CHAPTER VI:
THE BIRTH OF THE SUCI, 1946-1948: FROM PLATFORM OF ACTION TO A MARXIST POLITICAL PARTY

The RSP Revolt Group - the raising of ideological & procedural issues within the RSP:

Shibdas Ghosh, Nihar Mukherjee and others came to be associated with the Anushilan Samiti in Dhaka in 1936-37 during the ‘receding phase of Indian national revolutionary movement’. Both of them started working as the followers of Charu Roy and Durgesh Bhattacharyya, the leaders of Dhaka Chhatra Sangha, ‘the powerful student group of the Anushilan Samiti in Dhaka’. (Mukherjee, N, 2009: 6) As claimed by Provash Ghosh, the present General Secretary of the SUCI, Nihar Mukherjee was a very ‘popular student leader’ of Dhaka at that time. He also said that when Nihar Mukherjee had been the general secretary of ‘Dhaka Intermediate College’ students’ union in 1940, he was expelled from the college for organising movements against the British government. According to Provash Ghosh, ‘In protest, there was a massive students’ movement in the entire city of Dhaka that paralysed the roads and traffic for several days.’ and Mr. Sarat Bose, one of the members of the then Congress Working Committee had to go to Dhaka for the settlement of the issue. 1 (Ghosh, P, 2011: 19-20)

After their acceptance of Marxism, the Anushilan Leaders used to take classes on Marxist concepts at the North Brook Hall and Labour Office in Dhaka during 1938-39. All the young Anushilan volunteers attended those classes and became conversant with Marxism. (Mukherjee, N, 2009: 9)

When the RSP was formed in 1940, most of the members of the Dhaka Anushilan Samiti including Shibdas Ghosh and Nihar Mukherjee became workers of the RSP. Nihar Mukherjee in his conversation with the present researcher stated the following:

RSP was formed in 1940 in the Ramgarh Congress. A big section of the Anushilan Samiti members joined the RSP. A party-thesis was adopted there basically, on the basis of, Colonial Thesis of the Comintern. There was not much proof of new idea or creativity in the party-thesis. Besides this, though there were discussions on thesis, no discussion was made either on giving the party an organisational structure by forming party bodies at different levels on the basis of an accepted party constitution or on the pre-conditions for becoming party members. We were then at the very lower level of party-hierarchy; just upgraded to some extent from the level of volunteers. Therefore, no question comes about our taking active role in the formation of the party at Ramgarh. (Mukherjee, N- Personal Interview: 1996)
This group of young members of the RSP, who associated themselves at the time of its formation in March, 1940 started raising some questions within the party since 1942. We would refer this group in this dissertation as RSP Revolt Group. According to Nihar Mukherjee, one of the members of the first Central Committee of the SUCI, these questions were basically on two issues: 1. how a ‘genuine’ Marxist party could be built in our country and 2. evaluation of the role of Stalin in leading the international communist movement. While in detention in Alipur Central Jail, Kolkata along with other the RSP theoreticians and workers, a group of revolutionaries assembled themselves separately and Shibdas Ghosh took the leading role in it. They formed a study circle on Marxist classics there and used to discuss various aspects of Marxism in presence of the then leaders of the party. (Mukherjee, N- Personal Interview: 1996)

Towards the end of 1940 Shibdas Ghosh left Dhaka for Kolkata to evade arrest. Nihar Mukherjee came to Kolkata at the end of 1941. Both of them started working at the direction of the RSP leadership in and around Kolkata. At that time, Quit India movement was in full swing. Both Shibdas Ghosh and Nihar Mukherjee tried to organise the movement by involving general masses and youths. It was in the initial stage of the movement towards the end of 1942 when they were arrested and sent to prison. (SUCI, 1982: 16; Mukherjee, N, 2009: 10) Nihar Mukherjee, in a conversation with a journalist, gave an account of the events leading to their arrest in 1942. In that conversation it was further stated:

We were implicated in the ‘Ward Institution Conspiracy Case’—waging war against the British empire’. 172 persons were arrested in that case from all over the Bengal. Gradually, most of them were set free keeping only few as intern. Four accused faced final trial. Hearing was started in the Special Court. ....... We had two advocates. One was Manmatha Ganguly of the Sessions Court and the other was Barrister Pramatha Chakraborty. (Mukherjee, N, 2003: 6-7)

Mukherjee was arrested on September 17 and imprisoned in Alipur Central Jail. First one year he was in that jail and then kept as detenu to be released in 1945. Shibdas Ghosh was also released in 1945.

A different account leading to their arrest could be found in an article by Provash Ghosh:

During their stay in Calcutta, Dr. Niharendu Datta Majumdar entrusted Comrade Shibdas Ghosh with a task of organizing an uprising in Kolkata so as to capture some places like Writers’ Building, Lalbazar Headquarters, etc., as a part of the ‘Quit India’ movement of 1942. He had promised all help including supply of arms. With the permission of the Anushilan Samity, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh accepted the assignment and entrusted Comrade Nihar Mukherjee
with the responsibility of organizing students. During preparation, in 1942, both of them were arrested. (Ghosh, P, 2011: 20) (Italics original-Emphasis added)

However, the above observation of Provash Ghosh raises a number of questions regarding the historical evidences of that time, particularly involvement of the then important political leader Niharendra Dutta Majumdar with such an adventurous political programme.

