

Socialist Alternatives: The Congress Socialist Party



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Lesson - Socialist Alternatives: The Congress Socialist Party

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1. Introduction

The term 'socialist' is derived from its Latin root '*sociare*', meaning to combine or to share. In modern political philosophy, the term socialism is used for an ideology, and the socialists are those people who follow, practice and propagate such an ideology. The socialist party can be understood as a congregation of people believing in socialist ideology to achieve some political ends. The word socialism is used in a variety of meanings, so that it is very difficult to identify its kernel. There were socialists in former Soviet Union, who acquired the power after the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, there are socialists in democratic developed capitalist western countries, the North Korean regime calls itself socialist and many mainstream political parties in India and other third world countries (e.g. Samajwadi Party in India) also calls itself socialist. Famous political scientist C.E.M Joad observes that the "Socialism is like a hat which had lost its shape because too many people had worn it. Socialism is a chameleon like creed, which changes its color according to its environment. "There are many definitions of socialism; we can quote here a definition given by Cole. G.D.H. Cole observes that "Socialism means four closely connected things—a human fellowship which denies and expels distinction of class, a social system in which no one is so much richer or poorer than his neighbours as to be unable to mix with them on equal term, the common ownership and use of all the vital instruments of production and an obligation on all citizens to serve one another according to their capacities in promoting the common well-being". Within this maze of definitions and varied meanings of socialism, we can identify some core characteristics for the purpose of understanding; i) the socialism sees human beings as social creatures who wants to live in community with collective action and feeling of fraternity ii) According to the socialist, human beings are essentially oriented towards cooperation and not competition. iii) Andrew Heywood (Heywood, page 105) argues that a commitment to equality is a defining feature of socialist ideology. He says that socialists argue in favour of equality, because, social equality upholds justice as fairness and social equality underpins community and cooperation. Therefore the fundamental philosophy of socialism is egalitarianism. iv) Social or collective ownership of the means of production. Therefore there is no place for individual private property in socialist philosophy. v) The idea of class politics is another important feature of socialism. They believe that the social division

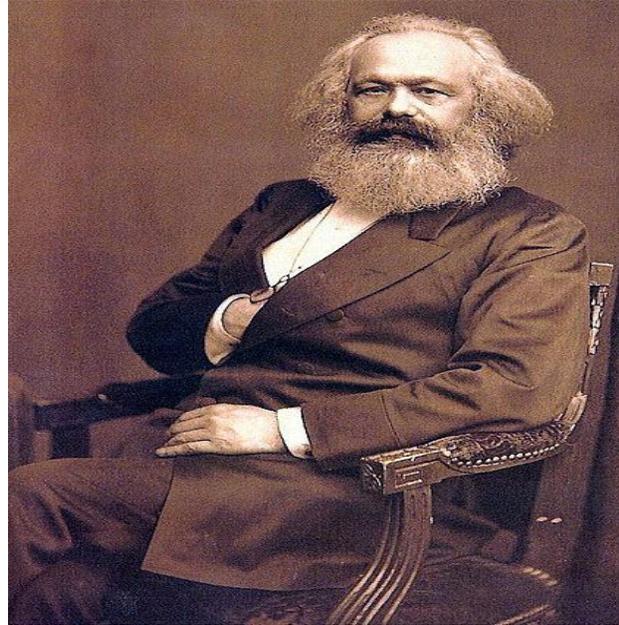
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based on class is the most significant political division in society. And they wish to end the class exploitation by establishing a classless society. vi) The socialist economy is based on the idea of centralized economic planning.

