

MANKIND OCCASIONAL PAPER 6

A LIFE OF SURFEIT AND OVERFLOW 1927 - 2005

**Chapter 2 :
WHEN PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY
MERGES WITH
NATIONAL SOCIAL HISTORY**

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A LIFE OF SURFEIT AND OVERFLOW

1927 - 2005

CH.2: WHEN PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY MERGES WITH NATIONAL SOCIAL HISTORY

Vinayak Purohit

MY MULTIPLE ARRESTS

Let us begin at the beginning, with the *satori* of August 9, 1942. It revealed in a flash, lighted up, the whole visage of comprador physiognomy of India.

In my foolhardy attempt to interject my own self, in a corner of Shivaji Park, between the police inspector's lathi and the young Parsi lady's oratorical debut, I suffered the consequences of a cracked skull. I lay for several hours in a pool of my own blood on the green grass of Shivaji Park, before being picked up by a charitable Marwadi ambulance service. (I cannot, at this distance, recollect its name.) From Shivaji Park, I was taken to the KEM Hospital where the quintessential comprador drama was enacted.

Dr. Jivraj Mehta, who later became the Chief Minister of Gujarat state, when this state was formed in 1960, as Bombay presidency was bifurcated, was in charge at the KEM Hospital. Jivraj was in the Baroda State Service, a Nagar Brahmin like hundreds of other Nagars of Gujarat, who had never participated in any national movement, nor sacrificed anything at any time for India. They, like the Parsis, had almost always joined hands with the colonial administration in British India, or in the princeling native state service, when in such location. I am not talking of a few exceptional nationalist Parsis or Nagars, who might have acted in defiance of their common, communal proclivities. In fact, Gujarat had the misfortune of including within its boundaries at least 82 of the 584 Native States, belonging to Gujarat States Agency and Baroda Residency, apart from a few more that might have been allotted to Gujarat out of a sub-total of 283 in the Western India States Agency. The national total of Native States was 584. (See J. Nehru *What are the Indian States*, Allahabad, 1939, pp.12-13) The Western India States Agency covered no fewer than 283 Native States out of a total of 584, but it would take too great an effort to separate those that ended up in Gujarat. In British India, Native States covered 40% of Area and 28% of Population.

Jivraj Mehta had been inherited by the comprador state of

Nehru, Patel and Gandhi, as a pure, pro-British element along with K.M. Panikkar, Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, V.T. Krishnamachari, and several more illustrious non-entities, and non-participants in the national movement, who hailed from the Native States Service.

Jivraj had been placed as the head of the KEM Hospital by the British rulers. It was August 9, 1942 when early in the morning, Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee members had been picked up. Since then the whole city had been in turmoil. A steady stream of the hundreds, killed and injured as a result of police atrocities, were being brought into the hospital wards. Jivraj made no provision for our reception. He had anticipated no emergency. I lay in a corridor of the KEM for several hours before I was operated after ten o'clock at night on 9th August 1942.

Jivraj stood as a rock on strict procedural correctness. He insisted upon a signature by an adult relation of the victim on the form absolving the hospital of all responsibility in case of any mishap.

My suburban rail season ticket from Churchgate to Vile Parle had been extracted from my pocket, and the telephone number of the only Purohit in Vile Parle had been traced. My mother was down with typhoid and my elder sister Veena was a non adult. Therefore, there was no one who could come to KEM to sign on the dotted line in the form.

Jivraj stood firm on procedural rectitude. Luckily, one Maniben Nanavati was nursing my mother when the phone message from KEM was received. Maniben took charge of matters from my weeping bed-ridden mother and elder sister. She took a taxi to KEM, Parel in Central Mumbai, some ten miles away from Vile Parle, and found one Dr. Surabhai Sheth, a Houseman under Jivraj, who managed the formalities, and thrust me into the operation theatre before I expired.

I survived entirely due to the resilience of my young body of 15. I remained in the overflowing surgical ward of the hospital for some three weeks.

I met Jivraj in 1965 in London, when he was India's High Commissioner. His daughter had become a friend of mine as she was my brother-in-law's first flame. Somehow my sister, Veena had managed to catch Indravadan Shroff who had been junior to Pollock, Gandhi's erstwhile associate in South Africa. Pollock had enlisted in the Supreme Court of India. He had migrated to Delhi to cash in on the prestige of the Father of the Nation after Transfer of Power to Indian

middlemen in August 1947.

The whole setup was purely compradorist. Jivraj, a secure Nagar *naukarshah* had come to power, and was denying or dispensing favours to those who had shed their blood for the national freedom struggle. I was on my world tour, that was to take me across some 70 nations.

Here in London I had gone to meet the Indian High Commissioner, next to the India Office Library which remains unreturned to either India or Pakistan or Bangladesh to whom power was ostensibly transferred, way back 58 years ago. This wretched Jivraj was strutting about as high and mighty representative of the nation which he had tried his best to throttle at birth.

My record as a freedom fighter and as a socialist militant, was to remain unblemished. I not only went to jail under George VI of England who filed several cases against me, but also under Morarji Desai, another ex-Assistant Collector of the colonial regime, dismissed from service for communal bias by those who had themselves created Pakistan out of exacerbating the communal tensions within the country. Finally, my third encounter with the authorities took place in 1987, under the rule of Rajiv Gandhi, an airline pilot whose only claim to political pre-eminence was his dynastic connection. I was picked up from the Delhi Press Club, in a mini-emergency created by Rajiv in 1986 and tortured in the Home Ministry interrogation chamber in the North Block. We will take up each of these three repressive measures undertaken by the imperialist police and their successors, the comprador police.

As I stated, the *satori* of August 1942 in the form of a compound fracture of the skull, opened my eyes and made me a sentient individual in my own right.

We, of the BLPI, had formed a cell in the General Motors assembly plant in Mumbai. We called them out on a grand strike in 1943 as part of the national freedom movement. Our cell was penetrated by a Stalinist agent, who called himself Dravid and lived opposite the BBCI Matunga Station. He led the police to our hideouts, and all the Sinhalese under-warrant (from Colombo) and many Indian comrades were picked up in July 1943, as the Allied war effort had been seriously disrupted by the GM assembly plant strike. (Of the Sinhalese wanted comrades, only Leslie Gunewardene and Colvin R De Silva evaded arrest successfully.)

I had earlier been arrested in December 1942 for leading a tochlight procession and "attempting to burn a policeman alive". I

had been also arrested in March or April 1943 for possession of proscribed literature.

Ultimately, after falsifying my age as above, 18, on the advice of a sympathetic sub-inspector, I was detained for the third time without trial under the Defence of India Rules.

It was during my detention without trial that I was absolved from all earlier charges. The Bandra sea-shore court judge (one eyed with a Puneri *pagdi*) facetiously observed in court that I was being released from the other charges but I would have to go back to the Worli detention camp. Thereupon the courtroom was filled with laughter. I will write about my Worli jail experiences, particularly about the solitary confinement of one month that I suffered therein at some other place in these memoirs.

In 1950, the Socialist Mill Mazdoor Sabha declared a general strike in the 60-odd mills of the Mumbai city following Ashok Mehta's dictum that the Socialists should join hands with the ruling Congress Party for four years, and struggle against it in the fifth year when elections to the Lok Sabha would take place.

It was a dictum that was followed by the PSP after 1956 and one that was followed by the Mumbai party under the chairmanship of Ashok Mehta, since 1948, when the CSP became SP.

The textile workers had been the largest block of industrial workers of the city since 1850s when the first textile mills were established in India.

