

CHAPTER - IIIFORMATION OF THE CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY (1934)

- Birth of the Congress Socialist Party - It's
Ideology - Differences with Communists -

It was early in the thirties that the Indian Socialists began to organize themselves. During the thirties, it is found that, socialist groups sprang up in various parts of the country.* In Maharashtra the Bombay Socialist Party was formed by Yusuf Mehrally, Achut Patwardhan, M. Masani and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya in 1931.¹ Afterwards during the Second Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932, socialist leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan, Achut Patwardhan, Ashok Mehta, M.R. Masani, N.G. Gorey, M.L. Dantwala, Acharya Jawadekar had been in prison in Nasik Jail.² And the idea of forming the Congress Socialist Party emerged through the discussion that took place in jail. As M.L. Dantwala, one of the founder member of the party recalls - "As is always the

* The Bihar Socialist Party was formed at Patna in 1931, with leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan, P.P. Varma, Rahul Saxkriyayana and G.S. Sinha. The Punjab Socialist Party at Lahore was an outgrowth of the Naujawan Bharat Sangh under J.L. Kapur and Firoz Chand. The U.P. Socialist Party was formed at Benaras with Sampurnanand, Ram Manohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Deva and Kamalapati Tripathi. The Socialists of the Central Province formed with Harihdranath Shastri, Shivnath Bannerji and Charu Chandra Chatterji (Ref. - J.C. Johari - Indian Government and Politics - Vishal Publication, 7th Edition, 1984 p.266).

case in jails, there took place intense and prolonged political discussions about the freedom struggle and its future. The idea of forming a socialist party within the broad based Indian National Congress emerged from the feeling amongst the younger group that the freedom movement lacked economic orientation."³ Most of these founders belonged to the new generation of youth. They nobly responded to the call of their duty during civil disobedience movement of 1932-33. But they were not satisfied with the congress programme because of the "failure of the congress to give the term 'Swaraj' a social content wide enough to attract the masses."⁴ This they sought to do. Their option lay between a new party outside the Indian National Congress or a unit within it. 'They opted for the latter alternative because their task could be better performed by and through the congress which already was a country-wide organization and has captured the imagination of the people.'⁵

Of the leaders of All India stature, Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the first to be attracted towards socialism. Nehru was elected as President of the Indian National Congress in 1929. In addition he was also elected as President of the Trade Union Congress, in the same year. At the instance of Nehru, the 1929 All Indian Congress Committee at Bombay passed a resolution, which ascribed 'the poverty of India not merely to foreign rule, but also to economic exploitation. To remove poverty and exploitation and to ameliorate the condition of Indian masses it was essential

to make revolutionary changes in the economic and social structure of the society.'⁶

The Indian National Congress at its Karachi Session of 1931 passed a resolution on 'Fundamental Rights' and 'economic policy' which stated - "The State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport."⁷ But the resolution on 'Fundamental Rights' and 'Economic Policy' did not satisfy the socialists in the Congress, who wanted not merely the nationalization of key industries, but also the nationalization of the essential means of production.

'Early in the thirties, the socialists and particularly communists, began to propound theories of class war and confiscation of private property. The Indian National Congress which was then dominated by Gandhi and those belonging to the Swarajya Party, disapproved of class war and all talk of confiscation of private property. It was on 18th June, 1934 the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution condemning the "loose talk about confiscation of private property and the necessity of class war." The resolution stated, that the 1931 Karachi resolution of the Congress on 'Fundamental Rights' and 'Economic Policy' did not envisage either confiscation of private property or class war. The Congress Working Committee Resolution further declared that the concept of class war and the doctrine of the confiscation of private property were contrary to the

principle of non-violence.⁸ The socialists within the Congress were dissatisfied with this resolution of the Congress Working Committee.

