

Seventy-Five years of Socialist Movement in India - An Appraisal

- *Qurban Ali*

The first war of independence was started against British in 1857 under the leadership of last Mogul King Bahadur Shah Zafar. There was no defined ideology in this rebellion war except that it was against foreign rule and it was limited to the some parts of the country and that too on the traditional warfare. The organized political battle through democratic means started only after the formation of Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885. For the next twenty years it was a body of Noble persons mostly engaged in law practice or holding titles of Rai Bahadurs or Rai sahibs. After the division of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905, the INC started reacting in passive voice and it was only in 1919, after the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh when Congress Party started Non Cooperation movement against Britishers under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. It was the first time when a movement against foreign rule was started nationwide. There were many streams in Freedom Struggle, like Swarajist, Muslim Leaguers, Hindu Mahasabites, Revolutionaries, Gandhians, and many more. The Socialist movement began to develop in India with the Russian Revolution. The Communist Party of India was founded in Tashkent on October 17, 1920, soon after the Second Congress of the Communist International. The founding members of the party were M.N. Roy, Abani Mukherji, Mohammad Ali (Ahmed Hasan), Mohammad Shafiq Siddiqui and M.P.B.T. Acharya. The CPI began efforts to build a party organisation inside India. Roy made contacts with Anushilan and Jugantar groups in Bengal. Small communist

groups were formed in Bengal (led by Muzaffar Ahmed), Bombay (led by S.A. Dange), Madras (led by Singaravelu Chettiar), United Provinces (led by Shaukat Usmani) and Punjab (led by Ghulam Hussain).

On May 1, 1923 Singaravelu Chettiar founded the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan in Madras. The LKPH organized the first May Day celebration in India, and this was the first time the red flag was used in India. On December 25, 1925 a Communist conference was convened by a man called Satyabhakta at Kanpur. The conference adopted the name 'Communist Party of India'. Groups such as LKPH dissolved into the unified CPI.

In the year 1927, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru visited then Soviet Union along with his father Motilal Nehru. He was greatly impressed with the Soviet model. After his return from Soviet Union, he advocated that Congress should also include planning and economic programme along with its main objective of gaining political independence in its agenda. At the same time Acharya Narendra Deva and Sampooranand prepared a Socialist programme under the aegis of UP Congress Committee and send it to the perusal of AICC meeting to be held in Bombay. At that very time Jayaprakash Narayan returned from America, impressed with full of Marxist thoughts and joined AICC. During the salt Satyagrah in 1930, and Civil disobedience movement in 1931-32, many individuals who believe in Socialist ideology and were part of Congress Party at that time started thinking of

establishing a Socialist forum inside the Congress Party. In the year 1932, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia returned from Germany after completing his PhD with a Socialist mind and lots of ideas. It was just a coincidence that people like JP Narayan, Ashok Mehta, Achyut Patwardhan, Minoo Masani, Charles Mescrenhas, Narayan Swami, MHDantawala, NG Gorey and SM Joshi were lodged in Nasik Jail in 1932-33, in connection with Civil disobedience Movement. While in jail they all felt to form a Congress Socialist Party with-in the Congress Party. On this basis Purshottam Tricumdas, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, Minoo Masani and Yusuf Meherally formed Bombay Presidency Socialist Party in 1933. There were two basic objectives behind this move, (A) To draw a picture of Socialism in order to attract workers and peasants into Congress fold with a Socialist trend (B) To check the freedom struggle from drifting it into the Constitutional channel Only. The first meeting of this group held at Poona in 1933, and invited all those who believe in socialist ideology to attend the foundation conference of Congress Socialist Party (CSP) at Patna on 17TH May 1934. The foundation conference of CSP was Preside over by Acharya Narendra Deva. About hundred delegates from all over India attended this conference. Prof. Abdul Bari was the president of the reception committee.

To draft the party's constitution, policy and programme an eleven-member committee was constituted. Acharya Narendra Deva was elected the president and Jayaprakash Narayan as Secretary of this Committee respectively. Following were the members of the committee. Prof. Abdul Bari, Purshottam Tricumdas, Minoo Masani, Sampooranand, C C Banerjee, Faridul Haq Ansari, Ram Manohar Lohia, Prof. Abdul Aleem and Prof. N G Ranga. Jayaprakash

Narayan was also authorized to appoint state committees of the CSP.

