he was released. After four days he again entered the border at some other place. He was again arrested under a law, which was made by the British government 86 years ago and again released. He issued a warning to the government of India that if the tribes of the north-east regions were kept separated from the people of the rest of India, these regions would become victims of foreign influence. This warning proved correct during 1962 when China attacked India and the Indian army was overwhelmed.

Lohia could not give a shape to his party, as he wanted to do. It was but natural. Which artist could translate his imagination in his work? In converting the abstract into the concrete, many hurdles have to be faced. For want of proper tools and limitations of time and space, the expression always remains incomplete. But the artist doesn't stop creating. He goes on creating with the help of available material. Lohia was

aware of his half creations. He wanted to decentralise the party structure. He wanted to delegate the powers of central and provincial committees to the district and village level committees. But the majority of the leaders of his party did not agree with him and therefore this idea was dropped. At times he used to say that his party was much better than other parties but he was not satisfied by the way the party leaders and workers functioned. He set seven years' time to capture power but he could not achieve this aim. Nevertheless, the Socialist Party enlivened the politics of India as never before. *Bund, gherao, satyagraha*, procession, demonstration became daily events and the newspapers had to cover them even if negatively. This news coverage was full of prejudice towards Lohia and his party but it provided an opportunity for the common man to think for himself and decide.

Angrezi Hatao (Remove English) agitation inspired the Hindi-speaking population to seek freedom from mental slavery but in the South it created misunderstanding and the politicians there misused this and started anti-Hindi agitation. Lohia had to face stone-throwing at several places. Although Lohia made it clear repeatedly that this agitation was not for imposing Hindi on the unwilling people of the South but only to strengthen the Indian languages and to give them their due place in national life, the media faithfully reflecting the voice of the ruling party and ruling classes presented the agitation as harmful to the unity of the country. Lohia had suggested that all coastal regions be given a certain percentage of reservation in jobs for 10 years and the Central administration be made bilingual or multi-lingual but nobody paid attention to these suggestions.

His efforts for replacing English with Indian languages brought him much insult, which pained Lohia throughout life. In a letter written to Roma Mitra on 9th October 1959, he wrote: "The Supreme Court has been treating me most insultingly. I have a letter asking me not to waste their time with a language other than English." It is mentioned here that

Lohia had argued his own case in the Supreme Court and insisted on talking in Hindi as per his vow.

In 1957, when Smt. Indira Gandhi was elected the President of the Congress, Lohia said, "After Nehru who? This question is solved by the election of Smt. Indira Gandhi as President of the Congress." The prophesy proved correct.

At the time of the third general elections in 1962, some opposition parties proposed formation of joint fronts. Lohia said that instead of forging a joint front, it would be much better to form a party on the values of liberal nationalism, socialism and democracy. The proposal of a front too could not be implemented and all opposition parties fought the election separately. As was expected, the Congress won with a huge majority. Both the Socialist parties got the beating and the Communist Party with 10 per cent votes took the second position, replacing socialists. Lohia fought the election from Phulpur against Jawaharlal Nehru and was defeated.

In October 1962, China attacked India. The Chinese army advanced at great speed towards the north eastern borders and after smashing the Indian posts reached Tezpur in Assam. The Indian military commanders vacated several posts without putting up a fight. In 1949, Lohia had cautioned the Indian government about China's expansionist and aggressive intentions but the government didn't pay attention to it. This attack revealed the hollowness of the government policies.

Lohia bitterly criticised the government for this debacle and said that its main cause was keeping the north-east regions cut-off from the rest of the country and neglecting their development. He gave a call of 'Save Himalaya' (Himalaya Bachao) and called a conference which was also attended by former President Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Lohia said in his speech that Himalaya was no longer our protector, it needed our protection. The aim of the 'Save Himalaya' movement was specified as preparing a long term plan for strengthening the long Himalayan border from Kashmir to *Urvasiyam* and working to implement this plan.

Some attempts to forge unity between the two factions of the socialist movement were made. It started in a faulty manner. In the UP assembly, the members of the two factions agreed to unite without the approval of the Central parties. They merged together and formed the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP). Lohia wanted unity only after an agreement both on objectives and on policies. When the internal pressure increased in the Socialist Party, the Bharatpur convention of the party authorised the national executive to hold talks on the basis of the election manifesto of the 1962 elections. But Lohia said he would not take part in negotiations. He said: "People blame me that due to me talks fail. In my age I cannot quarrel with people. You know when some people come together there is some discussion and some hot exchanges take place. The discussion later turns sour. I can't do this now. You people should take up this work. Second thing is that I am not capable too of making adjustments, in this give and take business because the things which to me look correct since years and even since centuries, if that is contested, the discussions become useless. I can't tolerate and it causes breach. I don't want to do this now. Such people should hold discussion that may be flexible, may be for merely showing, they should give something and take something. Let there be some pulling, some hot exchanges but ultimately something must come out. The man of my type can't do this. Third reason is that even if I show maximum flexibility, people will still say out of habit that I do as I want"

