CHAPTER 6

THE MIDDLE OF SOCIALISM

Rajaji was a practical politician who involved himself in the social and political life of India, but this does not mean that he was a politician in the Johnsonian sense of the term. He was not given to too much of abstract theorizing or attaching himself to impractical dogmas. His practical insight is, no doubt, Machiavellian, but since the edium attached to Machiavelli, while Machiavelli delinked ethics and religion from politics, Rajaji believed in combining ethics and religion with politics in order to make politics more useful to society and also to make the legislator realize that he cannot take shelter under the cover of a double standard morality to perpetuate his own creed. At the level of the citizen, Rajaji believed in stimulating social awareness and responsibility for the good of the society.

A number of socialisms came into existence after Marx. These socialisms tried to criticize the other 'isms' which are also of the same vintage. The mass attraction gained by socialisms is more due to the blind following of the gullible people than by any insight into the actual means of achieving the promised future. The only way to achieve real socialism, according to Rajaji, is to evolve a system resting upon the principle of shama, which aims at
making the rulers also feel that they have to abide by the laws that they make. This in turn is based on the premise that all are equal before the powerful arms of dharma.

6.1 Socialism in general:

Rajaji's criticism of socialism is mainly directed against the communist type of socialism. State ownership instead of individual ownership of property and the means of production is the characteristic feature of communism. But Rajaji himself advocated a form of socialism based on the doctrines of trusteeship evolved by Gandhiji, which in turn can be traced to the śāivācāra samajāda, the Śiva and the Kaurā.

6.1.1 Fundamental differences:

The communist belief in materialism as accepted by the scientists during the period of Marx and its strong faith in the reality of change is not acceptable to Rajaji. The development of science during the period of Rajaji took bold strides towards the principle of indeterminacy, immateriality of matter and relativity, thanks to thinkers like Heisenberg and Einstein. This undermines the 'Scientific basis' of Marxist thought as claimed by the communists. Although the communists believe in the concept of the reality of change, their present condition shows that it is contradictory to their fundamental premise namely that reality is change. "Socialism's fundamental error
consists in its static notion of happiness. Disparity is the mother of emulation and energy and a healthy drive upwards which is life in its real sense. The socialists set class against class and look to the resulting class hatred to cover the barrenness of their pursuit of parity."  

A question may be raised here as to how communism be charged of being 'static', when it believes in the 'Reality of Change'. Communism, though supports a philosophy of change, does not yield to change. "This is understandable: once in power, communism tends to remodel the rest of the world according to its own ideas and tends less and less to change itself."  

Their station lies in their own statements, which are dogmatic assertions. Although the communists denied the need for any philosophy, in practice, created a dogma of their own which they considered to be the 'most scientific' and the 'only scientific' system.

6.1.2 The question of revolution:

Marx did not think of a revolution to be inevitable in all countries. In countries where democratic institutions are already functioning, Marx felt that a revolution was unnecessary. Marx's concept of revolution was relative and conditional. He did not recommend revolution as a uniform

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policy. Lenin on the other hand made revolution an absolute and universal necessity which was further developed by Stalin to the point of brutalization. The strength and success of Marxism lies not in its scientific element, but depends upon the frightful control of the masses by a minority. In countries where economic forces and social relations were not ripe to face industrial change, revolution by the working classes became an easy vent for letting off steam.

6.1.3 Revolution need not take the shape of a class war

Aristotle was the first among the Western philosophers to systematically expose the nature of political revolution. Though his ideas were embryonic, they matured into different forms and acquired different features in the hands of later thinkers. Rajaji is aware of the fact that disparity provides a stimulus in society to react. But this reaction, according to Rajaji, should promote creativity and competition to increase production.

