

CHAPTER - IV

Ideological Position of Jaya Prakash Narayan

1. Introduction

Next to Gandhi and Nehru, there has perhaps been no one in contemporary Indian politics occupying a more crucial and pivotal position than J.P., nor one who has been more enigmatic and controversial in ideas and actions. More after his death, than before, this man inspires conflicting emotions of adulation and admiration for the selfless pursuit of truth and scrupulous abhorrence of power and political office, resentment and disappointment at his disinclination to occupy the centre-stage of Indian politics when most needed, and exasperation and bewilderment at his constantly shifting ideological position. At various times, he has been a Marxian Socialist, a die-hard revolutionary, democratic socialist, a Gandhian, a Sarvodaya leader and an exponent of Total Revolution. More pragmatic than philosophical or doctrinaire, this towering personality had striven to find the right path to a total reconstruction of the Indian society, yet ended with frustration, despair and agony of an unfulfilled mission. J.P. in fact, “amalgamates” in him, “associations and atmosphere of Karl Marx, Shivaji and Scarlet Pimpernel. His name thrills multitudes of bottled-up young men, hankering after adventure...”¹ Such a personality was widely discussed in the press by an overwhelming majority to be the successor of Nehru, as Prime Minister,² but his constant quest for a better society with all round development of human society, particularly of Indian people, led him to be a 'Lok Nayak' rather than the Prime Minister. To quote the assessment of Chester Bowles, J.P. was “.... a man of copious humanity who views human problems from the bigger and broader angle of higher human desire to serve good causes.... unpolluted by modern politicians claim that end justified the means.”³

Some attempts have been made by scholars to divide JP's socialist ideology and commitment into three or more broad phases — Marxian socialist phase upto 1945-46, Democratic Socialist phase during 1946-54, and the Gandhian phase since then, and later he adopted the sarvodaya philosophy and the concept of Total Revolution.⁴ But the fact is that such division of his

life into water-tight compartments is quite impossible. His life is a continuous process of development with overlapping tendencies. Even as a Marxist, he had denounced the role of the Communist Party of India and the Communist International and at the same time he had developed the United Front Policy.⁵ Again, when he proposed the organisation of Azad Dasta to attack the enemy, he also discarded the use of violence to transform the society.⁶ Therefore, there are obvious difficulties in indicating a clear boundary of different phases of his thought. However, an attempt has been made to discuss JP's leadership in developing socialist ideas and leading the socialist movement, both as a Marxist and as a Democratic Socialist. Alongwith this the role of JP as a confirm Gandhian leader has also been discussed. Otherwise, the study of JP will remain incomplete, if his ideology of sarvodaya, partyless democracy and total revolution is not taken into account.

II. Early Attraction to Marxian Socialism

Jaya Prakash Narayan, though has been categorised as the leader of the Marxian group, within the Congress Socialist Party,⁷ his political life was not confined to any single creed. His political life has followed a zigzag and tortuous course, but with a uniform line of development. In his own words, "... the groping undeniably was there, but it was certainly not blind, there were clear beacons of light that remained undimmed and unaltered from the beginning", and that led him to his "apparently tortuous path."⁸ He had accepted Marxism but had redefined it and also had shifted from Marxism to Democratic Socialism. During his stay in America (from October 1922 to September, 1929), he came in contact with Marxian ideology mainly through a Polish Jew, Abraham Landy, a member of the Communist Party. Through the influences of Landy and Manual Gamez, the famous Mexican Marxist, he was converted to Marxism. It was Marxism in which he found an answer to the problems of national self determination and socio-economic advancement of India.⁹

The Marxian science of Revolution impressed him much and he found in this concept a surer and quicker way for freedom of a country and mass emancipation, than Gandhian techniques of civil disobedience and non-cooperation. It was further strengthened by Lenin's success in Russia which

established the fact of supremacy of Marxian Revolution.¹⁰ To him, Marxism stood for equality and brotherhood without which freedom was meaningless. Freedom, to him, was not only political freedom, but, “it must mean freedom for all, even the lowliest and this freedom must include freedom from exploitation, from hunger, from poverty.”¹¹ He admitted that though earlier he might have had sympathy for the poor, it was Marxism which ultimately awakened him with real sympathy for them. In this respect, his living style in the U.S.A., earning his own expenses and the cost of his studies, also strengthened his sympathy towards the poor.¹² This sense of sympathy for the poor and his strong passion for social and economic justice led him to be attracted towards Marx and his techniques. He found in the Marxist theory and its application in Russia through the success of the Socialist Revolution, an answer and real path to be followed for the success of his mission. According to him, Marx transformed the tears of the workers into hopes. His practical experience and sufferings of the workers led him to choose the Marxist path for their upliftment. He was not satisfied with Gandhi's stand on the question of equality and the techniques of achieving it. He admitted that “Roy's writings of those days” had persuaded him “to believe that Gandhi was against the social revolution and would at a moment of crisis hasten to uphold the system of exploitation and inequality.”¹³ Freedom became one of the beacon lights of his life. In his own words, “Freedom, with the passing of the years, transcended the mere freedom of my country and embraced freedom of man everywhere and from every sort of trammel—above all, it meant freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind, freedom of the spirit.... I shall not see it compromised for bread, for power, for security, for prosperity, for the glory of the state or for anything else.”¹⁴ With such an urge of his mind for freedom of humanity he undertook the Marxian ideology for attaining his goal.

In his “The Foundation of Socialism”, he pointed out that “... there is only one type, one theory of Socialism - Marxism,”¹⁵ which, he thought to be a system of social reconstruction of inequalities - both biological and social. He stated that the root cause of inequalities of wealth and economic exploitation was due to the fact of private ownership of “the instruments of production” for the benefit of the owners only. The socialist solution of this, he suggested, was the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and establishment of social ownership over them, which according to him was the

basic principles of socialism.¹⁶ But he was careful enough that mere redistribution of land to the landless or seizure of treasures of the 'rajas' or 'mahajans' and distributing the same to the people does not mean socialism. To him "Socialism is something more sensible, more scientific, more civilized than all that."¹⁷ This socialism would be established through the power of the state with "sufficient power of coercion to put down resistance or sufficient popular support to be able to deal with opposition."¹⁸

Jaya Prakash Narayan had strong faith in Dialectical Materialism and agreed with the Marxian proposition about the influence of material forces in individual and social institutions. He also agreed with the Marxian economic interpretation of history, and held that all the political institutions of a society are nothing but the reflections of a given set of economic conditions. The way of living is a determinant factor and men's idea of good and bad are also determined by the economic conditions under which they live. As a true Marxist, he conceded that he was an "environmentalist" and indirectly maintained the primacy of material forces in society. He said, "Social division is an organic process of society. Marx showed that its primary source lay in the manner in which men earned their livelihood."¹⁹

Speaking about the real difference between Marxism and Gandhism, JP pointed out that it was not materialism or spiritualism, but it was on the point of inquiry into the causes of economic inequalities, into the origin of princes, landlords, capitalists, and paupers, the secrets of human exploitation - the main points of socialism, which had not been considered by Gandhism.²⁰ He confessed that he was no believer in Kings or princes or in the order which produce the modern kings of industry. He also confessed that he was a Marxist. Being aware of the different theories of socialism and different pictures of socialist society, he suggested to take into consideration only one of the several schools of socialist thought and said, "... if we accept Marxism or belong to the Marxist School, as I do, the differences are greatly narrowed down"²¹ though not at all removed or obliterated.²¹

Jaya Prakash refuted the contention that socialism could not be established in India, an industrially backward country, whose traditions were different²² and emphatically assured that if there is a socialist party in power with the requisite sanction behind it, socialism could be built up everywhere

in the world.²³ However, being convinced by the Marxian theories, he thought that main objectives of socio-economic equality and the establishment of real socialism could not be possible through mere persuasion. He thought Marxism was a scientific theory through which discovery of truth was possible.

The steps and measures, suggested by him in this respect, were clearly set forth in the 'Objective Section' of the programme of the All India Congress Socialist party (drafted by himself), the first being the documents for "transfer of all powers to the producing masses" and the other object being "To everyone according to his needs and from every one according to his capacity" to be the basis of distribution and economic productin.²⁴ This undoubtedly indicates his Marxist leaning.

At the failure of the first phase of the non-violent mass-action during the Quit India Movement of 1942, he felt that violence, which according to him, was in no way contrary to the Congress Policy, would be introduced and planned to hit the enemy by small bands of trained fighters called the "Azad Dasta".²⁵ Jaya Prakash was one of the pioneers in modern India to have initiated such guerilla tactics through 'Azad Dasta' to work in every district, as "a brand of shock troopers, a sort of advanced guard, who should possess the proper technical and political training who should wage ceaseless war against enemy."²⁶

JP was aware about the requirements of a successful underground activities for freedom fighters, and said, "Particular attention should be paid to the problem of building up of a sound decentralised organisation and the work of preparation both in respect of manpower and materials." He suggested this scheme of guerilla operation, on the basis of his findings of the causes of initial retreat of the revolution, i.e. "(i) Lack of an organisation to lead the resurgent masses, (ii) absence of a full programme of Revolution; (iii) failure of all parts of the country to rise together."²⁷ JP was influenced by the guerillas of Spain, preventing Napoleon from conquering Spain, the activities of Russian Guerillas and thought that this Azad Dastas would be "the instrument of complete paralysis and demoralization of British rule," and would become the leaders of revolutionary peoples' army in India.

His plan was that "In a district of average size 250 Azads might be organised in five Jathas of 50 Azads each, which should further be divided

into 25 Dastas of ten Azads each. It is suggested that every member of the Dastas should have the sur-title Azad added to his name Our Azad would mean the same as the Spanish “Guerilla” or the Russian “Partisan...”²⁸

JP elaborately discussed the discipline and Oath of allegiance in the name of “True Son of Mother India.” He suggested a broad programme of action and tactics which includes the training of Azads, the list of necessary materials, with a concrete instructions which indicate his vast knowledge about guerilla operation. He suggested three broad plans of action —

1. Dislocation of chief means of government communications and war efforts.
2. Depriving governmental financial centres, like treasuries, and the like of monies.
3. Raids for destruction or disarming of the centres of enemies forces and authority.

The first plan included, “(i) Telegraph and telephone lines and installations, (ii) Railways, (iii) Road and High ways, (iv) Postal Services, (v) Broad-casting and wireless telegraphy.”

The Second plan included,

- “(i) Looting of mail bags,
- (ii) Looting of post offices and railway stations,
- (iii) Looting of railway trains carrying government money;
- (iv) Looting of revenue collections before they reach head-quarters;
- (v) Looting of Government grain shops and other government stores.”

The Third Plan included,

- “(i) raid on Police Stations for disarming and destruction of records;
- (ii) raid on chowkies, patwari's office, registration office, chungi office and other small and not-too-well guarded offices and destruction of the records contained therein and of other properties, where possible.”²⁹

JP, however, insisted that killing and terrorism were not part of their programme, for which he suggested possession of arms was inessential except as to self-defence for Azads, and few country weapons were sufficient for such activities. He insisted on the training of Azads and to eliminate the unfit. His suggested list of materials for such operation also reveal his intention of anti killing and anti-terrorism. He suggested the following materials :

- “(a) Plier or wire cutter - 2.
- (b) Hack-saw-2
- (c) Hammers-2
- (d) Axe -1
- (e) Spades - 4
- (f) Pick Axes - 2
- (g) Lathies -10
- (h) Spears - 5
- (i) Materials for incendiaries
- (j) Two ropes thickness, length 12 ft.
- (k) Copper wiring 1/18 swg., Length 10”.”³⁰

Thus, J.P. like an experienced practical guerilla commander suggested the plan and programme in details for 'Azad Dasta'. On the basis of this plan, activities were started in many parts of the country, and “Looting of mail bags has been found very successfully in Karnataka and parts of Gujrat. In Karnataka a number of railway stations have also been burnt down by dislocation bands”. In the Broach district of Gujrat, “two police stations were raided by trained bands, and disarmed and records were burnt. In the second raid only 27 guerillas, whom we shall call Azads, took part. This was due to detailed planning and disciplined attack.”³¹

Such was the nationalist and revolutionary spirit of Jaya Prakash to free India from the bondage of foreign rule. During the Quit India movement of 1942, “JP became a legendary hero of the revolution as a guerilla leader.”³²

JP., thus, accepted the revolutionary methods of Marx and regarded Karl Marx as “one of the greatest minds produced by the human race” and “a path-finder in sociology.”³³ To him “Marxism is a science of society and a scientific method of social change that includes social revolution,” and emphasised that “the socialist movement in India must evolve into its own picture of socialism in the light of Marxist thought and of conditions in this country”.³⁴ At the same time, he was careful enough that there can be no place for dogmatism or fundamentalism in Marxist thought. He also consciously maintained that this truth was a related thing, the whole of which could not be comprehended by any single theory, however scientific it may be. In his “From Socialism to Sarvodaya”, he categorically described the ever progressing and enquiring nature of human being, and said, “Man is ever progressing towards the truth, for he is by nature an enquiring being. He will never be able to reach the ultimate truth, but, by gradually eliminating untruth, he will be able slowly to approach truth.”³⁵ This understanding of human nature led him to reconsider again and again, his attitude towards political theory or ism.

