

## Lohia- a world thinker in whom prison living and Human Values meet.

- Bagawat Prashad

In his essay 'Round the world' Lohia wrote "Let us for once and for all realize that this (American) is a civilization that is dead, although of course, even as a corpse it can still go on for another fifty years and lead the world into many battles and wars.' 1 What Lohia foresaw many decades ago has been cruelly fulfilled. Today, it is the hard – headed scientists who give dire warnings regarding the future of humanity.

James Hensen is the chief Scientist of Nasa Goddard Institute. He wrote the famed Book 'Storms of my Grand Children: the Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and our last Chance to save our Humanity'. Following the footsteps of Gandhi (Lohia), he took part in a civil disobedience movement and informed the press that he was courting arrest and risking jail –going to save the environment so that the future generations do not face extinction. He accused the US Government of not heeding the warnings of the leading scientists of the US. In the meeting held in Copenhagen recently, Hugo Chavez, the president of Argentina, cited the French writer, Herve Kempf's book 'How the Rich are Destroying the Planet' and warned that humanity will vanish from the earth if we fail to reduce our craze for more and consumer goods and our selfish desire to ignore the plight of the teeming world's poor.

The world's leading climate science bodies NASA/GISS, Hadley – met, Potsdam climate Impact Institute, NSIDE, 'SIRO, Bom: each has warned of the dire effects of the impending climate change.

The world's recent financial melt down has exposed the lethal nature of the global financial system. A civilization which grew on the foundation of greed and violence is in its death gasp.

In parallel with these two disastrous phenomena, the Himalayan disparity of wealth between and among nations, the sectarian identity craze that leads to violence and terrorism, the frantic race to arm the nations to the teeth, are all symptoms of a world in the grip of a deadly monster.

Among the world thinkers to whom we can look for the much needed sea-change or paradigm shift that can save the world, Gandhi is the foremost closely followed by his heretic disciple Lohia.

Some crucial questions cry for answers. One of them is why India was the only country in the world where two atheistic religions had their birth and progress. Bertand Russell, Albert Eienstein, Levi Straus and many other great intellectuals fell under the spell of Buddhism which is based on rationality. Another million dollar question is why none of the great thinkers of the West and Edward Said, the renowned' denouncer of 'Orientalism' (a cultural weapon of exploitation, devised by the West), almost ignored the original contributions of thinkers like Lohia and M.N. Roy, the two great towering materialistic rationalist intellectuals of India?

Can a thinker transcend the intellectual cultural traditions of a country? Certainly not, and that

was why M.N. Roy, J.P and Ambedkar were staunch Marxists in their younger days and gave up their ideologies in favour of cultural values in their mature years. Ancient Indian Yogic values ( Non-violence and Truth) not only influenced Gandhi and Lohia, but also intellectuals like J. P. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism. M. N. Roy discovered Indian materialist philosophy in Lokayat.

Gandhi called the modern civilization a Satanic one. Lohia was also an equally severe critic of the West. Both Gandhi and Lohia intuitionally absorbed the best in Indian culture and rejected its abominations like untouchability and the hierarchically graded caste system (Gandhi's abhorrence of the caste system occurred towards the later part of his career and was most probably due to the influence of Ambedkar). Lohia was a great theoretician and very few other thinkers had such a rich mind teeming with ideas.

When the arrogance of the Western ideologues claiming their civilizational superiority collapsed in the holocaust unleashed by Hitler, modernism based on reason was put under the lens. With a supreme sneer, nihilists like Nietzsche, dismissed reason's claim to authenticity. Camus pointed out how murder became rational in the twentieth century and he put criminals of passion at a higher pedestal than the criminals of reason. Post-modernists used reason to question 'reason' itself and found it wanting, Zygmunt Bauman analyzed instrumental and procedural reason that plagued mankind through the institutions of the market and bureaucracy. Max Weber, the sociologist, found no light at the end of the tunnel. Reason was faulty in its pedigree. Plato and Aristotle used reason to justify slavery and subdue the women folk. Post-modernists, with a sleight of hand dismissed reason with undeserved contempt. They threw away the baby with the bathwater.