The first CSP Conference was held at Bombay on 21-22 October 1934. Dr Sampoorananda presides over this meet and more than hundred fifty delegates attended this conference. Out of twenty states, CSP was formed in fourteen states by that time. Jayaprakash Narayan was elected General Secretary and Minoo Masani, Mohanlal Gautam, N G Gorey and EMS Namboodripad as joint Secretaries respectively. It is also interesting to note that before the formation of the CSP, Socialist Party in Bihar and Punjab were already formed and later merged into CSP.

Delivering the First Presidential address at the Foundation Conference of CSP the father of the Indian Socialism Acharya Narendra Deva said, "Socialism has come to stay in this country and is daily gaining strength and prestige inside the Congress as well as in the Country. The social foundation of this new school of thought which has appeared with in the Congress is the democratic intelligentsia. Outside the Congress among its adherents are representatives of workers and to much smaller extent peasants who constitute the real revolutionary elements of an anti-imperialist Struggle. As a matter of fact the working class is the vanguard while the peasants and the intelligentsia are only its auxiliaries. Most of us today with in the Congress are only intellectual Socialists, but as our long association with the National struggle has repeatedly brought us into intimate contact with the masses, there seems to be no danger of our degenerating into mere theories and Doctrines. We should try to broaden the social basis of our movement by bringing into our fold workers and peasants. I hope we will not rest satisfied with initiating the educated classes into the mysteries

of Socialist thought. I do not belittle the importance of the formation of Socialist study circles and the creation of a body of Socialist literature in Indian languages. That is good work and most essential too. But we must not forget that the real task before us is the political education of the masses, the carrying on of day-to-day agitation amongst them on economic issues and their organization into a politically conscious Class. It is only by working amongst the masses that we can emancipate ourselves from reactionary influences and shall be able to develop proletarian outlook. The great mistake that we members of the intellectual classes are apt to commit is to relegate the people to the background. The truth is that we are always willing to teach masses but never to learn from them. This attitude of mind is wrong. We should try to understand them and to act as faithful interpreters of their desires and needs”.

At the same time Acharya Narendra Deva fondly remember his leader Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and paid him his best tributes. He said

“Friends, we are founding today the first cells of the Socialist movement within the Congress. In the absence of our great leader, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, our task has become extremely difficult. We do not know how long we shall remain deprived of his valuable advice, guidance and leadership. I am sure he will hail with delight the birth of this new party within the Congress and that he will be watching our progress with keen interest from behind the prison bars. Let his great example stimulate and inspire us during the period of his incarceration and let us march forward with the assurance that the cause we represent will triumph in the end”.

After the foundation conference of CSP at Patna in May, 1934, the first Conference was

convened in Bombay on 21-22 October, the same year. The second National Conference of the CSP took place in Meerut on 20th January, 1936. While Jayaprakash Narayan remain General Secretary and Minoo Masani and EMS Namboodripad as Joint Secretaries, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia and Dinkar Mehta also got elected as Joint Secretaries. Smt. Kamla Devi Chattopadyay presides over this Conference. The third National Conference took place at Faizpur along with AICC Session on 24-25, December 1937, and the Fourth one at Lahore on 12-13, April, 1938. In this National Conference also while Jayaprakash Narayan remains General Secretary and Minoo Masani, EMS Namboodripad and Dinkar Mehta as Joint Secretaries, Yusuf Meherally got elected as Joint Secretary in place of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia. In Lahore session of CSP Communist tried to capture the party but they were failed. However Many Communist namely, EMS Namboodripad, P Sundariyya, Sajjad Zaheer, Z A Ahmed, Dinkar Mehta, Saurab (Soli) Batliwala were elected as member’s of the National Executive of the CSP but soon they were expelled from CSP and they joined Communist Party.

