Chapter VI

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN AND HIS TOTAL REVOLUTION
Total Revolution means complete change. Change of the system of society in all aspects. J.P. wanted to establish this type of system. On June 5, 1974, J.P. introduced a new concept in the vocabulary of Indian politics and political ideas. This was "Total Revolution". "Friends, This is a Total Revolution," he declared at the mammoth public meeting at Patna. Its major immediate objective, however, was a struggle for the dissolution of the Bihar Legislative Assembly and overthrow of Indira Gandhi's government.

This proclaimed objective of complete transformation of society was, it appears, born out of a rationalization for mass action for the overthrow of Indira Gandhi's regime. "Total Revolution," however, was not merely a negative concept. It was advocated more as a positive concept for establishing a nonviolent egalitarian society as envisaged by Gandhiji. J.P. was confident that his movement's aim was not only a change of government but rather a change of the whole system. "We want the entire system changed but do not want the ruling party to be simply replaced by the Jana Sangh or the B.L.D.," he declared. He proclaimed at the All India Youth Conference in Allahabad on 22 June, 1974: "My interest is not the capture of power but in the control of power by the people." Explaining his objective again in January 1975, he observed:
The aim of the total revolution is a radical, social, economic, political, educational, cultural and ethical change. We are trying to bring about these changes by people’s action and this will be a long-drawn-out process. Therefore, I have called this movement a continuing revolution.3

He did not want this movement to be reduced to just an “Indira Hatao” affair, because he said it was not against any individual but against a system. J.P. was, however, confident that:

If Mrs. Gandhi does not take any steps to change radically the system and persists in standing in the path of revolutionary struggle she cannot complain, if in its onward march, the movement pushes her aside with so much else.4

Thus talking of the revolutionary nature of the struggle, he emphasized the “internal and external change, changing the entire social frame from within and also from the outside, individuals as well as institution.”5 Whenever a movement for limited ends was started, it should not, he asserted, remain confined to the immediate objectives. Efforts should, rather, be made to reconcile it with revolutionary goals. So talking of the revolutionary aims in relation to the Bihar Movement he maintained:

My plea in relation to the Bihar Movement is that it should not remain confined to the original demands of the students or even to the political changes, but it should encompass the totality of human relations and social organizations.6
Need of Total Revolution

Now a pertinent question arises why did J.P. advance the concept of “Total Revolution”? In an answer to this question he observed, that there were various inter-connected ills in the Indian Society like chronic poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, corruption, wide gap between the rich and the poor, unemployment and ills of the present educational system. These problems were of such complex nature that these could not be tackled separately in an isolated manner. When one tried to touch one problem it had to be tackled with all its inter-connected and inter-related aspects. J.P. was aware of the complex nature of these problems. So he was trying to educate his followers that these ills could not be removed without an all comprehensive revolution. He himself raised this question:

How is it possible to fulfil them without a complete political, economic, social transformation in society?"

He was convinced that the capitalist path was no answer to the solution of these deep-rooted ills as the nature of the ills in the Indian Society which was predominantly agricultural were quite different from those of the Western countries. Thus for the solution of these ills, unlike the Western countries, there was a need of material as well as spiritual solution.

He also discarded Marxian method for bringing about transformation in the society after becoming disenchanted with the Soviet experience following
the death of Lenin. At the bottom of that solution lay “over-centralization” and “Total statism.” And Statism, to J.P., was not the answer.

J.P. discarded the Vinobian technique in the late seventies for it had been a dismal failure. Jayaprakash Narayan became aware of the inadequacy of the movement when he was faced with the Naxalite threat to the lives of two Sarvodaya workers in Muzaffarpur district. He came face to face with the ugly reality to which Vioba’s technique was hardly answer. From the one experience of Musahari which he later on collected in his pamphlet, face to Face, his disenchantment became quite obvious:

The emergence of the Naxalite danger to the lives of our workers appeared to me to be God sent. I had been feeling for quite some time past that our movement was losing its fire, and we, its workers, were becoming stale and flabby of spirit.⁸

Thus after rejecting the capitalist path, the Marxist path and Vinobian method, he looked for some other alternative for complete transformation in the society. Hence he thought of “Total Revolution”.

Though J.P. proclaimed his “Total Revolution” on 5th June, 1974 at the head of the Bihar Movement but the idea was evolving in his mind for quite some time earlier. He had not discussed this concept in a coherent manner and in all details at any one place. Attempts to clarify and elaborate this concept were made in various speeches, or in interviews after intervals. This was also discussed in J.P’s Prison Diary and J.P’s Jail Life. Later on Brahmananda, J.P’s 185
Private Secretary collected all his relevant speeches in book, *Towards Total Revolution* in four volumes.

