Chapter six

Press and Political Mobilization in Independent India: A Case Study of JP
Having analysed Gandhi, his strategies of mobilisation, and his use of the press in political mobilisation, we now shift our attention to another set of major questions that we have posed for ourselves for this study. What is the shape of political mobilisation in a democratic set up and how is press used for the same? J.P. Movement (1974-77) serves as the case study for us in this exercise. This chapter begins by noting some of the theoretical issues on which this section has been based, goes on to discuss JP as a communicator, his conception of total revolution, and takes up a detailed analysis of JP movement. The last section has been the most revealing. It also enables us to look into the use of the press for political mobilisation better.

“THIS struggle in Bihar is not just a flash in the pan of history,” wrote Jayaprakash Narayan in the front page story of his weekly Everyman’s issue of December 1, 1974, “but a continuing process of revolutionary changes.” Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) was referring to the struggle between “Chatra Shakti” (Student power) and “Jan Shakti” (People’s powers) on the one hand and “Rajya Shakti” (State power) on the other. He further wrote in the same article titled ‘Direct Action of Youth and People’: “In this revolutionary process governments and political parties will certainly play a role but the main moving force will be the direct action of the youths and the people.”

It is this direct action of the youth and the masses that JP harnessed to launch one of the most eventful, memorable and effective mass movements in post-colonial India. Often termed as the “Second Liberation” after Gandhi’s freedom struggle, JP movement in the 1970’s with its wide appeal is perhaps the best example of an effective political mobilisation in the democratic set-up of independent India. We have chosen to attempt to examine the various contours of this movement. This falls in line with one of the major objectives of our study.

It may be relevant here to point out one of the theoretical issue that we discussed in the chapter on political mobilisation. It was postulated that the student community in developing countries is among the most sensitive groups in becoming aware of and
asserting allegedly deprived rights. They have played an important role both in providing successful support for mobilizing regimes, as well as in opposing and often overthrowing unsuccessful ones.\(^2\) JP understood this the best and this is illustrated by JP Movement that we have taken up for discussion below. They perceive the value system of national development, which is articulated through symbols, as right. Their access to information probably helps them to scan and evaluate performance more accurately than any other single group of society, except perhaps the ruling elite. It has been found that students are less willing to accept information dissonance and they require a greater level of information constraint than that at which the ruling elite are accustomed to operate for the benefit of the peripherally mobilized population.

JP also believed that political mobilization is focussed on national perspectives in developing countries. “Mobilization is a functional process for the attainment of the goal of national integration; the regained saliency and level of commitment are high.”\(^3\)

Additionally, much like Gandhi before him, JP was conscious of the power of the press and continuously used this potent medium for communicating his ideas on political, social and international issues. “His ability to express political theories and sentiments in comprehensible terms provided a model for anyone involved in mass communication. Like Gandhi, he believed in placing his views before as wide a section of the people as possible, not confine them to ideological journals.”\(^4\) It is pertinent here to point out an observation by Lucian Pye. He noted that “a direct relationship exists in all societies between the structure and organisation of communications and the character, tone, and even to a degree, content of political expression.”\(^5\)

The politician’s, role both as articulator of the collective identity and as champion of specific interests, is invariably conditioned and limited by the media of communications available to him. No leader can rise above the restrictions posed by the specific communications networks to which he has access, and at the same time none can escape the consequences of being surrounded by a communications system.\(^6\)
JP realised this best and made full use of the print media. He wrote political pamphlets, besides writing for his own journal *Everyman’s*, that was being run by a group of professionals appointed by JP. JP also used to give interviews to a lot of mainstream newspapers and magazines, besides relying a good deal on speeches. On the whole JP’s was quite a sensitive mind and “he could react spontaneously to events. In the days of his retirement from politics, where there was a brutal police firing on students in Bihar, JP came out denouncing the government, and in the campaign that followed he did not hesitate to join hands with the Communists. At the same time, during the Hungarian crisis in 1956 he wrote an open letter to the CPI journal raising basic issues about democracy and socialism-which brought forth and equally frank response from the then leader of the CPI, Ajoy Ghosh. This correspondence between JP and Ajoy now forgotten, is one of the landmarks in socialist thinking in India, while the second landmark came when the CPI two years later at its Congress under Ajoy Ghosh’s leadership laid down in its constitution that under the Socialism of its model in India, there would be room for pluralism of political parties.”

