
UNIT 15 SOCIALIST THOUGHT: RAMMANOHAR LOHIA AND JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

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15.1 INTRODUCTION

The growth of socialist thought as a philosophy of social and economic reconstruction is mostly the product of the Western impact on India. One of the leading saint-philosopher of India, Aurobindo Ghosh's criticism of the middle class mentality of the leaders of the Indian National Congress and his plea for the social development of the "proletariats" in his articles to the magazine "Indu Prakash in 1893, B. G. Tilak's reference to the Russian Nihilists in the Kesari in 1908, C.R.Das's reference to the glorious role of the Russian Revolution in the contetnparary international system, and particularly his emphasis on the role of the trade union movements in the structural development of the social and political system of India, in his Presidential address at the Gaya Session of the Indian National Congress in 1917, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nelxru's eloquence about the New Economic Policy of 1926 and other developments in the Soviet Union in his articles and books such as *Soviet Russia, Autobiography, and Glimpses of World History*, are some of the examples of the impact of the Soviet ideas and thoughts on the minds of the leading Indian thinkers and political leaders.

One of the leading figures of the freedom struggle in India, Lala Lajpat Rai was considered by some critics as the first writer on Socialism and Bolshevism in India. The Marxist leader, M.N.Roy was very critical of Lala Lajpat Rai's writings, particularly his book, *The Future of India*. He considered him as "a bourgeois politician with sympathy for socialism". Roy, in his book, "*India in Transition and Indian Problem*" was also critical of the bourgeois attitude of the leaders of the Indian National Congress. Roy was not a blind follower of Russian communism. He considered Russian communism as a form of state capitalism. In his book, *Russian Revolution*, he regarded the Russian Revolution as "a fluke of history".

15.2 HISTORY OF SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

The socialist movement became popular in India only after the First World War and the Russian Revolution. The unprecedented economic crisis of the twenties coupled with the capitalist and imperialist policies of the British Government created spiralling inflation and increasing unemployment among the masses. According to John Patrick Haithcox, imperialism

was considered as a form of capitalist class government intended to perpetuate the slavery of the workers. The success of the Russian Revolution under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky and the economic growth of that country inspired intellectuals and political leaders of the developing countries of the Third World including India.

A number of radical groups and youth leagues opposing the policies of the British government were born in India. A left wing was created within the Congress Party under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. In November 1928 an organisation called the Independence for India League was created under the leadership of S. Srinivas Iyengar. Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were its joint secretaries. This left oriented pressure group within the Congress spearheaded the movement for complete political, social, and economic independence. In the Lahore Session of the Congress, in 1929, Jawaharlal Nehru, with the help of this left wing group, got a resolution for complete independence passed. After this resolution for independence was passed, the Independence for India League got slowly disintegrated.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century a number of political parties based on religion, caste, and community came into existence in India. According to a leading social scientist, Gopal Krishna, "Articulate political parochialism – characteristic of a society where primary loyalties continue to centre around caste and community, social and geographic mobility was minimal and attitudes were not enlightened by an awareness of the larger national community – resulted in the early formation of communal and caste parties, seeking in their own way to participate in the process of political modernisation."

The Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) , the precursor of the Jan Sangh, was born in 1925. The Justice Party, an anti-Brahmin movement in the Madras Presidency, came into existence in 1917. Both the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha were formed in 1906.

As a result of the impact of the Russian Revolution, most of the left parties were formed in the Third World countries. The Communist Party of India (CPI) was born in 1925. This left party was linked with the Communist International of Moscow. Besides, a lot of radical splinter groups also were born in different parts of India.

The Communist Party, with the help of the Communist International and the British Communist Party, made rapid progress in the field of trade union movements till the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928. With the criticism of the Congress Party as an instrument of 'bourgeoisie nationalism' and Gandhism, which Lenin regarded as 'revolutionary', as an "openly counter-revolutionary force", the Communist Party got alienated from the masses as well as from the freedom struggle. M.N.Roy also started his radical group in 1930 after he was expelled from Comintern in 1929,

The failure of the two civil disobedience movements of 1930 and 1932 and the compromising attitude of the Congress at the two Round Table Conferences made a number of young leaders disillusioned. During this time, Gandhi also suspended his Satyagraha movement and started concentrating on constructive programmes. Many Congressmen considered this development as failure of Gandhi's non-violent struggle. In this atmosphere of disillusionment an attempt was made to form the Congress Socialist Party, a Marxism oriented organisation within the Congress Party in 1934.