The Bombay Press Employees Union of which I had become the General Secretary, met and decided to second me to the Mill Mazdoor Sabha (MMS) for the duration of their struggle. Ashok was the president of my BPEU as well.

As an active SP unionist, I went over to the MMS and joined hands with Baburao Jagtap, Gulabrao Ganacharya, the Tulpule brothers, and others. I camped in a mill workers' chawl in Byculla, and held early morning and afternoon meetings at mill gates during the next fortnight.

One afternoon, as I returned home to Vile Parle for a change of clothes and a bath, I was accosted by Sub-Inspector or Inspector Kokje, who had been my classmate in Elphinstone College prior to being recruited to the police department. (It was the pet scheme of Morarji Desai, the then Home Minister of the Bombay Presidency, to recruit college-educated graduates directly into police service, after the compradors came to power in 1947).

Kokje settled down in the cane sofa and offered to allow

me to escape by the back door, whilst he continued to remain in the drawing room. I thought over the offer of a friendly college mate, and decided to get arrested. I was taken to the CID office where I met Baburao Jagtap and Gulabrao Ganacharya, and others.

When Chief Inspector Pandya called me for interrogation in his cabin, he once again offered to release me. I consulted Baburao and Gulabrao who felt that I should accept the offer and return to the Parel office of the MMS and help the junior Tulpule to carry on with the strike.

In the meantime, Cama, Sadanand and other newspaper proprietors had already contacted the Bombay Congress ministers. My Assistant Secretary Ram Mahadik had taken immediate steps to bring out the press workers to join the strike to demand my release. Apart from the *Times* which would probably have appeared the next day, most of the other English and language dailies of Bombay would not have come out the next day.

On second thoughts I feel that had I refused Pandya's treacherous offer (Pandya had arrested me in 1943 as well), I would have become a working class hero, had the newspaper workers come out to join the strike. That would of course, have distracted me totally. Thereafter, I would have become a trade union and labour leader of some eminence, and not the ideologue which I have become today.

Any way, that is all speculation at this point of time. There are many such backward glances that one can cast.

Baburao and Gulabrao thought that I should go back to the MMS to assist in particular Kisan Tulpule.

Thus, I accepted Pandya's offer and went back to the Parel office of MMS from the CID office at Crawford Market.

I wonder whether I should then have opted for pre-eminence as labour leader. Perhaps I am better off as at present. Rammanohar Lohia, who did not have a high opinion of trade unionists as a tribe, would surely have approved of my choice. Not that I had reasoned it out at that time. Baburao and Gulabrao had advised me to accept Pandya's offer of instant release, and I acted on their advice. I was too young and callow to work out possible political scenarios.

My latest encounter with the police occurred in 1987. I had been taken to Delhi by my publisher, Shri. Ramdas Bhatkal, of Popular Prakashan. For the first few days, I was put up by him in Ashok Yatri Niwas at Connaught Place, whilst he himself proceeded to stay with his school chum, Madhav Godbole, then Secretary, Home Ministry,

Govt. of India.

One evening, I decided to have dinner at the Press Club of which I had become an early member, membership card no.588. (The present membership is of several thousands.)

I was joined at the table by the well known stage and screen actor, T.P.Jain, who had been my colleague as visiting faculty at the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. At the adjoining table was seated, Major Raghavan, Blitz bureau chief at New Delhi.

I had re-appeared in the Press Club after a lapse of about ten or fifteen years, and was in my usual snowwhite khadi kurta and pyjama. Raghavan and I had known each other for many years, since the time that Karanjia had chosen to write an editorial attacking me and my Bombay Press Employees Union. Raghavan carried on the offensive, and addressing me sardonically, mocked at the new friend that the socialists had discovered in V.P.Singh, who claimed to be an ardent nationalist. I counter-attacked by pointing out that Raghavan had been, in the forties, a major in the imperialist colonial army, and was estopped from attacking anyone's nationalist espousal. Raghavan was thus publicly humiliated in the main hall of the Press Club, where several other eminent journalists had been able to overhear my reposte. In fact, there had been quite a few loud sniggers at the pretensions of Raghavan, who had recently turned into a Stalinist spokesman echoing the Karanjia line. After a few minutes of sullen silence, Raghavan walked out of the Club.

I did not know at that time that he had gone a hundred yards down Raisina Road to the white Ambassador car of the police which had been permanently stationed by Rajiv near the entrance to the Press Club in a sort of undeclared mini-emergency that he had imposed on the country in those days, emulating his mother's misadventure of 1975-77. Rajiv had in those days defended his mother and his younger brother, Sanjay's, great declaration of national emergency in June 1975 following the Allahabad High Court judgement favouring Raj Narain and unseating Indira from the Rai Bareilly constituency of U.P.

We will not go further afield. Suffice it to state that Raghavan as a new convert to Stalinism was mocking me, Lohia, Raj Narain, Madhu Limaye, George Fernandes and all other Socialists who toppled the government of Indira Congress in 1977 elections to the Sixth Lok Sabha. Major Raghavan with the ardour of a new convert to Stalinism and as a recent friend of the communists, had helped Indira stage a comeback in 1980 following the elections to the

Seventh Lok Sabha. He was very unhappy over V.P. Singh's defection from the Congress, and his vigorous anti-Bofors campaign. (Rajiv Gandhi was to lose the 1989 elections to the Ninth Lok Sabha, but that was yet in the future. But at the end of 1987, Rajiv had already created a mini-emergency in Delhi. The Delhi streets used to be empty by nightfall and were eerily deserted.) A few minutes after Raghavan, I and T.P. Jain and one or two friends got up to leave. T.P. went to the toilet, and I was alone when the white Ambassador rushed forward at high speed. I was dragged from the Press Club gate and dumped into the back seat of the Ambassador and six or seven plainclothes policemen blocked all the windows, so that I could not see where we were going. The journey took only a minute and half, and it was a small staircase to the first floor within the North Block complex. The policemen took turns to interrogate me. They wanted to know who I was and why I had come to Delhi. I insisted that I was an old member of the Press Club, and that as an Indian citizen, I was free to travel anywhere within the country. (This was not strictly true as large areas of the North-East, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir were sequestered to exclude ordinary Indians. However, Delhi was not an excluded area which was the material point.) The interrogation in a menacing manner continued for three or four hours. In the meantime, the police officer seated next to me had already extracted from my pocket a freedom fighter's identity card with name and other particulars. I was also carrying about Rs.2000/- in my pocket.

At about three O' clock in the morning, the police decided to end the stalemate and carried me to the sixteenth floor of the Yatri Niwas neatly placing a rubber band round the currency notes in my pocket, and when I got up the next morning, I saw that my papers and the cash were intact on my bedside table. Next day, I went and met Vinod Mehta, editor of the *Sunday Observer* and my arrest and questioning was duly reported by him in both the Mumbai and Delhi editions with the photo copied from my freedom fighter's identity card. It must have been around October 8, 1987.

With Ramdas Bhatkal's local assistant, I went and met Ved Marwah who was then Commissioner of Police, Delhi, and who has now been elevated to Governorship, in turn of several North-Eastern states. He heard me, and defended the state of affairs by telling me that "Let us not exaggerate the significance of an isolated incident, when thousands of things were happening all over the country, which were of greater importance."

Thus, my record as a militant nationalist fighter for justice remains unblemished from the time of King George VI of England to that of Rajiv Gandhi.

From 1987 to the time of his passing away, I made several efforts to meet Major V. Raghavan but could never succeed.

