CHAPTER — III.

MOVEMENT FOR SOCIALIST CONSOLIDATION

I. CSP-Royist relation

Since the socialists developed their party thesis on Marxian lines, socialist unity for them was a question of "the coming together in one party of all those groups and individuals who stand by Marxism". Emphasising the consolidation of the socialist forces the Party thesis, which was elaborated at the Third Conference of the Congress Socialist Party held in December, 1936, and popularly known as the Faizpur Thesis, declared: "In the conditions of India the conscious leadership of the anti-Imperialist movement falls on the socialist forces. These forces are unfortunately still divided. ... If socialists speak with divided voice there will be utter confusion that will only retard the national struggle. Till such unity is arrived at, the minimum that is necessary is agreement on the immediate tasks and line of action. On the basis of this agreement the various socialist groups should work together till the time we are in a position to form a united Party." When the Congress Socialist Party was formed, there were two other Marxist parties, namely the Royists [M.N. Roy group], and the Communist Party of India.

M.N. Roy, born in a middle class priestly Brahmin family in 1887, was brought up in a climate of intense religious and nationalist quest of freedom. This upbringing brought him
in touch with the revolutionaries of Bengal who were kindled by the ideal of Hindu militancy provided by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Swami Vivekananda. Teachings of Mazzini and Garibaldi were the other sources of inspiration to them. M.N. Roy was thus a full convert to revolutionary ideas as early as his school days, and by the early tens of this century he was convinced that the British could be driven out not by holding meetings and submitting petitions, as had been done by the contemporary moderate leaders, but by using force. In 1915 the restless young man left India in search of arms and by 1920 was inevitably turned into a confirmed Marxist and occupied a close seat to Lenin in the Communist International. During this time he developed his famous thesis on the colonial policy of the Communist International. His view was that the Communist International should assist proletarian parties of the colonies and through them the revolutionary movement in general. Lenin was so impressed by M.N. Roy's views that he agreed to get his own thesis appended by M.N. Roy's thesis. Lenin's own thesis was that the bourgeois democratic liberation movement be assisted by the Communist International. But M.N. Roy later admitted that the agreement between Lenin and him on the colonial policy was more apparent than real. This apparent agreement was turned into genuine disagreement after the rise of Stalin. In the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in 1928, the Comintern resolved to direct the Communist Party of India to denounce the Congress as a counter-revolutionary organisation whereas M.N. Roy inclined to support the left-wing within the
Congress. This gave a handle to Stalin who charged M.N. Roy of various anti-International activities and expelled him from the Communist International in 1929.

M.N. Roy came back to India and was arrested by the British Government in the early thirties. But he did not change his ideas. It is those ideas which had brought his followers into the Congress Socialist Party, and again, withdrew them away from it. During the formation of the Congress Socialist Party M.N. Roy was in jail. The socialists did not take the Royists into the CSP after discussion with M.N. Roy. They had discussions chiefly with Charles Mascarenhas, one of the closest lieutenants of M.N. Roy. Charles Mascarenhas was at the Nasik jail with Jayaprakash Narayan and M.R. Masani during Civil Disobedience Movement and he was one of the original four with Jayaprakash Narayan, M.R. Masani and C.K. Narayanaswamy to form the socialist group at Nasik jail. It was virtually the leadership of Charles Mascarenhas following the directives of M.N. Roy that took the Royists into the Congress Socialist Party. Because of his dissociation from the Communist International M.N. Roy became very popular with the non-communist Marxists, particularly those who were in the CSP. Beside this dissociation there was another reason behind M.N. Roy's popularity in the Congress socialist circle. Jayaprakash Narayan admitted that it was practically the pungent writings of M.N. Roy that completed his conversion to Marxism. It was therefore natural for Jayaprakash Narayan to plead with his colleagues for the Royists' admission.
into the CSP. Two other factors helped the socialists and the Royists to come closer. Firstly, during the time when the Congress Socialist Party was formed the socialists like the Royists would disapprove Gandhian ideas of non-violence and trusteeship; and secondly, both the groups would consider the Indian National Congress as the vanguard of the nationalist struggle. On the second point, however, there was a difference between the two groups. While the Marxist M.N. Roy with Soviet heritage refused to accept Gandhi's leadership of the Congress, the socialists having the background of Indian nationalism acknowledged Gandhi's leadership as a political necessity. He was taken by the socialists to be the right person to infuse nationalist spirit of unarmed masses and lead them against British imperialism. But the socialists ignored at this stage the controversy for the sake of socialist unity. The Royists' active participation at the Preparatory Conference of the Congress Socialist Party in May, 1934, had been taken by the socialists as if the former was also not insistent upon high-lighting the controversy regarding Gandhi's leadership. Royists were, therefore, absorbed in the Party. But shortly after the Preparatory Conference M.N. Roy in a letter to the Organisers of the Congress Socialist Party disapproved the nomenclature of the Party. Firstly, the very name 'Socialist', in his opinion, would bear a discredited history of the recent past in Europe where the socialist parties had drifted towards constitutional reformism; and secondly, it would put the group in an uncomfortable position in relation to the conservative leadership of the
Congress. It may be pointed out that the second point of M.N. Roy came true in course of time. Socialists had to waste a lot of time to vindicate their position in relation to the Congress. But as the socialists did not join the Communist Party of India for the latter's subordination to Moscow and decided to remain in the Congress for the furtherance of the nationalist struggle, they did the right thing in taking the socialist nomenclature. However, M.N. Roy favoured the spread of socialist tendencies in the Congress. For, he held, this "testifies to an ideological mobility. It is the sign of class differentiation in the Congress rank — a process blurred and obstructed for so many years by utopian doctrines. The development of this process is a condition for radicalisation of the Congress rank and file — radicalisation in the democratic sense." But the organisation of Socialist Party in the contemporary socio-economic conditions of India was taken by him as an act in disregard to the lessons of history. Socialism, what the Socialist Party wanted to establish, could not be possible without a considerable development in capitalist line. Because development in that direction alone might prepare the conditions for socialist transformation. As no such development had taken place in India the organisation of the CSP could not be justified.