In the development of socialist philosophy the name of Karl Marx is the most important phenomenon. Karl Marx had propounded the idea of scientific socialism and argued that socialist before him were utopian socialist. Karl Marx believed that the existing exploitative system of capitalism can be only overthrown by a socialist revolution. However, many new variants of socialist thought emerged after Marx; like Fabianism, democratic socialism etc. These schools of thought reject the idea of a violent socialist revolution and believe in gradual progression towards socialism through democratic means. These socialists believe in 'humanizing the capitalist system through a narrowing of material inequalities and the abolition of poverty'. Generally the political parties, which are established on the foundations of Marxist revolutionary ideology, are called the communist party. And all other bunch of parties based on social democracy, Fabian, ethical socialism and revisionism are called socialist parties. In contemporary times despite the decline of communist regimes, we find that the socialist parties exist in every corner of the world.

Fabianism or Fabian Socialism originated in England as an ideology centered on the Fabian society. Fabian Society was a socialist society founded in 1883–84 in London, having as its goal the establishment of a democratic socialist state in Great Britain. The Fabians believe in the socialist principles and goals. But unlike scientific socialism of Marx which talked about revolution to achieve a socialist society, the Fabians put their faith in evolutionary methods to achieve socialism. The founders of the Fabianism include: Thomas Davidson, George Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, Annie Besant, Edward Pease, and Graham Wallas. In 1889 the society published its best-known tract, *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, edited by Shaw. The principal activities of the society consist in the furtherance of its goal of socialism through the education of the public along socialist lines by means of meetings, lectures, discussion groups, conferences, and summer schools; carrying out research into political, economic, and social problems; and publishing books, pamphlets, and periodicals. Later scholars like R. H. Tawney, G. D. H. Cole and Harold Laski also became major Fabians. The Fabians has also influenced many third world leaders.

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Marxism is based on the writings of **Karl Heinrich Marx** and Friedrich Engels. Marx (5 May 1818 – 14 March 1883) was a German philosopher, economist, sociologist, historian, journalist, and revolutionary socialist. He is one of the most influential personalities of modern times. He is a champion of socialism and he called his variant of socialism as scientific socialism. Along with Engels, Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto, which gives the problems of capitalism and an approach to class struggle. In Marxist philosophy the fundamental division in society is class division. The class division of society

is a result of the institution of private property. In the history of human civilization there had always been two classes; one which owns the means of production (haves) and one which owns the labour power (have-nots). The owners of the means of production exploit the other class. In modern times the owners of the means of production are called the Capitalists. In Marxist terminology the two classes in modern capitalist system are: bourgeois and proletariat. The capitalist appropriates the surplus value, which is created by the labour power. The proletariat is exploited by the capitalists, and the capitalist creates an elaborate set of social, political, moral, ethical and legal institutions and arrangements to continue their dominance in society. According to Marx, the modern capitalist system can only be brought down by a revolution. Engels said after the death of Marx : “Just as Darwin discovered the law of development or organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means, and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch, form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art, and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of vice versa, as had hitherto been the case”.(Source of Picture : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Karl_Marx_001.jpg)

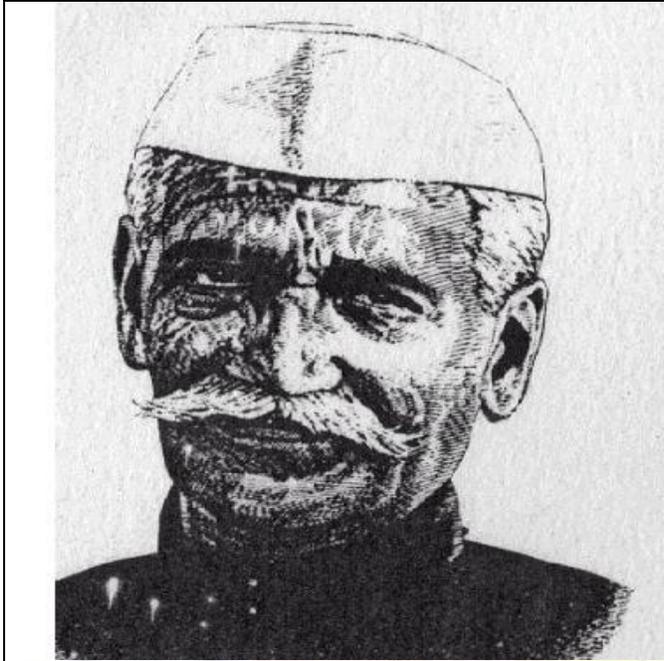
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2. Origin of the Congress Socialist Party:

The Bolshevik revolution in Russia established the first socialist regime in world. The revolution symbolized the unity of the weak against the powerful and the victory of the Bolshevik party over the Czarist regime. The victory of the Bolsheviks were especially fascinating for the people of the colonial world, since the fight was based on the vision of creating a social order where there is no exploitation of one human being by another. Many of the Indian nationalist leaders were also attracted towards these ideals. Further, many young Indian nationalists were dissatisfied with the Gandhina strategy in the Non Cooperation movement.

Acharya Narendra Deva (1889–1956) was one of the leading figures of the Congress Socialist Party. He was a prominent educationist, thinker and nationalist. He was an ardent supporter of democratic socialism and his revolutionary idea included the Gandhian tactics of Satyagraha. As a freedom fighter he was jailed several times by the government. He was also active in peasant movements. After independence he became a part of the socialist party and later of the Praja Socialist Party. Acharya Narendra was not only a politician but also a great educationist. He was a scholar on Marxism and Buddhism. With other socialists like Lohia he was an ardent supporter of the use of Hindi and he active an important role in the Hindi language movement. He had also served as the Vice Chancellor of the Lucknow University and was a member of the Uttar Pradesh legislative assembly several times.

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(Source

http://wikieducator.org/User:Neeti_m/Article_on_Acharya_Narendra_Dev)

Some Indian nationalists became actively involved in the International Communist movement and the communist party of India was established in 1925. However, there were other leaders who were influenced by Marxism, but were not in favour of a violent revolution and were skeptical of the dominance of the International communist movement. Many of these leaders were not in favour of building another party and weakening the nationalist front. They wanted to spread the socialist ideas with nationalist ideas from the nationalist platform. The economic depression that occurred in the late 1920s had also played an important role in strengthening the ideological resolve of the socialist leaders. By this time many local leaders in different parts of India were actively engaged in organizing the peasants and workers. Hence the class divide in the Indian society was also becoming apparent and it was no longer possible to sideline such issues in the name of a united front. After the Civil Disobedience movement some of the leaders who thought alike on these issues, were lodged in the Nasik jail. These leaders discussed amongst themselves about the possibility of a forum or party based on socialist principles. Some of the leaders involved in the Nasik dialogue were Asoka Mehta, Achyut Patwardhan, Jai prakash Narayan, N G Goray, Minoos Masani and Yusuf Meherally.

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The leaders were released from jail by April 1934. Jai Prakash Narain convened a meeting of some leaders in Patna in May 1934, and in this meeting the Bihar Congress Socialist Party was established. Jai Prakash Narayan became General Secretary of the party and Acharya Narendra Deva became the President. After the Patna conference the socialist leaders toured in different parts to communicate with other socialists and organize them. Finally, in October 1934, an all India conference of the Socialists was organized, which founded the Congress Socialist party. Jai Prakash Narayan became the General Secretary of the party, and Masani was the Joint Secretary. “From the beginning, all the Congress socialists were agreed upon four basic propositions; that:

- I. the primary struggle in India was the national struggle for freedom;
- II. that nationalism was a necessary stage on the way to socialism;
- III. that socialists must work inside the National Congress because it was the primary body leading the national struggle;
- IV. To achieve this objective they must organize the workers and peasants in their class organizations, wage struggles for their economic demands and make them the social base of the national struggle” (Chnadra, 299).