In the early thirties Communist were opposed to Mahatma Gandhi and his Congress Party and when Congress Socialist Party was formed with in the Congress they derogatorily called it “Social Fascism” and opposed it. But when Nazism emerged as victorious force in Germany and Stalin’s policy got defeated Indian Communist changed their mind and they started joining CSP. Party General Secretary Jayaprakash Narayan was of the opinion that with the victory of Nazi’s, Communist has learned a lesson and it will be good for CSP if the Communist and Marxist of the CSP can come together and join hands. Although non Marxist leaders of the CSP were

not satisfied with this move and were against it but due to Acharya Narendra Deva's support Communist got entry into CSP, however Acharya ji was of the opinion that control of CSP should not be given to Communist while JP trust them blindly and given control to Communist in southern states like Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Later on JP has confessed in a written article that 'it was a mistake on his part to trust Communist and due to this move CSP weakened and Communist widen their base among CSP cadre'. JP further says that his eyes were opened during Second World War when Communist supported the war and Socialists were compelled to expel them from CSP.

The CSP's Fifth National Conference held at Kanpur, before independence in February 1947, under the Chairmanship of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia and the word "Congress" was removed as prefix and party was named as Socialist Party. This National Conference held almost after nine years and the main reason was that most of its leaders were in prison due to their participations in 'Quit India Movement' and most of the Communist left CSP by that time. After India got independence, JP was of the opinion that now Socialist should leave the Congress and play a role of constructive opposition. Acharya Narendra Deva and Dr Lohia were not in this favour and Mahatma Gandhi was also of this view that Socialist should be part of the Congress Party as long as they are welcome in the party. On 30th January, 1948, Gandhi ji was assassinated and Congress also amended its constitution saying that no separate entity or organization can exist within the party with a separate constitution and membership. JP Narayan Dr Ram Manohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan Aruna Asif Ali and Yusuf Meherally were the heroes of the Quit India Movement and

have a great respect in the Congress Party. JP and Lohia were members of the Congress Working Committee also but with a heavy heart they decided to leave Congress Party in 1948.

The Socialist Party's Sixth National Conference held at Nasik in March 1948, under the Chairmanship of Purshottam Tricumdas and party decided to sever its ties with INC and AICC and left Congress to play the role of 'constructive opposition'. Jayaprakash Narayan again elected General Secretary and Dr K B Menon, N G Gorey, Suresh Desai and Prem Bhasin were appointed as Joint Secretaries, while Acharya Narendra Deva, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia, Ashok Mehta, Achyut Patwardhan, Yusuf Meherally, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, Aruna Asif Ali, Ganga Sharan Singh, Madhu Limaye and eleven others elected to the National Executive. This setup of Socialist Party except few changes in the National Executive exist till Eight Conference at Madras in March 1950. In the Madras Conference Acharya Narendra Deva elected the First president of the Socialist Party and Ashok Mehta as General Secretary. Prem Bhasin, Rohit Dave, Madhu Limaye and Moinuddin Harris were appointed Joint Secretaries.

After the Madras Conference the Socialist Party participated in the first General elections in 1952 and performed badly. The party got only 10.5 % of the total votes polled and got only 12 seats. This was the turning point in Jayaprakash Narayan's political life. He got disillusioned with the party's performance and tried to forge an alliance with Acharya JB Kriplani's Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, KMPP. Acharya Narendra Deva was not in favour of this alliance and was disagree with JP, Lohia and Ashok Mehta that party should merge with KMPP.

But soon after the Lok Sabha elections Socialist Party convened a special session of the party at Pachmadhi, in Madhya Pradesh on May, 23-27, 1952, to prepare policy statement and to decide merger with KMPP. Acharya ji was in China when Socialist Party decided to merge with KMPP but after the Pachmadhi Conference Acharya Narendra Deva and J B Kriplani issued a joint statement on 25th August, 1953 about the merger of KMPP and Socialist Party. The new party named as Praja Socialist Party and it was born on 25-27 September, 1952, at Bombay. Acharya Kiraplani named as President and Ashok Mehta as General Secretary of the new party. The PSP decided to convene the First Conference of the party to ratify the merger and to adopt policy statement and the ideology of the Party.

