

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Michael Brecher paid tribute to Jawaharlal Nehru in these words : "Few statesmen in the twentieth century have reached the stature of Jawaharlal Nehru. As the pre-eminent figure in India's era of transition he bears comparison with Roosevelt and Churchill, Lenin and Mao, men who guided their people through a period of national crisis."<sup>1</sup> "No political leader, with the exception of Gandhi, stirred the minds and hearts of the people of India so long and so deeply as Jawaharlal Nehru did. He became the quintessential embodiment of patriotism and self-sacrifice, and till the end remained the darling of the Indian masses - their prince charming,"<sup>2</sup> observes B.R. Nanda. "Personal integrity, love of country, lofty idealism, faith in the people and a passion to serve them well, far-reaching vision, these are the qualities by which he commands our respect, one of the handful of men who have influenced the implacable forces of our time," said Adlai Stevenson.<sup>3</sup> M.Chalapathi Rau rightly says : "Like Gandhi, he is a part of the Indian heritage, of the historical process."<sup>4</sup>

From a historical perspective the origin of socialist ideas in India and their bold articulation and orientation found frequent recognition in the writings and utterances of Nehru, and mainly through his influence the Congress Party incorporated them into its programme. 'His socialism was synthetic in conception, combining the key elements of Gandhian thought the concern for the masses and for an ethical and humanistic approach to life.' The fundamental goal of Nehru's socialism was to create the conditions of a 'good life' and to build a society in which every member would enjoy the fruit of his labour undisturbed by outside interference. Socialism preached by Nehru was not rigid and doctrinaire, conforming to a fixed pattern. It was not rooted in any dogma, but originated as a panacea for the poverty and degradation of the masses in India.

It was during the 1920's and 1930's that Jawaharlal untiringly preached the gospel of socialism. He waged a national campaign for socialism, and evoked wide support for a change in the socialist direction. If we discuss and analyse Nehru's ideas and conceptions on socialism we will find that Nehru's views on socialism did not remain static over the years, and they grew and developed with the passage of time. In Nehru's thinking and assertions about socialism one notices an unbridged gulf between the ideal and the reality. Nehru could not reconcile his socialist ideal with the concrete reality. Before independence Nehru had spoken only of the doctrines of socialism, but after independence he was faced with the problem of putting them into practice. At the end of forties, Nehru said that while he was himself an adherent of socialism, he did not put forward this objective before the nation because it was not shared by the majority of the Indian National Congress. Nehru did not create the organisational, political and ideological prerequisites for socialist reforms. The very concept of socialism in the INC's propaganda was extremely vague and devoid of class content.

Sankar Ghosh says about the changing views of Nehru on socialism thus : "In the fifties and sixties of this century, Nehru's position on regards Marxism and communism was considerably different from what it was before ..... Nehru could never reconcile himself completely to any rigid ideology".<sup>5</sup> Narendra Dev said that Jawaharlal did not believe in any particular ism. He believes in some form of the fundamental principles of scientific socialism, yet he is not prepared to swear by everything taught by Marx and Lenin. He is always revising his ideas in the light of new experiences gained.

Jawaharlal Nehru was mainly concerned about how the ideal of socialism could be synchronised with the practice of democracy. In Nehru's socialism there was always an element of individualism, a desire to adapt socialism to Indian conditions and to India's peculiar agrarian problems, and to

harmonize socialism with democracy. In fact, Nehru was as much a product of socialism as of Western liberalism and Gandhism. Sankar Ghose points out : "Nehru's attitude to communism in the forties and more particularly, in the fifties of this century was considerably different from his attitude of the thirties."<sup>6</sup>

## JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S VARIETY OF SOCIALISM

If one studies and examines Jawaharlal Nehru's ideas, conceptions and orientations toward socialism, it appears that Jawaharlal cherished a vision towards socialism to be established in India to solve the sufferings and problems of the people and for the progress and development of the country. One should keep in mind that the socialist orientation imparted by Nehru in India is important and significant.

Nehru always considered himself not as a socialist but as a leftist. For Nehru, socialism meant the addition of economic democracy to political democracy. Influenced by Gandhi, Nehru's socialism was the product of intense attachment to the higher values of ethics and social justice. Jawaharlal had great respect for the Marxist thought, but he did not subscribe uncritically to any of its dogmas.

