Chapter V

PARTYLESS DEMOCRACY
Jayaprakash Narayan slowly changed his political views according to changing conditions of country. In the late fifties, J.P. discarded his earlier idea that political parties were in general “agents of change and progress”. That was when he was attracted by the “magnetism” of Vinoba Bhave’s Bhoodan campaign. Gradually, he cut off his links with his political party and threw himself wholly into Bhoodan movement, “not only as a method of peaceful and redistribution but also to lay the foundation of a partyless form of democracy…”

J.P. did not attempt to define this concept precisely. As indicated it only meant a democracy without political parties, apparently only a negative concept. But he viewed it as something more positive, what was called, “organized democracy”. Tamarsee Dhar while explaining this concept maintained that “organized democracy” would provide greater opportunities to the people as compared to “party democracy”. That would make it virtually impossible for minority of the people to impose its will upon the majority of the people.

J.P. had been a protagonist of party politics since his youth when he formed, in 1934, the Congress Socialist Party. In 1947 the Congress Socialists decided to organize themselves into a separate new party independent of the Congress. An unintended consequence of the Socialist Party’s resolve to go it
all alone was the emergence of differences among its leaders which eventually became unbridgeable. This was at least one of the major factors which persuaded Jayaprakash to leave party politics.

After the Madras Session which was held in July 1950 for discussing party squabbles, the preparations for the first general elections to be held in the winter of 1951-52 had dominated the thinking of the Socialist Party. J.P. was perhaps hoping to win the elections with the co-operation of other like-minded parties. But the election results caused a great disappointment to the socialist leadership. It could get only 12 seats in the Lok Shaba. Much of the blame for the failure of the Socialist Party was put on the shoulders of Jayaprakash. Ramanandan Misra, an old comrade with whom he had escaped from Hazaribagh jail alleged that J.P. was responsible for all that, since he was on good terms with the congress and discouraged “revolutionary militancy” to be followed, in elections. Accusations by his erstwhile comrades upset Jayaprakash.

These squabbles did not decline even after the merger of Acharya Kriplani’s K.M.P.P. with the Socialist Party to constitute what was named as Praja Socialist Party. There were sharp differences on the issue of what attitude should it adopt towards Nehru’s Congress.

Getting completely disgusted with the trade in abuse, J.P. sent his resignation from the national executive of the party on 15 June 1953 suggesting that “those opposed to co-operation with the congress come forward and take
up organizational responsibilities. He refused to accept any elective office in the party, but continued to be concerned about the Socialists and in 1957 made another attempt to unite the party. That was all in vain. At last after the death of Acharya Narendra Deva, J.P. gave up even his basic membership of P.S.P. and left party-politics altogether. Rationalizing his withdrawal from politics he gave a considered but categorical assertion in his book *From Socialism to Sarvodaya* that he left politics as he felt convinced that politics could not lead to achievement of declared goals.

He was, however, not for abolishing political parties altogether as there was no alternative to that. "Partyless Democracy" he realized, was a distant goal that could be achieved only after class and caste distinctions had disappeared through a process of mass political education. Even years later when he led the Bihar movement his aims did not include establishing of partyless democracy. He clarified, however, that partyless democracy remained his ultimate aim which could be realized only in a classless, and casteless society.

Meanwhile he would like to see "parliamentary democracy" to work as successfully as possible. He was aware that the failure of the existing experiment would not lead the desired type of democracy but to "one-party" dictatorship which would be a tragedy for India and for Asia. There was no reason to let the prevalent system fail, without creating a suitable alternative. Thus he made it clear that in spite of its shortcomings, of all the different forms
of democracy that history had known till date, parliamentary democracy was
the best. According to him, parliamentary democracy may be a government for
the people and of the people, but it is not a government by the people. He stated
"that no example of parliamentary democracy exists today or has existed before
which would satisfy the third part of the definition, namely, government by the
people. It may be a Government with the consent of the people, but it is not a
government by the people."6

In 1957 when he left party-politics, he expressed in his letter of
resignation a feeling of revulsion against the shape which Indian politics had
taken. It was observed:

I saw how parties backed by finance, organization and the means of
propaganda could impose themselves on the people; how people's rule became
in effect party rule, how party rule in turn became the rule of a caucus or
coterie; how democracy was reduced to mere casting of votes; how even their
right of vote was restricted severely by the system of powerful parties setting
up their candidates from whom alone, for all practical purposes, the voters had
to make their choice, how even this limited choice was made unreal by the fact
that the issues posed before the electorate were by and large incomprehensible
to it.7

He was getting convinced that party system did not create the necessary
strength and initiative among the people to manage their affairs. The main
purpose of party leaders was to "capture power for themselves" to rule over the
people. This simply reduced the people to the “position of sheep” whose only right would be to “choose periodically the shepherds who would look after their interests.”8 In J.P’s tone, M.N. Roy also maintained that in parliamentary democracy, the sovereign individual in practice remains a passive spectator. He wrote, “In parliamentary democracy, power nominally belongs to the entire people. But in practice the individual is divested of all power; the individual is helpless in parliamentary democracy.”9 At another place he stated, “Parliamentary democracy formally recognized the sovereignty of the individual, but in practice deprived all but a privileged few of effective use of that sovereignty. The sovereign individual becomes a legal fiction. For all practical purposes, most individuals were deprived of all power and even of their dignity.”10 He further observed that the party system leads to complete erosion of the status of individual from the political scene. Only the mass of the people and parties remain in action. He maintained that the individual man and his judgment, his discretion and will are no where in the picture. Voters are canvassed for a party, the voters may not even know the man who is going to be their representative. According to Roy, “Once popular vote brings a man to the parliament, his responsibility is not to the people who vote for him, but to the party machinery, which has ensured his election by supplying the money and brassband.”