*[Sankraman Kalin Raajni by Madhu Limaye,
Article 'Jayaprakash Aur Lohia']*

The unity effort of UP assembly members failed when 22 members of the Socialist Party were dragged out by the marshal of the house and members of the Praja Socialist Party remained sitting quiet. Samyukta Socialist Party leader Ugra Sen resigned from the leadership and SSP was dissolved. But after sometime merger talks were held between the two central parties and S.M. Joshi became the president of the unified party Sanyukta

Socialist Party. But this experiment also failed after some time. S.M. Joshi has described this event in his autobiography in these words:

Lohia before going on a foreign tour in April 1964 had advised Raj Narain, Madhu Limaye etc., that if necessary, they should accept the unity proposals unconditionally. A meeting was held at 17 Windsor Place between Socialist Party and Praja Socialist Party. It was agreed that the name of the new party should be Sanyukta Socialist Party (SSP). Raj Narain and Prem Bhasin were appointed as secretaries and S.M. Joshi as president. It was decided to hold the foundation conference of the new party in January 1965 at Varanasi. Before this conference was held, some difference of opinion cropped up in the two factions. Praja Socialist Party leaders thought that with the merger of Hind Mazdoor Panchayat and Hind Mazdoor Sabha, George Fernandes would become powerful. Praja Socialist Party leaders also did not like Lohia's sharp remarks and Raj Narain's rude behaviour. Before coming to this conference, Praja Socialist Party leaders had decided not to forge unity.

He described the scene at the meeting and said: "Kamath read his own statement and when I said that they should also hear other's views, they did not stop and walked out. I proceeded further with the work. On request from everybody, I accepted the office of the President. Praja Socialist Party leaders had their meeting at a different place which was already arranged before and they elected Nana Saheb Gore as their president." When Lohia returned from his foreign tour, S.M. Joshi and Prem Bhasin went to see him at the airport. They had some conversation on the way. Lohia said, "For democratic politics we will have to reach an understanding with the Jana Sangh." At this Prem Bhasin said, "It appears to me that you are working too fast." The Praja Socialist Party leaders became suspicious. They thought that Lohia had already started deciding the Sanyukta Socialist Party's policies even before becoming its

formal member. Does he intend to lead the new Party from outside like Gandhi? Many Praja Socialist Party leaders even gave expression to this suspicion.

LOHIA IN PARLIAMENT

Till now Lohia has shown how politics could be geared to the needs and aspirations of the common man, neglected through centuries and how they could be aroused to aspire and fight for their rights. He had performed this miracle with this small but combatant party and hard-working, dedicated colleagues. The success was not much but a way was open before them. After the defeat in China's aggression, the weakness of the government had come out in the open and in Lohia's bitter criticism, people had started seeing the truth. The newspapers and other media were also changing their attitude of sycophancy towards the government. In this atmosphere by-elections for three Lok Sabha seats were held in which Lohia, Acharya Kripalani and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya were elected from Farrukhabad, Amroha and Jaunpur.

On Lohia's entry in the Lok Sabha, one English daily wrote a piece with the heading '*A Bull in China Shop*'. Another newspaper wrote that a street goon had entered the princely drawing room. Up to now only 'feel good' things were said in Parliament. No one criticised the government in bitter words and no one expressed his anger. The Lok Sabha was run like a class of obedient students. During the last 12 or 13 years, not a single no-confidence motion was moved against the government. After Lohia's entry, for the first time, a no-confidence motion was moved against the Nehru government. It was moved by Acharya Kripalani. The newspapers made fun of it, since there was no meaning in the motion in view of the massive majority of the Congress. But when Lohia delivered his speech, the whole atmosphere changed. He started with his personal reminiscence saying: "Once I was discussing with Gandhiji how grain production could be increased and the unemployment problem solved through the 'Grain Army' which would till the new land.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister came there and said, 'Where is the land?' Just like the Agriculture Minister said here yesterday. I told him he should see his books. At that time and even now at least 18 crore acres of land is still there which can be used for agriculture. But instead of doing this, the Prime Minister gave strange suggestions such as grow food in flower pots or on the roof. These prescriptions he gave not once but several times. The result was that sometime back in Purulia district Fakir Mehto's father died of hunger. Fakir Mehto was a freedom fighter who had gone to jail several times fighting against the Britishers."

Thereafter, the attack on the government continued for several hours. Members of the treasury benches kept shouting and obstructing and Lohia kept attacking with brief pauses in between. When the Speaker reminded that his time was over, other members asked the Speaker to give their time to Dr. Lohia. The speech was throughout delivered in Hindi. Lohia said, "My first allegation against this government is that it is doing its work on the basis of its ignorance and with impotent and fruitless verbosity and rhetoric." Thereafter, quoting the figures of the poverty prevailing in the country, he said: "In our country 60 per cent families are living on 24 rupees per month. In other words 27 crore people live on 3 *annas* a day, while 3 rupees per day are spent on PM's dog. About 25,000 rupees are spent on the biggest person of the government that is on the Prime Minister. I would have no personal envy with the Prime Minister. I would have excused him. But 50 lakh big persons, who imitate him, have destroyed this country. These 50 lakh people swallow 50 *arab* (1,500 crores) of rupees out of the total national income of 1.50 kharab (15,000 crores) and for the rest 42 crores of the people only 100 Arab are left. There can be no capitalisation in this condition."

