CHAPTER - II
JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN: THE SOCIALIST PHASE OF HIS LIFE

Indian Socialism emerged out of the social and political milieu of the two decades spanning the first and the Second World War. Its growth and impact was shaped by the attitude of the British authorities, recurrent economic crises, and the changing international and domestic political situation. The younger generation of Indians, particularly those associated with the Congress, also contributed to the emergence of socialism. They demanded major changes in the aims and objectives of the struggle for freedom. The socio-economic and political conditions in the country were congenial to the development of socialist ideas. The growth of scientific knowledge, technological development, improvement in the means of communication and above all the spread of education destroyed the isolation of the traditional village community. The traditionally closed village order fortified by caste and joint family gradually lost its identity and could not remain insulated from the impact of social change. British policies on Indian agriculture created a class of landlords whose interest coincided with that of the imperialists. A class of money-lenders also developed along with the landlords and together they exploited the poor and landless peasants.

The spread of education led to the growth of the middle class who were aware of their rights and privileges and were ambitious to achieve them in practice. They were economically dissatisfied due to lack of employment opportunities. The neglect of agriculture, pressure on small landholdings, the
migration of the poor to urban areas and the poverty of all these classes provided the ground for the germination of socialist ideas in India. These factors led to the emergence of new forces which were to transform the struggle for freedom into a mighty national upheaval not only for freedom from foreign rule but a movement for social justice.

Within the Indian National Congress, the origin of socialist ideology owed its existence to the confluence of four important factors in the third decade of the twentieth century:

A) The world economic crisis with its consequent impact on India as a dependent, under developed economy.

B) The failure of British administration to assess the nationalist desires and find suitable means to satisfy them.

C) The failure of the liberal-Gandhian leadership to lead the nationalist struggle. The younger members of the Congress were dissatisfied with the limited goals and methods professed and practiced by the liberal group.

D) The Bolshevik Revolution and the emergence of Soviet Union captured the imagination of the young leaders. They believed that the Soviet model and the leadership of a socialist group were essential for the success of the Indian freedom struggle.

Jayaprakash Narayan was attracted to socialism during his visit to America. In his unfinished autobiography, he recalled that he became a “Marxist or a communist in the company of some Jewish boys. One of them, Avrom Landy, was a well read Marxist. In associating with him, I read whatever Marxist literature was available in English.”

71
He read Marx's *Das Kapital* and found it quite convincing. Later on he followed the articles written by M.N. Roy which were published in a weekly Magazine called *The Masses*. He was also influenced by Roy’s two other books: *India in Transition* and *The Aftermath of Non-Cooperation*. He recalled his acquaintance with M.N.Roy when he wrote, “Naturally he had a great hand in moulding my thought and leading me to communism, which still was a revolutionary doctrine. That Roy was a colleague of Lenin and was a big personality in the Communist International, made him in my young eyes a hero and a great Indian. In the States I was drawn to him as a disciple to a master”\(^2\)

Roy’s writings at that time persuaded him to believe that Gandhi was against social revolution and that at any moment of crisis, he (Gandhi) would uphold the system of exploitation and inequality. Thus, in the analysis of contemporary political situation in India, M.N. Roy’s ideas appeared to him as most appropriate. During his studies in Economics and Sociology, his understanding of Marxism became deep rooted and he was in a position to argue convincingly against capitalist system of production.

His dissertation entitled ‘Cultural Variation’ was submitted for the Masters examination at the Ohio University. It was appreciated by his professors and was adjudged the best paper of the year. Here he adopted the mechanistic view of social change and argued like Engels that the changes in human society was the result of changes or improvement in the tools and techniques of production. Yet he did not rule out the
possibility of other factors such as human intelligence being responsible for change. One of his teachers, Richard C. Steinmetz appreciated the fact that he was not willing to give up his idealism even in a materialistic civilization.3

Jayaprakash Narayan's Socialist ideology can be divided into three broad phases: (1) the Marxist phase between 1929 and 1946, (2) the phase of Democratic Socialism between 1946 and 1954, (3) transition from Socialism to Sarvodaya and his subsequent emphasis on 'People's Socialism'. In this chapter, an attempt will be made to bring out the main features of J.P.'s ideas on Marxism and Democratic Socialism.

When Jayaprakash Narayan arrived in India in 1929, he felt that the situation was not ripe enough for application of Marxist ideas. Jayaprakash plunged into the freedom movement but deep in his heart he was committed to the cause of scientific socialism. He realized that freedom from British rule would remain incomplete till it is accompanied by social and economic freedom. J.P. wanted to combine the two struggles: the struggle for freedom and the struggle for socialism. The socialist group that was established within the Congress in 1934 swore by Marxian theory and believed that the planned economic development on the Soviet model was the answer to India's poverty and backwardness. Jayaprakash Narayan was an ardent member of the young socialist group and fiercely defended its ideas and policies echoing the principles of scientific socialism, as mentioned in his letter to the General Secretary of the All India congress Committee,
"...the ideas that the socialists preach are far from being loose or irresponsible, based on a scientific analysis and understanding of the social process. Classes or class struggles are not created by political parties. Political parties are the result of classes and conflict of classes. Class war existed before man discovered it and raised it into a first class sociological doctrine. What the socialists preach is that we must fight on the side of the oppressed."

There are three main features in Jayaprakash Narayan's analysis of Marxist Socialism. They are:

1) The basic principles of Socialism: Young Jayaprakash worshipped at the altar of dialectical materialism and was influenced by the idea that human institutions and ideas were determined by objective conditions of society. He applied the concept of materialism in analyzing the economic condition in India. Marxism was eulogized by J.P. as the science of society and a scientific method of social change that included social revolution. In Why Socialism published in 1936, he wrote, "The first thing to remember about socialism is that it is a system of social reconstruction. It is not a code of personal conduct...when we speak of applying socialism to India we mean the reorganization of the whole economic and social life." This was one of his earliest comments on Socialism. Socialism for him was a system of social reconstruction. It symbolized the reorganization of the whole of social and economic life on the basis of socialist principles. What were these socialist principles? The basic principle of socialism veered around the concept of socialization of means of production and exchange. This was necessary to deal with the problem of inequality in any society. The other important principle is related to issue of
power and authority needed to implement the socialization of means of production. Following Marxian analysis, he argued that the working class would capture power following a revolution and would utilize it to bring in socialist objectives.