It is the absence of Marxist approach in communist ideology that led to the success of an elite group which gained mass support by provoking hatred and violence. Rajaji himself was a revolutionary who questioned the existing practices which went wrong. Revolution need not always take the character of an anti-government move. It can be anything ranging from a change of habits in a society to a war
which claims lot of bloodshed. The idea of fighting first and then trying to educate people is democratic in that, the elite groups behind the revolution try to get rid of possible resistance from the opponents and then try to design the society to their liking. Anaji says that society is not a machine to be designed by an engineer. Such things are possible only when we assume that human society lacks the reflective element. If one has real faith in the reflective element of a society a revolution should be started at the intellectual level of convincing people of the need for a change and resorting to action, a method which will avoid minority groups trying to exploit the masses. Revolting against the existing set up would only unscuttle things without providing a proper substitute. The case of French revolution is an example to prove this point. The people went on a blood revolution to satisfy their excitement and following the revolution was the inevitable chaos, which followed the collapse of an existing system.

6.1.4 Freedom of the individual

Socialism, in general, aim at providing a peaceful life to the citizen and also promise to retrieve him from the existing yoke of exploitation. After launching their programmes, these systems get embroiled in their own ways.
The institutions formed for working out programs try to maintain their existence even after the purpose is served and, to justify their existence, constantly maintain a search for some campaigns to provide some fodder for the wrath of the public.

Even taking that a revolution is successful in achieving its ideal to a certain extent, the basic belief in materialism will not bring any good to the people in the long run. Any socialism worth its name should provide ways and means to develop the personality of the individual through social and political freedom. The socialist approach tends to lay more emphasis upon realizing their ideology than making the individual realize what he needs by way of a free life. The type of socialism practiced in the communist countries does not permit individual rights and appropriates many of the rights of the individual binding him to the ideology of the State. "There are no rights in the socialist countries, except for those who agree with the dictatorial rule of a minority in control. These countries are much further removed from the Marxian ideal of a society of 'unalienated' men and women than even the imperfectly developed countries of the East where the psychology of Aruna is alive. It is not the mode of economic production but the mechanism of political decision which is of importance
on the question of human freedom."

The economic limitations imposed upon the individual by the application of socialist theory have already been discussed in Chapter 3. The 'collective ownership' and control of means of production promise to remove the evils of capitalism. This leads only to a new form of capitalism, namely that of the State acting as the biggest capitalist. "The Communists did not invent collective ownership as such, but invented its all-encompassing character, more widely extended than in earlier epochs, even more extensive than in Pharaoh's Egypt." 4

The brutal means employed by the State to maintain its ideology alienates the individual more than what Marx attributed to the capitalist system. "There men are not free to follow their own nature but are compelled to labour for subsistence, and not as means to self-fulfilment, the condition is described by Marx as self-alienation, i.e., men selling their selves away." 5 In order to abolish self-alienation Marx aimed at bringing state control in place of market economy. But it is lamentable to note that the results were contrary to what Marx expected.

Even the milder forms of socialist doctrines of the West are not palatable to Rajaji, owing to their idealism. "Under ideal conditions—which do not and can never exist in fact—a planned and directed economy may assure equality and full speed. The Fabians proved it on paper. But ideal conditions not being available either in the bureaucracy that has to work the economy or in the people for whose benefit it is designed, State-planned and State-directed economy has proved to be neither efficient nor speedy nor by any means frugal."

To Rajaji, socialism of any form evolved from the West is anathema and even Western Capitalism is not free from his attack. "Western capitalism and Western socialism worship the same gods. They kneel at the same altar. In addition, socialism, be it Fabian or Marxist, believes in concentrating power in the State and utilising that power over every individual."

Communism, according to Rajaji, applied Marx's ideas in areas where Marx went wrong and where Marx was right, communists twisted Marx to suit their ideology. Collectivism in communist countries cannot promote individual happiness and freedom. To avoid the short comings of both Western

capitalism and western communism, Anaji suggested the adoption of Gandhiji's doctrine of trusteeship.