Yet the Congress Socialist Party was organised. M.N. Roy then felt it wise to allow his followers to join the CSP in pursuance of Lenin's thesis of bouring it from within. M.N. Roy's decision enthused the socialists, particularly Jayaprakash
Narayan, who believed that in order to establish left hegemony over the nationalist movement all the radical groups should learn to work in concert. In his Presidential address to the Bengal Congress Socialist Party Conference in 1935 he contended that, had the communists not abandoned the Congress during the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1929 "the radicalization of the Congress would have gone much further and we would have been much nearer our goal". Making reference to the Royists, in particular, he emphasised: "I firmly believe that unless there is fusion of the forces which I have mentioned, our common objectives will remain unrealized. . . . . I exhort you to develop the greatest possible cooperation with the groups that are, except for minor differences, working for the same object as ourselves. . . . . I entreat them to work together in the promotion of identical ideas, keeping in mind the day we shall all come closer and merge into one organization." Royists were elected to the National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party. They got a prominent role in the Bengal and Bombay branches of the Party. An eminent Royist, Rajani Mukherjee became the General Secretary of the Bengal branch. Bombay was the field of activities of M.R. Masani, Asoka Mehta, Achyut Patwardhan, Purushottam Tricundas and Yusuf Meherally. It was also a major centre of Royist activities. Besides Charles Mascarenhas many other Royists like Maniben Kara, M.R. Shetty, would work in the labour front through the Congress Socialist Party. V.B. Karnik, though not a member of Congress Socialist Party, would also work in the labour front with the socialists.
All these developments took place on the pious will of the socialists that the **minor differences** would be thrashed out in course of work. But M.N. Roy was firm in his logic that the socialists had confused "the immediate issues of the struggle for National Freedom by bringing in the question of Socialist programme". If the Socialist Party was at all to be organised, it was to be "independent of the Congress, although its members will individually remain in the Congress and constitute the driving force behind the left wing". Holding of such views during the period when the Party had already started functioning was evidently motivated to the liquidation of the Party. He even wrote to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International held in 1935 that the **petty bourgeois intelligentsia** was very active in the National Congress. "They are getting more and more concerned with social problems, in a rather reformist, sentimental, humanitarian sense than with a consciously revolutionary purpose. This tendency lately crystalized in the so-called Congress Socialist Party". His contention was perhaps to impress upon the Seventh World Congress to give up the left sectarian line of the Sixth World Congress and exploit the opportunities created by the formation of the Congress Socialist Party. It is not known whether M.N. Roy's letter was discussed in the Seventh World Congress, but the Communist International revised its policy to allow the Indian Communists to join the nationalist struggle, which will be discussed later. A dogmatist may change his tactics but never his thesis. This
was also true about M.N. Roy. His European outlook and experience helped him to believe that the Congress Socialist Party composed of the heterogeneous elements must reduce itself into a reformist-parliamentarian group. So an integrated communist party should work inside the Congress Socialist Party in order to expedite the split in that reformist party and develop out of that split an integrated party with the real proletarian elements. It was with this idea that M.N. Roy directed his followers to join the Congress Socialist Party. His directive was "to meet them socialists half-way and guide them forward". This implied working together and absorbing the promising elements like Yusuf Meherally and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and to be aware of the objectionable elements like M.R. Masani and Purushottam Tricumdas. M.N. Roy's anti-socialist crusade went unabated. In June, 1936, a Royist secret circular containing the directives to liquidate the Congress Socialist Party came into the hands of the socialists. Charles Mascarenhas and Rajani Mukherjee repudiated the circular as spurious before the National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party and the matter was dropped.

In November, 1936 M.N. Roy was released and Jayaprakash Narayan met him at Allahabad with the greetings of the Congress Socialist Party. In course of discussion with Jayaprakash Narayan M.N. Roy raised two points: (i) whether it was desirable for a Socialist Party to exist openly within the Congress, and (ii) whether an open Socialist Party was not likely to degenerate
in India into a reformist party. M.N. Roy raised these points. His idea about the Congress Socialist Party was summed up as follows: "The Congress Socialist Party is either an organisation of the left wing in the Congress, or a genuine Marxist Socialist Party. If it is the former, then it cannot be a real Socialist party. If it is the latter, then it must adopt the plan of action and the organisational form of a Communist party. With its present programme and organisational form, the CSP tends to be reformist Social Democratic Party." Jayaprakash Narayan clarified to him the position of the Congress Socialist Party vis-a-vis the Congress and stated that, the socialists' open functioning within the Congress had enabled them to work in responsible positions of the Congress and get the working class involved in the national movement which was the prime necessity of the day. As to the second point, the socialist answer was that, reformism might grow out of the ruling authority's willingness to give some concessions to the masses. But the position of the masses in relation to the exploiting imperialists was so miserable that even the slightest possibility of any concession by the latter might be ruled out. M.N. Roy seemed satisfied with what Jayaprakash Narayan said and "the hope was aroused that at least two of the three parties were soon to become one." But subsequent behaviour of M.N. Roy belied all hopes. Almost immediately after his talks with Jayaprakash Narayan M.N. Roy made certain remarks at public meetings to the detriment of the policy of the Congress Socialist
In order to ascertain whether M.N. Roy had any second thought relating to the socialists Jayaprakash Narayan again met him. M.N. Roy requested Jayaprakash Narayan not to be misled by press statements. Though M.N. Roy pacified Jayaprakash Narayan this way, he did not deviate an inch from his policy of liquidating the Congress Socialist Party. He issued a secret instruction to his followers to resign from the Congress Socialist Party in such a "public manner and at such suitable intervals" so as "to give the impression that the CSP was gradually breaking up." When the matter was brought before the National Executive, a section of the members led by M.R. Masani proposed the immediate expulsion of the Royists, but the National Executive did not respond to the proposal of M.R. Masani and issued a note of warning. This, however, could not check the drift. The Royists resigned from the Congress Socialist Party at suitable intervals as directed by M.N. Roy. This process started in April, 1937 and ended in August, 1937. On Royists' resignation Jayaprakash Narayan wrote: "The basic difficulty in the Party of unity was the ridiculous idea held by every miserable little party that it alone was the real Marxist Party, and that every other party had, therefore, to be exploited, captured or destroyed. The Roy Group was also a votary of this inflated creed. It was natural for it, therefore, to consider the development of another socialist party as unnecessary and harmful. It was much better to have a left platform which it could animate and dominate."
The Royists would form a "microscopic" minority in the Congress Socialist Party, so their resignation could not organisationally injure the Party much. Yet, it is worthwhile to note what actually led M.N. Roy to withdraw his followers from the Congress Socialist Party. John Patrick Haithcox has summarised that for three reasons Royists withdrew from the Congress Socialist Party. Firstly, M.N. Roy did not recognise the Congress Socialist Party as a Socialist Party. Secondly, he did not like socialists' emphasis on freedom movement and socialism at the same time. And thirdly, socialists' programme of radicalising the Congress through collective affiliation of trade unions and Kisan sabhas to the Congress was not acceptable to him.