Moreover the parties, as he argued, had become real arbiters of the people’s fate, but the latter did not exercise any control over them. Even the members of the parties had no say either in policy-making or in inner
administration. This party system was productive of many evils and J.P. observed:

Party rivalries give birth to demagoguery, depress political ethics, put a premium on unscrupulousness and aptitude for manipulation and intrigue. Party creates dissensions where unity is minimized. Parties often put party interests over national interests. Because centralization of power prevents the citizen from participating in Government, the parties, that is to say, small caucus of politicians, rule in the name of the people and create the illusions of democracy and self-government.¹¹

Like J.P., M.N. Roy was also a severe critic of the party system in modern democracies. Political Parties try to capture power by any means. A Party is organized with the object of capturing power. The democratic postulate of party system was in direct contradiction to the sovereignty of the individual. It meant that “people cannot rule themselves and they are required to delegate their sovereign rights to elect representatives.”¹² At another place he observed, party politics implies the denial of democracy; it implies that people cannot do any thing by themselves; it is a denial of the potential intelligence and creativity of all men, of the sovereignty of the people.” To capture the power, political parties play on the emotions of the people. In the words of M.N. Roy, “The vice of deceiving the people is inherent in this practice.” Roy felt that democracy has degenerated into demagogy. He thus asserted:
Under the democratic system a party can come to power only with the consent of the people. It is quite evident and that was also the experience in practice that any party which could make the most glittering promises had the greatest chance of obtaining the consent of the people. The result was that democracy degenerated into demogogy.13

The political parties capture the State power to bring about change 'as a means' but after success they threat power as an end itself. Therefore, Roy believed “political parties lead to concentration of power and hence carries in it the germs of the destruction of democracy.” Thus Roy maintained that centralization of power is another weakness of parliamentary democracy which ultimately leads to dehumanization of the individuals.

Like Roy, J.P. was also convinced that the most serious fault of parliamentary democracy, is its inherent tendency towards centralism. In the modern world all powerful national states, the individuals have no direct control over the state. The sovereign individuals became helpless. He wrote, “The sovereign people being dispersed over the length and breadth of the country like particles of sand over the desert and having no other organized political force than the national state itself to interpose between themselves and that state, the latter naturally becomes all powerful. The issue of power in such state is decided not by the fictitious ‘people but by a balance between political parties and such organized interests as industrialists and bankers and powerful labour unions.” A natural outcome of centralization of power and
administration, to J.P., is bureaucracy. In the parliamentary democracy, the central executive, being over-burdened with work, is dependent upon bureaucrats, who gradually become all powerful. And this tendency according to J.P. leads to dangerous autocracy of the bureaucrats.\textsuperscript{14}

Another serious defect of parliamentary democracy is the system of election. This system is very expensive and appalingly wasteful. In the words of J.P., “The fabulous expenses involved have the effect mortgaging democracy to moneyed interests or large sectional organizations as trade unions.” A general election creates unnecessary passion and excitement, it befogs the mind of the people instead of educating and enlightening them and tends to favour demagoguery. According to J.P. in our country, elections have become increasingly irrelevant from the view-points of the people and of democracy. He observed that “The meaning and significance of elections are being eroded due to use of money power deception, corruption and physical force in them.”\textsuperscript{15} So far as the role of the individual in democracy is concerned J.P. said, “Democracy in our country gives only this much right to the people that they cast their votes when an election comes around...but this right is also snatched away from us since the elections are increasingly neither fail nor free.”\textsuperscript{16}

To M.N. Roy the practice of delegation of power is also a negation of democracy. He stated, “Every individual is sovereign and has right to choose the government of country... Now the practice of democracy shows that
between his two elections the sovereign people is nowhere in the picture and has absolutely no possibility of controlling those, who are ruling the country. On behalf of them, and consequently delegation of power, for all practical purposes, has become surrender of power. The people exercise their sovereignty by surrendering it from time to time."17 Once the individual’s sovereign is delegated, he has no control over legislator.

He felt that western type of democracy was unsuitable to Indian conditions. In the western world industrialization had blocked all further development and enlargement of the primary community creating vast cities which made the relation of the individual to the society “depersonalized”. According to him, “The institutions of western democracy far from representing living together, expressed the depersonalization of man, and it would be pity if the peoples of Asia imitated such inorganic unity.” The countries of Asia and Africa had adopted outward forms of western democracy that meant, as in India, that there was a mass of desperate individual voters at the bottom-the sand heap-and on that foundation of sand was raised the topmost storey of government. In such a state of affairs people had only the right to vote but no stake in democracy. This did not give full scope to the people to participate in the management of their affairs and was based upon an atomized society, the State being made up of an inorganic sum of individuals.

He observed that in Asia due to entirely different conditions we should not copy the way of western and European democracy. What to talk of the
success of democracy in India—a backward country—even in Western countries where it had longer innings the problems of economic inequality and exploitation had not been solved. But as he maintained, “The challenge to democracy in Asia comes most from this backwardness.” Dissatisfied as he was with working of western type of parliamentary democracy in India he insisted that “we should think out our own system which is suited to the conditions of this country.”