III. The Communist Party of India, Soviet Russia and Jaya Prakash Narayan

Jaya Prakash returned from the United States of America as a convert to Marxism and was “... feeling like a ticking time-bomb”³⁶ But he did not join the Communist Party of India. The Communist Party was following the directives of the Communist International, even regarding the questions of Indian national interest. The Comintern Policy since 1928, according to Jaya Prakash “... had resulted in the division of the labour and socialist movements through out the world.....” as a result of which the Communists were isolated from the national movements, and this appeared to him “... to be contrary to Marxist theory generally and specifically to the famous colonial policy enunciated by Lenin.”³⁷ When the whole nation was awakened and participated in the celebrated Salt Satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi, the Communists denounced this national movement “..... as bourgeois and Mahatma Gandhi as a lackey of Indian bourgeoisie.”³⁸ A true lover of freedom, like Jaya Prakash, could not support such a stand of the Communists, on the contrary, he developed in him an aversion to the C.P.I. and this ultimately marked the beginning of his ideological alienation from Soviet Russia. He kept himself

away from the CPI and joined the ranks of freedom fighters. But to him freedom or Swaraj was much more than mere national independence. By “free India,” he meant, “Socialist India and Swaraj the rule of the poor and the downtrodden”³⁹

The role of the CPI inside the country and the events that were taking place in Soviet Russia, including ideological conflict and struggle for power, the Soviet dictated policy in our country, followed by the CPI, alienated him from both the CPI and the Soviet Russia. The Stalin-Hitler Pact of August 1939, Russian reassessment of “Hitler overnight from a fascist menace to a friend of peace”, Indian Communists' disruptionist game' against both the Congress and the Congress Socialist Party, their drastic change of attitude regarding the imperialist Second World War as a 'People's War', their spying against the underground workers of 1942 movement, including those of 'Azad Hind Fouj' of Subhas Chandra Bose, upto the extent of getting them arrested⁴⁰ — all these shocked the nationalist leaders including Jaya Prakash. The Indian Communists “Not only did support the demand of Pakistan but went much further by saying that every linguistic group in India had a distinct nationality and was therefore entitled as they claimed was the case in the USSR, to the right to secede. This would have meant the total dismemberment of the country and its Balkanisation into a dozen or more independent states.”⁴¹ For such activities within the country, “the Communists were by 1944, both internationally and nationally, isolated and discredited”.⁴²

JP was a true lover of freedom. This urge to fight for freedom led him, alongwith other like-minded persons in the Nasik Central jail, to draft the formation of the Congress Socialist Party within the National Congress. The ultimate aim of it was to make the Congress policy more scientific and to link the national freedom movement with the movement for economic and social regeneration. This party, as he envisaged, should be devoted to both independence and socialism. In his own words, “The Congress Socialist Party played a notable part in giving shape to the socio-economic content of the Congress policy and a hard edge to the struggle for freedom. By and large, the Congress Socialists were among the most uncompromising and undaunted soldiers of freedom.”⁴³

The situation created by the CPI within the country and the developments

inside the Soviet Union including its policy and the policy of Third Communist International under the leadership of Stalin, forced J.P., the staunch supporter of freedom, to remain with the freedom fighters, alienating himself from the Indian Communists. The developments, which according to J.P. were 'Shocking', in Europe, including the rise of Hitler, "the gravest of Stalin's mistakes - the costliest and the most criminal..", German Communists' declaration, under Stalin's inspiration- the social democrats to be "the enemy number one", and the Nazis enemy only after them, which ultimately helped 'horrors of Hitlerism" also influenced too much to rethink his Marxism.⁴⁴

In 1957, JP argued in 'Janata', the mouthpiece of the Socialist Party that ".... in Russia today there is not only heavy concentration of political but also of economic power. It is not that Stalinist dictatorship is merely political, its grip on economic life equally pervasive.... The economic organisation of the Soviet state is the real basis of its dictatorship"⁴⁵ The other developments in Soviet Russia 'powerfully influenced' JP's thinking. He was shocked by the trials of renowned Russian Communist leaders, the great revolutionary heroes of the Socialist Revolution. He could not accept the forceful dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by Lenin which he (J.P) thought as 'miscarriage of the revolution and distortion of socialism.' "In Soviet Russia", J.P., "saw not only the denial of 'formal' freedom, but also denial of social justice, of equality growth of a new class of bureaucratic rulers, of new forms of exploitation. All these was not only the absence of socialism but also its negation"⁴⁶ All these events led him to believe that both the C.P.I. and the Kremlin were, in some way or other, misapplying Marxism-Leninism not only in India but throughout the world. To him, Russian Revolution was started as a peoples revolution, with the support of the masses, but "Lenin converted it into a minority revolution" by forcibly dissolving the Constituent Assembly and seizing its "..... power with the help of rebel soldiers and urban working class".⁴⁷ This forced him to the conclusion that Communist rule in elsewhere "is a minority rule". In his own words, "over centralisation of political and economic authority" in Soviet Russia, "and total statism were clearly at the bottom of the evil"⁴⁸ He, however, felt the special conditions of Russia which necessitated the revolution and made it a success, but this would never occur again in any modern state. All these events and experiences, to quote again JP., "compelled me to re-examine the basic postulates of Marxism", and the Congress Socialist

Party and the later Socialist Party was virtually affected by such ideological reconsideration.⁴⁹

Another experience within this country, also affected him seriously to think otherwise, that was the *United Front Policy*, which JP formulated with the CPI even in the face of severe opposition from his colleagues like, Rammanohar Lohia, M.R. Masani, Achyut Patwardhan and Ashoka Mehta.⁵⁰ This idea of working together with the Communists and other leftist groups, was in his mind from the very inception of the Congress Socialist Party. JP, being the organising secretary of the CSP, dreamt the possibility of a united socialist-communist party under united leadership and with the active help and support of Acharya Narendra Deva he proceeded with his dreams and hopes. The problem of socialist unity, according to Jayaprakash was “the problem of coming together in one party of all those groups and individuals who stand by Marxism”.⁵¹ Socialist leadership, particularly, JP, “.... tried to create left-wing unity among such disparate anti-right wing elements as Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and his followers (latter called the Forward Bloc), the Communist Party of India, the dissident communist sects of 'Royists' (later called the League of Radical Congressmen), and others.⁵² As a result, the CSP was opened to the communists. It was interesting to note that CPI was eager for such united policy, with the CSP, which they frequently attacked as bourgeoisie and Mahatma Gandhi as a lackey of bourgeoisie, and suddenly they recognised the Indian National Congress as a 'National Front'. However, JP was happy with this new policy of the CPI and took the initiative of realising this possibility of united Socialist-Communist Party, and “A compact was arrived at with the CPI, according to which membership of the CSP was opened to the Communists, CSP branches, particularly in the south, were deliberately handed over to them..... communists were elected to the AICC and other Congress bodies with CSP support and in the trade Union movement it was agreed to work together”.⁵³ Surprisingly enough, the members and sympathisers of another party, the CPI, were given key position in the CSP organisation, including in the post of joint Secretaryship to Dinker Mehta, a confirmed communist, and P.Sundarayya was put in charge of the Andhra Party. This policy according to Madhu Limaye, “....was against ordinary common sense and violated the ABC of organisation.”⁵⁴

The fact behind the change of attitude of the CPI was in fact, due to the change of policy of the Communist International, which through Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley advised the CPI to consolidate the left-wing elements in the Congress to build up a broad-based, wide spread fighting front to combat the British imperialism.⁵⁵ In Meerut, January 1936, the Congress Socialists anticipating the change in Communist tactics, decided to form United Front with the CPI, with the two objects : “One, United Front as between Party and Party and two, going still further, admission of individual Communists to membership of the Socialist Party to pave the way from United Front to complete merger and socialist unity.”⁵⁶ This opportunity was successfully availed by the Communists in all fronts including party executive, both in the CSP and the National Congress, the Peasants and workers fronts by infiltrating their members. Another important opportunity was unconsciously given to the communist, by giving a cover upon them, as at that time the CPI was illegal and through this cover, communists built up successfully their organisations in various fronts. Within one year, of the United Front, the tactics of the communists to use the CSP as a platform became clear to the CSP from a secret statement of the Communist Party. In September, M.R. Masani, the then Joint Secretary of the CSP, published another secret circular under the title “Communist Plot against the CSP”, which included the secret plan of capturing the socialist organisation. At last in 1940; the CSP leadership decided to expel the communists from the party and the United Front became an end.⁵⁷

“The disastrous' consequences of that Policy,” JP said, “... was that the whole of the south was lost by the CSP to the CPI. But that nightmarish experience resulted in one good. It taught us a great lesson in politics. We learnt, that there cannot be any unity with an 'official' Communist Party (i.e. a party affiliated to the Comintern or approved of by the Kremlin); that such a Communist Party is not a free agent but a tool of Moscow; that the primary loyalty of the members of such a party in first to Russia and only then to anybody else.... their unswerving goal is always monolithic communist rule these were valuable lessons, but perhaps the price paid was too high.”⁵⁸

JP in his letter to Freedom Fighters, explained his bitter experiences about his left unity when he said, “We made serious attempts on two occasions for left unity which not only failed to achieve their object, but also left a trail

of bitterness that still hinders work. While the CSP sincerely opened its door to left and socialist groups and extended its hand of friendship to them, they only sought in all that an opportunity to enlarge their respective influences, recruit members and build cells, “bore from within” and to play other tricks that have been played all over the world in the name of left unity.”⁵⁹

This experience during his short journey with the Communists affected him a great. Ideological differences started not only with the Indian Communists but with the Marxism as a whole and felt the need for re-examining Marxism in the context of Indian situation in particular and Asian context in general. He was so much dissatisfied with the Communists that he said, “Lohia has correctly pointed out the irrelevance of both the capitalist and the communist systems to the situation in two-thirds of the world. He offers decentralisation of economic and political power as a solution”⁶⁰

But these events and experiences both inside the country and in Soviet Russia, were the immediate causes of rethinking his ideological position. JP's life, in fact, was a quest for freedom and equality and as soon as he realised the ineffectiveness of his present path or to be inadequate, he did not hesitate to find out a new and surer path for attaining the same. This feeling of his mind forced him to change his ideological position on shifting from one category to the other. He had good faith in Marxian methodology and Marxian thesis of economic power, controlling the political power, irrespective of the role of the CPI and Soviet Russia. But he had some doubt about the methods of bringing social change. In fact, JP, had continued his faith in democratic means of peaceful social change. And this was to some extent explicit, even in the days, he adopted revolutionary method through Azad Dasta, where he categorically indicated that terrorism or killing of men were not a part of his programme and use of arms was allowed only to self-defence. He believed in revolution by consent as opposed to violent revolution. This was much more evident in his later age, when he called for Total Revolution, a revolution by popular consent.

This attitude of re-examining Marxism was further strengthened during the days of his detention in Deoli, where he went on 31 days' hunger-strike for the betterment of the detenus. The Communist prisoners were following a disruptionist tactics, upto the extent of “collaborationist policy towards the

authorities". This at a stage, reached to the act of informers and spies⁶¹ by them. Thus, he grew in him a dislike for the CPI and Moscow and wanted to follow a new line "... to keep away from the dogmatism and servile subservience to Moscow, practised by the communists."⁶² The result was his transition to Democratic Socialism. He began to grow in his mind the fact that Marxism and its interpretation of history could not be true to all times and circumstances, since, the modern states, may be capitalist in nature, but some workers or labour beneficial works are being done, such as education, welfare, health, housing which probably were not examined or looked upon by Marxism. And hence, he thought it essential to re examine Marxism.

IV. JP as a Leader of Democratic Socialism

The beginning of JP's democratic socialist thinking may be traced to as early as 1940, when he placed before Gandhi and the Congress, "An Outline Picture of Swaraj" (March, 1940), where he had elaborated a democratic and non-violent social order, placing the supreme power to the people and the constitution.³⁰ His social order was based on the ideals of freedom. This was more or less attracted towards non-violent democratic means.⁶⁴ He argued that if the theory of violence was not challenged, then in a society where there was a possibility of bringing about social change by democratic means, "it would be counter revolutionary to resort to violence, and that socialism could not exist, nor be created in the absence of the democratic freedom." Logically, he "rejected the dictatorship of the Proletariat which in effect meant the dictatorship of bureaucratic oligarchy."⁶⁵ He supported the populist revolution, meaning revolution by popular consent based on reason and voluntary support of the people. He argued for a social revolution where full freedom should be allowed to find its own democratic expression⁶⁵. He said that Marx conceived of two ways to socialism, one peaceful, the other violent, and the way to be adopted depends on the conditions of the country and JP categorically confirmed that he would choose the democratic method.⁶⁷ He further said that it was wrong to make a rigid rule regarding the means — either peaceful or through violence. He said, "we cannot say that socialism must be brought about only through peaceful means or by only violent means. It depends on the conditions of those countries. Marx's mind on this question was absolutely clear."⁶⁸

According to him, both the methods are acceptable in Marxism and the correct Marxian position is to follow either method but to be determined by the relevant historical and objective conditions of a particular country. To quote him, "I believe that socialism which Marx pictured was the socialism which we are trying to describe by the term democratic socialism. Only that socialism can bring about the emancipation of toilers and no other."⁶⁹ To him the objectives of socialism were not merely nationalisation of some industries or redistribution of land to the tiller, but were, "elimination of exploitation and poverty; provision of equal opportunities to all for self development; full development of the material and moral resources of society and utilisation of these resources in accordance with the needs and wishes of society as a whole, rather than in accordance with the dictates of profit; equitable apportionment of national wealth and social, educational and other services between all who labour and serve society."⁷⁰ With such vast objectives in mind, J.P. further elaborated the idea of Marxism, particularly its concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat which according to him, is normally misunderstood. J.P. explained that according to Marx and Lenin, dictatorship of the proletariat was not a socialist society at all, rather, it was a "transitional phase, under certain conditions, between capitalism and socialism." This dictatorship of the proletariat may be necessary under certain circumstances but it is in no way the dictatorship of the party, as found in Soviet Russia, which is a denial of Marxism. The true dictatorship of the proletariat, after the transitional period is over, must disappear in course of time.⁷¹ Further, he said that "dictatorship of the proletariat in Marxist theory does not mean the dictatorship of a single party such as the Communist Party in Russia. It means the dictatorship of a class, the working class; or in industrially backward countries such as India and Post Czarist Russia, of a combination of the toiling classes, such as workers, peasants, and the lower middle class. These classes may have one or more political parties or have freedom to function freely never meant that parties would be suppressed; it meant only the suppression of the ruling classes and their political and economic institutions".⁷²

Even in his pro-Marxian days, J.P. was convinced that socialism without democratic freedom was meaningless, even if, in India, socialism could be established by revolutionary methods. His picture of a socialist India was the picture of economic and political democracy where, "man will neither be

slave to capitalism nor to a party or a state. Man will be free....” without having great difference in their incomes.⁷³

Further, he stated that the objective conditions of a country would decide which method, peaceful or violent, would be adopted for social transformation. India, he said, was ripe for peaceful transition to socialism.⁷⁴ He said again, “I have reaffirmed my faith in democratic socialism, which is the only true socialism.”⁷⁵

During the Quit India Movement of 1942, as already mentioned, Jayaprakash advocated the theory of violence through Azad Dastas and also class struggle. But he increasingly realised that democratic or peaceful methods alone could solve the problems of different traditions of Indian society. “The overall requirement for socialism to be achieved is the existence of a well organised powerful socialist party, supported mainly by workers' and peasants' organisations and organisations of youth (volunteer, student, etc.) and the city poor.”⁷⁶ The Congress Socialist Party, according to him, would soon be able to fulfil this task and would be able to represent the oppressed masses, by working both within and outside the Congress.

