

10 Ram Manohar Lohia

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explore the main currents of Lohia's political thought.
- To elucidate the basic components of Lohia's social thought.
- To understand Lohia as an internationalist.

Dr Ram Manohar Lohia (1910–67) may arguably be reckoned as the most unconventional and, may be original as well, theoretician amongst the Indian socialists given his penchant for 'New Socialism'. Called a 'doctrinal socialist' (Appadorai 2002: 311), indeed, it appeared to be his passion to liberate the theory of socialism from the shackles of theory and practice of Marxism and International Communism. Interestingly, Lohia sought to provide a new and unique dimension to socialism by attuning it to the needs and aspirations of the developing countries like India by incorporating within it certain elements of even capitalism which, he averred, has facilitated a subtle improvement in the standard of lives of the working class and its conversion into the middle class in Europe (Lohia 1963: 6). In other words, the creditable contribution of Lohia to the body of socialist thought¹ in India seems to be improvising the notion by ingraining in it numerous related intellectual precepts with the purpose of ensuring its cent percent suitability to the imperatives of the Indian circumstances. What, however, remained intact in such a conceptualisation of socialism is its unflinching focus on the creation of an equal, democratic and egalitarian socio-economic and political system aimed at securing the all-round development of people in India.

Like many other Indian thinkers, the thought process of Lohia was also shaped by an activist life lived by him. Being a prominent leader of the socialist movement in both pre- and post-independence times, his theoretical explorations in various issues confronting India were enriched by the empirical input drawn from various movements he led or participated in. For instance, presumably it was Lohia's early and subsequent consistent exposure to Gandhian ideas and movements that led him to think of Indianising the notion of socialism by giving an overdose of

decentralisation, and also addressing the issues plaguing India, such as managing the vast socio-economic and politico-cultural diversities of the country. At the same time, his sharp analytical faculties coming from his brilliant academic training on the one hand, and his erudition, on the other, helped him in grasping the theoretical formulations in vogue in various parts of the world and exploring the possibility of adapting them, given their suitability in resolving the complexities of India. An attempt, therefore, is made in this chapter to give an exposition of the main currents of the social and political thought of Lohia.

A LIFE IN INDIGENOUS EVOLUTION

An analysis of the life and times of Lohia unmistakably leads one to conclude that despite being exposed to various environs and ideas, his fundamental framework of perceiving things remained centred around the perspectives totally Indian in nature. In other words, instead of arguing for the need for India to adapt herself to certain alien values or institutional framework ostensibly for the infallibility of such ideas or institutions, Lohia appeared bent upon evolving indigenous models for the needs of the country. For instance, his 'Chaukhamba Model' of decentralisation seems a *sui generis* idea for a country having preponderance of village as the basic unit of life for an majority of the people. Moreover, in cases where he subscribed to an idea foreign to India, such as socialism, he infused excessive doses of interpolation and extrapolation in it, landing up constructing apparently a new incarnation of the concept.

Born in a village in Faizabad district of UP on 23 March 1910, Lohia was one of the few nationalist leaders in the country having his roots in rural India which probably conditioned his thinking process to a great extent in that he remained engrossed with such perspectives throughout his life.² The nationalist and teaching background of his father seemed to have ingrained two quite significant traits in his personality. First, he was introduced to the niceties of the Indian national movement from a very early age. Second, he apparently was inspired to develop an undiminishing urge for academic pursuits which culminated in his earning

his doctoral degree from Berlin University in 1932 on the subject of 'Salt and Satyagraha'.

Lohia's early initiation in the national movement was marked by two remarkable features. One, his going to a meeting with Mahatma Gandhi along with his father and listening to his views on issues like *satyagraha*, non-violence and struggle for the independence of the country so much influenced the tender mind of Lohia that he became a Gandhian and remained so throughout his life. Even in his later ideological explorations, the main tenets of Gandhism remained prominent in his thought and actions. Two, imbued with the love for his motherland, he became a freedom fighter at an early age when he organised a small mourning shut-down on the death of Tilak in 1920. His participation in the national movement since then continued unabated, a highpoint of which was the student protest that he organised in 1928 to protest against the Simon Commission.