But this is an over simplification of M.N. Roy's mind. What worked in M.N. Roy's mind was perhaps his inordinate ambition for dictatorial leadership. Through his close association with Lenin and Stalin he developed an image for himself after these two leaders. Like all other leaders of the Communist International he also cared very little for scruples. Establishment of his leadership in the political scene of India was his chief concern. And for this reason he made contradictory statements and undertook contradictory programme. About a year after Royists' withdrawal from the Congress Socialist Party he said in support of his actions that there was no justification in developing Socialist Party and fostering socialist programme under conditions when India, basically an agrarian country, was
groaning under British rule. Socialism has certain pre-
conditions of which the most essential was, in his opinion, the
organisation of a revolutionary party of the proletariat. But
the peasantry which would form the great bulk of Indian popula-
tion could neither be called proletariat nor be organised for
revolution. The peasantry needed an agrarian revolution and
this agrarian revolution might be called a bourgeois democratic
revolution meaning thereby transfer of power from the parasitic
landlords to the real cultivators. But he did not find any
possibility of bourgeois democratic revolution before political
power was captured. Hence, socialism was, to him, remote possi-

Yet it is this M.N. Roy who wrote in 1937: "I do not
believe in the dogma of proletarian leadership of the anti-
imperialist struggle. It is sheer nonsense, at best revolu-
tionary romanticism, to talk of proletarian leadership of the
democratic revolution in a country where the proletariat is
still to form itself into a social class." Contradiction is
very prominent. In one place he insisted upon proletarianisation
of the Indian peasantry as a pre-condition of socialism
while in other place proletarianisation seemed sheer nonsense
to him. While commenting upon M.N. Roy's ideas, at some later
time, Saumyendranath Tagore pointed to this contradiction,
"what a splendid example of confusion and opportunism. Roy does
not believe in the "dogma (1) of the proletarian leadership of
the anti-imperialist struggle". But may we ask Roy what is this
anti-imperialist struggle, if in our epoch it is not the
socialist revolution that will fulfil the democratic revolution
as its "by-product"? Secondly, M.N. Roy's idea that bourgeois democratic revolution would follow capturing of political power also seems queer. History has made us wise by the fact that, revolution can never be led from the position of power. Because power inspires to protect power. So, it was prudent for the Congress Socialist Party to intensify mass activity with clear and specific programme when struggle continued. Socialism, under those circumstances, was not the immediate objective, but propagation of socialist programme seemed inevitable in order to ensure mass participation in the freedom struggle. The Congress Socialist Party rightly felt that, if the uneducated poor peasants were to be made conscious of freedom, freedom should also mean redress of their increasing economic grievances.

"We cannot separate the fight for freedom and these demands for the redress of our day to day grievances. This is the only way, by uniting the two that a mass movement can be developed." A poor peasant did not care for British rule, he was afraid of the atrocities of the local landlord and the money-lenders. So, if the peasants were to be involved into the struggle, the programme must at least include measures to check the exploitation of the landlords, if not fully doing away with landlordism immediately. It was for this reason Narendra Deva characterised the contemporary stage as the stage of bourgeois democratic revolution.

Narendra Deva had thus taken a stand just opposed to that of M.N. Roy. M.N. Roy had differences with the Soviet leadership, but he did not completely renounce Soviet heritage. So, it was not possible for him to agree with Narendra Deva, who was out and
out an Indian. As a faithful Communist Internationalist M.N. Roy observed that there should not exist any Socialist Party but "only secret-parties and caucuses, preferably turning around select individuals." "What Roy is really attempting to do" charged the CSP Executive, "is to organize a secret party that will work within the Congress under his leadership." And that this was not an idle charge had been proved by later confession of some Royists that, they would operate inside the CSP, as an underground secret party and one of their main functions was to split the CSP and siphon off the more radical elements into their secret party.