Democracy in Europe was to keep in check the forces of social revolution as industrial growth and imperialism enabled it to raise the standard of living of the common people. But democracy in Asia had no such opportunities and hence it could not afford to imitate the ways of the West in that matter. Thus economic development and rising of the standard of living would be a slow process in Asia. Therefore, unlike Europe the priorities in Asia would have to be reversed. “Economic development and prosperity” came first in Europe and it was after 150 years that the process towards economic equality was set in motion. In Asia, on the other hand, it was the latter process which must come first, otherwise, as he believed, democracy would never be able to stand up to the forces of totalitarianism. He was of the view that those who were in power in India were trying to do just the opposite and wanted to imitate the ways of European development. That as he saw it, was “the challenge to democracy in our country. Unless this challenge is squarely met, it is certain that democracy would perish.”
Addressing Members of Parliament on 23 September, 1958 he put it squarely that the system evolved by Europe was not suited to our country. Thus he observed: “This democratic system which we are running is a game of a very small class of people. I do not think that merely because there is an Opposition Party or there are Opposition Parties there is a guarantee of democracy.”

Giving caution against immitating the ways of Western and European democracy, he talked about the values and guarantees of keeping democracy intact. He, therefore, felt that it was the urgent duty of all those who believed in the values of democracy to work for an immediate transformation of the existing social order. He, therefore, observed, “The real guarantee of democracy is the faith of the people in democracy, the strength of the people, the capacity of the people, to manage their affairs themselves. But he was feeling pained at the idea that, “This is not happening in our country. And, as we are going today, I do not think this is going to happen in the future either; and this is a great danger. Out of this anything may emerge, even the dictatorship of the left or the right, one does not know.”

So discarding the Western and European model of democracy and parliamentary democracy in particular he presented his idea of “partyless democracy”. J.P. thus pleaded for a model of democracy which was based on an integrated conception of society and which allowed the fullest possible scope to the individual to participate in the management of his affairs, without the mediation of political parties. This vague desire had been expressed in various speeches, articles and pamphlets earlier but an elaboration of this
concept was given in two books entitled *A Plea for Reconstruction of India Polity and Swaraj for the People*.

**A NEW POLITY**

The most important question before the country was not “how to strengthen the Government or who should succeed the Prime Minister; but how to awaken to action the sleeping *Leviathan* the three hundred and seventy millions people of this country”. His answer was that “the only way to move the people was to go back to Mahatma Gandhi.” The issue before them as he argued was not one of a “better electoral system” but a more comprehensive one, namely that, of creating a polity most suitable for the country at that juncture. Modern industrialism and the spirit of economism, which it had created was according to him unsuitable for human community.

The essential attributes of a true community are sharing, participation and fellowship: a feeling of unity in the midst of diversity, a sense of freedom within the framework of accepted social responsibilities, differentiation of functions converging to the single goal of the good of the community and its members.

Discussing the structure of this new polity, he maintained, that at the base of the new social organization would be the local or primary communities, neither so small that a balanced development of communal life and culture became difficult, nor so large that life in them became impersonalized. He was for what he called “building up from the villages.” The life in both city and village was imbalanced. The obvious solution to tackle this problem was “the
creation of agro-industrial communities where agriculture and industry are both carried together in an interdependent and complimentary manner." Thus the existing big cities would have to be reorganized and made federations of small sized communities. Just as a number of families came together to build a common life at the level of the primary community, in a similar way the primary communities would come together and cooperate among themselves to tackle common problems and build the regional community. Again a number of regional communities would in turn join together to form the district community. Similarly the district communities would federate to form the provincial communities, and the latter would join hands to form the national community. Thus as we would proceed from the base upwards, there would be less and less to do for the bigger communities, so that when we would reach the level of National Community, it would deal only with such matters as defence, foreign relations, currency and inter-State co-operation.24

This, however, would be a part of the larger problems of social reconstruction. Thus the political structure of the community must correspond to its social structure and rise storey by storey from the foundation, which would consist of "self governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial, urbo-rural local communities."25 He was convinced that even the existing villages and township could be converted into such communities if sincere efforts were made in that direction. But he was emphatic that the development of the rest of the political structure need not wait till this task was completed. Hence the
work must begin at all levels simultaneously; otherwise it would not succeed at any level.

**GRAM SABHA AS THE BASE**

Talking about political structure he maintained that the highest political institution of the local community should be the village assembly-Gram Sabha-with all the adults of the community as its members. The executive, i.e., Panchayat should be selected by general consensus of opinion in the Sabha, without anybody standing for election for any office. The Sabha and the Panchayat should be given responsibility to manage such things which concerned their daily life.

The next level would be that of the regional community, with the Gram Panchayats integrated into Panchayat Samities. Similarly the Panchayat Samities of a district would be integrated into the district councils, further the district councils integrated into State assembly and state assemblies integrated into the national Parliament. Thus a political institution at each level would be an integration of the institutions at the lower level. There would be indirect instead of direct election.