The questions which come to mind may be like the following: First, Dutta Mazumdar was then a leading figure of Bengal politics working mainly in the labour areas of Barrackpore and was the member of Bengal Legislative Assembly since 1937 as a labour representative. (Basu, N, 1992: 142) At the same time, he was also the general secretary of the Bengal Labour Party though in 1942 the BLP suffered a division as some of its central committee members were in favour of supporting British war moves like the CPI. But, Dutta Mazumdar stuck to the anti-war line. He was arrested in December 1942 and released in November 1945. The unanswered question is that Dutta Mazumdar being such a veteran leader why would entrust responsibility for ‘organizing an uprising in Kolkata’ to two rather unknown workers of a different party? He had been with communist ideology since his days in England in the thirties. He had also been a member of the CPI central committee for some time. How, a person believing in mass action and not in acts of individual armed violence could have handed this type of responsibility which was simply a ‘terrorist act’? Secondly, the Anushilan Samiti became almost non-existent after 1934 as observed previously. Anushilan members officially accepted Marxism and joined either CPI or formed the RSP. The process had already been completed by March 1940. So seeking ‘permission’ for undertaking such an act entrusted by Dutta Mazumdar, who had never worked with Anushilan, from the non-existent ‘Anushilan Samity’ appears to be confusing. A careful scrutiny of that event needs further research to trace out the reliability which, at present, with the available data and in accordance to historical logic seems to be non-plausible.

Nihar Mukherjee writes about their activities while they were in the jail:

By that time there had been a great change in his outlook. Since then...Ghosh started a new struggle to make his preliminary understanding of Marxism further deeper and more comprehensive—a realization he had developed from whatever scope he had, to study and practice Marxism during the last days of with the Anushilan Samity as well as with the RSP till 1940-48....Ghosh waged an all-out relentless......struggle to adopt Marxism......involving all other leaders and comrades. This......struggle continued for
three years to make his realization of Marxism-Leninism much more developed, enriched and concretised than before. It was in the light of this realization that he concluded........, it was necessary to build up a real communist party. He also realized at the same time that if the RSP was to develop like this, it must, at first, conduct an all-embracing socialist ideological cultural movement involving the whole party, from leaders down to the rank and file, with a view to attaining the essential characteristics of a genuine communist party. At the end of three years, ...... he came out of jail with strong determination and iron will to wage this struggle within the RSP ....(Mukherjee, N, 2009: 10)

Shibdas Ghosh, Nihar Mukherjee, Sachin Banerjee, Monoranjan Banerjee, Pritish Chanda etc. along with the other RSP workers were put to imprisonment in the same Alipur Jail for almost a year. In this connection, the process of changes in their ideas as told by Nihar Mukherjee is as follows:

While in the jail, we had taken the decision that we would try to build RSP as genuine communist party. Because, the party structure was very flexible at the time and so, there’s still remains the scope to build the party properly. We thought that RSP had strong organisational capacity, had branches in different parts of the country, the leaders attached with the party had long revolutionary heritage and enjoying then lot of respect from the people. If all these people come forward in the struggle to build the party as a genuine communist party then it could create a great possibility to change the direction of the India’s freedom movement. (Mukherjee, N, Personal interview: 1996)

With this aim in view they discussed the issue with Pratul Ganguly in the jail. But, as Mukherjee told, he remained non-committal. Shibdas Ghosh, when transferred to Rajshahi Jail, discussed the matter with Kedereswar Sen also. But Sen rejected their proposal outright.

Nihar Mukherjee further told:

The revolutionary trend of Agni Yug of the Indian freedom movement was the most advanced and fighting trend. But, it was fundamentally a petty-bourgeoisie revolutionary trend. The petty-bourgeoisie mentality was working among the revolutionaries-its aim was to free India from colonial rule. And the party we want to build up is altogether different; a party formed on the basis of proletarian class ideology whose aim would be to end the colonial rule through an
uncompromising anti-imperialist movement and, in the process, transition to socialism by making a revolutionary change of capitalist system. ((Mukherjee, N, Personal interview: 1996)

Nihar Mukherjee reiterated, through waging an un-compromising struggle for overthrowing petty-bourgeoisie mentality and through a break with the old tradition, advancing to the process of forming a ‘genuine communist party’ could only be undertaken. ‘A class party cannot be transformed into another class party, though a particular person could come to a party of the proletariat through waging struggle to become de-classed.’

They felt that the RSP was not built following the Leninist principle of party formation but it was formed ‘overnight’ just by adopting the name ‘RSP in lieu of the Anushilan Samiti’. For them, before giving a constitutional-organisational shape to a revolutionary socialist party on Marxist lines, some basic conditions are to be fulfilled. What, according to them, are those basic conditions for the formation of a communist party? Shibdas Ghosh writes in 1948 before holding the first all-national conference of the party in April that year:

Conception of Party and Communist Party of India: .... A Communist Party is the vanguard of the working class and in order to be so its membership should be restricted to the best elements with revolutionary spirit and selfless devotion to the cause of the proletariat. That is to say, in short, party must be composed of the most advanced and conscious elements of the working class...... Secondly, the party must be equipped with a revolutionary theory. Every member of it, specially those occupying position in the elected committees must have a thorough knowledge of the laws of working class movement and of revolution. ... Thirdly, the question of leading the proletariat comes. If the party limits itself to the momentary demands of the workers... if it fails to raise the class consciousness of the workers, it is sure to move as the tail of the current movement and it can never lead the masses....... In order to establish working class leadership over the people strong cultural movement through Marxist study circles, literatures, mass meetings is necessary....... Lastly.... solidarity and iron discipline of the party, the unity of will and the absolute unity of action of all its members...... the party should be based on the principle of democratic centralism.³ (Ghosh, S, 1948: 11-14)

The issue of converting Anushilan Samiti to the RSP ‘through a meeting’ held among some of the leaders was much debated upon by the RSP Revolt Group. In their opinion, what was the aim of Anushilan Samiti? Was it the establishment of socialism or achievement of national freedom from colonial rule?
Did they aim for mass revolution? They argued further that Anushilan Samiti was based on the principles of individual terror and heroism; it was not developed as a mass party nor the leaders ever tried to do so because the very policies of the party forced it to accept confidential nature of work where not even colleagues of the same party knew each other. In order to fight a colonial ruler this kind of secrecy was to be maintained at any cost. So, no question ever came to anyone to make the Anushilan a mass party before their imprisonment in the thirties. For them, Anushilan Samiti was a revolutionary party of ultra-nationalist petty bourgeoisie section of colonial India. ‘For meeting the historical necessity & in order to fulfill the class interest of a particular class at that particular historical context the Anushilan Samiti was formed by the middle class intelligentsia of Bengal.’ (Ghosh, S, 1946: 22) They wanted to free India but did not have any idea of what independence actually stands for or what would be system of governance in the independent country. Anushilan Samiti was no more. A new party was built with new ideology and with a set of new necessities. So, could Anushilan be renamed as the RSP without considering the process of formation? Was it also right to think that Anushilan could take the name of the RSP all on a sudden? Whether mere change of name and declaration of acceptance of Marxist-Leninist principles entitles that party to become a Marxist party? They concluded with high conviction that a petty bourgeoisie party cannot transform itself into a proletarian party, it’s not possible either. (Ghosh, S, 1946: 21-24)

