

CHAPTER - III

Socio-economic and Political Background of the Socialist Leaders

1. Introduction

It is widely accepted that socialism emerged in India as a nationalist revolt against both Gandhism and Communism. The main stream of Socialist movement in India was primarily the Congress Socialist Party formed in 1934 within the Congress and the Socialist Party of India after its secession from the Indian National Congress in 1948. Undoubtedly, the most prominent and the influential focal point in the heart of the socialist movement was Jaya Prakash Narayan who sought to give it a sense of direction and purpose during the formative years of its growth and development and its interaction with the Communist movement and the national movement.

Rammanohar Lohia, another stalwart of the Indian Socialist movement, initiated socialism through a different path-the Gandhian ways. He was essentially a theorist and would be remembered for his vast knowledge with brilliant provocative original ideas for social and political regeneration of India, having good fluency in English, German, French and half a dozen of Indian languages, including Bengali, with supreme faculty of expression.

All these leaders were not attracted to socialism suddenly and not became leaders automatically. They developed gradually in them the socialist ideas for which a thorough study of their childhood and family background causing influences upon them, is a must for understanding their socialist and political ideas and leadership styles.

II. Jaya Prakash Narayan : Early Life and Education

Without any “ancestral backing that could help him to work his way up”, Jayaprakash Narayan, “... put his foot ... to the top and acquired a premier place in the public life of the country.”¹

Jaya Prakash Narayan (Hereinafter J.P.)² was born in a lower middle class Kayasta family of Bihar on 11th October, 1902, in Sitabdiara, situated on the confluence of the Ganges and Sarjoo, in the district of Saran. His father Harsu Dayal was a government servant in the Revenue department. His grandfather Devakinandanlal was an inspector of police, who was famous for beating his English officer. His mother Phulo Rani or Phool Rani was a religious woman with very simple living style, full of human kindness. J.P. was deeply impressed by his mother. J.P. was the fourth child of his parents, but his elder brother Hariprakash died of cholera while one of his elder sisters Chandra Bhanu died of Plague. J.P. being the eldest surviving son, came closer to his mother and was deeply impressed by her simplicity and kindness.³

He was connected with a respectable family by marriage. His father-in-law, Brajakishore Prasad was a prominent Congress nationalist of Bihar and a leading lawyer of his time, while his wife Prabhavati Devi was extremely cultured and patriot. When J.P. was in America for higher studies, Prabhavati Devi used to stay at Gandhiji's Sabarmati Ashrama, where she was known as 'daughter of Gandhiji'. Prabhavati Devi was "... extremely cultured in manners and refined to sensibility, she was an ideal housewife and a patriot rolled into one."⁴ She used to study various subjects including the Geeta, at home. His marriage "... connected Jayaprakash's tie with some of the foremost political figures of Bihar and politics literally became a domestic affair in his life."⁵ His elder sister Chandramukhi got married to Sri Brajbehari Sahai, an employee of the office of the Patna High Court. J.P. used to stay with them during his studies. "Brajbehari Baboo was a man of great moral rectitude and placid temper. He had an abiding influence on the personality of Jayaprakash."⁶

Jayaprakash was nicknamed by his mother as 'Baul' meaning a dumb and under developed child. In his childhood, he used to remain deep in thought and spoke hardly. From his family tradition, it was supposed that he would join a government service, since, "Traditionally Kayasthas of U.P. and Bihar were known for their loyalty to the government and was a very service minded community."⁷ Naturally, his father being a government officer, could not think any other career for his son, than the government service, and with that idea in mind J.P. was sent to the school. He had his primary education in his native village. But his education was in a zigzag way since his father's service was transferable one. In school, he was a good boy- an extraordinary in his dress

and behaviour. Panditji (Teacher) of the school was with high ideas about the success of this 'Baul'. Then J.P. was admitted to Patna Collegiate school from where he passed the Matriculation Examination with a brilliant result and was awarded a Divisional merit scholarship. From the school days, J.P. used to read journals, newspapers, various literatures including the Geeta, which began to formulate his personal views about man and society.⁸

During these days of his education at Patna Collegiate School, he was associated with the Saraswati or Saraswata Bhavan,⁹ the then centre of nationalist discussion, which attracted him towards the nationalist movement.