Searching for the reason for the wrong policy towards China, Lohia said: "This is a case of touch revolutionism. By this I mean that the person who himself is backward looking and who is unable to do anything, thinks that if he touches some revolutionary, he will also become a revolutionary." Referring

to China's attack and India's defeat, he said, "On 12th October, he (PM) said throw out the Chinese'. This was a roar of the lion. After 37 days on 19th November, when the Bomdilla and Balong fell, he spoke on radio in a stammering voice. This was the cry of a goat." He continued: "Sometimes, our Prime Minister says, we will fight with our nails, with our *lathis*. Then he says we will buy arms. When the Chinese '*danda*' falls with more vigour, he says we will take loan and also charity. If the condition had worsened he would have said, we will take soldiers also. It can be justified in personal life. In love affair we can say hold the finger but not after this, hold the ankle but don't advance further, now hold the arm but nothing after this. But in the affairs of the nation this cannot be done."

Lohia called Nehru government as the one which promotes caste and family and in this connection he mentioned the name of his relative who was the commander in North East and who vacated Bomdilla even before the Chinese attack and ran to Delhi. Making himself more clear, he said; "The situation gets worsened, so much worsened that the father becomes the master of the government and daughter the owner of the people."

When the members of the ruling party accused Lohia of being jealous of Nehru, he said: " I never had a personal quarrel with anybody, nor will I have in future, until I am forced to do so. It is true that there was a time when I used to reply anger with anger, but now I don't do even that. I only pity."

This historical speech, along with other speeches delivered by Lohia in the Lok Sabha, have been compiled and published in several volumes by Lohia Samata Vidyalaya Nyas, Hyderabad. Some of his inspiring and illuminating thoughts expressed in these speeches are summarised below:

- 27 crore of people get 4 *chhatank* (about 200 gms.) of food grain every day. This plan only feeds 50 lakh big people and some '*chhote babus*' who hang on to them.
- Why does the food grain production not increase?

Because there is no profit, no bribe, no subscription in agriculture.... In all the plans, the profit of the crorepatris is 30-40 per cent. These industries provide money to the political leaders and the bureaucrats get opportunity to enrich their relatives and let crorepatris to earn huge profit.

- If my purpose was to hate Congress, why should I be concerned about the past one thousand years and the long history behind that?
- » We are 'Safarmaina' (Sappers and Miners). We dig mountains and build roads but you even don't allow us to walk over them.
- I am confident about my country. Sooner or later, it will rise one day and demolish this government, but I can't say whether this will happen in my life-time.
- What of me? I have but a few years left. But you must listen to a man like me. Our hearts break seeing to what fall this country has reached.
- I am not a backward-looking person, nor a side-looking one. One of those who look to Europe-America without looking forward, without seeing the climate and atmosphere of this country. I cannot support them.
- The train of India is running too fast towards a fall or towards a rock to turn into pieces. Those who are responsible to drive this train, had stopped driving it and the train is running of its own. I am also sitting in this train. It is running without any control. I can do only this much, I can shout and say, stop it. If my voice is not loud, the honourable members may understand my cries, and cries of my soul, that I want to shout and say stop this train, it is heading towards disaster.
- This country has become so much useless that you don't want to run it. What is needed there is explosion, a great upsurge.
- The international jugglers of history and the Indians who feed on their leftover—because there has not been a

single Indian historian so far—forget to think over the matter whether this process (of assimilation, rebirth etc.) will come to an end or this will continue till eternity. In this condition, India will become a laboratory of never-ending aggressions. We must do away with this capacity to absorb the conquerors. This strange quality of India must be regarded as evil.

We must wipe out this wide-spread illusion. While talking about defeats and weaknesses we always centre our attention on internal discords and riots. It is always *Jaichands* and *Mir Jafars* who are made villains of our country. Every school child must know that the aggressors have won not because of internal quarrels of the kings but because of the indifference of the people. The greatest cause of this indifference is caste. Caste brings indifference and indifference brings defeat. The era of Gandhi was of simplicity and dedication to duty. The Prime Minister's era is of fashion and luxury. Sometimes I feel that it would be better if the government show the courage and kill the poor, depressed people of this country all at once like Hitler did to the Jews, instead of killing them bit-by-bit, because due to this our country is unable to improve our plans, our industry and agriculture. Thirty crore people here are not even in a position to use a spade properly to dig the soil. The whole country has become a dirty pond in which at some places some lotus flowers have sprung up. At some places some luxurious, modern-most secretariats, airports, hotels, cinema houses and palaces have come up which are being used by the rich and handsomely dressed men and women. But they don't even touch one-thousandth part of our population. The rest of the people are hungry and naked.