M.N. Roy felt that, after cutting off his connections with the socialists he would thrust his well-disciplined group against the Congress to capture its leadership. He considered the matter to be easier when he found that the right-wingers co-opted a Royist, Maniben Kara into the AICC after her resignation from the CSP. But his assessment was found wrong. Although he was supported by some right-wingers to gain some local victory against the socialists, M.N. Roy admitted later that, the right wingers tried to use him merely as a counterpoise to the socialists. He did not get the chance of entering even into periphery of Congress leadership. Because of his avowed anti-Gandhism M.N. Roy was never acceptable to Gandhi. In reply to his article "Science and Superstition", in which he vehemently attacked Gandhi, Gandhi remarked that M.N. Roy was his enemy number one. M.N. Roy was also politically unacceptable
to Jawaharlal Nehru for his prophesed anti-Nehru views, though the latter admitted to be attracted to him by his remarkable intellectual capacity and "because he seemed such a lonely figure, deserted by everybody." Per contra, the socialists instead of enmity towards Gandhi acknowledged him as the supreme leader of the nationalist struggle, though Gandhi and socialists would not agree on all issues at this stage. Jawaharlal Nehru also did not always see eye to eye with the socialists, but the former had no disliking for the latter because of long and close association with them.

Whatever might be M.N. Roy's ideas about the socialists the CSP developed considerable influence in the Congress in the later half of the thirties. Hence, if M.N. Roy would have agreed to mend his Stalist ego, he might avert desertion and have been purposeful to the country's freedom by remaining in the CSP. He had a long and thorough knowledge about the tactics and behaviour of the henchmen of Communist International. Had he been in the CSP, his experienced leadership might check the communist disruptive activities inside the Congress Socialist Party and the Party might take a bold and stable stand against disruption. But the tragedy was that without being an Internationalist officially, he also became a votary of that creed. History has proved that, this did good neither to the Royists nor to the socialists.
II. CSP-CPI Relation

A Marxist never understands a social fact in isolation but in the perspective of history and in relation to other social facts, observed Jayaprakash Narayan. But Jayaprakash Narayan and his comrades in the Congress Socialist Party failed to understand that history does not produce anything by itself; social facts are definitely historical products, but they are shaped by the operation of strategy and tactics formulated by leadership. Successful handling of social events by leadership leads to social change in desired direction whereas the failure of leadership creates chaos and confusion. The socialists in thirties might be master Marxians, but they lacked the Leninist training of strategy and tactics. "In Communist usage . . . strategy defines the nature of the struggle among the political organizations of those classes." Communists' relation with the socialists was tactical and was in pursuance of Leninist tactical devices of action from above and action from below. Jayaprakash Narayan was a communist and a member of the Communist cell in his student days in America, so he might be credited with the knowledge of the communistic behaviour pattern. But the socialists were so very enamoured of the glamour of Soviet Revolution that they ignored the Leninist teaching. They did not even question, how the Socialist Party, which was so long considered by the communists as the bitterest enemy of international communism and the last reserve of the bourgeois society, became overnight a true socialist force? Although
the Communist Party of India was organised as late as 1924, socialism could not be a dominant force in India till the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934. It received some amount of publicity during the Meerut Conspiracy trial, but it secured no place for itself in the political life of the country. It was, on the contrary, believed to be an article of foreign import. The Congress socialists for the first time pointed out that, implementation of socialist ideal did never follow set pre-conditions. "The peculiarity of Indian conditions may influence and determine the manner and the stages in which the principles of socialism may be applied here, but never alter those principles. If social ownership of the means of production is essential for stopping exploitation and unequal distribution of wealth in other parts of the world, it is equally essential in India." If the backwardness of India did not prevent the British from building railroads and other institutions to serve their purpose or the identical backwardness in Turkestan did not prevent the Russians from building up socialism there, then there was no reason to suppose that the Indian condition was unsuitable for the implementation of socialist principles. Socialism, however, could not be built up unless the machinery of state was captured. So needed a synchronisation between the national struggle and struggle for socialism.

The socialists felt that, without a socialist orientation the national movement for freedom could neither be broad based nor be led to a definite goal. And to widen the scope of the
movement consolidation of socialist forces was the prime necessity. From the theoretical point of view this consolidation did not seem to be very difficult, because "... owing to the impact of the world crisis and the rise of Fascism, there has been a growing unity in socialist thought; and today more than even before it is possible to say that there is only one theory of Socialism - Marxism." It was, therefore, not very difficult for the Marxian parties to come closer and work for broadening the basis of the national movement. The socialists had strong faith in their formulation and they extended the hands of co-operation to the communists, though the latter had been abusing the Congress Socialist Party as the party of the Social Fascists. Not only that, the communists "had characterised the Party as a left manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie. This was not a stray remark of some individuals but the considered opinion of the Party voiced by the leaders and in the Party pronouncements." This line of activities of the Indian communists was in conformity with the Sixth World Congress of 1928. But the directives of the Sixth World Congress drove the Indian communists into isolation which was noticed with alarm in the Seventh World Congress in 1935. The Chinese Communist Leader, Wang Ming made a comprehensive report on colonial countries including India: "... Our comrades in India have suffered for a long time from 'left sectarian errors'. They did not participate in all the mass demonstrations organised by the Indian National Congress or organisations affiliated with it. At the same time, the Indian Communists did
not possess sufficient force independently to organise a powerful anti-imperialist mass movement. Therefore, the Indian Communists were, to a considerable extent, isolated from the mass of people."

On the basis of the report of Wang Ming the Seventh Congress revised its directives to the Communist parties of the colonies. They were directed to ally themselves with the left or reformist parties which were genuinely anti-imperialist. It was laid down in the general resolution of the Seventh World Congress: "In India the Communists have to support, extend and participate in anti-imperialist mass activities, not excluding those which are under national reformist leadership. While maintaining their political and organisational independence, they must carry on active work inside the organisations which take part in the Indian National Congress, facilitating the process of crystallisation of a national revolutionary wing among them, for the purpose of further developing the national liberation movement of the Indian peoples against British imperialism." The Leninist tactics of united front from below thus, again, came into operation.