Indian civilization had its foundation in the pre-Vedic days. Reason was the guiding force. That animated the all –embracing supreme Vidya (Knowledge + wisdom) of the age called Anwikshiki (KAUTILYA). Unlike Europe, India in its initial Anwikshikian phase understood pretty well that reason alone does not represent human personality fully. They wisely got reason combined with right emotion and thus escaped the embrace of reason gone astray.

This long introduction regarding two civilizations becomes necessary because Gandhi and Lohia absorbed the Anwikshiki culture both consciously and unconsciously and their personalities could not be properly understood by either the Western scholars or the Arab- loving intellectual Edward Said, because their backgrounds were totally different. Both Judeo- Christianity and Greek philosophy were Anthro-centric, particularly man-centric and no mainstream philosopher of the West and Vedic India could escape their grip. Heroes and priests laid the foundation of the Western and Vedic civilizations where as womanly virtues and species- love - centric Anwikshiki guided the pre-Vedic Indians. Gandhi's acceptance of God and Gita were subjected to his own interpretations that virtually placed Yogic values in the first place in human life. Thus pre-Vedic Anwikshiki got rehabilitated in a different garb. Even then patriarchy colored his outlook in regions like celibacy and Satitwa (Brahmacharya and chastity). Lohia suffered no such inhibitions. He was an atheist and no sexual prudery menaced his natural urges.

Lohia rightly advised the Westerners to enrich the vitality of strife by adding poise to it and thus to make it more humane. He was contemptuous

of the Indian love of sloth and advised them to shed it altogether. He was unconsciously urging the Samkhya ideal of the rejection of Tamo Guna (sloth) and by replacing Rajo Guna (strife) with the poise-directed actions of Satwa Guna. His penchant for world solidarity also reflected Satwa Guna ideal of the feeling of kinness with the whole living world (20th Sloka of the 18th canto-Gita).

Lohia's philosophical musings on the differences at cognitive levels of the concepts 'Abstract and concrete' are notable contribution in the field of ideas. Without embodying the abstract ideal in a concrete aim it is not possible to indulge in praxis. To my knowledge no other philosopher has discussed this point so well. 2 He enriched the abstract ideal of one-entirety - feeling for the whole living world (the Upanshadic seers simply mouthed it while supporting the iniquitous caste system) with the concrete suggestion of the international brigade of volunteers working in the poorer countries. He was dreaming of a war-free world but was realistic enough to realize that civil disobedience at the time of war is yet to transcend its abstract phase. It has to cross two hurdles i). Planning the formation of an international brigade of Satyagrahis and (ii). Taking recourse to death – defying non-violent concrete challenge to the armed might of the hostile states.

Like Gramsci's ideas which stirred the Western world to new level of thinking, Lohia contributed many novel ideas to the progress of humanity. Gramsci's idea of hegemony, though helpful in the analysis of civil society's role in change in society still smells of fatalism. How can revolutionaries increase their influence over the hegemonising elite. Gramsci's solution based on the revolutionary organic intellectuals dominating society is totally utopian and no where in the world has such a transformation taken place.

Among workers, the supervising or co-ordinating section can rarely function as a community of organic intellectuals of the proletariat because they are very conscious of their higher status. High – salaried intellectuals associated with unbridled consumerism develop a different outlook from that of the working class.