The socialist groups were also formed in Punjab, Bengal, Benares and Kerala. In Poona the task of forming the socialist party within the Congress was entrusted to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Yusuf Meherally and Purshottam Trikamdas. Other leaders who were instrumental in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party were: Jayaprakasli Narayan, Minoo Masani, Asoka Melita, Achyut Patwardhan, N.G.Goray, M.L.Dantwala, Acharya Narendra Deva, Dr.Rammanohar Lohia and S.M. Joshi. While in prison, these leaders prepared the blue print for the Congress Socialist Party. Thus the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) was born out of the disillusionment with the civil resistance movement, growth of constitutionalism, and anti-national role of the Communist Party of India and its alienation from the national mainstream. Some socialist critics are of the opinion that if the Communist Party of India would not have shown its anti-Gandhi and anti-freedom struggle mentality, and the Congress Party would not have been dominated by the conservative elements, perhaps the Congress Socialist Party would never have been born at all.

During the thirties, Jawaharlal was considered as a great champion of the socialist philosophy. Every young leader of the Congress Party looked upon him as the symbol of socialism. In a letter to Minoo Masani on December 1934, Nehru welcomed the "formation of the socialist groups within the Congress to influence the ideology of the Congress and the country."

By 1934, many socialist groups were formed in different parts of the country. It was then realised that these groups were to be brought under one socialist platform. Jayaprakasli Narayan organised a conference of socialist members in Patna in May 1934. He also revived the Bihar Socialist Party. The All India Congress Socialist Party was formed at this conference. Gandhi's decision to withdraw the civil disobedience movement and the revival of the rightist Swaraj Party precipitated the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934. Gandhi's favourable attitude towards the Swarajists like B.C.Roy, K.M.Munshi, Bhulabhai Desai and others and the Congress decision to withdraw the civil disobedience movement and launch parliamentary programmes in the forthcoming Patna meeting on 18 May 1934, made socialist forces in the Congress to create the Congress Socialist Party on 17 May 1934. Acharya Narendra Deva was made the chairman and Jayaprakasli Narayan as the organising secretary of the committee to draft the constitution and the programmes of the Congress Socialist Party.

15.3 CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY: PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

The birth of the Congress Socialist Party in May 1934 was a landmark in the history of the socialist movement of India. While assessing the programmes and policies of the Congress Socialist Party, it will be desirable to remember the contribution of the Meerut Conspiracy case in spreading the ideology of the early 1930s. Besides, the creation of the All India Kisan Sabha in 1936, and the role of the Youth League and Independence for India League can never be ignored in the growth of the socialist thought in India. The Congress Socialist Party provided an all India platform to all the socialist groups in India. The publication of the Party and the writings of the socialist leaders inspired the youth of India in different parts of the country to take up constructive programmes for the upliftment of the downtrodden. Ashok Mehta's *Democratic Socialism*, and *Studies in Asian Socialism*, Acharya Narendra Deva's *Socialism and National Revolution*, Jayaprakash Narayan's *Towards Struggle* (1946), and

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia's *The Mystery of Sir Stafford Cripps* (1942) played a significant role in spreading the messages of socialism in India.

It was declared in the Socialist conference of 1934 that the basic objective of the Party was to work for the "complete independence in the sense of separation from the British Empire and the establishment of socialist society." The Party membership was not open to the members of the communal organisations. Its basic aim was to organise the workers and peasants for a powerful mass movement for independence. Programmes included a planned economy, socialisation of key industries and banking, elimination of the exploitation by Princes and landlords and initiation of reforms in the areas of basic needs.

The ideology of the Congress Socialist Party was a combination of the principles of Marxism, the ideas of democratic socialism of the British Labour Party, and socialism mixed with the Gandhian principles of Satyagraha and non-violence. The Party was under the influence of deep Marxist ideas in its formative phase. The leading members of the Congress Socialist Party belonged to different streams of thought. According to Masani, "I was a staunch democrat of the Labour Party kind and had little sympathy with communist methodology or technique though I was a rather starry-eyed admirer of the October Revolution in Russia.... JP on the other hand was a staunch believer in the dictatorship of the proletariat, whatever that may mean. Marxism was the bed rock of his socialist faith."