A survey of the most momentous times of JP Movements vis-à-vis JP’s use of the press for mobilising the youth and mass (he did use other techniques like rallies and signature campaigns also) will help us establish the relevance of our question.

**JP: THE COMMUNICATOR**

JP was an effective communicator who put across his point of view systematically and convincingly. His communication strategy, much like Gandhi, included the use of both oral and written media. In an active political career spanning over five decades, JP constantly made use of speeches and writings to put forth his ideas on a wide-ranging national and international issues. He relied on this technique from his youthful days of Quit India Movement when he wrote “three monumental letters known as “letters to the freedom fighters,” through the days Post and Telegraph trade union movement when he wrote an article ‘Incentives for goodness,’ to the simmering
seventies when he started his own weekly “with a view to communicating his ideas regularly and systematically to the educated elite and the students.”

In addition to his writings, J.P. used speeches and even undertook fasts to communicate his ideas. For instance, in 1952 during the strike of Post and Telegraph employees, he carried on negotiations with the then Minister of Communications, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. After the negotiations, JP announced that wages for the strike would be paid. But when the Minister contradicted him, he felt the pricking of his conscience and said, “I led the trade Union movement and after the negotiations gave an assurance to my colleagues and comrades in the struggle that your strike wages would be paid. But I find that my understanding with the Minister was wrong and it was my failure as a trade unionist. Now it is my moral duty to repent and purify myself.”

Thereafter, J.P. undertook a 21-day fast at Pune. This was not a protest but an effective communication strategy. He said, “I ought to have taken assurance in writing. It’s my failure why should I blame the Minister?” He could make his comrades understand him and his ideas better. No wonder he was liked by all, across parties and ideologies.

“Jayaprakash Narayan has carried with him fulsome tributes from all political circles—his adherents and admirers, his adversaries and detractors. A life of ups and downs of heroic times and despairing moments. Living beyond the Psalmist’s assigned span, JP had not only witnessed mighty deeds but participated in them in the company of the great and was often acclaimed as one of them. Where history will place him in the pantheon of the architect of a freedom, it will be known only to posterity. For us, who have lived in the of his life-time, the millions who bade him a tearful farewell on the banks of the Ganga testify to his eminence, and the regard and the affection in which he was held by his countrymen and women.”

JP exhorted the masses and especially the youth for actions through his speeches. “While college and University students have every right to participate in politics,” said JP, “and political parties may have their student branches or sections, the latter should not interfere with purely student affairs. Students should have only one
organisation the college or university students union, which alone should deal with their problems and represent the students where necessary.\textsuperscript{13}

On another occasion he urged the students and teachers “to establish mass contact with voters in order to enlighten them.” For he believed that “voters are arbiters of destiny in a democracy, but in practice vote-catchers have become the arbiters of destiny of the people. Widespread illiteracy is certainly an obstacle to enlightenment, but let us not presume that they cannot cast their votes wisely until they become educated. India has a tradition of knowledge being acquired through audition so that the illiterate people of India possess unexpected intellectual maturity. What is needed is that they are awakened and told how to use properly their invaluable right to vote. This social education is far more important than propaganda in favour of a party or candidate…. If we do not enlighten our voters in this decade, the future of our democracy will become dark.”\textsuperscript{14}

JP’s use of the media for political ends is also reflected in his use of his journals for monitoring the movement. The journals \textit{Everyman’s} and \textit{Prajaniti} were effectively used to inform the course and direction of JP Movement. JP followed Gandhi in this model. Not only proforma of membership forms were taken in the journals but developments from various states on the progress about the movement were also reported. Ajit Bhattacharjea informs that a good deal of \textit{Everyman’s} was devoted to various aspects of growing discontent against the Indira Gandhi’s regime in different states. This acted as a morale boosters for the revolting students in Bihar and Gujrat. Another important section of the English journal \textit{Everyman’s} was on international issues. It was aimed at educating the At times examples of revolutionaries from abroad were given to educate the readers. The journal also carried profiles of leaders of national and international statures that was meant to motivate the adherents of JP Movement.