COMPRADORISM IN THE TIMES OF INDIA, BOMBAY

The incidents that I am about to relate are not on par with my several arrests and encounters with police investigators described immediately above. The events that follow are of secondary and symbolic value, though symptomatic of the socio-cultural malaise that has afflicted our society since the transfer of power to the comprador ruling class in 1947.

My next major encounter with crystallised compradorism was experienced in the course of my association with the leading English morning daily newspaper the *The Times of India*, Bombay, which today claims to be "the largest English daily of the world."

Then as now, the *Times of India* was owned by Bennett, Coleman and Co. Before 1947, a set of white, English imperialist scoundrels were the owners, who had panicked and handed over the paper around the time of the Transfer to a gang of comprador "brown sahibs". There was no need to get frightened and worried as J.Nehru and his government proved by the red carpet treatment accorded to Elizabeth II in 1961. This Elizabeth II recently came on a second and third visit, and refused to apologise for the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre of 1919 in Amritsar. Or for any other atrocity committed by British imperialism against Indian people from 1765 Acquisition of Diwani to the Transfer of Power in 1947.

Actually, the comprador class of brown plutocrats and *naukarshahs* has been so emboldened by the acquiescence of the passive Indian people, in the intervening 58 years, that Manmohan Singh, current Prime Minister and former colonial *naukarshah*, has had the temerity, the utter gall and cheek, to thank Britishers for their loot of India, in a recent speech to the Oxford University (J. Nehru's gesture just 14 years after Transfer of Power, was much bolder and more shameless than Manmohan Singh's after 58 years.)

But we are now referring to the days immediately after the creation of Pakistan; of the chaotic scenes that gestated 17 million refugees within their own country; of utter chaos and disruption of jute supplies to Kolkata from East Bengal, and of cotton supplies to Mumbai and Ahmedabad from Sindh and West Punjab; of the economic ruin wrought by the liquidation of the Sterling Balances; and of the palpable hatred of the English hardboured by the 400 million Indians of those days, whose land had been partitioned at a fearful cost.

It was not safe for Englishmen to move about freely in crowded Indian streets. There were isolated incidents of lynchings

of white men and women. Though repeatedly reassured by British Labour Party leaders like Ernst Bevin and Stafford Cripps that Indians were docile enough to be trusted, hundreds of lawyers, doctors, accountants, architects and managers quickly wound up their practices and businesses, to run away as fast as possible from the four metros of India - Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Delhi.

Sir Francis Low, editor of *Times of India* who had been knighted for his services to the empire advised the white shareholders of Bennett, Coleman & Co. to sell out. Ramakrishna Dalmia of the monopoly Indian house of Dalmia Jain, seized the opportunity to step in. Ramakrishna was a flamboyant character, with about six or seven wives, and with a bee in his bonnet about cow worship. Even after the takeover, he kept intact the regime of Anglo-Indian and Indian Christian culture-vultures.

I think that the first successor to Francis Low was the Indian Christian, Frank Moraes. He was followed by the Parsi middleman, Nanporia.

It was during Nanporia's regime that the great Anglo-Indian cultural association of Bombay Madrigal Singers' Organisation (BMSO) of Victor Paranjoti was heavily promoted. Several petite Parsi society butterflies used to receive training in piano-playing from the BMSO and used to pass some London external examination. Having obtained these London diplomas, they used to perform in Cowasjee Jehangir and Cama Halls, and Afghan Church and similar grand edifices in South Mumbai.

Bombay Gymkhana was still exclusively white as also the Breach Candy swimming pool. Black coolies were not admitted for several years more.

I am told that the racist, discriminatory and arrogant cowardly bully atmosphere was even thicker in Kolkata and Chennai. The art world of Mumbai was dominated by J. Kipling, Rudyard's father, and head of the Sculpture Department of the JJ School of Art and by the wonderful Mr. Langhammer who was editor of the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, a photo-dominated sister publication of the *Times* and who promoted K.H. Ara, then employed as chauffeur to a Japanese diplomat in Mumbai. Langhammer also patronised the Progressive Artists Group, of Mumbai whose members were M.F. Husain, K.K. Hebbar, S.N. Raza, Sadanand Bakre, F.N. Souza, and several others who were supposed to be leftists.

As everywhere in India, each ardent supporter of the British always preferred to pass himself off as "progressive leftist", a

sympathiser of the Soviet Union, and often a card-holding member of the Communist Party of India.

In this heavily compradorised atmosphere, all sorts of charlatans like Mulk Raj Anand, a Bloomsbury product, flourished. Mulk and his Sinhalese mistress, Anil D'Silva started the art journal, *Marg*. According to Raj Thapar, Mulk Raj fought over Anil's sexual favours with S.A. Dange, the well-known Stalinist trade unionist of Mumbai. (*All These Years*, N Delhi, 1991, p.59)

In those days, a grandson of the brokerage house of Petit wrote Western music criticism for the *Times of India*, which used to publish whole column length reviews of piano concerts held in empty halls that echoed the hollow tin-tinny sounds of the grand pianos, tickled by the latest crop of holders of London diplomas. I used to meet young Petit in Bombelli's on Warden Road, the only place in Mumbai, apart from the Army and Navy Stores, where one could get an excellent cup of hot chocolate for Rs.1or 2. (Today, you would not be able to get an equivalent cup for less than Rs.75 or 100.)

I protested at this disgusting state of affairs, and took up North Indian classical music criticism almost as a nationalist challenge in August 1956.

After a year or two, and after having done half a dozen classical dance reviews too, the strain was getting to be too much. I introduced Rita Chatterjee, wife of a top executive of Mahindra and Mahindra, to the *Times*. I believe Rita continued to write for the *Times* for several years, even after I had ceased contributing in my field of specialisation.

Thus, I was instrumental in providing the initial Indian classical touch to an Anglo-Indian daily of Mumbai in the latter half of the 1950s.

Similarly, in 1971, when I rejoined the Mumbai University as a Ph.D. student, I had just opened a small advertising agency named Akar. I did several campaigns for my clients in those days.

An aside on the professional advertising fraternity of Mumbai. I never thought much about the principles and philosophy of advertising publicity or public relations. Alyque Padamasee, E.Alkazi and so many other "big shots" in the field think no end of themselves and of their comprador bourgeois clients. They are the chief protagonists of Page Three of our venal journalism. They dominate the cultural scene in every one of our four metropolises and the dozen million-plus cities. Their tentacles reach into the fields

of architecture, painting, graphic arts, English theatre, popular journalism, academic fields like Sociology, language studies, theatre and film. They provide almost all the culture-vultures, the jet-set geniuses, the literary lions of cocktail parties in contemporary India.

By hard personal experience, I learnt that of the 15 per cent commission paid to ad agencies by the media, something like one-third or one-half had to be shared with the CEOs, managing directors and public relations managers of the clients. One had to manage one's own little advertising agency by in turn demanding commissions and discounts from printers, block-makers, bill board painters and so on. It was quite a complicated intrigue with cash transactions at every turn leading to generation of hundreds of spurious vouchers.

The merits of the campaign and graphics were of minor importance.

On behalf of one small client, Indana Milk Products, I had included in one of my art works the simple musical notes. *Sa re ga ma pa dha ni* in Devnagari script.

The Anglo-Indian and Indian Christian defenders of neo-colonialism in the *Times*, whom I had encountered during the one or two years that I had been vice-president of the Times of India Employees Union in the early 50s, objected to the printing of the art work which naturally included the Devnagari abbreviations of the *saptak* (known as the octave in the West). *The Times* returned the art work to my Akar agency with the remark that an English translation may be substituted for the Devnagari.