Some of the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party like Acharya Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan were the strong supporters of the Marxist trend in the CSP. By 1940s, JP came under the spell of Gandhi and the Gandhian socialism. By 1954, he was disillusioned with the functioning of party politics. He left CSP and joined the Sarvodaya movement. Other leaders like M.L. Dantwala, M.R. Masani, Ashok Mehta, and Pursottam Trikam Das were the followers of the principles of the British Fabian socialism. Masani left the CSP in 1939 and became a strong supporter of free enterprise. He was instrumental in the formation of the Swatantra Party in 1959. Achyut Patwardhan and Dr. Rammanohar Lohia were the followers of Gandhian methodology in the Party. Patwardhan became a follower of J. Krishnamurti in 1950 and left all party politics. Dr. Lohia continued to be a prominent Gandhian socialist leader throughout.

The ideological differences among the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party had a deep impact on the policies, programmes and organisational development of the Party. In the formative phase of the Party, all the leaders remained together because of their strong sense of nationalism, camaraderie, and brotherhood, and what is often referred to as their "intensive personal friendship". According to Madhu Limaye, they were all from a similar urban, middle class, highly educated background. They were also young and idealistic, possessed a strict code of ethics and had great "respect for values of truth and decency. Of all the leaders, JP was the most prominent cohesive factor. He was considered as the most important leader of the socialist movement. Because of his organisational capacity and strong Marxist approach, the Party, in the formative phase, followed the Marxist approach and principles."

The 1936 Meerut Thesis put emphasis on the Party to follow and develop into a national movement, an anti-imperialist movement based on the principles of Marxism. According to this thesis, it was "necessary to wean the anti-imperialist elements in the Congress away from its present bourgeois leadership and to bring them under the leadership of revolutionary

socialism." This task can be accomplished only if there is within the Congress an organised body of Marxian socialists. ...Marxism alone can guide the anti-imperialist forces to their ultimate destiny. Party members must therefore fully understand the technique of revolution, the theory of practice of the class struggle, the nature of the state and process leading to the socialist society." This thesis was adopted at the Faizpur Conference of the Congress Socialist Party in 1936.

The socialists played an important role in the 1942 Quit India Movement, and in organised trade union movements of the country. Their increasing popularity was neither lilted by the leading members of the Congress nor by the communists and the Royalists. The communists were not part of the nationalist struggle against the British imperialism. They also did not like the popularity of the trade union movements under the leadership of the socialists. They criticised them as fascists and symbol of 'left reformism'.

The Congress leaders were not very sympathetic to the role of the socialists inside the Congress organisation. The socialists of the Congress, particularly the CSP members, were opposed to the constitutional arrangements of the 1935 Act and did not like the Congress decision to participate in the elections in the states although ultimately persons like Acharya Narendra Deva participated in the elections. The Congress decision to form ministries in the states after the elections in 1937 was opposed by the socialists. Leading members like Jayaprakash Narayan of the CSP were convinced that this very constitutional arrangement would create obstacles in the growth of the 'revolutionary mentality in the Congress'. In his report at the Nasik Conference of the Congress Socialist Party in 1948, Jayaprakash Narayan said, "Looking back, however, and in spite of the years, I still believe it was wrong to have accepted offices then. While it yielded no advantage, it gave birth to a mentality of power politics within the Congress that threatens now to become its undoing."

The soft attitude of the Congress organisation towards the landlords, its policies regarding the Princely states, and its opposition to the Kisan movements in the states also embittered the relationship between the socialists and the leading members of the Congress. The Congress organisation was not very sympathetic towards the Kisan movements under the leaders of the CSP. They even went to the extent of passing an official resolution at the Haripura Session in 1938 asking its members not to associate with the Kisan organisations. The victory of Subhas Chandra Bose against Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Gandhi's candidate, was not very much liked by the Congress leaders. In March 1939, a Congress resolution moved by G.B. Pant, asked the newly elected Congress President Subhas Chandra Bose, to nominate the members of his Working Committee as per the advice of Gandhi. At this critical moment of the CSP, its members were divided on the issue of support towards Bose. Jayaprakash Narayan and the communists in the organisation wanted to support Bose. Dr.Lohia, Masani, Ashok Mehta and Yusuf Meherally were not in favour of Bose as they thought that the decision to support Bose would result in the polarisation of the national movement into two camps and would ultimately weaken the nationalist struggle against the British government. The decision by the socialist members to abstain from voting on the resolution, shocked Bose to such an extent that he decided to resign from the Presidentship and form his own party, the Forward Bloc. All these developments weakened the CSP as an emerging organisation of the socialist forces in the country. In the Nasik Convention of the CSP, in March 1948, the socialists ultimately took the decision to leave the Congress and to form the Socialist Party of India.