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Ram Manohar Lohia(23 March 1910 – 12 October 1967) was born at Akbarpur, Faizabad district in Uttar Pradesh in a Marwari family of hardware merchants. Lohia was a philosopher, thinker, socialist, revolutionary and a great nationalist leader. Lohia obtained his Ph.D. from Berlin in 1932 with his thesis on 'Salt Satyagraha and effect of Civil Disobedience on Economy'. Lohia joined the congress party after his return to India. But his socialist yearnings led him to play an instrumental role in the establishment of the Congress Socialist party. During the quit India movement while all the major congress leaders were put behind bars, Lohia with his comrades revived the movement and ran it from underground. Dr. Lohia also fought for the civil liberty and freedom of Goa and was

arrested twice. He Presided over the Congress Socialist Party's Kanpur Conference in February, 1947 and left the Congress Party, in March 1948. He formed the Socialist Party in 1948, which later became the Praja Socialist Party, (P.S.P). In 1962 general elections he contested against Prime Minister, Pt. Nehru but lost the election but he won a Lok Sabha bye-election in 1963 from Farrukhabad. Dr. Lohia was one of the very few original thinkers of India. Lohia was critical of both the European ideas of Marxism and Capitalism. He believed that the democratic socialism needs to be adopted to solve the problems of India. He always emphasized the importance of agriculture in the Indian economy. Lohia was also not very supportive of Gandhian politics and he was revolutionary in nature. In the post-independence era he was very critical of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. Lohia believed that the planning in India should be decentralized and it should be based on the *chauhambha raj* : village, district, state and centre. This idea of democratic decentralized planning is based on the philosophy of four pillars of state. He was not in favour of English education and believed in the abolition of the private school system. He founded and edited several journals, from Congress Socialist to Mankind and Jan. Some of his major writings include: The Caste System, Foreign Policy, Fragments of a World Mind, Guilty Men of India's Partition, India, China, and Northern Frontiers, Marx, Gandhi and Socialism.

(Source :http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ram_Manohar_Lohia.jpg)

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3. Ideology, strategy and programmes of the Congress Socialist party (CSP):

The leaders of the CSP were highly influenced by the Marxist ideas. Most of them believed in the Marxist idea of planned economy and they admired the soviet model of growth. The 1936 Meerut conference the CSP declared that “Marxism alone can guide the anti-imperialist forces to their ultimate destiny. Party members must therefore fully understand the techniques, of revolution, the theory and practices of class struggle, the nature of the state and processes leading to socialist society”. They concretized the fourfold basic objectives of their party:

- I. total independence from the British rule;
- II. the right of the Indian people to frame their own constitution;
- III. the foundation of a socialist society in the post-independence era; and
- IV. abolition of the institution of private property leading to a society free from the exploitation of man by man (Pradhan, 250).

Therefore the two ideologies that were at the foundation of the CSP were; Marxism and Nationalism. The CSP leaders understood it very well that the Congress party is the foremost player in the nationalist struggle and therefore their own fight for nationalism must be within the framework of the Congress party. However they were not fully satisfied with the policies and programmes of the congress party. They thought to reorient the direction of the Congress party and give it a radical socialist turn. Bipan Chandra (Chandra, 300) argues that this reorientation of the Congress party was to be brought about at two spheres; ideological and organizational. At ideological sphere, the CSP leaders planned to educate the members of the congress about the current economic conditions from a social perspective and thereby sensitizing them about the condition of peasants and workers. At the same time they also thought to propagate the socialist economic vision among the congress members. Interestingly, they realized that they need to be patient about their approach and it will take time to transform the Congress party. And they never thought of leaving the Congress party, if their programmes were not adopted. In 1934, Jai Prakash Narain argued, “we are placing before the Congress a programme and we want the Congress to accept it. If the Congress does not accept it, we do not say we are going out of the Congress. If today we fail, tomorrow we will try and if tomorrow we fail, we will try again”. The second type of the transformation of the Congress party was to be done through leadership

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change in the organization. The CSP was of the opinion that an alternative socialist leadership should take over the reins of the congress party.