I strongly protested and went and met one Sikh gentleman probably by the name Ahluwalia, advertisement manager, and told him that I would want a decision by the topmost man in the *Times* set-up, and that I cannot presume to translate into English musical notes which were in their nature untranslatable.

Needles to emphasise, the *Times* management surrendered and carried the ad as originally designed by Akar. Thus another small victory was achieved against neocolonial compradorism, firmly entrenched in the leading English daily of the most populous metropolis of India.

RIFLE CLUB

In the 50s, another little event took place. My schoolmates, Jeetendra and Narendra Bhatia, who had been arrested with me in one of the cases, which King George VI, the stuttering kleptomaniac monarch of the British empire had thought fit to file against me and the Bhatia brothers. (The case involved an alleged attempt to burn a policeman alive.)

This incident will throw light on the long reach, and longer memory, of the *naukarshahi* comprador regime to which the Transfer of Power took place in 1947.

We had been to meet Mangaldas Pakwasa, who was Governor of the then Bombay Presidency. I first met Sonal Pakwasa who later become after several marriages and divorces, Sonal Mansingh. She has already appeared in these pages as the classical Odissi dancer who held a seminar in Delhi where I read a paper on Bharata's *Natyashastra*. (see above)

Mangaldas Pakwasa was as Governor, the supreme authority under the Rifle Clubs Act in force in the Presidency. I think he advised us about the procedure to be adopted in order to register the Vile Parle Rifle Club.

My name in the members list which had to be sent along with the application for registration was deliberately placed at number 5 or 6, along with that of Jayant Desai and several more of my school chums who had been arrested in the course of the 42 Movement.

In due course, the reply came from the Commissioner of Police, Bombay who demanded the exclusion of my name from the proposed list of members.

If any proof was needed for the continuity of the current regime and the preceding colonial one, it is proved by my exclusion. The successor regime recognises and identifies me as an enemy of the authority to which Power was Transferred in 1947.

Naturally, if they identify me as an enemy-in-continuum, I am right in identifying the authorities as my enemies-in-continuum. Obviously, I cannot be a friend of a regime that calls me its enemy.

This is irrespective of my opinion that when the barricades are thrown across our streets, when the class struggle has been transformed into civil war and guerrilla struggles, I will be able to use any firearm and successfully aim at any hostile target. It was foolish on the part of George VI in the '40s and the Commissioner of Police, Bombay in the '50s to exclude me from the Rifle Club. I do not need any training to use firearms against the comprador regime.

BOMBAY BANDH

I continued to promote the Socialist Party in every way that I could. I recollect that on one occasion, for one day, George put me in charge of the city after he was jailed.

On another occasion, when one M.S.Kannamwar was the Chief Minister of Maharashtra (Nov.1962-Dec.1963, according to *India Decides: Elections 1952-1995*, p.238), George, Madhu and Dada Naik were jailed, and we actually had to hold several General Body Meetings of the unions concerned (municipal, BEST bus and taxi unions, principally), within Arthur Road jail premises. I was again deeply immersed in labour politics of the city. My name appeared in the front page of the Mumbai papers once again, after a long lapse of time.

As soon as Lohia heard about the difficulties faced by the Mumbai party, he sent Raj Narain¹, who came and stayed at my place. Raj Narain, a wrestler of Benares, held an MA degree in law, and was an extremely clever and adroit politician. I got along famously with him. I mobilised public opinion and middle class support for our party, by bringing Madhu Mehta and Pilo Mody of the Swantantra Party who were both ex-Elphinstonians like me. We immediately established a communication link with the Raj Bhavan, where Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Nehru's sister, was the presiding deity. Vijayalakshmi intervened as Governor of Maharashtra, to advise the ministry headed by Kannamwar to conciliate with the Lohia Socialists. She also persuaded Y. B. Chavan to intervene. Y. B. Chavan was India's Defence Minister at the time and had been Maharashtra's Chief Minister prior to Kannamwar from 1956 when Bombay Presidency was as yet undivided and remained head following the division between Maharashtra and Gujarat continued upto 1962 as Maharashtra's first Chief Minister. Chavan, in turn, pressurised his own lieutenant in the Kannamwar Cabinet, one Y. B. Mohite who had joined our confabulations at Varsha, residence of the Chief Minister.

1. Raj Narain caused one of the greatest upsets in recent political history of India when he induced the Allahabad High Court to unseat Indira Gandhi from her parliamentary seat of Rae Bareilly in 1975. This led to imposition of an Emergency in the country on June 25, 1975, and all sorts of other fearful and trivial consequences. Ultimately, Raj Narain helped Sanjay Gandhi to return to power in 1980, whereby Indira's Congress was able to stage a comeback. But all these developments we will deal with in later portions of this memoir.

These confabulations were proceeding with the following participants: Raj Narain, myself, later joined by Pilo Mody and Madhu Mehta of the Swatantra Party which claimed to represent the middle class citizens of the city. On the government's side were the Chief Minister, P.B.Sawant, then Home Minister of Maharashtra and Yashwantrao Mohite, another Maharashtra Minister (probably PWD). Yashwantrao Chavan's trunk call from Delhi had been put through in an adjoining room, and occasionally Kannamwar and Mohite went out to receive the conciliatory advice.

Ultimately, an almost total vindication of the stand taken by the socialist trade unions (as aforesaid, municipal, public transport BEST and taxi unions belonging to the Bombay Labour Union), was achieved, though there was a slight glitch at the very end. On the whole, the episode placed a feather in the cap of the Mumbai party, and Raj Narain and my humble self also shared this triumph.

During one of our marathon sessions at Kannamwar's residence, Raj Narain and the Chief Minister happened to be seated on the same sofa. Not facing each other, but side by side. Kannamwar who was an earthy rural type shamelessly put his hand into Raj Narain's kurta pocket to extract a small personal diary. The CM not only took out the diary, but opened it and turning the pages, began to read extracts from the jottings made by Raj Narain. There was one quotation copied by Raj Narain from one of poet Bihari's quatrains. This quatrain belonged to a lengthy erotic series by Bihari. It was quite well-known amongst literary circles. The theme was *viparit rati*, i.e. when the woman mounts the man to attain orgasm. Kannamwar, being a neo-literate from Marathwada, was highly amused, and he read out aloud the poetic sentiments, to the immense amusement of all of us, the Swatantra Party stalwarts and the Maharashtra State Cabinet Ministers.

I merely mention this incident in order to bring out the entirely informal nature of our confabulations.

THE INDIA-CHINA BORDER CONFLICT, 1962

When the India-China border conflict broke out in 1962, the Indian Left was sharply divided. The Naxalites of the Charu Mazumdar brand, who were a part of the CPM in those days came out with the famous slogan "Chairman Mao is our Chairman."

Strictly speaking, the CPM was merely a left faction of the united CPI of those days.

The Chinese and the Russian Communist parties had drifted apart from the early 1960s, when the Russians refused to share the secrets of their fission and fusion bombs with the Chinese. Thousands of Russian technocrats who were working with the Chinese on hundreds of joint irrigation and industrial projects in China abruptly left their jobs, and carried away the plans and the blue prints with them. It was a period of intense turmoil when Khrushchev attempted to induct missiles into Cuba.

The Americans had staged the Bay of Pigs fiasco which was a failed attempt to invade Cuba in 1961. Thereafter, they had imposed a quarantine at sea upon Soviet missile carrying vessels proceeding towards Cuba. The world was apparently on the verge of a nuclear war. Khrushchev backed out and the Soviet vessels not only turned back, but even the few missiles which had already reached Cuban bases were evacuated.