But the socialists in their eagerness to realise socialist unity did not question the honesty of the directives of the Seventh World Congress. M.R. Masani was, however, sceptical about the communists' change of attitude. During the session of the Seventh World Congress he was in Moscow. The British communist leaders — Harry Pollitt, R. Palme Dutt,
and Ben Bradley, who represented the C.P.I. in the Seventh World Congress in the absence of C.P.I. delegates and who worked as the mentor of the Indian communists — met him with the proposal of CSP-CPI merger. M.R. Masani replied to them straightway that the merger might be possible if the communist leaders agreed to the dissolution of the C.P.I. He also added that the new party developed through merger would not affiliate with the Comintern. The negotiation obviously failed. But the Congress socialists were Marxists and not Leninists. So they took the British communists' overture to M.R. Masani to be the beginning of a cooperative attitude of the communists. They opened the negotiation for co-operative activities in the field of trade union movement, which was in miserable conditions because of the left sectarian policy pursued by the communists. The socialists believed like true Marxists that, if workers of every industry or factory were split into rival unions fighting among themselves, strong trade union movement could never be developed. The CSP, therefore, from the beginning joined hand with the All India Trade Union Congress /"AITUC/7. All unions formed by or under the control of the CSP were to affiliate themselves to the AITUC. "It desired to co-operate with the CP in those labour sectors where the latter's influence was considerable, while the CP was expected to co-operate with the CSP in the peasant and other sectors where the Congress influence was pre-eminent." It should be noted in this connection that the socialists had a considerable base amongst the peasants. The socialists would
believe that like the labour peasants had an equally important role in ousting the British Raj and ushering in a new social order. "Even before the Party came into existence JP Jayaprakash Narayan and his band in Bihar had begun to organise Kisans and had succeeded in organising a fairly strong Kisan movement. The Party, soon after it came into existence, applied itself to this task as well." Socialists, therefore, considered that, if the communists would come forward, peasants' and workers' movement might be at once broadened and strengthened. The Soviet leaders also could gradually realise that the left sectarian line adopted by the Sixth World Congress of 1928 was not only faulty but disastrous to the international labour movement. So, they softened their attitude and ordered the Red Trade Union Congress in India to cooperate with other trade union organisations. The Soviet attitude was positively changed when Georgi Dimitrov reported to the Seventh World Congress of the miserable plight of the communist trade union movement in India. He recommended a total revision of policy in the field of trade union movement and said: "We are definitely for the re-establishment of trade union unity in each country and on an international scale. We are for one union in each industry. We stand for federation of trade unions in each country. We are for one international federation of trade unions organised according to industry. We stand for one International of trade unions based on class struggle. . . . . Our only condition for uniting the trade union is: struggle against capital, struggle against Fascism and international
trade union democracy. " The socialists were already negotiating with the different trade union leaders for unity, so they naturally welcomed the resolution of the Seventh Congress. The dissolution of Red TUC became possible in 1935 and the communists agreed to get all their trade unions affiliated to the AITUC.

But at this stage the Congress Socialist Party was aware of its differences with the communists and did not favour complete and immediate unity. The differences were chiefly in the attitude of the two parties to the Indian National Congress and the freedom movement. Therefore, differences were too great for complete and immediate unity. But the CSP "believed that if unity was desirable and was to come in the future, it could be possible not by fighting each other but by trying to work together as far as possible." The socialists in their zeal for unity cleared up their attitude towards the Soviet Union, which they felt might create an atmosphere for better understanding and co-operation between the two parties. It was categorically stated that "Soviet Russia is the only country in the world to-day where socialist society is being organised. It is, therefore, the duty of every socialist to help the Soviet democracy and treat as enemy power, any power that harbours aggressive designs against the Soviet Union and be prepared to defend the Soviet Union in case such attack materialises." Not only that, the CSP expecting cooperation said in advance that, "the two parties must remain as distinct and
independent bodies, but with a fighting alliance between them. An ad-hoc co-ordination committee for the purpose, having representatives of both the parties, would then have to be set up. While retaining the ideological differences it is possible for socialists of varying tendencies to work together on such basis."

But the communists in India paid little attention to what the socialists said and did. They, on the contrary, despised the socialists. Directives of the Seventh World Congress also could cut little ice. This, however, does not mean that the Indian communists had the capacity to defy the Soviet orders. As a matter of fact, the "Comintern United Front policy . . . has in India and elsewhere proved too wide and unwieldy a weapon, and is, in India especially, too prone: to jealousies and internal quarrels, to succeed without modification." Hence, came the Dutt-Bradley thesis in January, 1936. In an Open Letter to the Indian patriots they wrote:-

"Every Indian patriot will recognise that the first need for the powerful advance of the Indian national struggle, the key need of the present situation is the unity of all the anti-imperialist forces in the common struggle.

"The National Congress can play a great part and a foremost part in the work of realizing the Anti-Imperialist Peoples' Front. It is even possible that the National Congress, by the further transformation of its organization and programme
may become the form of realisation of the Anti-Imperialist Peoples' Front; for it is the reality that matters, not the name.

"What is needed is, without impairing the degree of unity that has been achieved through the National Congress, to strengthen and extend this unity to a broader front and to develop to a new stage of the organization and leadership of the mass struggle against imperialism.

"... it is essential that all left wing elements in the Congress should fight in union on a common platform for these vital needs.

"The Congress Socialist Party can play an especially important part in this as the grouping of all the radical elements in the existing Congress."

As the Communist Party of Great Britain was recognised as the mentor of the Indian communists, it was quite natural that Dutt-Bradley thesis had been able to bring the Indian communists in line with the Comintern policy. The CPI decided to send fraternal delegates to the Second Conference of the Congress Socialist Party at Meerut in January, 1936.