In the same article, Jayaprakash tried to bring to limelight the central problem of our society i.e. inequality. The root cause of inequality lay in the fact that the gifts of nature were privately owned by people for their own benefit. The poverty of the Indian people was due to the fact that the means of production were no longer in their hands. "...inequality with all its broad of social consequences is the central problem of our society....Charity, philanthropy, utopias, appeals to the more fortunate to be kind...have been the common reaction to this evil of inequality...The socialist's reaction is very different from these...the abolition of private and establishment social ownership over the means of production ...is the basic principle of socialism."6

Jayaprakash Narayan believed that biological inequality could also be attributed to social inequality. Poor people do not get enough opportunity to develop their potential. So people may not be always born intelligent but the amount of opportunities they receive in a society make all the difference. In a lucid analysis, meant for the common man, Jayaprakash revealed how accumulation of wealth led to exploitation and inequality. The source of all wealth, he wrote, was Nature and the agency that created wealth was human labour. The amount of wealth man could extract from Nature depended on the kind of his tools and his method of work. For accumulation to be
physically possible, the productive power of man should be so advanced that he could produce more than what he needed for his subsistence. Ideally, he admitted that in every society, each member would have accumulated a certain amount of wealth "provided he was free to work for himself, owned his own tools, had free access to Nature and was able to keep all he produced for himself."  

In course of the progress of human history, the gifts of Nature were monopolized by a few initially by sheer physical force. The instruments of production were brought under the control of a few who could accumulate wealth while the rest of the society succumbed to their exploitation. Since the genesis of exploitation lay in the accumulation of wealth in private hands, the socialists believed that exploitation could be nipped in the bud by social ownership of means of production. Thus applying Marxist principles, he was able to find a scientific explanation for the old order in India and equally a scientific recipe for attaining the new. The basic principle of Socialism was the socialization of means of production, exchange and distribution which will help to remove inequality in society.

(2) Jayaprakash Narayan's view on class struggle: the concepts of class and class struggle lie at the centre of Marxist theory. Class struggle has been portrayed as the moving force of history. Jayaprakash Narayan also believed that class struggle is the fact of history. It originated on the issue of privileges and suffering of different classes. He tried to apply the concept of class in the Indian context and believed that the anti-imperialist struggle in India was multi-class in character consisting of the
peasantry, middleclass and the working class. For Jayaprakash Narayan, the word peasant included the largest possible section of those who lived by agriculture- tenants, small peasants, proprietors, petty land lords, land less labourers and others whose subsidiary occupation was the tilling of land. He expected the peasantry to be the backbone of the national movement while the working class would provide dynamic leadership. In *Why Socialism* he discussed the issue of class composition of the anti-imperialist struggle in India. He believed that both landlords and the princes were dependent on imperialism for their existence. The royal families were relics from India’s feudal past. This class was maintained and supported by the imperialists to serve their own interest. The industrial bourgeoisie, he argued, “has grown up under the aegis of imperialism and is completely at its mercy, economically and politically. The result is the inability of these classes to oppose imperialism.”

JP was sceptical about the role of the middle class in the national liberation movement although the leading cadres of the Congress were recruited from it. He was firmly convinced that the anti imperialist movement must be led by the working class.

3) **His view on Freedom Struggle and Revolutionary Socialism:** Marxism was eulogized by J.P. as the science of society and a scientific method of social of change that included social revolution. But he was not satisfied with mere theoretical statements. His was not a pedantic but a populist approach intended to reach out to the Indian people. Getting rid of the British yoke was only one of his programs of action and in this
objective he was willing to co-operate with the Indian National Congress. But he was deeply concerned with the problem of poverty in India. “Hunger and poverty need no definition. Independence does. It can become real for the people only when its definition covers their fundamental needs...it is foolish to separate them from the issue of independence.”

These lines express his anguish over the economic condition in India and he wanted the Congress leaders to consider it to be a major problem, no less than that of political independence. He was absolutely certain that the struggle for political independence in a colonial country was organically connected with the economic emancipation of the masses. The Congress Socialist Party was formed so that the social policy of the Congress might become definitely socialist. The fight for independence had to be carried out in a more revolutionary manner which meant in Marxian terminology linking of the movement for national freedom with the movement for economic and social emancipation of the masses. At the second conference of the Congress Socialist Party (held at Meerut in 1936) it was pointed out,

“The immediate task is to develop the national movement into a real anti-imperialist movement aiming at freedom from the foreign power and the native system of exploitation....it is necessary to wean away the anti-imperialist elements within the Congress away from its present bourgeois leadership under the leadership of revolutionary socialism.”

He was unwilling to pin his faith on non-violence as a method of achieving independence and changing society.
"...non-violence is not my creed. I cannot accept it as a technique of social reconstruction."

Jayaprakash knew that freedom would not come as a gift from any foreign power but must be achieved by the strength and the resources of the Indian people. Hence he organized the Azad Dasta (Free Brigade). He was given the charge to plan the functioning of this organization as an instrument of sabotage. He wrote in his own hand a hand book on sabotage under various heads: dislocation of communication, dislocation of industrial centres, and methods to be used in dislocating them. Jayaprakash, after his daring escape from the Hazaribagh Central Prison in October 1942 toured the country. In 1943 he wrote the three famous letters to the freedom fighters. In these letters he appealed to the people to accept the path of struggle as freedom could not be achieved through non-violence and negotiations,

"My own interpretation of the Congress position—not Gandhiji's—is clear and definite. Congress is prepared to fight aggression violently if the country became independent...I feel that I should be completely justified as an honest Congressman...in repelling British aggression with arms.....non-violence of the brave if practiced on a sufficiently large scale would make violence unnecessary. But when such non-violence is absent, I should not allow cowardice clothed in shashtric subtleties to block the development of this revolution."

In the above mentioned letter he was expressing the concern that the imperialists would take recourse to violence and that had to be dealt with aggressively rather than by chanting the mantra of non violence. In one of his speeches at
Madras on July 27, 1934, Jayaprakash Narayan proposed two theses relevant to the contemporary situation: first, Socialism should be the guiding force for the freedom struggle and second, the revolutionaries should adopt the concept of socialist program for development after independence. However many of his contemporaries were not willing to accept the idea that socialism could be applied to the Indian conditions. “It is often said that India’s conditions are peculiar...that India is industrially a backward country and that...Socialism has no applicability here....but it would be difficult to imagine a greater fallacy.” In the same article he pointed out that the laws by which wealth accumulated were same in India as in any other country. The peculiarity of the Indian conditions could influence and determine the manner and the stages in which the “principles of socialism may be applied here, but never alter those principles.” Dismissing the idea that socialism would encourage the growth of mega cities at the expense of villages, he argued that socialism was a technique of social engineering. Its aim was the harmonious and well balanced growth of the human society.

“It is true that the socialist hugs machinery. But to him Machinery is not an instrument of exploitation...things that relieve human toil, increase productivity, and conquer wind and sea for us...Under socialism the cities will be planned and the villages will be transformed from little cluster of houses to progressive communities connected to the rest of the world...”

Young Jayaprakash attempted an evaluation of Gandhism from the perspective of a Marxist. In his lucid style he criticized Gandhian ideas on three grounds: a) Gandhi’s
ideas would be deemed in socialist history as 'reformist' as it tended to cover up the fissures of society by pious declarations, b) it does not delve into the root cause of economic inequality, c) J.P. did not accept the Gandhian idea that social change could take place through change of heart.