He warned that it would be wrong to suppose that if “local bodies” were given more powers and the direct system of election was replaced by an indirect one, while the rest of the social organization were left as it was, there could be any worthwhile change. The polity suggested was not a “graft on the
existing body of society, but an organic part of a radically transformed social order.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{THANSTIONAL PERIOD}

He was well aware that such a polity could not be built in a day and there would be a period of transition also. Thus, to begin with, elections should be so conducted that political parties did not play any role in them up to the district level. Even at the State and National levels the candidates must be selected by the people themselves and not by the parties, which during the period of transition, might be allowed to support particular candidates after their selections by the people. In this way gradually the role of the political parties would be decreased in our political process and that of the people would increase leading eventually to the establishment of "partyless democracy" or "communitarian Society"\textsuperscript{27}

The problems of the transitition from the old polity to the new had been dealt with more fully in his pamphlet, \textit{Swaraj for the People} (1961). J.P. stressed therein the urgency of the task of enabling the people directly to participate in the management of their affairs or in other words taking \textit{Swaraj} to the people. J.P felt satisfied that a beginning in this direction had already been made by introducing "Panchayat Raj" or "democratic decentralization" in several States, but pointed out that certain conditions must be fulfilled before this could become the base of a true "participatory democracy".

These conditions were: (i) education of the people in the widest sense of the term, which might be undertaken jointly by government and non-
government agencies, refraining of political parties from interfering with the institutions of Panchayat Raj for the purpose of using them as a jumping ground to climb to power; (ii) Real devolution or powers to the institutions of Panchayat Raj and not merely a make belief; (iii) Granting of minimum independent financial resources to the institutions of Panchayat Raj at every level; (iv) Exercise of real authority by the institutions of Panchayat Raj over the civil servants under their charge, who should be held fully accountable to them; (v) Making the Gram Sabha consisting of the entire adult population of the village the bottom tier of the Panchayat Raj with the Gram Panchayat serving as its executive and implementing its decisions.  

So far as elections to the village panchayat were concerned, J.P was convinced that they should be held without contest; because “Self-Government through faction-fighting will not be self Government but self-ruination”. The village was a primary, face to face community where the people were physically thrown together and had to share their joys and sorrows. The present village was, however, as he described, a “disrupted community” and it would be a tragedy and a mockery of democracy if it was allowed to be an instrument of further disruption. For the success of Panchayat Raj it was also essential that its day to day working be put outside the control of the State Government. The necessary laws and rules would continue to be framed by State Legislatures but their working should be placed under the care of a non-political autonomous body as Panchayat Raj Commission and not under a civil servant.
The Panchayat Raj was to him a step in the right direction but if the 
edifice of democracy was to be made strong and invulnerable then its top layers 
must be built into the fundamental structure. A Panchayat Raj up to the district 
level and “Party Raj” resting on “nothing more solid than the amorphous mass 
of individual and desparate voters”, at the State and National levels would 
represent “a very unhappy mixture of two different principles and processes of 
democracy that like water and oil will not mix.” There was a fundamental 
derence between the two systems. Therefore J.P’s pleas was not to terminate 
Panchayat Raj at the District level, but to extend it up to New Delhi. He was 
aware that this could not be done immediately but it should be clearly set as the 
goal and sincere efforts should be made to reach it as speedily as possible, he 
pleaded.

In what manner shall Panchayat Raj be extended to higher levels? For 
this J.P. suggested, in his Pamphlet Swaraj for the People, a procedure slightly 
different from the one he suggested in his Reconstruction of Indian Polity two 
years earlier. In the earlier pamphlet he had suggested that each lower level 
should elect the immediately higher levels through the system of indirect 
elections. But on second throught he altered his views, as indirect election 
might encournge parochialism and retard the growth of national outlook among 
all the citizens. It was also more liable to be corrupted by moneyed interests, 
as the number of electors would be small, except at the lowest level. He thus 
recommended a method of election which would be direct, yet so organized as 
to give the institutions of Panchayat Raj at every level a definite role in it.
Thus it may be possible to have advantages of direct election without affecting the organic nature of the new polity. The role of the political parties should, he argued, be restricted as far as possible and the people be enabled to select their own candidates for election through popularly constituted Electoral Councils. Every constitutional and educational device should be adopted to encourage councils to set up no more than one candidate for every seat, thus avoiding context. He considered all this essential for the fulfillment of democracy, "no matter what be its kind" so that "its processes are as little divisive as possible, or to put it positively, as cohesive and unitive as possible."

The political structure sketched above would require for its base, J.P. recommended, a new kind of economic structure. Though he maintained that the satisfaction of the material needs of man would be its objective, yet it would not endeavour to satisfy the insatiable hunger for more and more which modern industrialism-Capitalist, Socialist and Communist-had created. Thus he pleaded that for man really to enjoy liberty and freedom and to practice self-government, it was necessary voluntarily to limit his demands or wants. Otherwise, the greed for more and yet more would lead to production that would be so complex as to bind democracy hand and foot and to deliver it to a "bureaucratic oligarchy". If the prevalent science of economics comes in the way of the development of an economy based on voluntary limitations of wants then a new science of economics may have to be developed together with new methods of planning and new techniques of industrial organization.
The issue of reorganization of economy came for a detailed discussion in his *Swaraj for the People*. Here J.P. rejected the old belief of socialists that nationalization of the means of production and distribution would automatically usher in "economic democracy". The experience of Communist countries had shown, he warned, that even the complete nationalization of all means did not result in "economic democracy". It led instead to a most rigorous economic dictatorship, giving rise to new forms of economic exploitation and inequality. The only alternative, he believed, was "economic decentralization." As to what would be the essential features of a decentralized economy in India, J.P. suggested the following:

(i) It must be a "small machine and labour intensive economy", care being taken to constantly improve the efficiency and productivity of the small machine without adding mush to its cost.

(ii) There must be regional surveying and planning so that resources of a particular region might be utilized to the full to satisfy the needs of that region, though, of course, surpluses, of one region should continue to be exchanged for those of other regions.