Gandhiji's call of non-cooperation movement influenced him so much that he gave up his I.Sc. studies in the Patna University, being convinced that Government owned institutions "Produce only slaves"¹⁰ Later, he completed his I.Sc. studies in Bihar Vidyapith, after refusing to join the Benaras Hindu University on the plea that it received government grants. At this stage he was deeply attracted towards Indian nationalism. The speeches and writings of Swami Satyadeo attracted him to the American education system, where students were allowed to "earn while you learn".¹¹ The young Indians were attracted to the United States as they thought the united states "... as a citadel of liberty," and "a second home for Indian revolutionaries". J.P. decided to go to the United States for his higher studies which was opposed by his parents and other relatives. But his wife Prabhavati was of the opinion that "..... why should I stand in the way of my husband's further studies?"¹² Finally, in May, 1922, he was awarded a scholarship by an Association in Calcutta and he went to the United States, where he studied at Iowa, Chicago, Wisconsin, California and Ohio Universities during his eight years' study. From Ohio University he took his master's degree in sociology with brilliant academic record. His dissertation on 'Cultural Variation' was adjudged the best thesis of the year 1929 by the University.¹³ His main concern in the thesis was society - its nature, changing pattern and the forces of transition, which, according to Prof. N. B. Dumley, the supervisor, was a good critical approach and of original thought. Prof. Dumley, admitted in his report that J.P. had "the requisite capability and germs of leadership, at least in thought if not in action."¹⁴

In America, he had to work hard for his studies since he had to earn his own means by working in fruit farms (Ranch) at Sacramento Valley, as a grape picker and later in a fruit cannery in San Jose, in restaurants - cleaning

utensils, serving food for customers, boiling water, tending coal-hearts, boot polishing and even assisting barbers. He also worked as a Salesman of hairstrengtheners and complexion cream in Chicago. He had to move from one University to another cheaper University.¹⁵

His studies also did not follow a straight line. He changed the course of his studies from Science and switched to Biology, Economics and Sociology. "On account of a nationalist revolution in India", he did not think "that a study of science", would help him much in his "work as a revolutionary." Further he thought that "a study of the social science might help" in his work".¹⁶

In this way, he completed his studies, but had a desire to do researches for the Doctorate. He had another desire to visit Russia. Both these desires could not materialise firstly, due to paucity of fund and secondly, his mother's illness forced him to come back to India. He returned home in November, 1929, completing his studies in America, staying there for about seven years, changing his course of studies from Science to Sociology.

III. Development of his Political Ideas

J.P.'s life was a quest-quest for a better society, for around development of the society. All of his activities during his whole life, and his writings and speeches exhibit his deep concern for freedom of man everywhere and from every sort of trammel.

But his political ideas were not sudden bursts of the moment. These had gradually developed during his whole life and career, changing their courses and directions from time to time. But all these changes or shifting of his thinking and activities reflected his deeper and greater concern for the people - the downtrodden. Any power or position was too small for his "multidimensional and epoch making personality"¹⁷

The prevailing political atmosphere of his time and the then prominent Indian leaders with their ideologies had substantially influenced the formation of his political ideas. The condition of Bihar in which he grew up, certainly had some impact on his young mind. The two trends that were developing in the political ferment of Bihar — the growing tendencies of terrorist activities mostly under the influence of Bengal revolutionaries¹⁸ and the principles of Satyagraha and non-violence non-cooperation, generated by Gandhi, influenced

the youths of Bihar, including J.P. From this time, a sense of freedom grew in him, which became one of the beacon lights of his life. But freedom to him, with the passing of times, “..... meant freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind, freedom of the spirit.”¹⁹ Again, the study of the Geeta attracted him towards 'Niskama Karma', which influenced his later life and thought. J.P. started reading the Geeta, since his 15 years of age. Every morning after taking bath he used to read Geeta and took the same to his school and was attracted by the philosophy of 'Karmayoga', the philosophy of action and the idea of work without seeking the result or gain.²⁰

After the First World War, the spirit of nationalism began to rise in the hearts of the people. Mrs. Annie Besant's agitation for 'Home Rule', alongwith others, attracted J.P., who took an active part in the Home Rule movement and volunteered his services with fervour and pleasure.²¹

Lokamanya Tilak's call of 'freedom as birth-right', Gandhi's leadership of the Congress, his speeches and writings alongwith his personal example of self dedication to the extent of self-abnegation, the success of the historic October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, also influenced him in formulating his political ideas. Gandhi's call for non-cooperation movement inspired him to involve himself directly in politics giving up his studies at college.²² He was also much influenced by the self dedication of Gandhi that “he slunned all luxury-even dresses made of fine cloth.... clothed himself below the knees, his dhoti and 'Kurta' were of coarse cotton yarn make and now he had hand-stitched shoes on.”²³

J.P. was a vehement critic of the British Rule in India, which, according to him caused division of different communities and interests in India and also caused the low progress of literacy rate in India. Alongwith these, the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, Turkey's agitation against the British Rule, Rabindranath Tagore's relinquishment of Knighthood, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad's Speeches inspired J.P. during his college days, by the inner urge to join the freedom movement.²⁴