But prior to this, circumstances compelled the party to hold another special Conference to discuss the issues raised by Ashok Mehta in an article published in 'Janata' and to discuss about JP-Nehru correspondence. The heading of the Ashok Mehta's article was "Compulsion of backward economy and areas of cooperation". The special conference was convened at Betul (MP) on 15-16 June, 1953. Due to severe differences among the rank and file over the issue of cooperation with Congress Party, Ashok Mehta resigned from the General Secretary ship of the Party and N G Gorey become the General Secretary while J B Kiraplani remained the party president. JP has confessed that while he was fasting at Dr Dinshaw Mehta's clinic at Poona in 1953, he got a letter from Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru asking him to meet him in Delhi. JP replied to him that he will meet him after attending Asian Socialist Conference in Rangoon (now Yangon). After his return from Rangoon he met Jawaharlal ji in Delhi for continuously three

days and discussed with him about the areas of cooperation between Congress and PSP. After this meeting JP wrote to PM about the much-talked letter containing 14 points that can be the basis of the cooperation between the two parties. According to JP party president JB Kiraplani was agreed to this move but Acharyaji was of the opinion that it would be impossible to work with Congress party. He was also of this view that whatever Pt. Nehru's personal opinion Congress party are miles away from the Socialism. His third objection was that being part of administration or being the supporter of the Government our cadre will weaken and it will adversely affect the party. JP was not convinced with these arguments of Acharyaji and on the contrary he asked him to trust Congress party, but later on Acharya ji proved right when Jawaharlal ji himself rejected JP's 14-point formula of cooperation with Congress party and asked JP to support his policies unconditionally, which JP refused. These parleys between Nehru and JP spread as wild rumors and it is said from many quarters of the party that JP is under Nehru's influence and joining his Government as Deputy Prim Minister. Although it was never said from either side but many believed it and accused JP of A POWER HUNGRY PERSON of which JP termed as 'character assassination' at Betul and after that. After the Betul Special Conference in June 1953, the PSP decided to convene the First Conference of the party at Allahabad in December 1953, to ratify the merger and to adopt the policy statement and the ideology of the Party. In this Conference the basis of the policy statement of the PSP remain same as prepared by Dr Lohia in Pachmadi for Socialist Party and adopted on 1st January 1954. In this Conference Dr Lohia got elected as General Secretary and J B Kiraplani as president while Ashok Mehta, Sadiq

Ali and Madhu Limaye were appointed joint secretaries. After assuming office of the General Secretary of the party Dr Lohia started movement for the betterment of common people, downtrodden and backwards and launched a campaign against price rise and against the rise of irrigation rates in UP in May 1954. More than fifty thousand party workers participated in this agitation and more than five thousands were arrested along with Dr Lohia under the 'special powers act' in UP. Dr Lohia challenged this order in Allahabad High Court. After two months of hearing Allahabad High Court pronounced the 'special powers act' against the basic spirit of the constitution and released Dr Lohia along with thousands of party workers on 28th of August 1954, through a landmark judgment. Lohia also proved through this movement of civil disobedience that people could achieve their rights through peaceful means.

In the meantime on 17th August 1954, the PSP Government in Travancore-Cochin (Kerala) led by Chief Minister Pattom Thanu Pillai ordered police firing against peaceful protestors demanding Tamil speaking areas of the state in Tamilnadu. Many protestors killed in this firing and party General Secretary Dr Lohia, who was in Naini Jail Allahabad at that time demanded resignation of the Pattom Thanu Pillai Government. His argument was that when Congress Government at the Centre or in any State killed common man through police firing we demand resignation of their Government, now probity demands that our Government should also resign and we should establish some morals before the people. Party joint secretary Ashok Mehta reacted differently on this issue and asked that whenever there is police firing under Socialist Governments should they resign? Or they should establish the norms of constituting judicial probe

of such kinds of incidents? This debate was continued for more than three months in the party and to discuss this issue in the National Conference of the party a special conference was convened at Nagpur on 25-27 November, 1954. Before this conference both the party president JB Kiraplani and General Secretary Dr Lohia resigned from their respective posts. Acharya Narendra Deva presides Nagpur Session and on the issue of the resignation of Pattom Thanu Pillai's Government voting took place in which Dr Lohia's motion defeated by 85 votes.