Much like Gandhi, JP used cultural channels of communication during the JP Movement. The cultural symbolism as expressed in the poetry and street theatres were meant to add to the movement led by JP. “A lot of reputed poets like Baba Nagarjuna,
Satyanarayan and Ravindra Rajhans hold forte in Patna and read out satirical poems against the Congress regime.\textsuperscript{15}

In fact a whole lot of poet, writers, theaters artists and painters had joined JP during the JP Movement. “For the first time in the history of mass movements in India these cultural messengers had come out on the streets.”\textsuperscript{16} This speaks of JP’s success in formulating a communication strategy where one of the most unlikely elements of the society joined a mass struggle. This aspect of JP Movement was widely reported in the mainstream media and was duly appreciated. This also became a model for others to follow. This element was missing in Gandhi’s communication strategy.

JP posed a mighty challenge to the Indira Gandhi regime through the scientific use of the used of the press. No wonder it forced the Government to apply censorship across the board. Many veteran journalists resisted courageously and some of them were imprisoned. Several others participated in underground resistance. C.R. Irani’s. The Statesman and Ramnath Goenka’s the Indian Express refused to bow to the pressures. Nikhil Chakravarty preferred to stop the publication of his weekly Mainstream rather than conform. Jayaprakash Narayan’s Journal Everyman’s too was banned.\textsuperscript{17}

The press as a whole, however, was unable to resist during the emergency which took it by surprise. It was effectively muzzled and regained its voice only after the defeat of the Congress in the Lok Shaba elections of March 1977 and the establishment of the Janata Party’s first ever non-Congress government at the centre.

Such was the effect of JP’s use of the press during the Movement that “even the people in villages had realised the Government’s motive behind censoring the press.”\textsuperscript{18} JP posed a mighty challenge to the Congress regime through the scientific use of the media during the Emergency. This forced the Government to suspend press freedom and ban newspapers. It is significant to note that while JP’s communication channels were choked during the freedom, he found expression in the international media. For instance The Times, London brought out the following advertisement by Free JP Society, on 15 August, 1975: Today is Indian independence day. Don’t let the
light go out in Indian democracy. Free JP. Jayaprakash Narayan, follower of Mahatma Gandhi, fighter for the independence of India, leader of the non-violent campaign against corruption, unjustly imprisoned by the Indian Government on 26 June 1975, now reported to be seriously ill.”

TOTAL REVOLUTION

The solution to overcome this and other ills of society, felt JP, lay in social revolution, which according to him meant “a fundamental change in the socio-economic-political structure of power.” This, in turn, implied that “all power, social, economic and political, is siezed and wielded directly by the people, who in this context include petty farmers, rural and urban labourer, low-income group in offices, shops and schools, artisans and even such petty traders as hawkers and street venders. The people in this sense perhaps constitute 80 percent of the population of this country.”

This was possible through total revolution. JP conceived of the concept of total revolution for bringing about an all round change in the society. “While unfolding his plan of struggle on behalf of the Students’ Struggle Committee of Bihar at a mammoth public meeting at Patna on June 5, 1974, JP declared that the struggle was not going to be limited to securing the demands of the students, including the resignation of the ministry and the dissolution of the Assembly in Bihar, but would aim at bringing about a total revolution or sampoorna kranti which alone could solve the urgent problems of the country and usher in a new society.”

This concept of total revolution, that has been called a descriptive label of JP’s last phase, was essentially his version of the sarvodaya non-violent revolution. In terms of their social content and broad objectives, the two are the same: both involve a comprehensive transformation of man and society in accordance with Gandhi’s original vision. One should not be surprised, therefore, to learn, as JP himself pointed out, that Vinoba Bhave had earlier used the phrase and that it gained currency in India in the title of a book dealing with the campaign from gramdaan.
Without using the term total revolution, JP himself had been emphasising the need for a social revolution since the mid 1940s. This revolution, thought JP, would not merely bring about a change in the structure of society, but also an improvement in the character of individuals that constitute it.\(^{23}\) JP laid particular emphasis on it after joining the Bhoodan Movement in the 1950s.