Lohia is more realistic than Gramsci in the field of hegemonic challenge to the capitalistic state. The oppression – conscious group according to him consists of those individuals whose eye reddens at the specter of injustice and his heart beats in sympathy with the oppressed. He accepts non-violent suffering to fight the evil. While Gramsci's conscious organic intellectual may feel helpless when sufficient number of co-fighters are not emerging to challenge the dominant forces; even an individual of conscience can defy authority and though alone, court jail to further the cause of justice (Gandhi & Lohia). The blow struck by such a conscientious fighter shakes the civil society and his example is followed by more and more people. J.P's movement against Indira during the days emergency enthused the youth and India regained its democratic structure soon. Lohia's idea of 'shovel- jail – vote – practicing workers' is more realistic than Gramsci's wishful thinking regarding organic intellectuals. Gandhi's salt Satyagraha threw ordinary people into the political arena and not their intellectual abilities but their sacrifice and moral stance converted them into leaders of note. Gramsci's educated organic intellectuals coming from the middle class may be a rarity. But Lohia's (Gandhi's) morally sound volunteers may come from all classes, the educated as well as the illiterate. (During communal riots, the educated in India proved to be more notorious than the illiterate - Nandy).

Like Rosa Luxemburg, Lohia was an upholder of democratic principles in every field. Rosa, in the words of Lohia, made the actual the ideal. Her experience of the French revolution made her believe that spontaneous uprisings of the masses are possible and these will lead to revolutions. Modern Psychologists assert that mass movements may end in bloodshed and chaos unless they are guided by purpose-oriented non-violent leaders. Like Gandhi, Lohia wanted a cadre of non-violence – loving trained party – workers to lead and discipline the emotionally charged masses in revolutionary situations. The French revolution devoured its own children and the result was the dictatorship by a charismatic personality (Napoleon).

French revolution leaders mostly confined themselves to abstract values like liberty, equality and fraternity. Liberty and equality can only flourish by standing on the shoulder of fraternity. Had the revolution leaders concretized these values and put them to practice at the initial stage at least among themselves, the French revolution would not have drowned itself in rivers of blood.

Lohia's ruminations regarding the actual and the ideal need a little examination. He is right in stating that European thinkers like Hegel made the actual the ideal. Hegel's quest for the dialectical development of the absolute idea ultimately ended in the Prussian state. Vedic India including Shankar preached the ideal of Brahma-Vad (all are manifestations of Brahma), but the lack of concrete formulations of the abstract ideal landed them in the hypocrisy of giving importance to the mysticism of word – magic (Mantra). Gandhi concretized the ideal of Adwaita in the service of the lowest of the lowly and by practicing it fired the whole of India's imagination. Pre-Vedic India concretized the ideal of love and compassion for all living beings in the Yama values

and practiced them. Today's ideal of environment protection will end in failure unless the Yogic value of Aparigraha (minimizing the wants) is practiced by us. Buddha concretized the value 'truth' by making it guide our words and actions.

William Morris is probably the only Marxist thinker who comes close to Indian socialists like Lohia and J.P. His Marxism was of the libertarian type. From him Marx took up the idea of administration of things rather than the governance of persons. He did not want the handicrafts to be replaced by factory goods. Centralization of authority was denounced by Morris. Like Lohia who favoured beauty and arts in socialist society, Morris was fond of poetry and artistic craftsmanship. He wrote, ‘.. the change affected by peaceable means would be done more completely and with less chance, indeed with no chance of counter – revolution. And also “And here, I say once for all, what I have often wanted to say of late, to wit, that the idea of taking any human life, for any reason whatsoever is horrible and abhorrent to me”. 3

Lohia's ideas resemble those of Morris. Lohia spoke, “Organization of violence inevitably leads to concentration of power. The use of violence is a major issue in the world today, and large numbers are beginning to realize that the advocacy and organization of violence is bad even when used for good purposes. 4 The principle of non-violence in all situations is a great contribution of Lohia to political ideology. “... an act of Satyagraha or class struggle must pass the test of immediacy and it must not make use of lies or deceit or violence”. 5 Needless to say, communism in soviet Russia, China and many other countries faced debacles because they failed to observe the principle of immediacy (‘The principle of immediacy’ is a contribution of Lohia to the world of ideas). Expecting to build a

stateless society of free people in future, it (communism) unleashed violence of the cruelest sort on the people and many top communist leaders invited the odium of the world humanist intelligentsia.