With such an nationalist attitude and Gandhian influence, J.P. started for the U.S.A., where his conversion to Marxism was completed. During his stay in America, the home of successful capitalism, ironically enough, he came in contact with Marxism. “It was in the land of resilient and successful capitalism,”

he admitted that he “became a convert to Marxism or more precisely, to Soviet Communism as it was then. It was at Madison, Wisconsin, the home of La Follette's progressivism then, that in the company of Jewish and European born fellow students”, he “drank deep at the fountain of Marxism.”²⁵ He also studied the writings of Lenin, Trotsky and M.N. Roy from which a deep rooted faith in Marxism developed in him. During this time he regarded Marx “as one of the greatest intellectuals produced by the human race, as one who was a path-finder in sociology.”²⁶ But his ultimate concern remained freedom and in Marxism he found a surer and quicker road to attain that goal.²⁷ With such an interest and faith in Marxism, “By day and night he pored over the writings of the 'bourgeois' social scientists and the radicals — Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Plekhanov, and Rosa Luxemburg. He read the three volumes of *Das Kapital* and everything else available in English that Marx had written.”²⁸ His close friendship with Avron (or Abraham) Landy, a Polish Jew and a graduate assistant, influenced him strongly. Landy had a profound knowledge of Marxist literature and was a member of the University cell of the Communist Party. J.P., being influenced by him became a member of the inner circle which brought him into closer affinity with the Communists. From Landy, J.P. collected and read the writings of M.N. Roy, especially, 'Aftermath of Non-cooperation' and 'India in Transition'. He also became a regular subscriber of the Journal, “The New Masses” edited by M.N. Roy, and with these he became much more involved with the Marxist Philosophy, and decided to visit Soviet Russia, which did not materialise.²⁹

In 1929, J.P. returned from America as a Marxist and took the first initiative in re-organising the then Congress Party with Marxist Socialist ideology. The anti-nationalist role of the Communist Party of India (hereinafter C.P.I.), following the policy of the Communist International, shocked him very much. He thought this policy of the CPI and the Communist International as “contrary to Marxist theory.” and this impelled him to remain outside the C.P.I. His patriotic mind found that the Congress was fighting for the freedom of the country and decided to join the Congress. He was placed in charge of the Labour Enquiry Department of the Indian National Congress, and started his direct political activities. Later during the non-cooperation movement of 1930-32, he was also arrested alongwith others and was one of the 'Nasik Group', the like minded fighters of freedom, and took the main initiative to

form the Congress Socialist Party in 1934, for “.... the linking of the movement for national freedom with movement for economic and social emancipation of the masses.”³⁰

J.P.'s life was a quest for a better society for allround development of the society, for which he changed his line of thought and action from one creed to another. All these changes of his thinking reflected his deeper concern for the downtrodden of the country, their freedom, which, he “.... never thought of sacrificing either for the sake of bread or for position, power and security or for anything else...”³¹ This determination of his mind again led him to accept the idea of partyless democracy and Sarvodaya. Vinoba Bhave left great influence on him to withdraw from party politics and to join the Bhoodan movement. He thought, Sarvodaya was more original and a creation of Gandhi for bringing economic revolution in the country through change of heart. Vinoba, on this line, originated the idea of Bhoodan, in the remote village of Telengana. J.P. took this idea with heart and mind to be the best method of redistributing the land and set up a Sarvodaya Ashram in Sukhodeora village in Bihar and experienced the Bhoodan and non-violent revolution, which ultimately led him towards Total Revolution for the better upliftment of the poor, the downtrodden of the society.³²

But this transition from Marxism to Sarvodaya and Total Revolution was not a sudden matter to him. J.P., from the very beginning of his political career, more particularly from his school days, showed the signs of Gandhian influences upon him, when he gave up his University Scholarship and left the college to join the non-cooperation movement launched by Gandhi.³³

J.P., “.... had been perplexed at the prevalence of great wealth and grinding poverty, side by side even in America-the land of opportunity”,³⁴ for which he was in search of its solution. In America, through his teacher, who “.... declared that there was no solution to the problem of poverty, in the framework of capitalist system,”³⁵ J.P. was attracted to Marxism and later converted to a Marxist. But he did not turn to be an orthodox Marxist. His ultimate aim was the emancipation of the poor, and to quote Yusuf Meherally, “He has known life at first hand. Perhaps that is the reason why his thinking is so clear.”³⁶ For this reason, he never found any contradiction in his thinking or action by rejecting one creed and accepting another. In his own words, “As a matter of

fact, Ray's writings of those days persuaded me to believe that Gandhiji was against the social revolution and would at a moment of crisis hasten to uphold the system of exploitation and inequality. I did not understand then that Gandhiji had his own conception of the social revolution and of the means to achieve it."³⁷ Thus, even in the days of his Marxian phase, he could not totally overcome the Gandhian influence upon him. Again he said, "Man is ever progressing towards the truth, for he is by nature an enquiring being. He will never be able to reach the ultimate truth, but by gradually eliminating untruth, he will be able slowly to approach truth."³⁸