This was the prelude to split in the party. Later on Madhu Limaye was suspended by the Bombay unit for criticizing Ashok Mehta's thesis of 'Compulsion of backward economy' and Dr Lohia for supporting Madhu Limaye in April and July respectively. These incidents compelled Dr Lohia to leave PSP and to form his own Socialist Party in December 1955. On 1st January 1956 he was elected president of the new party and Bipin Pal Das as General Secretary at Hyderabad. While Dr Lohia and his associates holding the foundation Conference at Hyderabad, PSP led by Acharya Narendra Deva organize its National Conference at Gaya in Bihar. Acharya ji was seriously ill at that time and could not attend this Conference and soon after he died in February, 1956. So with-in the seven years of leaving the Congress party and the formation of the Socialist Party and with in the formation of the PSP, this was the first split in the socialist movement.

From 1956 to 1964 there were two main streams of Socialist movement one led by PSP and another led by SP. The results of the two General elections in 1957 and 1962 marginalised these parties to the core and Swatantra party and Bhartiya Jansangh emerged as the main

opposition parties in these elections. After the defeat in 1962 elections Dr Lohia called for the Socialist unity and at the Sixth National Conference of his party at Bharatpur (Rajasthan) in December 1962, a resolution was passed for the unity among the PSP and SP. Next year in 1963 there were four Lok Sabha by elections held at Rajkot, Amroha, Farrukhabad and Jaunpur. Minoo Masani, JB Kiraplani, Dr Lohia and Deen Dayal Upadhyay contested these elections from the different parties. Minoo as Swatantra party candidate from Rajkot, Dr Lohia as Socialist Party candidate from Farrukhabad, Kiraplani as an independent from Amroha, and Deen Dayal Upadhyay as Jansangh candidate from Jaunpur. All these leaders won these by elections except Deen Dayal Upadhyay. This gives a new momentum to the opposition parties. Nehru started weaken after the Chinese aggression and at the defeat of 1962 war. Lohia called for the opposition unity and to defeat Congress party a common candidate of opposition parties so there should be no division among the non-congress votes. In the seventh National Conference of his party at Calcutta in December 1963, he elaborated his strategy of Non-Congressism. Madhu Limaye and George Fernandes opposed this move of Dr Lohia but his resolution of unity among opposition parties passed with a thumping majority. This was the beginning of Non-Congressism. At the same time he started unity moves with PSP. In April 1964, he left for a long foreign trip but instructed his party colleagues to hold discussion with PSP leaders for unity and if possible for un conditional merger. On the other hand there was a split in PSP and a group led by Ashok Mehta, Tirloki Singh, Genda Singh, Narayan Dutt Tiwari, Vasant Sathe, Chandra Shekhar and others joined the Congress.

In June 1964, the PSP and SP decided to merge and a new party was formed with the name of Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP). PSP Leader SM Joshi named as new president and Rajanarain of SP as General Secretary of the new party. Prem Bhasin, Prof. Vasudev Singh and Surendra Mohan appointed as joint secretaries.

But this merger could not last long and there was split in the new party at Varansi in January 1965 and PSP was revived at the same time in a parallel conference at Varansi itself. However a large number of erstwhile PSP workers under the leadership of SM Joshi, Karpoori Thakur, Saligram Jaiswal, Vishram Rai and others remained with SSP. In Varansi Conference of SSP, S M Joshi got elected president and Ram Sewak Yadav as General Secretary. From January 1965, onwards SSP played a pivotal role of the opposition party and launched many agitations for the cause of common man and for the betterment of woman, Dalits, minorities and under privileged sections of the society. Thousands of party workers including Dr Lohia, SM Joshi, Madhu Limaye, Rajnarain, Ramsewak yadav, George Fernandes and Karpoori Thakur were arrested in the different parts of the country. In April, 1966 SSP convened its annual National Conference at Kota in Rajasthan and rehash its ideology, policy statement and programme adopted ten years earlier at its foundation conference at Hyderabad in 1956.

