CHAPTER - II

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The purpose of this chapter will be to discuss the origin and development of Indian Socialism, JP's Marxian Socialism, his role in the Indian Socialist Movement and a critical evaluation of his Socialism.

(i) Origin and Development of Indian Socialism

The roots of socialist thought can be explained in the context of British imperialism and colonialism in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the foremost social reformer of modern India, first came into contact with British socialists like Robert Owen and others with whom he had prolonged discussions on the nature and substance of socialist thought in general. After him, Dadabhai Naoroji met Hyndman who radicalised to some extent his moderate thought. But the fact was that during the 19th century the moderates were generally far removed from the influence of socialist thought or thinkers. This was because the moderates were primarily concerned with the impact of British imperialism on a traditional society with a backward economy. They were deeply concerned about how English imperial policy had led to the destruction of traditional Indian economy by destabilising the delicate
and shaky agro-industrial balance resulting in impoverishment of the Indian masses. The moderates advocated a policy of liberal administration which could sympathetically solve the basic economic problems of an underdeveloped society. In substance, the moderates made a rational and systematic critique of British economic policy and role in India.

The socialists in Britain were critical of British imperialism in India on the ground that it sought the exploitation of a pre-modern and predominantly agrarian economy. The Indian moderates like Romesh Dutt and Dadabhai advanced similar reasons for their attack against British policy. Dadabhai made a coherent analysis of the problem and came out with his drain theory which was subsequently applauded by socialists and other leftist opinion in India. The drain theory was based on the assumption that the poverty of India was basically due to the drain of wealth of India to Britain. Of course, the drain theory was severely criticised by Western critics, but it was the first serious attempt by Indian moderates to examine at an in depth level the nature and substance of imperialism. Romesh Dutt, another Indian liberal attributed India's poverty to the role of land revenue settlements which were imposed by foreign rulers. The succinct analysis by Romesh
Dutt of the economic policies of Britain in India was a clear indictment of its exploitative economic policy. He analysed the British policy of exploiting the natural resources of the colony by importing raw materials at cheap prices and reexporting them as manufactured goods to the colony at exhorbitant prices and in the process making enormous profits. In fact, Romesh Dutt gave an economic interpretation of British policy in India. He wrote that "in many ways, the sources of National wealth in India have been narrowed under British rule. India in eighteenth century was a great manufacturing as well as a great agricultural country, and the products of the Indian loom supplied the markets of Asia and Europe. It is, unfortunately, true that the East Indian Company and the British parliament, following the selfish commercial policy of a hundred years ago, discouraged Indian manufacturers in the early years of British rule in order to encourage the rising manufacturers of England. Their fixed policy, pursued during the last decades of the nineteenth century, was to make Indian people grow raw produce only in order to supply material for the looms and manufactories of Great Britain. This policy was pursued with unwavering resolution and with fatal success; orders were sent out, to force Indian artisans to work in the Company's factories; commercial
residents were legally vested with extensive powers over villages and communities of Indian weavers; prohibitive tariffs excluded Indian silk and cotton goods from England; English goods were admitted into India free of duty or on payment of nominal duty."

Indian nationalists like Ranade, were critical of the doctrine of *laissez faire*. The burden of the argument was that the people of India were poor, illiterate and tradition-bound and it was left to the government to take measures to develop the national economy by constructing a network of roadlines, schools, hospitals, etc. Ranade, in fact, was a champion of the idea of state interference for bringing about a welfare state. He pointed out that the policy of *laissez faire* may be relevant in the developed countries of Europe but in a backward country like India the state had a major role in the development of the economy. Thus, we find that Indian moderates like the socialists were critical of imperialism with their policy of *laissez faire*, yet they were not full advocates of the doctrine of Socialism.

Extremist leaders like Lajpat Rai and Bipin Pal also came in contact with socialist thought. Lajpat Rai was of the opinion that the Indian national movement should adopt the goal of the British Labour Party. He also argued that the Marxian critique of capitalism was essentially sound in its analysis of the exploitation of workers by the capitalist class. Adopting this Marxian framework Lajpat Rai was critical of the territorial aristocrats and industrial magnates who had developed vested interests in perpetuating the stranglehold of a minority who possessed the largest share of the national wealth. In like manner, Bipin Chandra Pal was impressed by the Russian revolution which released powerful forces of socio-economic change bringing about rapid economic development in the Soviet Union. In 1919 he put forth the view that India was a poor country without the basis of a political democracy and unless sufficient ameliorating measures to improve the economic lot of the masses with attendant liberties were assured the chances of violent upheaval on the pattern of the Russian revolution could not be ruled out altogether. Lajpat and Pal were attracted to Socialism primarily because it promised to liberate the enslaved toiling masses by bringing about equality of man and human brotherhood.
In the twenties and thirties of the present century the impact of the Russian revolution was felt by the steadily growing elite or the highly trained intellectual class who were against the imperialist autocracy as represented by the British rulers in India. The success of the Russian revolution in making Russia a highly industrialised nation within a short span left a deep impact on leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and JP. Thus, the Russian revolution was a great source of inspiration for Indians. The experience of the Russian people and their vitality deeply influenced nationalists and socialist leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and JP who wanted to stir the masses of India away from apathy and feudalism. These Indian nationalists welcomed the ideas of Karl Marx with energy, enthusiasm and sometimes with reckless abandon. They read Karl Marx with great interest and tried to adopt some of his ideas into the Indian national movement. The growth of the trade union movement in India was mostly the result of the impact of the Russian experiment. Planning also was accepted as a part of the Indian reality to usher in an equitable system of production and distribution of goods and services with a simultaneous increase in production. To Indian socialists the chief attraction of the Russian revolution and the Marxian framework of analysis was not in the concepts of class-conflict or economic equality but in the central idea of planning for a welfare state.
M.N. Roy, one of the early communists in India was of the opinion that the national movement was dependant upon a mass movement by workers for the destruction of imperialism in India. He felt that a vague nationalism had tried to combine the interests of such classes as labourers and capitalists, peasants and landlords which was not likely to make the movement socialist in substance and practice. According to Marxian analysis, Gandhi's leadership of the national movement was confined to the national bourgeoisie and such a class played a constructive role in the various stages of the national movement. However, at the same time, it eliminated the urge for revolutionary violence on the part of the people and laid the foundations of a socialist state. But leaders like Nehru and JP who were very active in the Congress Socialist Party disagreed with the attitude of Communists like M.N. Roy on the policies and programmes of Gandhi and the Indian National movement. The socialists considered Gandhi's leadership very much essential for the success of the national movement, while depending merely on industrial workers for success would not produce the desired results. "But Nehru, who also declared himself to be a socialist and was considerably attracted to Marxism, did not believe in the theory of proletarian

leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle. It was revolutionary romanticism to talk of proletarian leadership while the proletariat was still to form itself into a social class. The upper middle class and the professional classes might oppose a socialist revolution, but many of them willingly joined hands in the struggle against foreign rule and in the government for the establishment of a free India.\(^3\) The Indian communists failed to realise that Western Socialism was primarily developed to attack Capitalism for its internal contradictions and not to impose imperialism as such. Given this basis of Marxian Socialism in the West it was naive and wrong on the part of most communists in India to apply this kind of tactics and strategy in a context and circumstances which were altogether different.

The lasting basis for Indian Socialism was laid in 1930's by a brand of highly talented individuals who were diverse in personalities and political principles. These individuals constituted the class of elites with a high degree of political consciousness. In this galaxy of individuals could be included JP, who after his return from the United States was a confirmed believer in Marxian

Socialism, intellectually active Asoka Mehta, dynamic and brilliant Ram Manohar Lohia, mercurial Minoo Masani, N.G.Goray, Achut Patwardhan and others who shared some of the same ideas. These individuals entered into an intellectual dialogue and in the process emerged with a common politico-economic weltanschaung. In their prognosis Capitalism as a system was crumbling because of inner contradictions. It was a time of crisis which required bold thought followed by equally bold action. They saw the way out of the impasse in the Russian experiment of Socialism. In their discussions they agreed that Marxian class contradictions was a reality and class-conflict was a part of an inevitable process of proletarian revolution. To their receptive minds the collapse of Capitalism was inevitable just as the birth of Socialism was also part of an inexorable process. This belief was neither based on pious hopes nor was it an article of faith with them but a scientific certainty rooted in reason and truth about society. The contradictions in the capitalist system made booms and depressions a recurrent reality. The exploitation of the weaker nations by the stronger capitalist nations would lead to frequent international wars. All this would

result in the rise of the exploited masses against the tyranny of the few strong capitalist nations. The capitalist class owned the means of production but made the workers to produce more than they received, resulting in the expropriation of unearned profit by the capitalists. The only remedy for such an unequal relationship was to abolish private property and in its place usher in a planned classes society saturated by harmony and cooperation among all without the coercive power of the State. These conclusions arising out of their intellectual discussions were inevitably applied to the situation prevailing in India. They were firmly convinced that only the socialist model could bring about wholesale changes in the Indian Society. JP was convinced of the relevance of the socialist model for India and he used his immense intellectual power and abundant energy to create an organisation or platform for propagation of this ideology to the masses. He was largely instrumental in establishing the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) within the framework of the Indian National Congress, which was in the vanguard of the national movement for freedom against British rule in India. Through the CSP, JP wanted to give a new socialistic orientation to Congress policies and programmes and also to instil the fervour of Socialism in the masses.

The origins of Indian Socialism can also be traced to the Indian tradition of Individualism. Of course, there were many who argued that Socialism and Individualism were two concepts which blended harmoniously together. JP argued that the traditional Individualism of India was meant to create a perfect individual and not an individual seeking self-aggrandisement. Accordingly the ideas of Socialism and Individualism were not opposed to each other. JP very rightly said that "Indian traditions, as far as I know them, they are not averse to the sharing of life and its privileges. It is said that individualism has always been the dominant feature of Indian civilization and, therefore, the latter is opposed to socialism. To put the problem in this manner is not to understand either of the ideals and to get lost in words ..... Individualism has been the prominent motif in our culture only in the sense that perfection of the individual has been its idea; never in the sense of narrow, self-seeking individualism, which is the motif in capitalist society. And if individual perfection is the goal, the socialist has not the least difficulty in showing that such perfection can come about only by aiming at the utmost common good." (Italics Added).

6. See the pamphlet entitled Why Socialism, (Benaras, 1936).
We have briefly traced the origin of socialist thought in India. It is our contention that the early influences of socialist thought in a small measure can be found in the late 19th century. However, in the Indian context the socialist ideology began to take a definite shape and content only after the success of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. It was in the 1920's and 1930's that a band of young western educated Indians like Jawaharlal Nehru, JP and others coming under the deep influence of Marxian Socialism began to espouse a socialist creed for India. It is assumed that this background discussion of important landmarks in the history of Indian Socialism can contribute much to the subsequent discussion of JP's ideas on socialism.

(ii)

JP and Marxian Socialism

We shall now analyse in an in depth manner the impact of Marxism on JP by tracing the influence of various thinkers in India and abroad. There can be no doubt that they transformed him into an ardent believer in the political and economic creed of Marxian Socialism. The discussion has proceeded on the assumption that many Indians brought to bear a peculiarly Indian bias or flavour to doctrinaire
Socialism of the West. It was, therefore, not surprising that Socialism as a political and economic philosophy acquired a reputation somewhat like a hat that had lost its shape since it was worn by several people with different convictions and mental attitudes.

In respect of India it may be pointed out that Indian Socialism has borrowed heavily from the idea of Socialism as expounded in the West by the Fabian Socialists of Europe. Such borrowing of socialist ideas from the West gradually sunk deep into the psychology of prominent Indian leaders and other public men in the 1920's. This process of actualization really took shape with mass awakening and mass movement which Gandhi inaugurated through the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920. It may appear very curious and surprising that though Marx was a contemporary of Keshav Chandra Sen and Dadabhai Naoroji and Lenin of Gokhale and Tilak, socialist ideas were not the prime concern of Indian political leaders in the period before the First World War. Obviously, the educated class which was supposed to be more alive to the flow of political ideas from the West to the orient had yet to come to grips with a dormant ideology like Marxian Socialism.7 This did not mean that Indian political leaders

like Dadabhai, Gokhale, Tilak and Lajpat Rai and others were completely cut off from any worthwhile contacts with British socialists. On the contrary, these leaders were in touch with leading British socialists of the day like Hyndman, Webbs, Lansburg and Colonel Wedgwood. The perception of Indian leaders was that the Labour Party stalwarts were not so much as part of the British working class, but more as possible allies in the Indian nationalist goal of securing maximum political concessions through constitutional amendments. In any case Indian political opinion was not very familiar with socialist principles as yet, while the novel and unconstitutional methods of Gandhi were yet to fire the imagination of the illiterate masses and educated classes of the society. No wonder Lala Lajpat Rai wrote as he did in 1920 that "we do not understand Socialism. We have never studied it. We do not go by dogmas and doctrines." Even Jawaharlal Nehru felt that it was only after 1920 the first sign of a definite socialist thinking began to dominate the political atmosphere in the Indian horizon. Neither the leadership nor the rank and file of the Indian National Congress had clearly formulated Socialism in the Indian context. Inevitably, there was some

sort of hesitation and doubt in adopting an as yet unknown political creed like Marxian Socialism. In a traditional set up there was always a resistance to new ideas and even in the case of Socialism there was no exception to the general rule. Jawaharlal Nehru writing of such an uncertain atmosphere held the view that "a vague confused socialism was already part of the atmosphere of India ...... (which was) along utopian lines."9

The origin of socialist thought and movement in India was the result of dedicated work by outstanding leaders like Acharya Narendra Dev,10 JP, Jawaharlal Nehru, Asoka Mehta11 and Ram Manohar Lohia. Each of these leaders have in a unique way contributed to the growth of the socialist movement in our country. JP and Ram Manohar Lohia had a deep and perceptive understanding of socialist thought. Both of them were endowed with creative and original minds and they


laid the intellectual and doctrinal foundations of Socialism as applicable to the social conditions prevailing in an underdeveloped country.\textsuperscript{12} JP was not merely a doctrinaire or armchair socialist who was satisfied with intellectual formulations, semantic controversies and academic discussion on the theory and practice of Socialism. He was an organiser, \textit{par excellence}, who believed that socialist theory had no meaning in real terms if it was not put into operation through the launching of a socialist movement. With such a line of thinking in view, JP played a prominent role in the establishment of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 as a ginger group of the Indian National Congress.