Against this, Khrushchev merely obtained a US guarantee that Fidel Castro will be left alone, and there would be no further attempts to invade Cuba, or assassinate him.

Ultimately, Khrushchev's adventurist *faux pas* resulted in his own downfall and the Chinese became even more outspoken in their denunciation of the Soviet leadership. During this interplay between the superpowers of the world, a few leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement met in Colombo and formulated a set of conciliatory proposals which became known as the Colombo Plan.

For the first time in the history of Indian Parliament, a no-confidence motion against the Nehru Government was voted upon for accepting the Colombo Plan which accommodated Chinese aggression.

I was in Delhi in the relevant period and was staying in one of the Socialist Party leader's flats. That morning it became clear that all the other opposition motions had been withdrawn and only that moved by Ram Sevak Yadav, the Lohiaite leader from UP had survived.

I was with Madhu Limaye when intense telephonic discussions, multi-cornered, were being carried on by Madhu, Raj Narain, Ram Sevak and Chakravarti Rajgopalachari, the President of the Swatantra Party who had formerly been the Governor-General of India, and also Governor of Madras Presidency. He had parted company with Nehru to form the Swatantra Party whose secretary was Minoos Masani, formerly of the Congress Socialist Party. Minoos had left the socialist movement after many years, and had taken the

Burnhamite managerialist position in his *Socialism Reconsidered*.

Rajagopalahari had patched together a coalition of disgruntled former princelings of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Orissa, and certain industrialists of Mumbai, Ahmedabad and other cities.

I had unsuccessfully attempted to heckle Minoo from the audience when he came to lecture in Elphinstone College on his Burnhamite² managerialist deviation from socialism.

Then, in 1962, the socialists were too few in number, even including the vacillating PSP-ers, who were bound to fall in line, if decisively led. In any case, the support of some 18 Swatantra Party members was essential if Ram Sevak's motion was to receive the backing of 40-odd members, the minimum needed for the first motion of no-confidence against the Nehru government to be admitted for discussion and voting as per the parliamentary rules of procedure.

I was naturally very strongly in favour of non-withdrawal of Ram Sevak's motion. Madhu supported me and I had many lengthy telephonic conversations with Raj Narain, who had been in touch with Rajgopalachari in Madras, now Chennai.

Since this was the first no-confidence motion against Nehru which had a chance of succeeding in getting admitted, naturally I was very keen, and our arguments over the phone generated a lot of heat. From long experience of Raj Narain's mentality and ways, Madhu suggested to me in good humour that I should end the debate with Raj Narain with the final offer of one chicken for each vote in favour of Ram Sevak's no confidence motion. I did so and banged the phone down.

2. James Burnham had been a leading member of the American Socialist Workers' Party (SWP), a Trotskyist group affiliated to the Fourth International. Other leaders of the SWP had been James P. Cannon, Max Schatman, Felix Morrow and others. Burnham had been one of the authors of the Draft Programme of the Fourth International in 1936. Following the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939 whereby the Soviet Union had annexed the eastern half of Poland and the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as also a small north-eastern part of Romania, then known as Bessarabia (now called Moldova). At the same time Stalin had attacked Finland. This caused a major upheaval in the Trotskyist movement of the world. The American party reiterated its characterisation of Stalin's Russia as degenerated workers' state, which was in line with Trotsky's own views. Max Schatman characterised the new Soviet Stalinist State as a bureaucratic, collectivist formation and James Burnham travelled furthest to the right to propound his Managerialist Class Theory (See his *Managerial Revolution*, 1941). T. Cliff in England and J. R. Johnson, formerly known as C.L.R. James in America, took up the state capitalist position, with which little me in India found himself in agreement.

Coincidentally, Rajgopalachari's trunk phone arrived from Madras at Raj Narain's flat and he agreed to support the no-confidence motion.

Raj Narain's proclivity to interminable telephonic discussions was known to all. He even had the telephone wire lengthened to carry the instrument with him to the toilet.

Somehow, that day we triumphed. Ram Sevak's motion was carried by some 48 or 49 members standing up in its support.

After the debate in the Lok Sabha, I along with Madhu, Kishan Pattanayak, Ram Sevak, Gaure Murahari and Raj Narain went to Moti Mahal in Darya Gunj, Delhi. Raj Narain proceeded to order one chicken dish after another along with other miscellaneous dals, vegetables, curd salads, kababs, and so on. After 45 minutes of this sumptuous repast, most of the waiters and three or four of the Moti Mahal proprietors stood in a circle around our table. Raj Narain, though a MA, LLB from the Benares University, was a renowned wrestler of that place. The way he swallowed one dish after another, was truly spectacular. I had never seen anything like it in my life. We had all stopped eating, but Raj Narain carried on almost without pausing for a breath. The waiters hurried to and fro. New tablecloths, pickles, curd salads known as *raitas* disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. When we got up after two or three hours, by my count, Raj Narain had polished off at least 10 chickens, apart from miscellaneous other dishes. From that time onwards, whenever we met in Delhi, Lucknow, Kolkata, Mumbai and elsewhere, I went on paying for the chickens which I owed to Raj Narain, but he kept on deliberately muddling up the tally to only having cleared about five chickens. (He must have finished at least 50.)

This friendly relationship with Raj Narain continued upto the time he became a Minister of Health in Morarji Desai's Government of 1977.

PEOPLE'S POWER

I was a friend of Sachin Chaudhari who founded the *Economic Weekly*, which later became the *Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)*.

I wrote a few articles for the journal in the early days whilst I was working for the Bajaj group. Sachin's brother, Debu, who held Murphy Radio's agency in Kolkata also was a friend. (See note on the Kolkata group further on.) But the relationship with *EPW* became

more intimate in the early 70s, when I wrote an important study of Sri Lankan crisis "An Emerald Island Turns Bloody Red." It dealt with the basic neocolonial economic exploitation of Sri Lanka, and described the causes underlying the extreme Sinhala-Buddhist reaction in the form of the JVP revolt led by Rohan Wijeweera. Rohan was tried in a famous court trial and was defended by Bala Tampoe, a Trotskyist, who had been associated with the LSSP.

In a nutshell, Ceylon had been developed as an export-oriented plantation economy on the lines of the Caribbean possessions of Britain. It started its career as a Dominion with the disenfranchisement of lakhs of Tamil plantation workers. The British masters had played the usual *divide et impera* policy of favouring the Tamil minority. The Tamils formed about 1/3 of the Sri Lankan population and the British rulers pitted them against the Sinhala Buddhist majority. The Christians and Burghers, Dutch and Portuguese half-breeds, had formed the majority of the membership of the LSSP, the Trotskyist party. It had its main electoral base among the Tamil plantation workers. The Christians and the Burghers had found themselves in the limbo. Historically, the Dutch had driven out the Portuguese in the 17th century, and had themselves been displaced by the English East India Company at the end of the 18th century.