In *Why Socialism* Jayaprakash Narayan reviewed the concept of the 'Gandhian Alternative' to Socialism. In his interview published by Mahadev Desai, Gandhi had said that the Ram Rajya of his dreams ensured equal rights for the prince and the pauper. J.P. raised a fundamental question: "why paupers should remain at all in society... because the existence of paupers is essential for the working out of the Gandhian ethics." According to J.P., the real difference between socialism and Gandhism lay in the fact that socialism looked into the causes of economic inequality and tried to remove the source of this evil,

"The wealth of the land lords and the capitalist comes from the labours of the ryots and workers and is therefore in the famous phrase of Proudhon, not only are the higher classes guilty of theft; they are guilty also of violence." According to J.P., the real difference between socialism and Gandhism lay in the fact that socialism looked into the causes of economic inequality and tried to remove the source of this evil,

In a scathing criticism of Gandhiji in *Why Socialism* Jayaprakash wrote,

"The struggle between revolution and reform is as old as human misery. Gandhiji's views are essentially what in socialist history are known as reformism. Its language is Indian but the substance is international. The chief interest of reformism lies in maintaining the established order in society...Reformism is interested not in securing social justice, but in covering up the ugly fissures of society."
He also criticized Gandhi's concept of trusteeship with his cynical remark that 'the Shark was a trustee for the Minnow!' He disagreed with Gandhi's idea of reaching the hearts of the capitalists. Thus as a young Marxist, Jayaprakash Narayan severely criticized the Gandhian concepts of non-violence as a method of achieving independence and social change. He could not visualize how the exploitation of the common man could be removed by only changing the attitude of the capitalists and landlords.

One can discern the following ideas from his analysis and application of Marxian Socialism in the Indian conditions. Ever since Jayaprakash Narayan joined the struggle against the British, the search for freedom was his prime objective. The knowledge of Marxism committed him to the:

1) Idea that political freedom and economic equality must come together. The Bolshevik Revolution and the initial success of the Soviet State convinced him that the goal of freedom in all its aspects could ultimately be achieved.

2) He visualized a leading role for the state and the party in bringing about socialist transformation. He was willing to assign a progressive role to the state and considered it to be necessary. "What is meant by power? If one looks at the world today, one finds that the instrument through which groups, parties, and individuals attempt to enforce their plans, their schemes over the nation is the state... When the state is in your own hands you can legislate...Use the whole magnificent apparatus of
propaganda...No party can build up socialism unless it has the machinery of the state in its own hands." The state for Jayaprakash was an instrument of power, education and propaganda. It must regulate the economic life of the country.

3) He was an ardent critique of Parliamentary Democracy. His views almost echo the Marxist-Leninist view on Parliamentary Democracy. "It was with the appearance of ballot box and 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 lowest and the highest. But the economic order which weighs the scale too heavily on the side of the propertied interests makes this democracy a mockery." The major defect of Parliamentary Democracy is that it is based on the vote of the individual viewed in "isolation from rest of the society." Since the whole process of democracy rests on the arithmetic of votes, these institutions tend to divide society rather than uphold the spirit of harmony and cooperation.

4) If Jayaprakash was against Parliamentary Democracy, what would be the nature of the state after the revolution? If one looks at the objectives of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) it appears that J.P. pinned his faith on the dictatorship of the proletariat. In *Why Socialism* he mentioned that all power must be transferred to the toiling masses. Princes and land lords and all other classes of exploiters should be abolished. To everyone
according to his needs from everyone according to his ability' would be the basis of distribution. With the full development of Socialism and classless society, the state would wither away.24

Many years later, J.P. again expressed his anguish over the demerits of Parliamentary Democracy but then his main purpose was to project the politics of 'Sarvodaya.' During the socialist phase, Young Jayaprakash did not go into the details of a classless society; nor did he mention how the dictatorship of the proletariat would transform the state and ultimately lead to its disappearance.

In an articulate analysis of J.P.'s socialist ideas, Sandip Das argues that Gramsci's ideas come closer to Jayaprakash Narayan's more than anyone else.25 However it must be remembered that J.P. never mentioned Gramsci in any of his writings. Gramsci's ideas received international attention in 1956 when a conference on his ideas took place in Paris, 19 years after his death in Mussolini's jail. A product of Classical German Philosophy, French Political literature, English empiricism and Italian philosophical tradition, Gramsci could challenge Marx's dictum as mentioned in the *Critique of Political Economy*. Marx wrote that it was not the consciousness of men that determined their social existence. Gramsci considered that from its very nature consciousness could not be deterministic. Moreover, he rejected the idea that the economic base could mechanically determine the ideological superstructure. He believed that in its bid for hegemony, the working class must produce its own intellectuals. They would play a major role in
the formation and implantation of a new ‘common sense’. Thus Gramsci also showed the importance of moral, political and intellectual leadership that would guide the working class in establishing its hegemony. Young Jayaprakash’s reflections in his thesis on Cultural Variations almost reflect the same view, “Ultimately it should be to make it possible for man to control his social environment, to direct his social destiny, intelligently and rationally.” Even in his Marxist days J.P. was not prepared to compromise on moral questions.

Although, J.P. was firmly committed to Marxism, at the core of his heart he was deeply disturbed by some of the contradictions of Marxist theory and practice. Minoo Masani, his long time associate recalled, “At that stage of his life, J.P. was a very deeply confused man. A great deal had happened to shake his faith in communism both in Russia and in India. ...Gandhiji’s generous and friendly attitude towards him was also slowly making its impact. Still he could not make up his mind...” Masani also mentioned that Jayaprakash Narayan was still unwilling to give up the essential tenets of Marxism. “J.P. argued with me that it was better to be orthodox and reinterpret Marx rather than renounce him...” Soon his unwavering faith in Marxism gave way to his new thought on Democratic Socialism. One can trace three reasons behind this transition:

First, the developments in Stalin’s Russia: in several articles J.P. referred to the excesses committed by the ruling caucus in Russia. He read with deep interest the accounts of the infamous trial of renowned communist leaders in Soviet
Union. John Dewey's probe into the Trotsky affair and the official persecution of men like Kamenev, Zinoviev, Radek and Bukharin forced Jayaprakash Narayan to comment that "The Russian Revolution had started as a people's revolution that had the active support of the broad masses of Czarist Russia, but Lenin converted it into a minority revolution..."  

