CHAPTER III

M.N. ROY AND JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN ON THEORY OF SOCIALISM

Having dealt with, in the preceding chapter, the evolution of thought of Roy and J.P. in the context of their life span, we now propose to discuss in the present chapter their conceptual contribution to the theory of socialism.

M. N. ROY

Scientific Socialism

In the second phase of his political life, Roy was a staunch Marxist. He was the chief spokesman of Indian Marxism. In the second Congress of the Communist International held in 1920, Roy put forward his own thesis on the National colonial question. He stated his views, which differed with those of Lenin, in his book, 'India in Transition'. He gave a Marxist interpretation to the modern Indian history. According to him, India was not under the feudal system. The feudal system was destroyed by peaceful means. "Feudalism as the basis of social economics, received the first death-blow in the earlier years of the British possession in the middle of the 18th century, when the political power passed into the hands of the representatives of a foreign commercial

1. See Chapter II.
bourgeoisie". According to him, the last vestiges of feudal power were shattered by the failure of the 1857 revolution. The revolution of 1857 was nothing but the last effort of the dethroned feudal potentates to regain their power.

After the failure of 1857 revolt, the entire country was brought under the British Crown - an instrument of capitalist exploitation.

According to Roy, India was divided into four distinct classes; namely: (1) the landed aristocracy, including the native chiefs, (2) the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals, (3) the petty peasantry and (4) the working class, including the landless peasants. The land-holding class invested their accumulated wealth in commercial and industrial enterprises and thus, the modern Indian bourgeoisie emerged.

The Indian intellectuals - the basis of modern bourgeoisie, were the product of British imperialism. When the British Government introduced the modern education, in the second decade of 19th century, the modern intelligentsia grew rapidly and captured the professions of medicine, law and teaching. The increasing wealth of intelligentsia and the

absence of the profitable means of investment caused discontentment in their ranks with the British Government. According to Roy, this economic necessity forced "the intellectual bourgeoisie to begin its political struggle, which was initiated in the form of Indian National Congress". Its aim was to replace or, at least, to minimise the power of the British Government.

Reviewing the position of peasantry in India, Roy found that the capitalist economy had brought under its control almost the entire of agricultural production. The Indian peasantry was subjected to the exploitation of foreign as well as native capital. To Roy, "The secret of misery of the rural population lies in the fact that the agricultural production has been brought completely within the sphere of capitalist exploitation, foreign and native combined. The unrestricted export of foodgrains, together with the merciless speculation carried on by the native traders, raises the price continually on the one-hand, while, on the other, the lack of employment among an ever-growing section of the rural population creates great scarcity of money. So, even when there is food, the people die of hunger, because they have no money to buy it with".

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7. Ibid., p. 70.
8. Ibid., p. 56.
In India, to Roy, proletariat was "the class of industrial workers living exclusively on wages earned in the cities". The belated growth of the urban proletariat in India was due to the retarded industrial development of the country. The East India Company took about hundred years to undermine the feudalism. After 1857, the whole of India came under the capitalist exploitation. Normally, with the coming of capitalism, there should have been industrialisation in India, but India did not pass through the stage of mercantile capitalism to industrial capitalism. Operating under the strong urge to retain the monopoly of British capitalism over Indian market, the British continued industrial development of Britain at the cost of India. According to Roy, the development of large-scale industry would determine the future of India. It would strengthen the labourers. As a result, the native bourgeoisie would seek compromise with imperial bourgeoisie. To Roy, 'the workers and peasants consciously organized and fighting on the grounds of class-struggle would have to take responsibility to win the freedom for India'. Under these circumstances, according

9. Ibid., p. 89.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 99.
12. Ibid., p. 143.
to Roy, the workers should be educated to understand their class interests. He stated: "Our object should be to create discontent everywhere against the present system of exploitation, and to intensify it wherever it exists. Thus, the ideal of Swaraj would be brought within the understanding of the workers and peasants of India. Let us lead them forward under the slogans: 'Down With Foreign Rule'; 'Down With All Exploitation'; 'Lend to the Peasant and Bread to the Worker'.

To Roy, socialism was synonymous to Communism and was, therefore, a philosophy of class struggle, culminating into an equitable society. It was more than a philosophy of struggle and reconstruction. It was a revolutionary philosophy of life. "Socialism (that is to say Communism) is not equititarianism. It does not seek to level down humanity to a uniform standard. Socialism will establish equality only

14. According to Roy, 'Swaraj' would guarantee to the worker the full value of what he produces. Swaraj (political independence) was the first step to economic freedom and social emancipation. The programme of national reconstruction would consist of the following: "(1) That our National State (Swaraj) will be based on the principle of universal suffrage; (2) That the principal means of production, distribution and exchange (land, mines, factories, railways, waterways, etc.) will be owned by the Democratic State and operated under the control of Worker's Committees, elected by and from among the workers employed therein; (3) That landlordism be abolished, and the ownership of land be vested in the State, which will distribute it among those who cultivate it". (M.N. Roy, What Do We Want? (Bombay: Nachiketa Publications Limited, 1971), pp. 250-251 and 255-256.

15. Ibid., p. 284.
in respect of opportunity. In the socialist society, every man and woman will have equal opportunity to attain the highest level of creativeness and intellectual progress. Artificially created inequalities will be removed .... Socialism is more than an economic theory. The plan of revolutionary political action on the part of the working class is not the whole of socialism. Socialism is not comprehensively defined by calling it an ideology of social reconstruction. Socialism is a revolutionary philosophy of life*. On the question of comprehension and implementation of the concept of socialism, Roy was of the view that the economic theories formulated by Karl Marx could not be properly understood except in the light of his philosophical teachings; and that the political programme of socialism could not be effectively acted upon unless the leaders of that action were inspired by the revolutionary philosophy of life, which constituted the foundation of Marxism.

Interestingly enough, Roy made a subtle distinction between Marxism and Communism. To him, Marxism was a philosophy and Communism was only a political strategy - the means to the end. For that matter socialism or Communism "is common ownership of the means of production and


17. Ibid.
distribution”. He explained, “In brief, socialism is the abolition of private property in the means of production, distribution and exchange. The basic thing, however, is production. Private property in that key position of public economy once abolished, socialisation of distribution and exchange inevitably follows .... Therefore, the more exact definition of socialism would be ‘abolition of private property in the means of production’.

In 1922, Roy published his book, ‘India’s Problems and Its Solution’. In this book, in a thoroughly Marxian style he criticized Gandhism and the bourgeois leadership of the Indian National Congress. He advocated for the creation of a revolutionary mass party to intensify the discontent against the existing economic and political system of the country. In place of the Congress ideology of the civil disobedience, Roy advised ‘militant action of the masses’ for the immediate political and economic demands of the people. Accordingly, ‘A programme for the Indian National Congress’ was prepared and circulated on the eve of Gaya Congress, held in December, 1922. This programme advocated complete national independence for India, universal suffrage and a federal republic. Its social and economic programme


contained the following items:

'(I) Abolition of landlordism.
(II) Reduction of land rent to a minimum.
(III) State aid for Modernization of agriculture.
(IV) Abolition of all indirect taxes and a progressive income-tax.
(V) Nationalization of public utilities.
(VI) Development of modern industries under state aid.
(VII) Eight hour day. Fixation of minimum wages by legislation.
(VIII) Legalization of labour organizations.
(IX) Worker's Councils in big industries.
(X) Profit sharing to be introduced in all big industries.
(XI) Free and compulsory education.
(XII) Separation of State and religion.
(XIII) A national militia to replace the standing army.'

