CHAPTER - II.

The Birth of the Congress Socialist Party

1934. It is an auspicious year in the history of Indian freedom movement. Although being inspired by Soviet Revolution leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose spoke of socialism and of organising the peasants and labourers for ultimate transference of power to them, nothing concrete was done in that direction. Because Jawaharlal Nehru was more a leader than an organiser. This beside, at this stage he did not have the courage to do things that might be disapproved by Gandhi. Subhas Chandra Bose had the courage and capacity, but as he did not have the backing of at least a microscopic group of radicals, he perhaps did not think it wise to go against the shrewd and seasoned politicians of northern India. The Communist Party of India was organised as early as 1924, but their left-sectarian working as per directions of the Comintern cut them off from the main stream of Indian politics. Consequently, the political movement remained confined among the upper and middle class intelligentsia swinging like a pendulum within the Congress sometimes to petty constitutionalism and sometimes to passive resistance. The year 1934 marked the realisation by the Congress socialists that "Independence is not an abstract concept . . . . for a few misguided intellectuals. It is a concrete thing for all the various sections of the people. The masses . . . . do not conceive it in terms of assemblies and constitutions. Nevertheless, to them it does
mean certain very concrete things. If to the peasant, ground
down by landlordism, independence means freedom from that system,
it cannot be said that abolition of landlordism is to him an
issue remote from independence. But realisation cannot be
fruitful unless it is put to action. It needs "... the
leadership of a band of people held together by a common ideo-
logy, subscribing to the common forms and methods of agitation
and action. The only such group which can have a political
philosophy behind it is a socialist group." Such fervent
ideas got a concrete shape when a group of young Congressmen
introducing themselves as socialists assembled at the Anjamen-i-
Islamia Hall in Patna on May 17, 1934 in a conference under the
Presidency of Narendra Deva. The delegates of the conference
were chiefly anti-Swarajyists, but not necessarily having the
same attitude of hostility to the programme of Council entry.
As for instance, the Bombay Congress Socialist group had openly
accepted the electoral activity as a part of the socialist
programme. Altogether about 100 delegates came from all parts
of the country but the largest contingent came from U.P. The
Congress-socialists in conference were unanimous in their
opinion that it was high time to form an All-India Organisation
of the socialists and with that end the conference resolved to
appoint a Drafting Committee with Narendra Deva as President,
Jayaprakash Narayan as Secretary, and Abdul Bari, Purushottam.
Tricumdas, M.R. Masani, Sampurnanand, C.C. Banerjee and Faridul
Huq Ansari as members, to prepare the draft programme and
constitution for an All India Congress Socialist Party. Jayaprakas
Narayan was also appointed as the Organising Secretary to organise Congress-socialist groups in provinces where they did not exist and arrange for an All India Conference with the object of forming an All India Congress Socialist Party immediately prior to the next session of the Indian National Congress.

Although the Patna Conference did not present the country with the blueprint of Indian socialism, it indicated the shape of things to emerge in course of the movement of the socialists. Abdul Bari in his address of welcome stated unequivocally: "... mere political freedom is of little use to the masses of mankind. ... The masses of India cannot remain satisfied with mere political freedom unless that freedom is accompanied by such a reorganisation of economic foundations of society as will eliminate all forms of exploitation of man by man and offer equal opportunities to all for moral and material progress." The observation of Abdul Bari was further clarified by Narendra Deva, when he emphasised the need of the Indian democratic movement to be an alliance between the lower middle class and the masses. But he regretted: "... the Congress had persistently neglected industrial labourers with the result that a positive antipathy towards Congress developed in the labour unions. So, the Congress could not call to its aid political strikes of workers. There had been powerful strikes of the workers but had been purely of an economic character having no connection with the political struggle."
This, to the socialists, was not a correct stand on the part of the Congress. What was needed was "the co-relation of forces and as most of the labourer in towns was drawn from the villages these workers could become the standard bearers of revolution in villages." It was declared that, in order to fulfil these objectives the Congress Socialist Party had been proposed to be organised. But the socialists ruled out the idea of leaving the Congress. Because in the opinion of Narendra Deva a socialist "will never refuse to join a fight for independence carried on by the lower middle class if he can thereby overthrow foreign domination." He further said: "Capitalist democracy is any day preferable to serfdom and subjection to alien rule. And he will not refuse to take part in a national struggle simply on the ground that the struggle is being principally conducted by the petty bourgeois elements of society although he will make ceaseless efforts to give it a socialist direction. In the peculiar conditions of India, the socialist can very well work within the Congress and combine the national struggle with Socialism."