At the same time Dr Lohia called for a joint action of opposition parties against the Congress Government and it was quite successful in Uttar Pradesh where SSP, CPI, CPI (M) and RSP jointly formed an action committee and organized 'UP Bandh' (A strike) on 12th July 1966. Dr Lohia and thousands of other opposition workers arrested in UP. This was the beginning of joint

action by opposition parties and its paved the way for a common candidate of opposition parties jointly against Congress candidates in the coming elections. This exercise though limited to SSP, CPI, CPI (M) RSP and Republican party of India in UP, but this led to formation of Samyukta Vidhayak Dal Governments (SVD) in nine states and to de thrown Congress party's monopoly of running the Governments. The 1967 General elections was a landmark in the history of democratic India in many ways that Congress can go if a united effort is being done by the opposition parties but soon after this experiment and to yield any meaningful result from SVD Governments Dr Lohia died in New Delhi on 12th October 1967. The non Congress SVD Governments dissolve with in a year or two of the formations.

By the end of 1969 there was a split in Congress party also. Old and Veteran Congressman like Morarji Desai, S Nijlingappa, N Sanjiva Reddy, K Kamraj, Atulya Ghosh, S K Patil, C B Gupta, Ashok Mehta and others formed Congress (O) while the other faction of the party led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi was in power and this group choose Babu Jagjivan Ram as its president. A group of erstwhile Socialist and Communist in Congress party supported Mrs. Indira Gandhi and she herself tried to portray as a Socialist and the Champions of poor and downtrodden. As she was not in comfortable majority she dissolve the Lok Sabha and announced midterm elections in 1970.

In the mid term General elections Mrs. Indira Gandhi returned to power with a landslide victory. Barring Communist parties all the major opposition parties including Socialist Parties (SSP & PSP) defeated miserably in these elections. The results compelled both the Socialist parties

to merge and form a single party once again. This exercise started on ninth June 1971 and both the parties i.e. SSP and PSP merged and formed the Socialist Party. Karpoori Thakur named as president and Prof. Madhu Dandavate as General Secretary. But before both the parties could ratify this merger in a National Conference and could elect its office bearers the unified party got split again with in the ten months of its formation when party's ad hoc National Committee suspended Veteran leader Rajnarain for contesting Rajya Sabha election from UP and violating party discipline in April 1972. Soon after Rajnarain formed his own party called Samyukta Socialist Party (Lohia) at a Conference at Allahabad. Bhupendra Naraian Mandal got elected president and Mani Ram Bagri as General Secretary respectively.

The remaining group of the Socialist party convened a National Conference at Buland Shahar in the first week of January 1973 and approved the merger of SSP/PSP and the formation of Socialist Party. In this Conference George Fernandes got elected President and Surendra Mohan as General Secretary. This was perhaps the last National Conference of the Socialist Party since after this conference student movement in Gujarat and Bihar started which later known as JP movement.

When this movement was on its peak JP called for a 'Delhi March' by all major opposition parties on 5th March 1975. It was a historic march and show of masses that they are against the policies of Congress Government and Indira Gandhi should quit. After three months of this 'Delhi March' on 12th June 1975, Allahabad High Court set aside election of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to the Lok Sabha on the ground of corrupt practices during the election. Her election

was challenged by Rajnarain through an election petition who was a candidate against her in 1971 elections. This was a major setback to Mrs. Gandhi and with in 14 days of this judgment of Allahabad High Court she imposed emergency on 25th June 1975, and all most all the main opposition leaders and more than one lakh political workers were arrested all over the country. All these leaders were put behind the bars under MISA and DIR for more than 19 months. Socialist Party president George Fernandes were implicated in a false case known as 'Baroda dynamite case'. Many Socialist leaders were arrested in this case and they were lodged in Tihar jail of Delhi. Prominent among them were veteran journalist CGK Reddy, Viren J Shah, G G Parikh and Ladli Mohan Nigam. During the emergency main opposition parties of that time namely Congress (O), Bhartiya Lok Dal, Bhartiya Jansangh and Socialist Party decided to form a party with the blessings of JP and named it Janata Party. Morarji Desai became the president of this new party, Charan Singh as Vice President, L K Advani, Surendra Mohan, Sikandar Bakhat and Ramdhan as General Secretaries respectively. When the Fifth Lok Sabha was dissolved and elections were announced for Sixth Lok Sabha, Janata Party got landslide victory in north and central India. Mrs. Indira Gandhi herself lost the election in Rae Bareilly against Rajnarain but her Congress party got more than 150 seats mainly from the South and the western parts at that time. Morarji Desai was elected as Prime Minister and he formed his Cabinet on 23rd March 1977. It was the first time at the centre when Socialist party members joined Government at the centre. Rajnarain, George Fernandes, Prof. Madhu Dandavate, Purshottam Kaushik and later Rabi Ray joined union cabinet as cabinet ministers and many others joined as