In 1929, Lohia left for Berlin to pursue his higher studies and remained there till his return to India in 1934. His sojourn abroad seemingly developed in him a deep interest in India's relations with the rest of the world. Moreover, his participation in the proceedings of the League of Nations apparently sowed the seeds of internationalism in him which later developed in his propagating the idea of world government and international peace. On his return to India, though Lohia joined the Indian National Congress (INC), his exposure to the socialist ideas in Europe as well as his own study of the socio-economic problems of India probably shaped his inclination towards socialism, despite being an ardent Gandhian. Consequently, he helped set up the Congress Socialist Party in 1934. He also, along with Nehru, organised the foreign affairs department of the Congress and became its first secretary. During the Second World War, his anti-British activities landed him up in jail. In the course of the Quit India Movement, when most of the prominent leaders were imprisoned, Lohia became one of the foremost leaders of the movement and broadcast regularly on the Congress radio to disseminate the news of the movement (Chandra et al. 1989: 464). A remarkable though seemingly incidental event of this time was his struggle for the freedom and civil liberty of the people of Goa in 1946. The subsequent phase of the national movement saw Lohia's participation in full measure. During this time, he also showed his

solidarity with Gandhi in his peace missions to communally tensed areas and advocated the peace and unity of the country.

In the post-independence times, Lohia's growing differences with the Congress leadership led to his quitting the party and eventually setting up the Praja Socialist Party in 1952. Elected as a member of the Lok Sabha in 1963 for the first time, Lohia put his extraordinary oratorical skill to best use on the floor of the House to articulate his informed views on the causes and solution to the problem of poverty in India. Finally, the life of an intellectually versatile and practically tireless crusader for the cause of both national as well as international peace and well-being came to an end on 12 October 1967. Over a period of time, Lohia authored a number of books and monographs to propound his ideas and theories, the significant ones of which happen to be *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism* and *Will to Power and Other Writings*. Thus, though he left behind a rich and impeccable legacy consisting of a vast range of diversity in its intellectual framework and wide ranging domain in its functional sphere, the life and thought of Lohia remains pitifully at the periphery in the eyes of the biographers and chroniclers of the Indian political thought.³

MAIN CURRENTS OF LOHIA'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THOUGHT

Owing to the varying contexts and vast exposures in a life of just 57 years, the range of the social and political thoughts of Lohia is amazingly enormous. What is, however, more astounding is the topical spectrum of his thought which bears testimony to the exceptional lived experiences Lohia was blessed with, thanks to his quest for knowledge and untiring participation in the social and political issues facing the country at various points of time. For example, on the one hand, his insightful analysis of the problems such as poverty and systems of government, and innovative solutions like ideas of *sapta kranti*⁴ and 'Chaukhamba Model'⁵ of government illustrates his deep understanding of the grass roots issues of the country. On the other hand, his perspectives and conceptualisations on international issues such as world peace and world government amply demonstrate the internationalist vision of Lohia. And, New Socialism, undoubtedly, remains the basic theoretical construct for

which Lohia is reckoned as the frontal figure of the socialist thought and movement in India. What follows is a synoptic analysis of the main currents of the political and social thoughts of Ram Manohar Lohia.