In his analysis of the socialism in Russia Jayaprakash Narayan tried to highlight the difference between Marxian and Leninist approaches. Marx had conceived of socialist revolution in an industrialized country where the working class would constitute a great majority of the population. Lenin sought to engineer a socialist revolution in an industrially backward country. Here power was seized by a determined group of revolutionaries. J.P. in his analysis of socialist regimes was profoundly influenced by Kautsky's article 'From Marx to Mao' in which he had referred to the difference in orthodox Marxist and Leninist plan of action. Marx believed that socialism would grow out of the existing material conditions and the working class would be the revolutionary agent at a time when the economy had reached the necessary maturity. Lenin insisted that socialism was not only a matter of historically conditioned prerequisites, but also of the conquest of political power. J.P. felt that Stalin followed Lenin's direction and achieved industrialization through regimentation, compulsion and suppression of freedom. The crowning point of his argument here was that development at a breakneck speed led to misuse of power in Russia. The dilemma between 'means' and 'end' continued to haunt him. His quest now was for a new answer to the contradiction between freedom and development. J.P.'s
anguish over Stalin's activities can be gauged from a poem entitled 'The Death-Rattle of Democracy'.

\[
\begin{align*}
I & \text{ hate that fellow Stalin and his manners} \\
& \text{His Five Year Plans that take away my breath,} \\
& \text{To me the victory of his red banners} \\
& \text{Would mean sure death.}^{30}
\end{align*}
\]

Secondly, J.P was also shocked by the attitude of the communist leaders in India. While he looked forward to the unity of the left forces, the communists used this opportunity to seize the Congress Socialist Party's organizational network in south India. His biographers, Allan and Wendy Scarfe referred to his mental agony with the following words,

"he pursued the painful process of rethinking the Marxist-Leninist basis of his party which had been extinguished in South India because of the united front. He decided that there could not be any unity with a communist party affiliated to the Kremlin or Comintern."^{31}

Thirdly, by this time his attitude towards Gandhi was gradually changing. In 1944, he admitted that by teaching the Indian people the method of civil resistance Gandhi had revealed before the country a new and peaceful strategy of protest. Although he did not totally accept Gandhi's economic views yet went on to add, "I think that day has definitely been left behind when one merely cracked a few jokes at the spinning wheel and village self sufficiency and called it a critique of Gandhism."^{32} This statement of J.P. clearly shows that he was gradually being drawn to some of the ideas of Gandhi and was willing to change his previous ideas on them.
Jayaprakash Narayan’s ideas on Democratic Socialism crystallized through two stages: a) the manuscripts written by him during 1940 and 1947 reveal the influence of the European Socialists and b) between 1948 and 1951 his concepts of Democratic Socialism revealed glimpses of Gandhian thought. As a political ideal, Democratic Socialism stands on four main pillars: a) constitutionalism, b) power to be achieved through ballot boxes, c) reform to be initiated by law and d) evolutionary change. Thus the Democratic Socialists pin their faith on the state for changing the socio-economic condition of the masses but the Democratic-Socialist state would use the Parliament to bring gradual changes in or reform the socio-economic system. Giles Radice in his book *Democratic Socialism* has written, “Democratic Socialism is more than a belief in individual freedom. It is also the conscious directed control of the social, political and economic machinery of a nation ...to obtain equality and freedom for all.”

The Draft Resolution, prepared by Jayaprakash Narayan (1940) and sent from jail provides us with an impression of his changing mood. His concern at this stage was to synthesize freedom and economic development. He was looking forward to mobilize the machinery of the state for economic development without impeding democracy. “An Outline Picture of Swaraj” was meant to be projected in the Ramgarh Session of the Congress and was prepared and sent by J.P. for the approval of Mahatma Gandhi. In this resolution Jayaprakash Narayan pointed out to two major objectives of the Congress during the pre-independence days. The first objective was obviously political independence and the second one was economic
freedom. He rejected the path of capitalist development, and portrayed the contours of a democratic socialist society: individual and civil liberty, nationalization of transport, shipping, mining and other heavy industries, cultural and religious freedom and collectivization in agriculture. Commenting on Jayaprakash Narayan’s proposals Acharya Narendra Deva wrote, “India is reaching out silently but surely towards a new social order. ...For some time past it has been widely felt that it was necessary to get a cleaner outline of the picture of India to be. It fell to comrade Jayaprakash Narayan to make this attempt. The result is embodied in this pamphlet....This declaration has a value ...and it is necessary to address the country on the necessity and the contents of such a declaration.”34 It was indeed a bold declaration projecting socialist principles for development after independence.

The main features of J.P.’s concept of Democratic Socialism are: First, he made it very clear that Marxism was not a dogma but a science of society that included social revolution. In “My Picture of Socialism”, Jayaprakash Narayan lauded Marx for giving us a method to understand and change History. But that did not mean that Marx’s ideas represented the final truth. “In science there is no final truth.”35 This profound statement indeed sums up J.P.’s firm conviction that enabled him to pursue the goal of freedom.

Secondly, he believed that the creation of socialist society involved two stages: the stage of transition and the final establishment of socialism. By this time he was beginning to view democracy and socialism to be complementary concepts.
In “My Picture of Socialism” (1946) J.P. maintained that the state in socialist India must be a fully democratic state. There can be no socialism without democracy. He drew the outline of a socialist society claiming that it would include the following features: elimination of exploitation and poverty, provision of equal opportunities to all for self-development, full development of the material and moral resources of society and utilization of these resources according to the needs and wishes of society rather than in accordance with the dictates of profit.

He also recommended equitable apportionment of national wealth and social educational and other services between all those who labour and serve society. But all these objectives must be achieved without sacrificing the cause of democracy.

Third, as a corollary to the previous point, Jayaprakash Narayan preferred the evolutionary path of socialism to the revolutionary path. The threat of violence and the fallout of extreme policies prevented him from supporting the scheme of radical change through coercion. In “Transition to Socialism” he wrote,

“The method of violent revolution might conceivably lead to socialist democracy but in the country where it has been tried it has led to something very different; to a bureaucratic state in which democracy does not exist.”

The question that continued to haunt him was: how could one defend a revolution that was meant to restore democracy, but, ultimately ended in control of the state power by the bureaucracy? In the same article he wrote, that political
democracy had become far more democratic than what it was in Marx's time. He agreed that the socialists were in the seats of power through democratic means in some countries. He was referring to the socialists who had come to power in Britain, France and Germany. For proper functioning of democracy, J.P. proposed that there should be "no curbs on political parties of the working people and there should be full freedom for expression of opinion and to form voluntary organization for political purposes."\textsuperscript{37} Here, he was influenced by Kautsky's ideas of democratic Socialism. Kautsky had observed that there was no fixed path for the development of Socialism; the modern age was the age of socialism, to be achieved through democratic means. Even the Fabian Socialists had advocated the establishment of socialism through democratic means.