Thus, he began to grow in his mind the fact that Marxism and its interpretation of history could not be true to all times and circumstances, particularly in the industrially backward countries of Asia. In modern states, may be capitalist in nature, some workers or labour beneficial works are being done - such as educational, welfare, health care, housing, which probably, were not examined or considered by Marxism. Under this circumstances, he urged the Asian Socialists to find their “own road to socialism” and their “own pattern of industrialisation.” Such revaluation or rethinking of Marxism, in his own words, “... was gradually bringing me nearer to Gandhiji. But I had not yet been completely converted and so found myself at the half-way house of democratic socialism.”⁷⁷ He thought that the European Socialism both Marxian and non Marxian was mainly based on the industrialised society, whereas the Asian countries were overwhelmingly rural and agrarian by nature with a very low industrial capitalist development. Naturally, the Asian Socialists had a little to follow or learn from the European Socialists. However, he mentioned that Communists in Russia and China, precisely backward and rural communities, had succeeded in capturing power, “But the 'Socialism'

that they have built up is a far cry from the brotherhood of the equal and the free which to me is the essence of true socialism.”⁷⁸

J.P., in his “Ideological Problems of Socialism”, categorically analysed the Soviet system of nationalisation of industries and the overall economic structure developed there and came to the conclusion that mere nationalisation could not produce socialism, as in Russia. It produced “Centralisation, bureaucratisation, lack of industrial democracy, in short, lack of popular control over the economic process,” which again would lead to develop, “..... exploitation, there would be no equal distribution of surplus value”⁷⁹ For this reason, he suggested that the Asian Socialist should not only depend on the support of the working class to establish socialism, but they must have the support of the peasantry, by satisfying their elemental urges. At the same time he suggested the method should be democratic which would include, “... vital, large, mass movements, mass action of a nonviolent character, unconstitutional but at the same time peaceful,” alongwith parliamentary and constitutional methods.⁸⁰

In support of his democratic means for attaining socialism, J.P. in his article, 'Transition to Socialism,' argued that Marx was never opposed to democratic methods and said, “As early as 1872, when political democracy had not yet risen to its full height, Marx had visualised a peaceful transition to socialism. If we were to take into consideration all the social changes that have taken place since then we would be strengthened in Marx's view. Political democracy has become far more democratic today than Marx's time and the economic, political and ideological forces of capitalism have been completely shattered on the European continent and become much weaker in Great Britain.”⁸¹ Thus J.P. wanted to prove that methodologically democratic means were not opposed to Marxism, rather democracy and socialism were inseparable. Freedom and equal opportunity, the main contents of socialism, according to J.P., could be best achieved only in Socialism, based on and achieved through democratic means. This attitude of his mind was expressed better in the Patna conference of the Socialist Party, 1949, and its Madras Conference of 1950. In his own words, “Thus the Marxist, Leninist C.S.P., through several incarnations, developed into the democratic-socialist P.S.P.”⁸²

In fact, from the very beginning of his political career, Jaya Prakash had

been influenced by Gandhi and Gandhian techniques of social reconstruction. Even in the days of his Marxian conviction, he could not overcome this overpowering influence. According to him, "Socialism wishes to advance by setting class against class, Gandhism by cutting across classes. Socialism wishes to destroy classes by making one class victorious over the other ... Gandhism wishes to abolish classes..."⁸³ Socialism aims at a classless society, but it ultimately makes the state all-powerful by making the social revolution dependent upon state action. Jaya Prakash did not support a more powerful state as in Russia and supported the state machinery to be used for social transformation. He said, "No party in the world of today can build up socialism unless it has the machinery of the state in its hands..."⁸⁴ The state, to him, was a necessary tool and an instrument of power in society. The state power was needed to legislate, to propagate, to educate and even to enforce the will upon the people. To him, "Behind every piece of legislation lies the State's power to persuade, and ultimately, to coerce".⁸⁵

By 1946, he had changed his views about the state. The inadequacies of the mere control of the state over the means of production and distribution could not serve the real purpose of the individual and society. His mission was to prevent the state from acquiring the sole monopoly in industry and employment. The state under socialism, as in Russia, far from withering away, threatens to become all-powerful by maintaining a stranglehold over the entire body of citizen.⁸⁵

To him, socialism was not merely anti-capitalism or Stalinism. Nationalisation of industry and collectivisation of agriculture, though important, were not themselves socialism. The important thing was to stop exploitation of man by man abolishing injustice and oppression and to create an atmosphere of true freedom.⁸⁷

According to Jaya Prakash Narayan, complete democratic government should be established in Indian states, "in accordance with the principles of abolition of social distinctions and equality between citizens, there shall not be any titular heads of the states in the persons of Rajas and Nawabs." "The political and economic organisations of the state shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom." The life of the villagers should be reorganised and villages should be made self-governing units and self-sufficient

as far as possible. The land laws should be drastically reformed on the principle that land should belong to the actual tiller alone and no cultivator should have more land than he actually needed to support his family or a fair standard of living. At the same time he suggested nationalisation of heavy transport, shipping, mining and heavy industry with decentralised textile industries, and collective ownership and control of large-scale mass production for the benefit of all concerned.⁸⁸

The socialist India, as he pictured, was “cooperative farming run by gram-panchayats, collective farms in new settlements, large-scale industry owned and managed by the state, community owned and managed industry and small industry organised into producers' cooperatives.”⁸⁹ As a result of cooperative farming, a portion of the present agricultural population would become surplus, who would be engaged in industries, subsidiary to farming. He suggested both large-scale and small scale industries, “together with agriculture will form parts of a balanced national economy, democratically managed and controlled.”⁹⁰ Jaya Prakash, thus visualised a socialist order based on both political and economic democracy, where “man will be free”, and man should serve the society which would provide him means of livelihood, and “He will be free to express his opinions and there will be opportunities for him to rise to his full moral stature.”⁹¹

V. Jaya Prakash's Special Penchant for Freedom

Jaya Prakash Narayan's life was a quest-quest for better society for the upliftment of all including the downtrodden of the society. As such, he had a special penchant for freedom. It was this aspect of his life which led him to be attracted to one political thesis after another and he rejected them when he found that they placed constraints on freedom.⁹² Whenever he found that Marxism and the role of the C.P.I. would not fit into the Indian system whose conditions were different from Soviet Russia or other socialist countries, he decided to change his political thesis. It was the Soviet experience, where he saw “not only the denial of 'formal' freedom, but also denial of social justice, of equality the growth of a new class of bureaucratic rulers, of new forms of exploitation,”⁹³ that led him to re-examine Marxism. He also concluded about the role of the CPI that it was a tool of Moscow, and its primary loyalty

was to Russia and than to anybody else. During the later half of the thirties, the communists were allowed entry into the CSP so as to follow the united Front Policy. But J.P's experience about the CPI's role of winning over the C.S.P. led him to rebuild his political thinking. According to him, "communists had no doubt, been successful in capturing power, particularly in Russia and China, but the socialism that they have built up is a far cry from the brotherhood of the equal and the free which is the essence of socialism".⁹⁴ As such he felt the necessity of rebuilding the socialist thinking based primarily on the original enquiry into the soil of the country. He felt the necessity of "unfolding of the Gandhian techniques of social revolution and reconstruction as exemplified in the Bhoodan, Gramdan and Gramraj movement and the accumulating experience of state-ownership and bureaucratic management of economic enterprise which is being misconceived as socialism".⁹⁵ A true lover of freedom, like J.P., found in totalitarian communism, which was wrongly called as socialism, suppression of freedom, and no opposition party was also allowed to function, and even the trade unions of workers were the "subordinate limbs of the all powerful state with no power to strike or to take any other action independent of the state or the ruling party"⁹⁶ In such system, the state "acquires an unchallenged control over the life, liberty and happiness of the subjects," which according to J.P. was not socialism at all. To him socialism meant fullest political and economic democracy and in the socialist society, "the individual i.e. the worker, is free and the state has no power to deprive him of his rights and privileges except through the process of law."⁹⁷

Thus, his conception of socialism aimed at the establishment of freedom both individual and organisational, since, he visualised that in a true socialist society the trade union must have the right to decide and function in accordance with their own choice without state interference, upto the extent of having the right to strike, and political parties may be formed and function freely. For the establishment of real freedom, he argued for the freedom of press with the right to criticise the government. The economic power should not fully remain under the strict control of the state. It should be rested with the trade unions, cooperatives and other representative bodies of the working man, and as such, socialism would find its truest expression through these democratic organs, and freedom of the individual, in all respect could be restored. For the sake of freedom and equality, he also urged the abolition of special opportunity

or privilege of the children of the higher grade of wage earners. All these principles of freedom and equality, according to J.P., “merely state the conditions that will prevent socialism from being submerged by totalitarianism.”⁹⁸ He also argued for the abolition of caste system, which according to him was anti-social, undemocratic and tyrannous, and was the cause of inequality in the society. He also urged for freedom of religion, placing it completely free from state interference. His socialist society was a “democratic society where everyone is a worker and all men are equal including women; where there are equal opportunities for all and wages do not differ so much as to create distinctions of class; where all wealth is owned by the community; where progress is planned, where labour is joyful and life is richer, fuller and beautiful.”⁹⁹ Such a vast programme for a socialist state suggested by J.P. was due to his deep faith in freedom and equality. He believed that without the spontaneous development of humanity, no material development was possible and this necessarily demanded the individual freedom in its true sense.

The Gandhian influence from the very beginning of his political career, and the democratic faith of the Congress with which the C.S.P. was associated, influenced J.P. and the C.S.P. to think in terms of democratic socialism. But whenever he found that “the bulk of the Congressmen were carpet beggars devoted to the pursuit of their happiness ignoring liberty,”¹⁰⁰ he did not hesitate to leave the Congress and form the socialist Party. All these factors, the Gandhian influence upon him, the role of the C.P.I. the realisation of the Soviet Socialist experience and also of the real Indian condition led him think in a new direction and to repudiate his earlier concepts of proletarian dictatorship, inevitability of violent revolution, hostility to constitutional and parliamentary methods in the Indian context. All these were due to his faith in individual freedom and equality, which forced him to search new surer method throughout his life. In his later phase of the life, he gave more emphasis on these principles of freedom and equality to be maintained in free India. In a letter addressed to the then prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, on 27th June, 1973, J.P. urged for the independence of the judiciary and changing the procedure of appointment of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. In this respect of appointment of the chief Justice, J.P. indicated that the president of the USA,

who is constitutionally, more powerful, “than the Prince Minister of India, does not enjoy such unlimited power.”¹⁰¹

Reading the power of the parliament, as decided by the supreme court, to abrogate the fundamental rights, he wanted to impose restrictions upon the Parliament “... so as to prevent another parliament in the future, ... from extinguishing the fundamental freedoms of the citizen and establishing a dictatorship.”¹⁰² Such was the sense of freedom in him, for which he could never kept himself aloof from the sufferings of the people and could not remain silent when curtailment of freedom or any attack on it by anybody else, including the governmental machinery was made. Even after his official retirement from party and power-politics, his penchant for freedom, led him to stand with the people and to organise them for the preservation of freedom of individual, the ultimate mission of his life.

VI. The Sarvodaya Phase

Long before his resignation from party politics, Jaya Prakash had understood that the social conditions of Europe where socialism had been established, and India were different. While the former was an industrialised society and matured capitalism, India and other Asian countries were overwhelmingly rural and agrarian communities for which there was very little guidance to be obtained from the European experiences. The main work of thinking, experimenting and innovating for India was to be done by the Indian socialists themselves.¹⁰³ He, therefore, was in search of a new technique and a new philosophy, which he found in Sarvodaya.

Ever since 1953, Jaya Prakash was thinking in terms of Sarvodaya Philosophy. In his own words, “the parting began with what has come to be grandiloquently known as Jeevandan” (1954), which was a decision to withdraw from party and power politics and to devote life “to the Bhoodan and Sarvodaya movement.”¹⁰⁴ After his contact with Vinoba Bhave and his activities for the upliftment of the poor, he realised that socialism, in its ordinary sense could not assure mankind about the ultimate aims of freedom, equality, brotherhood and peace, “unless socialism was transformed into Sarvodaya” and “those goals would remain beyond its reach and just as we had to take the ashes of independence, so future, generations may have to take the ashes of

socialism”¹⁰⁵ Thus he accepted Sarvodaya philosophy, which, according to him, was used by Gandhi in the sense of the greatest good for all. He thought that “Gandhi is even today the authoritative propounder of Sarvodaya philosophy and way of life.”¹⁰⁶ Through this philosophy, J.P. wanted to generate mental peace and prosperity of individual in the society, while the socialists and the communists, in his opinion, lay emphasis on material prosperity only.¹⁰⁷ Jaya Prakash realised that the material prosperity was not sufficient for India or elsewhere, without a sense of creating a outlook of life, and “In such a restless society,” he said, “violence and war would be endemic. All values of life would be subordinated to this over-mastering desire for more..... to have more and still more. Equality, freedom, brotherhood would all be in danger of being submerged in a universal flood of materialism”.¹⁰⁸ J.P. thus, turned to sarvodaya philosophy and gradually accepted bhoodan and Sarvodaya movements as his mission of life.