The bigger politics cleanse the litter of the country and small politics cleanse the litter of the villages and *mohallas*.

- The power should flow from the people upwards. Instead of people's power going to block, district, province and country, it is the reverse here.
- If the common people, the ordinary men and women of this country build confidence in themselves that as they finished the British Raj turned evil, they will finish the Congress government which has turned evil and they will do the same if tomorrow socialist or communist rule turns evil and like cooking chapatti turning it over again and again, overturn the governments until they become honest, then our politics would become lively and healthy.
- The way of thinking in India has become so distorted that every man grows two heads, one is *nirguna* (the abstract) and the other is *saguna* (the concrete). The result is that we have lost the power of deciding.
- Raja No. 1 has been changing. After the Mughal Raj ended, the British Raj came. British Raj goes, Congress Raj comes. Raja No. 1 changes but the rajas No. 2 who are hereditary slaves always remain in the same places. If you ask me why our country has reached such a rotten state, I will say that the main reason is that we could not understand till now how we should keep these hereditary slaves under control.
- The fact is that you cannot take a decision on any issue. We cannot think and push the work after taking a decision. We hang our fate to some God or 'Khuda' and say please help us because we are useless.
- I want to tell the entire people to adopt a wide outlook. We have a population of 48 crore. Out of these 7-8 crore are Harijans. All backwards put together are 43 crore. As far as women are concerned I consider all women as backward, irrespective of the caste they belong to. The poor people among the upper castes are about six and a half crore and 50 lakh are really big people who mostly belong to upper castes. The face of these six and a half

crore poor has to be turned towards 43 crore backwards. When 43 crore backwards and 6.5 crore poor of upper castes will combine in politics, it will produce the gunpowder that will destroy the debauchery of the 50 lakh big people. Only then, a new India will emerge. People lay the trap and throw bait. Throw bait to Jagjivan Ram or to *Valmikiji* and all *Harijans* will stick to it. The result is very dangerous. If this politics of bait and contractorship of vote continues, this issue cannot be sorted out.

We are 40 crore. Even if 39 crore, 99 lakh, 99 thousand, 999 be on one side of an issue and I become alone, these 39 crore, 99 lakh, 99 thousand and 999 persons have no right to stifle my views, howsoever nonsense and foolish they may be, and they have no right to endanger my life, and hurt my self-respect. If they do, I will call them mad. It is a universal rule that the man who is true is considered mad by the majority of his time. But only history decides as to who was mad. Is Socrates called mad today or the people of his time who hanged him are called mad?

This throne of Delhi, whoever sits on it, will remain full of thorns. Unless the throne-holder is prepared to set it on fire it will remain painful.

It has become very urgent to save the man. He is so tightly bound to nation and caste, that he has ceased to be a man in birth, marriage and in death too. He has become a half-cut living being. Whatever little has happened in this direction is the result of love as much as that of wars and conquests. Perhaps more of conquests than of love. The real world will come into being when the man will become a bastard.

After all, socialism means equality. Equality is of two types, complete equality and approximate equality. To bring about approximate equality, talk of maximum and minimum income and expenditure. If to increase the

minimum income, it takes time, it should not take much time to reduce the maximum income and expenditure.

- The foreign policy of the present government has never been of non-alignment because some ministers are attached to the Soviet Camp and some to the Atlantic camp.
- Today, we are like the beggar, who starts abusing if he does not get any charity. Now Rome, Russia or America, all white countries are like the charity-giver who expects that the taker will not only feel obliged but also prostrate before him.
- I also believe in the policy of the third bloc. But our Foreign Affairs Ministry has distorted this policy so much that I have to say that it is a policy of the whore who changes lovers.
- In other countries where science had made progress, the order of development is scientist, tools and building. In our country the order is reverse, building, tool and scientist. What thought can enter the brain of a scientist? His brain is filled with rubbish. Now-a-days all scientists desire that they may not be in a position to choose their fathers but they can choose the father-in-law. If such a father-in-law is chosen who has good influence in the government, then science will make progress automatically. There is no need to do research. Everything will be all right.
- The speed with which we are building *samadhis* (tombs) for our Prime Ministers, this city is going to become a city of the dead instead of the living. There seems to be a rule that the more poor a country, the more expenditure is incurred on the dead government functionaries. The future generations will have to remove these statues, museums and *stupas*. In the countries where human life is considered valuable and the democracy of the common man is in operation to some extent, the real great men too, like other common men are allotted two-metre space

in the church or in the family burial ground. I want to say as a matter of principle that when someone dies, no coin or memorial should be made in his name for 300 years. Then it will be decided whether that man's fame was temporary or he was a man of history. Don't make Parliament a place of hypocrite show or rituals. The government and the members here chew the cud like animals.