The freedom movement therefore needed to be channalised into a new direction. With this objective the Patna Conference resolved to create pressure upon the AICC, which was to meet the next day, so that the latter would accept the socialist programme of widening "the basis of the struggle for independence and ensure that even after Swaraj comes the masses do not remain
victims of economic exploitation." The AICC was further impressed upon to recommend: "to the Congress to declare as its objective a Socialistic State and, after the capture of power, to convene a Constituent Assembly (on the basis that every adult shall have a vote with the exception of those who have opposed the struggle for freedom and that representation shall be on a functional basis) for the purpose of formulating a constitution for an Indian State on following political, social and economic principles:

(1) Transfer of all powers to the producing masses.

(2) Development of economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the State.

(3) Socialization of the key and principal industries for example steel, cotton, jute, railways, shipping, mines, banks and public utilities with a view to the progressive socialization of all instruments of production, distribution and exchange.

(4) State monopoly of foreign trade; production, distribution and credit in unsocialized sector of economic life.

(5) The elimination of princes and landlords and all other classes of exploiters.

(6) Redistribution of land to peasants.

(7) State to encourage and promote co-operative and collective farming with a view to the ultimate collectivization of all agricultures in the country.
The resolution also included the programme of organising the masses on the basis of their economic interests because only through the organisation of Kisan and Mazdoor unions the Congress could expect participation of the peasants and workers in the freedom movement; they would realise that the entry of such unions into the struggle for freedom would eventually lead them to their ultimate goal of being free from exploitation. The resolution relating to the programme of actions adopted at the Patna Conference might be described as directives to the delegates to the AICC meeting on the following day in the same city. It was practically for the first time the Congress faced a concrete constructive programme of nation-building to be pursued simultaneously with the national struggle.

The resolution was moved by Sri Prakash and seconded by Narendra Deva. It was an amendment to the original resolution of revitalising the Swarajya Party and accepting its programme of legislative activities. Although the socialist amendment was lost by 35 to 86 votes at the AICC, the Congress socialists comprising the youngest section of the Congress workers were said to be going to prove enfant terrible in Congress politics. "This new group, which is gaining strength in the Congress, considers the Karachi resolution as a half-hearted gesture to the masses and characterise the Council-entry programme as a barren path of constitutional agitation" unless it was backed by a mass
movement outside. They were anxious to get the Congress adopt such programme, as would attract the masses towards the Congress ideal of Purna Swaraj. "Although they are not expected to carry their point immediately", it was observed, "they will certainly make their presence felt."

The above observation came true almost to the letter. The socialists were aware that theirs would be a very difficult task to function within the Congress, particularly when the leadership accepted the policy of constitutionalism. But they had much faith in Jawaharlal Nehru, who, in their opinion, was a professed socialist. Narendra Deva virtually started his Presidential address at the Preparatory Conference of the Congress socialists that but for his being in prison, Jawaharlal Nehru must have been present at the conference and joined the proposed Party. Jawaharlal Nehru later wrote in his Autobiography: "So far as I had gathered, its Congress Socialist Party general policy was agreeable to me, but as it seemed a curious and mixed assemblage. . . . I would not have suddenly joined it." However, the Congress leadership felt alarmed. The Working Committee adopted a resolution on June 18, 1934 which reads: "Whilst the Working Committee welcomes the formation of groups representing different schools of thought, it is necessary, in view of loose talk about confiscation of private property and necessity of class war, to remind Congressmen that the Karachi resolution as finally settled by the AICC at Bombay in August 1931, which always lays down certain principles,
neither contemplates confiscation nor advocacy of class war. The Working Committee is further of opinion that confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress Creed of non-violence. At the same time the Working Committee is of opinion that the Congress does contemplate wiser and juster use of private property so as to prevent the exploitation of the landless poor, and also contemplates a healthier relationship between capital and labour."