A student of recorded history can only discern rape and violence blooding the pages of world history. Most of the conquering races were cruel and bereft of any sympathy for their victims. Evolution started four billion years ago. Prof. Lynn Margulis discovered that three billion years ago the process of endo-Symbiosis took place when two hostile bacteria forsook their hostility and formed the first multicellular body (EUKARYOTIC cells). Co-operation and love enabled a hairless ape species to acquire a brain having unimaginable creative powers. A section of this privileged animal species living a nomadic life in the huge grass lands of the world, used his creativity to wipe out the other species to feed on their flesh. A stronger group of such people imposed war on the weaker groups, made their men slaves and forced their women to be sex partners. Civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia developed under the rule of either priest-warrior kings or separate classes of warriors and priests. India was an exception because instead of warrior kings combined, with priests ruling the country, Yogis occupied the front rank in society (Megasthenes). This civilization based on Yogic Values (Anwikshiki) was replaced by DARSAN-based abstract concepts in 100 B.C (Radha Krishnan). Species-violence was abhorred by the Yogis, who were all materialists. Successful Marxism through out the world was only of one variety. It was military Marxism. In ancient India, Chandra Gupta over came the Nandas in a war because he could mobilize the support of some non privileged sections of society. Marxists, too, used the same method for coming to power.

Warriors, as psychology reveals, cannot make good democrats. Accustomed for decades to lives of command or obedience, how can they accept the commoners as their brothers? Elitism dogged Marxism, from its earliest days. The Western idea of the more civilized people having a right to lord over the less civilized ones guided the West in invading other nations. Within the West's borders many noble ideas flowered, though exclusivism put its stamp on Western and Semitic religions and cultures.

Though Yogic ideals were to a great extent manipulated and distorted by the Aryan warriors and priests, pre-Vedic India still retained sufficient vitality to give a message of love and brotherhood to the whole of mankind. Both Gandhi and Lohia enriched their personalities by laying under toll Indian's racial unconscious. Gandhi reinterpreted the sacred books as well as the symbols and myths of India and preached a highly humanist philosophy through his actions. Lohia modernized Gandhi. Ramila Thapar, in her Patel Memorial Lectures, described Indian civilization as non-spiritual. Lohia had a Yogic mind which enabled him to retain its sanity during the periods of torture in the Lahore jail. About Gandhi, Romain Rolland wrote, "All, be they nationalists, Fascists, Bolsheviks, members of the oppressed classes – claim that they have the right to use force, while refusing that right to others. Half a century ago might dominated right. Today it is far worse. Might is Right. Might has devoured right."6

Rolland also wrote, "For there is no such a thing as genius, great by its own strength, who does not incarnate the instincts of his race, satisfy the need of the hour, and requite the yearning of the world." Gandhi's was a combination of genius with the ancient traditions filtered through the Gita. Lohia, too, drew ideas unconsciously from the multi-racial unconscious of India. Kathopanishad

tells us about the incompatibility of the two values SREYA and PREYA. Lohia does not recognize the dichotomy and this dichotomy was absent in the pre-Vedic age. A priest-warrior led Patriarchal civilization (the Vedic society) cleverly separated SREYA from Preya . Going against the natural instincts ‘love’ and ‘sympathy’, that bring calmness and happiness to the mind, Upanishadic priests in the spirit of the warrior societies subjected young people to the austere initiation ceremonies in the name of following ‘SREYA’ (ragging in the top educational- institutions of India is intended to tame the spirit of the young people so that they unquestioningly obey their seniors and terrorize to submission their juniors) Today, the elite society wants its young to become good robotized soldiers or labourers whose consciences sleep permanently.