In the last 300 years, the British Parliament has not sent a person to jail. Only a reprimand was given, that too 200-300 years ago. After the reprimand, the member had to sit on knees. After that the member stood and said, "damn dirty house." At this some members laughed and others remained silent.

Don't think that the quarrelling is always bad. Selfish quarrels are harmful, but quarrels for the well-being of others are useful. If there are quarrels between the government and Parliament on one side and judiciary on the other, it will improve the health of the country. In the newspapers it was published about me that I should not return alive from Bihar. What was my crime? What I said about the late Prime Minister in Jackson (USA). In fact it was very appropriate and touching and nobody else could have said that. But it was not for the Prime Minister but for Jawaharlal of pre-1946. In Jackson I was pressurized to say something which was not for publication but on May 30, the statement which should not have been published (and was not published in America) was published in Indian papers in a distorted form. Result was that the people were instigated against me. There are some dirty newspapers, especially two among them, which dislike me too much, perhaps because I want to reduce expenditure or want that English language may not remain in common use.

For the last 1,500 years, the pictures before us are of *Graha-Vishnu* (crocodile and god Vishnu). We want that

some Vishnu may come and save us. We may only worship him. We also have the picture of the great bell of Jehangir. We may just pull it and some one may come and give us justice.

- See India, it has two heads, two brains. On one there are principles and abstract (*nirguna*). On the other, there is work, behaviour or *saguna*. *Advaitvada* on one side according to which all are equal, but there is also a smaller truth according to which discrimination of caste and inequality is justified. This division of our brain has been there since the last several hundred years.
- This government has covered the mouth of truth with gold. Public servants, sadhus, reformers, academicians, who can't become or don't want to become ministers, their mouth is closed by the government by spending too much money on them. Out of 50 billion rupees two billion are spent for covering the mouth of truth with gold.
- I want to say that at least 75 per cent Brigadiers should be promoted from soldiers. If this is considered very radical, then I would suggest that at least 50 per cent should be promoted from soldiers and 50 per cent directly recruited.
- The soldiers are given 5 rupees as uniform allowance and officers 50 rupees. Similarly, ration for the soldiers and officers is different. At least on the war front there should be equality.
- Until military drafting is made essential for everyone, not optional like today, we cannot get army equally sacrificing for the motherland.
- It gives pleasure if destruction and construction complement each other. Without one, the other is incomplete. There is both profit and loss in destruction without construction but in construction without destruction there is only a fraud.
- Before the end of the century, humanity will make new

and comprehensive attempts in the direction of both cruelty and sympathy. Men are hungry for being equal and getting each other's warmth. Poverty and cruelty live side by side. One who is very poor becomes very cruel.

In a nutshell, after Lohia's entry into the Lok Sabha, Parliament became a vital and lively institution in which the voice of crores of exploited men and women was heard. Apart from Lohia, many other parliamentarians made their valuable contribution in this. Among them the important names are: Acharya Kripalani, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prakash Vir Shastri, Madhu Limaye, Hiren Mukherjee, A.K. Gopalan, H.V Kamath, Nath Pai, Hem Barua, Kishan Patnayak etc. Till then the people of India and even many MPs and MLAs also did not know what measures are available to keep a check on the government and how these can be used.

Devices like question hour, zero hour, call attention, adjournment, censure and no confidence motions all were used in this period effectively and the people came to know about the importance of these devices. Parliament used to be like a puppet in the hands of the Prime Minister. Due to overwhelming majority of the ruling party the opposition was always subdued and the members of the ruling party were mostly expected to raise their hands. Drawing attention to this situation, Lohia said that in democracy, this kind of obedience is also dangerous. In response to Lohia's criticism, the treasury benches often resorted to shouting and filibustering. At this Lohia addressed to the Speaker and said, "Sir, I will obey you as far as possible but I cannot obey to the dictates of the crowd." For some time, the relations between Lohia and the Speaker Sardar Hukam Singh were cordial. Once Lohia said to him, "Sir, I have been as obedient to you as I have not been to anyone else except one person." The Speaker commented, "I am obliged to you for that." After sometime when Sardar Hukam Singh started showing inclination towards the ruling party and intolerance towards the opposition, a tug-of-war relations developed

between Lohia and Sardar Hukam Singh. On one occasion an interesting scene was created. Lohia wanted to speak and the Speaker wanted him to sit. Every time the Speaker would stand, Lohia would sit but as soon as the Speaker would sit on his chair, Lohia would again get up and start talking. This process was repeated several times and at last the Speaker had to allow him to make his statement. Once when the Speaker showed his annoyance over the noise and indiscipline in the house, Lohia reminded him that in British Parliament, the Speaker was once locked in the room. On another occasion Lohia said, "Sir, the chair on which you are sitting is cold and one on which I am sitting is hot. My work is to energise the country with the help of this chair and your work is to keep cool in conducting the proceedings of the house."

Once, the condition of the rickshaw-pullers was being debated in the house. In reply to a question, the Minister said: "Government knows that pulling rickshaw has no adverse effect on the body of rickshaw-puller." At this Lohia remarked, "Can you say this after working as a rickshaw-puller for one month? In the countries which are supposed to be modern, the judges themselves stay in prison to gain direct experience."