The socialists were taken by surprise by the Working Committee offensive. Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan, Sri Prakash and Sampurnanand issued a critical statement on June 22, 1934, from Benaras against this resolution and counter-charged, if there had been any loose talk, it was the Working Committee which had indulged in it. As against the charge of adopting the programme of confiscation of property their reply was: "What the Patna programme speaks is the progressive socialisation of means of production, distribution and exchange... It does not mean abolition of all private property."

The socialists made it clear that the Patna programme included confiscation, but wanted to have it done after independence was attained and that also through legislation. In this regard the socialist programme was rather an improvement over the Karachi Resolution of 1931 which advocated state ownership of the key industries; state-ownership could never be possible without confiscation. However, the Patna programme of
socialist action was different from the Communist programme in that the latter included violent overthrow of the British rule, cancellation of all debts and confiscation of properties, owned by the alien government or Indian landlords. But the socialist stand on class war was firm and unambiguous: "... to speak of the necessity of creating a thing which is ever present is meaningless. The question is not creating a class war but of deciding which side we should take in that war, the side of the oppressed or the oppressor. There is no other alternative. The Socialists aim at the ultimate abolition of all class struggles by having a classless society." It was infantile to attempt at effacing a stubborn fact like class war merely by speaking of contradiction between class war and the Congress creed of peaceful and legitimate means of struggle. Class war was a social fact. It may be pointed out that, by allowing the socialists to consolidate into a party with the belief in class war within the Congress, the High Command indirectly accepted the idea of class war. Socialists, of course, did not put forward this argument overtly.

Finding the Congress leadership touchy about non-violence the socialists wondered if non-violence could be the guiding principle of the free Indian state. They doubted that it was a doctrine that would not be "subscribed to by any one except by the religious devotees." It was also surprising how the Congress leadership could reconcile the Karachi Resolution of 1931 with their conception of non-violence. Acceptance of
one rejects the other. The socialists were rebuked and named rebels against the Congress creed for extending the principle of nationalisation to other economic activities beyond the Karachi Resolution of 1931, but it may not be out of place to refer that the Karachi Resolution of 1931 on economic issues was moved by Gandhi and his non-violence stood amended just to console Jawaharlal Nehru, who was distressed by the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931. Jawaharlal Nehru himself wrote on this episode that he had converted Gandhi to the idea of getting the Congress pass an economic resolution at the Karachi session in 1931. He made several drafts and ultimately Gandhi agreed to one which was placed before the Working Committee and later before the Subjects Committee. It was "a new subject for the Subjects Committee and some members were surprised", but it was passed through every stage including the open session by the blessings of Gandhi.