Within this context and quest of his mind he felt the necessity of accepting new and more surer creed to fulfill his aim of freedom and equality. From this consideration he refused to join the C.P.I, after his return from America, since C.P.I denounced the national movement as "bourgeois and Mahatma Gandhi as a lackey of the Indian bourgeoisie."³⁹ This influence of Gandhi and Acharya Vinoba Bhave, with his selfless Bhoodan movement influenced J.P. so much that he decided to give up party politics and became a 'Jeevandani.' But his sincere concern for the people, particularly the poorer section of the society and the political situation of the country forced him again to plunge into politics, which he called 'Lokniti', the deeper kind of politics. During 1974-77, it was his ceaseless work that organised several parties into Janata Party, which ultimately formed the first non-Congress government at the centre, in 1977. He remained outside the party and power but became the 'king-maker'.

IV. Rammanohar Lohia

In the history of the development of socialist thought and movement in India, Rammanohar Lohia occupies a unique place, with some original contributions to it, and he "... relieved socialism from much of its obsolete technical jugglery, discarded Hegelian dialectical materialism, set aside Marxian materialistic interpretation of history, and even avoided Lenin's theory of class-war ... constructed his socialistic mansion in a rather simple form ...", so as all masses could understand its visible dimensions.⁴⁰

Rammanohar Lohia's brilliance and his original thinking in the field of socialism and upliftment of the masses not only of India, but also all over the world was so vast and fascinating that nobody "..... cannot help being dazed,

almost thunder-struck, at the brilliant originality of the ideas, the ordered sequence of thought, and the supreme facility of expression".⁴¹ Lohia, in fact, "was an original thinker, a unique leader and a rebel,"⁴² with vast knowledge on Marxism, socio-economic conditions of India and Asia, literature, philosophy, history and economics. In his "lifetime, there was scarcely a movement which he himself did not inspire or with which he was not connected."⁴³ His fight was not only against the foreign rule but he also wanted to free the individual from ignorance, backwardness and all kinds of superstitions and prejudices. He was quite aware of the Indian masses who were "shrouded in superstitions and obsolete customs, poverty and ignorance",⁴⁴ and as such he wanted socialism to be fitted in this soil. He borrowed freely from Marxism and western socialism and fitted "his new brand according to the Indian way of life, traditions, and habits of the people."⁴⁵

Lohia, along with Achyut Patwardhan has been described as representing the ideal of "... democratic socialism tempered by Gandhian concepts of decentralization and the use of non-violent civil disobedience techniques for nationalist and class struggle."⁴⁶ Lohia wanted to give a new orientation to both Marxist and Gandhian principles, declaring both Marxism and Gandhism as have priceless contributions. However, "... unlike Narayan and Acharya Narendra Deva, he has not fallen under the spell of that Marxist ideology which has played such an important role in moulding the thought of the Indian Socialist movement."⁴⁷ His ideas and thinking on socialist thought remained mainly to be influenced by Gandhian teachings and techniques, and led the socialist movement in India with a distinct Indian character.

V. Early life and Education of Lohia

This perceptions and views of Lohia, like any individual, were not developed automatically being isolated from the social and political reality surrounding him. Naturally, the social and historical conditions in which he was born and grown up need a thorough analysis for better understanding of his ideas.

Rammanohar Lohia was born at Akbarpur in the district of Fyzabad, Uttarpradesh, on 23rd March, 1910. His father, Hiralal Lohia was a Vaishya businessman. Their original residence was at Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh. His

great grand-father, Lala Mansukhram had a flourishing business in cloth and iron.⁴⁸ It is surprising enough that belonging to a “Marwari Vaishya Community.... which values wealth and its accumulation ... both the father and the son (Rammanohar) remained, throughout their lives, surprisingly free from the ideas of property.”⁴⁹

Rammanohar Lohia lost his mother Chandri or Chanda, at his age of two and a half years and since then he was brought up by his grand-mother and aunt. His father did not marry again, after the death of his mother, for which Rammanohar was very close to his father, and was greatly influenced by his father's life-style. His father was a dedicated nationalist and a strong and blind follower of Mahatma Gandhi. He dedicated his life to the service of the nation. To quote Bhawani Choudhuri, “Lohia's early life was spent in an intensely political environment.... It was in this atmosphere that the foundation of Rammanohar's future political career was laid.”⁵⁰