POLITICAL THOUGHT OF LOHIA

As an academically trained intellectual, Lohia always looked at the things in a perspective. Indeed, it may be argued that the freshness and plausibility of the political thought⁶ of Lohia owed much of its substance to his context-driven analysis of the various issues and ideologies. Hence, before setting on to explore the dominant ideological frameworks and their suitability for the Indian circumstances, he tried to analyse the dynamics of civilisational transformations taking place at various points of time in history. He appeared convinced in the veracity of cyclical theory of history in so far as it helped in explaining the numerous ups and downs in the long history of a country or a civilisation such as India. Moreover, applying the canons of the cyclical theory of history, Lohia went on to modify the theory of dialectical materialism of Marx by emphasising that the element of intellectual consciousness plays equally, if not more, significant role in shaping the broad contours of a particular historical event and phase along with the economic factors. He, therefore, stressed the need for evolving a new intellectual format in which the factor of spirit or intellectual consciousness, articulated through the general aims of society, could be combined with the factor of matter or economic aims, expressed through the modes of production, might be visualised in an autonomous relationship in order to give an incisive understanding of history (see Lohia 1955).

CRITIQUE OF WESTERN IDEOLOGIES

Contextualising his theoretical explorations in the particular circumstances prevailing in India, Lohia argued in the favour of evolving an indigenous theoretical construct which could be efficient and effective in addressing the issues confronting the country. His passionate plea for an indigenous theoretical construct for India

was based on his firm belief in the inefficacy of the dominant western ideological formulations in terms of socialism, Marxism and capitalism. Significantly, it was thus quite interesting to note that though infatuated with basic precepts of socialism as the viable ideology to steer developing countries like India on the path of an egalitarian and all-round socio-economic development of the people, he appeared doubly sure of the inadequacy of European socialism to be the panacea for the ills of countries like India. Diagnosing the malady of ethnocentrism in the core of European socialism, he argued that such an ideological construct remained appropriate to serve the interests of a particular variety of socio-economic contexts, such as European, and found its utility, if any, for the non-European countries to be very minuscule (Lohia 1963: 321). He, therefore, appeared quite succinct in pointing out the practical contrasts in the development of European socialism in two varying contexts. While the development of socialism in Europe, *sui generis* as it was, remained gradual, constitutional and distributive, its transplanted development in non-European societies had been revolutionary, extra-constitutional and production-oriented (Mehta 1996: 247). In sum, Lohia, thus, argued for subjecting European socialism to critical examination vis-à-vis its suitability for non-European societies. On his own, he seemed sure of the futility of an imported ideology to serve the interests of developing societies and argued for and successfully attempted to evolve New Socialism for India.

After socialism, Lohia turned his attention to Marxism to find it as unsuitable for the developing countries as socialism. To him, Marxism appeared to be a theory marred by a host of internal contradictions which remained at the root of its unsuitability as a system of social organisation. Lohia's critical perspective on Marxism encompassed almost all the vital components constituting the core of Marxist thought. For instance, Lohia vehemently disapproved of the Marxian analysis of historical materialism establishing the unilinear growth of social organisation from primitive state of things to the stage of communism. Critical of ethnocentrism even in the Marxian analysis, Lohia contended that empirical inputs in theorisation of Marxism as the counter ideology of capitalism were drawn from the particular circumstances prevailing in the colonial nations of Western Europe. The Marxist analysis, thus, obviously could not be fully used as an analytical tool to study

and understand the conditions of the societies outside Western Europe. Even the doctrine of surplus value which remains at the heart of Marxist thought was criticised by Lohia as inadequate in explaining the pattern of exploitation in the colonies. In a nutshell, Lohia argued that Marxism was an inadequate theoretical construct to suit the requirements of societies of non-Western Europe.

Having chided European socialism and Marxism relentlessly, Lohia set on to scrutinise the theoretical foundations of capitalism in order to prove its limitations in resolving the issues of developing societies. Recognising that the basic roots of capitalism lay in individualistic rights with focus on the right to private property, he asserted that such a philosophy inevitably leads to widening of economic inequality. Moreover, unbridled lust for profit drives capitalists for more and more centralisation of the means of production in few hands, so that some sort of monopoly could be established over the market forces. This not only prepares the ground for the gradual destruction of the rules of fair play but also undermines the professed claims of freedom and liberty in such societies. At the same time, it turns out to be bane of the idea of an egalitarian social order and monopolises economic prosperity of the country in just a few hands. Lohia, therefore, found capitalism to be antithetical to the lofty ideals for which the national movements had been waged in various countries of the world. He argued that what such newly independent countries needed was some sort of proactive and forward-looking ideology of socio-economic development, not reactionary ideologies like capitalism.