In his book, "The Future of Indian Politics" written in 1926, Roy emphasized the importance of a 'People's Party'.

He criticized the Swaraj Party as a defender of capitalism and landlordism. The democratic party of the people would be contained of petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the

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20. M.N. Roy and Evelyn Roy, One Year of Non-Cooperation: From Ahmedabad to Gaya (Calcutta: Communist Party of India; 1923), pp. 105-111. (This programme was criticized in the Indian Press as an infiltration of Communist ideology. Most newspapers gave it wide publicity. It was also printed in the Government publication: Communism in India: Myself and the Communist Party of India, by Musaffer Ahmed and in the Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India.

proletarian. In its objectives, Roy included "(a) complete independence; (b) the establishment of a republican government; (c) radical agrarian reforms; and (d) advanced social legislation". At the time of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, Roy advocated the theory of 'decolonization'. Here he explained the changing character of imperialism. After his expulsion from the Communist International, Roy continued to devote his efforts towards the strengthening of the Indian revolutionary movement. At its Lahore Congress, held in December, 1929, the Indian National Congress accepted the complete national independence resolution as its immediate objective. Roy welcomed the decision and took the opportunity to put before the Congressmen a concrete programme of national revolution through his pamphlet, namely, 'The Lessons of the Lahore Congress'. It included the following items: "(1) Establishment of a Federal Republic of India with an advanced Democratic Constitution; the Executive being fully responsible to a single chamber Parliament elected by universal (male and women) adult suffrage; (2) Provincial autonomy in local matters; the province, reconstructed for assuring as far as possible linguistic and religious homogeneity; having government as democratic as the Central Government; (3) Abolition (without compensation) of the Native States and landlordism by the

22. Ibid., p. 17.

23. See Chapter II.
decree of the Democratic National State empowering the peasants to confiscate the land; (4) Nationalization of the land, the cultivators having the occupancy right in return for the payment to the Government of a unitary land-tax, which shall not exceed 15 per cent of the net income; (5) Abolition of all other charges on the peasantry (for example irrigation-tax) and of indirect taxation (salt-tax, excise duties, protective customs duty, etc.); (6) Complete exemption of taxation for peasants living on uneconomic holdings; (7) Liquidation of agricultural indebtedness in the case of the peasants in the state of insolvency; (8) Legislation for the control of usury (interest not to exceed 10 per cent per annum); (9) Organization of agricultural banks with State aid for providing cheap credit to the peasants; (10) Nationalization of the mineral resources and public utilities; (11) Legislation fixing the working day for the wage-labourer to eight hours; (12) Minimum wages guaranteeing a constantly rising standard of living of the worker to be fixed by law; (13) Social insurance (against unemployment, sickness, old age and maternity, the employers and the contributing 75 per cent of the fund); (14) Legislation of Trade Unions and the worker’s right to strike and organize their class political party; (15) Freedom of the press, platform and association; (16) Freedom of religion and worship; (17) Protection for minorities; (18) Right to bear arms; (19) Free and compulsory primary
Roy came back to India in 1930, as a confirmed Marxist. He was put in jail for six years (1931-1936). During his jail period, he modified some of the formulations of Marxism, particularly relating to the tactics of revolution. He found that Indian working class was very backward to realise the necessity of fighting for socialism. He saw that most of the leaders of the socialist movements were from intellectual middle classes. He came to realize that Marxism might be elaborated, amplified and even revised in the context of the knowledge of modern science. According to L.P. Sinha, "During this period of forced seclusion he pondered over some of the assumptions of Marxism and started modifying some of them, specially those in respect of the strategy and tactics of Revolution. He came gradually to occupy a Menshevik position, and held that the existing stage in Indian Revolution was only one of Bourgeois Democratic Revolution. Though he did not deny the possibility of National Revolution passing over into a socialist revolution in a hypothetical future, yet for all practical purposes he argued as if this would not happen". In his later writings, we find this trend becoming more pronounced.


In jail, he wrote an article entitled 'Whither Congress! wherein Roy advocated transformation of the Congress into the organ of a mighty mass movement against foreign imperialism and national reaction. The most important writings of his jail period were the three letters to the C.S.P. In his first letter he expressed the need of democratic national revolution. He drafted a programme for the Left-Wing of the Congress, wherein he sought to 'transforn the ownership of land from the non-productive rent receivers to those directly concerned with the actual production, to increase the purchasing power of the masses, to foster industrial and commercial prosperity, equitable distribution of national wealth, freedom of press, speech and association, free secular education to all children below fifteen years of age, equal political, economic and social rights for women, welfare of all masses and minorities'.

After the release from jail in 1936, Roy called upon all the anti-imperialist organizations in India to achieve freedom through mass struggle. 'Socialism was not the issue of the day. To achieve democratic freedom, with the establishment of a government of the people and by the


people was the immediate task'. In the editorial of the first issue of Independent India, Roy demanded transfer of the ownership of land to the cultivator; productive employment of social labour; establishment of a genuine democratic state; rapid growth of modern mechanized industry; abolition of all privileges.

Thus, we find that Roy did not think it necessary to follow in India the same lines as were predicted by Marx for European development, he rejected the Marxian principle - the dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary means to achieve socialism. In India, the proletariat was numerically weak and politically inexperienced. So, according to Roy, the proletariat could not bring about the socialist revolution alone. In India, dictatorship of the proletariat would mean rule of minority. According to Roy, bourgeois democratic revolution was a historical necessity for India. He characterised the impending Indian revolution as a bourgeois democratic revolution, which would take the form of "clash between a class based on land as the means of


production and another based on new means of production;
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namely, capital'. To Roy, the only way for the economic
development of India was to carry out "an agrarian revolution,
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and build up modern industry under the control of a really
democratic state". The bourgeois democratic revolution
would create conditions in India favourable for a convenient
development towards the socialism. There would be an
intervening period, during which the conditions for socialism
would be created. To Roy, "The introduction of the mechanical
means of production on a large scale, the abolition of all
pre-capitalist restriction on production, the attainment
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of a certain minimum economic level", were the historic
preconditions for the establishment of socialism. In Roy's
opinion, political freedom for India was the first postulate
for the ultimate objective of socialist society. He wrote,
"The political independence of the nation would be followed
by the economic emancipation of the masses...." He further
added, "The real and lasting freedom of a people demands
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their complete and unconditional social emancipation".

32. M.N. Roy, Scientific Politics (Calcutta: Renaissance

33. M.N. Roy, Letters by M.N. Roy to the Congress Socialist
Party, op. cit., p. 15.

34. M.N. Roy, Scientific Politics (Lectures in the All-
India Political Study Camp, Dehra Dun, May and June, 1940),
(Dehra Dun: The Indian Renaissance Association Limited,

35. M.N. Roy, What Do We Want?, op. cit., p. 278.
means the abolition of private ownership in the means of production, distribution and exchange). In the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the Indian proletariat would be able to exercise its hegemony. The Indian revolution would be led by a multi-class party. The bourgeois-democratic revolution would transform itself in course of time, into a socialist revolution.

In June, 1939, Roy organized the League of Radical Congressmen. In September, 1940, he left the Congress and organized the Radical Democratic Party in December, 1940. He advocated what he called 'Twentieth Century Jacobinism'.