Rammanohar's education was not confined to a particular place, rather was scattered from U.P., Bombay, Varanasi to Calcutta and also in abroad. He got his earlier education at the Tandon Pathshala and Visheshwarnath High School at Akbarpur. Later he was admitted to the Marwari School in Bombay, where he “... organised a complete strike.... and led the procession of his school-mates to the place where the deadbody of the great leader,” Lokmanya Tilak, “was lying”.⁵¹ In 1925, he passed the Matriculation Examination in first division from the Bombay University and in 1927, he passed the I.A., from the Benaras Hindu University. He then got himself admitted into the Vidyasagar College in Calcutta for his bachelor degree and passed the B.A. with a second class Honours in English in 1929.⁵² In Calcutta, he came in contact with nationalist politics of India, since, Calcutta was then one of the main centres of nationalist movement. Vidyasagar College, itself was known for its nationalist tendencies. Lohia came in contact with Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru in Calcutta in a youth session in 1928. Nehru and Lohia were deeply attracted to each other. Lohia also presided over a meeting in Calcutta to boycott the Simon Commission in the same year.⁵³

During his education in India, Lohia was exposed to the urban environment which, no doubt, was full of latest developments in the country and around the country. His student-days was a period of intense political

excitement and national unrest, marked by non-cooperation movement, movement against Simon Commission, rise of Leftism, including the demand for complete independence. Gandhi was the main leader of the national movement. Within this socio-political atmosphere in India, Lohia left India for higher education, first in London and then in Berlin. He obtained his Ph D. in Economics at the Berlin University in 1932 for his thesis on Salt and Satyagraha. He returned to India in 1933. His studies in Berlin was, undoubtedly, the turning point in moulding his ideological evolution. The intellectual background and political atmosphere in Germany immensely influenced Lohia for his future socialist ideas.

Lohia was a brilliant Scholar having good fluency in German, French and English, including half a dozen Indian languages.⁵⁴ Thus his education in several places in India and abroad, made him acquainted with the problems and developments all-over the country and international scene which again helped him in shaping his political thinking.

VI. Rammanohar Lohia-Development of his Political Ideas

The political interest of Rammanohar Lohia took a radical character during his student life in India. His leadership of a strike in his school at Bombay, on the death of Lokamanya Tilak, his participation in the Boycott of Simon Commission, are the examples of this nature. But his final political ideas and thinking began after his return from Germany in 1933 and after his joining the Socialist group within the National Congress in 1934.

“...Rammanohar Lohia,” to quote Dr. V.K. Arora, “was the son of his father, as Gandhi was the son of his mother.”⁵⁵ His father Hiralalji was a nationalist and follower of Gandhi. He did not marry again to serve the nation. His “spirit of nationalism, resentment against alien rulers, courage, as well as his stubbornness had been inherited by Rammanohar.”⁵⁶ In fact, this nationalist character of Rammanohar was possible due to the nationalist atmosphere at his home. His father broke up the family tradition and became a 'bhakt' of Gandhi and participated in active politics through the activities of Congress. His fearlessness, unquestioned faith in Gandhi influenced Rammanohar from his very childhood. “In 1941, during the individual satyagraha, Hiralalji, inspite of his age, marched on foot from Calcutta to New Delhi, in the summer heat

shouting anti-war slogans. Such was the strength of his faith in his leader - Mahatma Gandhi. His fearlessness was also remarkable ... openly distributing revolutionary literature. He founded a 'Sewagram' after Gandhiji's wardha abode, in Dacca...."⁵⁷

Lohia, thus grew up in a family atmosphere of intense nationalism with Gandhian influences. He, though came of a Marwari family, was "..... singularly lacking in provincial affiliation; he is as much of Bengal, as of U.P. or Bombay ... with total absence of the Marwari characteristic of thrift and business accumen."⁵⁸ With this family background, Lohia came in contact with the Congress and Gandhi. At the age of his nine only, he was brought to Gandhi by his father for his blessings and Lohia touched the feet of Gandhi. In latter years, again he got the chance to see and feel that touch again.⁵⁹ At the age of eight, he attended the Ahmedabad Session of the Congress in 1918 with his father. He also attended the Gauhati Congress at his age of sixteen, in 1926.⁶⁰ As a result, he imbibed in him a large doses of his father's devotion for Gandhi and his techniques of non-violent method. His contact with Nehru and Subhas Bose at Calcutta, also influenced him. This nationalistic attitude of Lohia was vividly expressed when he refused to accept the government service with a handsome salary, offered to him after his return from Germany. "... he refused to be caught in the bureaucratic trap which would surely bring about his mental stagnation and above all, his political death."⁶¹