In 1952, immediately after the first national election, the Socialist Party and the Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) of J.B.Kripalani took a decision to merge into a single organisation.

The socialist organisations in India then had two basic objectives: (a) They wanted to develop into an all-India organisation for social and economic reconstruction and (b) Development of the weaker sections of the social structure and also as an ideological framework for political emancipation of India.

The Bolshevik theory of democratic centralism deeply influenced the ideological deliberations of the Congress Socialist Party till the independence. With the attainment of independence in 1947 and death of Gandhi in the next year, the Congress Socialist Party underwent a significant transformation. It moved away from the communist principle of democratic centralism and Marxist methodology towards the area of democratic socialism. Also, in order to achieve a mass base, the CSP diluted some of its earlier ideological frameworks and methodology. Soon the electoral processes of adjustments, alliances, and even mergers were undertaken with political organisations that neither believed in democratic processes nor in the principles of nationalism, socialism and democracy. From a revolutionary path, it moved towards parliamentary methods of coalitional approach.

The Congress Socialist Party adopted the principle of democratic socialism in the Patna Convention of the party in 1949 more seriously. While emphasising its ideological purity the party was more careful about its constructive activities among the peasants, poor and the working class. In its famous Allahabad Thesis of 1953 the party proposed to go for all electoral alliance adjustment with the opposition parties. But the Party was not prepared to have any united front or coalition with any political party. In the Gaya session of the Party statements the separate identity of the Congress Socialist Party was also emphasised. The Party was reluctant to have any electoral adjustment or coalition with the Congress, Communist or Hindu Fundamentalist Party or Organisations. But this attitude was toned down and diluted during the General Elections of 1957 and thereafter.

In 1952, the Congress Socialist Party strongly advocated for the greater synthesis of the Gandhian ideals with socialist thought. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia as the President of the Party put emphasis on a decentralised economy based on handicrafts, cottage industries and industries based on small machines and maximum use of labour with small capital investment. During the Panchamarhi Socialist Convention in May 1952, this line of thought of Dr. Lohia did not impress several Socialist leaders of the Party. In June 1953, Ashok Mehta's thesis of the "Political compulsion of a backward economy" pleaded for a greater cooperation between the Socialist and the Congress Party. As a counterpoise to Ashok Mehta's thesis, Dr. Lohia offered the "Theory of Equidistance". This theory advocated equidistance from the Congress and the Communists by the Socialist parties. As a result of these two streams of thought the Congress Socialist Party was divided into two camps. Some of the members even thought of quitting the party to join the Congress, .

One of the prominent leaders of the Congress Socialist Party, Acharya Narendra Deva was not in favour of the Socialists to join the Congress. He was a staunch believer in the principle of dialectical materialism of Marx. He said, "We can perform the task before us only if we try to comprehend the principle and purposes of Socialism and to understand the dialectical method propounded by Marx for the correct understanding of the situation and make that

understanding the basis of true action we must make our stand on scientific socialism and steer clear of utopian socialism or social reformism. Nothing short of a revolutionary transformation of the existing social order can meet the needs of the situation. He believed in the moral governance of the world and primacy of moral values. He considered socialism as a cultural movement. He always emphasised the humanist foundation of socialism; he was not in favour of the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence in its entirety. He was in favour of broadening the basis of mass movement by organising the masses on an economic and class-conscious basis. He was in favour of an alliance between the lower middle class and the masses. He said that "They could become class conscious only when an appeal was made to them in economic terms" to understand India. He pleaded for an alliance between the Socialist movement and the National movement for a colonial country. He said that political freedom was an "inevitable stage on the way to socialism". He was a strong supporter of George Sorel's Syndicalist Theory of "General Strike". He said, "In India, unlike Russia, the proletarian weapon of strike has not yet been the signal for mass action; but the working class can extend its political influence only when by using its weapon of general strike in the service of the national struggle, it can impress the petty bourgeoisie with the revolutionary possibilities of a strike".

During the socialist movements in the pre independence phase, and subsequently during the 1940's, 50's and 60's, greater emphasis was put on the acceleration of agricultural production, cooperative, land ceiling, reduction of unemployment, and the raising of the living standards of the suppressed and backward communities. The socialist party always advocated for the separation of the judiciary from the administration and its decentralisation on the lines of the Balwant Rai Mehta committee report. The basic philosophy of the Socialist thought in India was based on a synthesis of secularism, nationalism and democratic decentralisation process.