His “The Ideological Problems of Socialism”, based on his address to the First Asian Socialist Conference held at Rangoon in 1953, is an example of these ends. He said that socialism was ninety percent practice and ten percent theory, and identified several practical problems based on mainly Soviet experience of socialist society, without overcoming of which a true socialist society would not be realised.¹⁰⁹ The first problem, he identified was the problem of socialist axioms. Describing in details the Soviet society, he came to the conclusion that after socialist revolution, what has been established there was “more as capitalism than socialism”, resulting “demoralisation of the party and the corruption of the ideals,” based on “amoralism,” for which he urged that the socialists “must subscribe to certain values that we could sacrifice them in order to achieve an immediate end”.¹¹⁰

The second problem, that he put forward was “problem of creating a proper political framework for the development of a socialist society.” J.P., highlighting the actual political framework developed in Russia, characterised it to be an one party dictatorship, with a restricted membership to it, without any democratic framework leading to a completely bureaucratic state. He expressed the view that this could not be described as a workers' state or people's state and naturally it was not acceptable. He also mentioned about the governmental efforts to build up a socialist society within the framework of parliamentary democracy as in some western countries like Sweden or Finland,

and the evolutionary process that started in Yugoslavia through People's Committees, Worker's Councils and peasants representative institutions. J.P. suggested that the political framework should be democratic and "multiparty system might remain a feature of socialist society", and to translate "Socialism into people's rule at the lowest level."¹¹¹

The third problem, he identified was the nature of economic structure, necessary for a socialist society. The experience of Soviet Russia, he pointed out was nothing more than centralisation, bureaucratisation and undemocratic industrial relations alongwith collectivisation of land in the hands of bureaucracy for exploiting the peasants, which he thought was not desirable in a true socialist order. As a solution to this problem, he suggested "dispersal of ownership at different levels, instead of concentrated ownership in the hands of the central government-dispersed ownership at various levels down to the cooperative, down to the village organisation or municipal corporation."¹¹² Further, trade unions and peasant organisations should be freed from the present managerial nature and its middle class leadership and the support of the peasantry should be achieved through satisfying their elemental urges and 'villagisation of land' instead of nationalisation or collectivisation and thus he proposed the ownership of land by village community, "... to the concrete entity with which the peasant is acquainted and of which he is a part."¹¹³

Other two problems, he identified, were the technique or method of struggle and the nature of relationship between socialist countries. As regards to the controversy of various methods, like revolutionary, democratic, parliamentary etc. JP suggested the democratic methods to be followed if democratic opportunities do exist. Alongwith this he connected the Vinoba Bhave's method of love, in redistributing land, which was the main urge of the Socialist Party. JP quoted Bhave: "Yes, land must be redistributed, land must belong to the tiller, land lordism must go. But let us do this by the method of love." and was greatly impressed by this.¹¹⁴

Regarding the relationship between the socialist states, he argued that it must be based on the principle of equality and mutual aid, not as the relationship between Russia and Yugoslavia, development of one economy at the cost of other economy.¹¹⁵

All these practical problems identified by JP and the solutions given by

him reflect his strong desire for Gandhian methods and techniques for the establishment of socialism and a strong aversion to the soviet system and Marxian model.

His framework for the development of a socialist society rejected the one party dominating system of the Soviet Russia and also Parliamentary democracy. He advocated decentralisation of political power accompanied by economic decentralisation. He suggested a nonviolent democratic state with minimum functions, "There will be no place for the tyranny of a few over the majority, nor even the tyranny of the majority over the minority... it will be characterised by the magnanimity of the majority. The dissent of the minority even of one, will receive due consideration."¹¹⁶

In fact, J.P. commenced his political journey as a Marxian Socialist and then shifted to the democratic socialist but midway he abandoned socialism because it did not appear to him to have any "clarity of thought. Democratic Socialism in the west has come to mean, in practice though not in theory, state socialism. And if it has any philosophy, it is that of welfarism from the top and not of a socialist way of life lived in every home and neighbourhood..... the old faith that state ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange plus planning will form that faith led Stalinism. But a new faith has not been created to take the place of the old. For this, the socialist will have to go to Pre-Marxian Socialist, idealists, the philosophical anarchists, to Tolstoy, Ruskin the Post Marxian social idealist, to Gandhi and Vinoba."¹¹⁷

With such an attitude towards Marxism, he re-evaluated Mahatma Gandhi, and said, "Gandhiji was a social revolutionary of an exceptionally original kind, and he has made contributions to social thought and methodology of social change that constitute imperishable contributions to human progress and civilisation."¹¹⁸ He identified three valuable and original contributions of Gandhi, first his moral and ethical basis and insistence on values. According to him, the values of individual and social life, which are the essence of socialism and its proposed new civilization, were also the foundation stones of Gandhian Society. It was correct that Gandhian philosophy was based on religious foundation, but in terms of practices of life, the values he cherished, were not different. His values are, "social and economic equality (casteless and classless society); freedom from exploitation, fullest possible freedom

and opportunity for self development; dignity of the human personality; cooperation; society's responsibility for the well-being of each; and the responsibility of each towards society.”¹¹⁹

The second aspect of Gandhism is its undying contribution to revolutionary technology in the shape of civil disobedience and Satyagraha, in which, according to JP, “the suppressed and exploited have found a new technique that carries the struggle forward beyond the usual peaceful limits and gives full expression to the urge for social justice and social change.”¹²⁰

The third unique contribution of Gandhism is the insistence on economic and political decentralisation which is too necessary for fullest development of true socialist society. JP argued that economic decentralisation was not to mean rejection of modern science or technology rather to mean abolition of exploitation and domination by the use of modern techniques of production. Decentralised economy was aimed at Labour-intensive instead of capital-intensive method which was most necessary in a backward country like India. It neither meant a weak state nor absence of planned life, for which “Gandhian constructive workers have a vital role to play”. On the basis of this analysis, Jaya Prakash came to the conclusion that “Socialism will neglect Gandhism at its peril”, and suggested, “to understand Gandhism and assimilate as much of it as found desirable in order to establish socialism.”¹²¹

His final decision to withdraw from power politics was taken and declared on the second day of the Sixth Sarvodaya Conference, held under the Leadership of Vinoba Bhave at Bodh Gaya, on the banks of Phalgu river, on 19th April, 1954. That day, in presence of a huge mass, including Nehru, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad and a host of others, he proclaimed himself to be a Jeevandani, the decision to offer his life for the cause of Bhoodan Movement, which, according to him, was not merely the redistribution of land, but a great social and human revolution. It was the failure of the Marxists, materialists and even the anti-Marxist politics, to provide any basis for ethical conduct and any incentive for goodness, that led him to resign from power-politics. He understood that materialism as a dialectical analysis would not be able to provide any satisfactory answer to service, sacrifice, freedom, equality and others, even if these were attained by materialism.¹²² In his own words, “I decided to withdraw from party-and-power politics not because of disgust or

sense of any personal frustration, but because it became clear to me that politics could not deliver the goods, the goods being the same old goals of equality, freedom, brotherhood, peace.”¹²³ His belief in Marxism and party-politics were completely shaken and found the solution in the development of all human qualities and values, so that “... every member of the society practices self-discipline and the values of socialism, and among other things, willingly shares and cooperates with his fellowmen.”¹²⁴ This aspect was neglected by both the Socialists and the Communists and Jaya Prakash realised that this would not be solved by petty power-politics, but only by Gandhian techniques, which, according to him, were “political’ in the sense that its goal was the national independence of India, it was not ‘politics’ in the sense that it was a struggle for power for any particular party, it was power for the entire Indian people.”¹²⁵

As a leader of humanity, working to free his fellow men from bondage, Jaya Prakash clearly understood the real picture of party-politics which forced him to seek an alternative. He looked upon the party system as nothing but a corrupting struggle for power, and was distressed to find how people's rule became in effect party rule of a caucus or coterie, how democracy was reduced to mere casting of votes, which again was restricted by the selection of candidates and incomprehensible issues posed before the electorate. He realised that party system reduced the people, “to the position of sheep whose only function would be to choose periodically the shepherds who would look after their welfare ! This to me did not spell freedom — the freedom, the Swaraj, for which I had fought and for which the people of this country had fought.”¹²⁶ He certainly had to seek an alternative - a partyless democracy based on Gandhian ideals, to establish people's socialism rather than state socialism, sarvodaya is people's socialims.¹²⁷ In his own words “The same old beacon lights of freedom, equality and brotherhood” guided the whole course of his life and brought him to the fold of democratic socialism, and again drew him further onwards around this turning of the road to Sarvodaya, the partyless democracy, participating democracy and finally to the total revolution. Thus his life was a quest-quest for freedom, equality and dignity of individual.

VII. Sarvodaya, Gandhism and JP

Jaya Prakash made a complete break with Marxism after a three-week “self-purificatory fast” at Poona in June-July, 1952 and his new quest for goodness started, being confirmed that materialism, which he worshipped for many years could not satisfy and “provide any basis for ethical conduct and any incentive for goodness”, rather conformed the party to take the place of God.¹²⁸ In his later writings and speeches, he confessed in clear terms that without moral regeneration of our politics and individual, establishment of freedom and equality would remain a far cry. For this understanding he decided to come back to the Gandhian model of social reconstruction. During his 16 months confinement in the Lahore Fort in 1944 he was gradually, though unconsciously, drawing towards Gandhism. His writings during this period of confinement and later published under the title “Inside Lahore Fort” in 1959, proves this leaning towards Gandhism.¹²⁹

In 1952, at the Panchmari Conference of the Socialist Party, JP cited the example of Marx in support of his undertaking Gandhian model with his Marxist background, and said if Marx could have synthesised three streams of ideas; i.e. classical economics of England, revolutionary socialism from France and German Philosophy to construct his theory, then, “why we should not combine Marxist thought with that of thought and practice of Mahatma Gandhi and achieve a synthesis of our own?”¹³⁰

J.P., thus undertook the principle of Sarvodaya Plan enunciated by Gandhiji and published in 30 January, 1950. Sarvodaya, according to J.P., “is a people's socialism” aimed to create and develop forms of socialist living through the voluntary endeavour of the people rather than seek to establish socialism by the use of the power of the state.”¹³¹ But he agreed that the idea of Sarvodaya was misconceived by most people, who thought Sarvodaya to be some crankish creed. According to him, it was a “concrete programme of basic social revolution,” and “it is the first attempt to picture concretely a new social order it contains eighty percent of the immediate programme of the Socialist Party, besides sharing the common ideal of a classless and casteless society.”¹³² The complete plan of Sarvodaya was set to achieve a non-violent, non-exploitative, cooperative society based on cooperative economy, instead of competitive economy. In the agricultural field, the land should be

redistributed and ownership should be vested to the tiller of the soil. In the industrial sector, there should be both centralised and decentralised industries. The centralised industries should be owned by the society and managed by autonomous bodies or cooperatives in which employees would also be included with the management. "Foreign concerns should either go out of existence or pass under public ownership", while the banks and insurance companies, ultimately be socialised. However, JP categorically mentioned that Gandhi's insistence on village and village self-government, i.e. gram raj, and on small machine technology for local small communities, do not necessarily mean putting the science or technology backward. He said "the application of science does not depend upon science itself but upon the character of the society" and poor science had nothing to say, if on the basis of science, "government and profiteers combined to create the Frankenstein of modern society". Again, science and technology could be suitably and equally applied for the establishment of peace, goodwill, cooperation, freedom and brotherhood. He further said, "atomic energy has made more possible than ever before the dispersal of production and the development of small technology."¹³³

According to J.P., "The Sarvodaya view is a world view, and the individual standing at the centre of Gandhiji's oceanic circle is a world citizen", and in such a Sarvodaya world society, the idea of present nation state would disappear. Again, he hoped that, "if the internal life of a community is laid on sound foundations, its external life cannot but be equally sound."¹³⁴ This attitude of JP was further influenced by Bhoodan movement of Vinoba Bhave, about which he said, "My brief experience was exhilarating beyond expectation. Within a week nearly seven thousand acres of land were obtained by gifts, most of them spontaneous and from small holders."¹³⁵ Bhoodan, as Vinoba meant, was not only gift, but 'sharing together,' while "Gramdan was equitable sharing together of the lands of the village by the people of the village." Thus Bhoodan signified distribution of land to the landless, Gramdan, on the other hand, meant communisation of the land : institution of community, in place of individual ownership of land.¹³⁶ Thus the idea of Bhoodan became a total agrarian revolution, a beautiful and different type of revolution, without force or compulsion but on the basis of mutual surrender to the community, "The outward social change was accompanied by inward human chang."¹³⁷

Jaya Prakash found practical expression of Gandhi's vision in the activities of Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan, Gramdan movements. It was, to him, a practical method to accomplish the social revolution and a brilliant extension and development of Gandhi's work. He found in it a two-pronged method, one of 'conversion', a mass campaign to persuade men—all men, irrespective of class, creed and other differences, to give up harmful and wrong ideas and thus creating a revolution in ideas and values, and the second, was a programme of self help and self-government, to learn to manage their own affairs, through mutual cooperation and thus leading to a new social life free from outside interference. This was no doubt, according to JP, a noble revolution, distinct from violent revolution or revolution made by law.¹³⁸

JP confessed that the ugliness of party and power politics forced him to undertake the new politics of Sarvodaya which also has its politics — “politics of a different kind : Politics of the people as distinct from the politics of Party and power, 'Lokniti' as distinct from 'rajniti'. The politics of Sarvodaya can have no party and no concern with power. Rather, its aim will be to see that all centres of power are abolished.”¹³⁹ As such, Jaya Prakash became close to the people, for their upliftment, upholding the idea of people's democracy and participating democracy based on both the moral and material regeneration of the society.

VIII. People's Socialism or Voluntary Socialism

Jaya Prakash Narayan considered Sarvodaya to be a form of peoples socialism or voluntary socialism based on peaceful revolution. J.P. being disillusioned with the authority of state using power and force to establish freedom or socialism, both in Communist country and in Western Parliamentary form of governments, developed in him a sense of apathy with the influence of party politics and wanted to eradicate the influence of power and violence from the society on the basis of communitarian society. He confessed that though he gave up Marxism and its basic postulates, he strongly felt that human freedom could be wholly realised only in a stateless society.¹⁴⁰ He was again not sure about the possibility of withering away of state. However, he believed in a state with limited power and functions, and like Gandhi he was also a believer that, that government was the best that governed the least. From this

consideration he thought socialism should be a voluntary socialism rather than a state socialism. In his own words, “the remedy is to create and develop forms of socialist living through the voluntary endeavour of the people rather than seek to establish socialism by the use of power of the state. In other words, the remedy is to establish people's socialism rather than state socialism.”¹⁴¹ According to him, mere economic development was not the only measure of socialism, since economic development in large scale, undoubtedly have taken place under both capitalism and fascism, but these could not be categorised as socialism. To him “Socialism is a way of life, an attitude of mind, a certain ethical behaviour”, which could not be imposed from above by the state or governmental powers.¹⁴² Keeping in mind, the several ways and approaches to define socialism, he said, “I would like to define a socialist society as one in which the individual is prepared voluntarily to subordinate his own interest to the larger interest of society. The key word is this definition in the word voluntary. Men may be forced in various ways to subordinate their interest to the interest of others but as there is force needed to do so, socialism would be limited, even distorted, may be even denied.”¹⁴³ He emphasised on the voluntary surrender of interest which indicate the moral evolution of the individual. For such moral evolution, education, he argued, had a valuable part, alongwith which he added “a socialist movement, a mass movement, of human reconstruction”, which again would be non-political since it would not require the capture of state power.¹⁴⁴ According to him, all the socialists, including Western Democratic Socialists, Communists and the Welfarists were all statists, but his proposed socialism was voluntary people's socialism without the use of state and its power. He considered Sarvodaya to be a people's socialism. He believed that “the more of people's or voluntary socialism and the less of state-enforced socialism, the fuller and more real the socialism. Unfortunately, there are very few socialists who are giving much attention of people's socialism.”¹⁴⁵

He realised the need of a band of selfless workers, prepared to live more in the midst of the masses to help them to reorganise. This is, no doubt, a revised version of the Gandhian ideas of “Lok Sevak Sangh.” He was sure that all the vices of party politics could be eradicated and establishment of better society based on equality in real sense of the term would be possible if it functioned as a communitarian society.