To resume the narrative. The socialists in their statement pointed to the Working Committee's ambivalence of wiser and juster use of private property in order to stop the exploitation of the landless poor and warned the masses: "... there can be no solution of their problems and no end to their exploitation unless the economic organisation is brought under social control. There can not be adjustment of class interests. There is no party in the society which can bring about and maintain this adjustment."
Although the socialists took up the challenge of the Congress officials and vindicated their position, their reply had practically no effect on the orthodox Congressmen. The chief weapon used against the socialists was the bogey of violence. Since non-violence was the accepted policy of the Congress they wanted to dub the socialists as violent and turn them out of the Congress. Even Gandhi said: "If they gain ascendency in the Congress, as they well may, I cannot remain in the Congress". But preaching of violent class conflict was not a part of the programme of the Congress socialists, they merely pointed out that class conflict was inherent in the capitalist system. However, this battle of statements between the orthodox and the socialist Congressmen had a tremendous effect on the socialist rank and they tried their best to muster strong at the 48th Congress session held in October, 1934 at Bombay. 'The Times of India comments on the socialists' performance as follows: "A feature of the week-end proceedings was the amount of noise made by the Socialist group and the increasing recognition on the part of Congress leaders of their growing strength in Congress politics."

Every proposal made by Gandhi on the Working Committee was opposed by the socialists. The session was impressed by their eloquence and manifest sincerity, though very few voted with them. The defeat of socialist resolutions and amendments had been ascribed to the influence of Gandhi. They were aware of the result that might follow their performance, but the
performance itself impressed themselves and generated confidence in them. Since Gandhi's rise into leadership in 1920, the socialists were the first integrated group inside the Congress to express their views openly against Gandhi.

These developments inside the Congress were, however, preceded by the socialist assembly in the First Conference of their Party at Bombay on October 22 and 23, 1934. Besides decorating the conference hall with red flags along with the Congress flag they placed a photograph of Karl Marx in a very conspicuous position on the dias. This marked their adherence to the philosophy of Karl Marx. This adherence became more explicit when at the two later conferences of the Party the socialists adopted their Party thesis on Marxian lines. This conference adopted the constitution of the Congress Socialist Party which in the main stated: "The Party shall consist of the members of the Indian National Congress, who are also members of a Provincial Congress Socialist Party, provided that they are not members (a) of any communal organisation and (b) of any other political organisation, whose objects and programmes are inconsistent with the opinion of the Party".

The spirit of the constitution was highly toned from the point of view of the freedom movement. Because the constitution envisaged consolidation of freedom fighters with the clear objective under the banner of Indian National Congress. But it was not a suitable, but rather harmful, constitution from the point of view of the functioning of a political party. Because
it agreed to allow persons belonging to other organisations to be inside the party. This generosity was harmful on the part of a political party. Firstly, it was difficult to draw a distinction between communalism and non-communalism. It might be that the socialists evidently desired to prevent the Muslim Leaguers and Hindu Mahasavites from entering into the CSP, but there were persons with communal feeling outside these two specific groups. Secondly, to consider an organisation's programmes inconsistent with those of others is purely a matter of interpretation. During the time when the CSP was organised, the programme of action of the CPI was far removed from the socialist ideals. But afterwards with the change in the CPI programme the communists were taken as having been very close to the socialists and were allowed to be inside the CSP. That the inclusion of this provision became suicidal to the Party has been discussed in the next chapter. But here it should only be noted that while framing the constitution of the Party, the socialists were not guided by political reality but by the romantic idea of socialist consolidation. They exhibited the generosity in order to widen the scope of freedom movement; on the contrary, the generosity led the Party to a great disaster within a couple of years.