6.2 The socialism of Gandhiji:

Although Anaji observed that the socialist thought represented by communism is inconsistent and inadequate, he himself subscribed to a form of socialism which was evolved by Gandhiji from the scriptures. He openly declared his belief in the efficacy of Gandhian socialism. "The

verse of Aryan Dharma consists of the duties that arise out of freedom and is given the name of Dharma in the Hindu tradition; it is called the principle of trusteeship in

Gandhiji's discourses."

6.2.1 The fundamentals of Gandhiji's social thought:

Gandhiji believed in what he preached and acknowledged that his system of socialism owes its origin to the scriptures. "All land belongs to Ccpal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it." Gandhiji's thought recognizes that man is born free and that he binds himself in fetters which he can break at any time. The socialists, after Rousseau, made use of such ideas to give a convenient twist to serve their own ideologies. Gandhiji on the other hand gave a


spiritual basis to the social realities which have a general tendency to provoke people to resort to violence. "To the creed of non-violence, he added the principle of truth as a twin brother. Like non-violence, truth was to him not merely verbal or apparent truth, but reality in the fullest sense."^10

The basic principle that supports Gandhiji's socialism is the belief in God and ownership of everything by God. While Rajaji centered his concepts round the term dharma, Gandhiji made use of the term satya. Satya or truth is the real force through which God works. "Pure mechanical adherence to truth and Ahimsa is likely to break down at the critical moment." Gandhiji's socialism rests upon the agreement and coherence between ends and means in the process of dispossessing individuals of their property. The so-called division between classes is meaningless, for there is no class without the individual, who is the real unit of social action. If the individual members of a society are loyal, the society becomes loyal without any difficulty. All individuals are spiritually alike and they do not differ from each other by any superiority or inferiority in status.

The communist premise, that the individual will exploit his fellow men, when in possession of capital, in

wrong according to Gandhiji, for if the individual can exploit with his little capital the State can exploit more by its huge capital. Gandhiji is very emphatic about this point and puts his view in a language that is full of confidence as follows: 

"The violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State. My theory of trusteeship is no make shift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories."

As far as the question of the right to property, Gandhiji takes the stand of what is said in the 'Gāṇavāsa Pranīyat. "You have the capacity to make money, for that you will be allowed your commission for yourselves. But you must abandon unfair means." The explanation given by Gandhiji regarding the right to property is similar to what Rajaji supported, which is explained in the third chapter. Both the thinkers agree that the right to work and the right to property are inter-twined and are based on moral and social grounds. The view of the socialists that private property and social good are mutually exclusive is untenable to the Gandhian approach to the concept of private property. An objection may be raised that Gandhiji's views would go contrary to the general interest, in view of his support

for private property. Here Gandhiji himself declares his position as follows: "I call myself a socialist. I love the very word, but I will not preach the same socialism as most socialists do."12

6.2.2 Non-violence and distribution of property:

Forceful dispossession of property from the individual is considered to be a form of violence, which is another form of untruth. This does not mean that Gandhiji supports the idea of private property to the extent of allowing a man to hoard millions for himself. Gandhiji differs from other socialists in the method of achieving the end through non-violence. Gandhiji considers that the loss of faith by some social reformers, in the conversion of the rich to sympathy with the poor resulted in their blurring the whole system of capitalism. While the communists tried to dispossess the individual through forceful means, Gandhiji believed in bringing an internal change in the minds of the rich. The change which Gandhiji wanted to make was through understanding and sympathy by a detached attitude to material possessions. Excessive possession and hoarding, no doubt, were considered by Gandhiji as forms of thieving. "If I take anything that I do not need for

my own immediate use and keep it, I thieve it from somebody..." The root cause for this malady is selfish-ness and not the right to property. Gandhi felt that Marx was corrupted by communism beginning from Lenin and reaching a peak with Stalin's reforms. Although it would be difficult to reach perfection in the distribution of wealth, Gandhi maintained his optimism by saying that his system of trusteeship would begin with the first convert.