Jawaharlal had a socialist outlook. Jawaharlal's love and infatuation with socialism indicated a direction. Socialism of Jawaharlal Nehru remained a good intention. Jawaharlal had deprecated a sectarian approach in the effort for socialism even in the early thirties and he was proved to be correct. Adadi Congress was to lay down a new direction for the congress and the country. Avadi socialism was not revolutionary socialism but it was socialism of some kind and not capitalism or private enterprise. But in ideological terms, Jawaharlal was taking the country to the left on a broad basis.

Nehru was committed to explore the possibility of socialist transformation through a democratic political structure. He stressed the need for "speaking of socialism in the language of India" to make it meaningful to the common people of India. He cherished the idea that "socialism would differ from country to country in accordance with the economic, social, cultural and political conditions of each country."<sup>7</sup> He was clear in his mind that India must chart out her own, distinct path of development without trying to copy either a capitalist or a communist model.

In the post-Independence period Nehru was embarked with the task of putting his ideas into practice. In that period he placed before his people the vision, the ideal and the perspectives of socialism, but he was not realist enough to take stern measures needed for the social discipline to translate into practice his ideals. He was determined to find the answer to the problems facing India, gifted with the vision and a passionate concern for its fulfilment. But we find Nehru's contradictions and vacillations in this regard. Nehru could not move powerfully towards the socialist goal. But one should keep in mind that Jawaharlal Nehru had to take note of the prevailing circumstances. He had to make compromises. Therefore, some amount of hesitation and vacillation afflicted Nehru to take strong action. Jawaharlal had to submit to circumstances. Often Nehru had to go slowly to achieve the objective. Jawaharlal himself admitted that and told a gathering of congressmen : "In India, we talk a lot about socialism but proceed rather slowly towards that goal." Therefore, the evolution of Nehru's socialist faith and ideology was rather slow if we measure up his performance with his professions. Action was always falling behind his thought. Nehru of Independent India was a hesitant, a vacillating Nehru. One finds a deviation from his earlier zest, enthusiasm and vigour attached to socialism.

According to Prof. P. C. Joshi, Nehru's socialism was the fruit of

synthesizing the various trends of thought at the level of the ideal. He argues that 'in its synthesis quality lay its main appeal.' According to him "Nehru's contribution to socialism in India can be analysed under three heads :

1. the socialist vision,
2. the socialist model and
3. the socialist mobilisation."

C.P. Bhambhri observes : "Nehru essentially remained a socialist at the intellectual level, but could not reconcile his liberal outlook, belief in democracy, and faith in non-violence with the total philosophy of 'socialism'. All these ideas remained different streams of thought with him. He could not merge them with his socialist beliefs."<sup>8</sup>

Nehru believed that Marxist theories would need modifications in their application to India. He felt that local circumstances demand local variations and they should be permissible. His aim was to establish a classless society with equal social and economic justice. It is true that Nehru's socialism was not a static concept. His socialism is a growing, developing and even a changing concept that defies categorisation in terms of the tenets associated with traditional schools of socialism. Nehru himself admitted, "I look upon it (Socialism) as a growing, dynamic conception, as something which is not rigid, as something which must fit in with the changing conditions of human life and activity in every country."<sup>9</sup>

Nehru never succeeded in evolving a socialist ideology and programme. Because his primary allegiance was to nationalism and national freedom. It appears that during the period of 1920-47, socialism was for Nehru more an intellectual exercise than a practical path to be followed. Never theless, Sarvepalli Gopal writes : "His special position, from the late 1920s, was that he, of all the nationalist leaders of the front rank, understood most clearly that the campaign for freedom required an economic orientation ..... At this point

Nehru gave the movement a bias towards socialism."<sup>10</sup> Nehru looked to the spread of socialism for the gradual elimination of class differences.