A few years earlier, addressing a conference of voluntary organization in Delhi on June 8, 1969, J.P. had stressed that it was necessary to place before the people a programme of nonviolent mass action. He had observed that “Society cannot change in instalments. There has to be a mass revolution, a movement and a massive change.”9 The idea of revolutionary change was obviously there in his mind. During the student movement in Gujarat also he was growing conscious of a developing revolutionary situation in the country. While making an appeal to the Gujarat students on February 3, 1974, he observed, “There is another 1942 movement in sight.” He elaborated his point in a message to the people of Bihar. “What can people do when constitutional methods and established democratic institutions fail to respond to their will or to solve their burning problems? “he asked. Giving answer to this question he justified the resort of the people to “unconstitutional but powerful means to assert themselves and to bend the power that be to their will.”10

**Meaning of Total Revolution**

But what did he meant this romantic idea of Total Revolution? J.P. did not do a serious work on theorizing about it. He had no time for it, nor perhaps the patient mind of a theoretician. He was a man deeply disturbed about the much too complex social malaise, and very impatient for speedy action. The nature of that action was to be what he was capable of; what he thought could
be started. It was the primacy of action, here and now, and with forces available to him that he wanted to work. He was, however, not to be satisfied with only change of government. He wanted fundamental changes in society. This is what led him to impose some high architectonic design on a, rather mundane, rather ephemeral, political movement.

Being not a theorist he had no pre-planned ideas about the nature, techniques and agencies of the revolution. He did not define the content of "Total Revolution" and found it to be not only difficult but also unnecessary. He himself explained, “I have been asked to define the socio-economic aims of the struggle” and added, “but I doo not think that I and my colleagues in Bihar have a fair idea of the broad social, economic, political and cultural frame for the movement.” He further added, “I do not think a detailed socio-economic programme such as that of a political party particularly of the left, is advisable for the movement.” J.P. was taking advantage of the developing objective conditions in Bihar and presented his programme of “Total Revolution.” He believed that every revolution decided its own course; a Lenin or J.P. could only tell whether there existed some potential for that or not. He explained thus:

I look upon this movement as the beginning of revolution. I have been saying that no leader in history, no matter how great, whether it was Lenin, Mao or Gandhiji, made a revolution. Revolutions happen. All that the leader
does give it a direction and control it. Otherwise it dissipates itself and there is a reaction...  

When once J.P. used this concept, however, he was bound to explain it. He himself maintained that different interpretations could be imparted to this “Total Revolution” depending upon “the needs of the time” and “circumstances”. Various prominent leaders also requested, J.P. from time to time, to explain the concept. Acharya J.B. Kripalani thought that the word “Total” smacked of “totalitarianism”. Chandra Shekhar was an ardent follower of J.P. publicly admitted that he did understand and grasp J.P’s concept of “Total Revolution”. J.P. explained the word “Total” in the sense of a “comprehensive revolution”. At one place while explaining the meaning of the term “Total” he maintained that the word “Total” in itself would include all aspects of individual and social life even those which he had forgotten to mention. These all would be effected by the revolutionary movement. Further, by giving reference of social history, he observed, that whenever there was any revolutionary upheaval in history if it succeeded it revolutionized everything, whatever be its main springs “political”, “Economic” “Class Struggle” or anything else and left nothing in its old form. Thus there would be brought about a “generalized change” in some spheres more, and in some other spheres less. This was what he meant by the word “Total” in his mind.

A “Revolution” in order to be total had to perform both positive and negative functions. But negative functions he meant the destruction of the
foundation of the old system whatever might be the nature of the society whether feudal, capitalist or feudal-cum-capitalist. But the positive aspect which included the building up of the new society was more important. He called all the earlier three revolutions, the French, the Russian and the Chinese as only half revolution. He further clarified that though, in all these revolutions the old structures had been demolished, these had failed to build up a new society. Hence these could not be called “Total”.15

In his Prison Dairy he elaborated his ideas. Revolution he wrote, was a continuation of seven revolutions (Sapta Kranti), social, economic, political, cultural ideological or intellectual, educational and spiritual. He further maintained that their number might be increased or decreased. To reduce their number to less than seven, he observed, for instance, the “cultural revolution might include “educational and ideological” revolutions. Further if “cultural” were to be used in an anthropological sense, it might embrace all other revolutions, Likewise “Social Revolution” in the Marxian context, covered even “economic and political revolutions.” J.P. further believed that in increase their number each of the seven revolutions could be broken up into small parts. For instance “economic revolution” might be split up into industrial, agricultural, technological revolutions, etc. Similarly “intellectual revolution” might be split up into two that is “Scientific and Philosophical revolutions.” Even spiritual or it could be viewed as made up of the moral and the spiritual or it could be looked upon as part of the cultural. However, as he maintained, the word “Total” itself would include all these revolutions.16
The Moral-Spiritual Revolution