JP was put in Nasik Jail along with a number of very talented freedom fighters like Asoka Mehta, Ram Manohar Lohia, N.G.Goray, Yusuf Meharali and Achut Patwardhan. This remarkably gifted company engaged in a continuous dialogue on economic and political problems of the day. In spite of a diverse background, JP had a similarity of views in respect of the politico-economic framework of Socialism for India with others such as Masani, Patwardhan and Lohia.\textsuperscript{13} The devastating effect of the Great Depression had shaken the faith of millions of people around the world in the strength

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\item \textsuperscript{12} A Appadorai, \textit{Political Ideas in Modern India Impact of the West}, (Bombay, Academic Books Limited, 1971), p. 50.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Also see Jayaprakash Narayan, \textit{JPs Jail Life} (A collection of Personal Letters, Bhargava (ed.), (New Delhi, Arnold Heinemann, 1977).
\end{enumerate}
and viability of Capitalism. In fact, JP saw Capitalism as declining with the inevitability of its collapse, leading to the emergence of Socialism. He believed that Socialism would be able to prevent recurrent booms and depressions and do away with the spectre of recurrent ways and perpetual class war. The abolition of private property would put an end to class war also where relationships between human beings would be based on harmony and cooperation. Further, JP was of the opinion that capitalist countries of the West were eager to exploit the abundant raw materials and cheap labour available in a populous country like India. Arguing in this manner, JP became a convinced Marxist. At this period in his intellectual journey, he considered Marxism to be a viable and acceptable theory of Socialism.

As a Marxist, JP was of the opinion that the real substance of power would not come to the people under a democratic system. In a democratic system the capitalists would have vested interests in controlling the levers of power and authority. In a sense, under a democratic set up of the capitalist ethos the few who were wealthy would constitute the elite and manipulate power to serve their selfish ends rather than the cause of suffering humanity. The real proletariat were the poorest of the poor and they would be at the periphery of power without much say in the
policies and programmes of the government. He said that "with the appearance of the ballot box and the party system of government that the fiction of democracy came into being. These two institutions were supposed to have conferred power on the whole people, equally on the humblest and highest. But the economic order which weighs the scales too heavily on the side of the propertied interests, makes of this democracy mockery. The rich have their great resources, their huge elections funds, their great newspapers, their schools and colleges. And the poor? Well, they can have their dole or jolly well starve. The right to exercise the vote in these conditions means little to the workers.

"And even this sham democracy, this mockery, turns against the poor workers when, in spite of all arts, they seem strong enough to disturb the scales of the economic order even so little in their favour. The cry of revolution and 'reds' goes up and what look like democracy disappears like a mist. The ballot box is withdrawn from the reach of the workers. Party Government is thrown over on this scrap heap. Fascism is enthroned. The scales of the economic order are firmly adjusted in the interest of the masters." 14

JP believed that democracy conferred equal rights to the highest and lowliest alike in the society only in theory. In reality, the economically deprived led a supine existence without much participatory role in the institutions of democracy. The right to vote in terms of universal adult franchise and one man one vote got distorted in the process. The reality was such that the wealthy classes through their powerful influence and money power could control the votes of the poorer sections of the society. Moreover, the majority of the electorate in an underdeveloped country had a low level of education which in itself may not be conducive to the exercise of franchise. Even the party system, which was the bedrock of democracy, had so many defects that the whole political processes got distorted to a point where political stability could be jeopardised in a considerable measure. Inner party democracy did not seem to operate in the party system, resulting in leaders taking the help of a coterie which decisively shaped and influenced the policies and programmes of political parties. In the process the rank and file members were deprived of any role in shaping the policies and programmes of the parties. The archaic structures and procedures of the party system in the context of India were not conducive for the development of a stable democracy. JP felt that these distortions in the political process would adversely affect the democratic
fabric which would eventually lead to the creation of a fascist state. Hence, he very vehemently argued in favour of Socialism which could remove the ills of a capitalist society and bring about a democratic order.

Having very precisely and coherently expounded the intrinsic defects of Capitalism and Democracy, JP turned his serious attention towards a purposeful assessment of the relevance of Marxism in the modern world. He felt that economic democracy was of primary concern in the case of the underdeveloped countries of the world. As long as economic inequality was the prevailing reality under Capitalism and Democracy there could not be any socio-economic and political salvation for the poor and other underprivileged sections of the society. Economic inequality led to political inequality and social instability thereby creating the conditions of violence and revolutionary change. To avoid such an eventuality JP argued in favour of a socialist economy as was in vogue in the Soviet Union. Capitalist democracies left the forces of market competition to operate freely which frequently created immense hardship to the people because of economic upheavals. Socialist planning of the Soviet model could prevent such sudden ups and downs in the economy since the State would be in control of the commanding heights of the economy through meaningful time-bound economic programmes and policies. There would be
little left to the mercy of free forces of market competition. Further, the Soviet experiment in economic planning had enabled that country to make rapid transition from a traditional social order to that of a modern, industrialised, scientific and technological society. In a short period of time the Soviet Union had pushed itself into the forefront of modern industrial societies. JP argued that if it was possible in the case of the Soviet Union to succeed in achieving rapid economic growth, there was no reason why India should not succeed in a like manner. In other words, JP wanted economic planning to become part and parcel of India's economic policies. A proper centrally planned economy could harness the immense natural and human resources for bringing about industrialisation and modernisation. JP was not prepared to agree with the proposition that in a State controlled or centrally controlled economy the bureaucracy would be inefficient and corrupt. He held the view that the critics of a centrally planned economy were not objective in their approach as they allowed their 'prejudices implanted in their mind' to have a mask over their real judgement. He said that it would take him "too far away from the subject to consider these prejudices. It would be sufficient to observe that while every national and international effort at solving the present crises of capitalism had abjectly
failed, Russia alone has kept her head high, has made steady progress in production and in raising the standards of living. In a period of extensive unemployment, Russia alone is a country where there is a shortage of hands. What this may mean to masses of men and women may best be seen by turning to Russia, where a faith and spirit seem to have awakened for which neither the sky nor the sea, the wind nor river, remains unconquerable. To think that only a few years back this country was one of darkest despair and most oriental lethargy."15

JP considered that economic planning led to over-centralisation and over-concentration of power with the bureaucracy at the federal level. He knew that if such a thing happened it would lead to enormous wastage and faulty production and hence he argued that the Soviet Union should opt in favour of decentralisation of economic control by percelling out power to autonomous geographical units of production. This would provide the necessary initiative, freedom and incentive to the bureaucracy in arriving at decisions on policy matters. Likewise he felt that centralisation of power could be avoided in India through decentralisation and greater autonomy to units of production.

15. Ibid., p. 80.
in the State. He also argued that the Marxian framework
was suitable to Indian conditions both in the present as
well as in the future. According to this reasoning which
he put forth at the Meerut Conference of 1936, the only
salvation for India was to chalk out a Marxist programme,
for it was Marxism alone which could provide momentum and
guidance against the imperialist forces through an independent
destiny for the nation. "We require socialism here, as
elsewhere, because life here has been so completely
disorganised as a result of imperialistic exploitation."

JP analysed rather exhaustively the argument that
since India was predominantly an agricultural country there
was nothing much in common with the creed of Socialism. He
was clear in his mind about the fact that though Indians
were predominantly agriculture oriented this in itself could
not constitute an impediment for the establishment of Socialism.
He pointed out that the issue was not one of examining whether
Socialism should pervade Indian society, but on the other hand,
the more important question was whether Indian farmers and

in India, Vol. II, Brahmanand, (ed.), (Bombay, Popular

17. Jayaprakash Narayan, Towards Struggle: Selected
Manifestos, Speeches and Writings, Yusuf Meharally,
the Indian nation as whole would accept Socialism. There was absolutely no doubt in JP’s mind that Socialism alone could save Indian agriculture from exploitation and bankruptcy. Since agriculture was the backbone of Indian economy, the vast majority of India’s population depended for their survival on this section of economy. Hence, he argued that only Socialism could save it from utter ruin and collapse. If the agricultural sector was weak with low productivity then it would reflect on the nation in terms of mass poverty and mass backwardness. Therefore, JF was right in his opinion that a strong and powerful nation was possible only if a strong agricultural base was built up through the instrumentality of Socialism.  

From time immemorial Indian agriculture has suffered from a number of serious anomalies. The exploitation of the tillers by absentee landlords, inordinately high taxation, crushing burden of debt, subdivision and fragmentation of holdings, utterly low productivity, unscientific methods of marketing, lack of proper credit facilities and the overall imbalance between agriculture and industry, the towns and the villages. These were some of the defects that were identified by JP in the course of his diagnosis of the doctrine of Socialism and its relevance

18. Ibid., p. 90.
for India. He provided a typical socialist solution to the agrarian problem by stating that it was necessary to destroy the forces of exploitation as represented by the capitalistic, feudal social order so that root and branch solutions could be found. He said it was imperative "to clear away all the vested interests that lead to in any manner whatever to the exploitation of the tiller of the soil, liquidate all agrarian debts, pool the holdings and establish cooperative and collective farming, State and Cooperative Credit and Marketing system and cooperative subsidiary industries ..... they mean the destruction of nothing but that system of exploitation which is inherent in the relationship of tenant and landlord. For the rest, they are wholly constructive requiring nothing except State guidance, encouragement and propropaganda." 19

JP's remedies for the problems of Indian agriculture were not negative but constructive and functional in their formulation. In reality he suggested a three-fold positive scheme for reorganising and modernising Indian agriculture within the framework of Marxism. The first step which he visualised was to adopt cooperative farming, where individual holdings would still continue to remain but land would be

19. Ibid., p. 90.
equalised through a national scheme of redistribution and the produce would be distributed to the farmers according to the size of their holdings and the quantum of manual labour put in by them. In the second step, collective farming would be adopted in which there would be no individual holdings and where the basis of distribution depended upon the amount of labour put in by individuals except in some unusual cases with unusual needs. In the third and final stage, individual holdings would be organised into communes, where utmost importance would be given to community living and participation. An analysis of this three fold approach of JP provided indication that the first two stages of agriculture were akin to socialist agriculture in the Soviet Union while the third stage corresponded with the pattern prevailing in the Chinese Communes. But in JP's thinking a careful step by step approach was necessary to bring about radical changes in the agricultural sector in India. He held the view that in the Soviet Union coercion on a massive scale was used by the socialist government to establish cooperative and collective farming, but for India he did not advocate the use of coercive methods. Instead of forcible socialisation of agriculture he recommended the encouragement and promotion of cooperative and collective farming. Just as the industrial sector was provided with incentives to increase
production so also the agricultural sector must be given
the necessary encouragement in the form of subsidy,
preferential taxation, extension education, demonstration,
etc. He took pains to make it clear that Socialism would
not mean taking away of the land from the peasants since
the objective of socialisation was social good rather than
the good of a few individuals. "We socialists do not have
an island across the seas where we shall transport all the
land we shall 'confiscate' from the peasants. The lands
will be where they are and the peasants will have them and
cultivate them. The question only is how the peasants shall
cultivate their land so that society may benefit most the
peasants themselves more than any one else."\textsuperscript{20}

JP accepted the Marxian critique of the capitalist
society and through his own dialectical method he sought to
interpret the meaning of a capitalistic feudal society for
India and for the outside world. Coming under the pervasive
influence of Marxism he was of the opinion that it was the
only political philosophy which provided solutions to
problems of society by taking into account the objective
conditions prevailing in the environment at any particular
time. This aspect of Marxism appealed to him very much
because no other political philosophy was rooted as much

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 95.
in reality as the Marxian philosophy. In the thirties JP seemed to accept the theory of class struggle as propounded by Marx. Marx took the position that man's value system and ideas component were determined by class ideologies, class interests and privileges. In this pro-Marxian period JP neither believed that Marxian Socialism could be ushered in through the power of persuasion nor could economic equality in the real sense be attained in the foreseeable future. Further, it must be noted that Socialism could also be explained on the basis of one's own experience of working class poverty and exploitation. In fact, the critics of Marxian Socialism in Europe generally did not belong to the working class but they were part of the middle class or the upper class. Such an analyses of Marxian insights were not the result of personal experiences but arose out of a critical understanding and knowledge of objective reality. These critics and scholars used their thinking faculties and intellectual capabilities to interpret and draw inferences about this political philosophy. Thus, their analyses was the product of their imagination, keenness of their observation of events in human societies and their urge to fearlessly think and do as they thought fit. JP's fidelity to Marxian values at this juncture was so strong and pervasive that he seemed to either contradict or dilute his unflinching commitment to human dignity and freedom. This contradiction in his thought may on the face of it not
reveal his personality unless we understand the totality of JP's political thought. It may be argued here that JP's preference for Marxism arose out of his propagation of human equality which he himself was striving for, placed as he was in a very difficult economic circumstances in the United States. On the other hand, JP's liberalism was always dormant and was likely to come into the open as a reflection of his own personal experiences in the west and as an eloquent testimony to the success of freedom of the human mind. This clearly explained the apparent contradiction in his thought process though in reality there was consistency in terms of his life experiences and value system.

During this pro-Marxian period of life, JP considered himself to be a votary of Marxism, relentlessly pursuing the path towards the ultimate truth as he saw it. As a traditionalist he was aware that whatever scientific perfection Marxian Socialism claimed for itself, the fact was that truth was not the monopoly of a particular political dogma or faith. He was also conscious that the theory of Scientific Socialism could not in itself proclaim the final reality or truth for the simple reason that the world of reality was diverse in its manifestation. JP was pragmatic enough to realise that man's quest for truth by eliminating untruth in the process of his methodological enquiry was a
never ending process. That was why, many years later he wrote in the preface to his book From Socialism to Sarvodaya that "man is ever progressing towards the truth for by nature man is enquiring being. He would never be able to reach ultimate truth, but by gradually eliminating untruth, he will be able to approach truth."21 Given these compulsions, JP became aware that the Marxian economic interpretation of history could not be applicable to all countries under all circumstances. He also began to realise that the modern Welfare State was performing a large number of human welfare oriented functions in the sphere of education, health, hygiene, etc. Yet his belief in the basic postulates of Marxian Socialism continued to dominate his thought process. He was clear in his own mind that political institutions in a capitalist society would not work for the upliftment of all the sections in the society, specially the under privileged who suffered from many disabilities. This belief was based on the reasoning that under Capitalism political institutions subserved the interest of only the governing class at the cost of all other classes. In such a context, political institutions were used as handy instruments to protect the sectarian class interests of the few. The Marxian idea that human institutions and ideas were determined by the objective

conditions in the society seem to have influenced JP's thinking to a considerable extent. The conflicts in human societies created a social relationship of antagonism sometimes leading to violence among individuals and groups. JP also accepted the viewpoint that the State was an instrument of coercion and exploitation, primarily meant to perpetuate the class war. From the above analyses it may be said that JP was still convinced about the relevance and the logical consistency of the basic principles of Marxian Socialism. However, one got the feeling that JP did not approve of some of the other detailed aspects in Marxian philosophy. Specially his anathema towards revolutionary violence came to the fore and he had lingering doubts in his mind about the efficacy of such a path to solve human problems. We can only say that JP's wide-ranging mind was moving away from firm adherence to Marxian Socialism because of some reservations on the mechanics and details of Marxian ideas. This was the state of his mind because of his own lower middle class Indian background with its divergent pulls and his long sojourn in the United States where he was exposed to Western culture and the political philosophy of Marxian Socialism.