Other than these influences of his father and nationalist atmosphere at home, Mahatma Gandhi and German philosophy left great influences upon him. Marxism, European Socialism and liberalism had also exerted tremendous influences upon him. Lohia imbibed from Gandhi, with his close association with him, the zeal for serving the cause of the downtrodden and the poor in society with his method of civil disobedience and non-cooperation. Lohia hailed Gandhi as the great invention of the twentieth century and said, "... God and woman are probably the two purposes of life, I never met God, and woman is elusive, but I happened to meet a man in whom I saw glimpses of both, and ever since he has gone away his memory shimmers many path."⁶² Gandhi, probably, was the only person to exercise greatest single influence upon him. Unlike Jayprakash Narayan and Narandra Deva, Lohia started as a critique to Marxism and to supplement Gandhian methods. "Gandhi exercised the deepest influence over the value pattern and thought process of Lohia. Gandhian

leadership had its greatest impact on his mind.”⁶³ However, he was never a blind supporter or follower of Gandhi. In his own words, “I believe that it is silly to be a Gandhian or Marxist and it is equally so to be an anti-Gandhian or anti-Marxist. There are priceless treasures to learn from Gandhi as from Marx, but the learning can only be done when the frame of reference does not derive from any age or a person.”⁶⁴ With such influence of Gandhi, he sought to combine socialist principles with Gandhian ideas and techniques of Satyagraha, ends and means principles, small machine technology and political decentralization. He cherished the view that Satyagraha is superior to both constitutional and revolutionary methods. Gandhian non-violent satyagraha, according to him was an effective method to bring about social changes. To him, Gandhi was “the first in the world history to be a revolutionary of political and social structures together with being a revolutionary of the inner world and ways of conduct.”⁶⁵

Lohia deeply felt, the inequalities in the society was the main cause of India's backwardness. The orthodox approach of the Hindu society, the wide difference between the poor and the rich, difference between 'savarna' and 'shudras' and the sufferings of the shudras attracted his mind to devote himself for the common man, the labourers, the peasants and the shudras. The nature of the British imperialism and its exploitation of the Indian people provided him an insight about the economic drainage and its affect on the Indian economy. He identified the British imperialism to be the main cause of stagnation and underdevelopment of Indian economy.

This national feelings and experiences of the Indian society and economy gathered much more light of general nature on world economy and European society during his stay at Berlin. Lohia came in contact with Marxian ideas when he was in Germany. But he did not develop in him any dogmatic affinity with Marxism, rather the doctrine of Marxism appalled him with its wide range of contradictory applications and he developed in him a desire to recover its truths and demolish its untruths.⁶⁶

His stay in the heart of Europe, for his higher education, during the crucial period of the thirties enabled him to develop an international outlook by close contact with several socialists of different countries. In fact, that time, Berlin was the cultural capital of Europe. German philosophical tradition enriched

by Kant, Hegel and a host of others, provided a sound philosophical background to Berlin. Along with this, Marx and Engels with their new ideas gave German politics a distinctiveness. Hegelian influence was another widespread factor among intellectuals and students.⁶⁷ In this situation Lohia reached Berlin and experienced the rise of Hitler and the Nazis “..... to power on the shoulders of the German Communists,” with their faith on racial superiority, “... and the interminable dissensions among the forces of the left.”⁶⁸ He also experienced “... the failure of the German Social Democrats to give a continuous and sustained fight and check to the Nazis, the attitude and actions of the socialist Democratic parties of Europe the betrayal of the Communists to the Socialist cause, the consolidated support which the capitalist international gave to the German Nazi Party and the suppression of individual liberty.”⁶⁹ In Germany, he came in contact with the Hegelians, the Marxists, the economists and some recognised socialists of the time, like Dr. Schumacher⁷⁰ a German Social Democrat and Brailsford, a British Socialist and others. Among others, with whom Lohia came into contact, “The names of Northrop, Sorokin, Spengler, Toynbee, Charles Beard, Anatole Rapaport, Martin Buber, Lewis Mumford, Eric Fromm, Jean Paul Sartre, Simon De Beauvoir can be cited in this regard.”⁷¹

During this time he also studied the writings of Karl Marx and Hegel in original, which helped him to be an anti-fascist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist. To quote G.S. Bhargava, “The German training has given his originally fertile mind a razor-sharp edge. It endowed him with the thoroughness characteristics of Germans.... Having eye-witnessed the growth of militarism on the continent, Lohia developed a strong aversion for violence, which later landed him in Gandhiji's Camp.”⁷² Same way, Gopal Krishna, has also assessed his German visit and said, “His German training had.... a considerable impact on his style of thinking and expression. To see grand patterns behind commonplace occurrences and to endow what is ordinary with significance was characteristic of his thought and to look for deeper explanations of social and historical phenomena was one of its stimulating qualities.”⁷³