In June 1967, Lohia spoke in Parliament for the last time on Nath Pai's Bill under which Parliament's supremacy was to be established. Lohia warned the house saying, "If this Bill is passed and converted into law, the country will have to face unprecedented worst situation. I am saying this with a sad heart. Perhaps, I can see the future. I can assure you that in the form of this law you are giving this government a weapon that can be used indiscreetly." At this Nath Pai asked, "Will not the court protect us at that time?" Lohia said: "Leave the time. By then, I will be no more and you will be in jail. It is impossible to say what will not happen at that time. Perhaps, there will be a military man in power and there would be neither a President nor a Prime Minister."

It may be recalled that in 1975, when the emergency was enforced in this country, Lohia's prophesy was fulfilled.

LAST BATTLE AND FAREWELL

When Lohia was expelled from the Praja Socialist Party, his opponent had hoped that it would be a political death of Dr. Lohia because he would not have more than a handful of workers. Except UP nowhere the number of his supporters was significant. Almost all big leaders of the socialist movement had left him. In Mumbai, which was then a citadel of socialist movement, except for Madhu Limaye, Mrinal Gore, Keshav Gore etc. all had deserted him. I remember, a meeting was held at Kurla to which Lohia was invited. A friend of mine, Ram Lai Shukla, who was a mill-worker, took me to the meeting. There was no stage, no electric lights except a bulb attached to a wire drawn from a nearby house. Lohia spoke for about two hours before the audience of 30-40 people sitting in dark on the ground. This was my first introduction to Lohia's views which later became my passion although I could never meet Lohia, personally.

Within 10 years, Lohia not only revitalised the dying socialist movement but also changed the face of Indian politics. Using the three democratic tools of jail, spade and vote and through the platform of the Parliament he made his party strong with revolutionary zeal despite the adverse relation with the press and other media. This was not an insignificant achievement. But Lohia was not satisfied with this. He wanted that the Congress Party which was sitting like a huge rock over Indian politics, should be displaced. Perhaps he feared in view of the feudalistic, dynastic and casteist propensities of the Asian leaders that one party rule in India will lead to some sort of dictatorship. Perhaps, Gandhi too was aware of this situation when he tried to hand over the leadership of the Congress organisation to Socialists and after failing in this attempt, suggested to Congress leaders to dissolve the Congress and convert it to *Lok Seva Sangh* and form a new party for electoral politics.

Lohia wanted to displace the Congress from power. He thought that it had become a party of status-quoism and had no will left for bringing about fundamental changes in the

society which were so essential. The other reason was that no scope for second or third alternative was seen in future. When in 1967, the fourth general elections drew near, he devised a new strategy of joint front of opposition parties, which is known as non-Congressism. To provide ideological input to this strategy, the Socialist Party called a special conference at Kota (Rajasthan) in April 1966. The statement of policy approved in this conference laid down the following policy:

1. The Sanyukta Socialist Party will give priority to strengthening itself and expand its base.
2. To achieve its object the Party will identify among the opposition parties those with whom the organisational merger is possible and those with whom it is not possible. Attempts will be made to attract the parties in the first category. With parties in the second category friendly relations and exchange of views will be encouraged.
3. On one side there are parties whose ideology is inclined towards false internationalism and one-party rule. On the other side are parties which are sympathetic to propertied classes and which have an aggressive attitude towards minorities. In addition, there are parties like the DMK which stress more on regional unity than on national unity but which reflect the aspirations of the depressed classes. Republican Party is the symbol of new awareness among scheduled castes and of equality and regeneration. The Sanyukta Socialist Party should develop close relations with them.
4. Indian political parties are at present in the process of formation. Hence sticking labels and generalisation is not proper.
5. The Sanyukta Socialist Party should continuously strive to see that the Communist parties stay aloof from international allegiance and authoritarianism and

rightist parties should make themselves more tolerant towards minorities and socialised property. The Party should not forget that the small evil of these parties are the result of big evil of the Congress Government.

6. Adjustment for effective action in the Lok Sabha and the assemblies should also be extended to legislative committees and upper houses.
7. The Sanyukta Socialist Party should give direction to people's aspirations and lead the struggle against tyranny and suppression. Whenever necessary, it should cooperate with opposition parties in people's struggle and other urgent issues.
8. Election should be considered as part of people's struggle. The Party's aim should be to displace the Congress from power and replace it by a socialist Government. In the present situation there can be a long gap between achieving the first and second objectives. In the interim period there can emerge so many equations, different kinds of Governments and new experiments. For this the Sanyukta Socialist Party should show some flexibility. In the coming years the Party should work in such a way that continuous minority rule of the Congress comes to an end. For this it is necessary that there should be least division of the opposition votes and there should be adjustments in all constituencies among the opposition parties. The deciding factor should be the achievement in the last election.
9. The Sanyukta Socialist Party will fight election on its own symbol and its representatives should not join the alliances which would efface the identity of the party. For the purpose of election, no minimum programme should be chalked out with other parties. Nevertheless, in case of defeat of the Congress negotiations should be held for formation of a Non-Congress Government. For such negotiations the