According to Roy, 'We live in the atmosphere of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. We are confronted with tasks, which were accomplished by the revolution of that epoch. But Marxism was formulated in the nineteenth century. ... We are living in a pre-Marxian period'. So, Roy opined that Marxism could not be applied on our then existing problems. Roy used the term Jacobinism to highlight the distinct nature of the problems of change and reconstruction in India, which was of a pre-Marxian nature, but which, nevertheless had a distinct tendency to pass into Marxian developmental syndrome with the passage of time. 'Jacobinism is to be appreciated historically as the shadow of Marxian

Thus to Roy, 'Marxism applied to a bourgeois democratic revolution, Marxist theory applied in practice to the problems of the bourgeois democratic revolution, is Jacobinism. Therefore, Marxism applied to the social problems of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, to be solved in the atmosphere of the twentieth century, can be called twentieth century Jacobinism'.

Roy considered twentieth century Jacobinism as something midway between a bourgeois revolution and a proletarian revolution. The credit of the Indian revolution would be neither of the proletariat nor of the bourgeoisie, but of the Jacobins; that is, "the petty-bourgeoisie acting as the vanguard of the rising proletariat together with the proletariat acting as an integral part of the petit bourgeoisie". That revolution would provide the transition to socialism.

According to him, "once the revolution takes place in our time, though with a Jacobin ideology and with a Jacobinist programme, the tendency towards a direct development to socialism, which was inherent in Jacobinism, will most probably prevail in our country". In formulating this Roy had in mind the petty-

37. Ibid., p. 157.
38. Ibid., p. 147.
39. Ibid., p. 114.
40. Ibid., p. 147.
bourgeoisie, who, at the time of French Revolution, acted as the great grand-father of the proletarian revolution. Roy's conclusion was quite similar to that of Edward Bernstein, a left wing German revisionist. V.P. Verma had regarded Roy as the Indian Bernstein.

Communitarian Socialism

In 1943 and 1944, Roy devoted his thought to the question of post-war reconstruction of the country. He formulated a scheme for planning in India, namely, Peoples' Plan, published in April, 1944. The Radical Democratic Party adopted the Peoples' Plan in May, 1944.

41. Ibid., pp.145-146. ('According to Roy, for the Indian revolution in its present stage, we should fix our sights neither upon the Russian Revolution nor any other revolution of our times. We would have to go further back and our prototype may be found in the Jacobins of the French Revolution. The Jacobins carried through the bourgeois revolution in the teeth of the opposition of the bourgeoisie; who had heralded the revolution, went over to the camp of counter-revolution, and the Jacobins carried it through against the feudal aristocracy as well as the big bourgeoisie. The relation of classes in contemporary India was somewhat analogous to the Jacobinism and was represented by Babosof and his followers.')

42. V.P. Verma, Modern Indian Political Thought (Agra: Lekshmi Harayan Agrawal, 1967), p. 443.

43. People's Plan for Economic Development of India was prepared by the post-war Reconstruction Committee set up by I.F.L. It was released for public discussion by M.N. Roy, General-Secretary of I.F.L., in 1944.

Roy laid down three conditions for the economic development of any country. These were: (i) abundance of labour; (ii) availability of capital to be invested; and (iii) internal market. The first two conditions existed in India, but the third, that is, internal market was very limited in India. It was due to poverty and low purchasing power of the people. To increase the purchasing power of the agricultural sections, "mechanical means must be introduced in the process of production. That means industrialisation of the country". The essential features of the People's Plan were the following: (1) The primary motive of production will be to supply the requirements of the people to raise the standard of living as distinct from increasing purchasing power; (2) Priority for the agricultural production through the mechanisation, modernisation and collectivisation; (3) Expansion of agricultural production coupled with rationalisation of agricultural economy, would relieve the burden on the peasantry by rationalising land and liquidating indebtedness; (4) Expansion of present industries and establishments of new ones for supplying the minimum requirements of the people, which are not at present satisfied; (5) State financing of the mechanisation


46. Ibid., p. 43.
of agriculture and expansion of industries for supplying the requirements of the people; (6) Requirements to be satisfied are food, shelter, clothing, health and education; (7) State control of industries financed with public funds; (8) The P.C. guaranteed profit from industries financed with private capital; (9) To relieve the pressure of labour on land, new land to the extent of fifty P.C. of land under cultivation at present will be cultivated; railway mileage will be increased by 50 P.C., roads enlarged 150 P.C., extensive public work, particularly irrigation, construction of houses to provide decent living conditions to the rural population and the working and middle classes in cities and towns; building of schools and hospitals”.

Roy believed in bracketing political planning with economic planning. He said, “without political planning, economic planning is found to be an idle speculation”. A really democratic government should be established in India where “people will be in effective control of political power”. Only then planned economy would be possible. Therefore, People’s Plan was followed in a couple of months by the

47. ‘Peoples’ Plan for Economic Development of India’, Independent India, Vol. 8, No. 11, April 19, 1944, p.126. Also see M.N. Roy, Peoples’ Plan for Economic Development of India (Delhi; Indian Federation of Labour, 1944), pp.6-7.


49. Ibid., p. 56. Also see M.N. Roy, Our Problems (Calcutta, Barendra Library, 1938), p. 5.
The Draft visualises a democratic state. The supreme power rests with the people. Organised democracy would be the source of all constitutional authority. The basic institutions would be the People's Committees in villages, towns and cities. "Chapter One" on 'Rights and Fundamental Principles' and 'Chapter Eleven' on 'The Economic Organisation of Society' of the Draft give a clear picture of Roy's socialist approach. Therein, he visualised that land and underground riches would be the collective property of the people. Basic industries and credit system would be subject to state control. Cultivators would be entitled to hold land subject to the payment of a unitary land tax. The State would promote large-scale cooperative agriculture through the supply of modern machinery and cheap credit. An irreducible standard of living for all working in the fields, factories, mines would be guaranteed by minimum statutory wages.

50. M.N. Roy, Constitution of Free India: A Draft (Delhi: Radical Democratic Party, 1945). Roy's Draft Constitution consists of 137 articles, gives a clear picture of a general social and political theory, which claims to diagnose and provide a remedy for all ills like poverty, ignorance and inequality. The Draft Constitution is based on the fundamental principles of Radical democracy - Twenty-Two Theses adopted by the R.L.P in its Third Conference held in Bombay in December, 1946. It aims to establish a Radical Democratic State based on Popular Sovereignty.

51. Ibid., Article 1.

52. Ibid., Chapter II.
wages. Adequate remunerative employment or relief would be a right of a citizen. Nobody would labour for more than eight hours a day for six days a week. Every worker would be entitled to one month's leave with full pay every year; and women workers to three month's maternity leave with full pay. There would be statutory provision of social security for the old, sick and infirm. Free, compulsory and secular education would be provided to all children up to the age of fourteen.

There would be guarantee for freedom of speech and press; and right of association for safeguarding the economic conditions and political status of workers and toiling masses. Right of minorities would be protected by proportional representation on all economic bodies. The economic life of the country would be reorganised in such a way that there would be guarantee to every citizen of all the material requirements for civilised existence and also adequate leisure for cultivating the finer aspect of life. The State would plan production and regulate distribution to that end. Production would be for use. There would be freedom of enterprise, individual and collective subject to satisfy the requirements of the people.