Taking into consideration their success in the field of trade union unity, the Congress Socialist Party in the meantime revised its Bombay decision of 1934 regarding the admission of the Communists into the Party. In January, 1936, the National Executive Committee unanimously decided on the recommendation
of the General Secretary, Jayaprakash Narayan that, the communists might be taken into the Party as members on individual basis. The socialists considered the decision of the National Executive Committee to be a revolutionary organizational step in the direction of unity. But whatever might be the importance of the step from the point of view of purpose, organisationally it was utterly an infantile decision. Because a person can never be the member of two political parties with two different ideologies. If any body accepted such membership, his motive might be questioned. But the socialists having little faith in Gandhian technique at this stage, behaved like true Gandhians and believed in the honesty of the communists who till the other day had been harbouring animosity and considered every change of policy to be tactical. Jayaprakash Narayan himself admitted at some later date: "We recognised then that it was extraordinary to have members in our Party who are also members of and owe their allegiance to another group. Yet, since we were eager for and working towards the development of a united Socialist Party, we took recourse to that anomalous procedure, much at the risk of confusion in our ranks due to conflict of loyalties and disciplines." The socialists were so very crazy about unity that the National Executive Committee by-passed its own decision of admitting communists with the express permission of the Executive in every case, and allowed the communists to enter into the CSP without scrutiny. Jayaprakash Narayan observed that, the Executive behaved in that manner because it did not want to queer
the process by sheer technicalities. Admitting the mistake, Narayan said: "The Communists in this way came into the Party under false pretences, and later when difficulties arose they were able to deny their membership."

But the Trojan horse policy as announced by the Seventh Comintern Congress or the programme of Socialist unity as described by the socialists could not bear much fruit before the middle of 1936. During this time a change came in the Indian communist leadership. The new General Secretary of the CPI, P.C. Joshi, having allegiance to neither of the warring factions, had been able to implement the Dutt-Bradley thesis and grasp the opportunity thrust at it by the CSP. By his initiative communists started applying for the membership of the CSP in large numbers.

During the Lucknow Session of the Indian National Congress in April, 1936, the CSP and the CPI came into an understanding and the communists agreed to look upon the CSP "as a Marxist Socialist Party, — a proposition we were prepared to accept to treat us as such provided they would not attempt to carry on 'faction work' within our Party either through their members or through others they could influence," observed Jayaprakash Narayan. By faction work was meant, —

"(a) Such activities as are designed to create a compact group or groups hostile to the party leadership with a view to capture or to break up the Party finally (Organization of
differing opinions with genuine aim of revising Party policies is permitted.)

"(b) Labelling of the Party, either among members or others, and such expression of opinions and commission of acts as bring the Party into discredit.

"(c) Consistent and repeated attacks on members of the party leadership in order to throw doubt on their 'bonafides' and thus isolate them."

On this understanding the socialists threw the doors of the National Executive of Congress Socialist Party wide open to the leading members of the Communist Party. At central and state level prominent communists became office-bearers of the Congress Socialist Party. Eminent communist leader E.M.S. Namboodiripad was made one of the Joint Secretaries of the CSP. By the end of 1936 a large number of communists entered into the CSP. This could be possible, as already stated, because of the deliberate by-passing of CSP's own resolution which was adopted by the National Executive at Bombay in 1934.

But by the end of 1936 reports began to reach the National Executive of the communists' 'faction works' and their attempt to disrupt the organisation; they were trying to convert the members of the CSP to Communism and manoeuvring to capture local CSP units or competing with the socialists in mass organisations like trade union and Kisan Sabha. At its Delhi meeting of the National Executive during the end of 1936 it was
decided to send a note of "warning to the party branches". But in some cases this warning had come too late and had no effect, because certain provincial units were already under the control of the communists. The whole of South India had been captured by the communists under the leadership of E.M.S. Namboodiripad, who was then the Joint Secretary of the CSP. He had put P. Ramamurti and P. Jeevanandan in-charge of the socialist affairs in Tamilnad. Andhra Provincial unit had fallen under the control of P. Sundarayya. Thus within a short period of time Southern units of the CSP were virtually turned into units of the CPI. These communists started espousing communism openly. Almost the same thing happened in the field of trade union movement in Northern India where the communists succeeded in capturing leadership. In Bombay Soli Batliwala, who later became a member of the CPI Central Committee, acquired tremendous influence in the trade union movements launched in the name of the CSP.

But the CSP only felt perturbed. Strangely enough these events did not create much reaction, at least in the party leadership. In early 1937 the National Executive merely reaffirmed its "policy of combatting such factionalism. . . . if necessary by resort to disciplinary action." From the organisational point of view such a stand was suicidal. The fact was that the socialists were blind to the danger that their policy would engender. They permitted themselves to be carried away by the simplistic romantic ideal of socialist unity.
There was, however, semblance of programmatic unity step between the two parties in fighting imperialism and feudalism. And this unity of programme led the socialists to forge an agreement with the communists, popularly known as the Lucknow Agreement. It was agreed upon "that both these were socialist parties which in course of time and following certain policies of co-operation would unite to form a single party. Without this basic assumption there could have been no meaning in the slogan of socialist unity."

With the signing of Lucknow Agreement the socialists started believing that the different Marxist-parties were all on the way "towards socialist unity. The Royists were already with us, and we hoped the Communists too would now gradually come in, so that very soon, as in the course of joint work differences would wear off and mutual confidence would increase, the united socialist party of India would emerge into being."

The socialists were aware of the differences that still existed between the two parties. The international affiliation of the CPI was a great hurdle for the unity of the two parties. But the socialists considered that a "mature movement might find means and strength to overcome difficulties entirely beyond the resources of its childhood."