In essence, these years left an indelible mark on JP's personality and thought. He seriously studied and imbibed the idea of Marxian Socialism since he had a young receptive
mind grouping for new ideas. It may appear very odd that young JP became a convinced Marxist living in a capitalist society for seven years. This was because of his own personal background and the stimulating academic atmosphere in the higher institutions of learning in the United States of that time which contributed a great deal to JP's intellectual journey to Marxian Socialism. On the whole, it may be stated that JP's conversion to Marxism during his stay abroad was something similar to what happened to many other contemporary Indians of his time who went to foreign countries for higher studies. In the twenties India was under the grip of British colonialism and many young talented Indians could carve out their future only by going to the West and exposing themselves to new types of societies and new ideas. This was the case with Indians like Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi and a host of others. JP was a part of such a galaxy of Indians who returned from abroad with new ideas and new convictions and new hopes. He went to the United States unsure of his own political convictions but returned to India a firebrand Marxist speaking the language of Marxism with deep convictions.
(iii)

**JP and the Indian Socialist Movement**

We shall now discuss the birth of the Congress Socialist Party, the relationship of this party with the Communist Party of India and JP's development of the concept of Democratic Socialism. These major events corresponded to an evolution of JP's ideas on Socialism in the context of the Indian society. This aspect of JP's ideas on Socialism marked the second important phase in his thinking and reformulation of Marxian Socialism to suit the conditions in an underdeveloped country. JP returned from the United States in 1929, a Marxist by conviction and a strong sympathiser of the Communist Party. He plunged into the national movement without any delay and spent his first jail term in Nasik in the company of talented and articulate younger votaries of different hues of Socialism. Young JP endowed with a keen perception and a sensitive mind had already begun to develop certain reservations about the totalitarian dimensions of Marxian Socialism. The immediate cause for such doubts was the Communist position on national movements in colonial countries. The Communist Party in India vehemently criticised Gandhi and the Indian National
Movement as a conglomeration of vested interests and reactionary forces. Such an unhelpful attitude of the Communist Party made JP more sympathetic towards those who wanted to toe a different line by establishing the Congress Socialist Party.

At this period of his life, he came into contact with a group of young socialist intellectuals like Minoo Masani, Achut Patwardhan, N.G. Goray and M.L. Dantawala. These intense discussions led to the formation of the Congress Socialist Party with an objective to provide the economic ideology of Socialism to the freedom movement by linking up the powerful forces of nationalism with the forces of economic regeneration. It was also JP's belief that India's freedom could have correct meaning only if it adopted the socialist model of economic development. He said that "free India to me meant socialist India and Swaraj the rule of the poor and downtrodden. Congress policy and programme on this score, in spite of the famous Karachi declaration, seemed vague and inadequate. Naturally, with other like-minded fighters for freedom we formed the Congress Socialist Party ..., which meant in Marxian

terminology the linking of the movement of national freedom with the movement for economic and social emancipation of the masses." In fact, it was "in prison that he was able to colly think over the Karachi programme and the prospect of socialism in India. Hitler and Dimitrov are not the only persons who came out of the prison only to mould the destinies of two of the greatest parties of the world - the Nazi Party and the Comintern. Jaya Prakash was also against a new political party."  

The Congress Socialist Party also arose out of the lessons and experiences gained from the last two national struggles namely, the Non-cooperation Movement of 1920 and the Civil Dis-obedience Movement of 1930. These two movements created a high sense of expectation among the masses but when they did not bring about immediate Swaraj or freedom to India there was a state of euphoria among the people of the country. Many Congressmen and socialists became convinced that a new direction and orientation to the national struggle had become an imperative necessity;


it also included reformulation of its basic objectives in terms of tactics and strategy and reconsideration of its policies and methods. To achieve these objectives, initiative could be taken only by those who had a clear theoretical understanding of the extant forces in the Indian society. Notwithstanding these considerations it also required men infused with high degree of patriotism, dynamism, vision and faith in the destiny of the nation to give a new and radical orientation to the national struggle. Such persons could only be Congressman like JP and others who were under the influence of Marxian Socialism and accepted it both in its theoretical formulation and practical application. Under such circumstances it was quite natural for the new organization which sprung up from within the ranks of the Indian National Congress to take the name of the Congress Socialist Party. The word 'Congress' which was prefixed to the word 'Socialist' definitely established the linkage between the parent organization and the new organisation in terms of its past, present and future.25

JP was also of the opinion that the Indian National Congress was loosing touch with the socialist forces in the country. Nor did the socialist groups have any positive influence on the national movement. Therefore, the Congress Socialist Party was supposed to bring about a fusion between the nationalist forces and the socialist forces. The task was to develop the national movement into a mass movement and to prevent the exploitation of the native population by forging an alliance of all anti-imperialist forces. It was JP's view that there were many elements in the Congress who were guided by the bourgeoisie leadership and therefore it was necessary to bring them under the umbrella of revolutionary socialism. Such a task could be accomplished if there was within the Congress fold a well organised group of Marxian socialists. He was conscious that such a step marked a radical departure from the existing set up. He, therefore, cautioned against hasty or a large scale socialist programme which would eliminate other anti-imperialist forces due to intolerance and impatience. He was eager to work with the Congress rather than follow a policy of confrontation with it. It did not mean that the Congress Socialist Party would dilute or give up its socialist propaganda through its own platform. JP was clear in his mind that Marxism alone provided the beacon light against the forces of imperialism.
and towards the path of economic prosperity and equality. Formulating a Marxian approach, JP emphasised the fact that the rank and file of the members must fully understand the theory and practice of revolution, class-struggle, the sum and substance of the State system and processes leading towards a society saturated by Marxian Socialism.26

In the establishment of a socialist society JP said that in the first place "there must be complete political freedom (and) secondly there should be no privileged economic or political class...."27 This only meant that for JP political freedom from British imperialists had to be given the top-most priority. He felt that without political freedom from foreign domination there could be no establishment of Socialism in India. The thrust of Socialism as an economic doctrine was to achieve rapid economic development, but such development could come only after the attainment of political freedom. He very rightly said that freedom "will have no real meaning until Socialism is established in the country." True freedom -


freedom from want, from poverty, from disease and illiteracy is only possible in a Socialist State where everyone would have a voice and all could be equal without any distinction between the rich and the poor." Once political freedom was secured economic or political classes with special privileges would no longer continue to exist. The argument was that too much concentration of economic and political power by certain classes would lead to the exploitation of the masses. JP wanted to avoid these twin evils in the socialist India of his vision through the Congress Socialist Party.

JP played a very prominent role in the organisation of the CSP. Through his flair for organisation and the clarity of his thought, JP became the key spokesman of the CSP. In his capacity as the Organising Secretary of the CSP he toured different parts of the country and was fully engaged in the propagation of the ideals of his party based on Marxian Socialism. In the process he developed his image as a dynamic mass leader who was capable of understanding socio-economic and political problems in their bare essentials. His

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appeal was directed to classes in the urban areas and the masses in the rural areas. JP's objective was to bridge the gulf between the urban educated and the rural poor. Adopting such a comprehensive framework, young JP was in the forefront of the drive to create awakening among the people in favour of the CSP. JP was also instrumental in formulating the basic objectives and programmes of the CSP. This was evident from the resolution of the conference in Patna on 17th May, 1934. "In the opinion of this Conference, the time has come for an all India Organisation of the Socialists in the Congress to be established. With this objective in view it is resolved that a drafting committee consisting of the following be appointed to prepare a draft programme and constitution of the Congress Socialist Party: Acharya Narendra Deva - President; Jaya Prakash Narayan - Secretary; C.C.Banerjee and Faridual Huq - Members.

"It is further resolved that Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan be appointed the Organising Secretary of the All India Congress Socialist Party to organise Provincial Congress Social Groups where they do not exist on the basis of the programme adopted by the drafting committee
and arrange an All India Conference to form an All India Congress Socialist Party immediately prior to the next session of the All India National Congress."  

JP propounded a two fold thesis for the Congress Socialist Party. He very rightly argued that it was the twin purpose of the CSP to get complete independence for India and the acceptance of a socialist programme. Time and again at various forums he spoke out forcefully in favour of these two basic objectives of the CSP. In a speech in Madras on 27th July, 1934 he declared unequivocally that he wanted to present two basic objectives of the CSP in front of the people. "I want to present to you two thesis. The first is that every honest Congressman ..... who wants to bring about complete independence of India not merely in name, but complete independence for the majority of the Indian people, that is for the worker, for the peasant, for the poor of this country, must accept Socialism as his basic principle of thought and action. The second thesis is that if we want that our great movement for national independence should

However, JP had to use all his intelligence and power of persuasion to create a climate of opinion favourable to the policy of the CSP. The big problem in the thirties about the theory of Socialism pertained to the fact that it was understood mostly by intellectuals, while the masses at large were yet unaware of the fundamental principles of Socialism. The Russian Revolution of 1917 certainly ushered in a new brand of Socialism, but in the 1930's it had yet to receive wide acceptance in different parts of the world. India possessing a feudal, traditional social structure with superstition and dogmas governing the life of large sections of the population was less receptive to these new ideas. Imbibed with such a traditional and religious outlook, the masses in the country looked upon Marxian Socialism as an alien system of thought and philosophy which reposed faith in atheism and hence was unacceptable to many people. Even many political leaders who had their training and familiarity with British political institutions looked upon Marxism
with a high degree of skepticism. Hence, the task before JP and his companions was to put the case of the CSP through an idiom and a method with which the people of India were familiar. This was indeed a yeoman task for the stalwarts of the CSP. Nevertheless JP responded to this challenge and began to propound the objectives of the CSP in conformity with the conditions prevailing at that time. He put forth the viewpoint that the extremes of poverty and richness, starvation and luxury, stalked the land in a compelling manner. This was because of the exploitation by the capitalists of other sections of the Indian society through their control of the means of production. "Socialism is as definitely 'indicated' in India as elsewhere. In India too there is poverty, starvation, on the one hand and wealth and luxury on the other; in India too there is exploitation; the means of production here also are in private hands. That is, the root evil of modern society namely, economic and social inequality, exists in India too as does it cause; the exploitation of the great many by the very few."31

Socialists like JP defined economic freedom in terms of Marxian Socialism. To him Socialism without economic freedom was a sham and moonshine like the chaff without wheat. In fact, he regarded economic freedom as "another word for socialism." Hence, if economic freedom was the goal of JP's Socialism it could be realistically connected with the fight for political freedom with a view to gain economic freedom eventually. Thus, it was clear that JP had a scheme of priorities and a programme of action. He believed that to the great "number of India's millions the real issues are hunger and poverty and oppression and exploitation. Is independence synonymous with freedom from these? Can we tell the masses that independence under any circumstances means bread, employment, freedom from exploitation and oppression? Can we say justly that unless independence takes on this meaning it is real issue for the people? Hunger and poverty do not need definition .... independence does. It can become real for the people only if its definition

32. Ibid.,

covers their fundamental needs." In consonance with this position he coherently argued that the socialist ideology was not foreign to India. "If there is capitalistic system of organisation in China, in Japan, in Australia or in any part of the world, no matter what its traditions have been before Socialism is to grow there .... India today is the part of the most highly developed capitalistic system in the world." On the other hand, at this time Nehru who called himself a socialist and a republican was keen to see that the Congress held a fair balance between capital and labour, landlord and tenants, the changes in land-laws and wages of workers, organisation of industry on co-operative basis and forging of a meaningful and creative link between the Congress and labour movement. At the Karachi Congress some of Nehru's socialist ideas were embodied in the catalogue of fundamental rights and economic principles which also included a living wage, imposition of death duties and State control of basic industries. "These may seem mildly...


socialist today in 1931 they sounded revolutionary."  

JP who had developed a very insightful understanding of Socialism was greatly disappointed with the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931 since he felt that the programme of the Congress was far short of socialist ideals. "It might ameliorate the conditions of the masses to a certain extent, but it will neither rid them of exploitation nor put them in power .... it leaves capitalists, landlords and princes on the one side and workers, tenants and subjects on the other. It leaves the means of production in the hands of private individuals, except in the sphere of key industries. The entire economic organisation, based as it is on the exploitation of the poor and the middle class, is preserved. This is not economic freedom. The preamble and the substance of the Karachi resolution are at wide variance without the other. What we endeavour to do is to remove this variance and bring them close together."  

The time was now ripe for the CSP to propose a


minimum economic programme which was in addition to the demand for nationalization of key industries, the realisation of the economic freedom of the masses through eradication of exploitation, injustice, poverty and ignorance. JP was keen to develop the CSP into a dynamic radical organisation with a view to prevent the drift towards 'sterile constitutionalism' of the Indian National Congress. This strategy involved full concentration on organising the latent power of the rural and urban masses through a linkage of the peasant and labour unions with the CSP. The basic purpose was to forge it into the mass movement which would be opposed to any dialogue with the British Government in India on communal issues. JP's radicalism coupled with his faith in doctrinaire Marxian Socialism could not accept the slow pace of political concessions which the British wanted to give to the Indians. To him constitutionalism and political evolution were a slow process for which neither he nor others of his thinking were prepared to accept and even the mood of the Indian people was against periodic doses of constitutional advances without the substance of freedom. As a revolutionary he prescribed the goal of total independence as an intrinsic programme of the CSP. As a socialist JP preferred mass organisation and mass movement to electoral
and legislative activities. It is our argument that JP wanted to fight the Britishers in India on his own terms, through the novel path of mass action through mass organisation. Finally, he believed that mass appeal and mass action covering every nook and corner of the country could undermine the basic strength of British rule in India and simultaneously provide a palliative to the socio-economic and political problems of the people. All this only showed that JP’s thinking had become more sophisticated and realistic since his perceptive mind took into account some of the ongoing changes that were taking place in the Indian scene. The period of unreasoned, uncritical and dogmatic acceptance of Marxian Socialism was over, since JP had to contend with the reality of Indian conditions, though he did have admiration for the Soviet model because of Russia’s achievements. At the same time his disenchantment with the Congress also grew because the lawyers, the capitalists and the landed gentry were the backbone of the organisation. The support of such reactionary forces to the Congress Party was of dubious value as they were eager to substitute colonial rule with their own overlordship in India. They were neither keen nor capable of removing the shackles of social injustice and economic stagnation which were rampant in the nation.
To achieve some of these objectives the all India Congress Socialist Party proclaimed a 15 point programme. A number of useful measures formed part and parcel of this programme. There was provision for transfer of all power to the producing masses rather than concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the capitalists. This proposal was made with a view to give power to those who produced wealth in society through their own labour. Marxian influence was to be seen in the sense that the capitalists were regarded as parasites in the society who appropriated wealth by denying to the masses their rightful share as producers of the wealth. Further, the working class always received a raw deal since the powerful capitalist class exploited them and appropriated their wealth. The long term objective was to have a centrally planned economy controlled and dominated by the State. The reason for such a prescription was to achieve rapid economic development in a planned and systematic manner. The State would exercise full control over the economy to foster rapid improvement in the standard of living of the people. Socialisation of key and principal industries like steel, railways, shipping, cotton, mines, banks, etc. was another important aspect of the programme. This was recommended with a view to socialise the instruments of production and
distribution and exchange. The commending height of the economy would be in the domain of the State rather than under the control of the capitalists. Probably such a programme could ensure that profits earned from industrial ventures or public utilities would benefit the society as a whole rather than be concentrated in the hands of a few people. This was also meant to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in a group of selfish people who could manipulate political institutions to subserve their economic and other interests. The State was also expected to enjoy a monopoly in foreign trade. A judicious foreign trade policy could enable India to export more and earn foreign exchange, thereby financing the imports of the country. The import of capital, technology and knowhow for rapid industrialisation and modernisation of the country would be possible only when the State was given a free hand in regulating foreign trade.