He said, “self government, self-management, mutual cooperation and sharing equality, freedom, brotherhood - all could be practised and developed far better if men lived in small communities. This is beginning to be realised by forward-looking thinkers even in the west.”¹⁴⁶

Jaya Prakash analysed the nature of human being and said “man is a product of both nature and culture. So, for his balanced growth, it is necessary that a harmonious blend between the two is affected,” and this, according to him was possible only in comparatively smaller communities instead of in the centres of modern civilisation, London, Paris or others,¹⁴⁷ He suggested that the basis or method of establishing such a society would be non-violent social revolution. He thought that such techniques of non-violent revolution would be much more effective in the Indian soil, since, “for us in India who have had the privilege of witnessing the miracle of national freedom being won with radically new ideas and methods, which too had been met first with doubt and derision, it should not be difficult to appreciate the new ideas and methods of Vinoba that are after all in the nature of an extension and development of the earlier ones used by the Father of the nation.”¹⁴⁸ This undoubtedly means that J.P. emphasised on the establishment of a self-government in the true sense of the term, which he termed as 'participating Democracy'. To him, it was free from party politics and following Vinoba Bhave, he preferred to name it as 'Lokniti', the politics of the people, than 'rajniti', politics of the state, since, Sarvodaya would have no party and hence no hankering after power. He wanted to see the abolition of all centres of power.¹⁴⁹

IX. Participating Democracy

Jaya Prakash was well-aware about the developments in the country during the 20th century, characterised by “... feudalism, capitalism, and social responsibilities of private enterprise, industrialisation and urbanisation, Parliamentary democracy and economic growth, village uplift and even environmental pollution...”¹⁵⁰ and suggested as its remedy, the participating democracy, in which Panchayati Raj might become the base “to obtain full public cooperation in the execution of development programmes,” since, the Development Officers could not be totally relied on for bringing understanding and enthusiasm, necessary for its success.¹⁵¹ However, “his attitude remains

simple : to reconstruct the community so that all men can live together in meaningful, understandable, controllable relationships acting jointly for the development of their moral and material life.”¹⁵² His thirst for freedom, national unity and bread was not satisfied by the simple declaration or normal activities of the government. It was his initiative that forty-six pilot projects of rural industrialisation were undertaken in the First Five Year Plan, and the Government undertook Community Development Project of 1952. The government scheme of nationalisation, also could not satisfy him and realised that Nehru and Indira Gandhi were following the same path of socialism, which “produced neither worker-participation nor Gandhi's ideal of Sarvodaya”,¹⁵³ and the industrial growth and green revolution did in no way serve the poor. He was convinced that democracy could never grow and flourish in an atmosphere of dictatorship. The introduction of Panchayati Raj, after independence, though created an atmosphere of participating democracy, J.P. thought and suggested that its success needed some immediate conditions, such as, education of the people, non-interference by the political parties, real devolution of power, and own minimum resource of the local authorities, including the power to control the civil servants, under their charge.¹⁵⁴

J.P. thought that people were not well-concerned about the real meaning of 'Swaraj', for which education is an urgent and compulsory measure for the success of democracy in the grass root. In his own words, “This education can best be imparted by disinterested, nonpartisan agencies, engaged in social service or tasks of rural development. Political parties might also make a great contribution in this respect, provided they addressed themselves to the task in a non-partisan spirit. Perhaps the best way for them would be to create a common agency through which to carry on this work. Government officers and agencies might also do useful work in this sphere. Schools, Libraries, co-operative societies have an important role to play ... there might also be a centre jointly set up and conducted by the Union Ministry of Community Development, the All India Panchayat Parishad, other all-local self-government organizations, the Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, and other all India rural service agencies. Such a centre could help by way of producing literature, conducting surveys, studying problems, etc.”¹⁵⁵

J.P. had an apathy about the role of the political parties which are power-hankering and hence he said that for the success of the Panchayati Raj, Political

parties should abstain from trying “to convert it as a jumping ground to climb power”.¹⁵⁶ According to him, political parties might have some role in educating the people, but for the better participation of the people and making democracy a better working institution, people should work without any direct interference of political parties. He again said, “If the leaders of all political parties come to an honest agreement among themselves, it should not be difficult to achieve this aim.”¹⁵⁷

JP wanted devolution of power in real sense of the term to make Panchayati Raj a success. Knowing well about the unwillingness of the power-holders to devolution, and the sense of distrust about the ability of the common people, prevailing in every society, it was necessary to make the people prepared and given full opportunity to shoulder the responsibility for the success of democracy, opined JP.¹⁵⁸ He said that if the present three-tier system of Panchayati Raj, is given full opportunity of devolution of power, the need of District Magistrates, eventually should disappear or remain as a representative of the state government just as the Governor in the states. To him, “Decentralisation cannot be affected by handing down power from above to people who have been politically emasculated and whose capacity for self-rule has been thwarted, if not destroyed by, the party system and concentration of power at the top..... capacity to self regulate the life of the community must be created and not bestowed from above in the name of decentralisation. The process must be started from the bottom.”¹⁵⁹ Following Gandhi, he also insisted to “proceed from the bottom level of government to the top, each higher level should have less and less functions and powers,” and as such, large portion of the vast upper floors should be brought down to earth to make the pyramid of democracy a real pyramid — “narrow at the top and broad at the bottom”¹⁶⁰ He criticised the present system of functioning of Panchayats according to the laws of the 'Vidhan Sabhas' and insisted the Gandhian method of functioning under a law of its own making, and suggested that non-partisan approach should be followed to translate it into practice.¹⁶¹

JP was so practical in thinking that he said, devolution of power and the success of Panchayati Raj would be possible only when the Panchayats should be entrusted with its own minimum resource, without fully depending on the state government. He suggested that, “land revenue, even though it does not amount much, should be the first resource to be placed totally at the disposal

of the village panchayat and Panchayat Samiti. It should no longer be the prerogative of the state government to allocate sums out of land revenue to those bodies. Subject to an equalisation fund for the purpose of aiding the poorer villages and blocks, the entire land revenue should be left in the hands of the Panchayats and Samities. Other possible resources of revenue must also be found and placed at the disposal of the Panchayati Raj in order that it might function with dignity and enjoy its autonomy. This does not mean that for development programme, Panchayati Raj should not receive allocation of funds from the state or the centre."¹⁶²

Being totally aware about the role of the civil servants, JP, suggested that the local civil servants should remain under the control of the local authorities with full accountability to them. Further, at the time of recruitment of the civil servants, the local authorities should also be totally involved. J.P. wanted that the lower level of Democracy, the Panchayat, should be totally self-sufficient and be free from political parties and government interferences. The Panchayats should decide and function and manage their matters more democratically, and through this, mass participation at the root-level, the idea of self-government could be realised.¹⁶³

In fact, Gandhi's ideas of decentralisation and recovering the people's strength by 'Lok Sevak Sangh', were formulated by Jaya Prakash in his idea of participating democracy or Sarvodaya democracy. This democracy, JP pleaded, to be based purely on non-violence and complete decentralisation of power with own-minimum resource in the hands of the Panchayats. To involve the peoples actively and continuously, he suggested further to go down the panchayat to the people themselves, by constituting a 'village community' with all adult members. This village community would be the statutory collective body, the gram sabha, and Panchayat should function as its executive body with the power of setting other committees or teams for specific purposes to serve.¹⁶⁴

X. Idea of Welfare Society

Jaya Prakash, including other Sarvodaya leaders, insisted on the construction of Welfare society, instead of Welfare state, which, to quote R.C. Gupta, "robs the citizens of their initiative and will to endeavour which are at

the root of all progress.”¹⁶⁵ J.P. was a bit critical about the role of the state even during the days of his belief in Marxism. His “Perhaps my schooling in Marxism, with its ideas of a stateless society, made him to raise some basic questions about the role of the state, party etc. and he continued “to feel strongly that human freedom could be fully and wholly realised only in a stateless society.”¹⁶⁶ This attitude of his mind made him think of a welfare society, instead of a welfare state, with possible minimum interference of political party. According to J.P., the state, including welfare state, abolishes the natural human virtues of love, compassion, sharing for the common good and leads to power concentration ultimately leading to totalitarianism and enslavement of man. He said that the states aiming at economic development under dictatorship leads to power rather than peace and prosperity. To him, “The standard of living of the common people in Soviet Russia - even after forty-two years of communist dictatorship and despite of phenomenal industrial and economic development — is lower than that of the U.K. or Sweden, considerably lower than U.S.A., and the same picture was also in other communist countries.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, the welfare state could not destroy the class structure of the society.

J.P. therefore, suggested a welfare society, based on self-help, self-reliance and hard work. People themselves would plan and carry out the welfare works for themselves, and thus they would be able to educate, people about the necessity and utility of self-reliance and self-help to improve their lot by their own initiative and endeavour. In fact, JP lost his faith in the state machinery to do social good, and advocated the Gandhian maxim of best government with least governance. He said, “The old belief that state ownership and management of the means of production, distribution and exchange will lead to economic self-government, elimination of exploitation and equitable distribution of the products of labour, a stateless order of society, has not been confirmed by experience. It is the very opposite that actually happened.”¹⁶⁸ It is, in fact, due to the constant concentration of power, in the state, which led him to think of a society instead of state, for the welfare of society. During the initial stage of his political career, J.P. urged against concentration of power and in the objective Section of the Programme of the All India Congress Socialist Party, it was mentioned by his initiative that all powers should be transferred to the producing masses. At the same time, he did not totally oppose

the existence of state, rather he suggested that state authority should exist and inspire and encourage the people in their initiative and render possible help if needed. As such, the people would be completely free from the totalitarian state, and subjugation of personal life and viruses of capitalism. To quote him, "The test of human evolution for me became man's ability to live in amity, justice and cooperation with his fellow men without outward restraints of any kind.... with this conception of the role and place of the state in society at the back of my mind, I viewed with very deep apprehension the march of the state to greater and greater glory. Democratic socialists, Communists, as well as welfarists ... are all statist. They all hope to bring about their own variety of the millennium by first mastering and then adding to the powers and functions of the state."¹⁶⁹

Therefore, he wanted to establish a welfare society, not welfare state, on the basis of people's socialism or voluntary socialism, for the fullest reality of socialism.

XI. Ideal of Communitarian Society

JP visualised a society of freedom, equality and human dignity, where people would live in justice and cooperation with his fellow-men without outside restraints based on both moral and material prosperity of the society. He preferred to name it as "communitarian", having a balance between agriculture and industry, and must be self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial, urbo-rural in nature, and according to him, such a communitarian polity alone could guarantee the success of the participating democracy.¹⁷⁰

According to him, science, technology, and industrialisation have so far been utilised for private profit and power. On the basis of these developments a false distinction have been developed between urban life and rural life, between industrialisation and agriculture. To him, such distinctions were false and unscientific. "Both industry and agriculture are essential for human life and its development ... and industry for man and not man for industry,"¹⁷¹ and naturally, the distinction between urban and rural be abolished. According to him, science and industry were the human products and they should be bent to human purposes. He argued that the science which led disruption of human society alienating man from his fellow man, should be rejected and a new

better science to serve the better way of life of human being be discovered. "Commercialisation of science has to be replaced by humanitarian science; instead of science being exploited for power and profit, it has to be used for peace and happiness," for this purpose, it is better to live in small communities instead of big cities.¹⁷²

He further argued that big cities should be reorganised and made federations of small communities. In his picture of communitarian society, primary communities were placed at the bottom. "A number of families come together and cooperate to build a common life,.... to tackle common problems and promote common aims," and would do possible works with its internal resources.¹⁷³

In the next stage, neighbouring primary communities should come together to form regional community, through cooperation among themselves, the works, beyond the reach of the primary communities, such as organisation of High School, hospital, servicing centre etc. should come under the control of this regional communities. This was not merely a sum total of smaller communities, but "an integration of institutions and activities of the primary communities : the village panchayats are integrated into the regional panchayats; the village cooperatives into the regional cooperative union; ... the village plans into the regional plan etc., Just as in its internal administration the primary community is autonomous, so in the spheres in which the primary communities have delegated their powers to the regional community, the latter is autonomus".¹⁷⁴ In the same way, the regional communities should come together and integrate a still larger community - the district community, which again would federate together to form the provincial community, and this in turn would come together to form the National Community and J.P. hoped that day should come when all "the National Communities might federate together to form the World Community."¹⁷⁵ The National Community would have "few matters to attend to, such as, defence, foreign relation, currency, inter-state coordination and legislation." J.P., however, pointed out that each community in its sphere should be equally sovereign and no higher community would have the power to control or interfere with the internal administration of the lower community, and as such in such a community people should get utmost scope to govern themselves in self-governing communities.¹⁷⁶ Thus, the society should develop into a self-sufficient, agro-industrial, urbo-rural

community, whose economy would “neither exploitative, nor competitive; it is cooperative and co-sharing”, and this communitarian picture should not be opposed to the socialist philosophy, since the old faith on state ownership based socialism plus planning has been falsified. “The socialists must also take from Marx what is still valid and from science the best it has to offer,” and as such, a creative synthesis to regain faith in socialism for the future, be done.¹⁷⁷

The success of this communitarian form of society depends on the success of the concept of belonging to community, which according to JP would not be possible by paid servants, who generally have no faith in or understanding of community since they themselves do not belong to any community. For this reason, JP insisted on the villages, since, according to him, “There is no better way to teach the young except by giving them responsibility. In the same manner, the only way to make the villages self-governing, self-reliant and self-sufficient is to throw upon them real responsibilities.”¹⁷⁸

It is a fact that JP was totally dissatisfied with the party politics and the role of state, concentrating all powers, for which he visualised such a self-sufficient, self-governed communitarian society. To come out of the curses of party and politics, to make the society a success, and to extend the benefits of the participating democracy and socialism to the people, he suggested some alternative measures of party-less democracy and decision by consensus of opinion to overcome the shortcomings of election system associated with parliamentary democracy.