But the communists did not take the Lucknow Agreement very seriously. They were faithfully carrying out the order of the Comintern and trying to extend the scope of their united
front movement. In February 1937 the GPI Politbureau adopted a resolution declaring its four-class strategy of actions. The Politbureau did not like to keep their united front movement confined only within the Congress, CSP and the working classes but to extend it to "certain organizations of the Indian merchants and industrialists." This touched off a furore in the CSP and the communists were castigated as revisionists, who, in their turn, condemned the CSP as "left sectarian". The communists, however, came out with long explanatory statements to ease the situation. One statement elaborated that the united front must comprise all classes "including large sections of the Indian bourgeoisie and barring a small top knot section of the pro-Imperialist bourgeoisie and the big landlords and princes."

Therefore, organisational and theoretical disputes that already started were beyond (proved too great for) reconciliation. Fractional contest was the order of the relation. The communists complained of the bureaucratisation of the Party. In a secret circular the communist leaders made their own comrades alert. "Disciplinary actions are taken against many active Marxist members who happened to have disagreements with the leading group on specific points. Marxists suspected of Communist leanings are rigidly excluded...". At the Patna meeting of the National Executive of the CSP in August, 1937 the circular came in the hands of the Socialists. In it the CSP was described by the CPI as "a political party which is
today dominantly petty bourgeois in composition and is led by a group of socialists and socialistically oriented intellectuals. . . . it is not a socialist party of the working class but rather the growing organisational expression of left unity. . . . Its future lies in its development into a mass party, not with the rigid discipline of a one class party but with an organisational structure which corresponds to the unification of all left forces." The communists also demanded that the "CSP as the rallying point of all left and socialist forces must pursue a policy of close united front with open working class parties wherever they exist or wherever they will be formed. The CSP as the growing expression of left unity must put a stop to the process of bureaucratisation which is preventing operation of genuine working class Marxist groups in the tasks of building and strengthening the CSP." Thus within a period of one year and four months between April, 1936 and August, 1937, the communists revised their stand about the CSP. The National Executive of the CSP took a serious view of these developments and decided, "till consultations are held and these points are cleared up to its satisfaction, to refuse admission into its membership to any members of the "Red" group and others who accept the statement issued by them." But the National Executive clarified that the refusal of admission of the communists into the CSP did not mean termination of the united front which "will continue unchanged, unless something else happens to disturb it."
After August, 1937 the situation steadily deteriorated and organisational activities were increasingly paralysed. Under these circumstances the socialists "felt that there was no alternative to expelling the Communists, and yet the Party hesitated to undo all that it had done before and let go all the hopes it had so fondly cherished." So while taking actions the socialists accommodated the communists instead of expelling them. During this time the socialists attempted a reorganisation of the Party and on the recommendation of Jayaprakash Narayan the Andhra unit of the Party was handed over to the communists.

The beginning of 1938 found a landmarking anti-climax to the Patna-document. An astonishing note was sent to the National Executive by the communists. "The note categorically stated that the CP considered the CSP to be a true revolutionary Marxist party and believed that socialist unity could be brought about only by the unity of the two parties." Not only that, a self-critical statement was published in the first issue of the National Front, their official organ on February 13, 1938. The communists seemed to have realised their faults in abusing the Indian National Congress and admitted that the Congress was not a forum of constitutional agitation. They lamented that they could not speak in a language which the people could understand. Their sentiments were expressed as follows:--

"The unity of the entire Left to develop the independent class organisation of workers and peasants and to preserve the
unity of the National Front and the National Congress is the two-fold task before the Left today. In the process of realising this unity of thought and action will have to be forged the unity of the forces of the Left itself, leading ultimately to the building of a united working class socialist party.

"The CSP must emerge at Lahore as a powerful United Party, into its ranks all genuine active anti-imperialists, all genuine socialists and communists."

While commenting on the communists' change of policy Jayaprakash Narayan said at some later time: " . . . . the Communist Party was in fright. Since Patna, feelings against the tactics of the Communist Party had been growing, and a body of opinion was gaining in strength in the Party that the time had come when the Communists should be shown the way out. They had too long been allowed, in the name of unity, to take advantage of the Party." Moreover, Mr. Masani, who had been denounced by the communists as a "communist-baiter", was the Chairman of the Lahore Conference of the Party. The communists were really afraid of Masani. Because "he was the first to see through their game of disruption and capture, played under the cover of unity. He was, therefore, early to demand the wholesale expulsion of the Communists from the party, not as an anti-Communist measure, but as a counter-measure to their anti-Congress Socialist Party and capture tactics." The CPI was still illegal. Under these circumstances if the communists had to face a wholesale expulsion from the CSP, they would not
find any other open mass organisation through which they might remain in the political current as an active force. Expulsion might throw them again into the underground and then alienate them from the masses. The National Executive, however, did not attach much importance to the communists' statement; neither did they listen to what M.R. Masani said. The communists were allowed to remain in the Party. The Executive would rather risk the palsied drift in the Party than to take the 'unpleasant decision' of packing the communists off from the Party. But the communists acted in complete contradiction to their solemn note at the CSP Conference. During the elections for the National Executive they put an alternative communist list and voted for it en-bloc. However they were defeated by a narrow margin. "In other words, even while they talked and breathed unity, they made a secret bid to capture the Party."

Yet, in the midst of despair the socialists achieved a striking success in the field of trade union movement. Within a week of the Socialist Conference in 1938 a joint session of the Trade Union Congress and the Trade Union Federation was held signalising the trade union unity. The moderate trade unionists who broke away in 1929 again came back into the fold of the All India Trade Union Congress by the initiative of the CSP. Suresh Chandra Banerjee, a member of the CSP became the President of the United Trade Union Congress.