In an article published in 1969 JP also used the term 'Total Revolution' to describe the objective of the Sarvodaya movement in India. Referring to the Bhoodan and Gramdan programmes JP observed: “Gandhi’s non-violence was not just a plea for law and order, or a cover for the status quo, but a revolutionary philosophy. It is indeed a philosophy of a total revolution, because it embraces personal and social ethics and values of life as much as economic, political and social institutions and processes.”\(^{24}\)

What led JP to give a call for total revolution in 1974? Some of the issues we have already mentioned earlier. In addition “more than a quarter of century of experience of public life in independent India, first as a socialist and later as a sarvodaya leader,” had convinced JP “that piecemeal reforms of the socio-economic and political system operating in India since the achievement of independence would not be able to bring about any significant change in the lives of mass of the people and that what was required was a radical transformation of the entire social system.”\(^{25}\) That system, according to JP had hardly undergone any change since independence.

JP recognised that zamindari had been ended land reforms measures had been adopted by the various legislations and untouchability had been abolished by law. But most of the Indian villages still continued under the grip of the bigger and medium landowners, who mostly belonged to the upper castes. The majority of villages in almost all parts of India consisted of small and marginal farmers and landless labourers, comprising Harijans and others belonging to the backward castes. Their condition remained miserable. Adivasis and harijans too were continued to be exploited.\(^{26}\)
The condition of the urban poor was hardly better. JP found no improvement in the educational system also. He discovered that despite several committees and commissions, the educational system had remained basically what it was under the British rule: 'class education designed as an escalator to reach the top.' Population was growing at a fast pace, so was poverty. More than 40 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line.

The pertinent question of the time was: could a drastic change be brought about in this gloomy picture by merely changing the government or the enactment of some laws by the legislature concerned? JP’s emphatic answer was based on his understanding of India’s economic and social development since independence of India. Several progressive measures had been enacted by the legislatures in the socio-economic field, but they had remained largely on paper. “A radical change in the situation, therefore, could come only through a systemic change in the society or a revolution in every sphere and aspect of society. In other words a Total Revolution.”

JP had clear ideas about the form his kind of revolution should take place. He worked within the parameters that he had set for himself. While referring to total revolution course of his writings and speeches in 1974-75, JP continued to lay stress on the fact that such a revolution had to be brought about through non-violent methods and care needed to be taken to see that the democratic structure of the state was maintained intact.

Indeed, one of the objectives of total revolution was to strengthen democracy by ensuring direct participation by the people in the work of government as much as possible. As JP put it in his notes while in prison on 23 August 1975, “total revolution has to be peacefully brought about without impairing the democratic structure of society and affecting the democratic way of life of the people.” JP was conscious, though, that this would prevent radical changes from being introduced at one go, as may be possible through a violent revolution, and would delay the process of social change. He, however, preferred this slower process to prevent violence and ensure more permanent result.
He also felt that in revolutionary times the period of transition can be shortened, through not to the same extent as in a violent revolution. As he put it in his prison notes in 1975: “The revolution being peaceful, it was not to happen suddenly and swiftly. It would take time, but the times being revolutionary, not too much time—perhaps a space of a decade or two.”29 This is, on the whole, not very different from the ideas of Gandhi, who also looked forward to a social revolution through non-violent means.30

Change believed JP, had to be impaired by a non-violent, popular upsurge against misgovernment rooted in man’s inherent desire for justice and freedom, in moral and social values, not by an imposed ideology. He appealed especially to the student community to fight social and political corruption.

When there was a response in Gujarat in early 1974, he supported the movement. When there was a much bigger response in Bihar, he agreed to lead. “JP tried to infuse the movement with wider social and educational objectives.”31 JP invited educationists like Ivan Illitch of Deschooling Society, and other proponents of non-violent social change for this. “He also invited journalists.”32 To expand a student campaign into a national movement required widespread popular awareness, for which the press was needed.

The weekly journal Everyman’s was started precisely because JP, like Gandhi, understood the role media could play in an open society. Like Gandhi, JP wrote prolifically.33 And like Gandhi’s Harijan and Young India, Everyman’s too was banned when the threat it represented to the status quo were sought to be extinguished by Indira Gandhi’s Emergency.34

Like a seasoned journalist, JP followed all the ethics of the press. Everyman’s was published at the facilities provided by Ramnath Goenka’s Indian Express. Ajit Bhattacharjea, recalls, “Though it was JP’s journal, I do not remember ever receiving any instructions from him. I felt free event to criticise him on occasions, once for

210
expanding the movement beyond Bihar before it seemed to be firmly established there.”