Though differing from the economic policy of the Congress, the Congress Socialist Party did not want to wreck the Congress, but wanted to make it more revolutionary and more socialistic. The founder members were already in the Congress, but they felt that for the growth and development of socialism in India, the leftist forces should be united under the banner of Congress Socialist Party.

It is interesting to note here that the socialists not only wanted to organize the socialist forces, but at the same time they wanted to strengthen the nationalist movement, and to give it a revolutionary rather than a constitutional character.

The Congress Socialist Party was established when the National Movement was entering the phase of frustration. The British had turned down the nationalist demand for Dominion Status and the negotiations at the Round Table Conference held in 1931 did not go according to the wishes of the Congress. The Congress launched the 'Civil Disobedience Movement.' But the nationalist movement made very little progress. The socialists wanted to push the movement forward and also to orient the movement to follow the path of socialism and class war. "As S.M. Joshi has stated "The Congress Socialist Party was formed through the 'ethos' of that time, people participated in the movement

of 1930 and again in 1932 Civil Disobedience Movement with the urge for freedom. But although the movement of 1932, in the beginning appeared very strong, it did not remain so after some time. When we thought about the ineffectiveness of the National Movement we came to the conclusion that unless the working class is not organized and unless the freedom movement is not oriented towards the path of socialism and class war, the national movement cannot be effective."⁹

After their release from the jail, socialists leaders held their first conference; in May 1934, Jayaprakash Narayan organised 'All India Socialist Conference' at Patna¹⁰. At this conference Preparatory Committee was appointed. Achut Patwardan one of the Socialist leaders from Maharashtra was associated with the Committee. This Committee drafted a 'Constitution' for the party; and a report regarding the nature and future policy of the party was circulated in the members of the party.¹¹ Prominent among the socialist movement and its leadership during this period were . . . Jayaprakash Narayan, Achut Patwardan, Ashok Mehta, M.R. Masani, Ram Manohar Lohia, N.G. Gorey, S.M. Joshi, M.L. Dantwala, Raosaheb Patwardan, Acharya Jawadekar and Yusuf Meherally.¹² Of these leaders Achut Patwardan, N.G. Gorey, S.M. Joshi, M.L. Dantwala, Raosaheb Patwardan, Acharya Jawadekar and Yusuf Meherally belonged to Maharashtra.

Immediately after the Patna Conference, 'on 1st July, 1934, the Socialist leaders from Maharashtra held a conference at the residence of the Congress leader Kakasaheb Gadgil in Pune and established Maharashtra Congress Socialist Party.'¹³

On 21st and 22nd October of 1934 a Conference was held in Bombay under the Presidentship of Sampurnanandji, and ~~the formulation~~ of the Congress Socialist Party, an organization within the Congress was formally founded.¹⁴ 'Eminent leaders like Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Acharya Narendra Deo, Gangasharan Sinha, Nabhakrishna Chaudhary, Chandrabhan Gupta, N.G. Gorey, S.M. Joshi, Ashok Mehta, Achut Patwardan, Raosaheb Patwardan, Yusuf Meherally and M.R. Masani were present at the conference.'¹⁵

At this conference the first 'National Executive' of the 'Congress Socialist Party' was also formed. Jayaprakash Narayan, M.R. Masani, Acharya Narendra Deo, Sampurnanand, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, N.G. Gorey, S.M. Joshi, Achut Patwardan, Purushottamdas Tricumdas, Farid Ansari, E.M.S. Nambudripad, Dinkar Mehta, Nabhakrishna Chaudhary, P.U. Deshpande, Sali Batliwala, Mohanlal Gautam and Charles Mascaronhas.¹⁶ were the members -

The formation of the Congress Socialist Party,* although seen with suspicion by some of the Congress leaders, was welcomed by the leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose, who had inclination's towards socialist movement. 'In 1936 when Nehru was elected the Congress President he openly avowed his faith in socialism and appointed three prominent socialists - Jayaprakash Narayan, Narendra Deo and Achut Patwardan - to the Congress Working Committee.'¹⁷