- Sanyukta Socialist Party's solid programmes should be a guide for the party representatives.
10. The Sanyukta Socialist Party should not join the anti-Communist democratic fronts with or without Congress or secular and left fronts with or without Congress. Such equations bring haziness to important aspects of socialist policy and cause disunity in the opposition.
 11. The main task of the Sanyukta Socialist Party would be to consolidate all socialist and democratic forces under its banner, strengthen the organisation and build a strong movement against bureaucracy and capitalist-feudalistic set up
 12. The Sanyukta Socialist Party will strive for revolutionary struggle, concrete socialist programmes, spirit of patriotism and decentralised democracy. At present, it is not such a party but soon it will be made so.

[Samajvadi Andolan Ke Dastavez, Edited by Vinod Prasad Singh and Sunilam]

This policy-programme of the Kota conference gave a new direction. The 1967 elections were fought on the basis of this strategy and the Congress was swept off power in many states.

So far, the socialists were of the view that power is essentially evil and they were shy of it. They did not support Swarajists in the third decade of 19th century or the Congress ministries in the fourth decade. They also did not join the interim Government in 1946. Lohia infused in the socialists the will to capture power and use it for the welfare of the people and as a platform for people's struggle.

Unfortunately, Lohia died and there was no one else who could provide proper guidance to the Sanyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD) Governments formed in pursuance of the policy devised by Lohia. These Governments failed on account of power intoxication. After this, during the emergency in 1975, a dangerous situation developed and Jayaprakash Narayan and

J. G. Kripalani had to experiment once again with the policy of Non-Congressism. But many people including socialists, have been criticising Dr. Lohia for the strategy of Non-Congressism.

It is worth mentioning here that this policy was opposed by George Fernandes and Madhu Limaye at the Calcutta conference of the party where this was first discussed. Fernandes used very bitter words. Limaye had absented himself because of disagreement with Lohia. Later, when Lohia met Madhu Limaye and explained to him his point of view, Limaye agreed to prepare the resolutions for the -Kota conference. Nevertheless, his reservation about the policy remained and he continued to believe that his policy of Non-Congressism had harmed the socialist movement.

But disintegration of the Socialist Party or the decline of the socialist movement was not the result of Non-Congressism. It was due to lack of self-confidence and entrepreneurship in the socialists. Dr. Lohia was not wrong in this. Had he not devised this strategy and broken the grip of the monolithic Congress, the country would have suffered one party dictatorship like that in the Soviet Union.

Some of Lohia's colleagues also harboured regret for Lohia's decision that Socialist Party should fight elections against the Sanyukta Maharashtra Samiti since they thought that due to this the party lost its base in Maharashtra. A brilliant leader like Madhu Limaye had to fight election from Bihar. Although Madhu Limaye himself never expressed regret over fighting election against Sanyukta Maharashtra Samiti, his wife Champa Limaye had some feelings of regret in view of the fact that Madhu Limaye could not become as popular in Maharashtra as N.G. Goray and S.M. Joshi. Dr. Lohia saw in Sanyukta Maharashtra Movement the seeds of regionalism, which later fructified in the ascendancy of parochial politics of the Shiv Sena.

Some critics of Lohia saw inconsistency in him. For example, in the beginning he was very strict in the matter of discipline and expected every member to abide by the rules

strictly. Later, he himself relaxed the rules. Similarly, he opposed political fronts at one time and then went to the other extreme in the days of Non-Congressism. In this connection, it needs to be clarified that he changed his strategies to-achieve the immediate end but never deviated from the long-term goal. This conforms to his philosophical formulation that immediate aims must correlate to long terms aims. If the deviation is for selfish gain, it is bad but if it is for fulfilment of the ultimate aim, it is justified. Lohia explained this through characterisation of Krishna who changed his strategies, even told lies but he had no axe to grind and was working for the ultimate sublime goal. Even Gandhi changed his strategies but not his goal.

Lohia must have been satisfied by the success of his strategy of Non-Congressism, though he was aware of the fact that this churning of the sea would also produce the poison (*Halahal*). When he saw SVD Governments running mad in the pursuit of self-aggrandisement, he felt that this was going too far and should be checked.

Roma Mitra has described Lohia's feelings in his last days in an article *Jana*, March-April, 1968. When the news from his constituencies were pouring and there was very thin difference between victory and defeat, he said to Roma, "If I lose the election, it will hurt you. Isn't it?" Roma Mitra wrote: "Even at that time he was worried not for himself but for others. He wanted to experiment with Non-Congressism at the Centre also and this he wanted to begin in the election of the President. He was preparing the draft proposals for the Bhopal conference on the programmes for the SVD Governments. That night he spent in a boat sailing in The Ganga river. At the *Manikarnika Ghat* where funeral pyres were burning, he stopped the boat. He remained thinking for some time and then said, "Why is so much show made about a body?" The news of Charan Singh, joining the SVD, pleased him. He was sure that a leader of the backward caste would abolish the land tax and by his doing work in Hindi, a major change will take place.

