CHAPTER VI

THE LAST YEARS IN THE CONGRESS

In 1945 the war was over. But it was a different world. Although the Allied Powers snatched away victory from the Axis hands, the balance of power was completely changed. The Second World War undoubtedly smashed the fascist forces, but it left a weakened and exhausted Britain in its trail. As a result Britain no longer remained a great power comparable to the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. both of which emerged as super-powers.

The changed balance of power, therefore, turned Britain again to look to her Empire. The Imperial Power made a reappraisal of its colonial policy, for it was not possible to maintain the Empire in the traditional way. This, of course, does not mean that Britain realised overnight that her traditional colonial policy, particularly that in relation to India, had grown obsolete. She could find the chink in her armour even at the early hours of war reversals, and it was this discovery that prompted the British Government in India to counterpoise the Muslim League against the Congress. Knowing fully well that the Congress was a secular body, the British Government had all along castigated it as a caste Hindu organisation and Gandhi as its typical caste Hindu leader.

The changed British colonial policy based on the same old attitude was first declared by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell in his broadcast of June 14, 1945 that, Britain would be pleased to
appoint a new Executive Council representing the main communities and having equal proportions of caste Hindus and Moslems. The Viceregal broadcast was based on the statement of the Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons that, the members of the proposed Executive Council would not be selected against the wishes of the major Indian Communities. They would come "from amongst leaders of Indian political life at the Centre and in the Provinces, in proportions which would give a balanced representation of the main communities, including the equal proportions of Muslims and Caste Hindus." The British Conservative leadership made this statement with two objectives in mind. The first objective was to draw India in the war efforts against Japan, which was a menace to the British Power in India; and secondly, Churchill wanted by this attempt to fetch more votes and defeat the Labour Party in the imminent election. It may be pointed out that while selecting the Viceroy's Executive Committee, the British Government wanted to consider the interests of the communities and not those of the people. However, Gandhi was dissatisfied with the Viceroy's proposal to include the caste Hindus, meaning thereby the Congress, and the Viceroy subsequently corrected his statement. But it was a Viceregal correction and not that of the Secretary of State for India, which remained unaltered. But the conference, that met at Simla on June 25, under the Presidency of the Viceroy in order to come to a settlement on that basis, ended in failure. The Viceroy tried his best to placate Jinnah, but the latter was uncompromising on his demand that the Muslim League alone would
nominate Muslim members to the proposed council and that led to the failure of the Simla Conference. The Simla Conference was destined to be a failure. Because the conference met at a time when the Congress leaders were just out of their three years of imprisonment and were given no time to feel the pulse of the people. People during this time were piqued by famine conditions and influenced by C. Rajagopalachari's propaganda that India being in the midst of war people's participation in the war was a pressing need. Though C. Rajagopalachari could not fully convince the people, yet he succeeded to confusing them. Moreover, in the war years Muslim League's appetite had been greatly whetted. From being an inevitable adjunct of communal electorates (1936), the League advanced the claim of equality with the Congress (1940) and had ended by seeing by not only to be equal to the rest of India but also to exercise a veto on any and every act of the "National" Government. Under these circumstances the failure of the conference was but a natural outcome.