The cooperative base of the State economy was also expected to be strengthened in respect of production, distribution and credit. This programme visualised a network of cooperative institutions performing intensive and extensive roles in the domain of production, distribution and credit and in different areas of human endeavour. This
programme also expressed the viewpoint that princes and landlords and all other classes of exploitation would be prevented from playing reactionary and obstructionist roles in Indian society. They would be completely eliminated through the withdrawal of their compensation. The idea was to bring about equality of classes through the removal of special privileges to certain classes in the society. Further, the landlords who had acquired ownership through coercive and illegal means were to be divested of their acquisition by redistribution of land to the peasants. Absentee landlordism was to be substituted by the slogan of land to the tiller. Through such distributive justice the CSP was eager to initiate a radical realignment of the class structure of the rural population. The exploiters would no longer be able to exploit while the exploited would be placed in a favourable position. To strengthen the sustaining power of the newly liberated peasantry, it was proposed to organise and encourage cooperative and collective farming under the auspicious of the State. Individual peasants through collective efforts and in league with the power of the State would be put in a position of equality with the more privileged in the society. These measures would also make possible the liquidation of enormous debts of
the peasants and the workers. Rural indebtedness was the bane of the Indian society. It was of such proportions that it created havoc with millions of rural families who were already crushed down by the burden of poverty.

One very progressive measure in the programme pertained to a clear recognition of the right to work or in lieu of it maintenance by the State. It may appear that this aspect of the programme was populist in nature and was expected to serve only propagandist purposes as there was practically no hope for the State to provide employment or work to all able bodied men and women. It was true that this part of the programme of the CCP appeared too ambitious at that time, but purely from the point of view of natural justice and the goals of a welfare State the acceptance of the principle of right to work was without doubt a major forward step of momentous significance. It was also specified that every one would be provided according to his needs and according to his capacity. This would be the governing principle in the production and distribution of economic goods. This element of the programme was a typical Marxian innovation that was expected to cater to the needs of every individual but in relation to his capacity. A meaningful relationship would be
developed between production and distribution. Large scale production or mass production without distributive justice was a mockery of the principle of natural justice and equality of all in the eyes of law. Production and distribution were equally important for a just social order. Adult franchise was another progressive measure from functional consideration rather than on any other consideration. The prescription of certain conditions for exercise of franchise appeared to be more reasonable than universal adult franchise without any restrictions. After all, democratic institutions could function properly provided people exercised the franchise without favour or fear and in the best interest of the country. Given mass illiteracy, economic backwardness and socio-cultural stagnation, the proposal to provide adult franchise for a specific purpose appeared reasonable and pragmatic. There would be no State religion or State discrimination between one religion as against another religion. There would not be any discrimination on the basis of caste, sex or creed. Obviously, the programme sought to keep the State and religious institutions as two distinct entities, looking to the fact that India was multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-communal. Secularism was expected to be the only viable policy for the State to adopt and
practise. Finally, the CSP proclaimed its intention of repudiating the so-called public debt of India.\textsuperscript{38} The public debt of India involved enormous sums of money supposed to be spent for the welfare of the people. The CSP theoreticians like JP were of the view that Britain as a colonial power was exploiting the human and natural resources of India and hence where was the need for imposing an additional burden on the public through the public debt of India. This was a definite indication that the CSP would not under any circumstances become a party to Britain's exploitation of India's wealth in terms of goods and services.

JP observed that the fifteen points in the programme were neither too drastic nor too extreme nor were they the product of foreign influence. On the contrary, they were very simple, reasonable, just and practical. In respect of the criticism that the programme was conceived by the CSP under the influence of Marxian Socialism imported from the Soviet Union did not carry much weight. It is reasonable to say that Marxian Socialism was a foreign creed, but CSP stalwarts like JP had redefined it and adapted it to suit Indian conditions. In this sense JP

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 101-102.
was right when he said that "they sound no more foreign than constitutional assembly, the legislative council, the Tariff Board, and the siren of cotton mills ...."39

JP as the principal organising genius of the CSP was clear in his mind that the CSP would have to take positions which would be contrary to the policies of the Congress. He was also convinced that the CSP would not be able to command a mass following through mere radical slogan mongering but by resolute and positive action. When the Congress Working Committee meeting on 18th May, 1934 condemned in no uncertain terms the thesis of class war and appropriation of property as leading to violence, JP was quick to respond as the socialists were the target of this resolution. He said that the "resolution of the Congress Working Committee regarding the Congress Socialist movement shows how reactionary the present leadership of the Congress has become. The programme adopted by the Patna Socialist Conference speaks not of class war but of organising the masses on the basis of their economic interest and fighting for the removal of their immediate demands and leading them to independence and socialism."

39. Ibid., p. 102. Also see Bimal Prasad (ed.), A Revolutionary's Quest - Selected Writings of Jaya Prakash Narayan, p. 78.
Nowhere in the Patna Conference had the phrase confiscation of property occurred.  

It was obvious that JP was trying to carve out an independent position for the CSP within the fold of the Congress Party. The basic purpose was to influence the policies and programmes, the strategies and tactics of the Congress organisation. At the same time, from the long term point of view, JP wanted the CSP to completely disentangle itself from the web of the Congress Party and develop into a viable alternative to it. Keeping this two-fold short-term and long-term objectives in view, JP used every platform and occasion which included public speeches, addresses at party forums, articles to leading newspapers and journals, press conferences, etc. to propound the philosophy of the CSP and to attack the obscurantist, pseudo-religious, antideluvian policies of the Congress. He specially concentrated on Gandhi's programme of Charkha and Khadi spinning by saying that they in no way provided lasting solutions to the perennial economic problems of the masses, nor could they provide a basis for the freedom of

India from British rule. In fact, JP took a practical view about the significance of Charkha and Khadi as mere symbols but he went one step further and argued that Gandhi introduced these non-issues which could divert the attention of the people from the freedom struggle. Speaking in the name of the CSP, JP said that "we have never obstructed the constructive programme and have often cooperated in it, we never accepted it as the only or even as an adequately effective weapon in struggle .... We recognised its value as a channel of approach to the masses and as an instrument for social amelioration. But we always stressed its inadequacy and its unscientific social philosophy. We advanced a new programme for peasant organisation, as the foundation of a revolutionary mass movement. Our views regarding these matters have remained unchanged. Rather, they have been strengthened by the helplessness of the national leadership in the present crisis. Yet, we are prepared in the circumstances to carry out the constructive programme because the nation's high command desires it. But we cannot make an ideological recantation, nor can we give up our own programme of work. We are prepared to spin, as some members of our party are doing, as a matter of discipline, but it would be dishonesty.
for us and renunciation of socialism if we profess the faith in Khadi which the new pledge requires."^41

One also suspects that JP and the CSP had reservations on the oft-repeated dictum of Mahatma Gandhi, namely, 'non-violence in spirit and demeanour' which was an article of faith with him. Gandhi also expounded this idea to apply it to the freedom struggle in India. JP on the other hand, preferred to use 'peaceful and legitimate means'. Here we find a subtle difference between Gandhi and JP on the question of non-violence. JP with his revolutionary fervor would prefer to use peaceful means in the fight for freedom against the British and for the socio-economic transformation of India, but if it became inevitable he would use as he said 'legitimate means' which could possibly include coercive or violent measures. We have found that the Congress and Gandhi stood on one side on the issue of violence or non-violence while JP and the CSP stood on the other side in the course of the national movement.

Even on the issue of decentralisation of power, JP differed with Gandhi. Gandhi's concept of decentralisation of power visualised power to all functionaries at all levels from the bottom to the apex. Through such parcelling out of power Gandhi hoped to build a harmonious society of simple but contented life to which he gave the name of Ramrajya. On the other hand, JP did not accept this line of argument since he was nearer to Marx than to Gandhi. Taking the Marxian position on this issue he said that instead of decentralisation of power, power must be transferred from the capitalists to the workers and from the classes to the masses. Probably this prognosis of JP was due to his acceptance of class dichotomy, which Marx propagated during his life-time. Further, the divergence between JP and Gandhi on this issue may also be due to the fact that the former was not as much of an individualist as Gandhi.

It must be said to the credit of JP and the CIP that from the very outset they were in favour of complete independence and severance of the link with the British empire. This was indeed in contrast to the stand of the Congress which was initially confined to the demand for
dominion status. One must say that JP's thinking on the crucial issue of freedom was more progressive and farsighted than many stalwarts in the Congress organisation. It could also be said that JP, to a certain extent, was thinking more ahead of his time which was a hallmark of a visionary leader.

In the 1936 Conference of the CSP at Faizpur, JP proposed a new thesis which called for a 'creation' of a powerful radical national front against imperialism. Such a task required a complete reorganisation of the Congress from the top to the bottom. The Congress was a mass organisation but its leadership was predominantly bourgeoisie in its character. "It is not only to wean away the anti-imperialist elements from the bourgeoisie leadership into a powerful anti-imperialist front, but complete reorganisation of the party and building it up from the bottom upwards. This cannot be done by confining our activities to the Congress alone. Taking the organisational aspect first, we should work for the democratisation of its constitution to enlarge the membership to bring the masses into the Congress by securing its representations in its committees. Till this is done we should build up a close link between such organisations and Congress committees for the purpose of joint work."
"We should so shape the Congress programme that it comes actively to develop the struggle of the masses taking their immediate demands as a basis. The formation of peasants' and workers' unions and active support to the struggle conducted by them should be kept in the forefront of this programme. The political backwardness of the rank and file is due to their lack of contact with the economic struggle of the masses. Propaganda alone will not radicalise them. They must be drawn into the peasant and labour movement so that they may realise that our programme is a more dynamic one and will raise the anti-imperialistic struggle to a higher pitch. The anti-imperialist struggle in India is a multi class struggle for the peasantry, working class and the middle class. The working class of India, though organisationally weak and politically not sufficiently conscious of its role, is nonetheless potentially the most revolutionary class but the struggle of the Indian masses for freedom will not reach its objective unless the working class is in the vanguard of that struggle. Therefore, it is our task as socialists to see that it assumes a historic role in the national movement. The leadership of revolutionary socialism can mean nothing else. This required the forging
of links with the masses in the struggle against anti-imperialist struggle."  

At this stage of his life in his political and economic thinking he was a Marxist. He had a great admiration for the material progress of the Soviet Union, though he was critical of some of the more unseemingly developments in that country. It was at this time that he came out with his tract *Why Socialism*, (1936) which was certainly a landmark in the evolution of JP's political and economic thought. Writing with rare clarity and conviction, JP debunked the Western model of parliamentary democracy as a sham and hypocrisy by taking a typical Marxian viewpoint. He also approved of individuals serving in their corporate capacity a larger social purpose rather than individuals or groups of individuals serving limited purposes, though he was against centralisation and imposed uniformity. He was in favour of planning under the socialist society. In respect of the structural dimension of the problem he was in favour of common ownership and peasant proprietorship.


43. Taken from *JP Papers*, 1936, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
The basis of JP's conception of rural construction was the village commune which he regarded not only as an independent economic unit but as an intrinsic part of the total economic system.

JP also identified politics with power at this period in his life and interestingly enough he accepted the Marxian position that the State was an instrument of coercion and that it was a necessary evil which ultimately was expected to whither away. JP, however, felt that if the State was an instrument of coercion, then it also was an instrument of power. Therefore, he argued that the power of the State was an inevitable concomitant of revolutionary changes in human societies. At least, at this point of his intellectual development, JP almost considered the State as a be-all and end-all, in the initial stages of the consolidation of Socialism in the State. According to JP "When the State is in your hands, you can legislate, you can use the whole magnificent apparatus of propaganda and education that modern science has made available; you can enforce your will. And if there is resistance, you use the coercive arm of the state - the police and the army - to crush it. Behind every piece of legislation lies the state's power to
pursue and, ultimately, to coerce. No party in the world today can build up socialism unless it has the machinery of the states in its hands."44 JPs plan of action to achieve economic and political freedom to end exploitation by a foreign power was basically Marxist in its thrust which he was to modify in later years.

Looking back on these years, it may be said that the formation of the CSP marked a major event in JPs public life which was to put him in the front rank of national leaders in India. During these years his life was devoted to bringing on a common platform radical groups operating in different parts of the country. He was instrumental in strengthening the base of the CSP by establishing a network of branches in various parts of the country. He also concentrated his energy on mobilising the urban workers and peasants and masses through the establishment of non-political organisations and associations. "Therefore, our foremost task outside the Congress is to develop independent organisations of the peasants, workers and of other exploited sections of the people. We should also attempt to organise the youth

44. Ibid.
of the country so as to mobilise the most active elements of the lower middle class. We should not be content with the formation of these separate organisations. We should try to harness them in the anti-imperialism front. These organisations while functioning independently and carrying on their own programme should be linked with Congress committees and there should be joint action as often as possible. This should ultimately lead to the masses entering the Congress through collective representation. In this way the Congress will become a wide national front against imperialism.45 Through such constructive activities JP made the CSP a focus for mass appeal and mass organisation. This made the CSP a very influential force which could not be ignored either by the Congress or the Communist Party. In these years the CPI primarily through JP's initiative took ideological positions on various issues and events before the country.