In 1933 Lohia returned from Germany with a leaning to socialism but aversion to violence. His ultimate choice of politics as a career was made when C.S.P. was formed in 1934. He was not among the 'Nasik Group,' but in the very first session of the C.S.P. in 1934 at Patna, he was elected as a member

of the executive committee. He was also the first editor of the new weekly 'The Congress Socialist,' the mouthpiece of the C.S.P. Through this weekly, he published many of his socio-political ideas, including on the cultural problem of India. It is worthwhile to mention that he also thoroughly studied various Indian texts, like, Upanishads, Ramayana, Srimad Bhagvat Gita, Yoga Sutra of Acharya Patanjali, other than the writings of Gandhi.⁷⁴

In 1936 he undertook the responsibility of the Foreign Affairs Department, a new branch of the Indian National Congress and was relieved from the responsibility of publishing the Congress Socialist. He then shifted his headquarter from Calcutta to Allahabad. During this time, he became more interested in international affairs and developed his idea of 'Third Camp' for India in the context of the Soviet and the American blocs. But independence of India remained to him as the burning urge and his concept of socialism was integral to his concept of nationalism without subordinating one to another.

Writings of Marx, specially his theory of dialectical materialism and class struggle influenced Lohia,⁷⁵ but he gave great significance to consciousness in the entire process of development of his thought, than orthodox Marxism. He declared that there were 'priceless treasures' to learn both from Gandhi and Marx. But at the same time, he refused to have his mental horizon limited or dominated by the ideas drawn from the west or the Soviet union.⁷⁶ He refused to develop any dogmatic belief in Marxism. He considered orthodox Marxism as a dead theory and the rigid Communist organisation as a dying force. On the other hand, he pleaded for a non-violent and decentralized socialism for the attainment of maximum equalitarian standards, in the fields of income and expenditure and raising the standard of living of the people.⁷⁷ At the same time, this does not imply that Lohia was a Gandhian. Rather he appeared to be nonconformist Gandhian. Alongwith some others, he did not believe in God and soul, the central pillars of Gandhian thought.

Thus both Marxism and Gandhism had influences on Lohia in formulating his socialist thought. But unlike Jayprakash Narayan and Narendra Deva, Lohia had minimum influence of Marxism on him and a strong Gandhian influence was there and he tried to synthesise the two to be fitted in the special situation prevailing in India and other underdeveloped countries. He was a

champion of freedom and equality. He disliked the religious dogmatism and the division of the world into two halves — the whites and the coloured — the beneficiaries of the modern civilization and the exploited, downtrodden Asians, Africans and Latin Americans. He thought that the West European Capitalism was responsible for such division of humanity. He said, “The history of the Capitalism is the history of the increasing poverty of colonial masses and their reduction into starving and landless labour... unless prevailing economic trends are reversed and that does not seem very likely, the increasing poverty of the colonial masses will be the greatest single factor towards the undoing of the West European economy.”⁷⁸

This was in Germany that Lohia had developed clear ideas about the capitalist society and its results in the colonial countries, the annexation of markets. To quote Dr. V. K. Arora, “It was in and through German language and philosophy that he developed the faculty of original thinking and critical acumen. His emphasis on ideological clarity about the fundamentals and his lofty sense of nationalism had the imprint of German influences.”⁷⁹

Notes and References

1. L.N. Sarin — **Studies of Indian Leaders**, AtmaRam and Sons, Delhi, 1963, p.43.
2. He earned this appellation, 'J.P.' in America, during his studies, from his professor, who found it easier to call him by this name.
3. Jaya Prakash Narayan, **Towards Total Revolution**, Vol. I edited by Brahmanand, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1978, p-xiii.
4. Dr. Amarnath Seth — **Jay Prakash**, Rupa & Co., Calcutta, 1975, p.29.
5. *Ibid*, p. 29. Also, S.P. Sen (ed.) **Dictionary of National Biography**, Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta, 1972, pp. 224-225.
Also, Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Nation Building in India**, (ed.) by Brahmanand, Navachetan Prakashan, Varanashi, 1975, p.5.
6. Dr. Amarnath Seth, *op. cit.* p.20.
7. D.R. Bali — **Modern Indian Thought, From Rammohun to Jaya Prakash Narayan**, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Third Revised and enlarged edition, 1988, p. 236.
8. Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Towards Total Revolution**, Vol. I. *op. cit.* p. xiv.
Also — S.P. Sen (ed) *op. cit.* p.224,
Also — Dr. A. Seth, *op. cit.* pp. 18-19.
9. Saraswata or Saraswati Bhavan was a centre of nationalist discussion. The Youths and Students of Patna used to assemble in this Saraswata Bhavan, among whom, Anugrahababoo, Ramcharitra Singh, Raghunandan Pande, the then leaders of Bihar were prominent. They used to engage in debates and discussions on questions of national significance. J.P. would get imbued with the spirit of nationalism from here.
10. Yusuf Meherally — **Leaders of India**, Padma Publications, Bombay, 1946, p.64.
Also, J.P. — **Towards Total Revolution**, *op. cit.* p.XV.