minister of state but that was the end of the organized Socialist Movement in the country.

After the formation of the Government in March, the Janata Party was formally launched on May 1, in New Delhi when all the five major constituent of the party namely Congress (O), Bhartiya Lok Dal, Bhartiya Jansangh, Socialist Party and breakaway group of Congress party known as Congress For Democracy led by Babu Jagjivan Ram merged into Janata Party. On JP's behest former PSP MP Chandrashekhar who joined Congress in 1964 became president of the Janata Party. Madhu Limaye and Rabi Ray along with Nanaji Deshmukh, Bijoy Singh Nahar and Ram Krishna Hegde became General Secretaries of the new Party. With in the two and half year of its formation Janata party splinted on the issue of dual membership and so were the Socialists. After 1980 General elections there was further division among the Socialists and now there are several regional parties namely Samajwadi party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Janata Dal (United) and Janata Dal (Secular) who claims to be the inheritor of Socialist legacy but they are hardly Socialist in ideology and in practice.

If one has to go through the journey of the last 75 years of Indian Socialist movement, it has a rich heritage. Socialists participated in the National movement with full vigor and devotion and liberated this Great country from foreign powers not only from Britishers but from Portuguese (Goa) also and played a constructive role as an responsible opposition parties, But at the same time the history of Socialist movement in India is a saga of differences and splits. A saga of the formation of Socialist parties with the different names. In short it's a mixed bag of failure and success. Failure in terms of ideology, lack of

consistency of running a mass based Socialist party and providing a Socialist alternative to the centrist parties, left of the center parties, left parties and regional parties. Over the time and again It lost the identity and became part and parcel of the other corrupt and communal parties like Congress and BJP and there allies like DMK and AIADMK and Shiv Sena and Akali Dal also lost their commitment to secularism. On the other hand Socialists can claim to compel Congress Governments to adopt socialistic pattern of the society, to fight for the just society, for the social justice and to compel non-Congress governments to implement Mandal Commission report and paving the way for social justice in the country. Fighting for the civil liberty, human rights, for equality among all sections of the society, against discriminations on the name of caste, colour, creed, religion and sex. For the betterment of common people.

At the 1931 Karachi session of the Indian National Congress, socialist pattern of development was set as the goal for India. Through the 1955, Avadi Resolution of the Indian National Congress, a socialistic pattern of development was presented as the goal of the party. A year later, the Indian parliament adopted 'socialistic pattern of development' as official

policy, a policy that came to include land reforms and regulations of industries.

The word socialist was added to the Preamble of the Indian Constitution by the 42nd amendment act of 1976, during the Emergency. It implies social and economic equality. Social equality in this context means the absence of discrimination on the grounds only of caste, colour, creed, sex, religion, or language. Under social equality, everyone has equal status and opportunities. Economic equality in this context means that the government will endeavor to make the distribution of wealth more equal and provide a decent standard of living for all.

The need of the hour is that all those who believes in Socialism, its ideology, its policies and have been associated with Socialist movement in any form should sit together and think about launching a Socialist Party based on the principals elaborated by Acharya Narendra Deva, Jayprakash Narayan and Dr Ram Manohar Lohia. I think it will be a befitting tribute to these great Socialist leaders in the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of Congress Socialist Party and the Centenary celebrations of Dr Lohia's birth anniversary.

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