15.4 SOCIALIST THOUGHT OF DR. RAMMANOHAR LOHIA

Rammonohar Lohia articulated his approach in what he called Seven Revolutions such as equality between man and woman, struggle against political, economic and spiritual inequality based on skin colour, removal of inequality between backward and high castes based on traditions and special opportunity for the backward, majors against foreign enslavement in different forms, economic equality, planned production, and removal of capitalism, against unjust encroachments on private life, non proliferation of weapons and reliance on Satyagraha were the basic elements of his thought. In his book on Marx, Gandhi and Socialism, Lohia made an analysis of principles of democratic socialism as an appropriate philosophy for the successful operation of constructive programmes. He said, "Conservatism and communism have a strange identity of interest against socialism. Conservatism holds socialism as its democratic rival and does not fear communism except as a threat of successful insurrection. Communism prefers the continuance of a conservative government and is mortally afraid of a socialist party coming to office, for, its chances of an insurrection are then deemed".

Lohia made a significant contribution in the field of socialist thought in India, He always laid greater emphasis on the combination of the Gandhian ideals with the socialist thought. He was a proponent of the cyclical theory of history. He believed that through the principles of democratic socialism the economy of a developing country could be improved. Although Dr. Lohia was a supporter of dialectical materialism he put greater emphasis on consciousness. He was of the opinion that through an internal oscillation between class and caste, historical

dynamism of a country could be insured. According to Dr. Lohia, the classes represent the social mobilisation process and the castes are symbols of conservative forces. All human history, he said, has always been "an internal movement between caste and classes – caste loosen into classes and classes crystallise into castes". He was an exponent of decentralised socialism. According to him small machines, cooperative labour and village government, operate as democratic forces against capitalist forces. He considered orthodox and organised socialism "a dead doctrine and a dying organisation".

Lohia was very popular for his Four Pillar State concept. He considered village, mandal (district), province and central government as the four pillars of the state. He was in favour of villages having police and welfare functions.

He propounded his theory of New Socialism at Hyderabad in 1959. This theory had six basic elements. They were equalitarian standards in the areas of income and expenditure, growing economic interdependence, world parliament system based on adult franchise, democratic freedoms inclusive of right to private life, Gandhian technique of individual and collective civil disobedience, and dignity and rights of common man. In his Panchamarhi conference address in 1952 he said, "The tensions and emptiness of modern life seem difficult to overcome, whether under capitalism or communism as the hunger for rising standards is their mother and common to both. Capitalists expected their ideal kingdom to arise out of each man's self interest operating under a perfect competition; communists still expect their ideal kingdom to arrive out of social ownership over means of production. Their common fallacy has now shown up that the general aims of society do not inevitably flow out of certain economic aims. An integrated relationship between the two sets of aims has to be set up by the intelligence of man."

Lohia advocated socialism in the form of a new civilisation which in the words of Marx could be referred to as "socialist humanism". He gave a new direction and dimension to the socialist movement of India. He said that India's ideology is to be understood in the context of its culture, traditions, and history. For the success of democratic socialist movement in India, it is necessary to put primary emphasis on the removal of caste system through systemic reform process. Referring to the caste system he said, "All those who think that with the removal of poverty through a modern economy, these segregations will automatically disappear, make a big mistake." He often highlighted the irrelevance of capitalism for the economic reconstruction and development of the Third World countries.

Lohia was opposed to doctrinaire approach to social, political, economic and ideological issues. He wanted the state power to be controlled, guided, and framed by people's power and believed in the ideology of democratic socialism and non-violent methodology as instruments of governance.

Lohia was deeply influenced by Leon Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution". He preached and practiced the concept of "permanent civil disobedience" as a peaceful rebellion against injustice. To him the essence of social revolution could be achieved through a combination of jail, spade and vote. His theory of "immediacy" was very popular among the youth. He wanted that organisation and action must continue as parallel currents and strongly pleaded for "constructive militancy" and "militant construction".

Lohia was convinced that no individual's thought could be used as the sole frame of reference

for the ideology of any movement. Although he was in favour of Marx's theory of dialectical materialism, he was aware of its limitations. He emphasised both the economic factors and human will as important elements of development of history. He was convinced that "logic of events" and "logic of will" would govern the path of history.