The Congress as an omnibus organisation saw the substance of power in the provisions made under the Government of India Act of 1935 and decided to accept its provincial part in contradistinction to its earlier policy

of mass struggle and mass action. In April, 1936 Jawaharlal Nehru was elected as the President of the Lucknow session of the Congress which implied a leftward shift in the policies and programmes of the Congress. Here was an opportunity for the CSP leaders like JP to radicalise the content and substance of the Congress Programme. This was reflected in part by the fact that JP and others accepted key positions in the Congress hierarchy. However, the Congress decision in favour of office acceptance under the provincial autonomy scheme of the 1935 Act led to a split between the Congress and CSP leaders. JP was against office acceptance by the Congress since it was tantamount to cooperation with the forces of imperialism and colonialism. His radical mind could not accept the inconsistency between policy and action of the Congress which on the one hand was claiming to fight for freedom against British rule in India and on the other hand was prepared to cooperate with it through office acceptance. Leaders like Gandhi, Nehru and others claimed that the Congress was a revolutionary force and yet it was opting for office acceptance, which was not acceptable to JP who was still very much under Marxist influence. Under such circumstances it was not surprising at all that he resigned from the Congress Working Committee to strengthen
the CSP. JP was critical of the Congress for side-tracking basic issues of economic development and social cohesion by frittering away its energies on side issues which were not immediately germane to the purpose of a mass movement. He once again reiterated his strong conviction that Socialism was the only panacea for the problems of India. "Independence cannot be separated from its content. Therefore, to put socialism and independence in water-tight compartments, to deny that any relation exists between them is to weaken the fight for independence itself. No one says that our immediate fight is for socialism and yet socialism is the warp and woof of the immediate fight. It colours it, it gives it direction, it provides it with an edge of idealism. Men must know where they are going before they can take their steps firmly. They fight and sacrifice their lives not for the first thing they see before their noses but for ultimate ideas and objectives." 46

In the late thirties one can discern progressive disenchantment of JP with the policies, programmes and

46. Ibid., p. 22.
strategy of the Congress in the freedom struggle. He felt that the forces of reaction and feudalism within and without the Congress had an overwhelming influence in shaping the strategy of the Congress in respect of the national movement. Coupled with this development, there was a remarkable shift in Communist strategy on the question of the national movement in India. The forces of international Communism were deeply disturbed by the rise of Nazism in Germany and their immediate reaction was to close their ranks in every country of the world. The Comintern directed the Communist party of India to forge a popular united front against British imperialism. The nose dive in Communist policy was so distinct that the Congress which hitherto was described by them as a bourgeoisie organisation became a major instrument in the anti-imperialist nationalist front. The CSP which was regarded as a socialist and fascist organisation was now accepted as a part of the popular front line. JP saw in this an opportunity for the CSP and the Communist party to join hands as part of a wider socialist force in the fight for freedom against the British. He took a pragmatic view of the Communist party arguing that it had moved away unusually from its moorings at the behest of outside forces and it would be a wise
move to have an accommodation with them. Except for Acharya Narendra Dev the stronger and younger socialists like Asoka Mehta, Ram Manohar Lohia, Achut Patwardhan opposed any understanding with the Communist party on the ground that it had betrayed the cause of Socialism in India. However, JP had his way on this issue and the ginger group of socialists accepted this position more out of loyalty and consideration for him than out of any reasoned conviction. But this patchwork compromise did not last long as the younger group of socialists felt alienated while Communist party leaders like Dange and others were admitted into the CSP. One may ask the question as to why JP was prepared to antagonise his comrades of long standing merely to accommodate the communists in the CSP. The reason could be that JP regarded the flow of contingent circumstances more crucial than the views of some parlour socialists in the CSP. He reasoned in his own mind that the time was right for unity among all the socialist forces in India. Moreover, it may be argued that JP's only difference of opinion with Indian communists was on the issue of national independence. On all other issues there was basic commonality of interests. He very coherently put forth his case for socialist unity. "In the conditions of India, the conscious leadership of
the anti-imperialist movement falls on the socialist forces which unfortunately are still divided. From the beginning the party has stood for unity in the socialist ranks ... If socialists speak with a divided voice there will be utter confusion that will only retard the national struggle."47

From the perspective of the communists it can be said that they forged a close link with the CSP as their objective was to enter, infiltrate and capture as many party branches as possible while at the same time discrediting and undermining the power and influence of the original CSP leaderships.48 To a certain extent the Communist party did take over a number of CSP branches in the South and such units were related to the A.I.C.C. and many other Congress bodies, while in the trade union movement it agreed to work together with a view to strengthen the workers' organisations.49 All these developments served the interest of the Communist party

47. Ibid., p. 24.
49. Jayaprakash Narayan, From Socialism to Sarvodaya, p. 60.
in a considerable measure. During this period the Communist party of India was banned and it had no other option but to go underground. At such a juncture the understanding with the CSP was a God sent opportunity which it seized without much consideration. The Communist party could operate effectively through the cover of the CSP and yet hold the freedom to pursue its own policies. Obviously, the Communist party was using the CSP to serve its own ends rather than having any genuine interest in left unity.

From another perspective also one may criticise JP's stand on left unity on the ground that he should not have propagated any link or understanding with the Communist party whose policies were dictated by Moscow and the world communist movement rather than from a consideration of what was in the interest of the Indian people. It was indeed a mismatch of two leftist forces, one developing an indigenous brand of Socialism while the other preaching and practising Marxian Socialism in toto as proclaimed by the Comintern. One can only say that JP's Marxist zeal had the better of him and this led to tactical and strategic errors in his judgement.
By 1937 the Communist party had infiltrated the CSP at various levels and it began to assert its position by claiming that the CSP was not a Marxist Socialist party. Faced with such an ideological warfare, JP doubted the sincerity as well as the utility of the United Front of the two parties. Some attempts were made to solve this particular tangle between the two parties, but the ideological cleavage was so wide and so persistent that there was hardly any harmony between the two. In 1939, JP and the Communist party theoretician P.C. Joshi made a serious attempt to bridge the differences between the two by proclaiming a socialist-communist unity as the basis of the United National Front. But subsequently JP was completely disappointed and demoralised by the unprincipled and opportunistic policy of the Communist party on national and international issues. By 1939 the Communist party was proclaiming its Machiavellian dictum of 'unity from below, opposition from above.' This slogan was part of the overall strategy of the communists to win over the rank and file members of the CSP while criticising and undermining the position of its leaders. JP's final break with the Communist party came about when Hitler launched his surprise invasion of the Soviet Union in 1942. The exigency of the situation made the Communist party of
India to suddenly label the World War as a peoples war as against its earlier slogan that it was an imperialist war. JP for the first time was deeply shaken by the equivocal and unpredictable shift in policy of the Communist party. His doubts were already there, but he was clear in his mind that the Communist party of India subordinated the interests of India to the Comintern. To JP this was nothing short of a great betrayal and a quisling role in the freedom struggle. His disillusionment with the communists was complete and he spoke out bitterly in strident language about the "nightmare experience resulted in one great good. It taught us a great lesson in politics. We learnt, some of us with a little regret, that there cannot be any unity with an 'official' Communist party (that is, a party affiliated to the Comintern or approved by the Kremlin); that such a Communist party is not a free agent but a tool; that the primary loyalty of the members of such a party is just to Russia and only then to anybody else; that when the Communist parties talk of united front, it is always a ruse and at best a temporary policy dictated by the exigencies of the situation; that their unswerving goal is always monolithic communist rule; that the Communists can never think of sharing power with anyone, except as a makeshift with convenient stooges."50

50. Taken from JP Papers, 1940, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
Under the circumstances there were only two alternatives before the CSP. The stalemate could be ended either through an immediate merger of the two parties or the creation of a strong independent, homogeneous CSP with members from other parties immediately removed from it. But the experience of the past was such that there was practically little possibility for the success of the first alternative. Ultimately at the meeting of the CSP in Bombay in 1939 almost every member other than the Communist Party members forthrightly asked for the expulsion of members belonging to the Communist Party. However, JP was somehow not willing to take this extreme step because it would have led to much bitterness and mutual destruction. He tried to find a way out of the difficult situation by suggesting that instead of expulsion of members the party should be under the control of genuine members and not under the dominance by members of other parties. But surprisingly this decision of the executive remained inoperative because of the strong feeling among the rank and file members. JP adopted this conciliatory gesture in the belief that the communists would reciprocate.

in the same spirit, opening a new chapter in the history of the socialist movement in the country. But all these efforts did not bear any fruit.  

Thus, it may be said that though the socialist leadership was under Marxist influence, it was not completely overwhelmed by Marxist thought as the Indian communists. The socialists were flexible and not doctrinaire in their approach. Their socialism had an Indian bias and it had stuck indigenous roots. They concentrated on India and their operations were not concerned with the shifting policies of the world Communist party and movement. The socialists were not prepared to accept any policy regarding India which were imposed by an alien creed or ideology. "Socialist leadership in India could not therefore be doctrinaire or orthodox Marxist. Revisionism was in fact more popular with the socialist leaders than orthodox Marxian Socialism ...... Thus the Marxist influence over the socialism of India though overwhelming was nonetheless, selective and different in different cases."  

52. Ibid., p. 178.  
53. O.P.Goyal, Contemporary Indian Political Thought, (Allahabad, Kitab Mahal Pvt.Ltd., 1965), pp. 43-44.
During the thirties and forties JP actively participated in the fight for freedom through the Congress. For instance, he regarded the 1935 Act as a 'charter of slavery' since freedom was not an abstract concept but a concrete thing for the people. He put forth the view that for the masses independence was not conceived in terms of assemblies and constitutions. This was a clear indication that JP was moving away from the Congress and from this point onwards the Congress and the socialist embryo began to drift apart. JP was beginning to think in terms of radical steps to secure freedom. On 18th February, 1940, he was arrested for a seditious speech at Jamshedpur, where he asked the workers to stop all cooperation with the conduct of war against Germany and to overthrow the British Government in India. Probably JP had come to realise that the time was ripe for final assault on foreign power. At this time JP was disillusioned with the Communist party and the


excesses committed by Stalin in the Soviet Union to such an extent that he moved away from Marxism while moving closer towards Gandhism even as early as 1943. One can even say that Gandhian influence had been gradually growing in him since the early forties, though in the beginning rather in an unconscious manner. With the passage of time JP found many flaws in the theory and practice of Socialism and it was not surprising that he moved nearer to Gandhism. JP said in his outline picture of Swaraj that the "political and economic organisation of the state shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. While the organisation shall conduce to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every member of society, material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at wealthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual."\(^{57}\)

It is clear from this passage that JP seemed to have given up his earlier firm commitment to Marxian Socialism by stating that material advancement and satisfaction should not be the sole objective. He began to stress the importance of ethical or moral factors in the development of human personality. He further said that the "law of the land

will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis of maintenance of order shall be the sanction and the concurrence of the people. The free Indian state shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence, the Constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly.\(^{58}\) (Italics added)

From the above it may be stated that JP's belief in the society and sanctity of the sovereign people in a free society got deeply embedded in his sensitive mind. Therefore, he was also against use of violent means to bring about basic changes in the existing set up. In respect of life in villages JP was of the opinion that there should be compulsory self-governing and self-sufficient units in such a measure as feasible or possible. He talked about framing new tenancy laws which would give rise to actual cultivators rather than perpetuate the domination and exploitation of absentee landlords. The idea was to end landlordism and foreign bondage in an expeditious manner. In retrospect, it may be stated that JP's experience of working with the communists left a

58. Ibid., pp. 52-53.
permanent impact on his mind and personality. He developed a sort of hatred against the violent ways of the Marxists. As it was, JP was full of doubts about the efficacy of Marxian Socialism when he came to know about the periodic trials and purges in the Soviet Union. His disenchantment with Marxian Socialism was reflected in his questioning the cherished postulates and practices of Socialism. Of course, he still retained some faith in the fundamentals of Marxian Socialism, but the fact was that he had become progressively alienated from the communists. Hence, he did not completely abandon his original belief in the principles of Marxism, but he proclaimed his faith in Democratic Socialism. This phase in JP's thinking began as early as 1940 and lasted for a fairly long time, till 1952.

It was during these years that JP evolved his own concept of Democratic Socialism which had relevance to the socio-economic and political realities of India. He fashioned this concept because of his bitter disappointment and unsavoury experience with the Communist Party on the one hand and practical difficulties of implanting Marxian Socialism of the West in the peculiar conditions of India.
The sharp clash of interests between the communists and the Gandhians in the Congress Party and the imperative necessity of fashioning an economic and political ideology based on the study of the objective conditions in Indian society determined JP's course of action at this point of his onward journey. Henceforth, he fully concentrated on developing a synthesis between Marxian Socialism and the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy.

Democracy under Socialism provided for a multiplicity of political parties rather than the monolithic power of a single political party. Such a course of action implied that various political and economic interests in the society would form political parties with divergent economic and ideological interests. In addition to these imperatives, the corporate bodies, the role of newspapers and party organs were also expected to play a constructive and meaningful role. Democracy under Socialism would create interests like trade unions and workers organisations, peasants, cooperatives, etc. which could act as supporting structures to democratic institutions. They would play a complimentary role and not a competitive role against the State. JP visualised a friendlier and harmonious relationship between various associations, bodies, unions, etc., where each unit was in an interdependent
relationship with every other unit, yet subserving the common interests of the society. Therefore, Democratic Socialism would "mean that there will be non one party rule and there might be more than one political party of working people and that the workers, the industrial and peasant cooperatives, the trade unions, etc. might form different political parties and that these parties should function freely. It should mean that there should be full freedom for expression of opinion and to form voluntary organisations for political purposes. The trade unions, the local committees, the cooperatives and other such corporate bodies of the working people might have their newspapers and broadcasting system and conduct their own schools and educational institutions... democracy under socialism should further mean that the trade unions should not be limbs of the State and subservient to it, but independent bodies supporting the State, also exercising the check over the government of the day." 59

JP definitely established a logical linkage between his concept of Socialism and economic and political democracy. He defined Socialism in such a manner that it would bring about economic and political democracy,

59. Ibid., p. 63.
which implied full equality of all irrespective of caste, creed or community. In such an understanding of Socialism the individual would not be at the mercy of capitalists who would no longer be in a position to act as slave drivers. The individual would come into his own as he would be playing a considerable role in society. The individual would not become a cipher but he would be a developing, producing and creative individual. Even while seeking his own good he would be contributing to societal welfare and development. Neither would the individual be sacrificed at the altar of the State as a cog in the wheel. In other words, the individual would not be allowed to be swamped by the State. Such a conception of the individual's role in a democratic society under Socialism by JP clearly meant that he was against the Leviathan State which overwhelmed the individual into abject surrender. Even in respect of the party the individual's relationship was one of an independent individual in conformity to the norms set down by the party. The individual would be active and constructive playing a peaceful role in developing the party as a major instrument of social stability, economic development and political continuity. All this only meant that JP had great concern for the individual's right to free expression
of views and opportunity for self-advancement even while he understood and accepted the role of the State, party and ideology. JP emerges as an individualist who was keen for the moral regeneration of the individual within the confines of a socialist State of democracy. He very rightly visualised the "picture of an economic and political democracy. In this democracy one will neither be slaves to capitalism nor to a party or the State. Man will be free. He will have to serve society which will provide him with employment and the means of livelihood, but within limits he will be free to choose his avocation and station of life. He will be free to express his opinions and there will be opportunities for him to rise to his full moral state."