In the later period of his life we find a gap between the promise and performance of Nehru. During the years intervening between 1935 and 1955, Nehru's philosophy underwent a great change. In the Avadi Congress Nehru advanced a broad perspective of economic growth combined with social justice. However, this conception of developmental perspective implied a departure from classical socialism, and even from the socialist ideas and visions expounded by Jawaharlal himself in the pre-Independence days. His departures from Marxism were partly aimed at reconciling the classical socialist approach with Indian conditions. His socialism seeks to attain social regeneration and rejuvenation which we all seek to emulate where individual initiative and freedom would thrive and spirit of co-operation would be there.

Thus, Nehru's socialism had three distinct features : individualism, Marxism and Gandhism.

It is true that Nehru could not press forward with socialism at the same speed as he wanted, but this did not detract him from his belief that India must go in the way of socialism. Nehru steadfastly carried on his campaign emphasizing the urgency of economic and social revolution. Jawaharlal nurtured a grand dream of a modern, democratic, socialist India, achieved with as much importance attached to the means as to the end. He was a visionary as well as a planner; and the combination imbued his vision with realism. In the words of Dr. S.Radhakrishnan : "His life and work have had a profound influence on our mental make up, social structure and intellectual development." Jawaharlal Nehru retained the capacity for seeing visions and dreaming dreams and the will and strength to give shape to them. He remains the most sensitive and humans leader of his time not only in newly free Afro-Asia but in the entire world.

## LOHIAN BRAND OF SOCIALISM

Rammanohar Lohia's centre of all thought was man, his future and his new civilization. Lohia was essentially a man of the revolution, a leader of the masses, having nothing to do with people living in ivory towers.

Rammanohar Lohia is one of the great socialist leaders of modern India. Lohia's contribution to the Indian socialist thought and movement was outstanding and remarkable. His socialism was a product of the soil. He borrowed freely from the western as well as the soviet models of socialism and adjusted these to suit his new brand of socialism for the Indian way of life. He attempted to theorise an indigenous version of socialism.

Lohia states : "The socialist doctrine needs to be retold in terms of the simple truth that all men are equal, not only within the nation but also among nations." Lohia notes : "A remarkable conjunction of economic development and the spirituality of freedom and peace seeks to be the mark of our times." Lohia says : "Revolution should take its rise from the innermost depths of the heart of a people." He admits that 'sound instincts have characterized socialism in India.'

Lohia fought all his life against superstitions, obscurantism and religious fanaticism. Clovis Maksud says that he was always keen that his politics should pave the way to commitment. He had immense faith in the human potential. Lohia was also allergic to power.

Rammanohar Lohia gave a new dimension to the ideological quest of socialism in his Presidential Address to the National Convention of the Socialist Party at Panchmarhi in 1952. He did not blindly accept some of the postulates of Marxism which were proved to be irrelevant to the new Indian

situation. Lohia advanced an alternative model of development. The 'small-unit machine' to rationalise the economies of the under developed countries, the decentralization of power based on the principle of 'Four-Pillar State' and non-violent civil disobedience as the method of struggle, constitute Lohia's development programme for socialism in the third world. Lohia pleaded for decentralised economy. The effect of decentralisation would be to make the content of democracy much greater. Lohia's contributions were great in social spheres. He wanted to root out caste stratifications, inequalities and corruption embedded in Indian society. Lohia espoused the cause of "preferential opportunities" for the upliftment of the backward castes and communities. He hoped that they might achieve equality.

Lohia's contention that the communist and capitalist models of development are irrelevant in the context of socio-economic conditions of the under developed countries is remarkable and important. Lohia formulated an alternative path of development to the socialist transformation of India and the whole third world. Lohia brought out the nexus between the development of the capitalist technology and the under development of the third world. He criticised the capitalist technology. Lohia denounced the ruthless suppression and denial of democratic freedom as prevalent in communist countries.

Lohia will be remembered for his humanism, egalitarianism and fight against injustice in all forms. His contribution regarding socialist thought are remarkable. His role and contribution was great to lay down the basic policy formulations of Asian Socialism in Asian Socialist conference. Lohia gave a call for organising a 'Third Camp' in world affairs, which would have a positive commitment to both democracy and socialism. Lohia sought to take the good Western values although he was not in favour of blindly imitating the West. Lohia understood that India could not achieve modernity by following the European model.

Lohia provided a new social philosophy which highlighted the social and economic development and prosperity and would act as a guide to the developing and third-world countries suggesting transformation of society. He emphasised that the Indian socialists must not seek to borrow ideas from the European socialist movement.