The LSSP's electoral base was provided by the Tamil, Hindu plantation workers on tea, rubber, coconut, cacao, cinnamon, estates. After the disenfranchisement of the plantation workers, the LSSP was forced to enter into coalitions with the Buddhist parties of SWRD Bandarnaike, his wife, Sirimavo, and their daughter Chandrika Kumaratunge³. The coalition politics naturally blunted and sabotaged their revolutionary pretensions. This was the tragedy of Sinhala Trotskyism, and led to the expulsion of the LSSP from the Fourth International. Another notable contribution that I made to the *EPW* of those days was in the form of a long letter to the editor, Krishna Raj, about their Delhi columnist, Romesh Thapar, who was Raj Thapar's husband, and a self-confessed agent of the British Stalinist Party in India. I compared Ramesh Thapar's discussion of debates in the Indian parliament with the famous word picture of debates in the London House of Commons in Dickens' *Bleak House* (1852-53),

3. Today, the two Trotskyist factions have only one member each in the Sri Lanka parliament. Chandrika Kumaratunge's SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) is ruling in coalition with JVP (Janata Vimukti Perumana), whose earlier leader was the same Rohan Wijeweera, referred to above. Philip Gunewardene's son, Dinesh, is a minister of this Sinhala rainbow coalition.

wherein the Government and the Opposition had been treated as the mock heroics of Mr. Tweedledum vs Mr. Tweedledee. " of Lord Coodle vs. Sir Thomas Doodle who was supported by Duke Foodle, and Mr. Goodle and Mr. Hoodle who were denounced by Koodle, Loodle and Moodle. They were opposed by Noodle, Poodle and Quodle" (p.152 of Everyman's Library edition).

At that time, Javed Laiq, who was my Elphinstone professor Ahmad's son, became a close friend of mine. Amongst the persons I met in the evening parties at his place was Ajay Oza, the son of N. H. Oza, a Trotskyist contact of the '40s who lived close to my place in Vile Parle. There, I also passed several pleasant evenings in the company of a Welshman who was a disciple of T. Cliff, an Irish Jew whose state capitalist characterisation of Stalin's Russia had been accepted by me as already described. This Welsh comrade was at the time engaged to Darshana Bhogilal, the daughter of a multi-millionaire industrialist of Andheri, a Mumbai suburb. I also became acquainted with J. P. Dixit, a lecturer in Hindi at the St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, who had been arrested by the Mumbai police for his Naxalite views and connections; and Jehangir Merwanjee, a Parsi maverick who had become a friend of Javed in London.

Javed, Ajay and Dixit decided to bring out a little journal, *People's Power*, for which I wrote a number of articles (see Vol.I, Nos.1, 2 and 3, Oct. 72 and March - April 73.)

CSIR STINT

As I have written above, I was recruited by Dr. A Rahman, Director, National Institute for Science, Technology and Development Studies (NISTADS), Delhi, which was one of the 49 institutions then functioning under the umbrella of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR):

The CSIR had been formed at the fag end of the British colonial period, in April, 1942. The total annual budgetary provision for it during the colonial period was a little more than Rs.one crore. (see HMSO, London, *Overseas Economic Survey : India*, Sept.1952, already quoted above, p.148.)

After the Transfer of Power in 1947, the comprador state had to expand rapidly and enormously its R&D and S&T budgets.

Dr.M.G.K. Menon, then Secretary to the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SACC), had in a confidential letter to NISTADS, invited the latter to submit an in-depth study of "Twenty

Five Years of SPR.”

SPR was the so-called Scientific Policy Resolution of 1958, and 1983 was its Silver Jubilee Year. Jawaharlal Nehru had got our Lok Sabha to pass a small single page silly resolution in 1958, whose main object was to place the science cadre of our bureaucracy more or less on par with the rest of the civilian establishment. In fact this resolution led to a thorough bureaucratisation of our scientific cadre. J. Nehru blighted and poisoned everything he touched.

I surveyed the comprador science scene in *Mankind*, March 1996, pp.32-43.

As I wrote in that survey Dr. A.Rahman turned out to be a broken reed, He was a typical Muslim *naukarshah* progressivist and crypto-Stalinist, who had devoted his lifetime to serving the British colonial regime under the garb of being a very advanced moderniser of backward India in the manner popularised by Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru had claims to being a scientist as well as a great historian. The basis for his science claim was the course in Botany that he did at Cambridge, and for his historical pretensions, he relied on his close association with Arnold Toynbee and the latter's multi-volume *A Study of History*. (see "Toynbee, British Secret Service and Agent Nehru" in *Mankind*, Dec. 1999-Jan. 2000, pp36-40).

I wrote several papers during my tenure at the CSIR. Amongst them, the one that attracted the greatest attention was the essay that I wrote on the American assault upon the forests in the third world, for a seminar in Hyderabad. This paper was summarised and highlighted by Dr.Iqbal Ahmad of the Indian Administrative Institute, Hyderabad in an issue of *the Economic and Political Weekly*.

The overall conclusion which I reached was that scientific research in India had played handmaiden to defence needs of the comprador state of India. The overwhelming proportion of the national R & D effort had gone in the initial period of about 20 years to the development of the atom bomb, and thereafter, in the next 25 years, the effort had been devoted to finding the delivery system of missiles (land to land, air to land, air to air and sea to land). The leading scientist-engineer in this national endeavour was APJ Abdul Kalam who has become the President of India on the basis of such an achievement. (see *Wings of Fire*, his autobiography, Universities Press, Hyderabad, 1999).

This symbolises and epitomises the limitations of comprador science. An industrially backward country with scarce resources like India, can only do as much as military necessity compels.

REVIVAL OF MANKIND AND RELATED ISSUES

After publishing my doctoral dissertation in 1986/88 as described in the last section of the first chapter, and the set of ten booklets under the title *Sociology of Art and Politics*, 1987-92, I felt emboldened to revive Lohia's *Mankind* in 1995. For one or two years, I consulted George Fernandes, Badrivishal Pittie, Jagdish Joshi, Kishen Pattnayak and other friends before finally taking the plunge to bring out the first number of the revived *Mankind* on Lohia's death anniversary on October 12, 1995.

At great cost and desperate effort we brought out *Mankind* issues for almost the next five years. I was closely associated in this activity with Dr. Sharayu Mhatre Purohit. The other friends who chipped in were George Gomez, Dr. V.V. Gopalakrishna, Homi Vekeel, Devilal Patidar, T. Pattabhirama Ready, Dr. Anant Marathe and Kishan Pattnayak.

As I wrote in *Mankind* at that time, after Lohia's death in 1967, the entire top leadership of the Socialist Party disintegrated, degenerated, and plunged the party into total disrepute. George Fernandes joined the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Others like Laloo Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Ram Vilas Paswan, Janeshwar Mishra and such others became regional warlords, who openly disgraced themselves by close association with known criminal gang leaders. Phoolan Devi, Pappu Yadav, Raja Bhaiyya and Akhilesh Singh in Uttar Pradesh; Shahbuddin, Taslimuddin, Sadhu and Subhash Yadav, Ranjit Don and similar dregs of society in Bihar became ministers, MPs, and MLAs. The notorious influence peddler, Amar Singh, was made second-in-command in UP by Mulayam. Ram Dhan became a Governor of a state. J. H. Patel became Chief Minister of Karnataka as did S. Bangarappa. Ex-Lohiaites were also prominent in the state politics of Orissa, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal and probably elsewhere too. If you look at national and regional politics of the country over the last three and a half decades, I am sure not less than 50 former Lohiaites will be found flourishing as "big shots".

How did this happen? How could so many have lacked a semblance of ideological orientation and commitment, and still remained with Lohia during his lifetime?

The charisma of Lohia is not being disputed. But how can the sudden disappearance of Lohia after a brief illness (prostate

operation, by an unknown surgeon in the then Willingdon Hospital of Delhi, now renamed Rammanohar Lohia hospital), have resulted in such a calamitous denouement?