J.P. believed in decentralization of power to ensure the participation of the common man at the grass roots level. At the First Asian Conference held in Rangoon (1953) he admitted that decentralization was the only means of translating socialism into people's rule at the lowest level. In "Evolution of My Thinking", Jayaprakash criticized the policies of the European Socialists in general and the German Social Democrats in particular. The welfare state of the European Socialist countries, he believed, was hardly a substitute for a socialist state. Ridiculing the policies of the British Socialists he wrote, "But there are many skeletons yet in the cupboard of British socialists and Great Britain is far away yet from a socialist democracy."\textsuperscript{38} For him, European Social Democracy could not transform society from the roots and failed to uphold the great human values of freedom, equality and brotherhood.
Fourth, J.P. rejected the idea of dictatorship of the proletariat because it often resulted in monopolistic control by one political party. Commenting on this issue he wrote in “My Picture of Socialism,”

“It should be remembered that dictatorship of the proletariat in Marxist theory does not mean the dictatorship of a single party...It means the dictatorship of a class, the working class...These classes may have one or more political parties.”

He was here trying to show that Marxism never supported the dominance of a single party; there can always be more than one working class party. Hence he referred to two major aspects of democracy under socialism. The existence of more than one political party of the working people. All these parties would function freely and enjoy freedom of expression; to ensure popular control, the trade unions must operate as independent bodies supporting the state and also keep an eye on the government of the day.

Fifth Jayaprakash Narayan’s picture of Socialist India included democracy both at the political and economic level. Economic democracy, he believed, could be achieved by introducing far-reaching changes in agriculture and industry. For building socialist agriculture, it was necessary to introduce cooperative and collective farming. He stood for abolition of the Zamindari system and redistribution of land among the peasants. The legal ownership of land will rest with the village panchayat. The village panchayat will play a leading role in encouraging the cooperative movement in agriculture. As the process of transformation in agriculture continued, it will make
way for the collective stage in which no individual propriety rights will be recognized and land will belong to village collectives. He mentioned that collectivization was introduced in Russia at a great human cost obviously due to the ruthless dictatorship. He spoke vehemently against such 'colossal repression'. In 1953, at the First Socialist Conference held at Rangoon, he used the term 'villagization'. He seemed to have favoured the carrot and stick policy – use of both coercion and persuasion. 40

Sixth, in the sphere of industrial development, he referred to the importance of both large and small industries. The large industries would be controlled by the state but here J.P. threw his weight in favour of trade union activity at all levels. He wanted representatives of trade unions to have an appropriate voice in the management of industrial organizations. He wanted the small industries to be organized into producers' cooperatives. He also advocated another type of industrial ownership apart from state ownership and producer's cooperatives – municipal or community ownership through a city or a town. It seems J.P. patronized the ideas of both guild socialism and state socialism but he was aware of the fact that both were contradictory to each other. Guild socialism was a reaction against the loopholes of state socialism, viz. the rise of industrial bureaucracy. But Jayaprakash Narayan offered a solution to remove this contradiction. The bureaucratization of industry could be checked by the participation of workers in the management of industries. 41
Seventh, having finalized the goals of socialism, Jayaprakash Narayan continued his search for the adequate means of achieving them in "Transition to Socialism". He pointed out in this article that "...in a fully democratic India the transition to socialism can and should be a peaceful democratic process." Yet he warned us that the transition to socialism was not a straight path but a tangle of conflicting paths. He justified his apprehensions by pointing out at the role played by the reactionary forces in India under the British. He was distressed by the dubious role played by the local reactionary forces in connivance with the imperialists. He raised a very pertinent question—was it possible still to achieve socialism through democratic means when anti democratic forces were at play? "I conceive a period of trouble and turmoil, a revolutionary phase of the transition a phase in which not only the democratic revolution should be completed but considerable progress made towards socialism." Thus combining pragmatism and idealism, J.P. declared that it was necessary to adopt strategies and tactics according to the situation. He again refused to give in to any set dogmas but hoped that a well organized political party of workers and peasants would guide the oppressed masses.

Eighth, Jayaprakash Narayan's writings in between 1948 and 1956 gradually reveal the influence of Gandhi over his ideas. Hence he could not undermine the importance of ethics in politics. He admitted that the "greatest thing Gandhi taught us was that means are ends, that evil means can never lead to good ends and that fair ends require fair means." In the 6th Annual Conference of the Socialist Party in 1948, he raised the
question of ethics and politics in the paper entitled "Ends and Means." He disagreed with the Marxist assumption that any means was acceptable provided it served the end of social revolution,

"The evil ends that had resulted from evil means in Russia, particularly the foul means that were used to perpetrate the staggering crimes during the purges, revolted me from the revolutionary ethics of Marxism and forced me to question if good ends could ever be achieved by bad means."  

Ninth, J.P. was equally committed to the moral and intellectual development of man. Material prosperity could not liberate man from bondage. Socialism, as manifested in the West, liberated man from the shackles of capitalism, but he was still caught in the quagmire of materialism,

"Does socialism merely mean solving the problem of bread and butter? Has it only an economic content? I refuse to accept the view...there can be no real socialism without enlargement of our liberty and freedom, without complete democracy. Marx and Lenin had both said that democracy and socialism are inseparable."  

In the September 1952 issue of the journal Freedom First, J.P. wrote an article entitled "Incentive to Goodness" in which he penned down his anguish over materialism,

"in a material civilization man has no rational incentive to be good. It may be that in the kingdom of dialectical materialism, fear makes men conform and the party takes the place of God....I feel convinced therefore that man must go beyond the material to find the incentive to goodness."
J.P. had the courage to admit that no ideology or institution was more important than man. Any human endeavour (be it in the sphere of ideology or in building organizations) would survive the test of time if it allowed every individual the freedom to develop according to his own inner nature. As he highlighted the importance of values in the development of individuals and of morality in politics, J.P. was gradually being drawn towards Gandhi for the task of social reconstruction. Yet he refused to indulge in fruitless ideological debate over social reconstruction and wanted to pursue what was best in the interest of humanity. He realized that materialism alone cannot remove all the constraints of social development.

A new social order could only emerge if the focus of development remained both at the micro level (individual) and at the macro level (society). Socialists committed the mistake of making a one-sided attempt to improve the environment at the cost of the individual. There are certain universal values which must be inculcated in the individual through education. He was convinced that over and above all other values, individuals must be taught to subjugate personal interest to the larger interest of society.

Jayaprakash Narayan had played a significant role in the emergence of Socialist movement in India. In the context of the pre-independence days, he would be best remembered for his ceaseless effort to organize a Socialist party, the first of its kind, in India. An attempt will be made here to discuss the events that led to the birth of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP);
J.P.'s role in nurturing this Party, and furthering the cause of the Socialist movement in India.