XII. Party less Democracy

J.P. was a man of action rather than a mere intellectual. His life was a quest for a better path for the establishment of equality, freedom, brotherhood, peace and the all round upliftment of the poor-the villagers. For this reason, he travelled through the Marxian revolutionary way to democratic socialism through Gandhian techniques of non-violence and Satyagraha, again through the path of Bhoodan, Jeevandan, as a follower of Vinoba Bhave. Finally, being confirmed about the inability of the party-politics to help attain his goals, he gave up party politics and preached the principle of party-less democracy for

the attainment of same goals for which he enumerated his theory of peoples Democracy, or voluntary socialism and participating democracy.

According to him Sarvodaya wanted to establish a system consisting of human rights and equality but in which the existence of political parties would be ruled out. He pointed out that political party gives birth to demagogy, destroying political ethics and rigidity, in the name of discipline of the party compels man to act against conscience killing his talent and sensitiveness of moral values. Moreover, the internal structure of party is autocratic for which it is anti democratic and becomes, in almost all case, the real arbiter of people's destiny. JP, with his strong sense of freedom, naturally, could not tolerate such imposition by the party system which according to him, "tends to emphasise their growing deviation from democracy," since it moves towards centralisation and in the name of discipline, "backed by finance, organisation and the means of propaganda," "peoples rule became in effect party rule ... party rule in turn became the rule of a caucus or coterie," and as such "democracy was reduced to mere casting of votes."¹⁷⁹

However, party system in modern representative democratic societies are indispensable, for which JP did not insist on complete and immediate abolition of party system. He suggested that parties should undertake the responsibility of educating the people and asked the various parties to cooperate commonly through an honest agreement for the all round development of the country. He admitted that political parties have vital roles to play in the local level too, but remarked, "Far from it, they would have a very constructive job to do there. If they accept the idea that it was in the best interest of the village to choose uncontested panchayats, that should become a challenge to them, and they should all join together to educate and persuade the villagers to do so, a challenging and creative task. If one leaves aside personal ambitions, this should not be difficult for the parties to do, because after all, the affairs of the village hardly admit of party political differences"¹⁸⁰ He further said that parties should leave these areas of local self government, to be used as jumping grounds to climb to power and for the success of democracy it is undoubtedly necessary to give the people full opportunity to shoulder the responsibility. He indicated that "electoral contests have already produced such tensions that there is a virtual stalemate in the affairs of the Panchayat," and therefore, for strengthening the Indian democracy, all should join together to help "the people to govern themselves"; and to "develop in them the necessary social consciousness, practical ability and moral quality... all democratic parties... if they have time from the scramble for power for themselves. All training and educative programmes, official and non-

official, should be aimed at this over-riding objective.”¹⁸¹ He thought that 'faction fighting' would not be self-government but lead to self-ruin, since, village is primary, face to face community and people have to live together and share their joys and sorrows. Considering the criticisms against this Panchayati Raj, that village peoples are too backward, ignorant and ill-informed and conservative nature of the village society, dominated by traditionally privileged classes, J.P. suggested that it was unreal to expect best utilisation of their entrusted power, without any mistake at the beginning, and on this ground, it was not wise to deny them the power of self-governance, rather the remedy, he suggested was the same, “Social education, without which no revolutionary change could be possible.”¹⁸²

This idea of party less democracy, according to J.P., must not be terminated at the district level but be extended upto the town, cities and upto New Delhi. He told that with the development of the functionings of the panchayati raj, the democratic institutions of the urban communities should also be integrated into this structure. It was not desirable, said J.P., that towns and cities would develop a centralised or unitary administrative system, which would seem, “— that power still remained locked up in Delhi and the state capitals”. He admitted that “this cannot be done immediately, it should be set clearly as the goal.”¹⁸³

XIII. Modification of Election System

As a continuation of the partyless democracy, J.P., suggested some procedures of election without involving the party in it. He was quite aware about the present party system and the system of election which is too expensive, with a greater chance of moneyed persons to be elected or to corrupt the entire system, with a little chance for a poor but good independent candidate, and suggested an alternative election procedure. For this purpose, J.P. in his “Swaraj for the People” and in “A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity”, suggested an elaborated system of indirect election procedure.

According to this procedure, at the village level, an Electoral Council would be formed with two delegates from each gram sabha or village assembly, at a properly convened general meeting. If more than two names come for the same, it would be voted upon by raising hands and thus dropping the name,

getting lowest votes, ultimately, the persons getting the highest votes be elected.

In the next stage, the Electoral councils, elected in this manner would meet in a central place and elect candidates on the basis of securing a given minimum number of votes, for the constituency of Vidhan Sabha or Lok Sabha as the case might be. Then the votes in favour of these candidates would be obtained from the village assemblies or Gram Sabhas within the Constituency concerned, and the candidate getting largest number of gram sabha votes, in a general meeting, would be finally declared elected.¹⁸⁴

However, JP insisted on the consensus of votes for electing a candidate, and hence, he thought the best way would be to persuade the members / delegates of the Electoral Council to choose only one name for the particular constituency, so as to avoid the election or counting of votes in gram sabhas and this would no doubt, avoid, “unnecessary excitement and wastage of energy and money.”

This system of election, JP, said, “binds structurally the upper storeys of the democratic edifice with the lowest, lending prestige, strength and meaning to the gram sabhas ... two, it gives a direct opportunity to every adult citizen to participate in choosing the highest organs of democracy.... in an organised manner .. and to exercise due influence over his representatives.”¹⁸⁵

According to JP this would be a simple and less-expensive method with the only requirement that people in the village level should be interested in the meetings of the gram sabhas. However, he said, this process would, within a very short time, lead the gram sabha and the people in general to gather experience by holding regular meetings, passing budgets and making other collective decisions, and ultimately would be a regular routine work of the villagers and “this electoral procedure should soon become one of their simpler jobs”.¹⁸⁶ In another way, he said, this process would serve the purpose of democracy, by providing every adult citizen of every village, whatever remote it may be, with an opportunity to take part directly in the process of democracy, and as such, decentralisation of power, in its truest sense, would also be possible, reducing, rather totally removing, the need of political parties. Thus, people in general would be the real part of democracy.

Decision by consensus of opinion, is another part of this people's

democracy. Democracy, has presently become a majority principle, which, according to J.P., was contrary to the principles of Sarvodaya. J.P. thought that the tyranny of the majority over the minority, or tyranny of a few over the majority,¹⁸⁷ should not be continued, and “the dissident of a minority, even of one, will receive due consideration.”¹⁸⁸ Following Vinova Bhave, he suggested the principle of consensus of opinion or “of an overwhelming majority for arriving at any decision.”¹⁸⁹ J.P. categorically explained that recent “Experiences has shown that present day mass elections, manipulated by powerful, centrally controlled parties, with the aid of high finance and diabolically clever methods and super media of communication represent far less the electorate than the forces of interests behind the parties and the propaganda machine,”¹⁹⁰ for which partyless democratic election procedure are much more desirable and accords with democratic principles. It requires that every citizen should be able to understand the problem and common purpose of the society, which easily could be done by proper education and training. J.P. was confident that the application of this decision of consensus of opinion in Gram Sabha, Panchayat Samiti or Zilla Parisad would bring positive result. He said that this system of party-less democracy and decision by consensus of opinion, would involve direct participation of the whole people through gram sabhas and close participation through the higher bodies, by eliminating the viruses of propaganda involving unhealthy psychological and emotional excitement, and voters would be well acquainted with the problems to deal with.¹⁹¹

As such JP visualised a clear concept of decentralisation of power for the establishment of peoples democracy with the equal right of all, maintaining dignity of individual. JP was a seeker of truth, and for the establishment of justice and freedom, he was always ready to accept any better way without any hesitation. JP considered “the human and social problem to be at bottom a moral problem,”¹⁹² but surprisingly, to him, “Socialism and communism both lay great emphasis on material prosperity, on ever growing production and on ever-rising standard of living there can be no peace in the minds of hearts of men, nor peace amongst men, if this hunger gnaws at them continuously.”¹⁹³ For this reason, he has changed this path from time to time in search of a better path for the upliftment of all the people including the poor, the downtrodden and the masses both morally and materially. This quest for truth and the urge to do for the poor and the lowliest with the thirst for freedom, national unity

and bread, led him to explore the path of 'bhoodan', 'Jeevandan' and 'Sarvodaya', in close association with Vinoba Bhave. From 1954 to 1974, he remained in this path for reconstruction of the Indian polity. But situations in the country during 1974-75, caused serious change in the socio-political atmosphere of India, which again led JP to call for "Total Revolution."

XIV. Total Revolution

Jaya Prakash, through his devotion to Gandhian techniques, wanted to develop human society not only from material aspects of life, but also from his inner life. Only material prosperity, he thought, was not sufficient to establish a society for equals and people's democracy or voluntary socialism, based on Gandhi's idea of Gram Swaraj, it needs, the transformation of heart by peaceful means. This realisation led him to turn to the idea of Total Revolution, a new version of Gandhian humanist ideology of ideal society. The objects of this, according to JP. was, "Social change through peaceful people's power." This social change included "both internal and external change, changing the entire social frame from within and also from the outside, individual as well as institutions", through legal and administrative action."¹⁹⁴ This "all round revolution"; according to JP. had "four objectives, namely, eradication of corruption, high prices, unemployment and radical changes in education."¹⁹⁵ This revolution, through peaceful means, he urged, not only to be confined to the political field but "will embrace all aspects of individual and social life ... the caste system, customs and manners, marriage, education etc..... society as a whole or in the totality of all its social relations, institutions and process will have to undergo a change,"¹⁹⁶ with a goal in mind to wipe out corruption and fulfilment of basic needs of the people, living below poverty line. J.P.. explaining his idea of Total Revolution said, "total revolution is a combination of seven revolutions — social, economic, political, cultural, ideological or intellectual, educational and spiritual."¹⁹⁷ However, he said that the number of revolutions would not be rigid as such, since one revolution might be broken into several parts, while more than one revolution may be incorporated in a single name. He explained that it was 'total' in the sense of a comprehensive revolution encompassing all aspects of both social and individual life, which would undergo a revolutionary change, if it could be successfully done. Therefore, "it is the totality that undergoes the change

including the individual a total revolution in India should mean a revolution from the village upwards to the largest urban concentration,” and this, he thought, could only be done by “the radical Sarvodaya group”¹⁹⁸

J.P., always was in search of a better way to attain his goals of socio-economic regeneration. His life, ideas and activities were a continuous process in this respect, for which his ideas of Total Revolution could not be identified as a separate or suddenly grown theory. Even after his resignation from party-politics, he continued to think and act for the upliftment of the society in general. By 1970, he was determined that the existing system should be changed and the influence of party politics be eradicated for the better functioning of Sarvodaya. In this respect, he found a new type of experience of heart transformation by peaceful means and turned to the ideal of Total Revolution to work both for internal and external changes. The socio-political and moral conditions of the country was much more degenerated by this time. His article entitled “First Things First” published in July, 1973, vividly explored this situation by saying that, “There is so much wrong with our polity, economy and society in general that it is really a bewildering question to decide where to begin”..., and came to the conclusion that the root cause of the country's deplorable condition was unhesitatingly, “the precipitous fall in the moral standards of our public life,” including - “politic, government, business, education, trade unions, social work and the rest...”¹⁹⁹ He confessed that politics was not for saints, however, “Politics, at least under a democracy, must know the limits which it may not cross. Otherwise, if there is dishonesty, corruption, manipulation of the masses, naked struggle for personal power and personal gain, there can be no socialism, no welfarism, no government, no public order, no justice, no freedom, no national unity - in short, no nation. There would be utter chaos.”²⁰⁰ Since then he was worried about the “moral regeneration of our politics” and was confirm that the present system of demonstrations, processions, strikes, bandhs, use of violence, all these have become ineffective for which new methods should have to find and.²⁰¹ During his stay at Paunar ashram of Vinoba Bhave, during 1973-74, he felt an inner urge to give a call for Total Revolution of the people, particularly to the youth of the country, in a peaceful manner.

Other two incidents of 1971 and 1972 in which he gathered confidence

about the success of the peaceful method of heart transformation, influenced him to undertake the programme of Total Revolution. In Musahari, in the district of Muzaffarpur in North Behar, a stronghold of Naxalities,²⁰² in 1971, his first experience about the success of peaceful revolution of heart transformation, took place. J.P. was not at all interested to interfere in the case of Naxalites, but the situation created by a letter serving death notice to two prominent Sarvodaya workers for which JP rushed to Musahari Block. He was aware that Naxalites were the creation of increased poverty of that area, and socio-economic conflict was the main cause behind this. He started to practice the Gandhian method of peaceful resistance, and Sarvodaya for achieving his goal of socio-economic transformation through peaceful method. Musahari was actually a supreme test of Sarvodaya. JP found out the root of the Naxalite movement in North Behar and summed up the causes in an impassioned plea for social justice for the rural poor :

“It was not the so called Naxalites who have fathered the violence, but they who have persistently defied and defeated the laws for the past so many years — be they politicians, administrators, land owners, money - lenders. The big farmers who cheated the ceiling law through '*benami*' and fictitious settlements, the gentlemen who grabbed government lands... the land owners who persistently denied the legal rights of their share-croppers and evicted them from their holdings and who underpaid their labourers and threw them out from their homesteads; the men who by fraud or force took the lands away from the weaker sections; the so called upper-caste men who looked down upon their Harijan brethren money lenders... the politicians, the administrators are responsible for the accumulated sense of injustice ... the poor and downtrodden that is now seeking its outlet in violence - Responsible also are the courts of law...”²⁰³

From this understanding JP took up the matter and the challenge of his strong faith in non-violence to combat the violence and Naxalite. “For Jaya Prakash it was a trial by ordeal, where for the first time the passions for violence confronted the forces of peace and persuasion. He emerged successful in his trial, and the villagers were filled with a new enthusiasm of self-rule and brotherhood. The strength of Jayaprakash's inner conviction was proved.”²⁰⁴ This was the strength of his mind and faith in Gandhi's teachings that he took the trouble of moving from door to door and listening their grievances, and

slowly changing their minds towards peaceful method of resistance. Ultimately success was there for his faith in people's democracy or Sarvodaya.