It was declared at this conference in an unequivocal sense that the achievement of independence would mean complete severance of connection with the British Empire and the establishment of a socialist society. The meaning of independence
was further clarified as "the establishment of an independent state, wherein power is transferred to the producing masses", and the attainment of independence in this sense involves refusal to compromise at any stage with British Imperialism." This interpretation of independence broadly gave two objectives. The first one was direct and simple meaning thereby the withdrawal of British rule. In this regard there arose no conflict between the Congress Socialist Party and the Indian National Congress. The second one meant reorganisation of the economic life of independent India on a socialist basis. This was an objective which could never be acceptable to the Congress leadership. But Jayaprakash Narayan rightly clarified that the first one "once determined, the rest becomes a matter of logical sequence". Because, if independence was to be meaningful, it must mean independence of the masses and not of a handful of persons. Jayaprakash Narayan said: "... if the ultimate objective is to make the masses politically and economically free, to make them prosperous and happy, to free them from all manner of exploitation, to give them unfettered opportunity for development (which in brief means independence) than, Socialism becomes a goal to which one must irresistibly be drawn. If, again, the objective is to take hold of the chaotic and conflicting forces of society and to fashion the latter according to the ideal of utmost social good and to harness of all conscious directives of human intelligence in the service of the Commonwealth, then, again, Socialism becomes an inescapable destination".
During the emergence of the CSP there was an opinion within the Congress that end of the British rule would bring to an end all miseries of the Indians. But this was purely an ostrich-like attitude. Because poverty and starvation on the one hand and wealth and pomp on the other was not a creation of the British, though it might have intensified it. An Indian mill-owner confessed to Gandhi that during the Swadeshi movement against the partition of Bengal they fully exploited the movement by raising the price of cloth which resulted into the worst type of misery for the people. Their plea was: "We are not conducting our business out of philanthropy, we do it for profit." 35 When this was the attitude of the capitalists, inequality and exploitation, the twin evils of civilisation, could not be expected to be eradicated merely by the elimination of foreign domination. Hence, to make independence realisable political freedom should be supplemented by economic and social freedom and this alone might bridge the gulf of inequality. But without socialism economic or social freedom would seem to be a well-o-the wisp. The Congress, though a heterogenous organisation, was dominated by zamindars, big businessmen, and men of the legal profession. The Working Committee would, no doubt, accommodate persons from different professions to manifest its heterogeneity, and this might prompt one to describe the Congress leadership to be composed of middle class people. Even if the composition of the rank and file was middle class in character, leadership belonged to the upper strate who generally aligned themselves with the interests of the moneyed people and pursued
status quoism as policy. This characterisation helped the zamindars and big businessmen to capture the organisation by donating big sums. They did not come to the forefront but by monetary pressure prevented the leadership from adopting programmes opposed to their interests. In this regard Gandhi was of course a different man. He was out and out a man of the masses, notwithstanding his middle class heritage. He influenced the Congress policy to a great extent but could not draw the official Congress leadership to the basic tenets of his economic thought. His idea of Trusteeship all along remained misunderstood. Gandhi wanted not to shield the capitalists, but to purify them by the non-violent aspect of the concept. Gandhi's constructive programme was also not seriously taken. This failure on the part of the leadership allowed the capitalists to get their interests represented by Congress. Till to-day the Congress, why Congress alone, other parties also have not been able to come out of the influence of moneyed people and this prevent them from adopting effective programme to eradicate miseries of the masses. However, the Congress fell short of the ideals of social orientation. The Karachi Resolution of the Congress of 1931, vaguely accepted certain economic rights of the labouring classes, but failed to formulate clearly social justice and economic freedom leading to social equality. The Congress by and large tried to preserve the age-old economic organisation, based on the exploitation of the poor and middle classes. It was this realisation that brought about the organisation of socialist opinion within the
Congress. The socialists were convinced that there existed an inherent contradiction and conflict between the interests of the landowning and the capitalist class on the one hand, and vast masses of people on the other. They felt it necessary to bring this conflict out into the open. They, therefore, devoted their attention to the organisation of workers and peasants and resolved to convert the Congress into an organisation of the masses. The socialists, hardly had any faith in parliamentarianism and accepted the legislature as a platform of propaganda for the furtherance of their real objectives. In short, they discarded the politics of petitions and prayers, and decided, to tread the path of socialist revolution.