In a document of 1962, we get the greater details of the theoretical arguments of the party on this political position:

....... the name communist does not, by itself, make a party a genuine communist party. The name of Tito’s party is the Communist League of Yugoslavia. But the name communist, has not converted this party into a genuine communist party. The parties of the Fourth International are named either revolutionary communist or Bolshevik Leninist; but they are neither communist nor Bolshevik Leninist. They are veritable Trotskyites. Similarly, the parties that owe their allegiance to the Second International are nominally socialist. But the use of the term, socialist, does not establish these parties as really socialist. A good number of communist parties are not even named communist. Some are United Labour Party, some Party of Labour, some Socialist Unity Party, so on and so forth. Thus the name of a party is no indication of its class character. To judge whether a particular party is a communist party or not, it is indispensably necessary to examine its theory, methodology, process of thinking, process of movement, organizational
principle and modus operandi on the anvil of Marxian logic. No communist party can deviate, on these fundamental questions, from Marxism-Leninism. (Ghosh, S, 1962: 44)

Their fundamental position on this issue has further been elaborated in a published article of 1970:

As the state of a particular class cannot be transformed into the state of another class through reforms, so also, through reforms, the party of a particular class can never be transformed into the party of another class. Such an idea is thoroughly unscientific and ahistorical. When ... Karl Marx found that the First International founded by him had degenerated into a petty bourgeois organization, he did not think in terms of taking the unscientific course of rectifying and reforming it, but himself dissolved it. Such is also the history of the Second International. When he found it to have degenerated into an organization of the national chauvinists, Lenin himself moved the resolution for the dissolution of the Second International at the Zimmerwald Conference which he had striven to strengthen ... Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht of Germany, though accepting Lenin's first proposition defining the Second International as the organization of the national chauvinists could not, however, agree at first to his second proposition, i.e. demand for its dissolution. They were rather in favour of keeping intact the Second International, built through long struggles and toils, and transforming it through reforms into a genuine working class organization. So, Lenin alone came out of the Second International, successfully led the Russian revolutionary struggle to victory and formed the Third International. Karl Liebknecht, through practical experiences, later realized the futility of reforming the Second International came out of it and formed the Spartacus Group in Germany. Drawing the correct lesson from the history of the communist movement we, therefore, did not adopt the unscientific course of trying to reform ... a petty bourgeois party, into a working class party. (Ghosh, S, 1992 B: 217-218)

Unlike a bourgeois or petty bourgeois party, a communist party is not a mere conglomeration of individuals or groups. In a real communist party the relationship between the leaders and the rank and file, between the central committee and other party bodies down to the cell, is just like that between the brain and the limbs and sense organs. So when these issues were raised by the RSP Revolt Group in the group discussions held in the jails, the issues remained unanswered mostly when they came out of imprisonment. In an attempt to draw the attention of the RSP workers in general towards these issues, a pamphlet was written by Shibdas Ghosh titling 'Oitihasik Patabhumikay Revolutionary Socialism', in Bengali (Revolutionary Socialism in Historical Perspective) by the beginning of 1946. The book was
published individually by Monoranjan Banerjee, not on behalf of any group. The pamphlet made an interesting call: 'DOWN WITH ANUSHILAN SAMITI-LONG LIVE RSP!'. (For details Appendix 3a) Another interesting point raised in the said pamphlet is: why the ruling colonial class was trying to publicise them as Anushilan members not as the RSP workers, the party which believes in Marxism? (Ghosh, S, 1946: 25 & 36)

After the publication of the pamphlet, they had a talk with Tridib Chaudhuri, one of the fore ranking leaders of the RSP. By this time the announcement of First All India Convention of the RSP in Delhi was made public. In their discussion, they urged the leadership not to give the RSP a formal structure before completion of the process of party formation and, further, acceptance of any constitutional structure at this formative stage would hamper the whole process of party building on Marxist-Leninist line. They were assured, as told by Nihar Mukherjee (in his interview given to the present writer), in the Delhi Convention they would be given scope to speak and, for this purpose they would be given delegate card. So, without circulating the pamphlet further all the copies were handed over to the party. But as the things stand, they were not made delegates; only allowed to listen to the deliberations. Only one member of this group, British Chanda, got the chance of attending the Convention as a delegate and allowed to speak for few minutes. After that episode, about thirty members were expelled from the RSP alleging that they were ‘Stalinist’. Protesting against this expulsion, the whole of 24 Parganas district committee including the then secretary, Subodh Banerjee left the RSP. The expulsion effectively stopped, for these workers of the RSP, all the ideological and organisational debate within the RSP and, consequently, they started a new journey towards forming another party for implementing their idea of ‘a genuine Marxist party’ in 1946 onwards. (Mukherjee, N, personal interview: 1996; Bhattacharyya, personal interview: 1996; Dasgupta, S, personal interview: 1996; Roychowdhury, 1395 BS: 157-158)\(^4\)