The Second experience of heart transformation was in 1972, by converting a dangerous group of dacoits of Chambal ravines, led by Madho Singh, and Mohar Singh. In 14th April, 1972, a group of about 82 notorious dacoits surrendered themselves with arms to J.P. This group was so much notorious that the government of Madhya Pradesh, could not tackle them with their all forces of police for several years.²⁰⁵

This was the situational context in which J.P. gave his clarion call for Total Revolution to save the country and her people from degeneration of both moral and material. The seven revolutions, he incorporated in the idea of Total Revolution, were aimed at the same point of social change -both internally and externally. Bihar became the main centre of such revolution, where JP formulated "a five week programme, one week to emphasize each of five important aspects of the struggle (1) Jana Jagaran week; (2) Organization for the struggle,(3) Mobilization of Opinion for Resignation and Dissolution of the Assembly; (4) Sadachar week; and (5) Reform of the Educational System."²⁰⁶

J.P.'s activities and leadership, gave a mass uprising in all-over Behar during 1974 and reached its climax on 4th November in 1974 at Gandhi Maidan at Patna, where the total government force could not resist the mass uprising, which ultimately began to spread all-over the country. "J.P. undertook a tour of the country. He forged a network of committees or Yuva Bahinis,"²⁰⁷ which ultimately ended by imposition of an emergency on 26th June, 1975. J.P., alongwith his other followers were sent to prison, where he thought that "those who sought to get at the stars have achieved anything in the world, may be, at the cost of their lives."²⁰⁸

His call for Total Revolution, as he visualised was not to take the form of confrontation with the government but to be carried on in cooperation with the government with peaceful methods of persuasion, negotiation and other constitutional and parliamentary methods. This led him to form the Janata party in 1977, with the then other opposition parties to fight against the corruption of the government and its "institutionalizing the values of an authoritarian rule", and to establish his Communitarian Society or 'Participating

Democracy', and to make man more human.

J.P., though could not elaborately discuss his total plan of seven revolutions incorporated in his idea of Total Revolution due to a hectic public life, his 'Prison Diary' and interview with Brahmanand, published in his 'Towards Total Revolution,' Vol.4, contain valuable analysis. His ideas stemming from the formal are analysed as below.

1. Social revolution

The Total Revolution was aimed at total or complete change in the existing social set up, reconstruction of the structure of society, on the basis of truth, non-violence, physical labour, non-possession, tolerance and equality. He, however, said, "... that if there is a revolutionary upsurge, whatever its main springs - political, economic, class struggle or anything else, once the revolutionary fire and fervour spreads, it effects everything and if it succeeds, nothing is left in its old form. There is a generalized change brought about; in some spheres more, some spheres less".²⁰⁹ This aim of social change, he suggested to be more fruitful through "gramdan", the process of carrying forward the "bhoodan" movement, "trying to establish the principle of community ownership of land, of regular sharing of labour and income in the community, and decision making by general consensus," Leading on the moral plane, "to overgrowing coincidence between individual and social interests; on the political plane, to direct democracy in a self-governing community; on the economic plan, to community planning and endeavour,"²¹⁰

To make equality in treatment of labour, he suggested the 'intellectualisation of the labourer and the labourisation of the intellectual', meaning physical labour by all in the society to create an atmosphere of love, courage and faith in truth. The caste-system in the society, particularly, in Hindu society, creating a hierarchical structure "of the high, middle, low, lowest untouchables, outcasts, and so on," should, according to him, be eradicated first. He identified that the so called backward classes were not all low castes, but backward, suppressed by the upper castes of Brahmins and Kshatriyas and then by the middle castes. He suggested inter-caste marriages "... as the only method by which the system, the barriers, the walls could be broken down"²¹¹ It is related with the question of social equality which is the

essence of democracy and socialism, for which J.P. gave much stress to eradicate this problem and to establish a society of equals but not through class conflict or struggle, but by peaceful means. This social system also included the eradication of distinction between man and woman, child and forced marriage, dowry system which stand on the way of independent life of individual and encourage social and economic exploitation. However he was aware about the problem which the social reformers, religious leaders and revolutionary activists were trying to abolish from days immemorial. He also wanted to establish a rural civilisation as compared to the urban which destroys the human feelings and community feelings. He considered the cities to be “great human forests,” devoid of any social atmosphere, for which he wanted to combine agricultural economy with small scale and reasonable job-intensive industries and build a community of self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial, urbo-rural.²¹²

2. Economic Revolution

J.P. deeply examined the modern economy based on large-scale industrialisation, which creates centralisation of production, wealth and power giving overemphasis on material aspects of life, degenerating the human dignity, status and morality. Hence, he pleaded for reorganisation of economic life, following Gandhian model of decentralisation and agrarian economy with small-scale industries. The materialistic aspect of modern industrialised capitalist economy leads people to achieve more and more and “the possession of more would only whet the appetite for still more.”²¹³ This ultimately leads to exploitation by the rich of the poorer section of the society, and as such, the idea of equality and freedom remains far more untouched.

Therefore, he suggested decentralisation of economy based on communitarian society, abolishing the false distinction between urban and rural life, between industrialisation and agricultural development. Both industry and agriculture were, according to him, necessary for the development of national economy and hence science and technology should be used for the equal development of the whole economic structure of the society, without being a tool in the hands of rich to exploit the poor, and should not lead the economy towards totalitarianism.²¹⁴ J.P. visualised an economic order based

on rural civilisation, with self-sufficient villages or communities and industries should be decentralised, life of the people should be simple with human feelings, community and cooperative feelings, and craze for more and more in a competitive manner should be cooperation and mutual assistance, and as such, an ideal sarvodaya society, participating democracy should be established. To him, "The aim of economic development should be Man... standard of living - minimum Ownership pattern, individual (family) self-employed producer, community ownership (village) cooperative ownership," and social ownership to be applied in large establishments, with "workers' participation in management may be tried."²¹⁵

3. Political Revolution

By political revolution, as a part of his total revolution, J.P. wanted to reconstruct the Indian political structure, which was full of corruption and was leading towards an authoritarian rule under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, by amending the Representation of the Peoples' Act, by enacting the Prevention of Publication of Objectionable Matter Act., by suppressing the fundamental rights through constitutional amendment and demolishing the multi-party democratic process in India.²¹⁶ He envisaged the establishment of the people's power in a participating democracy, as he called, through panchayati raj system. He was strongly opposed to the role of party, as practised both in democratic and socialist countries, leading to concentration of power and party-led democracy, for which he gave up party-politics, and wanted to establish a party-less democracy, the Sarvodaya society, which he also called Communitarian Society. This he suggested to be established by peaceful means, and power should be vested in the hands of the people but not from the above and as such, a self-regulated political society could be established in which, liberty, equality, social justice, peace and brother hood would be truly realised.

4. Cultural Revolution

By cultural revolution, JP, wanted to bring about radical change in the value pattern of human life, in other wards, a moral revolution, aiming at changing the outlook of man towards his fellow men and society. J.P.,

considered “the human and social problem to be at bottom a moral problem,”²¹⁷ for which he wanted to attain self-realisation, following the path of action, which could be easily reached to all sections of people. Cultural revolution was a moral revolution aiming at changing the habits of individual to follow, some principles of morality such as tolerance, humanity, sacrifice, fellow-feeling, free from corruption, truthfulness, and all these were aimed at changing the heart and attitude of common man to undertake social works for the benefit of all in the society. As far as possible, he urged that 'Bhrashtachar', which has become to be 'Shishtachar', should be avoided and everybody should insist on of his own. 'Swadharma', the participation in all productive activities irrespective of considering the nature of the activity. In his own words. “Let every citizen, who realises the paramount importance of a moral regeneration of our politics, lend a helping hand I have still hope that our leaders, whether of the Left, Right or Centre will correct themselves”²¹⁸

5. Ideological or Intellectual Revolution

JP since his withdrawal from party-politics, devoted himself to the work of reconstruction of Indian polity based primarily on the goodness of human nature without using the coercive force. He wanted drastic change in the moral and intellectual outlook of the people for socio-economic and political regeneration. This ideological or intellectual revolution was aimed at this purpose. He was convinced that no change or reconstruction of any kind could be possible unless the people become aware of it. And if people once become aware about the necessity and utility of reconstruction, the use of violence or coercion would become useless. Therefore, JP thought of an ideological or intellectual revolution, based on Sarvodaya principle of non-violence for building a new social order. However, JP was much careful, that this ideological revolution was in no way involved with any 'isms', which he explained, “that all the “isms” have become “wasms”. We are still living with our “wasms”.²¹⁹

J.P. thought that revolution of any kind needed the revolution or change in the values of man for which he suggested cultural revolution, and this changes of values could change the society in general. This naturally, needs the conversion of people to accept the new point of change or revolution, which needs appeal to the intellect and reason to convince them intellectually about

the utility of the new values. This process would take time and must be peaceful. In his own words, “though the new ideas and values appear difficult to practise, a phased programme is so contrived that even ordinary persons are able by easy steps to advance towards the seemingly difficult goal,” and this “programme of conversion though directed to the individual, has a mass character whole groups and masses of man are sought to be touched and moved by it”²²⁰ J.P. has given the example of Vinoba Bhave who expressed the view that “we are only trustees of our properties” and hence, it may be shared by other members of the society, and he asked first to share only a small part of his possessions which ultimately would be followed by others and as such, the change of outlook would take place. People would come forward with “new ideas and values, cooperate together to create new institutions and forms of social life.”²²¹ J.P. said that this technique was a new one, however, since we have the privilege of witnessing the Gandhian miracle of winning national freedom with new ideas and methods, it would also be possible to apply this new technique in transforming the people with new human values for bringing revolutionary changes in the existing society.

6. Educational Revolution

As a part of his total revolution for the establishment of a new society — the communitarian society, J.P. suggested educational revolution, for changing the educational pattern of the society. To him, state control education system was dangerous since it would create regimentation of thought. As a corollary to his concept of state and party-free society, he suggested an independent education system. He said that “the most prestigious academic institutions are being filled with “yes men”. The universities as a whole are suffering from the worst forms of nepotism and corruption and more and more ceasing to perform the functions assigned to them. There is no dearth of talent in them, but talent is being increasingly cramped and circumscribed by the general atmosphere, full of fear and favour, enveloping these institutions.”²²² Therefore, he urged for an educational system to be organised on the basis of the basic needs and values of the society, and since our society is basically rural, the education should also have a rural bias so that the villagers might prosper and an atmosphere of cooperation might develop between the rural and urban people. In his Prison Diary, he suggested a broad list of subjects to be

incorporated in the school curricula with necessary modifications according to the local needs. These are, “Agriculture, rural industry, sociology (meaningful for the students of the area), science, language and literature, economics — cooperation and cooperatives, laws, rules (constitution), accounts and book-keeping (agriculture, trade and rural industry) hygiene, sanitation (Latrine, water supply), bacteria, biology (related to rural frame), horticulture, Zoology, food and nutrition (sources available), gas plant, compost, urine manuer,”²²³ with the aim of all round development of the rural youth.

He also stressed the need for adult and social education. In his “A Programme for Five Weeks,” one week, i.e. from May 23 to 29, 1974, was devoted to Educational System, where he mentioned that parents and guardians should also be educated and made conscious about the present education system which was “intended to produce babus”, which was ruinous for both “their wards, the guardians themselves as well as the country. Therefore they should be enlightened enough to demand and welcome education which combined academic education with manual work and training in different skills in farms, factories and office.”²²⁴ JP had an intension behind this that education should make a man self-sufficient and capable of earning his livelihood with a sense and attitude to reconstruction of the whole society based on his ideas of participating democracy.

He suggested education with example, which means “to impart a lesson by example”. He gave the example of Gandhi who “lived what he preached”, and herein lies his greatness. He also said about “formal academic education through speech, writing, conversation, discussion, observation etc. As far as the rural population is concerned — as it is illiterate for the most part - education will have to be done by speaking, talking, demonstration, setting up an example and by all various audiovisual means that science has placed at our disposal.”²²⁵

7. The Moral or Spiritual Revolution

According to J.P., “society cannot be good unless individual men are good, and particularly those men who form the elite of society.”²²⁶ From this, he came to the conclusion that unless and until the goodness of a man could be regenerated, no social regeneration of any kind would be possible. The present society is fully materialist which has shaken the moral values and discarded

as dead weights of the past, and according to him social reconstruction could not be successfully done under the materialist philosophy, for which moral or spiritual revolution was needed.

Man is not only an animal, his inner values, potentialities and reasoning are sufficient enough to change the social pattern. There is no bad in achieving material prosperity, rather material needs must be fulfilled but it is harmful, rather dangerous when man starts mad race for attaining those material ends forgetting the society, and his responsibility towards his fellow men. A good society can never be built up only by greedy, self-centred persons, for which J.P. formulated this idea of moral revolution to change a man from within, so that he may, at least, share the social responsibility, and come forward to recognise the society on the basis of nonviolent methods. To him, "man is socio-organic being : he is partly the product of nature and partly of society,"²²⁷ and he is both matter and spirit, for which, his fullest development needs the satisfaction of both material and spiritual needs. A "full material satisfaction", according to JP, "is a spiritual life. Craving, excess, bad means to gather wealth, these are anti-spiritual,"²²⁸ and hence, he wanted to abolish these anti-spiritual matters for the development of his communitarian society based on peaceful means.