53. Ibid., Article 1(g) to (r).
54. Ibid., Article 1(s) to (y).
55. Ibid., Articles 103 to 117.
Cooperative Socialism

In his last phase of life, Roy came to realize that party system and power politics were not the solution for relieving the people from their problems. Consequently, he dissolved his R.C.P. in December, 1948 and founded the Indian Renaissance Movement. In order to bring about a social revolution, he propounded the philosophy of New Humanism (or cooperative socialism). In cooperative socialism the individual would be independent unit of society. There would be no domination of any kind on the individual to limit his freedom. "Man is freedom loving, romantic and creative animal. He would submit to no domination, dictation or bondage. So, it would be the task of the cooperative commonwealth to give every individual opportunities for direct participation in the governance of the State through the Panchayats".

The idea of Co-operative Socialism is based on the belief that the tendency to cooperate is deeply rooted in human nature. He believed that cooperative socialism could be a substitute to capitalism—based on competitive economy, on one side and, to communism —based on collective economy on the other. Through cooperative socialism the present political crisis can be resolved. Roy believed in direct democracy in the form of a network of small cooperative

commonwealths. There would be no clash between individual interest and the community interest. "The cooperative approach, moreover, does not stand merely for forms of enterprise or political institutions. It is the name for a social philosophy. It has an ethical-spiritual dimension. Regarded as such it is an alternative to orthodox liberalism as also to recent varieties of corporativism and communism".

Roy's cooperative socialism is based on widespread decentralization and a spirit and practice of cooperation. In cooperative socialism, man would enjoy his freedom as well as his security. According to Roy, the greater would be the ties of cooperative socialism; the greater would be the freedom of the individual and benefits of mankind. The cooperative economy, according to Roy, should be guided by two considerations: "(1) the basic purpose of national economy is to provide food, shelter and clothing for the people; and (ii) one must cut the coat according to the cloth available". Economic life of society would be reorganised on the basis of mutual cooperation independent of the State interference. The new economy would consist of consumers' and producers' cooperatives. The people would conduct and coordinate the economic activities of the society through

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these institutions. Full advantage would be taken of modern science and technology. The village would be a suitable unit for this purpose. "The working population of the village can, thus, form itself into a cooperative community for all the three purposes of estate management, farming operations and the running of the village industries". The cooperative economic system would be built up from the bottom upwards. Over the local cooperatives at the base, there would be a pyramidal structure at the district, regional, provincial and national level cooperative. All the activities at various levels would be performed by these cooperatives. The State would interfere only in economic matters when demanded. The local and regional cooperatives would look after the economic interests of the people within their territorial jurisdiction. "Commodities will have to be exchanged and local multi-purpose cooperative societies will be integrated into one larger economic system". Large scale industries would be developed with the help of the surplus pooled by these local cooperatives. Roy said, "Built on the basis of a cooperative agriculture and locally developed industries, the superstructure of the large scale production of certain specified articles or exploitation of natural


resources, such as mining, will also be cooperative. They will be owned by local cooperative societies - the new source of capital formation".

The private owned industries would have the freedom to develop and compete with the new system. They would also have the option to join the cooperative system or to remain independent and compete with cooperative economy. According to Roy, if they decide to remain independent, they would gradually be wiped out because of the "impossibility to compete with a non-profit-making economy sustained by the cooperative efforts of practically the entire society". Thus, without any coercion by the state, the profit motive oriented private enterprise would be eliminated.

The cooperative economy would be a planned economy. But planning process would ensure active participation and adequate freedom of individual. Roy gave the first preference to agriculture rather than to industrialisation in India - a backward country, in his planning. According to Roy, the recognition and development of agriculture as "the foundation of a healthy rational modern economy stands a greater chance than any other method to succeed in removing the poverty of the Indian people". Rural consumers and subsidiary

industries would be organised on a small scale on cooperative basis to provide employment. Roy favoured the cooperative method of farming because initiative would remain with the local unit in this method.

According to Roy, capitalism, socialism, communism, and welfare state etc. were unable to give freedom, democracy and security to the individual. The only alternative, in his view, was cooperative socialism. It was not merely a method of economic attainment, but a way of life. It would provide greater freedom to the individual and larger benefits to mankind. It was a new orientation in the history of socialism. It placed M.N. Roy in the ranks of pioneers of world socialist thought.

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

During the early years of his political career, J.P. was an apologist for Marxism. He had been the foremost leader, propagandist and spokesman of Indian socialism. Gandhiji regarded him as the greatest Indian authority on socialism.

Marxian Socialism

J.P. regarded socialism as a complete theory of socio-economic reconstruction. 'It is much more', he said, 'than

a theory of personal ethics. To him, socialism was a theory and technique of widespread planning. It involved a technolog-
ical reconstruction of the total aspects of society. Its aim
was "harmonious and well-balanced growth of the whole society".

Between 1929 and 1946, J.P. was an ardent believer in Marxian
socialism, but at no stage he was attracted towards the Indian
or the Russian Communists. It was due to the anti-nationalist
stand of the Indian Communists and the violent purges in the
Soviet Union that he disapproved of both of them. In the early
phase of his thought socialism was synonymous to Marxism. He
regarded socialism as an economic principle. According to him,
the aim of socialism should be to eradicate the economic
inequality and concentration of wealth in a few hands. There
would be social ownership of the means of production. He wrote
about his picture of socialism: "It is a society, in which all
are workers - a classless society. It is a society, in which
human labour is not subject to exploitation with interest of
private property, in which all wealth is truly national - in
which there are no unearned incomes and no large economic
disparities, in which human life and progress are planned
and where all live for all".

66 J.P. Narayan, Towards Struggle (ed. by Yusuf Mehnally),
(Mumbai, Padma Publications, 1946), p. 65. Also see
J.P. Narayan, Why Socialism? (Banaras, the All-India
67 Ibid., p. 38.
69 S.A. Ansari, 'Socialist Movement in India', The Radical
During this period, he believed in the principle of dialectical materialism of Marx. He believed like Marx that material forces affect the individual and social institutions. He observed: "Social division (class) is an organic process of society. Marx showed that its primary source lay in the manner, in which men earned their livelihood". Again pointing out the difference between socialism and Gandhism, J.P. stated that "The starting point of socialism is the inquiry into the causes of economic inequality; into the origin of princes, landlords, capitalists and paupers; into the secrets of human exploitation". According to him, Marxist dialectical materialism provided the basis of a socialist's inquiry into the causes of inequality.

J.P., in his book, Why Socialism, analysed the class organisation in Indian society. According to him, the Indian bourgeoisie, that is, the industrialists, landlords, highly paid government servants, the titled gentry, the middlemen, were the partners with the British imperialism to exploit the Indian masses. The Indian industrialists "exploit the masses as junior partners of imperialism ...? J.P. believed

71. Ibid., p. 88.
72. Ibid., p. 142. (To J.P., the term 'Masses' included workers, peasants and the lower middle classes).
73. Ibid., p. 144.
that Indian bourgeois could not lead the anti-imperialist movement. They had always been in league and compromise with the British imperialism. Referring the New Constitution, granted by the British imperialism; J.P. stated: "That Constitution represents ... just such as compromise between imperialism and the upper classes of India for the further exploitation of its masses. And, as it is already history, the Constitution was made possible by the pressure of the latter themselves. The bourgeois was dependent on the imperialism for their benefits but the masses were not. Therefore, according to J.P., "the masses are the only classes in India, which are uncompromising anti-imperialist. They alone stand for the complete independence of the country. Others either openly ridicule and oppose the idea or only pay lip-service to it". The masses were poverty stricken. It was due to the disproportionate ownership and control of the means of production. He stood for social and economic equality. Socialism to him, is also a theory and technique of comprehensive planning. It involves a technological reconstruction of the total aspects of society. Its aim is the "harmonious and well-balanced growth of the whole society".