11. Jaya Prakash Narayan, **Towards Total Revolution**, *op.cit.* p.xv.
Also, Dr. A. Seth, *op. cit.* pp.33-34.
12. Dr. Amarnath Seth — *op. cit.* p.34.
13. Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Nation Building in India**, *op. cit.* p.6.
14. Ram Chandra Gupta — **J.P. From Marxism to Total Revolution**, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, p-19.
15. Shankar Ghosh — **Leaders of Modern India**, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi-1980. p.376.
Also Yusuf Meherally - **Leaders of India**, Padma Publications Ltd., Bombay, 1946, p-67.
Also - Dr. Lakshi Narrain Lal - **Jaya Prakash : Rebel Extraordinary**, India Book Co. New Delhi - 1975, p. 35.
Also, J.P. Narayan — **Nation Building in India**, *op. cit.* p.5.
16. Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Towards Total Revolution**, Vol.I. *op. cit.* p.xvii.
17. Ram Chandra Gupta, *op. cit.* p.1.
18. The first case of bombing in the Indian freedom movement and the first case of political docoity were recorded in Bihar - Kshudiram Bose and Arunlal Sethi were charged respectively. Dr. A. Seth - *op. cit.* p.22.
19. Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Socialism Sarvodaya and Democracy**, edited by Bimala Prasad, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1964, p. 140.
20. Ramchandra Gupta - *op. cit.* pp. 7-8.
21. Dr. A. Seth, *op. cit.* pp. 29-31.
22. Jaya Prakash Naryan - **Towards Total Revolution**, *op. cit.* Vol.I, p.xiv-xv.
23. Dr. A. Seth - *op. cit.* p.72.
24. Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Towards Total Revolution**, Vol.I. *op. cit.* p.xiv.
25. Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy**, *op. cit.* p.141.
26. Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Towards Total Revolution**, *op. cit.* p. xvii.

27. Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy**, *op. cit.* p.141.
28. Allan and Wendy Scarfe — **J.P. His Biography**, Orient Longman, New Delhi, Reprint-1977, p. 55.
29. Dr. A. Seth, *op. cit.* pp. 41 & 57.
Also — Allan and Wendy Scarfe - *Ibid.* p.55.
30. Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy**, *op. cit.* pp. 142-143.
31. Ram Chandra Gupta, *op. cit.* p.1.
32. *Ibid*, pp. 44-45.
33. Yusuf Meherally — *op. cit.* p.64.
34. *Ibid*, p.66.
35. *Ibid*, p.66.
36. *Ibid*, p.65.
37. Jaya Prakash Narayan — **Socialism Sarvodaya and Democracy** *op.cit.* pp. 141-142.
38. *Ibid*, p. 139.
39. *Ibid*, p. 142.
40. L.S. Rathore — In **Foreword** to Dr. V. K. Arora - **Rammanohar Lohia and Socialism in India**. Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1984. p.9.
41. G.S. Bhargava — **Leaders of the Left**, Meherally Book Club, Bombay, 1951, p.39.
42. Madhu Limaye — **A Tribute to Rammanohar Lohia** - in M. Arumugam, **Socialist Thought in India, The Contribution of Rammanohar Lohia**, Sterling Publishers Pvt.Ltd. New Delhi, 1978. p.ix.
43. *Ibid*, P.xi.
44. L.S. Rathore - *op.cit.* p.9.
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53. Karuna Kaushik — **Russian Revolution (1917) and Indian Nationalism - Studies of Lajpat Rai, Subhas Chandra Bose and Rammanohar Lohia.** Chanakya Publication, Delhi-1984, p.149.
54. G.S. Bhargava, *op.cit.* p. 43.
55. Dr.V.K. Arora, *op.cit.* p. 27.
56. *Ibid.* p.27.
57. G.S. Bhargava, *op.cit.* p.40.
58. *op.cit.* pp. 39-40.
59. Rammanohar Lohia — **Marx, Gandhi and Socialism**, Hyderabad, Navahind,1963, pp.140-141.
60. G.S. Bhargava. *op.cit.* p.40.
61. Bhawani Choudhuri and Debaranjan Chakraborty, *op.cit.*p.23.
62. Rammonohar Lohia. *op.cit.* p.180.
63. Dr. V. K. Arora, *op.cit.* p.30.
64. Rammanohar Lohia — **Economics After Marx**, in Rammanohar Lohia - Marx Gandhi and Socialism, *op.cit.* p.1.
65. Rammonohar Lohia — **Marx, Gandhi and Socialism**, *Ibid.* p.137.
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