But the communists were never slow in their movement to wreck the socialist movement. In May, 1938 a secret communist
circular was detected by M.R. Masani. The circular contained
the communist strategy of action within the Congress Socialist
Party. They planned to form informal Activists' Groups
within the CSP and popularise the slogan, All Socialists inside
the CSP and vigorously attempt for joint action to sabotage it.
Wherever they were in a majority they would work in a new way and wherever they were in a minority, their
plan was to be critically vigilant to the day to day work of
the socialists. The circular directed the communists to
claim their admission into the CSP as a matter of right. The
communists were asked to keep constant contact with the new
CSP members and take all possible steps to influence them.
This created a great stir in the socialist circle, yet the CSP
Executive failed to take any firm decision. Their inaction
revealed the confusion and weakness of the Party leadership.
Two alternatives were left before the Party to check the drift
and emerge from the confusion. These were, either complete
merger of the two parties or wholesale expulsion of the
communists from the Party. Though the socialists started
their unity campaign in 1936 keeping in mind the first alternative, it was an impossible step in 1938-39 because of communists' betrayal to the cause of unity and stabbing the efforts. The second alternative was most practical. But the National Executive of the CSP still lacked the courage to take any decision. In its Bombay meeting in May, 1939 the demand for the expulsion of the communists was even more loudly voiced,
but no positive decision could be taken even after much deliberation. When the matter was left to Jayaprakash Narayan, the General Secretary of the Party, he effected a compromise by deciding "that Communists who were already members of the Party should not be expelled, as that would lead to much bitterness and mutual distrust. I, however, emphasized that henceforth every attempt should be made to keep the control of the Party in the hands of genuine members." Jayaprakash Narayan put forward such a view because he was still holding abortive talks with the communist leaders in order to make his long cherished dream of socialist unity a success. But the Jayaprakash-formula did not satisfy many. M.R. Masani, Achyut Patwardhan, Rammanohar Lohia and Asoka Mehta resigned from the Executive. It was for the first time in five-years history of the Congress Socialist Party that difference of opinion led the five of the ten pioneers of the CSP to resign. Although Jayaprakash Narayan admitted his mistake later, at this time he valued his dream more than his long trusted comrades. He himself deviated from his own formula and allowed eight communists to enter into the Allahabad Committee of the U.P. Party.

War broke out in September, 1939. Soon after the war began the National Executive met at Lucknow. Emergency Committee was formed in provinces for Anti-War campaign. "At this meeting there was a casual discussion about a joint committee being formed of the left groups to function during the war period and
perhaps to initiate a struggle, if need be." At the following meeting of the Executive at Wardha the matter was seriously discussed and the proposal was dropped because of the non-existence of political agreement between the left groups and lack of unanimity in attitude towards the war. The attitude of the CSP was "of non-co-operation with the war under any circumstances while all the other groups had some form of bargaining in view of return for co-operation." Hence, as the policies of other left groups might shift with the change in situation, joint committee was considered to be a farce. The Executive therefore, favoured the formation of joint committees at the provincial level with individuals instead of parties as the members. This was the first time when the socialists took a realistic decision in regard to their relation with other left groups.

In October, 1939, Subhas Chandra Bose convened a meeting of the left groups including the CPI to draw out programme of Anti-war campaign. Again, the proposal of joint committee was raised and the socialists opposed it. However, the meeting ended by adopting a programme of joint action. This was the last attempt at left unity. But soon after this meeting the CPI "came out with a thesis in which they launched an attack upon the Party CSP, and also talked of an armed insurrection. That was the final blow even to joint working. ... So was left unity laid at rest by its loudest advocates."
At the end of December, 1939 Jayaprakash Narayan issued a war circular to the provincial units of the CSP in which he stated that during the last few weeks the communists have left nothing undone to wreck the unity within the Congress Socialist Party. They had tried to create confusion in the CSP rank and spoke even of rebellion against the party leadership for an adventurist plan to launch a civil-disobedience movement without the sanction of the Congress. The socialists, particularly Jayaprakash Narayan, felt that the CPI had completely unmasked itself "and stood as the sworn enemy of the Congress Socialist Party and of every other progressive organization with which it had worked before." The National Executive at long last decided at its Ramgarh meeting in March, 1940 to expel all the communists from the Congress Socialist Party. It did not mean merely the expulsion of certain individual communists, the whole of South India and from one-third to one-half of the Party membership of Bengal and Punjab went away with the communists. With this the Congress Socialist Party lost control over All India Student Federation, All India Kisan Sabha and All India Trade Union Congress. In the words of Madhu Limaye the CSP was "all but finished". While narrating his sad experience of alliance with the communists Jayaprakash Narayan said "it is desirable once for all to give up vague talk of unity with the Communist Party." No party having the affiliation with the Communist International can think of collaboration with the CPI. After all, "unity is a misnomer" observed Jayaprakash Narayan.
Failure of the programme of socialist consolidation proved that men with different ideologies could never work together. The situation worsened because the Congress socialists, particularly Jayaprakash Narayan, allowed themselves too much to indulge in romanticism. Politics may be guided by ideals, but sentimentality can never be interpreted as an ideal. One after another opportunities had been created, even by the disruptors, but in every case the socialists lacked political acumen and the National Executive allowed the General Secretary to guide the Congress Socialist Party by romantic sentimentality rather than by reason. Reason was rehabilitated too late. It had by then lost the very basis upon which it had been built.
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75. Ibid.
80. All India Congress Socialist Party Circular Letter, Nov.4 to Provincial Secretaries, Patna, March 31, 1937 /An inner-Party Circular/.
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85. Ibid., p. 5.
86. Communist, June, 1937, p. 25.
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91. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
98. Ibid., p. 175.
99. Ibid., p. 176.
101. Communist Plot Against The CSP — a pamphlet for members of the CSP issued by M.R. Masani, on behalf of the Congress Socialist Party, Bombay. The pamphlet was based on a CPI circular dt. 9.5.'38, pp. 4-6. All the 480 members of the Andhra Party, all the 220 members of Tamil Nadu, all the 200 members of Kerala were under the influence of CPI. In Orissa 40 members were under CPI influence assuring “majority in the provincial executive to the communists,” pp. 6-7.

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107. Ibid.

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