First of all it is essential to discuss the moral and spiritual revolution as it directly relates to the character of man, which is considered to be the most important aspect of human life because without which not ideal society can be built up. According to the materialists, man is an animal. But this is not a correct view. In fact, man in both matter and spirit, and his life, to be worthy of existence, must fulfill both his material and spiritual needs. For man’s existence in this word, it is necessary that his basic material needs must be fulfilled. He must be provided with food, clothing, dwelling, etc. Food should be adequate, simple and nourishing, but it must not be excessive. Explaining his views on the moral and spiritual revolution. He wrote in his Prison Diary. “I do not have asceticism in mind. That is for the spiritual seekers. For the average man, for all of us, except those who accept asceticism as a way of spiritual perfection or aim, a full material satisfaction is itself a spiritual life. Craving excess, bad means to gather wealth, these are anti-spiritual.”

Ideological or Intellectual Revolution

Jayaprakash believed that no revolution for reconstructing the socio-economic and political framework of society could be brought about successfully without first making the people aware of the propriety and utility of it. Hence, he visualized the necessity of an ideological or intellectual revolution for building a new social order. As far as J.P’s views on new social order are concerned he in consistence with the philosophy of Sarvodaya, advocated for a sort of moral and spiritual anarchism’, a coercion free social
order in which the people would be developed and enlightened enough to keep themselves on the right path. In this order, the government would not be totally absent but would continue to exist like the alarming chain of a railway compartment to be used cautiously.

Since, the essence of a revolution lies in the revolution of values and society changes with change in men, it is considered to be a necessary step in Jayaprakash's technique of revolution to convert the people to new ideas. Thus the conversion of the people can proceed only slowly as people have to adjust their life to the new human values and ways of life. While there should be a sense of urgency about a revolution, the process of change should not be hastened unduly to avoid any kind of confusion. Another important feature of the process of peaceful revolution, according to Jayaprakash, is that "though the new ideas and values appear difficult to practice a phased programme is so contrived that even ordinary persons are able by steps to advance towards the seemingly difficult goal". Illustrating his viewpoint he wrote that "Vonoba through his movement is propagating the idea we are only trustees of 'our' properties and, therefore, entitled to no more that what society gives us as our share". Therefore, he is exhorting us to live as trustees and share what we have with others. In the present circumstances, this appears to be a very difficult road to travel. Therefore, Vinoba has made the pilgrim's journey easy by asking him first to share only a small part of his possessions. Even this should have been difficult for the individual if he were asked to do it alone. The moral life is difficult to live in the midst of immortality. It requires greater effort and
higher moral resources. But when all around one is making a similar effort, it becomes easy even for weak characters to raise themselves. Therefore, the programme of "Conversion, though directed to the individual has a mass character, that is to say whole groups and masses of men are sought to be touched and moved by it." At the same time, the programme of self-help and self-government is to be so devised as to make the people, moved by the new ideas and values, learn to manage their own affairs and co-operate voluntarily to "create new institutions and forms of social life."\textsuperscript{19}

"This is a new technique of social change of which the world has had no experience yet," remarked Jayaprakash. Thus, he accorded primary importance to the power of ideas, and his technique has the support of many thinkers in the west, including Bertrand Russel, who rightly remarked, "The power of thought, in the long run, is greater than any other human power."\textsuperscript{20} However, J.P. did not minimize the importance and the need of creating a congenial atmosphere for the acceptance of new values by the society. It is to be admitted that even the most independent minded persons are not completely immune from the influence of their environment, while the common man is more or less at its mercy. Hence the process of devolution must be double-sided. Simultaneous attempts should be made to transform the individual on the one hand and to change the social structure on the other. Nevertheless, he seemed to be inclined to lay a greater stress on the transformation or conversion of the individuals to the new human values-a necessary step for bringing about a revolutionary change in the existing social set-up.
Cultural Revolution

Jayaprakash's cultural revolution aims at bringing about a radical change in the values of human life and the general attitude of man towards his fellow-beings living in the society of which he himself is a member as well as in the outside world. He was of the opinion that merely a change in the external structure of society would not be of much value unless it went along with the change of heart and attitude of a common man. Thus, he meant by cultural revolution a kind of moral revolution, because he thought that without changing the habits and ideas of men, setting up of an ideal society would not be possible. When he remarked in his paper, written in 1974 on the "Various Aspects of the Total Revolution," that when Lord Buddha left his house, leaving his dear son in the lap of his sleeping wife, he had set out on a journey for bringing about cultural revolution in the then society. He thereby meant indirectly a moral revolution necessary for revitalizing the life of man and the society by embracing certain moral values.