In the meantime, the war ended and the Labour Party under the premiership of Clement Attlee came to power in England. The Labour Government declared in March, 1946 that India would frame her own constitution and decide her future relations with the Commonwealth. In pursuance of that declaration the Cabinet Mission consisting of Pethick-Lawrence, Stafford Cripps and Albert Alexander was sent to India in order to negotiate a settlement with the Indian leaders. The Cabinet Mission reached Delhi on March 24, 1946.
The Congress, since office-acceptance, had been working with one great disadvantage that it lacked unanimity. Jawaharlal Nehru complained to Gandhi as early as 1940: "The Congress speaks with too many voices and it is not surprising that confusion and embarrassment should result. On the question of independence at least there should be only one voice." But the situation became worse during this time. It was the time when Congress leadership was supposed to maintain unity in order to counter the manoeuvres of the Muslim League. But, as Pattabhi Sitaramayya reported, the Congress leadership miserably failed. The Congress, he wrote, during this time worked with "... a Non-official leader in Gandhi, an official leader in the Maulana, a de facto leader in Jawaharlal and a dynamic leader in the Sardar [Vallabhbhai Patel]." This greatly helped the British to implement their desire to ultimately partition India, which they had cherished for a long time. On the British desire Rammonohar Lohia commented: "The string of partition of India must have been there in the India Office of Britain for a very long time. On my knowledge of the doings of the British as of any other experienced government, I have safely deduced that it was there well before Mr. Jinnah started talking of it around 1940." Although the plan did not possess a constant value, it was prepared with great devotion and to the minutest detail and kept away in appropriate chamber for the use in opportune time. Rammonohar Lohia observed that, the scheme of partition was beginning to be decisive in early 1946 even when Lord Wavell was trying to put through the scheme of maximum provincial
autonomy. The '42 upheaval, the INA, the Naval Mutiny, street demonstrations by the people and, perhaps the continuing existence of Mahatma Gandhi as a vital force in Indian politics had convinced the British that they had to go. It was, therefore, natural for her to prepare and execute plans as would give her maximum benefit. Divided mind of the Congress leadership facilitated the British Government to execute its plan. Pattabhi Sitaramiyya wrote: "Occasionally he /Viceroy/ would send for the Sardar and get a few home-truths from him that he was not afraid of civil war, that all talk of it would cease when once the Government acted, and that there was no difference of opinion in the Working Committee on the question of parity between the Congress and the Muslim League in the Executive Council and so on." Vallabhbhai Patel had reasons to become an accomplice in the British efforts to partition India. He was neither a strict adherent to non-violence nor a dreamer like Jawaharlal Nehru. He was guided by self-confidence in administrative craftsmanship. And for that reason "Vallabhbhai Patel categorically ruled out the possibility of another struggle" for independence. He thought, and quite rightly, that there would be no difficulty to commit the Congress High Command to his line. As was observed by N.G. Goray, the Congress High Command agreed "to come to terms with the British Government. Might be they were afraid, that in case there was another struggle, that might not remain under their direction and control. So, they had become impatient for a settlement."
However, the Cabinet Mission started the work from April 1, 1946, when the preparations for independence were being made, two of the national leaders, Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia were behind the prison bars along with many other Congress workers. Gandhi pointed to it on April 2 and they were released on April 12.

Immediately after their release, the socialists and their co-workers met at Nariman's house in Bombay. This is known as the August Conference. This conference attempted an appraisal of the post'42 period and decide the socialist strategy. Prior to his release, Jayaprakash Narayan had a different reading of the situation: "From prison I sent a short note to Acharya Narendra Deva in which I had suggested, entirely tentatively, that within the Congress we should function as a group and without it there should be organised an independent socialist party". But that suggestion was made before the Cabinet Mission came to India. "The Cabinet Mission changed the situation completely and in the changed circumstances and in view of the attitude of the Congress leadership, it was essential to organise the CSP again and to function within the Congress as a party instead of as a group." Although this was the decision, the views expressed by different leaders may be interesting to note. Rohit Dave summarised the position as follows: "Jayaprakash and Aruna were Marxists. Aruna was more radical. Achyut became a full convert to Gandhism. Lohia was never a Marxist, but he was not a Gandhian either. Kamaladevi by that time lost interest
in the socialist movement. Achyut and Lohia were in favour of merging with the Congress. But Jayaprakash and Aruna were very much in favour of re-vitalising the party. Although Jayaprakash had lost all his faith in having the communists with us, he still had faith in the principle of class-war. And it is in this regard Jayaprakash had full agreement with Narendra Deva. ... But Aruna was 'first a socialist then a democrat', in her words. So it was quite normal for them to want to revitalise the party. ... Yusuf was also present at the meeting but he was so very ill at that time that he did not participate in the discussion. But the most curious thing was that Asoka, who was neither a Marxist nor had faith in class-war, favoured the re-vitalisation of the party. He perhaps rated the matter from the point of view of Bombay politics. ... He felt, if a socialist party could be re-organised capitalising the heroic height of JP's personality, that might be a strong party. There was a long discussion and other members yielded to JP as usual."

The socialists had been working during this time with one great difficulty. The Congress Socialist Party was banned from the very beginning of the '42 Movement, and their being in the underground, the National Executive of the Party had been defunct. It was, therefore, decided on the suggestion of Shibnath Banerjee that all the members of the old National Executive would resign and Jayaprakash Narayan would work as the General Secretary of the Party — the only official functionary of the Congress Socialist Party. The General Secretary had to work through informal discussion chiefly with Aruna Asaf Ali,
Achyut Patwardhan, Rammonohar Lohia, Asoka Mehta, Yusuf Meherally and Purushottam Trichumdas.