Ideology of The Congress Socialist Party

Ideologically there was never unanimity among the top rank leaders of the Congress Socialist Party. Jayaprakash Narayan at that time was a convinced Marxist and an admirer of socialism as it operated in Soviet Russia. So Acharya Narendra Deva also was an admirer of Russian Socialism.¹⁸ But that was not the case with other leaders like M.R. Masani, Achut Patwardan and M.L. Dantwala who believed in democratic socialism but were not committed Marxist. As Dantwala has put it - "many of us who

* Organisation of the Congress Socialist Party :

The Congress Socialist Party was organised as a cadre party - Its membership was open only to those who proved their commitment to the ideology and willingness to put in a certain amount of work regularly. It was a group organised with a broad based organization of the Indian National Congress. Naturally, the membership of the C.S.P. was open only to the members of the Indian National Congress.

(Ref. - the Constitution and Rates framed by the Executive Committee of the C.S.P. in 1937 (Printed in the Collection of Essays - Indian Socialism Past and Present - Appendix - IV - editors - Machery and Maneesh Tikekar, Himalaya Publishing House.)

participated in the discussion about the formation of the Socialist Party, though socialistically inclined, but were not Marxists. We had read a considerable quantum of Marxist literature and were deeply influenced by its analytical vigour. It would not be an exaggeration to say that it had helped us to shed our political innocence - an emotional attraction of patriotic fervour - and broadened our understanding of the historical process of evolution of social, economic and political system. But we could not make intellectual and moral reconciliation with some of the Marxist doctrines like the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹⁹

But, although there were such differences most of the socialist leaders were greatly influenced by Marxism. Most of them believed in class struggle and the redefinition of the concept of the 'State' in revolutionary terms. They believed in the use of the state machinery when it came into their hands for radical redistribution of wealth. Some of them had scruples about the use of violence, but the very use of violence was yet a distant idea. The Marxist character of the C.S.P. continued to be so until independence.²⁰ As S.M. Joshi has pointed out - "We became Marxist in the sense that, we accepted the materialistic interpretation of history, we were agreed with the Marxian concept of developmental process in the human history, his concept of thesis, anti-thesis - synthesis through which the change in the human society takes place."²¹

The influence of Marxism also clearly appears in

the Resolution adopted at the Conference of The Congress Socialist Party at Bombay in October, 1934. Through this resolution, for the first time the aims and the policies of the C.S.P. are clearly expressed. The resolution says :

"The Conference is of the opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what Swaraj as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understandable by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include the real economic freedom of the starving millions. The Congress, therefore, declares that the future constitution of the Indian State shall be based on the following fundamental principles -

1. Transfer of all power to the producing masses.
2. Passing and controlling by the state of the development of the economic life of the country.
3. The socialisation of the key and principle industries as steel, cotton, jute, railways, shipping, mines, banks and other public utilities.
4. The organization and encouragement of the co-operatives for the production, distribution and credit in the unsocialised section of the economic life of the country.
5. The State monopoly of foreign trade.
6. The elimination of prince and landlords and all other classes of exploiters.
7. The redistribution of land to the peasants.
8. The encouragement and promotion of co-operative farming with a view to ultimate collectivization of all agriculture in the country.

9. The liquidation of all debts owed by the peasants and labourers.
10. Providing of work to every able bodied adult by the state and social insurance against unemployment, sickness, accident and maternity etc.
11. Adult franchise on functional basis.
12. To every one according to his needs the basis of the distribution of the national income.
13. Neither support nor discrimination of religions by the State.
14. No recognition of any distinctions based on caste or community.