He was aware of the ideological impart of the cultural revolution started in China by Mao. As far as Mao's cultural revolution is concerned he essentially want to bring revolution in the country side and by the rural masses. Unlike Marx who believed that the revolution would be brought about by the working class, Mao Tse-Tung believes that the peasantry in China and other Asian countries is quite capable of bringing about cultural revolution. In China the Communist Party which emerged after the cultural revolution was no longer a bureaucratic steel-frame ruling over the country in its own right, as the
Communist Party in the Soviet Union does, but responsible ultimately to the people, which virtually means responsibility to Mao Tse-Tung, who now emerges as reflecting not the will of Communist Party, a claim Stalin had made, but the will of the entire Chinese People.\textsuperscript{21}

Social Revolution

By Social revolution, Jayaprakash meant reconstruction of the structure of society. For this purpose, he wanted regrouping of villages-small villages to be merged and large villages to be redistributed. As Jayaprakash was fully committed to Sarvodaya, he wanted to reframe the social structure on Sarvodaya lines. Sarvodaya is against the present society with its social and economic inequalities, its spirit of competition based on the belief of antagonism of individual interests, its worship of money, and duality in the conduct of people at home and outside. Sarvodaya aims to reconstruct society on the basis of truth, nonviolence, physical labour, non-possession, tolerance and equality. In such a society there would be no distinctions of any kind, there would be an all round development of all.

J.P. further maintained that most of the inequality in society, social or economic, is born of the low regard in which physical labour is held and of the high regard for mental work. The way to its removal lies in the intellectualization of the labourer and the labourisation of the intellect. Hence, Jayaprakash advocated a society in which none would be exempt from physical labour except for physical reason. Thus, as against the present tendency towards urbanization, Jayaprakash, as a Sarvodaya thinker, stood for a rural
civilization. He considered city life unhealth, because it lacks community feeling, and did not, permit contact with nature. Cities are 'human jungles', dense but devoid of feelings. But agriculture, he said, cannot stand alone and it has to be combined with handicrafts and industries, making the commodities agro-industrial.22

Explaining the various types of changes in the existing social set up, he observed, that in the Hindu Society "caste" was the predominant social evil. A total revolution would work for the 'eradication of caste' from the society. The caste system is a much criticized institution but it has survived all onslaughts of social reformers. Gandhiji and like him J.P. veered round to the view that good features of the caste system must be retained. It did not originally imply any feeling of high or low, any difference in payment or prohibition of inter-caste marriage. One solution which J.P. suggested, to remove this evil from the society was the 'advocacy of inter-caste marriage'. But later on he himself, felt that inter-caste marriage by itself was not a solution. Rather it must be an accompanying part of a large social revolution during the course of this social evil might undergo a change. He felt pained at the idea of politicization of caste and utilizing this evil frequently as a basis for fighting elections.

In fact, through social revolution Jayaprakash wanted to strike a synthesis of the new and the old social values. The new reorganized society would do away with the caste system, existing in the present form, but retain its healthy principals. In it, conflicts between difficult social groups on the basis of superiority or inferiority, caste, creed, faith and religion would be over, and all
the people would learn to live like real brothers and fellowbeings. In the new social set up social evils existing in the form of dowry system, child and forced marriages and ill-treatment of the fail sex by men, would also be done away with. Thus, Jayaprakash wanted to build up a classless society through social revolution in the sense that there would exist no class distinctions on the basis of superiority and inferiority, wealth and poverty, manual labour and intellectual labour, and that there would be no social and economic exploitation of one sex of people by another set of people.

Educational Revolution

At another time explaining another aspect of his “Total Revolution”, viz., “education” he maintained that he had used the term in its “widest sense.” In it he had included formal academic education, education through speech, writing, conversation, discussion, observation, etc. For the rural population which was mainly illiterate “education would have to be done by speaking, talking, demonstration, setting up an example and by all the various audiovisual means that science had placed at our disposal.”