Two very important things happened meanwhile. Woodrow Wyatt, a member of the Cabinet Mission staff met Gandhi in the second week of April to feel his reactions. Gandhi made it unequivocally clear to him that in the event the Cabinet Mission imposed something of their choice, all would be upset. Whatever might be the development, the British occupation must end forthwith, even if it meant the Congress conceding the Muslim League demand for Pakistan after the formation of the Interim Government, Gandhi observed: "That will be a good beginning. Even if the whole of India goes under the League in this way, it won't matter. It won't be Pakistan of Jinnah's conception. India would then have something to live for and die for." Gandhi went so far as to suggest that the British power might hand over India to the Muslim League and leave India. But till then the British did not agree to open their mind fully. Stafford Cripps, on the contrary, ruled out Jinnah's Pakistan to be an impossible idea. They, however, refused to tell it to the Muslim League, for the time was not yet ripe. Whatever might be the personal opinion of any member, the Cabinet Mission came to "the conclusion that as a result of successive adjustments between the Congress and the League, a stage had been reached when in fact what the Congress was prepared or could be prevailed upon to concede was not far different from what the Muslim League wanted or would accept if sufficient pressure was applied."
That the whole development had been taking place as per British assessment could be realised by Gandhi when he received a summon from Stafford Cripps on April 28. He learnt to his dismay that one of his closest associates was in correspondence with the British delegation without the knowledge of the Working Committee. Gandhi decided to leave Simla with the announcement that for all practical purposes Jawaharlal Nehru should represent the Congress. On Gandhi's decision of leaving Simla Vallabhbhai Patel commented with undisguised sarcasm: "... We may not always be able to follow him in his upward flight or even to grasp his reasoning fully. But we have no right to stand in his way."

But the difficulty with Gandhi was that he could not disown his lieutenants who, however, had no mind to disown him. On May 16, the Cabinet Mission came out with its recommendation to ensure the speedy setting up of a new constitution. The recommendation was made in two parts: the long-term plan for setting up a constitution-making body and the short-term plan for the formation of an Interim Government having the support of the major political parties. But the recommendation also pointed out: "This consideration did not, however, deter us from examining closely and impartially the possibility of a partition of India since we were greatly impressed by the very genuine and acute anxiety of the Muslims lest they should find themselves subjected to a perpetual Hindu-majority rule." The recommendation and the clarifications, given to it by the Cabinet Mission included so many niceties that even Gandhi was pleased to advise the Working Committee to accept it.
But the socialists were through and through opposed to the Cabinet Mission. Because they failed to reconcile the August Resolution with the decision to meet the Cabinet Mission. Achyut Patwardhan pointed out: "By demanding that the British should quit here and now in 1942, and then agreeing to discuss in 1946 how it may be necessary to reconcile to some form of British "partnership" as a temporary measure, 'slave diplomacy express its own lack of self-confidence.' Besides, the entire proceedings made them suspicious and they ultimately resolved to oppose the Working Committee resolution accepting the Cabinet Mission's recommendations. The AICC met on July 7, 1946. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad moved the official resolution and said that this marked the achievement of independence through non-violence and negotiations. The British acceptance of India's national demand was a great victory for the Congress and was unprecedented in world history. He also asserted that, there was no fear of the Congress leadership compromising on any principles and get caught in snares. But the socialists pointed out that, the Cabinet Mission's recommendations were contrary to the declared Congress policy regarding India's independence and national unity. "There is no guarantee or declaration of independence yet and national unity is in grave jeopardy. Yet a settlement has been made. ..... The proposed Constitution Making Body by no tests is the Constituent Assembly of Congress conception." As regards the assurance given by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad that the Congress leadership would not compromise on any principles Jayaprakash Narayan said: "Maulana
Azad forces me to remind the country of certain unpalatable truths. The same leadership was prepared in Simla some nine months ago, for shaking the path of 'Quit India' to enter a so-called National Government and drag India into Britain's war. The same leadership in Delhi nine months later was prepared even to sacrifice the entire national character of the Congress in order some how to reach a settlement with the enemy. In view of these facts Maulana Azad's aggressive eloquence was merely the working of what is known in psychology as defence mechanism." The socialists, therefore, urged for the rejection of "the British plan and to go to the people once again and organise them for the final struggle for freedom." Because that was the only "straight path for freedom, democracy, people's raj and national unity." At this stage Gandhi came forward to the rescue of the Congress leadership. He admitted the Constituent Assembly to be far short of the Parliament of the People, yet he called for the socialists to be optimistic. Gandhi said: "..... you are all seasoned and veteran fighters. A soldier is never afraid of danger. He revels it. If there are short-comings in the proposed Constituent Assembly, it is for you to get them removed. It should be challenged to combat, not be a ground for rejection." Referring to Jayaprakash Narayan, who was reported to have told that it would be dangerous to participate in the proposed Constituent Assembly and, therefore, the Working Committee's resolution should be rejected, Gandhi continued, "I was not prepared to hear such defeatist language from the lips of a tried fighter like Jayaprakash."
A satyagrahi knows no defeat." He, on the contrary, considered the Constituent Assembly as a Constructive Satyagraha. But Jayaprakash Narayan denied that he had told what Gandhi referred to. He wrote: "Mahatma Gandhi ...... had not heard us speak but ..... had apparently heard reports of our speeches. ....."