**Formation of Platform of Action, 1946: Journey towards a new party:**

A ‘Platform of Action’ with a party content was formed on May 01 1946 as a new initiative to form a party. Four different political groups of like-minded revolutionaries assembled together under the name of Socialist Unity Centre. These political groups were: first, the members of the expelled *RSP Revolt Group*, which we have already described; secondly, the group led by Sudhin Pramanik, a trade union leader of national & international repute and, earlier, an associate of MN Roy; thirdly, a group led by Nepal Bhattacharjee - founder of Workers and Peasants League, leader of Port & Trust Union, Kidderpore and, fourthly, people associated with Biren Bhattacharjee, leader of Port & Dock Majdoor Union, Cossipore. (Mukherjee, N, Personal Interview: 1996; Mukherjee, N, 2009: 11) Though set up as a
Platform of Action, it was meant to fulfill the prerequisites to build up a genuine communist party. The document, Platform of Action, declares:

The SUC is not a Party nor a sectarian group in any sense, but a propagandist platform and a TEMPORARY INSTRUMENT FOR THE UNIFICATION OF ALL SOCIALIST FORCES that identify their interests completely with the working class without reservation and pledge themselves to work for the Social Revolution on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, socialism or communism as against capitalism, imperialism and fascism as speedily as the objective conditions of the country would permit. The very division in SOCIALIST CAMP has made the appearance of a propagandist center of this nature an indispensable OBJECTIVE NECESSITY. Its very name signifies its TASK and justifies its emergence as a UNIFYING FORCE to cement a close MARXIST unity in order TO PAVE THE RISE OF AN EFFECTIVE WORKING CLASS PARTY worth the name. (Socialist Unity Centre, 1946: 1; Capitalisation original) (For details Appendix 3b)

Accordingly, the establishment the SUC in 1946 as a POA was the first phase of building up the party, also in the name of the SUCI, a couple of years later. The POA declared that it has come into being in a critical period of India’s freedom movement. Their principal task would be to do some ‘solid ground work’ for consolidating all uncompromising forces against imperialism and feudalism, for bringing all Marxists closer and closer through an agreed programme of action as far as possible in the present context and to pave the rise of a ‘genuine working class party’ of this nature in the very process of their struggle for unity in order to achieve their tasks. It would be content to work for the objectives on the basis of ‘maximum possible agreement’ among the socialist forces, learn by actual experiences and events and resolve the points of disagreement as far as possible. It would cease to exist as the objectives to build up an effective working class party were accomplished. ‘In that eventuality it shall merge in it.’

What was the historical necessity of building a Platform of Action during the time? This was tried to be answered in the 1946 pamphlet, Platform of Action:

The absence of an effective working class party makes it imperative on us to create preconditions for the rise of a Party of our concept, capable of leading the working class and other popular forces in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism in the immediate present, and against capitalism for its overthrow in no distant future to achieve the ultimate task of socialism which is assuming an increasing importance in the new situation. Sooner or later the Indian people have to realize that socialism alone can really put an end to all exploitation of a
people by a people and of the toiling multitude by the privileged class, and thereby ensure democracy, freedom and peace. It is the task of the Working Class Party to prepare the masses for the attainment of democratic freedom and socialism. (Socialist Unity Centre, 1946: 7)

They pledged further that until their mission of giving birth to a genuine working class party was accomplished, they would work hard ‘unity of action’. They were determined to contribute towards this end. They further vowed to accelerate the process of the Indian revolution and not to fail in their task. With this aim in view, a Provisional Central Executive Committee (PEC) was formed selecting Shibdas Ghosh and Makhan Chatterjee as joint conveners and a few others including Sudhin Pramanik, Biswanath Dubey and Nepal Bhattacharyya as members. The PEC was formed on May 01 1946. (Sen, R, Personal Interview: 1996)  

However when put to actual practice, the leaders of the organisations and groups of the POA differed among themselves in their understanding of Marxism-Leninism and, as written by Nihar Mukherjee, they did not engage themselves in the process to resolve these differences through ideological struggles to pave way for the formation of a ‘genuine’ communist party. Many of the organisers with the background of working within the proletariat were not ready to engage in a ‘socialist’ struggle to acquire communist character. In spite of declaration, on the contrary, many of them were not ready to take part in the struggle of forming a communist party. They rather were in favour of retaining the POA character. A section of the POA tried to impress others with the logic that the formation of POA was not the ultimate aim, it was built with the intention to assist in the process of developing a communist party. The members of different groups failed to give up their group identity. They tried to retain the character of a platform. So, no cohesion or integration of thought or work developed. On accounts of these, the POA became defunct and could not function properly just after the beginning. The attempt to build up a communist party through the POA failed. (Mukherjee, N, 2009: 11; Mukherjee N, Personal Interview: 1996)

However, except the RSP Revolt Group, the other groups associated with POA thought of retaining the platform further and thereby, developing differences of opinion among themselves on whether the necessity of POA had been exhausted. While the RSP Revolt Group favoured to retain the name ‘SUC’ for their proposed party, the other two groups of POA, viz. the groups led by Nepal Bhattacharjee and Biren Bhattacharjee want to continue with the name ‘SUC’ as a platform of action. So, there had been the possibility of continuing two SUC as parallel in Bengal. While paying tribute to Sudhin Pramanik in his memorial meeting held on 20 July 1994, Nihar Mukherjee reminiscences of the time:
Without engaging himself with the process of building the SUC as a party, only Sudhinbabu had taken a completely different role. He asserted firmly that they (the others) had no right to create obstacle in the process of building SUC as a genuine communist party in India, though they were not in agreement with the group intended to build the party on a number of issues. Because of his insistence, only a single party was built with the name SUC. (Ganadabi: 10/08/1994)6

SUC considers this as a second failed effort to build up a genuine communist party, first one being the struggle within the RSP. (Mukherjee, N, 2009: 11)

Some of the statements made in the pamphlet, however, raise questions about the time and date of the publication of the pamphlet Platform of Action. It was declared in the pamphlet itself that it was ‘adopted by the PEC of the SUC on 1st May, 1946’. But, a close scrutiny of the content of the said document would reveal that it could not be adopted in May, 1946. A section of the document is as follows:

With a peaceful transfer of ‘power’ to the Government of Divided India under the Dominion Constitution, a new situation has arisen. Our fight is NO LONGER against any foreign imperialism as openly and clearly as before. With the establishment of two sovereign States, the question of national independence assumes a different significance….. What is more SIGNIFICANT is whatever may be the character of the Governments of India and Pakistan, the far-reaching issues of the impending Socialist Revolution would be more and more brought to the forefront of the Indian politics. (Socialist Unity Centre, 1946: 6-7: Capital original; Emphasis added)

Raising question regarding the date of adoption of the document is very obvious. Whatever may be the actual date of the adoption of this document that must be after 15th August, 1947 when two sovereign states were established. Moreover, there had been no discussion at all about the partition of India on May 01 1946. Rather, the Cabinet Mission made its Plan public in London on May 16 1946 which refused the demand for creation of separate Pakistan by partitioning India. The formal declaration of partitioning India was first made in the Mountbatten Plan of June 03 1947. These historical facts led us to the conclusion that surely the document Platform of Action was printed after 15th August, 1947 and several very important changes in the text regarding the analysis of the political situation and strategy were made at the time of publication. Without having any editorial note, the mention of date as May 1 1946 with the content quoted above, appears to be ridiculous.
This type of incongruity on the historical facts and dates make it really difficult to build an objective study of the historical processes of that time. For example, no one now would be able to grasp their actual analysis of the political situation at that time and how they formulated their strategy. The document mentions that their fight was ‘no longer against any foreign imperialism’. So, there is no way to know what their strategy was when India was a colony. In absence of proper fact, many a time historical analyses are built on hearsay or unreliable sources.

The Beginning of the SUCI as a Party:

There have been a number of the SUCI publications on the process of origins of the party in 1948 though some contradictory views could be found in some of them. (Socialist Unity Centre: 1948A; SUCI: 1987; Mukherjee, N: 2009; Ghosh, P: 2011 etc.) The SUCI demands that the ‘ideological and organisational’ struggles carried on from 1946 till the founding convention had ‘fulfilled’ the necessary preconditions for shaping out a communist party of their choice in India. The structural shape of the SUCI was given through a ‘Founding Convention’ held in April 22-24 1948 in West Bengal. In the opinion of the SUCI, the founding convention fulfilled most of the tasks which are generally done in a party congress. Though termed a convention, it had the contents of a party congress. It had not been termed as a Congress, the party argues, for two reasons: First, all the formal requirements, such as holding the lower level conferences, had not been fulfilled. Second, at that stage of development of the party, it was an historical necessity to have conventional structures in the party and be governed by conventional methods. Under these conventional structures and governed by conventional methods, the workers and leaders of all categories in the party and all the party bodies -from the central committee to the lowest units of the party - were drawn into a socialist movement within the party. Objective was to develop one process of thinking, uniformity of thinking, oneness in approach, singleness of purpose among the members. Importance was given to acquire the communist character i.e., a lifestyle in which the private life and the party life got merged into one and the same. Workers and leaders of the party had to be educated to acquire dialectical materialism which would then ensure the uniform process of thinking. The concept of democratic centralism should remain at the core of all body functioning. Only on the basis of democratic centralism a Marxist-Leninist party could become monolithic and collective leadership could be established. (Mukherjee, N, Personal Interview: 1996; SUCI, 1987: 10-11)

As a result, the SUCI did not adopt any party constitution before holding its first party congress in 1988. So contrary to the RSP, the SUCI preferred not to have a constitutional structure of party for a considerable period of time. Further, the party adopted a process of building the party which, they
argued, was totally absent in the process of formation of the RSP. The process of formation of the SUCI as a party, as many refer, resembles the tough Platonic stipulations for the guardian class during the Greek civilization.

A report published in a party pamphlet ‘ON THE PATH TO STRUGGLE’ on May Day 1948 first declared that All National Convention of SUC was held successfully with delegates from the then ‘East Pakistan’, now Bangladesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and UP. The convention adopted a thesis of the party known as ‘National and International Situation’ along with some other resolutions. (For details Appendix 3c) The pamphlet further announced that the convention constituted a NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE comprising with 11 MEMBERS selecting Shibdas Ghosh as its general secretary. This simple announcement of May 01 1948 raises so many questions! Presently, the SUCI accepts the 1948 convention as the party ‘Founding Convention’. But, why it has been declared All National Convention of SUC in the said pamphlet in lieu of declaring it as the founding convention? (Socialist Unity Centre, 1948A: 6) Even the cover page of the SUCI party thesis on The National & International Situation published in 1948 and whose ad was published in party’s Bengali mouthpiece, Ganadabi, even in its 1959 November Day special issue stated: ‘Adopted in the First All-National Convention of the Socialist Unity Centre of India, April, 1948’ (For details Appendix 3d) (Emphasis added) So, in the beginning the party considered the 1948 convention as ‘All-National Convention’ but later on, chooses to declare it as ‘Founding Convention’. So far our study of the SUCI literature goes, we could find the term ‘Founding Convention’ was first coined in a 1987 party pamphlet Make Historic Party Congress a Grand Success. Shibdas Ghosh spoke on so many times about the hardship he and his compatriots faced during the process of building of party but nowhere he used this term. Before his death in 1976, no party literature mentioned anything about the 1948 convention. It appears that Shibdas Ghosh during his lifetime willfully avoided the term ‘Founding Convention’. Why the party later on changed their position is very hard to explain as no response from the party is received so far on enquiry. It’s more astonishing that the party’s fortnightly Bengali mouth piece Ganadabi was first published on July 29 1948, after a few days of holding the ‘founding convention’. But the first issue not contained single information on the party convention held just three months back. If it was the founding convention of the party then it would have certainly been mentioned in the first issue. From here, it may also appear that the party during the time not considered the 1948 convention as the founding convention.