Lohia stood for political and economic emancipation of the people. He knew that no progress can be attained so long the mind is caged. The values he cherished are important and should be emulated.

Paying glowing tributes to the contributions of Rammanohar Lohia. Madhu Limaye says : "It is my belief that Dr. Lohia's views and thoughts ..... will in future come to be accepted to have great relevance for solving the country's problems ..... I have no doubt that his contributions to modern India will come to be regarded as only second to that of Mahatma Gandhi."

## ASOKE MEHTA ON SOCIALISM.

Asoke Mehta's contributions as an economist and democratic socialist are great. Though Mehta was never a Marxist yet he had love for socialism and worked hard to usher in socialism in India from his early days when he was a member of the Congress Socialist Party. Under the influence of Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev and Rammanohar Lohia, Mehta's activities especially in the trade union field to inculcate and disseminate socialist ideas are noteworthy feature. In the later period of his life, Mehta was more inclined towards western values of social democracy and economic planning. Asoke Mehta should be remembered for his seminal contribution towards economic planning in India and his concerns to raise the standard of living of the Indian people and economic self-reliance of the country. Mehta deprecated the system to lean on foreign aid and advocated economic self-sufficiency of the country. He was of the opinion that until India remains economically and technically backward and under-developed, foreign countries would dominate and impose restrictions on our economy. Mehta wanted to remove the fetters by strengthening the economy.

Mehta stressed emphasis and importance on devising plans and strategies of development in India. He says : "When we talk of transformation and modernisation, we realise that what we seek is the simultaneous strengthening of the material and technical bases of our social life, our defences and our means of increasing private consumption."<sup>11</sup> Mehta emphasised on ethics of austerity. Mehta viewed budget as a tool of economic policy. He says : "The Budget is necessarily a tool of economic policy and it seeks to direct growth as well as seek social change." He also observes that industrial growth must trigger agricultural growth.

Mehta wanted to stamp out inequalities, corruption and disparities from

the society. He had strong faith on democracy and democratic values, culture and institutions. The socialism which Mehta visualised and envisioned had two chief aims - justice and equality - equality meaning the equality of opportunity and justice the removal of economic exploitation.

Mehta opined that Indian socialism will be different from Russian socialism as conditions and circumstances of the two countries differ. Like Lohia, Mehta was nurturing an idea to have an indigeneous kind of socialism with respect to democratic values and norms, parliamentary institutions and democratic planning. Mehta's socialism appears to be humane and ethical in character.

### **INFLUENCE OF GANDHI ON NEHRU, LOHIA AND ASOKE MEHTA**

"Few men in their lifetime aroused stronger emotions or touched deeper chords of humanity than Gandhi,"<sup>12</sup> observes B.R. Nanda. 'Generations to come, it may be', wrote Einstein of Gandhi in July 1944, 'will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.' It would be difficult to think of another Indian personality beside the Buddha as completely integrated as Gandhi. According to Minoo Masani, "Undoubtedly, the greatest man I have known was Mahatma Gandhi." Gandhi had struck some of the inner chords of Indian humanity; his appeal for courage and sacrifice evoked a ready response because he was himself the epitome of these qualities. Gandhi was the product of the Indian renaissance.

Gandhi aimed at being a complete man and for him the ethical approach was vital for public as much as private life. The impact of Gandhi and Gandhian ideals and principles were formidable on Nehru, Lohia and also Mehta, Gandhi's leadership was the pole star of Nehru's political life. Often, he disagreed with Gandhi's ideology, approach and analysis, but scrupulously put aside his own

ideas in preference to Gandhi's. But at the same time we find that there were differences with Gandhi especially on the subject of socialism and the radical policies which Nehru pursued. It was Gandhi who choose Nehru to be his political heir. Jawaharlal had a deep and unbreakable attachment for Gandhi. Above all, in Nehru's conception of socialism, one is bound to notice a certain amount of liberal bourgeois ideology, plus traces of Gandhi's utopian moralistic ideas.