Einstein wrote in the essay ‘Why Socialism?’ “Nowhere have we really overcome what Thorstein veblen called the predatory phase of human development. .... economic science in its present state can throw little light on the socialist society of the future because the observable economic facts belong to that (predatory) phase”.

Violence played the primary role in establishing the predatory civilizations. Customs, religions, law and culture made them tolerable to the suffering public. No emancipatory ideology based on violence can avoid hierarchy of power which gets entrenched because of the human tendency to perpetuate the status quo. Ancient civilizations gave absolute power to kings who prospered on the misery of the lower sectors of people. Historians celebrated their mighty achievements based on bloody massacre of weaker populations and the annexation of their territories to the winner’s kingdoms. Gigantic buildings, the wonders of the world, were built

with slave labour to announce to the world the glory and grandeur of absolute monarchy.

How the highly civilized Christian West behaved with lesser breeds of pagans, comes out in the book, ‘People’s History of the United States’ written by Howard Jinn. The Indians, Columbus reported “Are naive and so free with their possessions that no one who has not witnessed them would believe it. When you ask for something they have, they never say ‘no’. Again writes H. Jinn, “. . . . . In two years, through Murder, mutilation or suicides, half of the 2,50,000 Indians on Haiti were dead . . . . A report of the year 1650 shows none of the original Arawaks or their descendents left on the island.”

Quoting the report of the priest B. de Las Casas containing the horror deeds of the conquerors, the Spaniards, H. Jinn wrote, “The treatment of the heroes (Columbus and others) and victims (Arawaks), the quiet acceptance of conquest and murder in the name of progress is only one aspect of a certain approach to history in which the past is told from the point of view of governments, conquerors diplomats, leaders.”

Regarding what happened in N. America H. Jinn wrote, “Behind the English intrusion of North America, behind their massacre of Indians, their deception, their brutality was that special powerful drive born in civilizations based on private property.”

While capitalism emphasized ‘greed’, landing huge chunks of humanity in destitution and misery and destroying our natural habitat at rocket speed, communism aiming at equality, unleashed terror police on millions who lost their liberty to speak and also their right to food. Among the scholars who tried to explain why the soviet regime went astray, many ascribe the debacle due to the presence of war – mongering states

surrounding the soviet state. War preparations had to be given priority to win the civil war, clandestinely backed by the capitalist states that led to the undermining of genuine communist culture. Military communism uses nationalist ideas to bolster the military. Militarism is the end and nationalist and ethnic sentiments are harnessed to get the support of the masses. Military leaders develop a mentality that valorizes violence. They want to solve all their problems through violent means. They build close-ended societies and free floating of ideas gets halted.

Lohia was not less zealous than any genuine leader of any camp in combating inequality and exploitation, but he recognized the evil effects of violent fights. Nether victory nor defeat of such elements can introduce the humane culture, in which the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity are concretized. Fidel castro, speaking at the university of Venczuala in 1999 roared”

..... Their (the capitalist society's) whole ideological strategy is based on this (that man is an animal moved only by a carrot or when beaten with a whip). .... we have discovered a powerful weapon, “man thinks and feels” . Castro quoted Bolivar and Hose Marti and emphasized that a revolution can only come through culture and ideas. Cuba is an island where a short violent struggle was sufficient to bring to power Castro and his comrades. In a big country like India where the military machine is pretty strong and an affluent middle class numbers in terms of crores, there is little chance for a violent revolution to succeed. If it succeeds, the long period of bloody battles will brutalise the commoners and the leaders of the emancipating brigade. Such a society becomes unfit for democracy. A violent revolution marginalizes women and strengthens male's dominating characteristics that are detrimental to the functioning of the civil society.