Socialism did not mean merely the solution to the economic problems of individuals in terms of food, clothing and shelter. According to JP Socialism conceived merely in its economic content was a wrong understanding of the theory of Marxian Socialism. Therefore, he was not prepared to accept any brand of Socialism which viewed it merely in its economic dimensions. JP very rightly argued

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60. Ibid., p. 64.
that as one who had made an intensive and extensive study of the works of Marx and Lenin he had found no evidence whatsoever of Socialism being conceived only in its economic perspective. Marx and Lenin as two secular individuals in their thought process did not conceive Socialism merely as an instrument of economic reform or salvation for oppressed economic classes without giving thought to such values as liberty, freedom and equality. Accordingly, real Socialism could come about only with real Democracy where there was liberty in the real sense of the term. Any brand of Socialism that did not enlarge the quantum of human freedom was not Socialism of a genuine kind. JP attempted to give a new kind of interpretation to Marxian Socialism by arguing rather forcefully that Democracy and Socialism were inseparable. They were like two faces of the same coin. They were two different aspects of the same reality, namely, the social, economic and political upliftment of humanity. In fact, in his prognosis of Socialism he asserted that under Socialism alone there could be genuine freedom. He talked about free complimentarity of Socialism and freedom when he said that human beings would have the highest opportunity of development under a society which lived
by principles of Socialism and Democracy. Greater the nature and scope of freedom, greater would be the development and enrichment of Socialism. JP posed the issue of Socialism and Democracy in a cut and dried manner. "Does socialism merely mean solving the problem of bread and butter? Has it only an economic content? I refuse to accept this view. I am convinced that there can be no real socialism without the enlargement of our liberty and freedom, without complete Democracy. I have read Marx. I have studied Lenin's writing ... Marx and Lenin had both said that democracy and socialism are inseparable. Marx agreed that under socialism alone will people get real freedom, freedom and equal opportunity to realise best in themselves .... I thought greater the freedom higher will be the level of socialism." \(^{61}\)

JP also examined the much discussed theme of the dictatorship of the proletariat which was associated with the theory of Communism. He tried to allay the fears by stating that the dictatorship of the proletariat was only relevant during a transitional period from Capitalism to Socialism. To put the argument in another form it may be stated that JP was trying to underplay the role of the

\(^{61}\) Ibid., p. 102.
dictatorship of the proletariat. He took the position that it was a necessary stage from Capitalism to Socialism and in that sense it had a particular role to play in a particular period of transition. Eventually the socialist State in the fullest sense of the term would become fully democratic in its import and substance. This only meant that JP took an evolutionary view of Socialism. Associating Capitalism with Democracy, he argued that in the first stage it would be a capitalist Democracy moving finally towards a socialist Democracy. From this perspective it may be said that JP took great pains to develop the idea of a strong similarity and convergence between the theory of Democracy and the theory of Socialism. Therefore, writing about the dictatorship of the proletariat he said that it had "a place only in the transitional period from capitalism to socialism .... It is, however, the very essence of Marxism, that once the transition is over, the state must become a fully democratic institution." 62 Alluding to the socialist experiment in Russia, JP strongly condemned and disapproved the lack of freedom in that country. He further rightly expressed his disapproval of the totalitarian State which kept the individual bound by

62. Ibid., p. 62.
his hand and foot. In the Soviet Union the individual had no freedom to disagree or disown the government and its policies. Even other organisations could not criticise the State or the government, with the result the individual was completely swamped by the State and the party. In many respects it was a dictatorship of the Communist party rather than the dictatorship of the proletariat though their role was supposed to be decisive in determining policies of the government and in regulating the life of the individual. JP was critical of such a situation which to him amounted to a betrayal of the principles of Marxian Socialism. The monolithic nature of the Soviet State and party apparatus was such that the individual had virtually a subservient relationship with them. JP as a firm believer in the dignity and freedom of human beings could not extend his support to a totalitarian system which was supposed to bring about equality for all. Therefore, he considered it his moral duty to strongly support the democratic aspects of Socialism. JP inspite of his affinity towards Marxian Socialism and his appreciation of the economic miracle in a socialist country, was in reality against the degradation and dehumanisation of the Soviet system: "There may be socialism in Russia, but there is no
individual freedom, no freedom to criticise the
government or party ..... and ..... this lack of
freedom was not confined to individual citizens alone
but to organisations as well. Such a pattern of
totalitarianism controls life completely from birth and
death and we thought it was a complete betrayal of the
ideal of socialism and therefore we consider it to be
our duty to emphasise the democratic aspects of
socialism ....."63

By 1949 JP had resolved the issue of democratic
socialism in his own mind. He was now determined to
pursue the path of Democratic Socialism which became the
warp and woof of his life. Henceforth, for the rest of
his life he never again looked back by propounding his
theory of Democratic Socialism and giving it a concrete
shape through the party platform. Never again did he
revert to his old commitment to Marxian Socialism. He
had moved from a position of Godless Marxian Socialism
to the liberal creed of Democracy under the influence of
Gandhian humanism and spiritualism. This indeed was a
remarkable testimony of his intellectual growth and
powerful influence on the socio-political and economic
conditions of India. Hence, by 1949 JP concluded that

63. Ibid., pp. 134-35.
the framework of doctrinaire Marxian Socialism was alien to the Indian reality. He very rightly said that "democratic socialism must accept democracy and all that it stands for, for thus alone can we reach the goal of socialism."64

From the above discussion it may be possible to deduce three distinct phases in the evolution of JP's socialist ideology. Broadly it may be said that the first Marxian phase, could be fixed between the years 1929 and 1946. These were the years when he propounded the doctrine of Marxian Socialism. The second phase could be identified between the period 1947 and 1952 in which Democratic Socialism was his primary concern after his deep differences with the Communist Party and its tactics, strategy and ideology. The third and final phase began from 1953 until his death in 1979, which can be called as the Gandhian phase in his life. In this chapter we have discussed the first two phases in JP's intellectual development during a very turbulent and eventful period in modern India's history.

64. Ibid., p. 102.
An attempt will now be made to analyse and compare the ideas on Socialism of JP and Jawaharlal Nehru. These two great leaders were primarily responsible for providing a rationale and a method for the spread of the doctrine of Socialism in India. During the course of the freedom struggle and thereafter both of them championed the cause of Socialism in the Indian context. They developed a socialistic framework for solving the basic problems of food, clothing and shelter of the Indian masses. We shall examine their respective framework in the light of the Indian conditions and speculate whether the doctrine of Socialism could provide meaningful solutions to the basic problems of poverty and economic development or merely open a Pandora's box with unpredictable consequences.

JP, in his earlier phase, was deeply committed to the theory and practice of Marxian Socialism. This commitment to Marxian Socialism was a result of his own upbringing and his long sojourn in the United States from
1922-1929. His humble beginnings, the hardships that he had to undergo in the crucible of a traditional society steeped in tradition and antiquated values, the spirit of restlessness and adventure coupled with the intellectually stimulating atmosphere in the United States made him a convert to Marxism. JP even in his younger days as an ardent nationalist was thrilled by the romantic and revolutionary cult of extremism symbolised by the Bengali revolutionaries. In addition to these influences the unconventional and extra-constitutional method of Satyagraha of Gandhi fascinated him in a considerable measure. Gandhi's first experience of non-cooperation made a deep impact on JP both in terms of its originality and impact on the vast millions of India. This brief emotional experience provided him utmost satisfaction and he became a life long champion of freedom and justice for the oppressed people in India and elsewhere.

Freedom became the beacon light of JP's life, and remained a passion with him throughout his life. JP's freedom transcended the freedom of his own country by embracing the freedom of all oppressed people in the
world. His exalted concept of freedom involved the freedom of the human personality, mind and the spirit. Imbibed with such ideas in his younger days the question arose as to how JP became a convinced Marxist. It may be stated emphatically that JP honestly believed that the goal of freedom and human liberation was possible through the Marxian science of revolution. During these years the Gandhian technique of Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience and revolutionary success of the Marxian Socialists in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Lenin were two powerful influences competing for sway over JP's thought process. The success of the Marxian experiment in Russia seemed to have established the supremacy of Marx over Gandhi in JP's mind. At the same time young JP realised that freedom in itself did not have much meaning without the ending of poverty and exploitation of all types. JP knew that it was only through Marxism that freedom from exploitation, equality and human brotherhood could be achieved in any realistic sense. "At the same time, Marxism provided another beacon light for me! equality and brotherhood. Freedom was not enough. It must mean freedom for all—even the lowliest—and this freedom must include freedom from exploitation, from hunger, from poverty and suffering.
But the latent sympathy certainly was there, and it was awakened and brought to the surface of conscious living by Marxism. This process was reinforced by the mode of my life in the United States. Coming from the lower middle class, I hardly received any help from my family and had to work as an ordinary labourer in field and factory to earn my upkeep and the expenses of University education. At that time, I was not very certain about Gandhiji's stand on the vital questions of equality which captivated me as much as the ideal of freedom."\(^65\)

JP gradually moved away from doctrinaire Marxian Socialism after his unsavoury experience with the Communist Party of India in the twenties and thirties. His prognosis of the situation was that the wrong policy of the Comintern since 1928 had created dissensions in the ranks of the working class and the socialist movements in the Third World countries. The incipient ideological struggle for power and authority in the Soviet Union and the unwholesome impact of wrong policies in India caused

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deep sense of misgivings in JP's mind. He could not reconcile the interest of India as a patriot with the Russian dictated policy of Marxian Socialism. This marked an important phase in his alienation from Marxian Socialism. Henceforth, he was determined to join the mainstream of national life by participating in the national movement and giving the Congress a radical socialistic orientation. Such events and experiences led him to reconsider the basic postulates of Marxism.

In this process of reconsideration he took the position that social revolution and revolutionary violence need not go together nor could genuine Socialism be established in the absence of a liberal creed. In a sense JP rejected the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat which in effect turned out to be the dictatorship of a 'bureaucratic oligarchy.'

The Soviet experiment fully confirmed his belief that Socialism did not only mean the rejection of Capitalism in its fundamentals, but it was something more. It could mean the destruction of Capitalism by nationalisation of trade, commerce and industry through a process of wholesale collectivism and yet not reach the goal of Socialism. To JP, Marxian Socialism could grow only out
of the objective material conditions in the society and that such conditions differed from one society to another society. For instance, he argued that in the Soviet Union social revolution was the product of mass coercion in a programme of forced industrialisation of a backward country. This aspect of the Soviet experience had a great lesson for India. JP was of the opinion that India must find its own path towards an indigenous brand of Socialism. He argued that it would be an illusion to ape the West by opting for forced industrialisation with complete disregard for the peculiar and unique social conditions prevailing in India. In such a long process of re-examination of Marxian Socialism, JP who had looked askance at British Fabianism and pragmatic Socialism now realised the realism and significance of these gradualist and moderate brands of Socialism. JP understood fully the fact that Marxian Socialism essentially assumed the structure of an industrialised society. Hence, Marx was quite right when he argued that Socialism would come about after a certain stage of maturity of Capitalism, but JP was aware that 'industrialist capitalist development' was in its infancy in India since it was primarily an agrarian society. The onerous burden of building up of Socialism in a non-conducive socio-economic milieu meant that it had
to be reformulated and reinterpreted to suit these ongoing conditions in the society. In essence, JP was in favour of a new type of Indian Socialism which was dependent upon experimentation, innovation and original enquiry on the part of socialist-minded leaders. While this was the substance of his analysis of Marxian Socialism, he was not suggesting that it had nothing to offer to the Indians nor was he demanding a complete repudiation of Marxian Socialism. Through such a process of searching enquiry JP eventually moved away from Marxist-Leninist CSP to a democratic socialist Praja Socialist Party.

As a contrast to JP's Marxian Socialism let us now trace the origin of Nehru's ideas on Socialism. Nehru's interest in Socialism dated back to the days when he was a student at Cambridge. He came under the influence of Fabians who initially kindled his interest in the doctrine of Socialism and later the enforced leisure of prison life and his long period of confinement gave him an opportunity to read intensively and extensively in Marxist literature. The Communist Manifesto and Das Capital deeply impressed him because of the scientific rigour they brought to the analysis of the development of human society. He first read Marx very seriously in the thirties in the background
of the Great Depression which demonstrated the instability of the capitalist system. In such a context the Marxian analysis of class war or theory of revolution, economic interpretation of history, surplus value, etc. appeared very coherent and persuasive with the likelihood of providing all the answers to the economic and other problems of the world. Nehru felt that this ideology opened up new possibilities for the upliftment of downtrodden humanity in the developing countries. According to him Marxism was "a way of interpreting history and politics and economics and human life and human desires. It is a theory as well as a call to action. It is a philosophy which has something to say about most of the activities of man's life. It is an attempt at reducing human history, past, present and future, to a rigid logical system with something of the instability of fate or kismet about it .... Marx surveyed past history as a socialist and drew certain conclusions from it. He saw from the earliest days man struggling for a living, it was a struggle against nature as well as against brother-man."66

By the 1930s Nehru's ideas on Socialism were deeply

ingrained in his mind and he strove very hard to impart
a socialist vision to the freedom struggle and independent
India thereafter as an overall part of the strategy for
socio-economic emancipation of the masses. Though Nehru
borrowed heavily from Marx, yet he was convinced that
Socialism must be rooted in the native soil of India.
"I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the
world's problems and of India's problems lies in Socialism,
and when I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian
way but in the scientific economic sense. Socialism is,
however, something even more than an economic doctrine,
it is a philosophy of life and as such also it appeals
to me. I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast
unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the
Indian people except through Socialism." 67 Nehru was
attracted to Socialism not just because it was an economic
doctrine which had to be adopted because of expedience,
but in time it became a fundamental principle governing
his thought and action. In the event, he emerged as a
foremost exponent of an Indian brand of Socialism, giving
a new meaning to India's socio-religious and cultural
heritage in the background of the modern phenomena, and

67. Jawaharlal Nehru, India and the World, (London,
George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1936), pp. 82-83.
incessantly preaching the gospel of Socialism so that India could forge ahead in the community of nations. Within such a comprehensive framework, Nehru visualised a new socio-economic order without political, economic and social injustice. Nehru's philosophy of life for the individual and the society through the instrumentality of Socialism sought to achieve justice and equality for all.68

Nehru was a socialist by conviction but he was not a communist in the commonly understood sense of the term as he was repelled by mass violence. The scientific side of Marxian dialectics had a great attraction for him as it lighted many dark corners of his mind, but yet he was consistently opposed to its dogma. Many years ago he wrote that he was "a socialist in the sense that I believe in socialist theory and method of approach. I am not a communist because I resist the communist tendency to treat Communism as holy doctrine, and I do not like being told what to think and what to do .... I feel also that there is too much violence associated with the communist

method and this has produced untoward results in Russia in recent years. The ends cannot be separated from the means. It can be said that Nehru's Socialism was not a collection of superlative words and irrelevant phrases, nor was his conviction merely theoretical that only created further confusion and complications rather than providing a panacea for the economic problems of the poor. His analytical mind could see no other alternative than some form of Socialism involving State ownership of the means of production and distribution and State control of the commanding heights of the economy. Endowed with a liberal background it was not surprising that he was in favour of a non-exploitative society in which the relationship between the individuals would be on the basis of equality. Nehru felt that political freedom was merely an empty slogan without the attendant content of economic freedom. Genuine freedom through Socialism meant the ending of exploitation of the masses by bringing about fundamental social changes. Nehru was deeply moved by the grinding poverty of the masses and the overall economic backwardness of the country which according to him was a result of faulty socio-economic structure. In short, his ideals of a progressive society

were the attainment of the good of each individual which involved the good of all. There was no doubt that he was a revolutionary working for root and branch solutions to the endemic problems of the Indian society. "Whether I function inside or outside the legislature I function as a revolutionary, meaning thereby a person working for fundamental and revolutionary changes, political, social, for I am convinced that no other changes can bring peace or satisfaction to India and the world."  