Admittedly the British Plan was full of traps and dangers, but that alone did not call for its rejection. He was in full agreement with Gandhi that a group of determined revolutionaries could experiment with any dangerous proposition and hope to emerge from it unscathed unscattered." But Jayaprakash Narayan wondered if Gandhi really believed that satyagrahis alone had been seeking election to the Constituent Assembly. He referred to a speech of Vallabhbhai Patel at the AICC that for every place a hundred Congressmen had applied and then questioned, could by any test these Congressmen be considered as satyagrahis? "I find it difficult, therefore," wrote Jayaprakash Narayan, "to understand why Gandhi should place himself so far beyond realities as to talk of a Constituent Assembly of satyagrahis when probably extremely few, if any, satyagrahis are likely to be present there."

However, the Working Committee resolution favouring the entry into the Constituent Assembly was passed at the AICC by a vote of 204 to 51. Socialists decided not to join the Constituent Assembly.

Then there was the issue of the Interim Government. The Working Committee resolution was: "The All India Congress Committee having considered the direction of the Working Committee to the President Jawaharlal Nehru by that time became the President of
the Indian National Congress to accept the invitation of the Viceroy to form an Interim National Government approve of this direction and ratify the subsequent steps taken thereunder resulting in the formation of the Interim Government. The socialists sought to give specific directive to the members of the Interim Government. Achyut Patwardhan moved an amendment directing the Interim Government "to create conditions by such means as removal of the British troops to endow the Constitution-making body with sovereignty and thereby transcend the limitations imposed by the British Cabinet Delegation's statement on May 16 and further to transform the new Central Government into an instrument of sovereign power." The directive was necessary from the socialist's point of view, because acceptance of the British plan in full might bind the Interim Government by so many objectionable features of the plan. But the President ruled out the amendment. Thereafter the socialists remained neutral to the rest of the proceedings of the meeting.

Though the socialists made it a duty to strengthen the hands of the Interim Government, they took a lukewarm attitude as to its prospect. They were convinced that another struggle was inevitable to drive the British away from India. Taking into consideration the then economic, geographical and political conditions of India, Jayaprakash Narayan had drawn a plan of the struggle. The villages were taken to be the basis of struggle. The objective was two-fold: Paralysis of British rule and establishment of the parallel government. He proposed to set up secret
and open organisations for the struggle as also central and provincial units to run the parallel government. Incidentally it may be mentioned that, it was with the object of training the people for the struggle Jayaprakash Narayan founded the Gandhi Ashram. Jayaprakash Narayan wrote: "If we have got an organisation ready, it can be utilised for any of the following eventualities: (1) Struggle with the British Government, if that is not to come then, (2) Struggle against capitalist exploitation and consolidation of left rank and file."