In Algeria, the freedom fighters fought a fierce battle with the French, and wrested the control of the country from their unwilling hands. The society got brutalized in the process and today democracy does not exist in Algeria. A violent fight in Latin America balkanized the country even though one religion (Christianity), one language (Spanish in all the countries except Brazil), one culture (a mixed one of Europeans, Indians and muleteers) could not unite the people. Latin America broke into several states, some as small as Bolivia (6 million people live here). Octovio Paz praised Gandhi for succeeding in keeping India whole (minus Pakistan). Patrice Lumumba, who managed to keep Congo undivided (whole) must be turning in his grave at the sad plight of the present Congo, where two third of the country's women have been raped already. P. M. Sweezy, a Marxist, an economist and ideologue, blames the militarization of society during the civil wars for the evil that overtook soviet Russia. Military commanders, party men and bureaucrats jointly formed the privileged elite in Russia and the common man's resentment grew till it burst its bonds. Sweezy wanted a paradigm shift of KUNHIAN type to save Marxism from its demise which happened in Russia, china and other communist countries of the world. 7

“Without Socialism, Barbarism will invade our human societies,” said Lohia. How prophetic was his statement.

No essay on Lohia can be complete without a peep into his monumental piece of work ‘Wheel of History’. Merx's ideas of linear determinism and Lohia's ideas of circular determinism have both failed to enthuse modern historians

Writes Eric Hob swam “Both evolutionary science and the experiences of the 20th century

have taught that evolution has no direction that allows us concrete predictions about its future social, cultural and political consequences”. 8

Explaining the view of history of Raymond Aran, Shamlal says in his essay ‘The Meaning of History that Aran warns us of looking for any method in history. Shams Lal writes, “Even the more sophisticated Marxists disown the theory of historical inevitability and admit that the future depends on ourselves as much as on the means and relations of production”.

In his essay ‘Interrogating the Past’ Sham Lal writes that the historian Michel Vovelle studies not from the vantage point of ideologies but mentalities present in the form of religious beliefs, superstitions, and attitude to life and death. Like Marx’s study of history based on the dialectical interactions in the field of production, Lohia used class and caste to reveal the cyclical movement of history. Both are partial truths. No historian is in a position to explain the totality of factors that guide history. Chance and creative individuals play, no less a decisive role, in shaping the history of mankind. Between Gandhi and Lohia, though Gandhi was Lohia’s mentor to a great extent, and also the discoverer and inspirer of the non – violent movements that span the 20th century, Lohia is the more acceptable ideologue to the modern man. For them Gandhi’s declaration that he is a Sanatani Hindu, his intuitional certainties and his reinterpretation of Gita as a book of non-violence, look pretty mysterious. Gandhi’s lack of respect for the so-called fallen women stands in sharp contrast to Lohia’s categorizing them as honourable.

Lohia’s characterization of history as consisting of ages concentrating on partial efficiency and nature’s mode of reaching the end of history through total efficiency, finds identical

echoes in a book written by seven leading world thinkers (including Norm Chomsky and Michel Albert). They isolated four important fields where humanity must shed its prejudices and rise to new heights. Marx’s class war, the feminist’s quest for equal status with men, the anarchist’s suspicion of state power, avoiding the craze for collective selfishness (National, religious, cultural or racial fanaticism) leading to genocides; all have been integrated in the book ‘Liberating Theory’. This book vindicates Lohia’s vision in toto. The revolutionary mentality prevailing among the mainstream parties has been described by Michel Vovelle as ‘a notional system carved by terms such as vigilance, plot and legitimized violence swarming with words like destroy, crush... annihilate exterminate’. Lohia’s principle of immediacy is violated by the mainstream revolutionaries. No wonder their success leads to utopian dreams of Marx, Lenin, and Mao ending in nightmares bringing untold misery to millions of people.

Lohia’s advocacy of decentralization of polity and economy is the only way to keep the democratic spirit alive among the commoners. Now-a-days, state leaders who swear by democracy actually sell their souls to the fabulously rich transnationals. No centralized big state can function democratically. Decentralization of power and economy to the local level is the only way to preserve democracy. Satyagraha at the local level, too, can not be denied as a potent weapon. People should abhor any sort of violence at the local level. Women and men should be equal participants in the polity and economy, both locally and federally. The party units should enjoy autonomy at the local level.