Another contentious issue that emerged in course of our study is on the composition of the party central committee and whether it’s an altogether new CC or re-constitution of the 1946 PEC? The SUCI Central
Committee website provides a list of members of the first central committee of the party. The list include these names: Shibdas Ghosh (General Secretary), Sachin Banerjee, Subodh Banerjee, Nihar Mukherjee, Hiren Sarkar, Rathin Sen and Pritish Chanda (Total Seven Members) (Source: http://www.sucicomunist.org/history/) (For details Appendix 3e) In his conversation with the present writer, Nihar Mukherjee informed that the first ‘political bureau of the central committee’ was constituted of two members: Shibdas Ghosh and Subodh Banerjee. (Mukherjee, N, personal interview: 1996)

But, as we have noted earlier that the first report on 1948 First All-National Convention stated that a 

**New Central Committee was constituted with Eleven Members** electing Shibdas Ghosh as the general secretary. However, the pamphlet did not give the names of the members of the new central committee. The present researcher’s enquiry to the leaders of the SUCI of that time could not retrieve all the names. However, from the published reports time-to-time since 1948 in the Bengali organ of the party Ganadabi we find other names of the first Central Committee. Except those seven names found in the SUCI website, the additional four names may be like this:

1. Promod Singha Roy: First Bengal Provincial Secretary of the SUCI, CC member and Trade Union Leader. (Ganadabi: 01/11/1948 & 15/12/1948) However, he was expelled from the party by a central committee meeting held in October 1949 on the charges of misconduct. (Ganadabi: 15/10/1949) He later became the leader of the Revolutionary Workers’ Party (RWP) and represented that party in the joint programmes held in the fifties and sixties.

2. Monoranjan Banerjee: Involved with the party in the beginning and was elected as a member of the first CC but could not continue the struggle and ultimately, retired from active politics. (SUCI, 1954: 13)

3. Radheshyam Saha: Party Trade Union organiser and the first CC member. He was expelled from the party on the charges of breach of trust and misconduct by a central committee meeting held in October 1948. (Ganadabi: 01/11/1948)

4. Tribeni Bardhan or Durga Mukherjee alias Shankar Singh: No information on Tribeni Bardhan was found in any issue of Ganadabi. However, he was the publisher of 1946 document *Platform of Action* and he might have been the member of the PEC of the SUCI at its POA phase. On the basis of this, it may be assumed that he was a member of the SUCI central committee for a short time after the all-national convention of 1948. However, Durga Mukherjee alias Shankar Singh’s
name was first found as the CC member of the party in the 1950 May Day special issue of *Ganadabi* and as a labour leader of the party he also used to write signed articles in *Ganadabi* since November 15 1948. However, in all probability, though he attended the first all-national convention, he was not in the 1948 central committee and subsequently, could have filled the vacancy in the central committee created because of expulsions of some members or retirement of Monoranjan Banerjee. (Singh, 1997: 38-39) Therefore, it is observed that the number of central committee members of the party reduced to eight within couple of years of its first convention. But, the total number never came to seven till the holding of the party’s first congress in 1988. Sankar Singh had been the member of party’s central committee since 1950 and he was also in the second central committee elected in the first party congress 1988. He was expelled (or resigned as per Sankar Singh’s version) from the SUCI in 1996.

Another pertinent question also arises: why this CC has been declared as the *first CC* and not a *new CC* as published in 1948 pamphlet. It’s really difficult to find out the reason. However, one explanation may be that the party had to expel a number of members including at least two central committee members of the party within a very short time of the beginning of the party activities in 1948. Two other members took retirement from active politics shortly after the convention. Both Singha Roy and Saha were the well-known students’ leaders of Bengal in the forties and led a number of students’ protest movement against the colonial rule. Such well-known persons after becoming top ranking leaders of the SUCI on the basis of ideological and cultural struggle conducted so far, were expelled from the party so early could have raised questions among the others on the efficacy of the SUCI’s party formation process. So, it appears to be an explanation of omission of names. 7

Yet another issue merits discussion in this context. In some of the SUCI pamphlets, the party foundation year has been mentioned as 1946. (Socialist Unity Centre, 1948A: 5- For details Appendix 3f). Promod Singha Roy’s pamphlet in Bengali *Dal O Daler Sangathan* published in June 1948 and had an introduction by the general secretary of the party stated that the SUCI was born in May 1946 and *after that two years had already been passed*. It was also stated that the party had recently completed the first all-national convention successfully (1948). (Singha Roy, 1948: 31- For details Appendix 3g)

But, the party presently accepts April 24 1948 as the party foundation day. Since 1950, *Ganadabi Patrika* urges its readers to observe 24th April as the SUCI day. In 1954, *Ganadabi* in its issue dated 18/05/1954 reported the observance of the ‘Sixth Anniversary’ of the party. It seems to imply that though 1948
convention was held as ‘All National Convention’, for some reasons or other they later, since 1987, declared that as a ‘Founding Convention’.

The 1948 Thesis of the SUCI:

The thesis adopted in the first all-national convention of the SUCI held in April 1948 analysed the then international situation and stressed on the issues like the revolutionary significance of the victory of Soviet Red Army; the establishment of the people’s democratic powers in countries of Eastern Europe, North Korea etc.; the defeat of the purpose of the world capitalists and imperialists who dreamt of wiping out the Soviet Union. Further for the SUCI, Soviet Union emerged as the center of the world revolutionary struggle and the best friend and ally of the world proletariat, of the freedom loving people in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. (Socialist Unity Centre, 1948B: 2-33)

The thesis adopted at the all-national convention also made an analysis of the socio-economic changes taking place in the national level: The transfer of political power to the ‘Indian national bourgeoisie’; the end of the British colonial rule in India through transfer of power; the country attaining its political independence; the partition of India into two separate independent sovereign states—India and Pakistan; the emergence of a ‘sovereign independent bourgeoisie national state in India’. The thesis further expressed its belief that the phase of the national democratic revolution, although half-baked and many of its tasks remaining unaccomplished, culminated into a new historic phase, the phase of the ‘anti-capitalist socialist revolution. It became so as ‘the Indian national bourgeoisie, so long playing a reformist oppositional role in the anti-imperialist liberation struggles against the British colonial rule, had made a final deal of compromise with the British imperialists, taking full advantage of the post-2nd world war situation and being afraid of the advancement of revolution’. ‘This deal resulted in the transfer of political power and the emergence of the Indian bourgeois state on 15th August 1947.’ (Socialist Unity Centre, 1948B: 34-49)

While analyzing the Indian national situation and the consequent stage of revolution as ‘Socialist Revolution’, the SUCI thesis, it appears, was deeply influenced by the ‘The April Theses’ by Lenin written between the February and November Revolution of Russia in 2017. An interesting observation in this connection is that the stage of revolution of post-independent India was characterized as ‘socialist’ both by the RSP and the SUCI.