6.2.3 Freedom of the Individual

The characteristic feature of Gandhi's socialism is the possibility of preserving individual freedom without exploitation. He refused to accept the communist dream of freeing man from exploitation through material reform. There are two approaches to reform. The first approach takes a collectivist stand which looks simple, exciting and attractive. The other approach is to reform society by taking the individual into consideration. The collectivist approach has a tendency to get entangled in its own norms. The means being violent, a peaceful condition would be difficult to achieve. The approach which begins with the individual, though microscopic in magnitude, and a time consuming

process, brings greater dividends in the long run. More legislation cannot achieve the desired results, so long as the individual is not convinced of the right approach. The first step towards Gandhiji's approach would be to convert the individual to accept and believe in the existence of an all-powerful spirit behind all that exists. Once the real ownership of everything by God is understood, the individual can be won over to accept that he is only a trustee of God's property. Compared to what the State can do through its controls and interference, the Gandhian way promises greater freedom to the individual both at the level of means and at the level of ends. Gandhiji knew that his doctrine would be received with much suspicion and scepticism. "I adhere to my doctrine of trusteeship in spite of the ridicule that has been poured upon it." 14

6.3 The Indian brand of socialism after Gandhiji

The description and criticism of the social and political conditions in India, after Gandhiji's death, by Rajaji concentrates mainly upon a corrective and prescriptive approach. Though the call is desperate, it invited more criticism from the opponents who charged Rajaji of being a cynic. Rajaji declared that he believed in setting right what went wrong owing to taking too many diversions from what Gandhiji preached.

The fundamental departure from the Gandhian way of non-violence brought too many changes in the attitude of the administration towards the people and there has been a mounting discontent and lack of confidence among the people towards the administration. "The evolution of non-violence that was the dream of Gandhiji has been rudely stopped, and India goes the way of the other States of the world." Bringing too many reforms in the national policies and trying to justify the claims of the government led to the practice of violence either directly or indirectly. As Rajaji says, the 'machinery of the State is a perfect instrument for exercising violence without exposing it to the eye'. A rapidly changing policy invites gaping differences between the expectation of the State and the level of development of its citizens. Difference in levels of expectation and actual level of achievement engendered loyalties to the national interest at various levels.

Apart from the rate of change expected and the actual change accomplished by the effects, the type of policies adopted by the State contributed their own share to the chaos. The State which adopted a socialist policy went wrong in two directions. Firstly, the pattern of socialism

adopted by the State was not in tune with the pattern expected by Gandhiji. It looked as though the ruling agencies wished to take away the thunder from the communists and wanted to please the masses and therefore adopted a mixed type of socialism. Secondly, whatever be the ideology, implementation of the policy lacked consistency at various levels, which added to the confusion.

Gandhiji repeatedly urged that achieving political freedom from foreign rule was only a first step and that India should achieve economic and social freedoms. The question of freedom at the economic front is discussed in the third chapter. Any disturbance to the economic conditions definitely affects the people in other fields deciding whether a people can live freely or not in the pursuit of their requirements and ideals.

A mixed form of socialism to satisfy the masses led to many commitments which could not be executed. By virtue of the ambition and sophistical nature of the Indian brand of socialism after Gandhiji, the evils of both capitalism and socialism developed fast in the country. The State enjoyed the power of the typical socialist State and a few affluent groups earned favours from the State and acted as typical capitalists in a capitalist State. The promise of achieving a socialist pattern without bread shed led to
something more violent, than what was prevalent in the
pre-independence period. "But the end is the same—a
soulless Leviathan taking possession of all personal life
and strangling it to death except for whatever life is
needed to work as a serv."

The socialist concept of 'Welfare State' became a catch word by which the State
covered the various activities of the individual either
directly or indirectly. "There was more self-reliance in
the days when the government was foreign and was just a
law-and-order government. Today Government's ambition is
much greater but the way it has gone about the business
has ... in fact, undermined independence at the 'grass
roots' and made the people suffer than under foreign rule."