In India socialist thought came to be influenced by Gandhian views and ideals. Rammanohar Lohia was the one thinker who tried to give a new orientation of Marxist and Gandhian principle. Lohia was a disciple of Gandhiji, but he never accepted the latter's view points blindly and differed from him on many occasions over approach to problems and mode of action.

Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha and decentralization of power exercised an ineffacable influence on Lohia. Satyagraha of Gandhiji's conception was an alternative to bullet. Dr. Lohia said : "Satyagraha is the specific contribution to political action which Gandhiji made." Lohia's purpose is to salvage Gandhism from its recent distortions and fall, and "embody the essential part of Gandhiji's teachings in a mechanism of struggle that we might evolve ourselves."

Asoke Mehta was also impressed and influenced by Gandhi as other socialist leaders. Like Gandhi Mehta believed that village economy should be strengthened. Mehta appreciated the Gandhian techniques for the achievement of objectives. He was influenced by Gandhi's insistence on improving the ethical aspect of life. Mehta indicated that the organic relatedness between ends and means as propounded by Gandhiji should be emulated.

## NEHRU'S DILEMMA AND VACILLATION.

From the above study it appears, that Nehru, fired by a 'grand idea' tirelessly carried on a national campaign for socialism and evoked wide response for a change in the socialist direction. But the response remained only amorphous and diffused and could not assume any organised, concrete and coherent shape. Although Nehru accepted communism as an ideal of society, he could never be an unqualified Marxist. Nehru acquired and maintained, throughout his life, a half-liberal, half-marxist position. It should be mentioned that Nehru became more and more convinced that if socialism had to take roots in India it must be adapted to the conditions in India and must be expressed in the language of India.

In making an assessment of Jawaharlal Nehru's role in establishing socialism in India, one has to keep in mind that in India, during the twenties and the thirties, there had been two mutually exclusive political perspectives and programmes, offered by Gandhi and the Communist Party of India, and that Nehru was caught in the cobweb of confusion in his choice of his own political ideal. He failed to offer an independent political perspective which could be an alternative to Gandhi and the comunists. Nehru, naturally, suffered from great contradictions and vacillations. He himself confessed about "the two ways" that have moved him, and many of his countrymen, namely, "nationalism and political freedom as represented by congress and social freedom as represented by socialism"; and he admitted that "to continue these two outlooks and make them an organic whole is the problem of the Indian socialist."<sup>13</sup>

## TOWARDS A COMMON END

Jawaharlal Nehru, Rammanohar Lohia and Asoke Mehta were all democratic socialists and establishment of socialism in India was their common end. They have inspired us to soar high. They have inspired us to aspire for the best in all our endeavours for the attainment of socialist goal.

The socialist model for India was a creative concept which represented a departure from classical capitalism of the West and classical socialism of Russia. One Polish Marxist scholar has aptly characterised it as the conception of the third way of a 'national revolutionary pattern' which is 'non-classical in its character and content.'

Nehru, Lohia and Mehta were not content with political freedom but were inspired by the vision of anew society based on equality, social justice and freedom. All the three thinkers emphasised that the objective and goal of socialism would be the establishment of an egalitarian society where social and economic justice, democratic values would be maintained and development of human personality would be the hallmark. They viewed democratic planning as a measure to boost production and equitable distribution thereby enhancing the economic well-being of the masses. They laid stress on improvement of the Indian economy. They wanted to rouse the motivation of the people to serve their country. They emphasised on the strengthening of moral foundations of politics, accorded importance on the maintenance of Indian culture and traditions and sought to uphold the ethical principles. The destination is democratic, humane socialism.

## HOPE AND OPTIMISM.

It was the firm commitment of Jawaharlal Nehru, Rammanohar Lohia and Asoke Mehta to carry through the radical socio-economic transformation required by socialism. Nehru once said : "Today the community has to be organised in order to establish social and economic justice. This organisation is possible on the fascist basis, but this does not bring justice, or equality, and is essentially unsound. The only other way is the socialist way." Surendranath Dwivedy, a socialist leader, is hopeful and optimistic about socialism as he says : "Socialist ideology is best suited to our country. I am yearning for the day when the younger generation will work for this objective."

Socialism does not come spontaneously though objective forces push it along. There has to be continuous change bringing in what is new, what did not previously exist. This is the test history has placed before its modern and contemporary makers.

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