But it was a time when the course of events had been changing so fast and so erratically that there was almost no time to implement a systematic plan. Jinnah adopted a peculiar line. The Muslim League was persuaded to join the Interim Government at a considerable concession from the Congress. But the Leaguers did not join the Constituent Assembly. And surprisingly, the Muslim League, which did not launch a single movement for independence, resorted to Direct Action on August 16, 1946 for Pakistan. As a result of the Direct Action the whole of Calcutta and its adjoining areas went completely under the control of the anti-social elements. Killing, looting and arson became the order of the day for months together. And then Government of Bengal under the Premiership of H.S. Sharwardy did nothing to stop it, on the contrary gave instigation in some cases. Jinnah got whatever he wanted from the Congress, for the Congress was committed to the British proposal of forming the Government on the basis of communal representation, instead of popular representation. But Jinnah continued to remain firm in his demand
for Pakistan. Quoting a British official J.B. Kripalani has written that Jinnah was promised Pakistan by the British authority, if he did not come to terms with the Congress and it inspired his persistent demand. The country was put to the greatest of all trials. Congress leadership was also no less responsible for this situation. Whenever the socialists tried to direct the Congress to the path of economic battle by the masses and develop class organisations, the Congress leadership castigated them for developing class war which was detestable to non-violence. But Gandhi himself admitted as early as 1937 that he failed to convert even his closest disciples to non-violence. Had the Congress leadership been able to take the masses to economic battle, Jinnah would definitely have failed to foment religious fanaticism amongst the poor Muslim masses. What they needed was bread and shelter to ensure existence, and it was the Congress which alone could give them these things. But the Congress in its long history of struggle paid almost no attention to this basic problem of human life. It fought only for political power and made compromise with the British power at the earliest opportunity. The masses were ignored. This helped the Muslim League to intoxicate a section of the masses by the opium of religion and direct them against their Hindu brethren who had known the same suffering. Gandhi was torn by severe emotional crisis and rushed to the riot ridden areas. But the Interim Government being crippled by the differences between the Muslim League and the Congress helplessly looked at events.
The socialists met at their Kanpur Convention in February 1917. The Kanpur Convention gave the CSP a new orientation and introduced far reaching modifications in its political emphasis and organisation. The convention resolved to make systematic efforts in order to translate freedom in terms of the economic demands of the masses of the working people in the fields and factories. In a bid to shift the accent on the political effort from Congress to socialism, the Party decided to drop the word Congress from its name. In a resolution on the proposed British withdrawal from India, the Party Convention stated that "every care must be taken that power passes not merely into the Indian hands but into the hands of the toiling masses." A new statement of Policy was adopted. This marked a shifting from the Party's Meerut and Faizpur theses. The Party ceased to believe in Marxism and its attitude towards Soviet Russia became critical. The Statement of Policy re-defined the objective of the Party as the establishment of democratic socialism. The socialist society which the Party aimed at was to provide for the fullest economic and political democracy. The individual was taken to be free and the state had no power to deprive him of his legitimate rights and privileges except through due process of law. Economic power in such society would not be held merely by the state but shared by trade unions, co-operatives and similar other representative bodies of the toiling masses. While firmly believing in democratic society, the Party affirmed its steadfast adherence to the path of revolution for social change. This implied
coordination of different movements in order to bring a total change in the Indian social life. As regards the relation of the Socialist Party with the Congress the consensus was to remain in the Congress and to reorient it on socialist lines.

But subsequently the country had fallen into such a whirlpool of events that the socialists could take breath only when they were out of the Congress. Lord Mountbatten came to replace Lord Wavell as the Viceroy. He came with the positive directive to settle the Indian issue and transfer powers to the satisfaction of major political parties in India. The stage was so nicely set by the British bureaucrats in India that Lord Mountbatten did not have to take much pain to implement the long cherished British desire of partitioning India and tie the two parts namely India and Pakistan together in the Common Wealth. Yet all credit must be due to the craftsmanship of Lord Mountbatten as also to his able diplomatic wife Lady Mountbatten. They had the sagacity to cultivate friendship of the Indian leaders, chiefly Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel. The Indian leaders in their eagerness to get rid of the Muslim League colleagues' disruptionist activities and save the country from further bloodshed agreed to Lord Mountbatten's proposal of partitioning India. They settled everything and put the matter before the Working Committee on June 4, 1947.

The most pathetic figure at the Working Committee meeting was J.B. Kripalani, who was then the President of the Congress. Things had been settled but without prior consultation with him.
Gandhi mildly complained against Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel for not informing him before committing themselves to partition. To this Jawaharlal Nehru's petulant reply was that Noakhali was far away and therefore it was not possible to inform him of every detail of the scheme. But Gandhi was in Noakhali only from November, 1946 to February, 1947 and then he proceeded to Bihar where he stayed till the end of May, with a little break to meet Lord Mountbatten at Delhi. So what Jawaharlal Nehru said was far from being accurate. He might have written some vague letters to Gandhi but "Mr. Nehru and Sardar Patel had obviously between themselves decided that it would be best not to score Gandhiji away before the deed was definitely resolved upon." However, in the given context Gandhi advised that as the leadership had already committed themselves to partition, it should be honoured, but the Working Committee should ask the British Government and the Viceroy to step aside and let the Congress and the Muslim League complete the work of partitioning India by themselves. Rammonohar Lohia, and Jayaprakash Narayan were invitees to the meeting. They were equally opposed to the proposal of partition. Rammonohar Lohia at some point in the debate "made a plea for the rejection of the two-nation theory, and had also made some flamboyant assertions about continuing to cherish the undivided map of India. Mahatma Gandhi endorsed this point, which made Mr. Nehru throw a fit."

Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel were offensively aggressive to Gandhi. Rammonohar Lohia wrote on this issued: "What appeared to be astonishing then as now ..... was the exceedingly
rough behaviour of these two chosen disciples towards their master. There was something psychopathic about it. They seemed to have set their heart on something and, whenever they scented that Gandhiji was preparing to obstruct them, they barked violently." But, the Congress leadership came so armed to the meeting that it did not become difficult for them to bypass what Gandhi or the socialists said and get the resolution of partition passed.

The resolution was also smoothly passed at the AICC meeting on June 14 and 15, 1947. The socialists abstained from voting in obedience to Gandhi's advice. On this issue N.G. Goray comments: "Gandhiji was not in favour of compromise and he did not like the way Nehru, Azad and Patel were trying to compromise with the British. But he did not try to prevail upon them either. Many a time Gandhiji convinced Nehru to follow his line, but this time he allowed Nehru to be convinced by Lord Mountbatten. ..... The whole political atmosphere of the country was contaminated by the air of compromise. Had Subhas Babu been on the scene at that time, the situation might have taken a different turn." J.B. Kripalani has also admitted that, had Gandhi been determined to oppose partition, the AICC might not have passed the resolution. But Gandhi this time suffered from a feeling of loneliness, and he believed that in the absence of an alternative leadership, the then leadership should not be weakened. But such a feeling was unbecoming of Gandhi. He was an irrepressible optimist and had the magical
power to creating new leadership. It seems his optimism was shaken by the development of events, quite a few of which were nurtured by his own disciples. It is unbelievable that the man, who fought throughout his life for national unity, would agree to vivisect the nation. As a matter of fact, his disciples took the advantage of his mental crisis.

However, matters once allowed to be drifted are difficult to retrieve. The personnel in the Interim Government were already on bad terms with the Congress Party officials. A series of discussions were held between Gandhi, the members of the Working Committee and the socialists. Rao Saheb Patwardhan and Asoka Mehta presented a written programme of action. In their urge to uphold the Congress as the People's Organisation they held: "The Congress cannot function as the public relations organisation of the Governments. It has an independence and significance of its own. The Congress has to elicit popular co-operation for Governmental efforts and as such it must be prepared to reflect and convey to the administrators the changing nuances of popular feelings. The Congress as a people's organisation ..... has to understand the limitations of our Governments as well as the pressing thrust and aspirations of the people. Unless the Congress provides some safety valves for the discontent of the people it will get divorced from them and might develop authoritarian tendencies." But such a position was not acceptable to the persons in power and they did not agree with the socialists. Jawaharlal Nehru clearly stated: "The historical role of the Congress is finished with
The present authoritarian attitude of the Government, so to say, has its genesis in the tradition set by Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel. At the height of Party-Government controversy J.B. Kripalani resigned the Presidency of the Congress. Gandhi suggested that Narendra Deva should succeed J.B. Kripalani. Nawaharlal Nehru approved of the idea, but Vallabhbhai Patel opposed. So they had their own way.

Vallabhbhai Patel had reasons to oppose the idea. He was an astute realist, and therefore had no leaning towards any ideology. His opposition to the socialists was crystal clear. Whatever might be the degree of Jawaharlal Nehru's part in partitioning India, Vallabhbhai Patel was always apprehensive of Jawaharlal Nehru. He had had his bad days with the latter, but then Gandhi was there to mediate. This time he was equally apprehensive of Gandhi, particularly because of the latter's siding with the socialists to oppose partition. The socialists increased his annoyance with them by their attempt to make the Government subservient to the Congress as a Party. Jawaharlal Nehru might not agree to the socialist programme, but then the socialists were his good friends. Vallabhbhai Patel, therefore, did not want to create further 'trouble'. To weed out all thorns from his path, he started campaigning that the Congress should not allow any organised party to be within itself. The Constitution of the Congress was amended to vindicate the feeling of Vallabhbhai Patel. The socialists left the Congress. And, simultaneously, the curtain finally fell on the role of the socialist cooperation in India's struggle for freedom.
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15. Guilty Men of India's Partition by Rammonohar Lohia, p. 45.
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36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
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54. See Appendix VIII
57. Ibid., p. 296.
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