Nehru was not a philosopher who strove to build a logical and rational system of thought. Pragmatism was the hallmark of his thought and actions. He did not cling to ideas dogmatically but viewed their relevance in the context of the social setting. He was flexible on tactics, but rigid and firm on goals. The central core of his thinking was based on his implicit faith in western Liberalism which frequently expressed itself in his devotion ... to the ideas of democracy and individual freedom. Socialism was deeply rooted in his thinking, which provided the basis for his ideas on planning and

the emphasis on social and economic equality. It was a revolutionary creed with him and he talked, argued and wrote consistently of its power. He was a man of passion and compassion.

Nehru was not merely a political agitator and a schizophrenic who shuttled between his predilection for Democracy and Socialism. It was true that on occasions he compromised on important issues in the interest of national unity and with a view to carry with him the vast millions of his countrymen. Nehru had the temper of a scientist and the mind of an artist. He sought to convert India from a medieval to a modern progressive society and to persuade a tradition bound people to take to technology. He shook the Indian society out of its apathy. He fought a valiant and ceaseless battle against outworn ideas, social inertia and cultural stagnation. He strove steadfastly for the cultivation of the scientific outlook and temper and the promotion of science and reason to the service of an ampler life. Nehru's was a many-sided role of a revolutionary and a builder, an internationalist, a democrat and a socialist.

Even as early as 1946, Nehru in his Discovery of
India propagated the ideology of Democratic Socialism. He held that political and economic change was necessary. But such change would have to come about by 'democratic' planned collectivism.' However, it is difficult to define the nature and substance of Nehru's Democratic Socialism. It is a broad concept within which we have to fit in Socialism and Democracy keeping in view India's political background, cultural and spiritual heritage. Socialism for Nehru stood for the ideal and the ideology, while Democracy stood for the means. Democracy was not an end but a means for achieving Socialism.71

Nehru believed that Democracy was the best method available for the governance of human beings. He recognised that it required self-discipline in the community, certain standards of behaviour and responsibility, restraint and tolerance of diverse viewpoints and respect for man's creative spirit. Parliamentary Democracy to Nehru involved the full acceptance of peaceful methods of action to foster non-violent change. This implied that he firmly opposed the language and action of violence. He was of the opinion

that in a Democracy there was always ample scope for discussion, argument and persuasion.

Nehru often stressed that in a Democracy the successful working of the government depended largely on the cooperation of the people. A democratic welfare State must reflect in a large measure the hopes and aspirations of the majority of the community. If the rules were responsive the people would repose trust in them and this equitable relationship could form a solid foundation to solve the socio-economic problems of the people. Democracy was not merely a form of government or a body of egalitarian laws, but for Nehru it was essentially a scheme of values and moral standards in life. Nehru's commitment to Democracy was so great that he gave primacy to human freedom as against the material comforts of individuals. Economic freedom and political freedom had to go together for freedom to have any worthwhile meaning. Nehru did not want material advancement at the cost of fundamental freedom which ennobled man throughout the ages.

Nehru was one of the foremost champions of
Socialism but his Socialism did not include class war or class conflict. His Socialism was deeply influenced by his humanism which was a prominent part of his philosophy. He therefore argued that Socialism should ensure greater freedom to individual. Under Socialism the individual must have freedom of conscience and mind, freedom of enterprise and even the possession of private property on a restricted scale. According to Nehru, Socialism was an economic ideology which raised the standard of the masses. In a developing country like India, the problems of poverty, hunger and disease could be eliminated only through an economic strategy that aimed at a classless society with equal justice and opportunity for all. His Socialism had native roots and was in tune with the conditions in India. Nehru was not ambiguous about the goals of Socialism which he practiced during his lifetime. He pointed out that "the picture I have in mind is definitely and absolutely a socialistic picture of society. I am not using the word in a dogmatic sense at all, but in the sense of meaning largely that the means of production should be socially owned and controlled for the benefit of the society as a whole."72 Nehru frequently

expressed the view that his ultimate objective was to usher in a socialistic pattern of society in India. In such a society there would be equality of opportunity and every one would have a chance to live a good life. Disparities of wealth and status would be removed so that the necessary conditions of an equalitarian society would be created in the shortest possible time. The State for this purpose would control the commanding heights of the economy so that wealth generated in the society could be equitably shared by the people.

Socialism to Nehru "meant increase in national income, increase in national investment, expansion of the judicious public sector and equality of opportunity for all."73 Nehru felt that if a society got paralysed between the haves and the have nots, between the privileged and the unprivileged, endemic instability would be the bane of such a society. He, therefore, attempted to bridge the gulf between the rich and the poor through successive five year plans for economic reconstruction and regeneration. Coupled with this was his view that liberty and Democracy without

73. Address to All Party Consultative Committee on Planning, April, 1961.
equality were barren slogans incapable of providing the atmosphere in which the individual could prosper.

Nehru's socialistic pattern of society was not fixed nor did it have any rigid pattern. It involved innovative changes in the existing patterns of thought and behaviour. It meant "that the basic criterion for determining lines of development and the structure of socio-economic relations should be so planned that they result not only in a appreciable increase in national income and employment but also in greater equality in incomes and wealth. Major decisions regarding production, distribution, consumption and investment and in fact all significant socio-economic relationships must be made by agencies informed by social purpose."  

Nehru's economic philosophy was a typical conglomeration of different traditions of western and Indian economic and political thought. His economic philosophy was a result of the trinity of influences of Marx, the Fabians and Gandhi. Nehru's Socialism was neither orthodox nor Marxist in its complete formulation,

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but it certainly was an amalgam of Gandhian liberal values. He wanted to bring about Socialism in India through non-violent means based on respect for human dignity, equality of opportunities for all individuals, elimination of inequalities of income and wealth and vesting economic powers with the State.  

At this stage it would be worthwhile to compare and contrast the economic ideology of Socialism of JP and Jawaharlal Nehru. In the first place, it may be stated that JP's commitment to Marxian Socialism arose out of his own modest background while in the case of Nehru it was the product of his compassion for suffering humanity though he himself was an individual with an aristocratic background. JP, born and bred in poverty naturally developed instinctive sympathy for the underdog while Nehru developed the same fidelity to the cause of the poor from a vantage position of comfort and luxury.

In the second place, both JP and Nehru were deeply influenced by Marxian prescriptions to the problems of

human society. Realising that India was a vast country with endemic problems of poverty, disease and illiteracy, the only way out of such depressed conditions was to employ a powerful economic ideology which could bring about rapid socio-economic transformation. It was, therefore, not surprising that the secular nature of Marxist thought, its emphasis on equality of all men and the economic category of class conflict appealed to both JP and Nehru who had highly receptive minds. While Nehru appreciated all these substantial aspects of Marxian Socialism, he was against the use of mass violence to foster rapid economic change under the powerful influence of Gandhi and his own Western liberal training. On the other hand, JP had intellectually accepted most of the basic tenets of Marxian Socialism like class war and revolutionary violence to seize power. To JP, radical transformation in the conditions of human societies had a higher sense of priority than a formal exercise in semantics on the issue of violence or non-violence to achieve the desired goal.

In the third place, both of them were individualists and as such emerged as life-long
revolutionaries fighting for the cause of human brotherhood, justice and fairplay. However, Nehru who was under Gandhian influence was not prepared to sacrifice the individual at the alter of a Leviathan State. But JP was free from Gandhian influence in his socialist phase and in the larger interests of the society the individual constituting a part was accorded a lesser priority than the whole. This did not mean that JP was in favour of an all powerful State which would submerge the individual since he was only a unit in the society.

In the fourth place, the defect with JP's analysis was that he wanted to implant fully the Marxian model of Western Socialism into a primarily underdeveloped and agrarian country like India. JP did recognise the need to have an indigenous brand of Socialism for India, yet he did not reformulate and reorient Marxian Socialism to suit the unique conditions prevailing in India. On the contrary, Nehru cannot be faulted on his score since he made an attempt to develop an indigenous brand of Socialism with its roots in the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions of India. But, it must be stated emphatically that while his ideological reformulation of Marxian Socialism was appropriate, he failed to implement
it successfully in the context of India. It was on this issue that there was a very acrimonious dialogue between JP and Nehru. JP took issue with Nehru and expressed his views in a trenchent and forthright manner.

"You are undoubtedly a great man .... but even you cannot lead millions of people and a vast country like India to the goal of socialism without the active support of a widespread socialist movement reflected strongly in the highest councils of the nation. How many socialists are there in your Cabinet, how many in the party you lead in the Constituent Assembly? How many provincial Congresses are Socialist? It is socialism that is the driving force behind the Congress or is it, in the majority of cases, the hunger of power and personal gain? Since you came into Government what steps has it taken towards socialism? What planning has been done for it? Everywhere and at every turn socialism is being put on the shelf. Even where an opportunity offered itself to build up a sector of the national economy on a basis of socialism, the opportunity was thrown away .... There is no doubt that you will hold fast to the faith that you leading the country to socialism, but let me say without malice or rancour that in spite of your best intentions, the country is drifting in the opposite direction. You
are trying to ride two horses, which may be possible in circuses but not in a historical evolution. History can move only in one direction and not two at the same time. You want to go towards socialism, but you want the capitalists to help in that. You want to build socialism with the help of capitalism. You are bound to fail in that. If you want capitalism to play its role in industrialising the country, it will demand its price and if you pay the price, you will give the go-by to socialism. That is exactly what is happening today. Bold and drastic measures are necessary in the place of which we get half-hearted diluted measures."

JP was critical of Nehru because he felt that mere large scale nationalisation by transforming private control to State control without the necessary change in the policies would not lead to the goal of Socialism. He was of the firm opinion that the policy of nationalisation involved dynamic changes in the policies and programmes of the State to bring about equitable distribution of income and rapid economic development. Otherwise it would merely

amount to State capitalism or what John Kenneth Galbraith called 'post office Socialism'. This criticism levelled by JP has been amply proved by the fact that a majority of the units in the nationalised sector of the industry were uneconomic because they were inefficiently managed or incur losses year after year because of wrong policies and programmes. JP was of the opinion that nationalisation in India had not produced Socialism, but it led to the wholesale bureaucratisation of the bureaucracy, exploitation of the masses and uneven distribution of wealth. He therefore, was of the view that socialist practice and theory must go hand in hand with each other. In fact, he said that Socialism was 90 per cent practice and 10 per cent theory and if the theory was not properly implemented then it could be said that theory in practice was not a success.77

JP differed with Nehru on the question of finding an appropriate political organisation for the socialist society. He was of the opinion that socialists were still groping for a definitive answer to this problem. There

would be different political structures through which Socialism could be built up in a systematic manner.

Schematically it may be argued that when a socialist party came to power, the existing political structure built in the period of liberal Capitalism required major modifications to fall in line with socialist ideals. With such a party, the democratic government through parliament may not fully serve the purpose since there could be an imperative necessity to decentralise power to the lower echelons of the people. In J's opinion, Nehru did not sufficiently radicalise the Congress Party's ideological base so that it could become a major instrument in bringing about Socialism within the framework of Democracy. The Congress Party was a loose amorphous organisation with different shades of political opinion reflected within its fold. It included rightists, reactionaries, leftists etc., who did not help much in giving it the doctrinal purity of Socialism. Thus, it may be said that Nehru did not sufficiently transform the Congress organisation towards radical Socialism within the framework of Democracy.

In the sixth place, J took the position that it would not be possible to build genuine Socialism in India without involving the rural masses as constituent parts.
of the socialist movement. It was a fact that the socialist movements in the West depended heavily upon the industrial workers, while in a predominantly rural country like India, the peasants would constitute the backbone of indigenous Socialism. This involved the provision of appropriate incentives to peasant proprietors for the success of Socialism. Unfortunately, Nehru was not fully successful in exploiting the potentialities of the rural masses for the success of the socialist experiment in India.

In effect, it may be stated that JP and Nehru started from the position of Marxian Socialism and ended up with Democratic Socialism. After many years of flirtation with Marxian Socialism JP eventually realised that it was doctrinaire and dogma ridden and hence unhelpful in solving the problems of India. Coming under Gandhian influence JP reformulated Marxian Socialism by fusing it with Democracy and thereby evolving the synthetic concept of Democratic Socialism. Nehru with his Western liberal training in England and the influence of Gandhian thought also took a synthetic approach and evolved the concept of Democratic Socialism. JP and Nehru differed on the mechanics of Marxian Socialism for India but both eventually arrived at the same goal of Democratic Socialism.
Our analysis has established the point that great leaders during the course of their lives moved from one position to another position in the light of new understanding and new prognosis of the situation prevailing at any given time. This was also the case with JP and Nehru who were essentially rationalists as they believed in the power of reason and intellect to formulate and reformulate an appropriate economic ideology for India. In this sense they started with the major premise of Marxian Socialism, differed with each other on details, but both ended up embracing the goals of Democratic Socialism.

(v)

A Critical Evaluation of JP's Socialism

In this section we shall critically examine the appropriateness or otherwise of JP's views on Socialism.

JP was in favour of an indigenous brand of Socialism which took into account the unique conditions prevailing in an underdeveloped country like India. It is one thing to argue that Marxian Socialism must be
reoriented in such a fashion, so as to be in tune with the conditions prevailing in a particular country and another thing to work out the mechanics of an indigenous Socialism and implement it successfully. It may be pointed out that JP's vision was allright but he refrained from working out the reformulation of Marxism in all its details in the Indian context. This opened JP to the charge that while at the intellectual level he was capable of illuminating conclusions, yet the fact was that when it came to working out the full details he fell far short of expectations. In this sense, JP in his socialist phase made contribution to the refinement of the theory of Marxian Socialism, a contribution more in the realm of ideas than as a doer who put his cherished ideals into practice. JP appeared less as a system builder and more of an iconoclast. This was the case because JP did not work out fully his own theory of Socialism just as other thinkers like Marx, Engels or Plato. It would be appropriate to ask the question as to why he failed to come out with a viable theory of Socialism for India. One explanation could be that JP in his younger days was under the influence of Marxian Socialism but could not bring to bear the power of his intellect to think dispassionately about this particular
ideology because of his multifarious activities in the
national struggle against British colonialism and imperia-
listm. The other reason could be that he was subject to
the influence of other great leaders and their ideas
during the freedom movement in India. Towering personali-
ties like Gandhi, Nehru and others deeply influenced his thought
process in different directions. Possessing a very open
mind, he was receptive to different currents of political
thought which at times confused him and at other times made
it impossible for him to resolve his own political ideas
in respect of his theory of Socialism.

JP's understanding of the Indian situation was
correct, his prescriptions were in the right directions
but unfortunately he did not develop fully ideas to a
logical conclusion. He frequently argued that India was
primarily an agricultural country with a backward economy
and that any brand of Indian Socialism had to come to
terms with this pervasive reality. Therefore, he was
right when he suggested that Indian Socialism should
evolve out of peasant proprietors who could give a new
thrust and dimension to socio-economic transformation.
But he did not specify clearly the nature and substance of peasant proprietorship, whether they would be organised on a collective or voluntary basis or what would be the role of the State in such a process. These were very important aspects of the problem for which JP did not provide adequate answers.