JP was equally forthright in criticising the journalists when he felt the need for it. Thus he commented during the emergency. “Most of our journalist friends have not even used to margins of freedom that the press has in the present circumstances. Is it because the press in India is in the hands of big industrialists who have submitted to the dictatorship out of fear?”

Besides writing for Everyman’s, JP wrote a large number of pamphlets and books. All contributed in great measures to the propagation of many of his ideas and were quite effective in arousing people against the autocratic rule of Indira Gandhi. The pamphlets too contributed to political mobilisation.

**JP MOVEMENT**

It was this power of the people that JP relied most while waging his struggle in Bihar, popularly known as J.P. Movement. The genesis of J.P. Movement can be traced to Musahari, a small block in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar. Recalling how naxalites had become suddenly active in Musahari Block and “had committed four murders,” J.P. wrote in a popular pamphlet titled ‘Face to Face’ in 1970, that naxalite threat posed “an urgent call to demonstrate through positive action how the challenge of violence could be used to speed up the process of non-violent social change and reconstruction.” And this, felt JP set the stage, “for a new turn to be given to the movement,” of Gramdan “from being extensive and widespread to becoming intensive and deep-going.”

JP’s encounter, “face to face”, with the socio-economic reality of rural India and the “utter poverty, misery, inequality, exploitation, backwardness, stagnation, frustration and loss of hope,” led him to his quest for a mass movement based on ‘people’s action.’ “It was in this spirit of quest,” he said while referring to his stay in Musahari,
"and with a modest programme of action that I came to this area determined either to succeed or perish in this effort."\(^{40}\)

In the Musahari block, it was found that a large proportion of the villages had been improperly declared *gramdan*; they were ‘bogus *gramdan,*’ in which the work had to begin again from scratch. Similar findings were reported in other areas and, although some progress was made in implementing *gramdan* and, beyond that, in engaging in a few hundred villages in the task of development, the overall results of all the efforts were extremely disappointing. “There was certainly no evidence that the Sarvodaya movement had reached the take off point at which ‘movement of workers’ was being transformed into ‘a movement of the people’, signifying the revolutionary elite’s success in generating ‘people’s power’. In this situation, the natural response of many Sarvodaya workers was to question the movement’s strategy.”\(^{41}\)

In *Face to Face* JP provided a clear hint of what was to be one element in a revised strategy.

After reflecting on the failure of the government land reforms and the futility of the Naxalite movement, JP wrote: “If democracy is found wanting and violence offers no solution, what then is the way out? To find the ways we well have to go back to Gandhiji... conditions seem to be ripening in the context of our present programme that may necessitate large scale Satyagraha.”\(^{42}\) Besides, following the model of Satyagraha, there were many new elements in the revised strategy for non-violent revolution of JP. “A study of the movement’s publications, recording what amounts to a prolonged strategy debate, reveals that by the end of December 1973- that is, before the Gujarat agitation erupted in January 1974, Sarvodaya’s new thinking had embraced several additional points.”\(^{43}\)

Firstly, it was felt that it was necessary to enlarge the existing cadre of revolutionaries. The main source of new recruits was identified as rebellious students and idealistic youth, the group that is recent years had constituted the ‘revolutionary vanguard’ not only in many advanced industrial countries of the West but also in
developing countries such as Thailand. Hence, JP issued ‘Appeal to Youth Power’ in December 1973.\textsuperscript{44}

It was equally important to enlist the active support of concerned but politically uncommitted citizens, especially middle class professional people and intellectuals. Plans for a new weekly paper directed to this group, and for an appropriate organization, were laid in the summer of 1972, plans which led to the publication beginning in July 1973, of \textit{Everyman's Weekly} and the setting up of Citizens for Democracy in April 1974.

By setting up a weekly, JP created a ‘newspaper’s newspaper’. The main focus of the weekly was to cater to the intellectual class and answer their questions pertaining to the ideological stand taken by J.P. during the course of his struggle in Gujarat and Bihar. In many reports of the mainstream press, many of JPs views were distorted. It was \textit{Everyman’s} which did the damage building exercise. \textit{“Everyman’s would immediately counter any such distortion of JP’s views.”}\textsuperscript{45}

In order to mobilize wider popular support than the programme of gramdan had achieved, it was necessary for Sarvodaya workers to take up, articulate, and seek to resolve the current problems affecting the masses, such as rising prices, unemployment, endemic corruption and the eviction of tenant farmers. The movement hitherto centered on the villages would have to extend to towns and cities, developing a programme and organisational forms that would be appropriate to both rural and urban areas. In this connection JP in December 1973 put forward “a programme of immediate socio-political action” to build a structure of direct ‘people’s democracy’ as an alternative to the existing ‘people’s democracy’.