A lengthy programme was adopted at the First Conference of the Party. The Socialist bill of rights included the following:

1. Freedom of speech and of the press.
2. Freedom of association and combination.
3. Repeal of anti-national and anti-labour laws.
4. Release of all political prisoners and prisoners detained without trial.
5. Reinstatement of all farmers and peasants deprived of their lands owing to their participation in the movement for national independence.
6. Free and compulsory primary education and liquidation of adult illiteracy.
7. Drastic reduction by at least 50% cut in the military expenditure of the Government of India.
9. Control of usuary, direct or indirect.
10. A steeply graduated tax on all incomes including incomes from agricultural sources above a fixed minimum.
12. Freedom from serfdom and conditions bordering on serfdom.
13. The right to form unions to strike and to picket.
14. Compulsory recognition by employers of the Workers' Union.
15. A living wage, 40 hours week and healthy quarters and conditions of work.
16. Equal wages for equal work.
17. Weekly payment of wages where demanded.
18. Insurance against unemployment, sickness, accident, old-age, etc.
19. One month's leave with full pay for every year to all workers and 2 month's leave to the female during maternity.
20. Provision against employment of children of school-going age in factories and women and children in underground mining and hazardous occupations.
21. Elimination of landlordism in Zamindari and Talukdari areas.
22. Abolition of feudal and semi-feudal levies on peasantry.
23. Encouragement of co-operative farming.
24. Introduction of scientific agriculture at state cost.
25. Establishment of land mortgage banks to grant cheap credit to the peasants.
26. Liquidation of agricultural indebtedness and arrears of rent.
27. Complete exemption from rent and taxes of all peasants with uneconomic holdings.
28. Substantial reduction of rent and land revenues.
29. Freedom from attachment in execution of rent or money decrees of homestead, agricultural resources and that portion of peasants' holdings which was just sufficient to maintain an average peasant's family.

This lengthy programme of socialist action was complementary to their basic demand of the transfer of all power to the producing masses and the development of the country's economic life to be planned and controlled by the state. The socialists did not advocate at this stage nationalisation of all capital. As a matter of fact, the socialist bill of rights was an improvement upon the Karachi Resolution of 1931 in that it sought to abolish the Zamindari system in all its variety and establish the peasantry on a solid footing. For this they tried to encourage co-operative farming and demanded introduction of scientific agricultural system at state cost and establishment of land mortgage banks in order to set the peasants free from agricultural indebtedness. The socialist demand was
that under no circumstances peasants' homestead or agricultural holdings could be attached for the execution of rent or money decrees. The socialist programme was, thus, evidently far from a revolutionary one. The programme virtually sought to emphasise certain points and adjust the interests of a handful of persons with those of the masses. Had the Congress leadership agreed to accommodate the socialist programme, the peasantry might not have to face the present deplorable conditions after decades of independence and the country would not have to beg food from door to door. However, the history coursed differently.

It should be mentioned in this connection that the programme of actions of the Congress Socialist Party as also the Party thesis adopted later were influenced by the Paris Commune of 1871 to a great extent. According to Karl Marx the Commune was democratically formed and the "majority of its members were . . . . workingmen or acknowledged representatives of the working class". The so-called dignitaries of State had no role in the Commune and even "the police was . . . . stripped of its political attributes and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune". Marx further said that, the working class did not expect any miracle from the Commune. They would know "that in order to work out their own emancipation and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending, by its own economic agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes transforming
circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant. "Karl Marx also asserted that the victory of the Commune was the "only hope of the peasants." Following Karl Marx the CSP also wanted not to "transfer the bureaucratic military machine from one hand to another but to smash it." True, the socialist programme was no carbon copy of the Paris Commune, but a little analysis of the programme reveals the spirit of the Paris Commune permeating it. The only differences were that, like the French workers and peasants, the Indian workers and peasants were not conscious of their problems and, therefore, remained unorganised. The socialists were attempting to make them conscious. And secondly, the Indians were fighting the foreign rule whereas France was not at least under foreign domination.