Workers Demands : The conference was also of the opinion that the daily struggles of the peasants, workers and other exploited masses for their immediate economic political demands, are - an integral part of the struggle for Independence. The conference, therefore, resolves that the peasants, workers and other exploited classes should be organised for the immediate realization of the above among other demands.²²

The socialist who joined the Congress Socialist Party believed in what was called scientific socialism and not in any humanitarian kind of socialism. In 1936 the Congress Socialist Party published a pamphlet written by Jayaprakash Narayan entitled "Why Socialism?". In this pamphlet, he sought to define the kind of socialism that the Congress Socialists believed in. "He conceded that

there had been different schools of socialism, but claimed that, latterly, and particularly, as a result of the impact of the world crisis and the rise of fascism, there had been a growing unity in socialist thought."²³ And "today more than ever before it is possible to say that there is only one type, one theory of socialism - Marxism"²⁴. He hailed the Revolution in Russia with the remarks - "So far only communists have vindicated their theory of tactics by their great and remarkable success in Russia. The proponents of the other methods are today every where in the trough of failure."²⁵

Socialism, for the Socialists in India, as in other parts of the world, was a system of social reorganization of the entire economic and social life of the country. In fact, the greater part of the differences between various groups of Socialists were not so much about the nature and definition of Socialism, but about the method and tactics that had to be adopted for transforming the capitalist society into a socialist one.²⁶ In order to transform society, the Socialist sought to capture power and the State machinery. 'After seizing State power the Socialists would concentrate on the acquisition by the State of the means of production in order to eliminate economic inequality and to ensure to each citizen equality of opportunity in the economic field. What distressed the Socialists most was the lack of opportunities and the inequalities that existed in the Indian society. The extremities of inequality

and the absence of equal opportunities of development in present day society, the Socialists claimed, were entirely due to the existence of the capitalist system.²⁷ The Socialists claimed that the usual solutions to the problem that had been advocated in the past, such as 'charity, philanthropy, utopias, appeal to the more fortunate to be kind to the less fortunate, denunciation of rich and exaltation of poverty, curtailment of wants, were wholly inadequate and antiquated. The Socialist, therefore, denounced Gandhi's theory of 'Trusteeship' and said that it would be futile to expect that the rich would act as the 'Trustees' of the poor.'²⁸ The Socialists pointed out that sometimes a rich man earned a thousand times more than a poorman, but "an individual, no matter how clever, cannot possible produce, at any stage of productivity, thousands of times more than others who are using the same means of production."²⁹ Thus, according to them the great riches of the rich were not the result of their own production, but the result of exploitation. The Indian Socialists, urged like their counterparts in the west, that, the owners of the means of production accumulate enormous wealth through the exploitation of the working class; and not through their own creation. According to the Socialists the real cause of the inequality of the present day society was the ownership of the instruments of production in private hands. Naturally, the means of removing such inequality, in socialist thought was the social ownership of the means of production.

The basic policy of the Congress Socialist Party was first defined in the short document published at the Second Conference of the party at Meerut in January 1936 - known as Meerut Thesis. The document declared - "The immediate task before us is to develop the national movement into a real anti-imperialism movement - a movement aiming at freedom from the foreign power and the nature system, of exploitation. For this it is necessary to wean the anti-imperialist elements in the Congress away from its present bourgeois leadership and to bring them under the leadership of revolutionary socialism For fulfilling the party's task it will also be necessary to co-ordinate all the other anti-imperialist forces in the country." ... Further, the thesis declared - "The party's own programme must be a Marxist one; otherwise, the party will fail to fulfill its task and leadership. Marxism alone can guide the anti-imperialist forces to their ultimate destiny. Party member must, therefore, fully understand the technique of revolution, the theory and practice of class struggle, the nature of the State and the process leading the socialist society."³⁰

Shortly afterwards, the Third Annual Conference of the party which was held at Faizpur, on December 23, 24 and 25, 1936. At this Conference the policy adopted at Meerut was elaborated in a statement that came to be known as the Faizpur Thesis. In this statement the party urged for the consolidation of the socialist forces, and creation of powerful anti-imperialist front."