NEW SOCIALISM

Lohia's scathing attack on the western ideological constructs appears to be aimed at preparing the ground for establishing socialism as the most appropriate theoretical format for steering India on the path of an equitable and all-round socio-economic development. However, it is interesting to note that even his ideology of socialism kept on getting improvised and enriched with newer intellectual inputs coming from Lohia from time to time. Thus, while he accepted socialism as the viable ideology for India and tried to conceptualise it in the light of the Gandhian inputs, he came out

with the idea of New Socialism in 1959 with the plea that it offers a comprehensive system of socio-economic and political life for the people in India (Varma 1964: 552).

While conceptualising the notion of socialism, Lohia began by arguing that,

...the concept of socialism has too long lagged 'behind the cohorts of capitalism or of communism' and has lived 'on borrowed breath' leading to hesitancy in the action of socialists and that it must be developed, if it is to have an effective appeal, into a doctrine independent of other political ideologies. (Appadorai: 1987: 132)

He, therefore, sought to free the ideology of socialism from its borrowed breath by infusing the spirit of Gandhism in it. Overwhelmed as he was by the logical and spiritual consistency of Gandhian principles, Lohia asked for dovetailing the philosophy with the Gandhian doctrines of *satyagraha*, theory of ends-means consistency, economic system rooted in the small machine technology and, finally, the idea of political decentralisation. He maintained that the incorporation of Gandhian principles in the socialist philosophy would lend greater practicability of socialism to the Indian situations. In response to his colleagues asking for co-option of socialism with the Congress's seemingly centrist ideology, Lohia floated the 'equidistant theory'. Reiterating Lohia's growing faith in the Gandhian prescriptions on political and economic issues in India, the equidistant theory stood for maintenance of equal distance from both the Congress as well as the Communists on such issues. Thus, the core of socialism envisioned by Lohia drew its spirit and substance from the Gandhian principles of socio-economic and political reconstruction of the Indian society and formed the doctrinal foundations of socialism as conceptualised by Lohia (1952a). What, however, was unique to Lohia was his notion of decentralised socialism whose essence lay in emphasis on things like small machine, cooperative labour, village government and decentralised planning (Lohia 1952b).

Like other thinkers, circumstantial motivations and lived experiences appeared to have inspired Lohia to come out with his conception of New Socialism in 1959. Apparently more comprehensive in scope and reflective of the holistic vision of its proponent, the theory of New Socialism was founded on the basis of six fundamental elements encompassing both domestic as well as

foreign aspects of the life of the people. These six elements were: egalitarian standards in the areas of income and expenditure, growing economic interdependence, world parliament system based on adult franchise, democratic freedoms inclusive of right to private life, Gandhian technique of individual and collective civil disobedience, and dignity and rights of common man. The cumulative impact of the theory of New Socialism, argued Lohia, would be in providing such a complex web of system of life for the people that they would not only be able to live an egalitarian and contented life within the country but would also aspire to become a part of the world government. Thus, the theory of New Socialism seems to be either a reflection of the reiteration of the cherished ideals of Lohia or his growing detachment from the realities of life in the country paving way for utopianism in his political thinking to a large extent.

MODEL OF POLITICAL SYSTEM FOR INDIA

As a system of government, Lohia stood by the idea of democracy to provide for basic institutional framework of government in India. However, he also expressed his anxiety with democracy having the tendency of turning into a sterile—and sometimes oppressive—model, if not adequately antidoted by positive orientations in the policies and programmes of the government. He, therefore, argued for the adaptation of the system of democracy to the complex and unique socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country. He, for instance, expressed himself in favour of guaranteeing basic fundamental freedoms of the people, provided it was ensured that the basic needs of each and every citizen would be fulfilled. In his opinion, the notion of democracy must not be confined to affording the people certain civil and political rights, but be construed in such a way that it leads to provision of such socio-economic conditions where nobody remains without securing the basic minimum needs of life.