These beside, the socialists had two other very important issues before them: communal problem as also a future war in which the British Government might be involved. The communal issue as known to all was always a much used weapon in the hands of the British Government. Whenever they were put in a tight corner, communal sentiment had been fomented. The socialists felt that, it could so happen because the common masses were ignorant of their basic demand, the economic demand. Hence they resolved to organise struggle for the economic emancipation of the masses. They rightly held that "with the development of class consciousness of the masses the communal problem
was bound to be relegated to the background, the major problem for the future state being adjustment between those who possess and those who are dispossessed."

Secondly, the socialist reading of the international situation was that, owing to the rapid rise of the Fascist forces the danger of sudden outbreak of war could not be ruled out and in such eventuality the British Empire would inevitably be involved in the war. And in that war Indian men, money and resources would be actively utilised. This would definitely obstruct the freedom movement. But the Congress leadership barring some individual Congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru was not very much worried about it. Denouncing war the socialists, therefore, urged upon the Congress to start anti-war agitation during an apparently peaceful period.

Although the Party was formed and a lengthy programme was adopted in 1934, the real picture of the Congress Socialist Party did not emerge before 1936 when the Party-thesis was adopted at its Second Conference in Meerut on January 20. It was unequivocally declared: "... Party's own programme must be a Marxist one.... Marxism alone can guide the anti-imperialist forces to their ultimate destiny. Party members must, therefore, fully understand the technic of revolution, the theory and practice of class struggle, the nature of state and the processes leading to the socialist society." Marxism was officially adopted because it was felt that the Marxian
technique of movement alone could "develop the national movement into a real anti-imperialist movement — a movement aiming at freedom from the foreign power and the native system of exploitation." Socialists demanded this new orientation of the national movement, because they wanted it to be acknowledged that foreign domination was not the only cause of Indian miseries; the former was supplemented by exploitation by the native capitalists. So, it was necessary to understand the correlation between the two and accordingly re-orient the method of struggle. But, as already stated, they did not want to implement their programme independently apart from the Congress. Because they looked upon the Congress as the instrument of national emancipation. Hence the task of the Party had been defined as weaning "the anti-imperialist elements in the Congress away from its present bourgeois leadership and to bring them under the leadership of revolutionary socialism." This needed development of class organisations of the masses particularly of the peasants and workers. Jayaprakash Narayan observed: "These unions will organize their struggle against oppression and exploitation; and through that struggle develop in them that anti-imperialist consciousness and solidarity which will lead them finally to defeat imperialism." These class organisations had been destined to work alongside a common political organisation which would lead the anti-imperialist struggle and integrate the former's struggle into one organisation to secure the common end of the masses — economic and political freedom. The Congress, in the opinion of Socialists, was far short of such
a common political organisation. Hence was formed the Congress Socialist Party within the Congress. The emergence of the Congress Socialist Party "shows that a considerable portion of the petty bourgeois elements has broken away from the bourgeois ideology", to replace the bourgeois leadership of the Congress. But an inconsistency is traced out when the Meerut thesis of the Party is found to postulate that the task of the members of the Party was not to "show keenness to 'capture' committees and offices of the Congress... nor... form alliances with politically undesirable groups for the purpose." This doctrinal puritanism might be ideologically sound, but politically hollow. Because the Party, which was planning to develop working class organisations in order to widen the basis of freedom movement and dislodge the bourgeois elements from the Congress leadership, should not have proposed to stay away from the offices. Whatever influence the socialists might exercise on the Congress rank and file, they would get no opportunity to work until and unless they were in office. This was an inconsistency. But why?