In this statement the C.S.P. declared that the chief task before them and all other anti-imperialists was the creation of a powerful National Front against Imperialism. The struggle against imperialism had to be widened, integrated and raised to a higher stage of intensity. And "It is the task of all anti-imperialists in the country to bring together and unite all anti-imperialist sectors and to build up mighty front against imperialism, including the broadest possible sector of the masses." The Faizpur thesis further declared - "the anti-imperialist struggle cannot be separated from the day-to-day struggle of the masses. The development of the latter is the basis for a successful fight against imperialism." And "In the conditions of India the conscious leadership of the anti-imperialist movement falls on the socialist forces. These forces are unfortunately still divided. The party from the beginning has stood for the unity in the socialist ranks. "Till such unity is arrived at, the minimum that is necessary is agreement on the immediate task 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."³¹

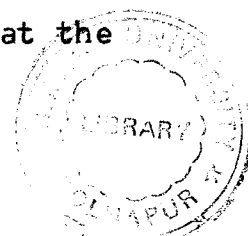
The effect of these two thesis was two-fold on the one hand it alienated the party from the right wing leadership of the Congress which looked askance at its revolutionary programme, and on the other hand being a "revolutionary Marxist organization it desired "Socialist

Unity" and threw open its door to the other Socialist and leftist groups. Two such groups were already in existence - the Royists and the Communist.

The Royist followers of M.N. Roy, welcomed the idea and enthusiastically worked with the C.S.P. for some time. But it was a vanishing group and their activities within C.S.P. did not make much impact. Later, they left the party to form their own party which was a short lived experience.³²

The Communist Party of India founded in 1924 was ten years old when C.S.P. was founded. In the beginning the communists repudiated the C.S.P. as "Social fascist" and "a left manoeuvre of the bourgeois" and refused to loose their identity by associating with it.³³ But as 'the Communist International had given signal to the C.P.I. to shed its sectarian outlook and work within the national Congress and National Revolutionary and National Reformist Organisation affiliated with it,³⁴ the communists also joined hands with C.S.P.

But this alliance proved to be very tragic. A graphic account of the C.S.P.'s effort at achieving Socialist Unity is given by Jayaprakash Narayan in his pamphlet - 'Problem of Socialist Unity in India' incorporated in his book 'towards struggle.' C.P.I. had not given up its monopolistic and sectarian attitude' the discovery of a circular of the communist by Jayaprakash Narayan and another circular by M.R. Masani convinced the socialists that the



communist had no faith whatever in the Congress Socialist Party which they had joined. Eventually the communists were expelled from the party in 1940.³⁵

Nationalism and total commitment to the Freedom Movement was another factor that constituted an ideological foundation of the socialists. In fact the immediate aim of the Socialists was not Socialism but the National Freedom. And they considered the Congress as the proper forum for the national struggle. Working within it they wanted to push the movement forward and also to orient the movement to the path of socialism and class war.

The birth of Democratic Socialism in India was a result of the urges that were different in some important respects from those that inspired similar movement in the West.

There socialism got developed as a theory to fight capitalism and not imperialism. The pioneers of democratic socialism faced with a different situation in India. The Indian masses were exploited not only from aristocracy and capitalists by also from foreign imperial rulers. And the immediate task before the socialists was not of "a socialistic society, but creation of the freedom from the imperialistic rule. 'Socialism was still a sort of remote intellectual conviction with most of the socialists.