If we turn our attention to the second issue of contention i.e. the role of Stalin both in the Comintern and as the leader of the international communist movement, the declared position of the SUCI was
completely opposite to that of the RSP. We have already noted the RSP position in the preceding chapters.

The relationship between the international communist authority and the national parties has been discussed in several party literatures since the inception of the party formation. In one such article, written by the then party General Secretary Shibdas Ghosh, we find the political analysis and actual stand of the SUCI on this issue. He explained their party position that why they consider ‘allegiance to international leadership does not entail blind obedience’:

If you would analyze, in the first place, the nature of the relationship of this party (the CPI-the writer) with the international communist leadership and the party's conduct in this respect, you will note that since inception, and till today, this party has failed to play its due role in the international communist movement as the vanguard of the Indian proletariat in discharging correctly and consciously its responsibility from the Marxist standpoint. Rather, it has mechanically copied the international communist leadership all through. As a result of its practice of copying blindly it has not only failed to develop ever a correct communist movement inside the country but has failed also, and very miserably at that, to contribute its due share in the development of the international communist leadership which grows and develops through ideological struggle, i.e. through conflict and interaction of ideas and experiences of the communist parties of different countries. Rather, owing to this practice of copying blindly, they actually weakened the international communist leadership. (Ghosh, S, 1992: 187-188)

Further elaborating the point, the party explained the position that stress should not be given on the mechanical relationship or blind obedience but on dialectical relationship among the communist parties based on the ‘principle of unity-struggle-unity’. The common object being revolution, emancipation and social progress, the nature of this struggle, according to their view, is logically must be non-antagonistic contradiction in character, i.e. ‘the principle of struggle and unity at the same time.’

We find the Party’s explanation why they consider the contradiction should be ‘non-antagonistic’ in nature as follows:

And when this dialectical relationship between the international communist leadership and the different communist parties takes a living form in practice, then and only then does it open up the possibility of continuous intellectual enrichment and development of the ideological standard of the international communist leadership, not only to the benefit of the leadership
but, through mutual exchange of experiences, to the benefit of the communist parties also in conducting the communist movement correctly in their respective countries. And this becomes possible if the nature of contradiction between them is non-antagonistic or, in other words, mutually conducive in the background of the struggle against the common enemy, i.e. world capitalism-imperialism.

But, the obvious question that comes to mind: How the differences among different parties would be resolved maintaining the ‘non-antagonistic’ character? Are all these differences really ‘non-antagonistic’ in nature? The SUCI provides the following explanation:

In course of this common struggle of the different communist parties on the principle of unity-struggle-unity some serious differences are bound to crop up. But here we should always bear in mind one thing. The differences which may crop up between the different communist parties or between them and the international leadership often look antagonistic in nature, if viewed in isolation, appearing to be separate elements of a contradiction. But if judged in the greater perspective of the accepted fundamental principles of the international communist movement, this antagonistic contradiction at once gets transformed into a non-antagonistic one. This is why, in the common struggle against capitalism-imperialism, it becomes the bounden duty and responsibility of all the communist parties to maintain cohesion and solidarity of the socialist camp for united action against the common enemy, even as they are in the midst of an intense ideological struggle amongst themselves. (Ghosh, S, 1992: 188-189)

Criticising the attitude of dependence on international communist leadership on every policy-issues pertaining to national interest, the SUCI decided that the process of unity and struggle should be followed in relationship with the international leadership. The national parties should pursue the policy of an uncompromising struggle in the ideological sphere. According to their opinion, this is possible if only fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism are applied correctly in ‘concrete conditions’. They are of the opinion that it needs continuous elaboration, concretisation, development and enrichment of revolutionary theories. It implies that they consider Marxism as a philosophy which must be developed over time and with the change in objective reality.

What comes out from above is that the reported failure of the CPI in correctly analyzing the Indian context prior to Indian independence, as alleged by the RSP, was due to its membership of Comintern. As a national section of the Comintern, the CPI was bound to follow all the decisions of the Comintern,
argued the RSP. So, the failure of the CPI in taking a leading role in the Indian bourgeoisie democratic revolution was actually a fault of the Comintern. However, as opposed to this, the SUCI believed in the dialectical relationship between the Comintern and the national sections and held the view that for the failure of CPI neither the Comintern nor Stalin could be held responsible. The SUCI, though not in full conformity with the RSP, had some reservations on the role of the Comintern in leading the international communist movement. The national and international theses adopted by the SUCI in its first all-national convention in 1948 discussed quite a length on ‘the role of Comintern’. The said theses on international situation declared that the objective conditions for socialist revolution in many countries of Europe were fully matured during the Second World War but for the incompetence of the Comintern in leading the world proletarian revolutionary movement these conditions could not be utilized. The acceptance of united front as the general international political theory as adopted by the Seventh Comintern Congress and the programme of anti-fascist people’s front with the democratic imperialist were definite blunders and a swing to the right wing of liberalism.

However, the SUCI in its theses in 1948 incriminates Comintern as corrupt and incompetent and, according to them, precisely for this reason Comintern ‘utterly failed to prepare grounds for socialist revolution in the highly developed countries of Europe at the most opportune moment and also failed miserably in guiding the colonial countries to fight for democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat in association with the peasants and petty-bourgeoisie revolutionary section.’