(iii) There must be launched a programme of rural industrialization so that every village or at least every small group of villages was developed as an "agro-industrial community" based on organic blending of agriculture and industry.

(iv) The organizational pattern of decentralized industry should be such as to keep it free from both bureaucratization and exploitation.
The institutions of Panchayat Raj should play an important part in the development of such economy.\footnote{32}

J.P. thus advocated a complete reorganization of economy, the creation of which would require a new machine technology as well as “a new socio-economic technology”. That would lead not only to a “decentralized economy” and make it more democratic, “but it would also bring immediate benefit to the masses”. This would ensure employment on a mass scale and a production of wealth in a manner, that would ensure its wide distribution and would make wage-goods immediately available to the ordinary consumers.

J.P. laid stress on “Need for Rural Industrialization.” While addressing the 15\textsuperscript{th} Sarvodaya Sammelan in April 1961 he expressed satisfaction with the fact that two Five Years Plans had led to an increase in the national income of as much as 40\%. He pointed out, however, that there had been no corresponding improvement in the condition of the common people. Moreover, the economic experts and planners of the government, in their enthusiasm for copying the methods and techniques of economic organization prevailing in Europe, did not pay any heed to the ideals of regional self-sufficiency and economic decentralization. Therefore, “the results were disastrous”. He emphasized on the well known but cruel reality that ‘The obstinate fact of poverty, unemployment, starvation and scarcity persist shamelessly.” It was strongly asserted that all our fanciful theories were wrong or out-of-date and that by insisting upon humanization of economics we acting as sheer romantics. The people wanted food and clothing and wanted to live differently from
animals. For that purpose there was no other way except to launch "a massive programme of rural industrialization."\(^{33}\)

M.N. Roy, like J.P. after discarding parliamentary democracy, presented his own model of ‘Organized Democracy’ or ‘Radical Democracy’. Roy's conception of organized democracy is based on decentralization and elimination of political party. Under this new system power would be in the hands of people who would actively participate in the Government of the country. This vague desire had been expressed in *Constitution of Free India- A Draft* and in the *New Humanism* written by M.N. Roy.

In Roy's scheme of Organised Democracy, there is no place for political parties. The basic unit of organized democracy is people's committee which is an elected body of a small local community. Roy erected the structure of partyless democracy through the mechanism of people’s committees. There will be decentralization and diffusion of political power in the society. He wrote, “Seats of effective political power being located throughout the length and breadth of society (through local people’s committees). The state will become coterminous with society and become an instrument of human freedom instead of its enemy.”\(^{34}\) Roy has given the supreme status to the individual in the society. He wrote, “No scheme of decentralization is likely to work unless there is a philosophical revolution and the individual has known that he is the architect of his own destiny.” In his scheme of partyless democracy, the leaders will function as guides, friends and philosophers of the people rather than their would be rulers.\(^{35}\)
Roy gave a concrete shape to his vision of ideal democracy in a Draft Constitution. He felt that as people's power grew in a country, the existing political parties would become irrelevant. Keeping this thing in mind he dissolved his Radical Democratic Party in December, 1948. The second chapter of the Draft Constitution deals with the composition, organization and functions of people's committees. Every village, town and city will have local people's committees. To Roy, the foundation of the state is organized democracy, and all the sovereign power is to be expressed through these people's committees, but all authority is to emanate from the people.36

Above the people's committees, there will be structure of subdivisional and district people's committees. The subdivisional people's committee will be composed of delegates from each local people's committee in the subdivision, and the district people's committee will be composed of five delegates from each subdivisional people's committee. These subdivisional and district committees will perform the function of the local self-government. The local people's committees will remain sovereign primary organs of democratic authority and power. At the provincial level, there will be a Provincial People's Council, composed of the Governor and Deputies of the people, which will be the highest authority in the province. The governor and Deputies will be elected for five years and 4 years respectively by universal adult suffrage. The Provincial People's Council will exercise executive as well as legislative powers, and there shall be no separation of powers. Like parliamentary democracy there shall be a council of ministers. At the apex of Roy's structure
of organized democracy will be supreme People's Council which will give final sanction to all legislative and executive acts of the government. From the whole of the above structure of organized democracy, it is obvious that his model resembles to a great extent to J.P's model of partyless democracy as it starts by giving maximum power to people's committees and minimum power at the apex Supreme Peoples Council.

For the attainment of his ideal of partyless democracy he was both for a new political and economic model. According to Roy, Radical democracy presupposes the economic reorganization of society. "To begin with, the economic life of society must be progressively freed from the paralyzing and corrupting control of vested interests. The economic reorganization of society should be "as to eliminate the possibility of exploitation of man, progressive satisfaction of material necessities is the precondition for the individual members of society unfolding their intellectual and other finer human attributes." In this economy the production would be for use and the distribution according to human needs. This society would be a planned society. He thus observed that, "The new society, being founded on reason and knowledge, will necessarily be planned. But it will be planning with the freedom of the individual as its main objective. The new society will be democratic-politically, as well as culturally. It will be democracy capable of defending itself."

J.P. was aware that the desired reconstruction of polity and economy might perhaps be idealistic, even utopian. He would not, however, consider
that to be a disqualification. The achievement of that ideal would be a “Colossal task”. Thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of voluntary workers would be needed over a number of years to accomplish it. Since the task was one of “Social engineering”, this would require the help of the State, of scientists, of experts, educationists, businessmen, experimenters of men and women; of young and old. It would be a “task of dedication, of creation of self-discovery.”