Jayaprakash, in his message to the nation on 13 April 1977, coherently spelt out the major dimensions of Total Revolution. He thought of education, especially literacy, as one of the vital components of the new social order and underlined the imperative need for a radical transformation of the educational system and structure. He said, “coming to more modern spheres of life, such as education, it is time that the radical recommendations of the several education commissions, the Kothari Commission not being the last of them, are
implemented. Here we might follow the example of China in which all the schools and colleges were closed down and the students were sent to the villages and slums of the towns to impart the rudiments of education to every citizen, young or old.”

Coincident with this skeptical trend, a note of somewhat optimism was struck by Dr. P.C. Chunder, soon after he took over as the Education Minister in the Janata Government at the Centre in 1977. In a speech, he reflected a genuine concern and commitment to the launching of a massive programme to wipe out illiteracy from the country and to improve the impoverished environment of the rural areas. The current dichotomy between the urban elite and rural folks must be rectified and be replaced by something more meaningful. Rural India needs to be made riches, self-sufficient, self-regulated and an attractive place to live in. Its educated youth must get full opportunities for an all-around development of their life. Thus to Jayaprakash Narayan, the whole education should have a rural bias, in the context of Indian conditions, so that the villages might prosper and the urban people might keep the interests of village in their minds and cooperate with the villagers. The new education would provide a health and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village, and go a long way in eradicating poisoned relationship between the classes.

**Political Revolution**

Jayaprakash was not happy with the existing democratic system in India, based on Western style. He, like Gandhiji and Vinoba, saw a vision of a
new socio-political order and for its realization, he advocated for a peaceful Total Revolution. His political revolution was an attempt to reconstruct the present political structure and build up a new polity in its place, which he often called a 'participatory democracy'. How would the 'participatory democracy' be established? To what extent the interference of political parties would be minimized? In his books "A plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity" and "Swaraj for the people" he had dealt with all these ideas in detail. To elucidate all these an attempt has already been made in the preceding chapter on "Partlyless Democracy". Hence only a few remarks on the political revolution would be sufficient. Jayaprakash's ideal of a new polity verges on an anarchism, but it is of its own variety. He conceded that a fully stateless society was beyond the reach of man, and the goal of human endeavour could only be to reduce the powers and sphere of the state to the minimum. Hence, there was no question of abolishing the state at once. Its authority was only to be effected gradually till it became imperceptible, and this was to be achieved through the development of nonviolent power to the mass.

As regards partyless democracy, it may be stated that although Gandhiji had no liking for the working of political parties, he nowhere expressed himself in favour of partlyless democracy. But Jayaprakash had his own experiences of the pernicious effect of party-politics on this country, and hence he pleaded strongly in favour of a partlyless democracy. As Jayaprakash wanted to construct a new polity in India which, according to him, would be more or less a state-free (free from its coercive authority) and self regulated political
society, he contemplated in terms of bringing about peaceful political revolution by providing intellectual and moral training to the people. He knew that a new polity could not be built up in a day or two. For that, the people were to be made first conscious of their strength and the need of changing the present democratic system of the Western type. He strongly believed that without changing the prevalent democratic system and building a new polity in its place, the great human values of liberty, equality, brotherhood, peace and social justice could not be truly realized. Hence the need of Political Revolution.

**Economic Revolution**

So far as economic revolution is concerned J.P. maintained that large scale industrialization leads to the concentration of power, civil strife and ultimately to imperialism and war. Centralized production may be good for a country with a limited manpower, but in a country where manpower is available in abundance, it results in large scale unemployment, poverty and imbalances in society. Such a system cannot suit a country like India with the problem of unemployment and underemployment for its millions.

In view of all these facts, Jayaprakash became highly critical to large scale industrialism. And he contemplated for a new society, which would be a communitarian society, based on economic decentralization. Economic decentralization means that as far as possible all enterprises should be in the hands of individuals carried on not in factories but in their own houses. But this does not mean that he was against the use of modern science. According to
him, the decentralized industries would be allowed to make the utmost possible use of modern science. He saw no harm in utilizing the laws of Nature for the benefit of decentralized industries. In his own words, “Commercialization of science has to be replaced by humanization of science, instead of science being exploited for power and profit, it has to be used for peace and happiness.”

Thus J.P. was not happy with the present social order in which man was exposed to innumerable types of exploitation, violence was rampant in every sphere of life, and human ideals of freedom, equality, peace and brotherhood were kept in the utmost disregard.