This inconsistency may be ascribed to the composition of socialist leadership. Although the Party had been characterised in its thesis as a Marxist Party, the top ten personalities who would form the leadership were not all Marxists. Ideologically they were divided by three amorphous and overlapping tendencies namely, Marxism, social democracy of the British Labour Party type, and democratic socialism tempered by Gandhian concepts of decentralisation and the use of non-violent technique.
for national movement and class struggle. As a result there was a compromise. The "party's thesis, programs and resolutions were allowed to reflect Marxian terminology, the party was described as Marxist. . . . But it was not permitted to be called a Marxist-Leninist party dedicated to the dictatorship of the proletariat; nor to be affiliated with either the Second or Third Internationals." Because the dictatorship of the proletariat is a subterfuge — turned into dictatorship of the CFSU representing a microscopic minority of the population of Soviet Russia. The non-Marxists in Socialist leadership were in majority, yet the views of the Marxists had been shared by the wide majority. This could be possible for their uncommon loyalty to nationalism and fealty to the Congress. The exponent of Marxism in the Congress Socialist Party, Jayaprakash Narayan categorically denounced the isolationist policy of the communists in the national movement as contrary to the Marxist theory in general and specifically from the colonial policy enunciated by Lenin. Another ardent Marxist, Narendra Deva also had basic differences with the orthodox Marxists. Unlike the orthodox Marxists, who would consider peasants as counter-revolutionary, Narendra Deva held that India being a predominantly agricultural country the minority of industrial working class could not lead the social revolution, therefore peasantry must assume the role. It may be noted in this connection that what Narendra Deva asserted in the thirties was echoed by Mao Tse-tung that "the bourgeois-democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism was in essence a peasant revolution and that the basic task
of the Chinese proletariat in bourgeois-democratic revolution was to give leadership to the peasants' struggle." China also being an agricultural country, Mao-Tse-tung made this formulation. The leaders of the Congress Socialist Party, of whatever persuasion they might be, had the common concern for the peasants. Madhu Limaye bases this cohesion on "subterranean current of non-traditional and unorthodox ideas such as the instinctive abhorrence of communist amoralism, deceit and double talk; respect for the values of truth and decency even in political relations; peaceful methods, decentralisation etc.," while according to Minoo Masani "honesty and purity of means" could bind the socialists together. Another very important cohesive factor was the towering role of Jayaprakash Narayan in organising the socialist movement. Inspite of differences "deference was usually given to the views of the acknowledged central leader, Jayaprakash Narayan, whose influence over the party's emergence . . . was very great." But the most important cohesive factor was the class composition of socialist leadership. Although the party was dedicated to organise movements for the emancipation of the peasants and workers and build up a socialist society, the composition of the party was essentially middle-class. The hard core of the socialist leadership "were highly educated, young (average age of thirty in the nineteen thirties), north Indian Congressmen, predominantly of the urban, middle class professions, many of whom gave up families or marriage in favour of professional politics." The socialists were quite aware of their class composition and did never
characterise themselves as declassed. But the truthful awareness of the socialist helped the communists to abuse the former to have petit bourgeois sentiment as against their declassed mentality, though their own leadership even today continue to be cent per cent petit bourgeois! The communist leadership has been so composed because the communist movement was started in India by persons who were "professional revolutionaries of middle class origin or the vanguard of the petit bourgeois tradition like the pioneer vanguard of Russia" frustrated by the failure of the Non-Co-operation Movement.

But whatever might be the lacuna in the ideology of the Congress Socialist Party and wherever might lie the basis of cohesion the socialists had no difficulty to work together. Concern for the central issues facing the nationalist movement enabled them to work with perfect unanimity. Being pressed by the exigencies of the freedom movement they even modified their policy of staying away from Congress offices and accepted seats in the Working Committee as well as secretarial posts of the Congress Sub-Committees. The working of the Congress Socialist Party in the freedom fight has proved that, if the object is clear, ideological overlappings could never create any obstruction.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

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21. Ibid., p.344.
29. The Times of India, Bombay, October 30, 1934.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., October 23, 1934.
34. Ibid., p. 99.
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38. Advance, Calcutta, October 23, 1934.


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62. Ibid., p. 189.

63. Leadership Problems in the Communist Party of India by N.C. Bhattacharyya in Political Science Review, p. 15, Vol.4, No.1, April, 1965 Department of Political Science, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur (India).