M.N. Roy also believed like J.P that change from party politics to politics without parties (from parliamentary democracy to organized democracy) would not take place in one or two days. The change would be brought about gradually by raising the intellectual level of the people. In a lecture he stated:

It does without saying that this change-over cannot take place from today to tomorrow; nor will an entire country discard the old practice and adopt the new one all at once. It will be a process, and the process itself will be uneven. This change-over from party-politics to democratic politics will be brought about gradually by raising the intellectual level of the people, by quickening their sense of self-respect and self-reliance. Therefore, democracy is not possible without education.39

In the transition period, he preferred parliamentary democracy to a dictatorship. In the transitional period, there should be provision for men of intelligence, creative genius, integrity, wisdom and moral excellence occupying top place in the state. According to Roy, in this transitionary phase, these
spiritually freemen would guide and lead the functioning of governmental machinery. Here M.N. Roy's views are more akin to J.P. who also in the transitional phase felt need of intelligentsia to lead the functioning of governmental machinery.

Speaking about the programme of the Total Revolution of which the formation of People's Committees was a part, J.P. side that it might to be several generations to realize it. In a statement issued on April 30, 1997, he said, "I know that the attainment of such a high objective (of Total Revolution) is possible only when several generations strive for it increasingly with a will." Like M.N. Roy, J.P., was also of the view that education was a prerequisite for the transformation of existing democratic system into the communitarian democracy or participatory democracy.

J.P. gave education the prime importance in his scheme of new model of partlyless democracy. According to him, "education of the people, understood in the widest sense of the term is an essential condition for the success of the experiment." J.P. regarded education as the most powerful means for creating self-regulated enlightened classes and the stateless society of his concept. He did not like the present system of education, which according to him, was responsible for the accumulated sense of injustice, grievances, dissatisfaction and outbreak of violence in the society. In his article, Face to Face, published in 1970, he expressed his resentment with the present system of education which is, "responsible for the accumulated sense of injustice, grievance and hurt among the poor and downtrodden that is now
seeking its outlet in violence. Responsible again are the system of education and the nature of planning that are producing an ever-expanding army of ill-educated, frustrated and unemployed youth and that are accentuating economic disparities and leading to further polarization of classes.\textsuperscript{41}

J.P. believed that the primary aim of education should be to impart knowledge and training that is, it should aim at preparing the youth to earn his livelihood independently. Speaking at the convocation of the Mysore University on November 29, 1965, J.P. observed, “While the aim of education is to impart knowledge and training, it is universally agreed that its no lesser aim is to make man human, i.e., a better human being... Much has been done to understood and change man’s environment but so little to understand and change man himself.” According to him, the true function of education would be to build a bridge between that inner and outer knowledge of individual so as to achieve a synthesis of understanding. It would lead to a common goal. He said, “When that happens, education might come into its own and be able to perform its true function of making both man and his environment, so that the outward and inward activities of man might come to be correlated and oriented to a common goal.”\textsuperscript{42}

He was of the view that the education should be practical as well as theoretical. The students should go to villages and do some social work. The practical experience of village life would help them to develop their personality. He emphasized on rural education, which would be non-bookish, practical and technical education, with special emphasis on training in
agricultural techniques. It would include large scale practical adult education. He believed that this type of education would develop in the youth the qualities of co-operation and brotherhood.

He expected the educators of the people to come out from all possible quarters. He thus observed:

This education can best be imparted by disinterested, nonpartisan agencies, engaged in social service or tasks of rural development. Political parties might also make a great contribution in this respect, provided they addressed themselves to the task in a non-partisan spirit. Perhaps the best way for them would be to create a common agency through which to carry on this work. Government officers and agencies might also do useful work in this sphere. Schools, libraries, co-operative societies have an important role to play here.43

He thus suggested the formation of a "non-party and purely educative body of voters called the All India Voters Association, or a centre jointly set up and conducted by the Union Ministry of Community Development, the All India Panchayat Perished, other All India Local Self-Government Organizations, Sarva Seva Sangh and other all India rural service agencies."

In his model of 'Organized Democracy', or 'Partyless Democracy', M.N. Roy like J.P. also gave prominent place to education. He thus observed that organized democracy would only be successful when the citizens would be politically conscious and with a high degree of political articulation, people's committees would be the school for the political and civic education of the
citizen. He further observed that education was a precondition for the success of democracy. Roy maintained that the political parties neglect the factor of education, because they can easily sway the backward uneducated and ill-informed electorate. Believing in the innate obligation of the political parties to educate the masses, he himself transformed his political party into a cultural and educational movement. He stood for a philosophical revolution, without which, he said, "no social change in the direction of greater freedom is possible." \(^{44}\)

Further Roy observed that at the time of election campaign, masses may be educated. He said, "On the eve of an election, when various parties will make big promises to catch votes, the electorate shall be advised and helped to examine the promises and vote intelligently. That will mean political education." He further, "On the same occasion, the people should be told that they are not obliged to vote for this or that party; that they can just as well as vote for a logically nominated candidate who will be their own man known to them, and therefore, can be controlled more easily."

By education, Roy did not imply reading and writing or primary or traditional higher or scientific education but the ability and training of individual to develop and realize his own potentiality, rationality and responsibility. Explaining his idea of education, he said, "It is the process of raising the intellectual level of the people." In the same lecture, he stated, "Education for democracy does not consist in teaching just as reading and writing, but in making people conscious of their humanness, in making them
conscious of their right to exist as human beings, in decency and dignity. Education means to help them to think, to apply their reason.” In another lecture, he stated:

What is needed is different kind of education, an education which will not be imparted with the purpose of maintaining any given status quo, but with the sole purpose of making the individuals of a community conscious of their potentialities, help them to think rationally and judge for themselves, and promote their critical faculties by applying it to problems confronting them.45

Thus he felt convinced that education must create faith in a man in himself, and he must be made conscious that the present social order is his own creation and has power to create a net social order.