Jai Prakash Narain outlined a 15-point programme in furtherance of their basic political philosophy. The points of the programme were as follows:

1. Transfer of all powers to the producing class.
2. Development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the state.
3. Socialization of the key and principal industries, with a view to progressive socialization of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange.
4. The monopoly of state over foreign trade.
5. Role of co-operatives in production, distribution and public credit system.
6. Abolition of zamindari, and Princely system without any compensation.
7. Re-distribution of land among the peasants.
8. State support for cooperative and collective farming.
9. Liquidation of debts owed by peasants and workers.
10. Right to work for the people.
11. To everyone according to his needs and from everyone according to his capacity to be the basis of distribution and production of economic goods.
12. Introduction of universal adult franchise on a functional basis.
13. No support to or discrimination between religions by the state and no recognition of any distinction based on caste or community.
14. No discrimination between the sexes by the state.
15. Abolition of so-called public debt.

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The social base of the CSP was among the farmers and peasants in Bihar, UP and Andhra. Strong peasant leaders like Swami Sahajanand Saraswati in Bihar and N G Ranga in Andhra had already sensitized the peasants about their rights. This provided a fertile ground for the socialists to make their base in these areas. The membership of the CSP was restricted. Only the members of the Congress party, who at the same time believe in socialist ideology, can become the members of the CSP. The day-to-day activities of the party were to be carried by an executive committee elected during the annual conference of the party. However, the ultimate power of policy formulation was vested in the annual conference which would have participation from the provincial units (Pradhan, 253).

4. Role of Congress Socialist party in India's national movement.

The contribution of the CSP can be understood in two senses: one, the role of the party and two, the role of important leaders of the party. As per its philosophy and strategy, the CSP played an important role in bringing an element of socialism both in the congress party and in the national movement itself. They were more vocal in talking about the issues of peasants and workers, and tried to link it to national movement. They understood the problems of the peasants and workers as a part of the national movement. Second, the leaders of the CSP were the backbone of the Quit India movement. Leaders like JP and Lohia had widespread influence both within the congress and outside it. These leaders were seen as heroes and played an important part in enthusing the masses and cadres in the national movement. Here we can discuss some of the episodes in the journey of the CSP during the national movement.

The CSP, which rapidly gained in strength in provinces like UP, was meant to operate from within the Congress and try to change its orientation towards a socialist programme as well as restrain the dominance of the conservative 'right' wingers. However, soon the divide within the Congress centred on two issues, i.e., council entry and office acceptance (Bandopadhyay, 405). Immediately after the formation of the CSP, the Government of India Act 1935 was proposed. The CSP leaders believed that the provisions of the Act were not any major improvement. However the CSP leaders went along the consensus opinion in the congress party to fight elections. But the aim of the CSP was to fight elections and wreck the system from within. They intended to capture the legislatures by participating in their elections and then to create a total

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political deadlock by refusing to form the governments. The CSP wanted to make the 1935 Act inoperative. But after the election victory, there was a debate within the congress party about the office acceptance. The CSP and Nehru were opposed to office acceptance. The CSP leaders were disillusioned with the decision of the Congress to form governments. Incidentally, later some of the CSP leaders also joined the government. But the CSP leaders continued their struggle for peasants even against the congress ministries. For example, the UP Kisan Sabha leaders like Narendra Dev and Mohanlal Gautam mobilized peasant demonstrations against the Congress ministry.