JP realised that his reconstruction of Indian polity was possible only if it emerged from the democratic, if faulty, processes of India’s existing system of government. By December 1973, JP felt the situation was conducive for revolution as it had been in 1942, and he ‘felt an inner urge to give a call to youth’ to enter the political scene.\textsuperscript{47}
JP had set the tone for revolution through his writings in Everyman's and other publications.

He wrote a series of three articles in Everyman's to arouse the intelligentsia and the youth and inform them about the "complete collapse of the moral authority of the country's political leadership." By focusing the literate and politically active class, JP much like Gandhi realised the way his journal could make an impact. He fell in line with the 'two-step flow' hypothesis of Lazarsfeld that postulated that media messages are first received by the "opinion leaders" in society; they are then passed in a somewhat changed form to the "opinion followers", who are thus influenced by the media only indirectly. 48

According to JP, "the common people... have come to believe that most, if not all, ministers including Chief ministers, most of their representatives from gram panchayat presidents to members of Parliament, most, if not all, officers of the government, high or low, have become corrupt... Ministers of the Union government are not exempt from this common belief. The Prime Minister's own image has become clouded." 49 He went on to argue that "in the minds of the urban intelligentsia, the unattached and non-partisan larger part of it, the picture is darker still. Is it any wonder than that the moral authority of the political leadership, including that of the opposition, with more exceptions, should have collapsed so completely?" 50

The revolt that JP predicted broke out in 1974 against growing unemployment, 30 percent annual inflation, rampant profiteering, inadequate supplies of essential goods, and food rationing queues for rice, wheat and sugar. Bitterness was mounting as thousands of students were jailed without trial for protesting against price rise. Gujarat was convulsed by mass demonstrations largely led by students, against the corruption of the legislative assembly. The congress government retaliated with police and military firings. More than a hundred people were killed and disorder increased.
JP rushed to Gujarat to ensure that the protest was non-violent. He knew that non-violent protest did not necessarily ensure a non-violent response, but in time it might ensure that the conscience of the community was aroused. "In non-violent militancy you face all attacks without flinching," he said. "I do not know if I can face immediate death without flinching but that is the militancy of non violence." JP appealed to the young dissenters to give up a year of their studies to do constructive work to restore democracy. He felt that the Gujarat movement launched by the youth should be an example for the youth in other parts of the country.

By March 1974, public outrage forced Indira Gandhi to dissolve the Gujarat Legislative Assembly. But she imposed President's rule, delaying the election her party might have lost. "The revolt spilled into Bihar which had been worse hit by rising food prices and students mess charges. Students put up fourteen demands to the Bihar government including the resignation of Chief Minister Abdul Ghafoor and the dissolution of the Assembly."

The following events were outlined by JP in his booklet *Total Revolution*. On March 18, the students picketed the Assembly to prevent the governor from entering it. The police tear-gassed, baton-charged and fired on them. Over ten days thousands were jailed without trial, hundreds were wounded, and twenty-seven were killed. After the army was ordered back to barracks, patrolling by 'security forces' and a curfew continued.

Out of despair the students sought JP's advice and he agreed to lead them if they would use non-violent methods. JP was soon in action. Declaring that police firings in Bihar had 'surpassed the brutalities of the British regime' JP demanded dissolution of the legislative assembly, judicial inquiries into the firings, and expulsion of twelve congress ministers who were continuing in the office although they had been found guilty of corruption by commissions of inquiry. "If Indira refused their demands, his Bihar citizens for democracy Movement would launch a paralyze the government Satyagraha." JP announced in *Everyman's* "I have decided to fight corruption and
misgovernment and black-marketing, profiteering and hoarding,... for... a real people's democracy."\(^{56}\)