Talking of his “economic revolution” at another place on September 9, 1975, he elaborated it with details of the desired strategy. It was observed “There should be work for every adult or head of the family (wife and minor and unmarried children and old parents, unemployed brothers or cousins and a minimum standard of living.” He was not in favour of large scale modern technology. “The industrial development should toe the line of medium industry, small industry and rural industry.” There was need of upgrading the technology in use in rural and small industries. Regarding the ownership pattern he felt that “larger enterprises” could be capitalist in pattern within certain restraints. But the general pattern should be “Public co-operation.” In “large establishments” worker’s ownership being not applicable, a “concept of social ownership” would have to be applied. In the larger sector both public and private or private limited company, private ownership might be allowed to continue. Moreover the private sector should have enough incentives to
produce, develop and grow and unnecessary restraints should be removed. The economic revolution, to him, implied both “change” and “new creation.”

The weaker sections of the community and minorities had an important role to play in his scheme of “Total Revolution.” J.P had rejected the Sarvodaya ideal and hope that the stronger sections would themselves feel their responsibilities and obligations towards the weaker sections. He, therefore, advised the weaker sections to organize themselves to claim their rights and privileges which had been imparted to them by law. Similarly the minorities must play their role. According to him “The minorities also are part of the weaker sections, not because they are educationally backward or socially backward but numerically they are in minority.”

J.P. certainly wished to bring about a large scale transformation in society, its norms, values and preferences. The scope of his Total Revolution was to be very wide as he said:

In the present context a Total Revolution should mean a revolution form the village upwards to the largest urban concentration. There must be a total change in civic-life, civic institutions, civic-relations and as we go beyond the sphere of civic-life we enter larger spheres of the state of national life; we have innumerable spheres, in which changes will have to be brought about.

The process of transformation of the society required change in its “social relations”, “institutions” and “processes” including a “revolution in customs, manners revolution in the individual’s life as well as in the life of the group and in the life of the society.”
All this change was possible through the active involvement of the people and new political framework in which the representatives were under the control of the people. He, therefore, stressed on the need for constituting people’s *samities* in every village panchayat up to the state level to work for Total Revolution. Only active participants in the struggle without any partisan outlook would join these *samities*. These *samities* would be essential to start work from the grassroot levels which was essential for establishing “*LokShakti*.” This would establish a true democracy which he believed must be a “Partyless Democracy.” This would also necessarily involve a change in the bureaucracy, one of sectors which had always resisted change.

Sachidanand while explaining “the concept and strategy” of Total Revolution as conceived by J.P., maintained that a “Total Revolution” would be that in which “Total Power” would transferred to the people at large. This gave a prominent place in the individual. He observed that “A revolution to be complete or total must affect a change in the system and also in the individual at the same time.” For the achievement of “Total Revolution” there should be change simultaneously in the political, economic and social structures and also in the individuals “intellectually”, “culturally”, “morally” and “spiritually.”

Obviously a major emphasis was put on the transformation of man. This was certainly under the influence of Gandhiji on J.P.

V.M. Tarkunde differentiating it from the Marxist revolution, called it a “Humanist Revolution, for statism was not the answer of the problem. Giving a predominant place to political freedom of the individual he maintained that
Total Revolution aimed at "the extension of freedom from political to the economic, social and cultural spheres of life, and not in the curtailment of political freedom for the sake of attaining economic freedom." The Humanist revolution was "total" since unlike Marxist revolution, it denied the primacy of economic transformation as a pre-condition of all-round progress of society.

J.P did not consider it necessary to draw the blueprint of the future society, nor did he outline the various stages of revolution. Instead he gave a long list of proposals. But he was convinced that the ultimate society which he envisaged would be non-exploitative, casteless and classless. And he believed that the social, economic, political and cultural frame of such a society would be based on Gandhian Plan or "Sarvodya frame."32

**Techniques of Total Revolution**

As to "How" this "Total Revolution" would be brought about and who would be in the vanguard, he was categorical. It had to be a militant nonviolent struggle and it had to be a struggle of all the people. It had to be a political struggle. Vinoba's non-political approach, he was acutely aware, was not destined to deliver the goods. He had then to go back to Gandhiji and rely upon the efficacy of his *Satyagraha*. "If democracy is found wanting and violence offers no solution, what then is the way out? To find the way we have to go back to Gandhiji...."33 Thus in the Bihar Movement he adopted Gandhian *Satyagraha* as the mode of popular struggle and that, he regarded, was the beginning for bringing about Total Revolution in the country.