In so far as the system of government is concerned, Lohia's creditable contribution seems to be his model of four pillars of state called the 'Chaukhamba Model'. This model was contextualised within the framework of decentralised democratic polity Lohia recommended for the country. In such a system, he called for the

operationalisation of the concept of 'permanent civil disobedience' which would act as a perpetual antidote against any sort of injustice. Thus, considering village, *mandal* (district), province and centre as the four pillars of the decentralised system of government, Lohia unconventionally sought to dovetail the lower levels like village and *mandal* with the police and welfare functions (Lohia 1956: 132). However, later, reiterating his support for the idea of world government, he argued for the creation of the 'fifth pillar' also, which would be in the form of the world government (Varma 1964: 552).

Lohia argued for acknowledging and right placing of the ideas of religion and politics in order to develop the infrastructures of the political system. However, the imprudent admixture of the two unavoidably leads to communal fanaticism amongst various communities whose repercussions for the country are fatal. For instance, in one of his lesser known works, *Guilty Men of India's Partition* (2000), he was categorical in exposing the errors and untruths which were propagated in the name of religion ultimately leading to partition of the country. Outlining the basic causes of partition, he unhesitatingly chided the selected persons whom he squarely held responsible for India's partition (see Lohia 2000). Thus, the main contours of the political thought of Lohia cover a wide range of spectrum touching most of the pressing problems of the political processes and institutions in the country.

SOCIAL THOUGHTS OF LOHIA

The analytical incisiveness of Lohia's intellectual pursuits naturally led him to examine the social problems of India and suggest probable solutions to such problems. Analysing the Indian social structure, he asserted that universal male domination and the obnoxious caste system happen to be the two greatest evils of the Indian society. He attributed the prevalence of poverty to these two factors and called on the youth to become the bearer of a social revolution in the country. At the heart of such a revolution, he argued, lay the notions of 'constructive militancy' and 'militant construction'. While constructive militancy stood for positive channelisation of the vigour and zeal of the youths, the idea of militant construction meant the radical nature of the constructive programmes to be

carried out by the people. Thus, his assessment of the problems and suggestions of the solutions to such problems prove the radicalism of his thought and actions.

Providing a macro analytical framework to the problem of caste in India, Lohia emphasised the inherent tussle between the forces perpetuating caste and the forces bent on introducing class perspective in the society. In such a conflict, while the idea of caste represent the evil forces of conservatism, primordial affinities and inertia, the notion of class becomes the beholder of the virtues of dynamism and social mobilisation in society. However, Lohia avers that this confrontation between the two remains almost unending owing to the fact that two sets of forces keep on changing sides leading to castes fragmenting into classes and classes occasionally metamorphosing into castes (Lohia 1955: 51). Such a seeming duality between the castes and classes did not seem plausible for Lohia and he kept on looking for ways and means to rid India of the inherent evils in her social structure.

Lohia, therefore, came with the idea of 'seven revolutions' or *sapta kranti* to infuse a new sense of dynamism and vigour in the Indian social system (Pandey and Mishra 2002). These seven revolutions are to be materialised in the form of: equality between man and women; struggle against political, economic and spiritual inequality based on skin colour; removal of inequality between backward and high castes based on traditions, and special opportunity for the backwards; measures against foreign enslavement in different forms; economic equality by way of planned production and removal of capitalism; measures against unjust encroachments on private life; and non-proliferation of weapons in conjunction with reliance on *satyagraha*. The most significant aspect of the seven revolutions of Lohia appears to be the reflection of his utmost desire to bring about the greatest degree of socio-economic equality amongst the people. More importantly, the idea of equality to Lohia did not consist of only material equality in terms of equitable distribution of economic resources but also consisted of a higher degree of spiritual equality coming from the innate feeling of the individuals that they are equal like others in society (Lohia 1963: 236).