I attribute this precipitous decline to the following generic failures:

- (i) Having left the PSP in 1956 (four years after I had refused to join it in 1952), Lohia ought to have formed a cadre party, and eschewed the opportunistic and careerist path of building a mass party devoted to parliamentary politics.
- (ii) Lohia was himself an atheist, but he should have inculcated in - depth atheism into his cadres, which he failed to do. For instance, when I met Raj Narain after he became Health Minister in Morarji's cabinet, the only time that I made the effort to see him, the gods and goddesses in framed Ravi Varma style chromolithographs together with a small black and white photo of Lohia, lined an entire wall of the room where Raj Narain lay being given oil massage by underlings, whilst the visitors formed a hollow square around him. The photos had been garlanded with flowers in various states of decay and some joss-ticks faintly liberated thin lines of smoky aroma. It was a scene of horror, gross vulgarity and flamboyant idiocy. I cannot imagine such a surrounding for a scientific, socialist, rationalist and socially-concerned politician. The repulsive *mise-en-scene* would have embarrassed an RSS or BJP fundamentalist Hindu leader or for that matter, even a Muslim follower of Jinnah or the Khan brothers, not to speak of Mia Iftikaruddin of the Pakistan Communist Party. I was so shocked that I immediately vowed never to seek Raj Narain again, even to influence such a mind.

Lohia should never have admitted non-atheists into his party. The comprador dictum of *sarvadharmā-samabhava* (all religions are equal), is obviously false. If all religions were truly equal, then no one could belong to any particular religion! To say that a fool who has made a choice of religion will, after the choice, show no preference, is to chase a stupid mirage. Why would he have chosen a religion after being compulsorily born into one, as all of us are, except second and third generation atheists? It is nonsense to suggest that after exercising a preference as an adult, one could become suddenly non-preferential in conduct.

This is a typical comprador subterfuge and hypocritical masking. For non-atheists, there can be no true and genuine *sarva-*

dharmā samabhava. Thus Lohia should have excluded all believers from his cadre party.

- (iii) Instead of relying on his oratorical powers, he should have made a greater effort to train and write for his cadres, just as Tilak or Leslie Gunewardane was caring enough to write a small booklet, *Socialism Reaffirmed*, for our miniscule BLPI cadres, in reply to Masani's *Socialism Reconsidered*, crystallising his Burnhamite managerialist re-orientation.
- (iv) Tilak's book was an improvement on F Engels' *Socialism : Utopian and Scientific*, which was the third part of his famous *Anti-Duhring*, and it had been used by European socialist and communist parties as a text book for several generations of their cadres.

Lohia never made any effort to train and guide his cadre. He could easily have done this. I heard a magnificent one-hour speech by Lohia on "Socialism as the Only Solution of the Indian Crisis" at Ahmedabad. This was taped but Badrivishal Pittie never published this magnificent oration at the end of which Umashankar Joshi personally told me that "We are reminded of the days of the freedom struggle."

There was also a breathtaking superb, three-hour speech in the Lok Sabha in 1963, which I heard from the Visitor's Gallery, wherein Lohia proved, to a dumbfounded audience, from official statistics that the average income of an Indian was five annas per day! Gulzarilal Nanda, Planning Minister in Nehru's Cabinet in his comical reply suggested a compromise between Lohia's five annas per day and Nehru's claim of fifteen annas per day. (In those days, one rupee equalled sixteen annas, which may be taken as 6.5 paise of today.) Nanda's hilarious suggestion was that a compromise figure of ten annas per day per capita for an Indian, may be accepted.

Tilak/ Leslie was a very fine comrade who took me through a few study classes on the Chinese Revolutionary Crisis of 1927 onwards. (His wife, Vivi, was a simpleton who followed for husband's footsteps to become a minister in a coalition government in Sri Lanka in later years.)

- (v) Lohia should have conducted a special course in Indian history and geography for cadres the Socialist Party.

As Marx wrote in *German Ideology* : "We know only one science, the science of history".

I was not mature enough and knowledgeable enough then to write *Mankind Occasional Paper 2: A Non-Comprador Account of British Conquest, Subjugation and Loot of India*.

But Lohia was sensitive to the need for a revision of Indian history-writing and teaching. His last live-in companion, Rama Mitra, was a history teacher at Miranda House, New Delhi.

His own *Wheel of History*, correctly exposed the Euro-centric bias of Marx's writings. Lohia wrote in effect that "If the socialist overturn was to begin in the most advanced capitalist countries of North-West Europe, particularly England itself, as Marx posited, then European supremacy will extend into the next stage of human history, thus perpetuating English and European supremacy".

This was the kernel of historic insight in Lohia's *Wheel of History*, on which I elaborated. Contrary to Lohia's simplification, history does not move in circles as prescribed by Vico, Hegel and others. Actually, history is a spiral which does not repeat itself, but carries forward some pre-figurations of the future in an ever-expanding spiral form. Further, there is a direction, Right, Centre and Left, to history as also speed or Acceleration, Deceleration, and Retardation, as well as a question of Tilt at Curves or Orientation towards the Exploited or the Ruling or Middle classes. I wrote a review of Lohia's *Wheel of History*. I consider his little essay to be the most important single contribution to re-writing of Indian Historiography (*Mankind*, Dec. 95, pp-13-14).

- (V) There were certain harmful and disruptive peccadilloes of Lohia's personal conduct. For instance, he held that "all women were beautiful." This apparently libertarian statement is a gross untruth. All women are beautiful only if beauty is equated with possession of genitals and breasts and other secondary sexual characteristics.

Women can be beautiful, plain, or downright ugly, just as men can be handsome, just passable, or repulsive. And further, there is a question of age, and dress and make-up suitable to the age. As Raj Narain quietly pointed out to me one day at Willingdon / R.M. Lohia Hospital in Delhi, some of the Punjabi wives of the personnel of the armed forces, dressed themselves in such outlandish outfits, and made themselves up with so much lipstick, rouge, arched eyebrows, long eyelashes and the rest, that they looked absolute frights.

With his libertarian ways, Lohia might have once attracted Indira Gandhi who sent baskets of mangoes when he was in a Portuguese prison in Goa, but Indira's fancies were passing and extremely varied. In any case, her choice was not the last word in any matter. Lohia's view of women was that of an inebriated satyr. Women and men are likeable or otherwise to each other as fully-developed, rational, sentient beings. They are not merely objects of interest to nymphomaniacs or lecherous womanizers.

For all non-Freudians, sex fills only a part of the human horizon. It is not even dominant for all ages, at all times, in all climes.

Lohia's defective world-view, lack of application and steadiness, frivolity and flippancy, ultimately led to the complete disintegration of the Lohiaite current in Indian politics within a short time after his passing away in 1967. As M.L. Dantwala wrote to me, "you are perhaps the only surviving Lohiaite who has kept the legacy of Lohia alive." I took this as a compliment, though not many middle class compradors will be of the same opinion.

The entire five year period during which I wrote in the revived *Mankind*, 1995-2000, was a period of the greatest possible intellectual excitement and attainment. The canvas as I look back was very wide, and covered an immense area of human knowledge.

I would like to add one or two caveats at this point. When I had explored one area, I did not know exactly what I would be working on in the next field.

I feel that I have been vindicated in several important new departures. I initiated in *Mankind* the methodology of international comparisons of utilizing.

- (i) annual GDP figures on PPP terms;
- (ii) of comparing national GDP-PPP aggregates as proportions of a world total, and
- (iii) of making a comparison of such national proportions over a period of time, roughly the last 50 years.

My studies of the dynamics of the world economy, the structure of world production, capitalism's second breath after 1975, and so on, have been confirmed by the study made by the newly formed combined intelligence agency of the Bush administration.