J.P. went to America, quite unsure of his ideological/political moorings. But he returned to India as a firebrand Marxist speaking the language of Marxism with conviction. His close contact with the group of intellectuals (with socialist leanings) at the Nasik Central Jail encouraged him to look beyond the ideological frame work. J.P. felt that it was not enough to speak about socialism; a bold step was required to translate these thoughts into practice. He was obviously working in a very hostile environment. The Congress was not yet ready to accept his socialist vision. In his article, "What the Congress Socialist Party Stands For", J.P. wrote,

"The present programme of the Congress ...might ameliorate the conditions of the masses to a certain extent, but it will neither rid them of exploitation nor put them in power. Far from effecting revolutionary changes in it, it leaves the economic structure of the society intact...the entire economic organization based as it is on the exploitation of the poor and the middle classes, is preserved. This is not economic freedom."^48

He was expressing his views with reference to the Karachi Resolution (1931) of the Congress. The alternative was to develop a socialist wing within the Congress to influence its policies and programs. In the Nasik central Jail, he and his young socialist friends could discuss the limitations of the Karachi Resolution. Its main limitation was that it proclaimed economic freedom but failed to delineate the mode of achieving it. He came out of the prison only to mould the destiny of the major political party in India. As he wrote later,
free India to me meant socialist India and Swaraj the rule of the poor and downtrodden....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 for national freedom with the movement for economic and social emancipation of the masses.”

Many years later, in the twilight of his life, J.P. once again revealed his organizational ability by bringing different political parties under one umbrella (in 1977). But that is beyond the scope of this chapter.

The factors that led to the growth of the Congress Socialist Party include:

1) Lessons and experiences of the Non-cooperation movement of 1920 and the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930. These two movements created high expectations from the masses but many young Congressmen felt that they (the movements) could not produce the desired results. A chink in the British Armoury was achieved but ‘Swaraj’ still remained a distant goal. A.R. Desai has observed that the failure of the 1930 and 1932 Civil Disobedience movements together with the break down of the two Round Table Conferences had created an atmosphere of objection and despondency in India. Within the Congress an inner struggle was going on between the constitutionalists who were prepared to participate in British Indian political institutions and the younger members who preferred a radical policy against the British. The Karachi Resolution (adopted during the Karachi session of theCongress
held on 29-31 March, 1931) disappointed the younger section of the Congress; they looked forward to the inclusion of radical economic policies in this resolution. About the Karachi Resolution, Nehru wrote in his autobiography, “In the Karachi Resolution it took a short step, a very short step, in the socialist direction...this was not socialism at all, and a capitalist state could easily accept almost everything contained in that resolution.” The socialist group was in no mood to accept this compromise.

At the Patna conference of July 1933, the mass Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended. Many Congressmen felt that the party should decide to enter the legislatures and prevail upon the British Government to repeal the repressive laws. This idea was reiterated again at the conference held in Delhi on March 31, 1933. But the socialists opposed this as they apprehended that the constitutionalist leaders at that time were using the platform of the Congress to fight for mere transfer of power from one interest to another. It dawned upon them that a new orientation and strategy was required to infuse life in the ebbing movement.

2) J.P. also felt that the Congress was loosing touch with the socialist forces in the country. Hence the Congress Socialist Party was supposed to bring about a fusion between the nationalist and the socialist forces. He wanted the common Indian, especially the peasantry and the working class to be a part of the movement and that they must understand the significance of 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."52

3) Another cause of concern for J.P. was the deteriorating communal situation in India. In Towards Struggle, J.P. wrote that the communal problem was a primarily economic in origin and felt that universally acceptable goals and ideals should be accepted that would appeal to both Hindus and Muslims,

"The communal question in Bengal as in other parts of the country is largely an economic question and has resulted from the fact that the Muslims are nearly all tenants and the landlords are nearly all Hindus....since the class division coincides with the communal division this conflict and these clashes have often been given communal colour."53

He further added that the course left open to the nationalists was to link the freedom movement with the need of economic emancipation of the masses.

4) J.P. wanted to ensure that once political freedom was achieved there should be no classes with special privileges. He nurtured the CSP to project his vision of socialist India to do away with the concentration of economic and political power.

5) He wanted to maintain a separate line of organization and action distinct from the communists and the Royist group. He was very clear in his mind that the Congress Socialist Party was formed not to develop into a rival to the Congress but to work within the Congress. In his article "The Problem of Socialist Unity in India," he referred to the problem and prospects of socialist unity in the pre independence days with the following words,
"The Congress Socialist Party is not a party transplanted from outside. It is a growth of the Indian soil....Its very formation was a protest and revolt against the line of the Third International pursued in India."\textsuperscript{54}

With these observations J.P. explained why the CSP did not affiliate itself with the Communist International or amalgamate with the Communist Party of India. Yet, at the same time, he desired to unite the various socialist groups that were functioning in different parts of the country. J.P. along with Ashok Mehta, Ram Manohar Lohia, N.G. Goray, Yusuf Meherally, Minoo Masani, Achyut Patwardhan, Acharya Narendra Deva, S.M.Joshi and Sampuranand took initiative to send letters and circulars to various splinter socialist groups. Nehru was also approached and he welcomed the formation of the socialist group in the Congress to influence the ideology of the Congress and the country, and promised to help but decided not to join it. This was made clear by Nehru's letter written to Masani on December 19, 1933.

In April 1934, after his release from the Nasik Jail, J.P. returned to Patna and on May 1934, inaugurated the convention of the Bihar Congress Socialist Party and make arrangements for an all India conference. With the help of Dr. Sampurnand and Acharaya Narendra Deva the policies of the party was laid down that included capture of the state through elections, centralized state planning, the collectivization of agriculture and dictatorship of the proletariat, meaning in the Indian context, of peasants, lower castes and outcastes of India. Later on, on Jayaprakash's initiative, a decision was taken to
convene an All India convention of socialists to coincide with the Congress Annual Conference in 1934. J.P. became the General Secretary of the Party and Masani the Joint Secretary. The fifteen point program propagated by the CSP included,

1. Transfer of all power to the producing masses.
2. Development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the state.
3. Socialization of key and principal industries, Banks, insurance and Public Utilities with a view to the progressive socialization of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange.
4. State monopoly of foreign trade.
5. Organization of cooperatives for production, distribution and credit in the unsocialized sector of economic life.
6. Elimination of princes and landlords and all other classes of exploiters without compensation.
7. Redistribution of land to peasants.
8. Encouragement and promotion of cooperative and collective farming by the State.
9. Liquidation of debts owing by peasants and workers.
10. Recognition of the right to work or maintenance by the State.
11. ‘To everyone according to his needs from every one according to his capacity’ to be the basis ultimately of distribution and production of economic goods.
12. Adult franchise on a functional basis.
13. No support to discrimination between religions by the state and no recognition of any distinction based on caste or community.
14. No discrimination between sexes by the State.
15. Repudiation of the so called Public Debt of India.\(^{55}\)

The formation of the CSP was not hailed by the right wing of the Congress and the Working committee passed a resolution in June 1934 claiming,