Implementing welfare schemes would mean doling out
subsidies to satisfy particular groups which becomes a bait
and loss of revenue. Instead of the poorer sections
receiving the benefits the affluent sections received more
favours and built a wall between the State and the poorer
sections of the society.

The concept of the affluent acting as trustees and
the State acting as a co-ordinator between the various


and also compare Rajaji's jail notes dated 21, 7, 1937,
Rajajis 1930 Jail Bridge, p.37
groups became a kind of a Utopian dream of the Gandhian way. Anaji says that the non-violent way is a long road to achieve the Gandhian aim, which requires patience. But the government, in its anxiety to produce quick results, tried the various short cuts which only resulted in more violence. Gandhiji was very much against the concept of massive industrialization and he believed in encouraging the village industries and the small farmers who would form the base of our economy. In the act of levelling inequalities a new zamindari system of officials and controls came into existence much against the wish of Gandhiji. Gradually the State lost its power and control over individuals and groups who were working with selfish interest as their goal.

Anaji gives a simple case to show how the Gandhian principle of civil-disobedience is now being misused. The citizen's duty of non-violent disobedience enunciated by Thoreau was the basis of struggle against a foreign ruler. This principle, Anaji feels is now being used by our own people against our own productivity. The right to strike work by workers in India is a typical example to show how the Article 19 of the Constitution is put to misuse. The State policy being ambigious, it is unable to solve the problem. The workers, trying to threaten by resorting to strike, hamper production and enhance their own interests.
Though the number may be smaller, the appeals and demands of the workers go against the interests of the country. The right to strike is untenable from the point of view of free economy as well as a socialist economy, which Bajaji proves as follows:

The right to work according to a contract accepted on either side, is a right stated to be guaranteed by the Constitution in Article 19. But this right is daily infringed at the altar of the so-called right to strike, which is sought after to include also a right to prevent others from working when a strike is declared by a trade union. 18

From the point of view of accepting that we follow a free economy this claim by the workers is a violation of a contract. Rev Bajaji analyses the issue from the point of view of a typical socialist economy. The freedom of the labourer to go on strike as he pleases is inconsistent with a socialist economy which is planned to work for the people. In such a society the workers who go on strike will be considered the enemies of the people. Leaving the individual workers at that, Bajaji goes to analyse the position of the state. If the state allows the right to strike and the right to prevent others from working, then a strike is declared, it only shows that the State is tender-minded to deal with the strikers or that it is afraid of losing popularity from a certain section of the

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society. Rajaji now tries to analyse how the State should act when it claims to be a 'welfare State'. "A State that has taken over charge of the welfare of the people as a whole, and all the powers corollary to it, has scope and authority enough to see that justice is rendered and wrongs remedied without having to make the community suffer the ill-effects of industrial dislocation." 19

In the field of education, Rajaji feels, emphasis has been placed more upon a life of dependence than that of independence and enterprise. The habit of looking for the State for any help created by subsidies and grants killed all creativity and self-reliance. The States depend very much upon the Centre and are reduced to the level of silent allies to the Centre with a little local authority to maintain their election offices. Rajaji visualised as early as 1922, that India after independence, would be and, regretfully looking for the old conditions. 20

The solution to the problem of the confusion prevailing in the sub-continent of India, Rajaji says, consists of training the individual to improve his qualities

19. IWA. p.257.
of the heart. "When the object is to produce a new way of life, it is necessary to bring about a change of heart and of culture among the people."® Compassion based on dharma which alone can forge a union should be the basis for governance, but not any coercive policy of the State. Rajaji reminds us of what Gandhiji believed in achieving peace. "He believed in the governance of the country through dharma, leaving the citizen to incur moral opprobrium when he failed to play the game rather than in the method of the veiled violence of state-compulsion which defeats its own purpose. "²²