During the Total Revolution phase, J.P. advocated the formation of People’s Committee as a part of the work for Total Revolution. He suggested organization of People’s Committees in each Assembly constituency polling-booth. These People’s Committees would consist of non-party members with non-caste and non-class attitudes of mind, pledged to act as watch-dogs of democracy and people’s rights as well as duties. There should be some representation of students and youth of that area. He further maintained, “Each People’s Committee from each polling-booth should send one representative selected by general consensus to an Assembly Constituency of People’s Committee.”

At another place, J.P. suggested to organize Gram Sabha in the countryside and neighbourhood and work councils in the cities and towns. The
Gram Sabhas could be comprised of all adult residents of the village. In the urban areas, J.P. maintained neighbourhood councils made up of a hundred families living in the neighbourhood of one another. He further observed, “In factories, offices, educational institutions and other work places ‘communities of work’ may be formed on the shop, office or any other convenient basis, for a participative manner of deliberation, decision and action.” According to J.P. these Sabhas would “meet regularly, discuss their common problems and evolve cooperative and collective forms of action to manage their affairs.” In the context of State Assembly elections, J.P. suggested the formation of Gram Sabha Delegates Council. It would be formed by the elected delegates of Gram Sabhas. The Gram Sabha Delegates Council would meet in the central place of the constituency before the elections to select its candidates for the State Assembly. The decisions of the Gram Sabhas or the Delegates Council would be taken by general consensus or by the process of elimination. The Gram Sabha Delegates Council would continue to function until the next election. It would keep contact with the Gram Sabhas and keep in touch with the M.L.A. 46

In his new model of ‘Partlyless Democracy’ in place of Parliamentary Democracy, J.P. gave the full sovereign rights to the individuals including the right to recall their representatives. He thus asserted, “The right of recall is the people’s birth right, whether it is enshrined in the Constitution or not.” In another place, he remarked, “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.\textsuperscript{47}

Soon after the Lok Sabha elections and establishment of the Janata Sarkar in 1977, J.P. appealed the formation People’s Committee in all the villages and \textit{mohallas} in the country. Thus, he believed, would enable the citizens to exercise increasing control over the local functionaries of the State and would lay the foundation of a participatory democracy. According to J.P. the village people’s committee would be the foundation committee. It would consists of 5 to 15 members elected by general consensus of all the adult citizens of the village. Next to People’s committees there would be Panchayat people’s committee, which would be formed by the convenors and the representatives of each Village People’s Committee. The next would be the Block People’s Committee consisted of conveners and five representatives of each Panchayat People’s Committee. The Assembly Constituency People’s Committee would be formed by the convenors and 4 or 5 representatives of Panchayat People’s Committees, not of the Block People’s Committee. The next the Lok Sabha Constituency, People’s Committee, like the Assembly Constituency People’s Committee would be organized by the convenors and representatives of the Panchayat People’s Committees.\textsuperscript{48}

Like, the countryside People’s Committees, there would be Urban People’s Committee too. Neighbourhood People’s Committee would be the Foundation People’s Committee. With integration of convenors and representatives of Neighbourhood Committees, Mohalla People’s Committees
would be formed and with the integration of conveners and representatives of *Mohalla People's* Committee, the Ward People's Committee would be formed with the integration of representatives and convenors of the wards. But the Constituency People's Committee would consist of convenors and representatives of all the wards in the constituency. The representatives of the professional organization, e.g. lawyers, doctors, teachers, correspondents organizations should also be invited in the Wards or City People's Committee.

J.P. had been in the thick of party politics when the priority was the glorious struggle for freedom. At that time all the selfishness, weakness, factionalism were covered, pushed under the carpet and did not appear a big hurdle. However, when after independence, it became a struggle for economic development and political power all the diseases of politics, petty jealousies and strife come to the surface. J.P. had a moral revulsion against it. The route to development and economic justice lay through the use of State power for bringing about radical change. But Gandhiji and like him J.P. considered struggle for political power as a corrupting influence. In fact, J.P. had no taste for any public office, he was amoralist driven into politics. Many before him had viewed party-politics as the last refuge of a scoundrel. When that struggle showed its ugly face he tried to reason out why it should be so. That led him to question the fundamental assumption of parliamentary democracy.

Capitalism and the philosophy of liberation which was the basis of the western model of parliamentary democracy and competitive struggle for political power were not major issues of theoretical examination for him. What
he focused on was the fact that given the socio-economic structure of India and its cultural ethos the existing political arrangement would certainly accentuate both exploitation and hypocrisy and amorality. Hence he talked about his utopian idea of “Partyless Democracy.”

The parliamentary democracy was rejected because of the alleged emphasis on industrialization and urbanization. The alternative to that was going back to villages. Adi H. Doctor observed that J.P’s crusade for “Partyless Democracy” reached its peak when in 1959, “he advocated a utopian political model similar to that advocated by such federal anarchists as Bakunin and other.”

It is a pertinent question whether going back to the village would be an answer to the challenges of the present society. J.P. sought to have forgotten that the present is an age of organization of vast bureaucracies necessary for management of industrialization keeping the war machine in a world of suspicion and cruel struggle for power.