He was not convinced by the Marxist thesis that the revolutions were to occur in the industrially developed societies. He said that communism borrowed from capitalism its conventional production techniques; it only sought to change relationship among the forces of production. Such a process was unsuitable for the conditions prevailing in India. He pleaded for small unit technology and decentralised economy. For him the theory of determinism was not a solution for the tradition bound Indian society where class distinctions and caste stratifications rule the day. The Marxist theory of class struggle is not an answer for the complex social structures of India.

Lohia was convinced that the concept of "welfare-statism" was not an answer for the social and economic progress of countries in the Third World. The Marxist concept of class struggle had no place for the peasant because he was "an owner of property and an exacter of high prices for their food." Dr. Lohia always emphasised on the role of peasants in the economic, political and social developments of the country. According to him, "Undoubtedly, the farmer in India, as elsewhere, has a greater role to play, than whom none is greater, but others may have equal roles to play. The talk of subsidiary alliances between farmers and workers and artisans and city poor must be replaced by the concept of equal relationship in the revolution." He gave a call for the civil disobedience movements against all forms of injustice and for the creation of a new world order.

Lohia was of the view that the universal male domination and obnoxious caste system as the two basic weaknesses of India's social structure and pleaded for their eliminations at all levels. He said, "All politics in the country, Congress, Communist, or socialist, has one big area of national agreement, whether by design or through custom, and that is to keep down and disenfranchise the Sudra and the women who constitute over three-fourth of our entire population." He appealed to the youth to be at the forefront of the social reconstruction process to eliminate these social evils. He said, "I am convinced that the two segregations of caste and women are primarily responsible for this decline of the spirit. These segregations have enough power to kill all capacity for adventure and joy." Poverty and these social segregations are inter-linked and thrive 'on each other's' worms. He asserted, "all war on poverty is a shame, unless it is, at the same time, a conscious and sustained war on these two segregations."

Religion and politics, said Lohia, are deeply inter-linked and have the same origin. Although the jurisdictions of religion and politics are separate, a wrong combination of both corrupts both. He was of the view that both religion and politics could be judiciously administered to develop the infrastructures of the political systems. He said, "Religion is long term politics and politics is short term religion. Religion should work for doing well and praising goodness. Politics should work for fighting the evil and condemning it. When the religion instead of doing something good confines itself to praising the goodness only, it becomes lifeless. And when politics, instead of fighting evil, only condemns it, it becomes quarrelsome. But it is a fact that imprudent mixture of religion and politics corrupts both of them. No particular religion should associate itself with any particular politics. It creates communal fanaticism.

The main purpose of the modern ideology of keeping religion separate from politics is to ensure that communal fanaticism does not originate. There is also one more idea that power of awarding punishment in politics and religious orders should be placed separately, otherwise it could give impetus to conservatism and corruption. Despite keeping all the above precautions in view, it is all the more necessary that religion and politics should be complementary to each other, but they should not encroach upon each other's jurisdiction. “

As a socialist thinker and activist, Lohia has carved out for himself a unique place in the history of Indian socialist thought and movement. Although there has been a tendency among the contemporary researchers not to recognise him as an academic system-builder in the tradition of Kant, Hegel or Comte, his democratic socialist approach to look at ideology as an integrated phenomenon is now being widely accepted throughout the world.

15.5 SOCIALIST THOUGHT OF JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Jayaprakash Narayan popularly known as 'JP' was a confirmed Marxist in 1929. By the middle of 1940s he was inclined towards the Gandhian ideology. Till 1952 JP had no faith in non-violence as an instrument of social transformation process. The transformations of the Russian society in the late 1920s had thereafter changed his outlook towards Marxism and the process of dialectical materialism. Soviet Union was no more an ideal model for him for a socialist society. The bureaucratised dictatorship with the Red Army, secret police and guns produced an inherent disliking for the Soviet Pattern of development. He was convinced that it did not produce "decent, fraternal and civilised human beings". He said in 1947, "The method of violent revolution and dictatorship might conceivably lead to a socialist democracy; but in only country where it has been tried (i.e. the Soviet Union), it had led to something different, i.e. to a bureaucratic state in which democracy does not exist. I should like to take a lesson from history".