First of all they were ardent nationalists in search of an effective means for the struggle for national independence. And the Congress, for them, was the forum for the national struggle. Though differing from the economic

policy of the Congress, the Congress Socialist Party did not want to wreck the Congress, but wanted to make it more revolutionary and more socialistic. In 1935, Jayaprakash declared that the policy of "Congress Socialist Party" was not to convert the Congress into a full-fledged 'Socialist Party', which was not possible in the circumstances then prevailing, but to make it true - anti-imperialist body. He said - "It is not our purpose, as sometimes it has been misunderstood to be, to convert whole Congress into a full fledged Socialist Party. All we seek to do, is to change the content and policy of that organization so that it comes truly to represent masses, having the object of emancipating them both from the foreign power and the native system of exploitation."³⁶ Thus, working within the Congress, the Socialist leaders wanted to make the organization more revolutionary and socialist in character, thereby strengthening the nationalist movement. But their working within the Congress was dependent on the attitude of the older Congress leadership. The programmes that the Congress adopted usually fell far, short of the 'Socialist' ideal. The two theses, adopted at the 2nd and 3rd Conference of the C.S.P. held at Meerut and Faizpur respectively, clearly indicate the devotion of the Socialist towards the national struggle and the urge to make it a mass-based revolutionary force and their close ties with the Congress. The Meerut thesis, thus, declared - "The Congress Socialist Party grew out of the experiences of the last two national struggles. It was formed at the end of the last 'Civil Disobedience

Movement' by such Congressmen who came to believe that a new orientation of the national movement had become necessary, a redefinition of its objectives and a revision of its methods. The initiative in this direction could be taken only by those who had a theoretical grasp of the forces of our present society. These naturally were those Congressmen who had come under the influence of, and had accepted, Marxian Socialism. It was natural, therefore, that the organization that sprang up to meet the needs of the situation took the description : "Socialist".

The word "Congress" prefixed to "Socialist" only signified the organic relationship - past, present and future - of the organization with the national movement."³⁷ The same idea was elaborated, at the 3rd Conference of the party held at Faizpur. Where the Socialists declared that, the main organized expression of anti-imperialist movement had been the Indian National Congress. And it was the task of all anti-imperialists in the country to be brought together, and unite all anti-imperialist sectors, and to build up a mighty front against imperialism, including the broadest possible sector of the masses. It was clear that in their attempt to do so, it was the Congress that they must take as the basis, and they must attempt to make it an all embracing united front against Imperialism.³⁸

Apart from Marxism and nationalism, other factors that influenced the ideology of the C.S.P. were Western Democracy and Gandhism.

The Socialists claimed that in order to establish Socialism in India, complete political freedom was first to be attained, and only thereafter the privileges of the Princes and Zamindars could be abolished, and the land can be distributed to the people.

The socialists referred to Marx's theory that in certain countries 'Labour' may come to power through democratic means and urged that Marxism should not necessarily lead to a belief in dictatorship.³⁹

'The Indian Socialists have to a certain extent been influenced by Fabian Socialism and Western Parliamentaryism. They say that Marxism is only a method, and accordingly the statements and theories of Marx on political democracy or the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be taken as the last word in Socialism.'⁴⁰

The Congress Socialists envisaged the establishment of Socialism in free India by a victory through a poll. They said that 'if a political democracy was established in India after India become independent, the bourgeois class would assume control of the State. But that did not mean that the working class and the city and rural poor would not be able to displace the bourgeois and establish socialism through the democratic process and without resort to violent revolution.

If the Socialist Movement in India had no freedom or opportunity to use the democratic method, there could certainly be no other way of destroying bourgeois. Society

and bourgeois rule than by a violent revolution and dictatorship. But if a full democratic state was established in India, then why could not Socialism be achieved peacefully? Even at the time when political democracy had not risen to its full height, Marx himself had visualized the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism. Since the days of Marx, political democracy had become more powerful and potent instrument of social change. In this condition the possibility of the peaceful transition to socialism was even greater than in the time of Marx.⁴¹

The influence of Gandhism on socialists was equally important. Many of the Socialists had been closely associated with Gandhi; and had been under the influence of Gandhism. In fact, the formation of the Congress Socialist Party marked the transition, for many nationalists from Gandhism to Socialism.⁴² They were attracted by Gandhi's emphasis on economic equality and simplicity and his passion for social justice, but they felt that Marxism provided a truer diagnosis of the economic ills of revolution offered a surer and quicker way of social and economic transformation than the technique of Gandhi.⁴² Though the principle of non-violence was not wholly acceptable to the socialists, the method of Satyagraha formulated by Gandhi appealed to them. They wanted to avoid violence and dictatorship and also wanted to combine socialism with democracy. They derived their belief in the possibility of effective peaceful changes through Satyagraha or Civil Disobedience from Gandhi. They

felt that by evolving the method of Satyagraha, Gandhi had made a unique contribution to revolutionary technology.