"While the Working Committee welcomes the formation of groups representing different schools of thought, it is necessary in view of those who talk about confiscation of private property and necessity of class war, to remind Congressmen that the Karachi Resolution as finally settled by the A.I.C.C. at Bombay in August 1931, which lays down certain principles, neither contemplates confiscation of private property nor advocacy of class war.....confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence."\(^{56}\)

However, J.P. was prepared for a very long struggle to defend the cause of socialism and along with Acharya Narendra Deva issued a statement challenging the Working Committee resolution,

"What the Patna Programme speaks is the progressive socialization of the means of production, distribution and exchange. It does not mean abolition of all private property....The socialists’ aim at the ultimate abolition of all class struggles by having a classless society."\(^{57}\)

Undeterred by such scathing criticism, Jayaprakash toured the different parts of the country to encourage the growth if Provincial Congress Socialist Parties that would be ultimately affiliated to the All India Congress Socialist Party. At Madras he declared, "...We do not say we are going out of the
Congress. If we fail, tomorrow we will try again and if tomorrow we fail we will try again." He made it very clear that the Congress Socialist Party would not detach itself from the Indian National Congress and would continue to influence its policies and programmes in the direction of Socialism.

The attitude of the newly born CSP towards the Congress was analyzed by J.P. in his articles “Gandhi’s Leadership and the CSP”, “Our Problems: How to Face Them?” In these two articles he dealt with a few pertinent questions relevant to the politics of the turbulent 30s and 40s. First, he admitted that the main task facing the CSP was to develop the anti-imperialist movement. “The Congress Socialist Party was formed not to develop into a rival to the Congress, but to work within the Congress, to strengthen it to mould and shape its policies.”

At the 1936 conference of the CSP at Faizpur, he proposed a new thesis which called for the creation of a powerful national front against imperialism. Such a task required complete reorganization of the Congress,

“It is not only to wean away the anti-imperialist elements from the bourgeois leadership into a powerful anti-imperialist front, but a complete reorganization of the party and building it up from the bottom upwards.”

In 1936, Jawaharlal Nehru became the President of the Congress at the Lucknow session; it implied a shift in Congress policies towards the left and J.P. and other socialist leaders accepted important positions in the Congress hierarchy. Jayaprakash and his socialist group did not support the
decision of the Congress to accept offices in the provincial autonomy of the Government of India Act 1935. He thought this Act as an Act of 'slavery'. J.P. found the attitude of the Congress totally contradictory. On the one hand, it claimed to fight the British rule and on the other hand it was prepared to participate in the institutional network offered by several statutes passed by the British Parliament. Hence he resigned from the Congress working committee to strengthen the CSP. The prime requirement for strengthening the CSP, according to J.P. was to maintain links with the masses. J.P. had to argue the case of socialism in a language that would appeal to the masses. He chose to deal with the problems of extreme inequality, unemployment and starvation that had ravaged the Indian society; he took upon himself the responsibility of convincing the common man that socialist policies and programmes were necessary to deal with these problems.

As a revolutionary, J.P. had little faith in the process of constitutionalism which was in progress at a snail's pace under British supervision. He was convinced that the people of India, the toiling masses, were not satisfied with the gradual doses of constitutional advance without concrete freedom; only a mass movement covering every nook and corner of the country could shake the foundation of British Imperialism in India. For him, the anti-imperialist struggle in India implied a multi-class struggle involving the peasantry, working class and the middle class. But although the working class was organizationally weak, the potential for revolutionary leadership rested with it.
During this period, J.P. was a committed Marxist and criticized the western concept of Parliamentary Democracy. His ideas revealed great admiration for the developments in the Soviet Union. A glimpse of his political and economic thinking can be observed in his book *Why Socialism* (1936). J.P. was in favour of developing a planned economy by using the coercive power of the state. Equating politics with power, he argued that the power of the state was necessary to bring far reaching changes in human society.

In his public speeches, he criticized the Gandhian program of Charkha and *khadi spinning* by claiming that they in no way provided lasting solution to the economic problem of the masses in India. “We have never obstructed the constructive programme and have often cooperated in it ...But we always stressed its inadequacy and its unscientific social philosophy.”  

He also had reservations on the oft repeated ideas of Mahatma Gandhi – use of non-violence as a method of struggle against the British and the concept of *Ramrajya*; J.P. felt that instead of decentralization of power, real power must be transferred from the capitalists to the workers and from the classes to the masses. He also dismissed two common criticisms of the 15 point programmes of the C.S.P. it was often argued that these programmes were too drastic. Critics also felt that they were the products of foreign influence. “They sound no more foreign than constitutional assembly, the legislative council, the Tariff Board and the siren of cotton mills.” He argued that these were the requirements for socio-economic transformation and obviously they were not product of foreign influence. In that case, all the
experiments of constitutionalism over which the Congressmen were raising hue and cry were also the products of the west!

J.P. had always nurtured the vision of socialist unity in India. Yet the policies and statements of the communists often annoyed him. The Communist Party of India had pitted itself against the Congress and left no stone unturned to criticize Mahatma Gandhi. Jayaprakash called it 'folly and shameful' behaviour.

It is indeed interesting to observe how the relationship between the CSP and the communists oscillated with the changing domestic and international political scenario. The war in Europe changed the attitude of the Communist International towards the Indian National Movement. Alarmed by the rise of the fascist forces in Europe, it directed the Communist Party in India to forge a united front against British Imperialism in India. This was a radical departure from their earlier position and the Congress now became a major instrument in the anti-imperialist front and the CSP (so far regarded as a socialist fascist organization) was now accepted as a part of the popular front line. J.P. who was always interested in forging socialist unity in this country, tried to accommodate the communists but the later utilized this chance to seize the organizational structure of the CSP. A visibly shaken Jayaprakash later wrote,

"The Congress Socialist Party held a strategic position within the Congress. The communists were anxious to get into the Provincial Congress Committees, the Executives, the All India Congress Committee, possibly the Working Committee. With their own resources it was impossible for them to get
anywhere near them...the Congress Socialist Party afforded a splendid platform for self advertisement to these practically unknown communists....The growth of the Congress Socialist Party into an independent party was a danger to their monopoly."

Many socialists like Ashok Mehta, Rammanohar Lohia and Achyut Patwardhan opposed the idea of sharing a common platform with the communists. "J.P.'s Marxist zeal had the better of him and this led to a tactical and strategic error in his judgement." J.P. wanted to bring all the leftist forces under one banner and he could not imagine that there were other elements in Indian politics which would misinterpret his desire for unity. He had to learn a bitter lesson the hard way.

By 1937, the communists had infiltrated the CSP at various levels and began to assert it claiming that the CSP was not at all a Marxist party. Finally in Bombay in 1939, decision was taken to expel the communists from the membership of the Party. J.P. later on admitted that the entire idea of socialist unity was "misconceived and the fundamental difficulties were not understood....It was very wrong to have admitted members of other parties into our Party. This was against all sound principles of organization."