As an alternative to democracy based on adult suffrage J.P. wanted to go back to the primitive village communes. He had emphasized that the village alone could be the natural and sensible habitat of man and the primary unity of social and political organizations. He was emphatic about his view that self-government, sharing and democracy and a harmonious blending of culture was possible only in smaller committees. He, therefore, thought the existing towns and cities should better be broken up into smaller communities and their proliferation be stopped. People should live in small agro-industrial and self-
governed communities, producing mostly for self and local consumptions on
small machines.

The political structure envisaged in his framework was of a Village
Assembly serving as the most important political institution. That appeared to
be the best alternative to the highly centralized, monolithic top where struggle
for power became an end in itself. As to how would such a struggle be avoided
at the local level he suggested the choice of the executive by consensus or
lottery. J.P. did not bother whether consensus in an unequal society would not
mean another way of strengthening of the hegemony of the already privileged
sections in the rural society and thus further accentuation of disparities and
exploitation. Explaining the impracticability of consensus model, Achutanand
Prasad called these ideas as “desperate...theoryization.”

As to the economic re-organization he was in favour of voluntary
limitation of wants and rejection of the philosophy of unlimited material
progress. This he considered as essential for the achievement and preservation
of democracy. Achutanand Prasad accused J.P. of turning back the hands of the
clock. That, as he charged, would keep India economically backward and make
it ‘a client state” of the imperialists and neocolonialists and just a source of raw
materials for them. J.P. seemed to have ignored that in this modern age despite
the various defects of economic centralization and planning, there was no easy
way of going away from it.

J.P’s ideas about the nature and necessity of political party as an
instrument of economic and social change did not remain consistent as we have
seen. In his youth days he was the protagonist of party system; during Bhoodan years he talked about ‘partyless democracy’, but again when he led the Bihar Movement he appeared to recognize the need of parties. When he launched an all out effort for the formation of a new party as an alternative to the Congress it caused some misgivings and hopes that he had given up his earlier stand of keeping out of party-politics. It was thought in some quarters that he may actually join and lead the new party. In order to remove these misconceptions J.P. made a categorical statement:

But I must say in this connection that my determination not to participate in party-politics remains undiluted. I will not fight any election nor will I hold any office. I never cared for power because I have relied on people’s power instead of state power.\textsuperscript{51}

He was, however, getting convinced that for the success of parliamentary democracy there should be a strong opposition. He had always thought it was essential to have strong opposition and often worked for it. In his Prison Diary, he pointed out that ‘attempt to form such a party were not successful in the past. But whenever there was a movement in that direction I always welcomed it.’ Since Partyless Democracy appeared a distant goal and meanwhile parliamentary democracy had to be worked well, he reconciled himself to the idea of creating an alternative to the Congress. But when it was alleged that as a leader of the Bihar Movement he was working for partyless democracy, he had to make his position very clear. This he did at a Press Club
Meeting in New Delhi on October 31, 1974. He explained his objective and his attitude towards his earlier programme as under:

What I am trying to do is to give some sort of organized form to the upsurge of the people in Bihar and to give direction to it. The result of that will not be establishment of partyless democracy but a democracy which has parties. But these parties will be much better controlled by people themselves.52

Adi H. Doctor had a point in his analysis that the emergency and its after efforts became a second major "water-shed" and led J.P. once again to take a more realistic and appreciative view of the role of political parties. "... thanks to the emergency and to the "Indira Hatao" movement, J.P's views seem to have undergone some modification. He observed, Vithaldas Bodani expressed the view that the ineluctable conclusion of J.P. was that for the rational consent the participation of the people had to be both moral and intelligent, guided by the values of democracy, by a sense of their rights and responsibilities and by the realization that they were the real source of all power. That belief, according to him was the reason for J.P's call for the cooperation of all non-congress political parties. "Parties and elections might be a better way of removing Indira Gandhi,"53 he told a B.B.C. correspondent in 1976. When he succeeded in dethroning Mrs. Gandhi and in brining desperated groups together into a Janata Party which captured power in 1977, J.P. termed it as a "political revolution" somewhat similar to his idea of reconstruction of the polity not without political parties but precisely with their help. Even in his Prison Diary J.P. had emphatically defined that the
participation of Opposition Parties in the movement was an "unmixed evil". Rather he asserted that it had strengthened the commitment to "Total Revolution". "The parties undergo a seachange as the get committed to total revolution."

Adi H. Doctor thus concluded that to J.P. Political Parties at least seemed, an essential part of infrastructure of modern democracy" and that "politics and political power play a greater role in underdeveloped contries as compared to the developed..."54 How far his realization of the importance of political parties and the natural struggle for political power was commensurate with his view of Total Revolution remains a moot point. That towards the end of his life he was equally disgusted with the hypocrisy and ugly sectarian and selfish faction fighting within the Janata circus must have impressed upon him the need of a more serious thinking on what and now of his programme. But then his falling health left him no time to think.
References


3. Ajit Bhattacharjea, op. cit., p. 103.

4. Ibid., pp. 117-18.


8. Ibid.,


13. Ibid., p. 138.


16. Ibid., p. 45.


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21. Ibid.,


25. Ibid., p. 68.

26. Ibid., p. 78.

27. Ibid., pp. 78-79.


29. Ibid., p. 25.

30. Ibid., p. 29.


32. Ibid., p. 21-22.


38. Ibid., p. 48.


45. Ibid., pp. 158-59.