'Before Gandhi the peaceful means that exploited could adopt to fight the oppressor, were generally limited to agitation, and strike. Beyond these limits the struggle was powerless to go except in a violent direction. But in Gandhi's method of Civil Disobedience and Satyagraha the exploited found a new weapon to carry forward the struggle in a peaceful way."⁴³ The Indian Socialists deriving inspiration from the Western Democratic tradition as also from Gandhism believed in the achievement of Socialism through the polling booths, if possible, and by the adoption of the Gandhian methods of Civil Disobedience, if necessary. As M.L. Dantwala, one of the pioneer of the Socialist Movement in India put it - "My acceptance of Socialism emanated from its moral or ethical appeal, mainly its egalitarianism. I must, therefore, confess, it was Gandhian thought rather than pure Marxian doctrines which led me to Socialism. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that it was the core - or what I believe to be the core - in both the Gandhian and the Marxian thought, rather than the literal texts in both, which constitutes socialism for me. Shorn of its humanism, I would reject Socialism Gandhiji's intuition and Marx's intellect - but the phraseology of neither - judiciously blended make up for me a complete philosophy, by whatever name it is described."⁴⁴

Differences with Communists :

The Socialists and the Communists differed not only in their tactics and methods, but also in their attitudes and beliefs. So far as the communists were concerned they relied greatly, if not exclusively on Marx, Engles and Lenin. The Socialists also relied on Marxism and regarded it as a form of Scientific Socialism, as distinguished from utopian Socialism or Social Revisionism. The Marxian concepts of historical materialism and class war appealed to them also; but they were opposed to the ideas like proletariat dictatorship. Secondly, apart from Marxism, the socialists had other sources of inspirations like Western Democracy, Nationalism and Gandhism. The Socialists were not whole - hearted Marxists. 'They thought that the communists had converted Marxism into a dogma, and there always existed revisionist tendencies among the Indian Socialists. Further the Indian Socialists gave their own interpretation to Marxism to show that it was not opposed to democracy; and some of them also claimed that the Marxian interpretation of history did not leave out or ignore the non-economic causes and forces altogether.'⁴⁵ The Socialists considered that the road to Socialism lay not through revolutionary violence only, and that it was possible to achieve Socialism in certain countries without violence and through the instrumentality of the democratic machinery alone. Further the Socialists claimed that in order to apply Marxism in India, Socialists would have to take into account

not only all the developments that have taken place since Marx wrote but also the special conditions prevailing in India, and that Socialism in India would have to adopt itself to Indian conditions."⁴⁶

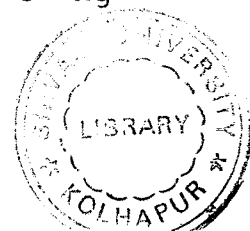
The Socialists in India and particularly those who belonged to the Congress Socialist Party, fundamentally disagreed with the Indian Communists on the attitude that should be adopted towards Gandhi and the Indian National Movement. They considered that Gandhi's leadership was essential for the Indian Nationalist Movement and it was "madness" to attack Gandhian leadership or to seek to discredit or weaken it.⁴⁷ It is for this reason that, though the programmes that the Congress adopted fell far short of the Socialist ideal, as a member of the Congress, the Socialists whole-heartedly participated in the freedom struggle. Particularly the work they did during the Quit India Movement of 1942, has become a glorious part of our history.

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