Amongst the other aspects of his social thought, his continuous emphasis on Hindi language being made, as far as possible, the

language of masses remains significant. Interestingly, Lohia himself was well-versed with a number of foreign languages such as German and English. Indeed, it appeared in consonance with Lohia's indelible passion for indigenous and native aspects of life being given preponderance in comparison to imported or imposed values and institutions drawn from an alien ambience. Hence, Lohia seemed quite pained at finding reluctance on the part of the government to give an impetus to Hindi as the mother tongue of the people. Lohia vehemently argued for the progressive replacement of English by Hindi as the official language in the country. Moreover, he averred that the ethos of democracy could not be delved deep in the hearts of the people unless Hindi becomes the language of administrative and judicial systems in India. In sum, thus, Lohia's social thoughts reflected his deep sense of critical understanding of the problems of Indian social structure and a bunch of plausible solutions to overcome such problems.

LOHIA AS AN INTERNATIONALIST

A relatively understudied aspect of the life and thought of Lohia appears to be his subtle standing as a scholar having deep sense of belonging to the issues and perspectives of international affairs. His first exposure to the niceties of international relations apparently goes back to his stay in Berlin during the 1930s, when he participated in the proceedings of the League of Nations at Geneva and tried to understand the position of government of India on various issues. Subsequently, his appointment as the first secretary of the foreign affairs department of the Congress helped him to evolve his own understanding and perspective on the affairs outside the country. For instance, he decried the much appreciated policy of non-alignment as propounded by Nehru and argued for India having certain formidable and reliable friends abroad to give a boost to India's standing in the international affairs.

Despite arguing against India's neutrality in the world affairs, Lohia vied for the development of a third force in international relations consisting of the newly independent countries of Asia. He expressed opinion in support of India signing treaties of friendship with Burma, Nepal, Ceylon and other independent countries of

South-East Asia which could gradually develop into a permanent federation. Lohia believed that if such a federation could come into existence, the world could 'be made safe for democracy and permanent peace' (cited in Ghosh 1984: 382). Indeed, it was Lohia's passionate plea for democracy and peace in developing countries which apparently led to his forays in the national movement of Nepal and his lifelong friendship with the leaders of Nepali Congress. Thus, the socialist vision of Lohia did not remain confined to the affairs of India alone but also went to countries like Nepal to inspire them to fight for the cause of democracy and rights of the people. Later, continuing his anti-imperialist stance, Lohia decried the Portuguese occupation of Goa.

Significantly, in most of the theoretical interventions of Lohia, the idea of world government and world peace found prominent place. For instance, in his theorisation on New Socialism, Lohia was unequivocal in emphasising the need for a world parliament system based on the principles of adult franchise. Similarly, his notion of 'seven revolutions' consisted of the element of non-proliferation of weapons as one of the elements which lay at the core of sustainable international peace and security. Enriched by the Gandhian input of non-violence and *satyagraha*, Lohia's conceptualisation of international peace lay mainly in the fostering of mutually socio-economically beneficial relations amongst various nations of the world which would minimise frictions amongst them. His suggestion for the creation of a third force based on friendship treaties amongst developing countries was presumably in anticipation of this beneficial cooperation, which could lead to the creation of a permanent federation amongst them auguring well for world peace and tranquillity.

The most significant theoretical intervention of Lohia in the realm of international relations appears to be his idea of world parliament and the eventual establishment of a world government with limited powers. It was his firm belief in the practical operationalisation of such an idea which inspires us to call him a true internationalist. Indeed, Lohia held on to his ground on the issue of world government despite people calling his idea utopian and impracticable. Reinforcing his faith in the idea, he modified his notion of 'four pillars of state' to include the 'fifth pillar' in it in the form of the world government. What, however, was really remarkable

was his attempt of giving practical manifestation to his thoughts on the subject. He established the World Development Council and tried to set up world government to maintain peace in the world. Daringly, he once travelled without passport to Myanmar in support of his call for an international order free from visa and passport regimes.