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The path of violent struggle was rejected for he believed that violent revolution by its very nature turned out to be half-a-revolution. A revolution to be total had not only to destroy the old foundations of the old power structure but it had also to build a new one on a sound foundation. One big cause of failure of the Russian revolution was "the logic of violence." "Violent revolution destroys old order, but cannot build the new order... This is never the structure of people's power. The failure of the Russian Revolution is not the betrayal of the leaders, but logic of violence," it was observed. As against it "a nonviolent social revolution may lead to power at the ground level." J.P. rejected violence also because violence proceeds violence and "no sane society based upon justice, equality and democracy can be built up after a violent revolution." He also refuted a "generally considered" view that violent revolution was swift and sure. "It is neither". Taking France and Russia as solid examples, he observed, "It takes a long time, sometimes centuries, for a violent revolution to succeed, and when it does the aims of the revolution are thrust into the distant future to be achieved no one knows when." It was believed on the other hand that "a nonviolent revolution can be quicker than either revolution by constitutional means (if at all possible) or by violent methods."34

He, therefore, felt that it was an appropriate method particularly because his aim was to change the man, and violence, to him was unsuited for the purpose. Moreover the change brought about by violence would be only "superficial." The only way to achieve permanent social change was through nonviolence. A revolution, when nonviolent would not only change the ruling
classes but it also helped in changing the structures of the society and attitude of the citizens. A violent revolution on the other hand may change the rulers but it could not alter the structure. He definitely wanted something different in place of the coercive apparatus of the state though he did not specifically describe the alternative structural arrangements.

J.P. also talked about class struggle as a technique for bringing about revolution in the society. But his position regarding the existence, of classes in society was “vague” and “vacillating”. During his youth he had believed in the existence of different classes in society. Reference to “class struggle” in 1975 gave the impression of a return to the logic of his Marxist days of the past which he had discarded during the Sarvodaya phase. Heading his crusade against Indira Gandhi’s government, for instance:

I wonder if she knows that a class-war is going on all the time in Indian history, as in all societies were there are privileged and unprivileged classes. So nobody creates a class-war. It is only a question of who wants which side of the class-war to win.  

Two years later, however, he opined that class-struggle as the dynamics of social change was out of question in India. In an industrial society, “there was or there is an owning class who own the means of production and the other class which are more or less the tools of production”. But as against it in “our society we do not have that kind of classification.” He did not ignore the divisions in our society. But these were divisions between the weaker sections of the society and the privileged sections. The weaker sections must organize.
This was what he meant when he called upon “the weaker sections to organize themselves and become strong enough not necessarily to fight against the strong sections but certainly to claim their rights...”\textsuperscript{36}

In a meeting with some of activists of the Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti during August 1977, he again talked of class-struggle and a classless society. A few Patna based correspondents asked him to spell out his concept of class-struggle and how did differ from Marxist class-struggle. He explained “what Marx has said about class struggle was in relation to industrial societies. Ours is a predominantly agricultural society. The Marxian theory of class-struggle envisages violence, mine is essentially peaceful and non-violent.” V.B. Karnik was right in pointing to the vagueness of J.P’s concept. He thought that J.P. should not have used this term. He further maintained that the simple reason of the ill-treatment and exploitation of Harijans and landless labourers by the privileged classes did not make the former a class. He also refuted J.P’s contention that the class struggle he contemplated would remain peaceful. “There is no point in saying that the class-struggle that he contemplates will be peaceful and will not be of the Marxist variety. But when the class struggle begins he will not be there to keep it peaceful or stop it from developing on Marxist lines.\textsuperscript{37}

With J.P. it was, however, the strength of a belief that mattered. India, had no such proletariat which could lead a revolution. In an interview with Minoo Masani he brought forward an other reason for the inability of the industrial working class in India. It was “petit bourgeois” in character. Their
standard of living was higher than the living standard of the lower-middle class. Their wages were higher than those of the agricultural labour. So J.P. argued, with their better conditions one could not expect a revolutionary change from this class.\footnote{38}

**Chattra Shakti and Jana Shakti**

Who would then be in the vanguard of the revolution which he began? The youth and the people, i.e., *Chattra Shakti and Jana Shakti* was his answer. He did not bother to examine which section of the youth and which section of the people was suited for the task of his Total Revolution. That appeared irrelevant. “The levers of revolution are not in the parliaments of the world, but in the hands of the people. Whether the revolution is brought about through violence or nonviolence, it is the people always who bring it about.” It was to be a struggle of all the people not of political parties or ideological organizations. “This struggle is a non-party one; its objective is not to support or oppose any political group. But this is a movement of the people. The students and youth are its leaders.”\footnote{39}

To the question why he selected youth as the vanguard of the revolution, his answer was that “The proletariat ceased to be a revolutionary class; students, on the other hand, did not have any vested interest. He, therefore, called upon students to give up their studies for one year for the cause of Total Revolution.”\footnote{40} He was also inspired for the selection of youth due to the success of the student movements in countries like U.S.A., in Japan and in
Indonesia and Thailand. Thus he made up his mind to select students as the vanguard of revolution.