76. Ibid., p. 143.
The following fifteen point programme of the All-India Congress Socialist Party outlined in 1934 by J.R. clearly highlights the Marxist slant of his ideology during this time. They are:

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 (e.g. steel, cotton, jute, Railways, Shipping, Plantations, Mines), 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 owed by peasants and workers.
10. Recognition of the right to work or maintenance by the State.
11. "To everyone according to his needs and from everyone 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 or discrimination between religions by the State and no recognition of any distinction based on caste or community.

14. No discrimination between the sexes by the State.

15. Repudiation of the so-called Public Debt of India".

J.P. criticized the Congress programme and its objectives. According to him, the programme, objectives and declarations of the Congress did not give it the character of a representative body of the masses. Its objective must include, as a minimum, the following points:

1. Complete independence, in the sense of separation from British imperialism.

2. All political and economic power to the producing masses (including brain workers).

3. Nationalization of all key and large industries, banks, mines, plantations, etc.

4. Abolition of landlordism in all its forms.


(In the Meerut Thesis (1936) of the C.S.P. it was stated: "Marxism alone can guide the anti-imperialist forces to their ultimate destiny". In the Faizpur Thesis (1937) of the C.S.P. it was stated: "The struggle of the Indian masses for freedom will not reach its objective unless the working class is the vanguard of that struggle").
5. Land to the tiller of the soil.
6. Liquidation of all debts owed by peasants and workers.

Socialism can be realized only by the abolishing "private ownership of the means of production and to establish over them the ownership of the whole community". Only, thus, can the cruel process of economic exploitation of the vast masses be halted. J.P. criticized the inadequacy of the Karachi Congress of 1931 resolution on Fundamental Rights. He stood for the reduction of land revenue; the limitation of consumption expenditure and the nationalization of industries. The most important economic and social task in India, according to him, was to eliminate the rural and heartless exploitation of the masses. This could be achieved only if the people control their economic and political affairs. Since 1934, J.P. believed that Socialism alone could be the basis of freedom of India. In 1940, he submitted a draft resolution to the Ramgarh Congress, wherein he advocated collective ownership and control of all large scale production. He urged that the State should nationalize heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. He wrote: "The law of the land will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis

79. Ibid., p. 155.
81. Ibid., p. 78.
of maintenance of order shall be the sanction and concurrence of the people.

The free Indian State shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom, provided that there shall be no freedom overthrown by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly.

The State shall not discriminate in any manner between citizens of the nation. Every citizen shall be guaranteed equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privilege shall be abolished. There shall be no titles emanating whether from inherited social status or the State.

The political and economic organisation of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. While this organisation shall conduce to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every member of society, material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual. To this end to secure social justice, the State shall endeavour to promote small-scale production carried on by individual or cooperative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. All large-scale collective production shall be eventually brought under collective ownership and control; and in this behalf the State shall begin by nationalising heavy
transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralised.

The life of the villages shall be reorganised and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that land shall belong to the actual cultivator alone, and that no cultivator shall have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living. This will end the various systems of landlordism on the one hand and firm bondage on the other.

The State shall protect the interests of the classes, but when these impinge upon the interests of those who have been poor and downtrodden it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice.

In all State-owned and State-managed enterprises, the workers shall be represented in the management through their elected representatives and shall have an equal share in it with the representatives of the Government.

In the Indian States, there shall be complete democratic government established and in accordance with the principles of abolition of social distinction and equality between citizens, there shall not be any titular heads of the States in the persons of Rajas and Nawabs.
This is the order, which the Congress envisages and which it shall work to establish. The Congress firmly believes that this order shall bring happiness, prosperity and freedom to the people of all races and religions in India, who together shall build on these foundations a great and glorious nation."

According to J.P., Socialism is not opposed to the dominant values, which have been cherished in the Indian culture. Indian culture has always laid emphasis on the emancipation of the individuals and the downtrodden. Sharing of social burdens has always been one of the dominant values of it.

J.P. stood for village reorganization. He emphasized that villages should be made self-governing and self-sufficient units. He suggested that land should belong to the actual cultivator. He also suggested the idea of cooperative farming. He wrote, "The only solution is to

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85. Ibid.
clear away all the vested interests that lead in any manner whatever to the exploitation of the tiller of the soil; liquidate all agrarian debts; pool the holdings and establish cooperative and collective farming, state and cooperative credit and marketing system and cooperative subsidiary industries”.

According to J.P., cooperative efforts and planning only could provide the balance between agriculture and industry. In his ‘Third Letter to the Fighters of Freedom’ written in August, 1946, he formulated a thirteen-point constructive work programme to establish Gram Raj. He suggested the following types of work for this: “(1) Enrolment of Congress members. Attempts should be made to enrol every adult villager. Meetings of the enrolled members should be held. Flag salutation. (2) A cultural centre should be opened where newspapers should be read and such other activities conducted as adult literacy, dramatics, folk


87. J.P. Narayan; Towards Struggle, op. cit., p. 90.

88. Ibid., p. 92.

(13) Work among women and children".

Side by side with the cooperative and collective farming, J.P. suggested that the State should set up its own industries. As an orthodox Marxist, he also suggested municipal or community ownership of industries besides the ownership by the State or by the Producer's Cooperative. He wrote: "I advocate development of these co-operatives and community owned industries: firstly, because I do not believe it possible to find employment for many years to come for our surplus population, which would swell further at least, by twenty percent by the revolution in agriculture in large industry alone; secondly, because I desire to prevent the State from acquiring the sole-monopoly in industry and employment. The State under Socialism threatens,

as in Russia, far from withering away, to become an all-powerful tyrant maintaining a stranglehold over the entire body of citizens. This leads to totalitarianism of the type we witness in Russia to-day

**Democratic Socialism**

With the passage of time and in the wake of his growing experience, J.P. progressively realised that democracy was essential for socialism. He observed: "There can be no socialism without democracy. It is a common mistake these days to think that there must be the dictatorship of the proletariat in a socialist state. This is against the teaching of Marx. The dictatorship of the proletariat has a place only in the transitional period from capitalism to socialism. And in this period too it is not inevitable in every case". He described his concept of socialism as "an economic and political democracy. In this democracy man will neither be slave to capitalism nor to a party or the State. Man will be free. He will have to serve society, which will provide him with employment and the means of livelihood, but within limits he will be free to choose his avocation and station in life. He will be free to express his opinions and there will be opportunities for him to rise to his full moral stature. There will


91. Ibid.
be no great difference between man and man - except the
difference of physical and mental endowments - for there
will be no great difference in incomes".