JP was convinced that there was inter-relationship between nature of the revolution and its future impact. He was convinced that any pattern of violent revolution would not lead to the empowerment of people at the grassroots level. He said, "A Soviet Revolution has two parts: destruction of the old order of society and construction of the new. In a successful violent revolution, success lies in the destruction of the old order from the roots. That indeed is a great achievement. But at that point, something vital happens which nearly strangles the succeeding process. During the revolution there is widespread reorganised revolutionary violence. When that violence assisted by other factors into which one need not go here, has succeeded in destroying the old power structure, it becomes necessary to cry halt to the unorganised mass violence and create out of it an organised means of violence to protect and defend the revolution. Thus a new instrument of power is created and whosoever among the revolutionary succeeds in capturing this instrument, they and their party or faction become the new rulers. They become the masters of the new state and power passage from the hands of the people to them. There is always struggle for power at the top and heads roll and blood flows, victory going in the end to the most determined, the most ruthless and best, organised. It is not that violent revolutionaries deceive and betray; it is just the logic of violence working itself out. It cannot be otherwise".

JP was very much critical of dialectical materialism on human development. He was convinced that this methodology would affect the spiritual development of man. His concept of Total

Revolution is a holistic one. He used this term *Total Revolution* for the first time in a British magazine called *The Time* in 1969. Underlying the emphasis on the Gandhian concept of non-violence and Satyagraha he said, "Gandhiji's non violence was not just a plea for law and order, or a cover for the status quo, but a revolutionary philosophy. It is indeed, a philosophy of total revolution, because it embraces personal and social ethics and values of life as much as economic, political and social institutions and processes."

The concept of Total Revolution as enunciated by JP is a confluence of his ideas on seven revolutions i.e. social, economic, political, cultural, ideological and intellectual, educational and spiritual. JP was not very rigid regarding the number of these revolutions. He said the seven revolutions could be grouped as per demands of the social structures in a political system. He said, "For instance the cultural may include educational and ideological revolutions. And if culture is used in an anthropological sense, it can embrace all other revolutions." He said, "economic revolution maybe split up into industrial, agricultural, technological revolutions etc. similarly intellectual revolutions maybe split up into two – scientific and philosophical. Even spiritual revolution can be viewed as made of moral and spiritual or it can be looked upon as part of the culture. And so on." The concept of total revolution became popular in 1974 in the wake of mass movements in Gujarat and Bihar. He was deeply disturbed by the political process of degeneration in the Indian politics of the time. During his Convocation Address at the Benaras Hindu University in 1970 he said, "Politics has, however, become the greatest question mark of this decade. Some of the trends are obvious, political disintegration is likely to spread, selfish splitting of parties rather than their ideological polarisation will continue; the devaluation of ideologies may continue; frequent change of party loyalties for persona; or parochial benefits, buying and selling of legislatures, inner party indiscipline, opportunistic alliance among parties and instability of governments, all these are expected to continue."

JP was deeply moved by the mutilation of democratic process, political corruption and fall of moral standards in our public life. He said that if this pattern of administrative process continues then there would not be any socialism, welfarism, government, public order, justice, freedom, national unity and in short no nation. He said, "No ism can have any chance, democratic socialism symbolises an incessant struggle for the establishment of a just, casteless, social and economic order under a democratic system in which an individual is provided with proper environment." In his address in Patna on 5th June 1974 he said, "This is a revolution, a total revolution. This is not a movement merely for the dissolution of the assembly. We have to go far, very far".

In a letter to a friend in August 1976, JP defined the character of the Total Revolution. He wrote, "Total revolution is a permanent revolution. It will always go on and keep on changing both our personal and social lives. This revolution knows no respite, no halt, certainly not complete halt. Of course according to the needs of the situation its forms will change, its programmes will change, its process will change. At an opportune moment there may be an upsurge of new forces which will push forward the wheels of change. The soldiers of total revolution must keep certainly busy with their programmes to work and wait for such an opportune moment."

JP's Total Revolution involved the developments of peasants, workers, harijans, tribal people and indeed all weaker sections of the social structure. He was always interested in empowering and strengthening India's democratic system. He wanted the participation of people at all levels of decision-making process. He wanted that electoral representatives should be

accountable to his electors, not once in five years but if is unsuitable before the expiry of his five year term he should be replaced. The political representative must be continuously accountable to the public. He wanted electoral reforms to be introduced in the political system to check the role of black money in the electoral process of the country. He said that some kind of machinery should be established through which there could be a major of consultation with the setting up of candidates. This machinery should "keep a watch on their representatives and demand good and honest performance from them". Regarding the statutory provision for recalling the-elected representatives he said "I do recognise of course that it may not be vesy easy to devise suitable machinery for it and that the right to recall may be occasionally misused. But in a democracy we do not solve problems by denying to people their basic rights. If constitutional experts apply their minds to the problem, a solution may eventually be found."