Comintern, necessity of which was contemplated by Lenin as a instrument of strengthening and guiding the revolutionary movements in the world, was dissolved in 1943. While discussing the role of Comintern in 1948, the SUCI observed that ‘far from being conductor of world Communist movement, Comintern turned to be factor hindering further development of the Communist parties and a useless instrument for carrying the world revolutionary movement in the newer international situation.’

So the SUCI supported the decision to dissolve the Comintern. However, while denouncing Comintern, particularly for Seventh Congress decision, we find that the SUCI expressed high regards to the leadership of Stalin. It seems that, as opposed to the RSP position, the SUCI never equated Stalin with the deeds of Comintern. (Socialist Unity Centre, 19488: 12-13; 28-29) In this connection, views may be comparable to that of the Communist Party of China, which we have already discussed in chapter IV.

On the role of Stalin as the leader of the international communist movement, the SUCI position as given in a 1961 document is as follows:
It must be realized that the unity between different communist parties is not based on formalistic mechanical relation, nor the difference between them is of antagonistic nature. The relationship between different communist parties is governed by the dialectical principle of “unity-struggle unity” on the basis of new understanding of values of life fundamentally different from bourgeois humanist moral values and cemented by the common aims and objectives of world proletarian revolution and establishment of world communist society. But the tragedy is that the international communist leadership headed by Stalin, though basically correct on almost all major questions then confronting the communist movement, was not free from formalistic process of thinking. (Ghosh, S, 2004: 72-74; Italics original; emphasis added)

The party in clarifying its position further on the question of the pattern of relationship with the international communist movement believes that there is no denying that the foreign policy of the USSR and the programme of international proletarian revolution supplement each other and are in the common interest of establishing world socialist order, yet there is a contradiction between the two. The aim of the Soviet foreign policy is to consolidate the forces of socialism, create further and deeper antagonism among the imperialist-capitalists, isolate the less adventurous in the imperialist war camp from the more adventurous, defend and maintain world peace and thereby create objective conditions for the growth, development and success of world proletarian revolution. The aim of the programme of world proletarian revolution is to provide the general guidelines for successful revolution in different countries. The duty of the communist parties in colonies, semi colonies and capitalist countries is to apply creatively this general line in their respective countries. The SUCI states further that the practice of following blindly the foreign policies of the USSR adopted for that country only or the general line of the international communist forum must be discontinued on the part of the communist parties in colonies, semi colonies and capitalist countries.

Communist philosophy believes that the general policy of the international communist forum gives the general guiding principle which is to be applied differently in different countries. The specific analysis of specific conditions which differs from country to country and the specific application of the general guiding principle in different countries with different objective conditions depend upon the understanding of Marxism. It is because of the difference in conditions in different countries that there exists a contradiction between the general programme of international proletarian revolution and the particular programme of revolution in a given country. It is better to conclude that there are contradictions of non-antagonistic nature between the foreign policy of the USSR and the programme of
revolution of a communist party in a given country. ‘Lack of understanding of the contradiction between the general and the particular and that between the foreign policy of the USSR and the programme of revolution in their respective countries had, at the time of Stalin’s leadership, reduced most of the communist parties to robots.’

Stalin was considered as an international communist authority by the SUCI. The RSP was totally against the leadership and authority of Stalin. They considered his leadership as responsible for the Indian communists’ failure in doing the requisite revolutionary work in the right moment. If we compare the performance of the Indian communists with that of Chinese then we would see, in China the party was established in 1921 but completed the first phase of revolution by 1949 by establishing peoples’ democracy under the leadership of Mao.

For the SUCI, Stalin was ‘a giant communist leader’ and an ‘authority’ of Marxism after Lenin:

Who can deny that just as Lenin in his struggle against the revisionists and the centrists safeguarded the Marxist theory of state and the dictatorship of the proletariat from distortion and effacement, and by generalizing upon the historical experience of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, made brilliant contribution to Marxism, so also Stalin in his struggle against the Trotskyites and the Bukharinites safeguarded Marxism-Leninism from distortion and effacement and by generalizing upon the historical experience of the period of general crisis of capitalism and further disintegration of world capitalist market, enriched Marxism-Leninism. Stalin’s works on problems of Leninism, his contributions to the national question, to the question of linguistics, to the problems of socialism in the USSR and to revolutionary military science, in particular, are treasures of revolutionary science............In fact, the present understanding of Leninism, as distinct from social democracy and Trotskyism, is due to Stalin............Stalin’s understanding of Leninism is the correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism. This understanding has brought the communist movement to its present stature. .................Indeed, like his precursors Marx, Engels and Lenin, Stalin also is an authority on Marxism-Leninism. (Ghosh, S, 2004: 85-87; italics original)

Epilogue:

With regard to ideological differences between the RSP and the SUCI it has been observed that, though both the parties accept Marxism as their ideology, there are differences in their political line. We have discussed the origin of both these parties in two subsequent chapters. We find that there are
differences in their approach regarding the process of formation of party, the analysis of national and international situation – particularly the role of Comintern, the evaluation of Stalin as a Marxist theoretician, the role of Soviet Union as a leader in the socialist camp and defining the stage of revolution in post-independent period of India. Though both the parties define the stage as ‘Socialist’, the RSP formulates that with reference to ‘Permanent’ or ‘Continuous’ revolution which basically is a proposition propounded by Trotsky, whereas SUCI formulates that on the basis of Lenin’s formulation of socialist revolution as stated in April theses. Evolution of the RSP goes through the phases of national revolutionism, then an association with non-communist socialist group like CSP and ultimately conversion to a Marxist-Leninist party through a declaration. The evolution of the SUCI, on the other hand, followed a different pattern. It was started with the constitution of the POA which was an action-oriented body of active people who from the very beginning involved themselves with political activities mainly by following Marxist theoretical line and selected a path of continuous ideological debate. However, the concept of forming a platform of action prior to the first official convention was not a unique practice conceptualized by SUC alone; other parties like the CSP, the RSP and the Democratic Vanguards also followed the same process of party formation during that period.