Marxism had its rise when the idea of material abundance was reigning in the minds of intellectuals. ‘To each according to his need’ is

the Marxist maxim which becomes unrealistic in the present world, plagued by resource constraints Lohia is in a much better position because he advocated 'a decent standard of living for the whole of mankind'. It is doubtful whether that too, is possible in the world where climate change, limit – less consumerism and unrestrained population increase are causing fast depletion of natural resources. Carolyn Baker is a professor of history. She is also a psychologist and practicing psychotherapist. She has written the book 'Sacred Demise. Walking the Spiritual Path of Industrial Civilization's Collapse'. She used the term 'Toxic Triangle' to explain the relationship between Peak oil, climate change and economic melt down. She said "... the real issue is that collapse is not a future event, it is happening as we speak. She says that the industrial civilization is disconnected from the real world (the natural world) in favour of a synthetic creation that exists to create wealth, and give power to the latest people who crawl their way to the top of the global hierarchy." She expects water riots in near future. Lohia wrote in the essay, 'Some Fundamentals of a World Mind, "until peace and non violence can be convincingly correlated to freedom and growth, it is an expensive exaggeration to speak of a European Gandhism". Now many leading thinkers are advocating zero growth, as growth has cancerous effects on human society.

When Lohia visited the US, the American society was more egalitarian. Now-a-days more than forty million people in the US cannot afford even ordinary medical aid. In 2001, the top 1% of families in the US enjoyed 33.4% of the net wealth of the country. The bottom 40% had to content themselves with 0.3% of the net wealth. With in these years, the yawning disparity must have increased exponentially. If he had lived

today, and visited Europe and the US, the compatibility of prosperity with egalitarian features of a society, would not have received his commendation.

Appropriate technology as advocated by Lohia still stands correct in the present age. This is not because of lack of capital in the third world (Capital has become global) but because of providing employment to all and preserving the autonomy of the local people.

Today speculative capital is dominating the world. Hedge funds can break a country's financial system easily. A leading finance capitalist, George Soro's forced England to devalue its currency. The prime minister, John Major, had to beat a retreat after resisting Soro's maneuvers for a short period. The president of France, Mitterrand was warned by financial capitalists of France to give up his attachment to his manifesto that advocated socialist policies. He succumbed to their pressure. In today world, finance capitalists and major banks dictate to states what policies to adopt. Inequality is increasing in geometrical progression every year among and between nations. Keeping full control over the country's currency to preserve the sovereignty of the nation is the need of the hour. Otherwise the bad effects of one mismanaged economy can plunge the whole world in to a severe economic melt down. The effect on the poor countries will be the worst. If the highly consumerist elite of any country has the final say in the field of economy, we must say good bye to the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. Writes Eduardo Galeano in his essay 'Rule of the Few', "Every day sees the further shrinkage of the already limited maneuvering room of local politicians, and the people look at the decisions taken in their name by governments ruled by global institutions".

Latin American radical thinkers have blazed a new path keeping in mind the criticism of Galeano. Instead of thinking of capturing state power, they are keeping alive big social movements of people. The MST movement in Brazil and the Zapatista movements in Mexico avoided enjoying state power; though their cultures, institutions and personalities influenced the ethos of the elected representatives in their areas. They decided to leave the ultimate decisions to the elected representatives of the area and not to their military which played the role of preventing government forces from entering their territories. Lohia's ideas of constructive work and resistance through Satyagraha tallies with their activities. A group of socialist thinkers not prepared to face the ordeal of elections may devote their time and energy to improving the moral character of the populace, through persuasion and becoming role-models, to deepen democracy. J.P.'s idea of recall is another shot in the arm of democracy.