Jayaprakash Narayan must be given due credit for making the CSP flexible and not doctrinaire in approach. He was quite convinced that "Marxism is one and indivisible. The important question however is, how is Marxism to be applied to a given social situation?" The socialists concentrated on the Indian conditions and they were not swayed by the directions of
the Communist International. They refused to toe the policy guidelines offered by any alien organization.

After the war was over, while the British and Indian leaders continued discussion on plans for transfer of power, Jayaprakash and the leading members of the CSP were apprehensive of the intentions of the imperialists. It is worth observing that on a number of occasions J.P. and the CSP clearly deviated from the official declarations of the Congress. In an inspiring speech, from the dais of the Gandhi Maidan in Patna, J.P. declared,

"The Congress Socialist Party does not extend hospitality to the British Cabinet Mission as the Congress does. The leaders of the Congress..... believe that independence can now be negotiated. But to me ...and to our colleagues it is axiomatic that a capitalist imperialist power will not peacefully surrender its exploited colonies which are the source of wealth. We must prepare for the revolution that is inevitable."^8

His speeches and observations at this stage reveal the difference in approach of the Congress and the CSP. His frustration with the Congress policies can be traced in the letter to All Fighters of Freedom, written on August, 9, 1946. "The A.I.C.C. has agreed that Congressmen should go to the British sponsored Constituent Assembly....Could the proposed Constituent Assembly take all these steps, everyone of which is essential to lead India to full freedom and democracy?"^69

To him the weakness of the Congress lay in its decision to participate in the constitutional process sponsored by the British. The Congress, he felt was gradually being converted
into a Parliamentary Party and it would fail to address the issues of 'national unity and bread'.

The Congress Socialist Party, under the guidance of Jayapraakash Narayan, opposed the plan of partition of India. He believed that communal harmony could be achieved only through a common struggle for economic development to protect the common economic interests of the two communities. In a statement signed by Jayapraakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Dr. Lohia and Achyut Patwardhan, the socialist leaders issued a statement condemning the Cabinet Mission proposals. They demanded the abolition of every vestige of foreign domination and the preservation of the political and economic unity of the country at all cost. It has been mentioned that the main purpose of the CSP was to redefine the objectives of the Congress and revise its strategy according to the principles of Socialism. But differences between the two organizations could not be reconciled; in 1948 the socialists broke away from the Congress and formed a separate party of their own calling it the Socialist Party. J.P. became the General Secretary of the Party.

Jayapraakash Narayan’s commitment to Socialism was a part and parcel of his wider struggle for securing social justice for the poor and underprivileged sections of India. As a young firebrand Marxist, he was eager to apply the tenets of Marxism to the Indian conditions; he thought the Marxian principles would be suitable to remove the problem of inequality in India. He never hesitated to change his views on Marxism when he found that its application led to compromises on human freedom.
He subsequently argued in favour of Democratic Socialism upholding the idea that Socialism must be introduced through Democratic means. The limitations in the policies of the European Social Democrats encouraged J.P. to redefine Socialism. This reinterpretation brought him to the threshold of Gandhian thought. As he later on admitted, Democratic Socialism was his halfway house from Marxism to Gandhism.

J.P. has been often accused of diluting or abandoning the essential principles of Marxism. He was not moved by such adverse comments. He sincerely believed that in life there was no final truth,

"Those who call Marxism scientific ... and introduce dogmatism into it do it great disservice... Today with a vastly developed store of human knowledge... experience and observation on capitalist society, we are in a position to make far greater approximations to the truth than Marx." 70

He denounced a) the restrictions on freedom in socialist countries, b) the neglect of values under Stalinism, c) application of coercive means to achieve socialist objectives and d) use of violence to bring social change. As a follower of Democratic Socialism, he declared that the mission of his life would be to pursue socialist objectives through democratic and peaceful means. Even the states pursuing Democratic Socialist policies could not rise above the problems of Parliamentary Democracy. In the economic sphere, nationalization of industries led to the growth of a centralized bureaucracy that was unsympathetic to the problems of the masses.
In 1929, young Jayaprakash wrote in his thesis Cultural Variation, “...the primary function of the sociologist is the study of social and cultural change. Otherwise he may become what Summer called a 'social quack' but never a social scientist. Furthermore all quests for social guidance are foredoomed unless real knowledge of social change is forthcoming.”

As the country eagerly waited for the end of British rule, J.P. decided that India must embark on a programme of social change; but in order to be ‘meaningful’ it must be linked to moral development to be achieved through peaceful means. His inner conflict over man-environment relationship was finally resolved; in his address to the First Asian Socialist Conference at Rangoon in 1953, he observed that there are many instances in history where the man-environment relationship was portrayed as a one sided phenomenon,

“Buddha developed a system of self-culture...for making moulding and shaping of individual human nature so that he may be free from misery by controlling his passion...But it was a one sided effort”

It would similarly be a one sided effort if a socialist environment and the individual is not trained to “subdue or subjugate his personal desires and to ambitions to social good...the experiment of social engineering would miscarry.”

J.P. here has used a new word 'social engineering' referring to efforts to regulate man-environment relationship through changes in the external environment and internal attitudes/values of the individual. This can only be achieved if Socialism is linked to Sarvodaya. Jayaprakash was always
against the senseless use of violence and refused to accept any
strategy that preached violence. His biographers, Allan and
Wendy Scarfe, have observed that Jayaprakash was deeply
distressed by the outbreak of violence in the wake of the
announcement of partition,

"Now faced with the pitiful broken bodies strewn by
cruel men who were aggressive in their actions, he
began to feel ashamed of his philosophy of force and
his intellectual and spiritual desertion of Gandhi's
moral principle of non-violence."74

This decision to link Socialism and Sarvodaya was the
turning point in his life as he realized the eternal truth behind
the statements that the Mahatma had repeated for years: use of
force was a failure of the West and belief in non violence was
the hall mark of a true Indian.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


7. Ibid., p.90.


24. Yusuf Meherally, ed., *op cit.*, p.120.


32. Wadhavekar, op cit., p. 72.
37. Virender Kumar Verma, op cit., p.94.
39. Quoted in Dasgupta, op cit., p.53.
40. Wadhavekar, op cit., pp.82-87.
41. Ibid., p.89.
43. Ibid., p.30.
44. Dasgupta, op cit., p.57.
47. Quoted in Minoo Masani's article "Who was this Man", in Sandip Das. op cit., p.99.


52. Patil, and Lokapure, *op cit.*, p.34.


55. Jayaprakash Narayan, "What the Congress Socialist Party Stands For", in Yusuf Meherally, ed., *op cit.*, p.120.


62. (Gandhiji had visualized a decentralized society in which power will be enjoyed by all functionaries at all levels from the bottom to the apex and that would lead to the development of a harmonious society).