Doctors had said that his prostate operation was urgent

and medicines, injections etc. would not help. But he did not like the idea of operation. He used to say: "This business of cutting I don't like. I don't understand how you people eat chicken, fish etc. Eating a living being and enjoying the taste." He didn't even like to cut the branches of the trees. Roma said, he was the only person who differentiated between life and commodity in the context of Ahimsa. He used to say: "In this country, commodity is protected but men die like flies and nobody cares."

When the doctor told him that operation was a must he didn't want to delay and immediately got admitted in Willingdon Hospital (now Rammanohar Lohia Hospital). He was admitted on September 28, was operated on September 30 and he expired on October 11, midnight. Roma Mitra wrote: "During his short illness, when he was fighting against death, he had two burdens on his mind. One was about the country. Moaning in severe pain he used to talk about land-tax, Hindu-Muslim unity, the condition of poor farmers, language problem and so on. In my view he never lost his speech or consciousness. He was also aware of what was going on in the country. Once he took my hand into his and said: "Tell me, you will not lie to me. Is something great happening in our country? This is the first rehearsal" After this he started talking about Indo-Pak confederation."

According to Roma Mitra, when he entered the hospital he had no idea of his imminent death. But when his condition worsened he realised that his time was nearing and so his anxieties about the country increased his pain.

But Lohia must have been conscious about death as he was about other matters such as the society, the philosophy and the complexities of the human mind. Several times he had experienced that moment when death was standing before him, for example, in Berlin Lake, in Lahore Fort, during the riots in Calcutta, Chittagong and Noakhali and lastly on 19th December, 1966 at night about which he wrote to Roma in his letter dated January 31, 1967: "At Calcutta I was feeling a little

ill. After reaching there, it worsened just like yours. Heavy head and nausea. On 19th night again and again it came to my mind if that was how a man dies. But that was only a flash of mind."

Madhu Limaye used to say that Dr. Lohia had a feeling that he would not live for more than 56-57 years because no one in his family had lived beyond this. He might, therefore, have prepared himself for this moment. That is why complete calm was prevailing on his face, only eyebrows were stretched as if he was welcoming his eternal rival.

Many controversies arose after his death. It was said that his operation was done by inexperienced doctors, post-operation care was insufficient or the right kind of medicines were not available in the hospital or the instruments were not properly sterilised. Some people also saw a political conspiracy behind this. This was investigated too during the Janata Party regime. It was alleged that all records were not made available to this investigating team. The committee could not know which doctor undertook the operation. The committee noted in its report that negligence was found in many matters.

Dr. Lohia had been advised by some of his friends that he should not go for operation to Willingdon Hospital but get admitted in some good hospital. He was about to go to Germany. He was invited for the function of the 450th anniversary of Martin Luther. It was suggested that he should get himself operated there. But Lohia did not pay any attention to them. He got himself admitted in Willingdon Hospital without informing his friends. He wanted to go to a common man's hospital. He was a bitter critic of the five-star hospitals for VIPs. When Lal Bahadur Shastri died in Tashkent, it was reported that he did not get proper medical attention at the time of heart attack. At this he said: "Ordinary man lives in hunger and dirt and dies like flies. In the hospital doctors and nurses attend to him hours after the right time. When he does not die on account of unemployment and hunger, he gets killed by police bullet. Therefore, it is proper if his Prime Minister also dies like him despite extraordinary amount spent on him."

Dr. Lohia wanted to die only in a poor man's hospital. When he saw many doctors and nurses in a discussion in his room, he commented, "why so many doctors for one patient? Is this available to an ordinary citizen? Why spend so much on me?" He kept his wit alive up to the last moment. When he asked his doctor whether he would be all right, the doctor said as usual, "Yes, you will." At this Lohia smiled and said, "It seems like politicians, doctors too tell lies and grope in the dark."

One day Raj Narain became adamant. He wanted to shift Dr. Lohia from Willingdon hospital to The All India Medical Institute. Lohia refused.

Till the time he remained in hospital, the outside lawn remained crowded by his well-wishers and admirers. *Rehriwallas*, rickshaw-pullers, hotel waiters, writers, journalists, teachers, politicians, leaders, all were seen in the lawn waiting for some news from inside. When someone came out, people looked at his face and tried to read what was written on it. I also stood in the crowd. On 11th October in the evening I saw Madhu Limaye coming out from Lohia's room. 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 came home. Children were not there, they were playing outside. Wife was busy in the kitchen. Finding myself alone I broke down. When my wife saw me weeping she asked, "What happened?" I could only say, "I will never be able to see Lohia anymore." I don't remember whether I wept before on someone's death.

Mastram Kapoor