With human survival at stake, the masculine culture that is savaging humanity will get more brutalized in future. In the coming age of scarcity, the class divide, between the East and the West will defy any solution because the class-leveling global ideologies like Marxism and Democratic Socialism cannot enthuse the majority of Western people. They cannot sacrifice or lower their living standards to provide basic necessities for the commoners of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The time has come when humanity has to choose between the truth based on destructive emotions like greed and violence and truth based on the motherly attitude nurturing the values of non-violence, Asteya and Aparigraha. Gandhi's ideas filtered through Lohia's cogitations, transformed in consonance with the changed

reality and thought contents of the present world, can prove relevant in the present context.

There is poverty of thought plaguing the present world. Nihilism has invaded the philosophies and Cynicism waits in the wings. Post modernism, as Prof. Frederic Jameson says, is only 'the cultural logic of late capitalism' which stinks of decadence and burning flesh. Lack of democracy dogs Marxism that wades its way through brutalities, violence and fanatic faith in the infallibility of its leaders and creeds.

In 'Wheel of History', Lohia's great idea of cultural and functional approximations (one world idea, both internal and external) based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, stands in contrast with the current idea of globalization that benefits a highly parasitical class. Where is Lohia's grand vision and where is the present night mare of capitalism's illusory finance, that is wrecking nations and distributing hunger and destitution particularly among the weaker sections of all communities.

Indian materialism (Lokayat) is far away from hedonism which muddies the ideas of materialism of the West. Non-violence or non-exploitation of any species of being, was advocated by Anvikshiki in pre-Vedic India. In the Western sense, Lohia advised a combination of materialism and spiritual values. Pursuing the supreme value of non-violence, angry Charvak clashed with the Vedic priests who merrily ate the flesh of animals in sacrifices. In those days when men and women were considered equal, sexual freedom of women was considered a natural phenomenon. Vedic scholars whose minds were polluted by Patriarchal values later criticized Charvak; who had a healthy attitude towards sex. Vedic Aryans declared chastity and celibacy as great values and relegated non-killing

of animals to an inferior domain in the world of values. Wars and raids were common and considered praise-worthy in all Aryan and Semitic societies of the world.

A paradigm – shift in the thinking of the Western and Westernized Third World elite which makes them explore the thought worlds of Gandhi, Lohia and the ancient Vidya of Anwikshiki, of which Lokayat is a part, is essential for saving the living world from sure extinction. Patriarchal society must give way to a society where motherly values find a place of prominence in private and public life. If we can not abolish war and limit less consumerism and wealth seeking in our lives, all living beings inhabiting the earth will vanish with in a short period.

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Authors E-Mail- bagwat\_prashad@rediffmail.com

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## From "MANKIND" A Monthly November 1967

### Rammanohar Lohia

a torch has burned out  
a new star in the sky  
our grief is only tears  
the rose is dead before it bloomed  
the salty dew on its  
strained and withered petals  
the light was true unafraid  
but too soon it has perished  
leaving a heap of warm ashes  
the river was strong  
but too quickly spent itself  
into the salty sea  
great men must die  
torches burn out  
rivers spend themselves

but why so soon?

and why unfinished?

I ask god, if there is one

*Nandana Ishbiliya Reddy (14 years) Madras*

Nehru's death did not create so much impact on people's mind as Dr. Lohia's. Nehru was a spent force and people knew that he had nothing more to give to the people. But Dr. Lohia, with his socialistic and real humane approach and philosophy could give so much to this country. Therefore, all over the country there is so much sorrow and a feeling of emptiness. For Dr. Lohia not only spoke for the people and of the people but he felt for the people, which is a rare quality one finds only in a great person like Dr. Lohia. Calcutta.

- *Adhir Bannerjee*

We lost our unfailing guide and the greatest socialist since Marx.

Gauhati (Assam), *Ajit Sharma*