Indira Gandhi launched a jeering attack on JP’s character, calling him corrupt, a traitor, a fascist, and a believer in violence. The Bihar government continued to rule through ordinances and attacked JP for threatening democracy with mob rule. He responded on 9 April, riding on a jeep as the head of Gandhian Peace Workers for ten kilometers through the Patna streets. The marchers had cotton pads tied over their mouths, emphasising the silence of their protest against police cruelty. At the Patna Gandhi Maidan to a gathering of over two hundred thousand, he declared: “The gravity of the people’s problems has crossed its limits. Many are starving, the problem of unemployment is acquiring disastrous proportions and those who are launching an agitation to protest against the government’s failures are being dubbed as fascist and reactionary forces. Nothing short of a fundamental charge in the system can cure the chronic disease. I will not any more remain a silent spectator of the suffering of the masses.”\(^{57}\)

He announced his determination to lead a five-week people’s struggle for the resignation of the Bihar congress government “which has compelled almost everybody to go corrupt.”\(^{58}\) He was then admitted to Vellore hospital and released again on 13 April when in Delhi JP presided over a Citizen for Democracy conference. He argued the leaders of the opposition parties to engage in a mass notional movement to force the Congress government to reform the electoral laws.

JP led a procession on 5 June 1974. Which delivered many to the petition governors asking him to dissolve the assembly. He declared “friends this is a revolution, a total revolution. This is not a movement merely for the dissolution of the Assembly. We have to go far very far.. you will have to make sacrifices undergo suffering....The people are being crushed under all sorts of injustices... countless children in Bihar go to sleep without food...”\(^{59}\) And he made his intentions clear through his journal *Everyman’s*: “My interest is not in the capture of power but control of power by the people.”\(^{60}\)
JP had invited the wrath of Indira Gandhi’s government in no time. On his return to Patna on 22 July the Bihar police, under a prohibitory order, bashed and jailed anyone who tried to go to the airport to meet JP. Intelligence bugged his telephone connection. Despite his physical frailty JP’s efforts to correct political immorality went on continuously for the next six months. In the colleges he called for continuing revolution, challenging students, as Gandhi had once challenged him, to boycott their studies for a year to devote themselves to the people's struggle, and declared in Everyman’s: “This movement is of the youth, of students, of the people.” College became empty, prominent artists gave up government honours they had received. Village people resisted paying taxes.

As a result of the assistance of most opposition parties in his no-tax-without elections campaign, by September JP claimed that the administration had been paralysed throughout the rural areas of Bihar. “The JP Movement reached its height in October when during a three-day bandh all shops, businesses and schools were closed, trains were halted by people squatting on the tracks and citizens turned out for the huge meeting that Jayaprakash addressed. ‘I rely on the power of the masses... a peaceful, organised expression in democratic ways, of the will and wish of the people’.”

JP, like Gandhi, relied on a multi pronged approach in his mobilisation efforts. He would constantly air his views in speeches; his Everyman’s would come out with all the details and ideological arguments of his movements and he would time and again resort to delegation and processions. JP kept the momentum of his movement alive in both Delhi and Patna. Thus even while the campuses of Delhi University and Delhi’s Indian Institute of Technology rang with wild cheers of ‘Long Live Jayaprakash, the people’s Hero,’ JP led a historic march on 4 November to “paralyse functioning of Bihar’s ministers by a sit-in in front of their houses.”

This was followed by another historic march on 6 March 1975 in Delhi when he led a procession of an estimated one million, who had pledged themselves to his total revolution, to present the people’s charter to the speaker of the lower Sabha and the chairman of the Rajya Sabha. “The charter demanded free elections in Gujarat and the
dismissal and re-election of the Bihar government, with supervision by an electoral commission, and elections free of the influence of violence, money or use of public servants. An end to political corruption was demanded through public declaration of their assets by politicians and the establishment of judicial tribunals to inquire into allegations against politicians and prosecute dishonest ones. Stating that sixty per cent of the population were living in semi-starvation, the charter requested practical policies to boost the stagnant economy, halt inflation, control prices, create full employment, guarantees minimum wages, distribute land and reduce economic inequality to the ration 1:10. 64

Prior to this, JP had already indicated that he wanted to give a real mass color to his movement. "The Bihar struggle is no longer a state issue. It has acquired an all-India importance and country's fate has come to be bound up with its success or failure." 65