In another article entitled: "The Transition to
Socialism", J.P. continued to describe his theme as 'democra-
tic socialism'. Here J.P. talked of democratic methods to
establish a socialist society. He pointed out 'violent
revolution and dictatorship might conceivably lead to a
socialist democracy, but in the only country (U.S.S.R.)
where it has been tried, it has led to something very
different, that is, to a bureaucratic state, in which
democracy does not exist. I should like to take a lesson
from history'. The direct experiences of J.P. with the
C.P.I. and the trials of renowned Russian Communist leaders
in thirties were the main reasons of his disillusionment
with Marxism and his resultant conversion to democratic
socialism. Quoting the speech of Marx at the Hague
Convention of the first International, J.P. justified his

92. Ibid., p. 11.
93. Reproduced in Ibid., pp. 49-56.
94. Ibid., p. 57.
95. J.P. Narayan, Towards a New Society (New Delhi: The
Congress for Cultural Freedom; 1958), p. 11. Also see
Ibid., Introduction, p.xiv. Also see Brahmamand: 'J.P.
Redefines Socialism', Jayaprakash Narayan: His Life
and Thought: Commemoration Volume (Madras: Sri J.P.
Narayan's Sixty-first Birthday Celebration Committee,
1962-63), pp. 4-42.
stand of peaceful means to establish socialism in India.

He questioned some tenets of Marxism and consequently came
closer to Gandhiji. He wrote, "... all this questioning
and rethinking was gradually bringing me near to Gandhi".

But I had not yet been completely converted and so found
myself at the half-way house of democratic socialism. Mine
would yet be a revolutionary socialism, I thought, which
would transfer society from the roots and would yet preserve
and uphold the great human values of freedom, equality and
96 brotherhood'. At Nehru's request, J.P. joined the Congress
Working Committee in September, 1946, and at Neerut Session
in November, he moved the following resolution, which was
adopted unanimously. "In the opinion of this Congress Swaraj
can not be real for the masses unless it makes possible the
achievement of a society, in which democracy extends from
political to the social and economic spheres, and in which
there would be no opportunity for privileged classes to
exploit the bulk of the people, not for gross inequalities
such as exist at present. Such a society would ensure
individual liberty, equality of opportunity and the fullest
scope for every citizen for the development, of his
97 personality". For the first time, the C.S.P. in its Kanpur
Session, held in March, 1947, emphatically asserted that

96. Ibid., p. 17.
there could be no socialism without democracy. In his annual report as General Secretary of the Sixth Congress of the Socialist Party, J.P. emphasized on ethical values and good means to achieve Socialism. In his report, J.P. indicated an evolution of his thought away from Marxism and in the direction of Gandhism. He wrote, "There were many things that Mahatma Gandhi taught us. But the greatest thing he taught us was that means are ends, that evil means can never lead to good ends and that fair ends require fair means. Some of us may have been sceptical of this truth but recent world events and events at home have convinced me that nothing but good means will enable us to reach the goal of a good society, which is Socialism".

J.P. believed that greater the freedom, higher would be the level of socialism. In his report as General Secretary at the Patna Conference of the Socialist Party he stated:

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98. **Resolutions, Congress Socialist Party, 1947; held at Kanpur (Bombay, Socialist Party, 1947), p. 12.** In his Statement at Kanpur Conference, J.P. dealt with Socialist objectives. Giving the picture of his Socialist Society he wrote, "It is a democratic society where everyone is a worker and all men are equal including woman, where there are equal opportunities for all and wages do not differ so much as to create distinction of class; where all wealth is owned by the community; where progress is planned where labour is joyful and fruitful life is richer, fuller, beautiful". (J.P. Narayan: "The Objective of Socialism: What the Socialist Party Strives For?", **Samata**, Vol. 2, No. 9, March 23, 1937, p. 4.).


100. Ibid.
"Democratic socialism must become our life's mission, the philosophy of our life. We must accept democracy and all that it stands for; for thus alone can we reach the goal of socialism. Democratic socialism involves acceptance of democratic means, peaceful methods and constructive approach, in the attainment of our goal". This view was reiterated by J.P. in Madras Conference in the following year. Here he pointed out that "in the present conditions of India and further anticipated conditions, the democratic method is the only right method to work for socialism". Describing the goals of socialist movement, he observed: "The aims of socialist ... were not mere overthrow of the capitalist order and establishment of a party dictatorship, but the creation of a society of free and equal peoples, a society based on certain values of human and social life; values which could never be sacrificed in the name of theory or the party line or expediences of any sort". At the Special Convention of the Socialist Party, held at Panchmahi, J.P. emphasised on democratic means to be followed under the then existing conditions of the country. Explaining his position


103. Ibid., p. 134.

to his partymen, J.P. stated that Marxism was itself a confluence of three streams of ideas, that is, classical economics of Britain, revolutionary socialism of France and philosophy of Germany. Consequently, he pleaded to combine the Marxist thought with the thought and practice of Mahatma Gandhi and achieve a synthesis of their own.

After the General Election, 1952, the K.M.D.P. led by J.B. Kripalani and the Socialist Party merged together and the P.S.P. came into existence. In 1953, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to J.P. for cooperation between the Congress and the P.S.P. in the fields of national reconstruction and development. Following that gesture, J.P. formulated a fourteen-point 'Minimum Programme for National Reconstruction', on the basis of which, he expressed his willingness to extend cooperation to the Congress. The talk did not bring any concrete results. The 'Programme', however, shows the standpoint of J.P.'s ideology. In the 'Draft Programme', J.P. gave a picture of society, in which there would be no exploitation. There would be economic and social equality, freedom and well-being for all.

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105. Ibid., p. 27.
Since 1948, J.P. came closer to Gandhi and pleaded for ethical politics. He increasingly came to distrust the principle of Dialectical Materialism. By 1952, he stood fully and firmly for Gandhism. He observed: "For many years I have worshipped at the shrine of the Goddess of Dialectical Materialism, which seemed to me intellectually more satisfying than any other philosophy. But while the main quest of philosophy remains unsatisfied, it has become patent to me, that materialism of any sort robs men of the means to become truly human. 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. But when that God himself turns vicious, to be vicious becomes a universal code."

People's Socialism

The trend of J.P.'s ideological leanings towards Gandhism and Sarvodaya reached its high water-mark when he attended the Bodh Gaya Sarvodaya Conference in 1954 and declared there to dedicate his life for the cause of Sarvodaya and Bhoodan. Thereafter began the phase of Sarvodaya, which he called People's Socialism. As early as 1951, J.P. declared that Sarvodaya was not a "crankish

but it was the first attempt to establish a new social order - "a classless and casteless society. He wrote: "Some years back it became clear to me that socialism as we understand it today cannot take mankind to the sublime goals of freedom, equality, brotherhood and peace ... unless socialism is transformed into Sarvodaya, those goals would remain beyond its reach ...". J.P. expounded the contents of 'Sarvodaya Plan' and suggested to the Congress to accept and implement it. "The ideal that the plan sets out to achieve is that of a non-violent, non-exploitative - cooperative society, which shall not be based on caste or class and in which there shall be equal opportunity for all. The present competitive economy shall be replaced by a social economy based on cooperation. Proprietorship in agriculture land shall vest in the tiller of the soil under regulations laid down by society". He added that socialism was not just the Sarvodaya plan. It was much more. He stated that Bhooman was the first step towards a total revolution - social, political and economic. "It stands", he said, "for a
society, which strives of the good of all, and in which everybody would be happy. In such a society, there would be no distinction of high and low. The man would be the architect of his own government.