He did not think that the aim of his movement was only to dissolve the Bihar Assembly. He wanted to create a revolutionary consciousness in the people so that they may exercise full control over their representatives. “It would be a profound mistake to look at Bihar struggle as a struggle between the opposition parties... what you see happening in Bihar is struggle between Chattra Shakti (student power) and Jan Shakti (people’s power) on the one hand and Rajya Shakti (State power) on the other.” And the struggle was not for the capture of power, in other words, for replacing the Congress Government with the opposition, but for purification of government and politics, including that of the opposition and “for fashioning instruments and conditions for taking and controlling power, irrespective of which party or parties happen to be in power for the time being.”

Since the ultimate goal, i.e., Total Revolution was viewed as the extension of Bihar Movement he talked about organizational structure of the age of revolution. Here, however, he did not exclude the opposition parties. On the contrary, a certain alliance of national opposition parties would be in the lead.

His scheme was that at the apex there would be a National Jana Sangharsh Smiti, which would be composed of the representatives of the national opposition parties which were fighting for the cause of Total Revolution. There were to be provincial and district level Jana Sangharsh
Samities in all the States. There were also to be Chhatra Sangharsh Samities spread over different states and towns. But unlike Jana Sangharsh Samities these did not constitute an apex body. Thus Jana Sangharsh Samities and Chhatra Sanghrash Samities were the vehicles of revolution. It was through them the popular support of the movement was to be mobilized. That meant, in substance, that while the opposition parties would constitute the apex body for revolution, youth bodies would be for mobilization of the masses:

Great importance, in his scheme, was given to the people’s power. Thus he said,

We have started our journey on a new road to peaceful revolution . . . there is no great power than the power of the people. It is our duty to arouse that dormant power. Our only hope lies in it. The future of Bihar nay, that of India, lies in the consolidation of the organized power of the masses. We are ordinary people but we have undertaken a herculean task. We have to take every step with patience and courage. The future is ours. I am confident of our victory.43

He was conscious that it was very difficult to bring about Total Revolution while preserving the existing democratic institutions. There must be a people’s direct action. That action would obviously include among others civil disobedience, peaceful resistance, non-cooperation in short, satyagraha in the widest sense. One of the obvious implications of such a Satyagraha would be self change, i.e., those wanting a change at first must change themselves before launching any kind of action.44

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That in brief is the why, what and how of J.P’s programme of Total Revolution, based almost entirely on J.P’s writings. An attempt has been made to understand, with earnestness, what exactly was the scheme which J.P. was struggling to devise according to heart’s desire. His scattered ideas, often passionate but vague, sometimes even contradictory, have been presented with a fair degree of fidelity. This, it was felt, was absolutely essential as a basis for any meaningful evaluation of his ideas about Total Revolution.

In order to assess J.P’s concept of “Total Revolution” it is essential to discuss what J.P’s concept amounted to. It could not be called a movement for “reform” as it had the illusion that it was a revolutionary movement. At the same time one could not be unaware of the fact that the movement was used to dislodge the government led by Indira Gandhi and later to induct the Janata Party into the same citadels of power without even a semblance of change in structure of power. And that was hailed as revolution. Radhakanta Barik commented that it had only “aroused the people” against the ills of the existing system, without creating a consciousness among the people for the establishment of any drastically different social and political system.45

It was in fact a protest movement against the failure of the Congress to deliver the goods. Ghanshyam Shah’s conclusion is not very contestable that the Bihar movement was a protest movement, which started as a Movement for limited purposes but was gradually believed to be the beginning of a wholesale revolutionary change in the country.46 It is doubtful if there were many besides J.P. and a few of his ardent devotees, who shared any of their illusions about its
being a struggle for fundamental all-round change as was proclaimed in speeches.

J.P. deeply studied and realized about man and society. He explained need of change of man in all aspects. This philosophy of Total Revolution is new ideology in a democratic country like India.
References


4. Ibid., p. 124.


7. Ibid., Vol. IV. pp. 92-93.


15. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 228.


19. Ibid., p. 53.


28. Ibid., p. 201.

29. Ibid., p. 197-98.

30. Ibid.,


33. Vasant Nargolkar, op. cit., p. 91.


36. Ibid., pp. 200-01.


44. Ibid., p. 12.