The situation started worsening and JP appealed to the government to reverse the vast expansion of state use of police and army under emergency ordinances. "Aware of how limited the checks on government power were in India with her elite so permeated with caste arrogance and the majority of her people poverty-stricken, illiterate and powerless, he appealed to the police and army to uphold the Constitution against totalitarian threats; to refuse to shoot on peaceful demonstrators; to refuse to obey order from superiors to commit illegal acts; to refuse to act against their conscience. It was a sensitive man's practical response to the habitual cruelty of policed firings and assaults and the use of torture in jails. Total revolution was his moral response to total baseness. Significantly, Indira's propaganda against him became frantic." 66

JP's movement got a shot in the arm when on June 12, 1975, the Allahabad High Court ruled that Indira Gandhi had been guilty of corrupt electoral practices. Added to Indira Gandhi's woes was the loss of Gujarat elections. On 25 June Moraji Desai and JP demanded her resignation at a mammoth rally at the Ram Lila Grounds in Delhi. JP proposed that protesters offer Satyagraha outside Indira Gandhi's residence. This remained in the air as "at 11.00 p.m. without consulting party or parliament, she had
President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed sign a proclamation of emergency. The same night at 3.00 a.m. JP was arrested at the Gandhi Peace Foundation in Delhi.

What followed after that was a reign of terror and violation of all democratic means during the period of Emergency. JP’s dreams, as expressed in his journal *Everyman’s*, of the “fulfillment of the people’s desires and needs, their freedom from exploitation, oppression, poverty and a host of similar injustices.”

But then JP’s revolution did not go waste as Indira Gandhi faced a crushing defeat and the first ever non-Congress government came to power after the 1977 general elections. JP went on to become one of the greatest heroes of modern India who fought valiantly against corruption. Just after emergency a citation for JP in Delhi rightly read: “We venerate you as the messiah who led us to freedom form native dictatorship through a unique ballot-box revolution in 1977, as we do the Mahatma who led as to freedom form foreign rule through a historically unique non-violent revolution in 1947.” And according to M.C.Chagla, who read the citation. “While Gandhi created the nation, Jayaprakash taught the nation how it should live;”

However, there was some critical soul-searching immediately after JP passed away. Nikhil Chakravarthy summarises the post 1975 scenario thus: “What happened from 1975 onwards is recent history. More than what JP could do, Indira Gandhi by her folly, power-hunger and attachment to her son’s mafia forced the pace and brought upon the nation the curse of Emergency. Inevitably, JP in prison became the symbol of resistance. But significantly, no organised resistance could be discerned, because JP was never a man of organisation. This absence of resistance led Indira further astray into more misdeeds. By the time the election was announced on January 18, 1977, many of the Janata heroes had already, from prison, compromised themselves by almost beseeching overtures to the Indira Government.”

Janata Party registered a landslide victory “not because JP had welded it into a party but because of the anger of the electorate against the Emergency Raj. The dismal history of the Janata Raj must have come as a matter of utter distress for Jayaprakash
Narayan. From the sick bed, there was nothing that he could do to stem the rot. However, one wonders, with due deference to his memory, how much more he could have done had he been in a better state of health, except occasional admonitions which power hungry politicians would have ignored without qualms of conscience. The very manner of choosing the new Janata Prime Minister gave an inkling of the innate drawbacks that has always afflicted JP in handling of matters organisational at the best of times. His Total Revolution was at best an emotional urge without the contours of a well-framed idea. This was indeed a career bereft of consummation.\textsuperscript{71}

JP is no more today but has “left this world of sordid politics with an abundance of tributes and gratitude from his countrymen and women. If one has taken a critical view of his life-work, it is with the fullest knowledge that JP belonged to the generation wherein leaders could listen to criticism and were not scared at nor insensitive to the slightest murmur of dissent as do those who strut about the political stage today. Under different aegis and in different times Jayaprakash Narayan would have had a better epitaph than the crumbing edifice of the discredited Janata Party.”\textsuperscript{72}

In his whole exercise, JP made good use of the press. He used to write regularly and express his ideas on various issues. In fact, he made the press a partner in his campaign during the JP movement. This was so because JP was aware of the power of the press in political mobilization. JP regularly used this potent medium for communicating his ideas on political, social and international issues. JP’s speeches, much like Gandhi, were equally powerful and he used them to propagate his political philosophy. In conjunction with his writings, JPs speeches left a long lasting imprint on the masses, forcing us to believe JP’s prowess as a communicator.

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220


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