In the First Asian Socialist Conference in Rangoon, J.P. only advocated Gandhi's path of peace and love to achieve socialism. J.P. pleaded for a revolution in the values of life, which, to him, would be the real revolution. 'Law would not be helpful in this regard'. He believed in Gandhian method of internal change in man. He advised the people to limit their wants and to share and to cooperate with their fellowmen. He defined a socialist society 'as one in which the individual is prepared voluntarily to subordinate his own interests to the larger interests of the society'. According to him, state can not force the individual to live


according to this ideal. Only the Gandhian and Servodaya principles showed the way of sharing of wealth, which was the real and full socialism. Socialism to him was a way of life. "Socialism for me was always a way of life. It represented a set of values, to which we owed allegiance voluntarily and which we tried to put into practice in our lives. These values we did not see developing anywhere as a result of merely institutional changes, whether economic or political".

In 1957, J.P. disassociated himself from party politics and advocated people’s socialism instead of state socialism. He realised that representative government was not enough. It was necessary to decentralise the political and economic centres to give power of self-government to the people at large. His goal was to create a classless, stateless and partyless society. He sought to build up from below on the model of the ancient Indian village order – village self-government (Gram Raj). In his two pamphlets, 'A Plea For Reconstruction of Indian Polity and Swaraj For the People', J.P. outlined his picture of village self-government.


According to J.P., the people's socialism or communitarian socialism would only be realised when the social structure of society would be of a pyramidal structure—a communitarian society. He suggested at the bottom of this structure there would be face to face communities. He visualised a chain of communities, building from the primary community to the world community. According to him, all the communities from bottom to top would be organically inter-related and independent in their spheres. No control would be imposed from above. There would be maximum economic and political decentralisation. The primary community would be self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial and urbo-rural. The primary communities would form a regional community. It would come into existence by an organic process of growth. It would be an integrated community in itself. It would be autonomous, like the primary community, in the spheres in which the primary communities had delegated their powers to it. In the same order, a number of regional communities would form a still larger community; that is:

119. J.P. Narayan, A Plea For Reconstruction of Indian Polity, (Kashi, Akhil Bharat Sarve Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1959), pp. 50-51. (The community would be built up of personal relations and choice, and freedom within the limits of self-imposed discipline and common culture. There would be participation by the members in all communal affairs. It would be a cooperative society. The cooperation in the community would encompass its entire of life, rather than only its economic sector, and all the members of the community rather than only those who purchase shares).

120. J.P. Narayan, 'A Plea For Reconstruction of Indian Polity', op. cit.; p. 85.
the district community. The district communities in turn would federate together to form the provincial community. The provincial communities would come together to form the National Community. He believed that a day might come when the national communities might federate together to form a World Community.

In this communitarian society, there would be progressive decrease in the functions and powers from bottom level to the top. And there would be utmost scope for the people. This type of communitarian polity, according to J.P., only could guarantee the participating democracy.

'The economy of the communitarian society would also be decentralized like-wise. To J.P., "political decentralization can not be effective without economic decentralization". The aim of the economy would be welfare of the community and each of its members, not individual profit. It would be neither "exploitative nor competitive but cooperative and co-sharing". It would be balanced and of limited wants. It would also be in cooperative harmony with nature. Further,

121. Ibid., pp. 55-58.
122. Ibid., p. 58.
124. J.P. Narayan, A Plea For Reconstruction of Indian Polity, op. cit., p. 73.
it would be as self-sufficient as possible, so that it might provide the primary food, clothing, shelter and other necessities of life to its members. It would produce for self-consumption. Planning would begin from the regional community. 'Regional plan would be the unit out of which the whole national plan would have to be constructed'. All the natural resources would belong to the community. Each community would have possession of land and of natural resources that falls within its boundaries. There would be equality in incomes. The worker would be given central position in the community. 'The communities would be of agro-industrial character. A greater part of the industries in the primary, regional and district communities would be of the owner-worker type. The rest would be cooperative and a few units might be of the private-employer-employee type. The provincial and national undertakings would be of the cooperative, communal or even-private type'. There would be self-government in industries and other economic undertakings. In each community, that is, regional, district, provincial, etc., there would be different associations representing owner-workers, other workers and owners, managers and technicians. All these associations would be

125. J.P. believed that village plan would be too small for this purpose.

126. Ibid., p. 77.

127. Ibid., p. 79.
federated in each communal area into an Economic Council. Each community would have its own Economic Council. It would advise and be represented in the political communal body concerned. The Associations and Councils would have powers to make rules and to govern the activities of their member institutions. Private enterprise would also partake with the spirit of private as well as communal welfare. But private enterprise would also be subjected to the principles of self-government.

In the communitarian society, the role of the State would be minimum. The State should regulate and legislate for the formation of a Panchayati Raj but "the day-to-day working of Panchayati Raj", according to him, "should be put outside the purview of the State Government". At another place opposing the State machinery, J.P. stated, "It is not possible to achieve any success through

128. Ibid., pp. 60-81.

129. Ibid., p. 82. (J.P. believed in using the recent technology for production. He said, "for my purpose the debate between the modern and the traditional is irrelevant. What I am suggesting is, indeed, a most modern type of economy, the like of which does not exist or has existed anywhere, and to create which the utmost possible help of science, including social sciences, would be required. In other words, a new machine technology as well as a new socio-economic technology, would have to be created. J.P. Narayan, 'Communitarian Society and Panchayati Raj', op. cit., p. 90).

130. J.P. Narayan, Swaraj for the People, op. cit., p. 15.
developing the power of the State". Thus, J.P. maintained that in the communitarian society, the people's socialism (Sarvodaya and Gramdan) could be achieved. To him, it was a real and unique form of socialism. He pointed out that Gramdan was "a form of socialism, the like of which history had not seen before".

Total Revolution

Since 1974, J.P. advocated the philosophy of Total Revolution which, to him, was the true alternative form of socialism. In a letter to friends he wrote, "I have faith only in such socialism in which the economic power would be in the hands of the working people themselves and individual freedom and civil liberty would remain secure. In my opinion a socialist revolution will be successful when the economic power (and political authority also) is in the hands of the people and they will be able to build their future without any outside interference. The total revolution of which I speak today is such a revolution and is based on socialism with real equality and human freedom". Here he


was influenced with the teachings of Gandhiji, Vinoba
and, M.K. Roy and Lenin to a certain extent. According
to him the ideal of Total Revolution was similar to that
Gandhi's idea of Purna Swaraj. He observed, "any Gandhian
approach or model is one of a continuous revolution which
I have called Total Revolution. Satyagrah or non-violent
struggle, is the essence of this revolution. It is also
dialectical in a special sense - it makes a struggle
between Individual and Society, Authority and Freedom,
Elite and the Masses, Property and Non-possession, Labour
and Capital and so on ...". Bhooman, to him, was the first
step towards total revolution. He wrote, "Bhooman is not
a programme of merely collecting and distributing lands.
It is rather the first step towards a total revolution
social political and economic".

In this phase, J.P. advocated persuasion and
conversion - social revolution through human revolution to
achieve total development and welfare of the society.
Giving the meaning of Total Revolution, J.P. advocated a
seven-fold scheme of revolutions. He said: "I have been

134. Vasant Marulkar, J.P. Vindicated (New Delhi, S. Chand

135. J.L. Sethi, Gandhi-Today (New Delhi, Vikas Publishing
House, 1978), Foreword by J.P. Narayan, pp. ix-x.

136. J.P. Narayan, A Picture of Sarvodaya Social Order
saying that total revolution is a combination of seven revolutions - social, economic, political, cultural, ideological or intellectual, educational and spiritual. This number may be increased or decreased. For instance, the cultural revolution may include educational and ideological revolutions ... Economic revolution may be split up into industrial, agricultural, technological revolutions etc. Similarly, intellectual revolution may be split up into two - scientific and philosophical. Even spiritual revolution can be viewed as made up of the moral and spiritual or it can be looked upon part of the cultural. And so on**.