Thus, as a true internationalist, Lohia's international vision appears amazingly refreshing and unconventional keeping in mind his overwhelming faith in the operational viability of such a vision. For instance, though a number of philosophers had argued for world peace, it was probably Lohia who envisioned locating world peace in the realm of socio-economic and political cooperation amongst countries. And, most strikingly, what put Lohia above all the other internationalist theoreticians was his quest for practical realisation of the ideal of world government and barrier-free regime of international movement of people by showing the way to others by doing things himself first, lest they might question the innate conformity between his thoughts and actions.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Lohia was a political thinker having his indomitable faith in indigenous and traditional institutions and ideas of India. As a result, most, if not all, of his theoretical formulations have had their inspirations, roots and concretisation on the basis of things prevailing in the country in older times. At the same time, he was also a believer in the ideological purity of his thoughts and did not hesitate to break away from his socialist colleagues like JP and others when he found them tilting towards Congress for certain extraneous considerations. Indeed, despite beginning his political life from the platform of Congress, anti-Congressism remained the benchmark of political activism of Lohia in the post-independence times. What was, however, a less known idea about Lohia's political contemplation was his deep and informed opinion about the foreign policy of India and his call for the seemingly utopian ideas of world parliament and world government. What is most laudable is his ability to unite anti-Congress political forces under one platform. The outcome was the formation of coalition governments in several

states in 1967. It is true that the experiment was ephemeral, yet it had set a trend that loomed large with the consolidation of coalition government in India since the 1999 national election.

NOTES

1. For a succinct account of the body of socialist thought, see Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (2000).
2. For a contextual articulation of the ideas of Lohia, see Pandey and Mishra (2002).
3. While most of the Indian thinkers have found their biographers and/or compilers of their thoughts, Lohia seems to be a loser on this count. In the form of biography, for instance, two very late publications include Grover (1998a) and Prasad (2007). A significant biographical work articulating Lohia's thought is Grover (1998b).
4. This forms the basis of his social thought which is explained in the text.
5. This is Lohia's formulation of decentralisation of power.
6. For a lucid presentation of the political thought of Lohia, see Pillai (1994) and/or Prasad (1989).

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11 Subhas Chandra Bose

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To provide an analysis of Bose's early life and work.
- To explain the basic elements of Bose's political ideology.
- To explore the position of Bose on Hindu orthodoxy.

Subhas Chandra Bose (1897–?) was a nationalist par excellence. His primary aim was to win freedom from the British rule. Appreciative of militant means as opposed to Gandhian non-violence, Bose pursued a different line of political thinking which ran counter to his colleagues in the Congress. It was Bose who not only challenged the central and regional Gandhian leadership most successfully, but also provided a broad platform for many of those who held position opposed to Gandhi and Gandhism. The Indian National Army (INA) connection and 'the springing tiger' image of Bose are well-known; but equally interesting was his political career in which he articulated his distinct nationalist ideas that have not been addressed adequately in the available literature. Compared with other nationalist leaders, Bose had a relatively narrow span of political life because during his 19 years, 1921–40, he was in jail for more than six years and away from India for three years. He was considered one of the most dangerous of the freedom fighters, in part because of his radical stance within the Congress, but mainly because of his intimate association with 'revolutionary terrorism'.

HIS EARLY BACKGROUND

Subhas Chandra Bose was born in 1897, the ninth child and sixth son of Janakinath and Probbabati Bose. He was descended from two fairly well-known *Kayastha* families of Bengal. In 1902, Subhas joined the Baptist Missionary School run by Protestant Europeans. Only 15 per cent students were Indians, with the rest being Europeans and Anglo-Indians. This was perhaps the first time in his life when he confronted racial discrimination between Indians and