JP was deeply disturbed by the growth of corruption in the Indian political system. He said "I know politics is not for saints. But politics at least under a democracy must know the limits which it may not cross." This was the focal point of JP's Peoples Charter which he submitted to the Parliament on 6th March 1975. He said "Corruption is eating into the vitals of our political life. It is disturbing development, undermining the administration and making a mockery of all laws and regulations. It is eroding peoples faith and exhausting their proverbial patience."

JP wanted a network of Peoples Committees to be established at the grass roots levels to take care of the problems of the people and the programmes for development. He wanted the economic and the political power to be combined in the hands of the people. Analysing his economic programme he said, "A Gandhian frame laying emphasis on agricultural development, equitable land ownership, the application of appropriate technology to agriculture such as improved labour, intensive tools and gadgets..., the development of domestic and rural industries and the widest possible spread of small industries".

JP's programme of Antyodaya meaning, the upliftment of the last man was an essential aspect of his socialist thought. On 21st march 1977, in a statement he said, "Bapu gave us a good yardstick. Whenever you are in doubt in taking a particular decision remember the face of the poorest man and think how it will affect him. May this yardstick guide all their actions." Right to work was an integral part of his concept of Total Revolution, he said "Once the state accepts this obligation, means will have to be found for providing employment to all. It is not so difficult to do so." JP was also particular about social reforms such as elimination of dowry system, development of the conditions of the harijans and abolition of the caste system in India's political system.

Analysing his concept of an ideal state, he said in 1977 that "the idea of my dream is a community in which every individual, every resource is dedicated to serving the weak, a community dedicated to Antyodaya, to the well being of the least and the weakest. It is a community in which individuals are valued for their humanity, a community in which the right of every iadividual to act according to his conscience is recognised and respected by all. In short, my vision is of a free, progressive and Gandhian India."

Minoo Masani said, "All through the vicissitudes and jig-jags of JP's life, there has throughout been a non-violent means for total revolution." JP, throughout his career, highlighted the role of students and youth in the field of peoples movement. He said "Revolutions an' not brought about by those who are engaged in the race for power and office whether in the government or in non official organisations. Not also by those who are totally preoccupied with the

burden of providing bread to their families and are wary of adopting any risky step. The youth of a country alone are free from these constraints. They have idealism, they have enthusiasm, and they have a capacity to make sacrifice from which older men shrink." In his letter to youth in August, 1976 he said, "for the long and endless battle for Total Revolution there is a need of new leadership, the forces of history are with you. So go ahead with full confidence. Victory is certainly yours." Throughout his life JP has always tried to put men in the centre of picture. JP said, "In the society that I have in view for the future, man should occupy the central place, the organisation should be for man and not the other way round. By that I mean that the social organisation should be such as allows freedom to every individual to develop and grow according to his own inner nature, a society which believes in and practices the dignity of man, just as a human being."

15.6 SUMMARY

It is often said that the Indian socialist literature did not attain the depth and theoretical maturity like that of Plekhanov, or Bukharin or Rosa Luxemburg. But one must not forget that the significance of Indian Socialist thought lies in its emphasis on the needs of original socialist thinking in the context of agrarian, caste bound underdeveloped economy and polity of India. The German Marxists considered the peasants as reactionary elements. The socialist thought in India highlighted the role of peasants in the structural development of the economy. The Indian Socialists were interested to eliminate the prevailing class and caste struggles of Indian society. They indeed brought about some original thinking on the basic problems of Indian society – the role of peasants, caste struggle and planning in an under developed economy. They were for the synthesis of political liberty and economic reconstruction with the emphasis on the Gandhian principles of Non Violence and Satyagraha. This indeed is their contribution to the Indian Socialist thought.

At a time when the growth of excessive authoritarianism of political process and marginalisation of majority has coupled with a nexus between native monopolies and multinational industrial corporations, and unethical interactions between local ruling elite and their external counterparts, have created a new correlation between economic power and political power, there is indeed a need to remember the programmes, policies, ideals, methodology and message of the Indian socialists, particularly. As founding members of the Congress Socialist Party, freedom fighters and socialist theoreticians and political activists, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan played an immortal role in the socialist thought and economic development of India.

15.7 EXERCISES

1. Explain the history of socialist movement in India.
2. Discuss the evolution and origin, programme and policies of the Congress Socialist Party.
3. Examine the Socialist Thought of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia,
4. Explain the Socialist Thought of Jayaprakash Narayan.
5. Critically evaluate the relevance of the Socialist Thought in the Contemporary Indian Society.