Thus, J.P., visualised a picture of seven closely-connected revolutions in the name of Total Revolution for the radical change in the socio-economic-political structure and moral virtues of the people of our country. Since 1970, J.P. was looking at the all round deterioration in the society, which became much more grave, during June 1975 to June 1976. According to him, "India has been converted from a working democracy into a personal dictatorship of the Prime Minister, Mrs. India Gandhi."²²⁹ As such, he felt the necessity of an all round peaceful revolution embracing every aspect of individual and social life, and advised the youths, "to turn their revolutionary zeal to such tasks as demolition of the present caste system including untouchability, revolutionising the educational system, reverse the process of industrialisation so that it spreads and in the rural areas and thus stop exploitation of the village by the town and the city and so on."²³⁰

However, in such a broad based revolution, he denied to attach with any political party or to take part in election, in other words, entering into party

politics. He categorically explained that “the election is just another battleground of the people's and students' struggle”, but the aim of total revolution was “not merely a change of government but a total social change” which was not possible through mere election. Regarding political parties, he said, “It is not political parties with which we are identifying ourselves but with the people struggling against a corrupt, oppressive and incompetent regime and an iniquitous social order.”²³¹

He explained the nature of his revolution to be a people's movement embracing the whole nation with the purpose of articulating people's wishes, and “the task of revolutionary leadership is to channelise the revolutionary urges of the people and to give them direction, an objective and an ideal.”²³²

J.P. considered the prevailing caste system to be “most obstinate obstacle” in bringing about changes in rural society. He condemned the role of the political parties who for their election purposes use to strengthen the caste system, and said, “For political canvassers do appeal to caste feelings to get their votes and everyone does it,” and no party including revolutionary party is free from it. He again said that “the system of the election itself is such that it made caste the main basis on which elections were fought.” From this understanding of the actual picture of our society, JP gave his clarion call for Total Revolution, which “is all-comprehensive - political, economic, social, cultural, religious, revolution in customs, manners; revolution in the individual's life as well as in the life of the group and in the life of the society.”²³³

XV. J.P. — His Position as a Socialist Leader

Jaya Prakash Narayan was a seeker of the ideal society, in which the great human values of equality, freedom, peace and brotherhood would be best realised. For this, he fought throughout his life. His political and socialist ideas developed through a long process of evolution. The peculiar character of his thinking was that he travelled through a long path but his aim remained the same. In his own words, “I have been pursuing a single goal, seeking the answer to a single question: how to make India independent and help establish a social, economic and political democracy.”²³⁴ This search made him take and change several political ideologies and paths and at last found the answer in the Gandhian ideas with their dynamic and revolutionary adaptation. This

change or shift in his ideological position, may be thought as unsteadiness of his character or attitude, but the fact is that he developed his whole political and socialist ideas and movements in a uniform line with the ultimate object of radical change in socio-political, economic conditions of the country including the change of moral values of individual. Herein lies his greatness as a socialist leader that whatever he thought or preached he tried to demonstrate the same through his own involvement and activities. He never remained a thinker only, but became a revolutionary in real sense of the term, became a 'Loknayak'.

As a socialist leader, his another importance lies in his clear grasp of the economic foundations of politics. He regarded socialism as a complete theory of socio-economic reconstruction and as something much more than a theory of personal ethics.

J.P. started his political journey as an ardent nationalist, when he was just a young boy, and freedom of the country became his ultimate aim of life. This passion of freedom ultimately did not remain confined only with the achievement of national freedom, rather embraced the idea of freedom of man from every type of exploitation. This beacons of light remained glittering throughout his life and forced him to seek more higher and surer path for attaining the goal. His whole life, thinking and activity was aimed at the upliftment of the poor, eradication of exploitation of any kind, and all round development of rural life as well as of the whole society. His family background and the situation of the locality, where he was born and brought up, no doubt, had influenced him in thinking in this way, alongwith, certainly, Gandhian influences.

During his studies in United States of America, he became a Marxist. The writings of Marx, Engels and his friends influenced him so much that he took the Marxian science of revolution as a surer and quicker road to achieve his goals. M.N. Roy was another personality who influenced him on the evolution of his thought and J.P. had high regard for him, "even when", he "found it difficult sometimes to agree with him".²³⁵ Marxian method was so much acceptable to him that he did not hesitate even to criticise Gandhi, whom he considered to be "retrogressive force in Indian Politics", and "gave every indication that his political line was diametrically opposed to that of Gandhi"

and considered there was “nothing new or peculiarly Indian in what Gandhiji says.”²³⁶ This was Marxian influence that he planned and partially practised the guerilla warfare, through his Azad Dasta, during the Quite India movement of 1942. But interestingly J.P. repudiated the Marxian path within short time, and undertook the Gandhian methods being an ardent follower of Gandhi about two decades later.

After coming back from America and being converted to Marxism, he did not join the CPI for its anti-nationalist attitude, and its working as a tool of Moscow. This differences with CPI, however, did not totally shattered his faith in Marxism. But the events in Russia, activities of Stalin, pact with Hitler, centralisation of power in Russia, dictatorship of party, denial of democratic rights and freedom in Russia, CPI's declaration of the second World War to be a people's war, forced JP to rethink and re-examine “the basic postulates of Marxism”, and ultimately, “break with Marxism though not with politics, had come during the three weeks fast at Poona (1952)”.²³⁷

Since then J.P. moved towards democratic socialism through Gandhian methods of non-violence, and then withdrew from party politics, being confirmed about the ineffectiveness of party politics to reach his ultimate goal of freedom and equality, and turned towards Sarvadaya Philosophy. During this time, the influence of Vinoba Bhave, the follower of Gandhi, attracted him too much which ultimately led him to call for Total Revolution. One thing to be remembered is that he never thought other than the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden and reconstruction of Indian society. This love for the people, particularly the poor and their freedom and dignity forced him to remain always with them, either being a party leader or a leader of the people, 'Loknayak', without any allegiance to a party, politics or power. Herein lies the greatness of JP's leadership, a true socialist leader.

This love for the people, forced him again to come with the people and lead them again in the crisis period of early seventies, when the whole socio-political system along with the morality of the people and ethics of political parties were totally degenerated, and all round corruption deteriorated the conditions of people - especially the poor and the downtrodden. He took the initiative without affiliating himself to any party, to lead the country which ultimately ended with the formation of the first non-Congress Government at

the centre, by the newly formed Janata Party, the supposed protege of Jaya Prakash, in 1977. Herein lies the importance of J.P.'s leadership, that without any support of a political party or organised group behind him, he could successfully lead the country through a peaceful revolution, to change the Congress ministry at the centre, which according to him was leading towards "a personal dictatorship of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi."²³⁸

However, his leadership qualities were proved in the Quit India Movement of 1942, where he played the role of a Guerilla Commander, as a Sarvodaya leader, during his bhoodan movement, his role in transforming the hearts of hundreds of docoits of the Chambal. His able and dynamic leadership succeeded in all these cases and his strong personal traits attracted many for which he was expected to be the next Prime Minister after Nehru. But J.P. realised the futility of power and party politics, for which refused Nehru's offer to join his government, since he had no personal ambition or power-hankering attitude. A real leader - with all qualities, unparalleled, except Gandhi.

In one sense, JP's shifting was quite natural, since change is a natural phenomenon. Marxism is a method of explaining this process of change. JP. considered that in Indian, Socialist movement should evolve its own picture in the light of Marxian thought, conditions of the world since the death of Marx, and that of our country and our historical background, and "as such", according to him, "there can be no room for dogmatism or fundamentalism in Marxist thought." Marx could not have ultimate truths, and he only made approximations to them.²³⁹ Again man is by nature an enquiring being, and ever progressing towards the truth, and "the vastly developed store of human knowledge and vastly greater experience and observation of capitalist society" of the present day, continuously leading us "far nearer approximations to the truth than Marx,"²⁴⁰ This understanding of Marxism and truth, no doubt, will lead anybody to change his directions according to the changing situation of the material world, and progress towards truth. JP was always in search of truth not only for his own salvation, but his main concern was the people, the poorer section of the society. In an interview with Brahmanand, J.P. clearly expressed his position, when he was asked whether both JP and Russel were 'communist haters', he replied, "... The Marxist task, even for a philosopher,

is to try to alter the world. In my humble way I am trying to alter the world, while Russel merely interpreted it. Have I been able by now to command your respect as a better Marxist than Russel?"²⁴¹

It is a fact that Marx could not demonstrate his theories, probably, for which a variety of Marxist groups or parties developed all over the world, obviously, on the basis of the 'situation', but sometimes, the same situation created different groups, such as Leninist, Stalinist, Trotskyists, Maoism, Castroism, Titoism, or CPI, CPIM, Royist, Forward Block, R.S.P. Naxalites and so on.

Whatever may be the theoretical set up, the fact is that JP has shifted his position from time to time, and the factors responsible for such shift, at least immediate factors, can be summarised as follows :

First of all, it was undoubtedly, his quest for better way to attain freedom, which was not national freedom but freedom in real sense of the term, alongwith equality, brotherhood and a socialist society.

Secondly, the role of the CPI since, J.P.'s arrival into the political scene, caused great influence on JP's thinking and activities. These includes :

- (a) Its' anti-nationalist stand on the ground that the national movement was a bourgeois and Mahatma Gandhi was "a lackey of the Indian bourgeois."²⁴²
- (b) CPI's misunderstanding about the Indian condition and its position as a "tool of Moscow."²⁴³
- (c) Their sabotage and disruptionists game during the 1942 movement²⁴⁴ and "collaborationist policy towards the authorities" during 31 days, hunger strike inside the Deoli jail, for the betterment of detenus,²⁴⁵
- (d) during the Second World War, CPI's reassessment of the 'imperial war' to be a people's war;²⁴⁶
- (e) CPI's role, during the United Front Policy, for which the socialists "but perhaps the price paid was too high,"²⁴⁷

Events inside Russia :

- (a) Over centralization of political and economic authority in Russia and all round domination of the Communist Party there;²⁴⁸
- (b) denial of 'formal' freedom, social justice and equality to the people;²⁴⁹
- (c) Development of new exploitation through a newly developed bureaucratic ruling class;²⁵⁰
- (d) Lenins's forcibly dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, shocked him a great;²⁵¹
- (e) Stalin's inspiration of the German Communists to declare Social Democrats to be "enemy number one" and if left unity would have been there, he thought, "Hitler could never have become the master of Germany."²⁵²
- (f) Stalin's dictatorship in Russia, "Moscow Trial" of famous Communist Leaders, such as Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Rykov, Pyatakov, Rakovsky, Rudzutak, Sokoienikov, among whom most were Lenin's comrades-in-arm during the October Revolution, ultimately most of them were sentenced to death which "shocked the conscience of humanity"²⁵³
- (g) Russia's pact with Hitler, and subsequently, due to Hitler's attack to Russia, the "Imperialist War" became "People's War", and Allies became their friends.²⁵⁴
- (h) J.P. thought "CPI and the Kremlin were misapplying Marxism - Leninism in India particularly and to the world situation in general,"²⁵⁵ for which he thought Stalin's activities were gravest mistake — "the costliest and the most criminal", and due to his disruptive policies, it was possible for Hitler to seize power in Germany.²⁵⁶
- (i) The relationship among the Socialist countries, particularly of Soviet Russia with, Poland or Hungary, Baltic States or Yugoslavia, according to JP, "was not based on the principles of equality and mutual aid," and "was not much different from the relationship of the metropolitan states to their colonial empire."²⁵⁷

All these developments led him to re-examine and rethink Marxism and came to the conclusion that without democratic rights and freedom, a social revolution could not succeed. This thinking was gradually bringing him nearer to Gandhi. Ultimately, the socio-political situation of India, and elsewhere, convinced him that, Party politics was not the real answer to his questions of freedom and justice, and he became clear that, socialism could not “take mankind to the sublime goals of freedom, equality, brotherhood and peace gives promises to bring mankind closer to those goals”²⁵⁸ for which he came to the following conclusions.

- (a) Material prosperity alone could not establish permanent peace, freedom and equality, since in it hunger gnaws at them, continuously.²⁵⁹
- (b) Some sort of unreal uncontrolled competition between individuals, groups and nations grows for which society becomes a restless one.²⁶⁰
- (c) Party system in modern democratic countries was nothing but a struggle for power.²⁶¹
- (d) Money power controls the party and the political process;
- (e) Party system emasculating the people, not to develop their (peoples) strength and initiative;
- (f) Party system reduces human to the position of a sheep with the only function to choose, periodically their shepherds who would look after their welfare!
- (g) Party system reduces democracy to mere casting of votes.²⁶²

All these understanding about the party and politics forced him to resign from 'Rajniti', the politics of the State, not from 'Lokniti', the politics of the people, and turned towards Sarvodaya Philosophy, with the same old aim of real socialism in all respect.

During this journey with Sarvodaya Philosophy, through which he directly worked with the people, sometimes under the influence of Vinova Bhave, J.P., became confirmed that corruption and all other problems of our society were closely related with the morality of people, i.e. in fact that became a moral problem, which could not be overcome only by material prosperity. This makes man to be greedy and ultimately leads to exploitation of the poor.

The backwardness and caste problem in our society, he thought to be purely a moral problem, and if the people could not be changed morally, their moral values, attitudes, and outlook, no development in the real sense could be possible. This understanding led him to call for Total Revolution, for radical change in the society, embracing morality of the people, to socio-political-economic and spiritual aspects of life.

Thus, the shifting tendencies in his life was not whimsical or for any personal reason, rather due to his total devotion to the service of the people, made him to find out the more and more better path for attaining the goals, and he did so without any personal reservation or did not find in it any contradiction. Therefore, his whole life and political thinking and leadership developed in a uniform line with a specific aim in his mind.

Another important thing is that this quest for better alternative of his mind was not only limited to political aspects or political solutions, but it also happened during his studies i.e. in choosing the right course of study. He started his studies as a student of science, particularly mathematics, physics, and chemistry and then switched to biology, economics and sociology. When he realised that the study of the social sciences would help him to work for the people of India, forced him to leave science and come to social sciences. Such was his force or strength of aim, not personal ambition, but the cause of the people of the country that forced him to change his both academic and political paths.

J.P. thus, as a socialist leader, became a real leader with sufficient theoretical clarity of mind, full devotion to his cause of attaining the goals of freedom, equality and peace, establishment of a society of equals - in all respect, with radical change both internal and external. He understood that good means only can produce good ends, and good means deserve good morality, values, which was the root of all development, and hence, he devoted his whole life to develop or enrich the morality of the people so that their enriched conscience would automatically lead them to good services for the society. With such a vast practical knowledge of the human nature and socio-economic and political conditions of the society, he never had in his mind any aspiration to hold state power or party power. His power remained in the heart of the people, who

were so long neglected and exploited for which, without affiliating himself with any party, he could organise people for any movement. The election of 1977 is a great proof of this, where he came, organised and made the 'king', the first non-congress Ministry at the Centre, but he himself remained outside the power-structure, alongwith the people, to whom he was the 'Loknayak.'

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China. They were originally expelled as dissident groups from the CPIM and with the aim of overthrowing the existing social order, by violence, and gradually spread among the youths almost all over the India, though the movement in West Bengal was suppressed with equal violence.

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232. **Interview** with Brahmanand, *op.cit.* p.141 & p.188.
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