The communist party of India was banned in 1934 by the British government. The communists needed platforms to function openly. In the name of the socialist unity, the CSP welcomed the communists in the CSP. The idea was to build a united socialist front against imperialism and spread the message of socialism in India effectively. However, the communists had other intentions in joining the CSP. They wanted to hijack the CSP and use it to their own benefits. By 1937-38 the communists succeeded in placing four of their important members on the executive body of the CSP. Dr. Lohia had earlier opposed the move of JP and Narendra Dev of socialist unity. Lohia's apprehensions proved correct. The CSP leaders gradually discovered the secret plans of the communists through the circulars of the communist party. The circulars said that the CSP was not a socialist party and the communists were the only real socialists. The communists were merely using the CSP platform to strengthen and widen the communist base. Soon, the communists were expelled from the CSP at Ramgarh meeting in 1940. The idea of the socialist unity was dead. An analysis of the socialist unity period reveals that the communists were the real beneficiary of this unity period, and the CSP was a total loser. The communists had gradually eaten up in to the base of the CSP, and by using the CSP platform they were able to capture important positions in congress party; All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), All India Kisan Sabha and Students Federation. Many CSP leaders across India were poached by the communists.

The CSP claimed its years of glory during the Quit India movement. The socialist leaders like Jaiprakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Rammanohar Lohia, Ram Nandan Mishra, Basawan Singh, Suraj Narain Singh, Yogendra Shukla, Achyut Patwardhan, Chootubhai Puranik were the pillars of this movement. It was the CSP which kept pressurizing Gandhiji to start a movement, which

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he eventually did after the failure of the Cripps mission. On 8 August 1942, the Quit India movement was started in Bombay. Gandhi said, here is a mantra, a short one that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The mantra is. "Do or Die" We shall either free India or die in the attempt: we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery. But the British government was in no mood to allow the movement to buildup. On 9 August 1942, the government arrested almost all the top leaders of the Congress party. The leaderless movement started showing signs of sporadic violent incidences. And within 5-7 weeks the British government brutally suppressed the movement. Here the young socialists were able to endure the movement at various places. Jaiprakash Narayan escaped from Hazaribagh jail. Dr. Lohia escaped the arrest and went to Nepal. Lohia and JP with other socialist leaders organized a guerilla organizational called the Azad Dasta (freedom brigade). The purpose of this brigade was to sabotage the government installations all over India. An underground movement of revolutionaries was running and there were contacts between these revolutionaries. "They also collected and distributed money as well as material like bombs, arms, and dynamite to underground groups all over the country. They, however, did see their role as that of directing the exact pattern of activities at the local level. Here, local groups retained the initiative. Among the places in which local underground organizations were active were Bombay, Poona, Satara, Baroda and other parts of Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra, U P, Bihar and Delhi. Those actually involved in the underground activity may have been few, but they received all manner of support from a large variety of people" (Chandra, 461). The underground movement tried to destroy the lines of communication of the British government. Many government installations and offices were attacked. Interestingly, a radio operation in Bombay was started, which broadcasted news about the movement and kept the morale of the people high. Famous CSP leader, Usha Mehta and Ram Manohar Lohia regularly broadcast on this radio, and the radio continued till November 1942, when it was discovered and confiscated by the police. After the movement the CSP leaders became the real heroes. Leaders like Lohia and JP were given rousing welcome in different cities.

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Jaiprakash Narayan is famously known as JP in Indian politics. JP was born on October 11, 1902 at Sitab Diyara, Bihar. Jaiprakash went to California and Ohio University in the United States, for higher studies. He was influenced by Marxist writings. After his return to India he joined the Congress party but soon became dissatisfied with the policy and strategy of the party. JP played a prominent role in the establishment of the Congress Socialist party. During the Quit India revolution his dramatic and heroic escape from the Hazaribagh jail and later organizing violent resistance against the British government made him a hero in Indian national movement. JP was recognized as “The Heart of India”, “The King of the Hearts of the youth”. After independence, in 1954, JP suddenly announced that he would henceforth devote his life exclusively to the Sarvodaya and Bhoodan Yajna Movement, founded by Vinoba Bhave and will not take part in active politics. But in 1974, when Indira Gandhi was opposed by the united opposition, JP took the leadership and called for total revolution. As a consequence to this the Indira government declared a national emergency on 26th June 1975 and jailed JP. Later Indira was badly defeated in the general elections of 1977. JP died on October 8, 1979, in Patna (Bihar). JP was attracted to Marxism but soon he found that Marxist was denouncing the national movement and this led to his disillusionment with Marxism. JP was a nationalist socialist. He was very respectful of Gandhiji and was attracted to Nehru. As a member of the CSP he tirelessly worked for the cause of Indian peasants and workers. In the later period of his life JP became more interested in the Gandhina ideas of Sarvodaya and Bhoodan. In his famous idea of Total Revolution, JP recognised that the foremost important thing is to change the individual and the changed individual will change the society. So the personal transformation and social change cannot be separated from each other. Some of the important writings of JP include: Why Socialism, War Circulars, Inside Lahore Fort, Nation Building in India, Three Basic Problems of India, From Socialism to Sarvodaya, A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity and Swaraj for the People,