"In the next 15 years to 2020, India, China and Russia could form a de-facto geo-strategic alliance to counterbalance US and Western influence (*Indian Express*, Pune, 24-02-05). See *Emergence of Tri-Polar World after 1975* which appeared as *Mankind Occasional Paper 3* in June 2005.

I believe that historical truth can be apprehended by only he who aligns himself with the historical forces acting upon the events at each point of time.

For instance, let us assume that a person wanted to understand the history of the world from a pro-capitalist, pro-imperialist, anti-socialist and anti-nationalist point of view. For such a person, it would not be possible to understand the real, material world that surrounds us.

Why should there be a hiatus or gap between human needs

and effective demand? How can there be so many millions of Indians living in 2005, who are malnourished, who can afford only tattered clothes and horribly unsanitary jhuggi-jhonpadies?

Why should not human beings help each other instead of committing crimes, individually and in gangs? Why are infrastructure facilities - means of communication, transport, conduits of energy, water supply and waste disposal - not available to all?

We are all born equal, why is it that only a few are able to grow and develop and why is the vast majority forced to lead a deprived existence?

For instance, why are terrorists to be condemned for killing innocent citizens? Are not those landless laborers in police and army uniforms equally innocent?

Is it not extreme violence to condemn the vast majority of a nation's people to live a deprived existence in extreme poverty?

We have a certain number of trillion trillion trillion brain cells available within a specific national population. We have the whole universe to explore, understand and partially control. Is it not a criminal waste to prevent by poverty and deprivation, by oppression and exploitation, so many trillion brain cells of their natural growth and flowering?

I have opted to align my thoughts and actions to the dynamics of the world socio-economic and politico-cultural reality.

After all, even if I stood against the growth of productive forces, I am bound to be overwhelmed and submerged, and drowned.

I believe that each of us has the choice of either accelerating or retarding the inexorable ever-expansive forces of production, development and growth. It is basic ethics to be with the people and to help them understand the world and change it.

A SECOND POST SCRIPT OF 8.12.2005, TO PAPER NO. 5 : AN INITIAL SUMMING UP, ETC.

In respect of the Theatre Unit production of my *Steel Frame* in Mumbai, I should have noted, the top acting prize was won by Sunila Pradhan who beat Amrish Puri hollow in histrionics, at least then. I believe the role of Mrs. Ram came naturally to her. She enacted a real life role of herself. Madan Puri, Amrish's brother and well-known film personality and Pearl Padamsee met me at the end of the Mumbai performance to shower accolades.

The Baroda enactment of 1973 might or might not have received recognition, but the Gujarati production of 1984 in Surat directed by

Mehernosh Karanjia, did receive three prizes at that year's Gujarat State Drama Competition : for Direction to Mehernosh, to me as Author and to a young actress for her Supporting Role. I am sorry to have forgotten her name. She was a student of architecture and must be practising in Surat where a building and construction explosion has taken place in the last few decades.

But I value more than these state-level awards, the mark of distinction that I received from Mrinal Sen, Dharmaveer Bharti, Umashankar Joshi and several others.

On the theme of *Steel Frame*, I may mention that after viewing the Mumbai enactment at Tejpal, Shri Lalji Mehrotra, ex-Indian ambassador to Japan and Shri. Kamalnayan Bajaj, M.P. met me, full of praise, and pointed out the real life parallel between my Mr. Ram, bureaucrat and a UP cadre ICS officer, B.B.Lal of the old days, who had murdered his pretty maid servant, Bidesia, and thrown her pregnant body in a well in his backyard. In my *Steel Frame*, the maid servant, Padma is strangled on her bed by Ram, ICS; but that was a difference of mere detail. As I then told Bajaj and Mehrotra, if a character has been perceptively conceived by the dramatist, either the events plotted in the play have already occurred, or are about to happen!

Shri. Tirmizi, Head of the National Archives, who later became my colleague at NISTADS, devoted almost an entire issue of the *Journal of the National Archives* to a paper that I read at the National Archives in Delhi.

I affectionately recollect the weeks and months that I spent with Nirnanjan Majumdar, Assistant Editor of the *Statesman* in Kolkata, as well as with Samar Sen of *Frontier*, and Sunil Jana, ace photographer, and Sattu Sen, ex-aide of Satyen Bose, in the same city.

Umashankar Joshi valued my Gujarati writings as did Dharmaveer Bharti my Hindi column in *Dharmayug*.

I have not much time left. I can only hope that someone, sometime will collect in separate little volumes my Gujarati and Hindi papers, monographs and columns.

I have always been multi-lingual apart from being multi-valent in the sense of being active in many fields.

I think there are many more landmarks that I can look back upon, but the above lines will suffice as a beginning.

Since I do not suffer from any elephantiasis of the ego, I have never felt that my multifaceted activity was anything extraordinary. It is the capitalist society which wants to hide its overall oppressive and exploitative character, that forces its familial and educational training

programmes into narrow specialisation channels. This actually creates more and more ignorant persons in wider and wider areas of knowledge and facilitates their brain-washing. Such blinkered field of vision actually cripples a man and emasculates a human being.

Above all, we were fortunate enough to have been a part of our national liberation movement.

That is how and why I am what I am, wide-ranging, free, creative in many directions and forever effervescent. It is also a handicap in matters of day-to-day existence within this utterly selfish bourgeois lifestyle. I am in many ways neotenic, childlike, guileless and one who is easily fooled and manipulated.

An eminent contemporary not only managed to become a refugee in Pakistan, but actually succeeded in reclaiming his property in Shimla as a non-refugee and further glorify himself as a non-resident Anglo-American. This hero of a Nehruvian Midnight actually made our Mauryan and Sher Shah Surian highways disappear to credit British imperialism with the laying of trunk roads! He was clever enough to create a fog of Magic Realism to hide his barbaric activities against the Mukti Bahini guerrillas and the Indian liberation army which were jointly setting free Bangla Desh in 1971.

Another son of an indentured labourer discovered a total area of darkness in free India and made Jainism and Buddhism off-shoots of Hinduism.

A third studied famines in Africa, whilst India had been ravaged by any number of famines, some at his very doorstep, in order to marry for a third or fourth time into a family of international banking and armaments cartel.

Finally, I take my hat off to our present prime minister who actually travelled several thousand miles to Oxford to thank British imperialists for conquering India and instituting in it an educational system that produced such a grateful comprador mindset, as his own. He drowned our entire Freedom Movement in a flood of obsequious tears thanking Britain for civilising India for its own benefit, by conquering the country and ruling over it.

It is clear from the above four examples of Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Amartya Sen and Manmohan Singh that compradorism has now matured and is confident enough to project its own Great *Bicholia* Rats!

I admit I am no match to these comprador stalwarts of the new LPG Global Village emerging under the aegis of the fearful *trimurti* of WB, IMF and WTO!

Vinayak Purohit

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*Freedom fighter, 1942 August Movement; compound fracture of the skull due to police lathi, 9.9.42 at Shivaji Park, Mumbai; thrice arrested : once on charge of attempting to burn a policeman alive; again for production, distribution and possession of illegal literature; third time detention without trial, Worli Jail, Mumbai. Trade unionist, 1948-52, as General Secretary, Bombay Press Employees' Union; rejoined Socialist Party, 1956, as Lohia founded the party in Dec. 1956.

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*Designed monumental *Gitai Mandir*, Wardha, 1965-75

*Revived Lohia's *Mankind*, 1995-2000

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