According to J.P. the Total Revolution would bring revolution in all aspects of society as well as the individual simultaneously. It would change the entire system. Its methodology would be non-violent and peaceful. 'The philosophy of total revolution aims at renunciation of the lust of power'. The people would be the real masters of the political power. He suggested the organization of people's committees in each assembly constituency polling booth. These would


139. Ibid., No. 46, June 8, 1974, p. 4.
act as watchdogs of democracy and people's rights and duties. The people's committee would set up candidates and would send a representative selected by general consensus to an assembly constituency people's committee. The people would have right to recall their representatives, who have ceased to enjoy the confidence of a majority of voters. He wrote: "in a democracy the people do have the right to ask for the resignation of an elected government if it has gone corrupt and has been misruling. And if there is a legislature that persists in supporting such a government it too must go so that the people might choose better representatives".

J.P. visualised a radical change in the ownership of the means of production. As a Gandhian, he laid emphasis on agricultural development: equitable land ownership; the application of appropriate technology to agriculture; the development of domestic and rural industries and the widest possible expansion of small industries; regional planning (Planning from below) and development. The concept of total revolution may be taken as a synthesis of socialist revolution


and the agrarian rural realism of the Sarvodaya. J.P. had given in this scheme the central place and utmost importance to the individual.

Thus, all through the way of development of his thought from Marxism through democratic socialism and Sarvodaya to Total Revolution, J.P. remained an ardent advocate of all-round development of individual and society. As a matter of fact, it is this seminal and consistent factor, which appears to have steered the course and determined direction of the development of his thought through its various stages. He has been one of the greatest thinkers of Indian socialism.

Comparison

Both M.N. Roy and Jayaprakash Narayan changed some of their ideas from time to time in the light of experience. The ideological development of both the thinkers was somewhat similar. Both were ardent Marxist in their early phases of political career. Both began by analysing the Indian society from the Marxist viewpoint. And came to the conclusion that the reason of poverty of the Indian masses was not merely the foreign economic exploitation but Indian bourgeois

classes also played important role in exploiting the natives.

Both believed in scientific socialism and its evolutionary nature. Socialism to them was the common ownership of the means of production and distribution and equal opportunities to all the people. Both agreed initially to bring socialism by the power of the State. Nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution and public utilities was to be brought about by the State power.

Neither Roy nor J.P. was satisfied with Gandhism and the bourgeois programme of the Indian National Congress. To transform the Indian National Congress into a radical and socialist organisation both drafted their programmes for change in the Congress.

Roy and J.P. both agreed that to achieve freedom was the first postulate for the establishment of a socialist society in India. Without political independence the socialist programme could not be implemented. The law of the land had to be based on the will of the people. The people were to be in effective control of the political power.

Both placed a great emphasis on agricultural development of the country. The agriculture was to be mechanised.

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and modernised. They suggested cooperative farming. Land was to be redistributed and tiller be made the owner of the land. The State was to provide the financial aid to promote the agricultural production. To balance the economy of the country both favoured setting up of industries - both large and small scale; State owned as well as community owned. An agro-industrial economy was prescribed by both as the remedy for India and its development. Both gave a lot of importance to planning in the economic development. Both sought to reorient the village life and make it self-sufficient.

In their later stages both Roy and J.P. renounced Marxism. They came to the conclusion that Marxist socialism was not the solution for the problems of humanity in general and India in particular. Socialism, they realized, tended to culminate into state capitalism. Socialisation of the means of production was not the cure of all evils of capitalism. Both Roy and J.P. grew into vehement critiques of the Russian totalitarianism and Statism. Their ideologies and thought went beyond Communism. In the post-Independence period, Roy developed the philosophy of Radical Humanism and J.P. joined the Sarvodaya movement. In this phase most

of their ideas were considerably similar. The cooperative socialism advocated by Roy is similar to that of J.P.'s People's Socialism (Sarvodaya) in terms of their pronounced human components and all embracing comprehension. Socialism to them was not merely an economic principle but a way of life.

Both agreed that the main problem was not that of production but of centralisation. Both advocated the maximum decentralisation. They proposed to reorganise the political and economic system independent of the State interference. Both visualised the pyramidal structure of the political and economic system. The village was to be its basic unit. From village to the national level, they visualised formation of a communitarian society and dreamt of the ultimate formation of a world community. The State had a minimum role to play in this economic system.

Both agreed on cooperative agriculture. The motive behind the production would be consumption not profit. The economic development would be planned. But planning would not be imposed from above; it should begin from bottom. People were to be given fullest scope of participation in their economic management. Both were critical of the Second

146. M.N. Roy in the Radical Humanism, op. cit., p.52; and May Humanism, op. cit., p. 53; and J.P. Narayan in A Plea For Reconstruction of Indian Polity, op. cit., pp. 55-56 and 65; and Saint For the People, op. cit., p. 19.
Five Year Plan. Workers were given central place in economic organisation by both.

Besides these similarities there seem certain differences between the two socialist thinkers. J.P. never took the directives from the World Communist movement. He came to India as a confirmed Marxist, but did not join the Communist movement in India. He joined the Indian National Congress straight away. He was a great propagander of Indian socialism. To him, socialist movement in India was a part of the national freedom struggle. 'The association of the socialist movement with freedom struggle had an important consequence. Nationalism which might in theory be regarded as a departure from socialist internationalism, in practice, helped the socialists to escape from the embrace of the Communists. It was on this issue of subordination to Moscow that they parted company'. Roy, on the other hand, took active part in the mobilisation of the World Communist movement as an official of the Communist International. He was the most colourful of all non-Russian Communists in the era of Lenin and Stalin. Roy did not like orthodox nationalism. He wrote: "National-socialism in practice cannot be anything but Fascism. It was in Germany, it has not been any different in India ...".

147. The Radical Humanist, Vol. XX, No. 24, June 17, 1956, p. 264.


J.P. advocated democratic socialism and Gandhian spiritual means to establish it. According to him, there was no dichotomy between socialism and the Indian culture. He talked of co-sharing and limitation of wants. His emphasis was on human values. M.N. Roy did not like democratic socialism. Democratic socialism was written of as "contradiction in terms". According to Roy, if democratic socialists ever came to power in India, "either their socialism or their democracy will go by the board". Roy believed that every possible human need should be satisfied. He believed in the enrichment of the individuals. According to him, "the advocacy of Indian spiritualism was merely an attempt to revive the backward pre-capitalist social conditions of India".

Thus, it may be concluded that while J.P. was very near to Roy in his socialist thinking, he had some basic and vital differences also with the man he admired so much and from above he drew considerable inspiration in his thinking.


131. Ibid., p. 483. (According to Ashok Mehta, Roy could not grasp that democratic socialism was the only answer to the political compulsions of backward economy): Ashok Mehta: Democratic Socialism: Mid-20th Century Synthesis (Hyderabad: Chetna Prakashan, 1981), p. 118.