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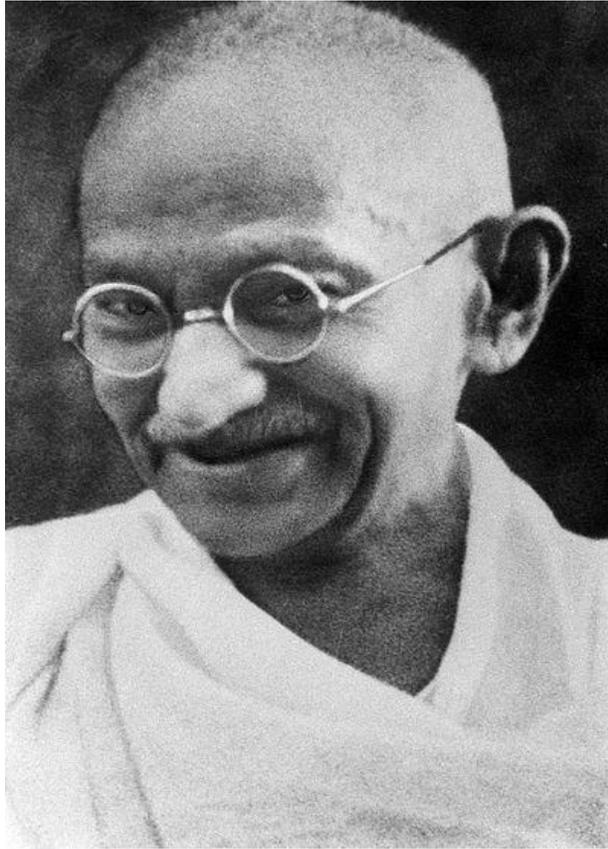
The CSP recognized the importance of the Congress as the foremost mass party in the national movement. At the same time they were suspicious about the leadership, programmes and strategy of the congress. They saw congress leadership as a representative of bourgeois interests. They recognized that within the congress party there are many progressive people, but largely the leadership of the congress party remains in the hands of the right wing group. Therefore, the purpose of the CSP in the congress was to strengthen the left leaning elements within the party and displace the right leaning people from the leadership positions. Added to this they wanted to make the congress party more representative and democratic in nature. They argued that a system of group representation should be included in the congress party. So, they wanted a leadership change and organizational transformation of the congress party. Many CSP leaders saw Nehru as their friend and guide in the Congress party. Nehru had sent his good wishes on to the CSP. Naturally, Nehru's election as the Congress president in 1936 reflected the victory of the left-wing within the Congress, and it brought joy to the CSP leaders. Nehru nominated JP, Narendra Deva and Achyut Patwardhan as members of the Congress Working Committee. However there was a strong right wing element in the congress party which opposed Nehru's socialist orientations. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, Rajagopalachari and others were critical of Nehru for his socialist pronouncements. Due to their pressures, Nehru made a compromise and told that socialism is more theoretical till we achieve independence. To fully understand the relationship of the CSP with Congress it is pertinent to elaborate their relationship with Gandhi. "The Mahatma reacted adversely when the Congress Socialist Party was founded in 1934. In fact, he cited this as one of his reasons for resigning from the Congress in September 1934. The socialists, in their turn, were critical of Gandhiji's leadership and his style of working. But both had high respect for each other's sincerity and patriotism" (Pradhan, 251). The young socialists were impatient to plunge in to the struggle and they were not in favour of halting the struggle at any point. Hence they had no faith in the constructive programme of Gandhi. "The Congress Socialists doubted the effectiveness of Constructive Programme as a substitute to revolution or converting national struggle into a mass movement. The Congress Socialists criticized Gandhian constructive approach as "vacuous fatuity", "a cloak for inaction", intended to divert the attention of the people from the main issue of struggle for independence to lesser important activities" (Mehrotra, 31). Interestingly, later JP regretted the attitude of the CSP towards the