Socialist leaders like JP did not give sufficient attention to the development of communication between the masses and the mass leaders. After all, if Socialism was to be acceptable to the people of India the socialist leaders had to educate the masses in an idiom in which common men and women could easily understand. Such a process involved moving into the interior areas of the country and educating the rural masses in the countryside. This was not done in a satisfactory manner by most socialist leaders, with the result that many of them turned out to be arm-chair critics indulging in drawing room semantics. Hence, it may be said that Indian socialists except Nehru and to a certain extent JP lacked mass contact through mass participation. In our opinion this bedeviled the impact and influence of the Indian socialist movement on the masses of India.

It may also be mentioned that JP was not very
successful in bridging the gulf between the classes in the urban areas and the masses in the rural areas. If he had achieved success in this area he would have been in a position to draw upon a vast reservoir of young urban educated men and women who would have been instrumental in carrying the message of Socialism to the masses. Apparently, JP was unable to see fully the potentiality of mass contact through mass propaganda. This probably explained why even today Socialism has remained largely as an alien creed without deep roots in the Indian society.

JP realised the significance of an organisation to bring about the acceptance of Socialism in India. However, the CSP before independence and PSP after independence were not equal to the task set up for them by JP. They could not carry much conviction with the masses for the simple reason that the CSP was only a ginger group within the Congress Party, while the PSP from its inception was plagued by multi-centric leadership. Obviously, the CSP could not project an independent and forceful image of itself because the Congress Party and its ideology always had a priority over it. The PSP was a political party of leaders without a large cadre of
followers. From yet another consideration it may be stated that even the Congress Party which was an amorphous organisation representing within itself divergent socio-economic and political ideologies was unable to spread the message of Socialism to the masses in a real sense. For all these reasons it may be said that there was lack of a proper organisation for spreading the message of Socialism to the masses in India.

JP advocated the development of a strong Trade Union movement which could be in the vanguard of the socialist movement. He was in favour of enlisting different segments of the population to create the psychological fervour in favour of Socialism. "I believe that whether or not we have the government in our hands, if we succeed by constructive work in creating a sound Trade Union Movement capable of running industry; in educating the working class in the arts of citizenship in creating cooperative communities in the villages; in mobilising the youth and children as voluntary servants of the nation; in creating cultural influences that go down even to the most backward sections of the people; if we succeed in eradicating superstition and bigotry;
if we succeed in enlisting the cooperation of hundreds of thousands of selfless workers to whom the seats of power offer no attraction — if we succeed in all this, we shall also succeed in building up a socialist society. In this event, the state will inevitably become a socialist state and will play its inevitable and appointed role, which would go little beyond the imprimatur of the law on what has already been accomplished, or on what cannot be prevented from happening. The state in this manner will only be an instrument in the hands of a popular socialist movement — i.e., of the people organised independently of the state for a socialist way of living — rather than the source and fountain-head of all authority; and will .......... We must keep this temptation in check. We must remember today, and never forget it in the coming years, that it would be by constructive work rather than by the tactics of a parliamentary opposition, by positive service rather than by exploiting the mistakes and fault of others, that we would succeed in establishing a democratic socialist society. 78

For the success of the socialist experiment the kind of mass political consciousness which was necessary

78. Taken from JP Papers, 1946, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
was not there. In a predominantly traditional social order the creation of such mass consciousness was a herculean task which required a well planned programme of ideological indoctrination. JP did not work out the modalities and strategy for the creation of mass political consciousness in favour of Socialism. In such a task the information media like the radio and the press assumed a great significance. The English language press and the vernacular press and public meetings constituted major instruments for carrying the message of Socialism to the masses. As it was, the generation of public opinion in an underdeveloped country was very difficult because of apathy and indifference on the part of the people. Given these built-in constraints, it was not very surprising to note that the socialists could not carry much conviction with the masses.

The theory of Socialism required the creation of a sophisticated planning machinery since Socialist ideology and planning were inseparable concomitants of a drive towards rapid economic development. JP had not clearly resolved in his mind the question of the nature and substance of planning in India. He was not sure
whether he favoured centralised planning or decentralised planning. Centralised planning involved immense concentration of power at the top with the bureaucracy while the people were merely participants at the other end of the process. On the other hand, the policy of decentralisation would enable the people to participate fully in the planning process. In such a scheme, there could be development from below gradually spreading in an upward direction. This would make the planning process successful and could go a long way in ensuring a measure of success for the socialist experiment.

"There is however, a danger in planning. It has been found that if completely centralised, planning leads to bureaucratism and dictatorship. But the very nature of a planned economy is such that in certain spheres, as key industries, imports and exports, currency, finance, prices of basic commodities, reinvestment, etc., central planning is imperative. Yet, if the evils of regimentation are to be avoided, it is necessary to leave as much local initiative as possible in the manner of regional planning, particularly with respect to commodities locally consumed. At the same time, the central planning authority too should be so constituted as to be a
representative body. It should consist not only of the representatives of Central Government, but also of provincial governments, trade unions and cooperatives.  

In an underdeveloped country like India it may be stated that the educated class was mostly concentrated in the urban areas. This segment of the people had a yeoman responsibility to go deep into the rural areas to educate the people about the economic ideology for the nation. It is regrettable to note that JP did not train a large pool of young, educated and dedicated workers with a crusading spirit who could carry the message of Socialism to the masses. This explained why even today Socialism as a creed or philosophy has remained confined to intellectuals or politically conscious urban intelligentsia with the large masses of India blissfully ignorant of the principles and practices of Socialism.

JP as one of the leading lights of the Congress Socialist Party and Praja Socialist Party was concerned more about long term policy than immediate problems.

of a grave nature. It was true that political leaders must be visionaries with a definite picture of the present problems so that they could plan for the future. But, however, important a long-term policy for Socialism was, the fact was that immediate problems could be ignored only at the peril of the socialist movement. It cannot be forgotten that immediate problems through their cumulative effect can have deleterious consequences for the long-term policy of Socialism. Hence, it is our point of criticism that socialists like JP frittered away their immense energies and talents by concentrating on the long-term policy at the expense of immediate problems, which was nothing short of chasing endlessly a shadow and a mirage. In yet another sense, it can be said that the Socialist Party stood by itself defining 'partial truths of Marxism' while getting alienated from the impulses of the nation and the people. In the event, the Praja Socialist Party's goal of coming to power by socialisation of property and destruction of decadent Capitalism through democratic means remained only a chimera with no prospect even in the distant future of fructification.

JP had a particular understanding about human
beings. From an ethical perspective he argued that men may not be born good but they can be made good by training if they are saturated with certain ethical values. If JP based his belief of success of the socialist ideology on this premise it may be difficult to agree with him. JP's conception of human nature was lopsided and he seemed to ignore the human capacity for evil as well as good. If the nature of men was predisposed towards evil no amount of training will be of help in making such men good. It is our contention, therefore, that while training for men to achieve Socialism was a desirable thing, or for that matter any other ideology, yet in itself it may not produce good men capable of doing good things.

JP was a fervent critic of the concept of mixed economy. His argument was that mixed economy enabled Capitalism to flourish in which the profit margins of the capitalists swelled all the time. Obviously, JP did not accept the position that the nationalised sector and the private sector could exist side by side and yet produce beneficial results for the society as a whole. In his mind State ownership of the means of production and private ownership of the means of production were
antithetical to each other. This only meant that he was against a synthetic approach which combined the best of both the ideologies of Socialism and Democracy. But JP was on record as having said that the aim of socialist society was to achieve the fullest economic and political Democracy. It was an axiom of Marxism that there could not be true Socialism without true Democracy. In the light of these arguments it is difficult to understand JP's criticism of the concept of mixed economy. In our view Democratic Socialism, which JP espoused in his later years involved a synthesis and a fusion of the fundamental principles of Socialism and Democracy. The achievement of the goals of Socialism through democratic means involved the recognition of State controlled property and privately owned property as two aspects of the same reality. "If there was, however, any controversy regarding the democratic character of socialism, it was only with regard to the transitional stage...... It was held on all sides that the transition to socialism might have different characters depending on different conditions and that under certain circumstances the transition might be actually through
a period of dictatorship. But even then it was never
doubted that at the end of the transitional period,
when the socialist society is actually built up, that
society would be a free and democratic society.... "socialism
and democracy must exist together. As a matter of fact,
democracy does not become full unless it is evolved into
socialism."80

From an ideological perspective JP contrasted
Democratic Socialism with totalitarian Communism. He was
of the opinion that under totalitarian Communism only
the ruling party was permitted to be in power, and no
opposition party was allowed to function. The trade
unions were organised as the limbs of the authoritarian
State. The State in such a system had all-embracing
control over the life, liberty and happiness of its
subjects. On the other hand, JP was in favour of an
ideal socialistic society. In such a system the individual
whether he was a worker or not was entirely free since
the State could not interfere with his fundamental rights.
In fact, the individual's rights and privileges could
not be tampered by the State without the due process
of law. The working class movement was free to organise

80. Ibid., pp. 127-128.
itself and function in an unfettered manner. Political parties with divergent political ideologies or philosophies were free to operate in any manner they desired. In such a socialistic state of JP's conception, the State would not have complete monopoly over the press, radio, T.V., and other information media. Further, the economic power of production and distribution of commodities would be parcelled out to different functionaries in the society. Here the State bureaucracy and other interests in the society like the trade unions, cooperatives and other representative bodies would cooperate with each other. In this type of Socialism, JP was particularly interested to see that decadent Capitalism did not entrench itself under the cover of constitutionalism and Democracy. He prescribed the path of revolution, which according to him was not contradictory with an ideal form of Socialism. After all, if Socialism meant bringing about allround change then the path of revolution was the only way out of the situation. He also felt that Democracy also involved creative and meaningful change in the society. Here also he felt that the goal of revolution served the purpose of human societies.
This in sum was the type of Socialism which JP was hoping for throughout his life. It is our contention that the type of ideal Socialism which he hoped to achieve remained only as an ideal since the social, political and economic conditions sometimes were beyond the ken of human manipulation. The conducive conditions can only be objectively determined by the inexorable forces of nature. In addition to these considerations, the fact of human imperfectability was a datum which any theory of Socialism had to contend with in any final analysis. Given this pervasive reality it would have been better for JP to formulate a theory of Democratic Socialism sound in theory and workable in practice.

This critical evaluation of JP's ideas on Socialism has clearly revealed that his thinking underwent frequent change depending upon new information and new evidence which he came across. This sometimes made JP open to the charge of inconsistency in thought, word and deed. However, a sympathetic understanding of his thought process has enabled us to conclude that JP was moving from one plane of reality to another plane of reality. JP when assessed from this comprehensive framework appeared very rational in his views as a founder-member of the Congress Socialist
Party and later as one of the leading lights of the Praja Socialist Party. Thus, this discussion has been critical of some of JP's views while assuming that his vision of Democratic Socialism was essentially correct in the context of the problems of political instability, economic stagnation and lack of cohesion in a predominantly agricultural country like India.

(vi)

Concluding Observations

We have argued rather forcefully that JP began with the orthodox position of Marxian Socialism and ended up with the formulation of Democratic Socialism. We have tried to look into the evolution of JP's ideas on Socialism as faithfully as possible by interpreting his ideas and events which shaped him as a man of destiny.

It must be stated that JP's Socialism owed much to his long stay in the United States in the 1920's. Given the atmosphere of freedom and stimulating intellectual companionship, JP's young impressionistic mind accepted the basic tenets of Marxian Socialism almost as a matter of fact. This has also been the experience of other
Indians during the colonial period who went for higher studies to the West. These young people coming to the West with a background of colonialism in their own countries were exposed to a new way of life and to new currents of political thought in the world. This broadened their mental horizons and equipped them with a frame of mind that was receptive to the impact of powerful ideologies of the age. It was, therefore, not unusual to find that JP returned to India a Marxian Socialist by conviction. Hence, the new experience of young Indians visiting the West during the colonial period and coming under the sway of Marxian Socialism may be attributed to what can be called the 'demonstration effect'. These individuals observing the high standard of living and rapid industrialisation in the West compared and contrasted the problems of poverty and stagnation in their own countries and ended up by concluding that the Western ideology of Marxian Socialism could solve all their socio-economic and political problems.

In the modern period when Marxian Socialism was being preached by different countries under different labels, it would be very difficult to pigeonhole JP's brand of Socialism. However, it has been our argument
in the study that JP's Socialism was not inconsistent with the ultimate flowering of a democratic society. In our understanding of JP's Socialism it may be said that he conceived it as a system of society in which there was complete political, social and economic liberty. Therefore, JP said if you looked at Marxism from such a point of view then in that sense he could call himself a Marxist and the socialist party as a Marxist Party. JP was of the opinion that the Indian Socialist Movement must develop its own programmes, policies and ideologies. In such a context he believed that Marxism as applied to India must emerge out of a democratic socialist society. Any other form would be a repudiation of Marxism as he understood it.

JP devoted a lot of attention to the correct political organisation for a socialist society. He knew that it was difficult to find rough and ready answers to this particular problem. He eventually favoured working within a democratic framework where he defined Socialism as being beneficial to all the people. In such a scheme of reasoning, JP visualised a political structure that was based on more than one political party, either of the
classical two party system in Great Britain or the Multi-party system in France and other European countries.

JP was also very much concerned with the economic structure of a socialist society. He very rightly pinpointed such ills as centralisation, bureaucratisation and lack of economic democracy as the bane of countries who believed in the ideology of Socialism. On the nature of the socialist struggle there were different viewpoints. One viewpoint favoured violent struggle to bring about a socialist revolution. The other approach favoured a non-violent democratic method. JP very forcefully argued out his position that violence was not a necessary condition for the success of a socialist revolution. In conclusion, it may be said that the first phase of JP's Socialism could be called as the Marxist phase and the second phase of Democratic Socialism as the beginning of the Gandhian phase of his Socialism. In sum, JP's Socialism was an admixture of two major streams of thought of the modern period namely Marxism and Gandhism. (See the diagram on the following page.)
JP's Transition from Marxian Socialism to Total Revolution

MARXIAN SOCIALISM (1939 to 1946-47) INITIAL PHASE

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM (1948-1952) TRANSITORY PHASE

GANDHISM (SARYODAYA, TOTAL REVOLUTION, COMMUNITARIAN POLICY, PARTYLESS DEMOCRACY) (1952 onwards) FINAL PHASE

FROM VIOLENT CHANGE VIOLENT-NON-VIOLENT CONTINUUM TO NON-VIOLENT CHANGE

USE OF COERCIVE METHODS

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH STATE ACTION

USE OF CONSTITUTIONAL METHODS

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH STATE ACTION

USE OF PEACEFUL METHODS, VOLUNTARY ABDUCTION, SATYAGRAHA PASSIVE RESISTANCE ETC.

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH TRANSFORMATION OF STATE AND INDIVIDUAL

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR EXPLANATION
Explanatıon:

In the realm of JP's political ideas two broad stages can be identified, namely, the phase of Marxian Socialism leading eventually to the Gandhian phase. In the Marxian phase the emphasis is on State action through violent means while in the ultimate Gandhian phase the emphasis is on individual and collective action through Satyagraha and other peaceful means. Here through individual and collective action the State and the individual get transformed to a higher level.