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constructive programme of Gandhiji. He thought that the constructive programme would have been beneficial in mass contact and gaining first-hand experience of rural India.



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Trusteeship: Trusteeship is the Socio-economic philosophy propounded by Mahatma Gandhi, where he wanted a change of heart of the wealthy people to reorganize the way wealth is owned in society. Putting it in Gandhiji's words "Supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth – either by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry – I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me; what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community. Gandhiji added that recognizing this above fact I want the capitalists to outgrow their greed and sense of possession, and to come down in spite of their

wealth to the level of those who earn their bread by labour. The labourer has to realize that the wealthy man is less owner of his wealth than the labourer is owner of his own, viz., the power to work. Gandhiji also added that there is one more aspect of trusteeship. Trusteeship is a means of revolution or radical social change. In the economic field there is the idea of description, which has been propagated by Marxist revolutionaries. There is the method of confiscation of all property by the state. Then there is the accepted method of taxation which has been universally accepted even in the democratic countries. But all these methods agree in not bringing men closer to each other. This process of social change, to my mind, is a process of assent and all assents must ultimately result in approach. So trusteeship is designed with a view to eliminate the distance between men and bring them, not only in body but also in mind, as close together as possible.

(Source of Picture : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Portrait_Gandhi.jpg)

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The CSP leaders had a fundamental disagreement with Gandhi on economic issues. The Socialist wanted a structural transformation of the Indian economic structure. On the other hand Gandhi recognized the problems related to concentration of wealth and poverty, but he proposed another solution; Trusteeship. The socialists, especially JP had severely criticized the idea of trusteeship. “He characterized Gandhism as being in a serious bog of timid economic analysis, good intentions and ineffective moralizing. He regarded Gandhism being well-intentioned, but "dangerous" in its blindness to the pressing economic issue and deceptive of the masses. To the Socialists the idea of Trusteeship would encourage "the upper classes to continue their domination” (Mehrotra, 32). Finally the socialists were also critical of the Gandhian idea of Ram Rajya. They argued that the Gandhian appeal to change of heart is futile and it is the change in the social environment which matters. Further, the socialists argued that such concepts are deceptive as it is a cloak for hiding the existing discriminatory social reality.

6. Conclusion:

The CSP presented an alternative analysis of the Indian reality and had a socialist vision for independent India. Unlike the communist alternative to the Congress party, the CSP never left the congress and saw the goal of national independence paramount. The contributions of the CSP to the national movement are many, with quit India movement making the highlight of their contribution. But at the same time there were many limitations that were faced by the CSP. First and foremost, ideologically the leaders of the CSP were not very clear. The CSP was a mixture of many conflicting ideological trends. Second, despite their talk about socialism, they lagged behind the communists in gaining the socialist ground in India. Their rejection of the Cabinet mission plan and consequently non-participation in the constituent assembly limited their role in the future of India politics. After independence, the CSP dropped the word Congress from its name and became the Socialist Party. Lohia kept the flame of the socialist party alive. In the post-independence days it were the socialist leaders like Lohia and JP that played a prominent role by providing an alternative to the Congress view of Indian society and the dominant congress politics.

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