

**INDIAN LEFT AND NATIONAL QUESTION:
CPI, CPI(M) AND CPI(ML)-LIBERATION
ON KASHMIR ISSUE**

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We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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SHASHI KANT PANDEY.

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INTRODUCTION

INRODUCTION

The encounter between nationalism and Marxism in the present century in Asia has been 'asymmetrical'¹ one. In Asia, it was Marxism which sought to abandon, understand, theorise, influence, woo, adopt or compromise nationalist ideology and the process it seem is far from over. It is the Marxists who had to address the question of nationalism, which existed prior to arrival of Marxism in colonial world. "Nationalism has been a 'veritable minefield' for Marxism which has yet to develop the conceptual aides needed to traverse such explosive terrain."² Ronaldo Munck terms Marxism's encounter with nationalism as "Difficult Dialogue"³ and nationalism as a phenomenon which has always frustrated Marxists by its 'chameleon like qualities'. Tom Bottomore⁴ too, hints at Marxist tendency to ignore and dismiss nationalism as being of little significance. Conceptualisation of national phenomenon presents a series of

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1. Sanjay Seth, Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics: A Case of Colonial India, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1995, p.9. PP.256.
 2. Achin Vinaik, "The Painful Transition: The Bourgeois Democracy in India", VERSO, London, New York, 1990, p. 113. PP.302.
 3. Ronaldo Munck "The Difficult Dialogue: Marxism and Nationalism Oxford University Press, 1986, PP.184.
 4. Tom Bottomore, 'Sociology' in D. Mcellan (ed.) Marx the First 100 Years, Fontana, London, 1983, p. 140.

serious challenges and difficulties before various ideologies and theories in general but more so to the Marxism. Nationalism, as Tom Nairn calls it, has been a "great historical failure"⁵ for Marxism. Nationalism cannot be explained only as 'false consciousness' misleading proletariat for a cause which is not their own. Mere dismissing it as 'erroneous form of idealism' under the banner of rationalism and rejecting all other aspects as simple superstition or irrationalism cannot be an adequate explanation. Notwithstanding the difficulties one cannot agree with Ronaldo Munck's argument that Marxism has "no theory of nationalism."⁶ Marxists of various hues have attempted to explain nation/nationality and nationalism by application of constantly refining and redefining universalist logic. Whether chameleon like phenomenon of nationalism with its multiple variants, constituents, 'fragments'⁷ and their complex interconnections can be explained by application of such an universalist logic is an important question. Historically nationalism with its various manifestations has claimed 'universality' and 'generality' on the one hand and

5. Tom Nairn, "The Break up of Britain: Crisis of Neo Nationalism"; New Left Books, London, 1977, p. 329.

6. Ibid., p. 2.

7. Partha Chatterjee, Nation and Its Fragments, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

'specificity' and 'uniqueness' on the other; existing simultaneously in varying degrees. Many times attempts to explain the nature of national phenomenon in singular universal term has clashed with diversified complex reality, which resists monocausal, reductionist explanations. It is therefore no coincidence that Marxism despite equipped with sophisticated conceptual aides has often tended to reject uniqueness of nationalist movements and ideologies.

The purpose of this study is neither to provide structural/ historical analysis of 'nationalism' nor to provide a detailed account of theoretical and political debates concerning historic interaction between Marxism and nationalism. It also does not aim at reconstructing Marxist theory of nationalism from classical or modern Marxist categories. The main objective of this study is to explain, evaluate and examine Indian Marxists and specially Left Parties' encounter with nationalism in colonial and post-colonial contexts. Concrete historical settings of Kashmir issues provide the context and vantage point for such an inquiry. Kashmir problem is an adequate as well as the most complex example, to trace the process by which Indian Marxists came to think the question of post-colonial nationalism. With the help this example, it might be possible to highlight the changes, to expose the limits of theoretical and political practices

of Indian Communist's over a long period of time. Kashmir problem is not simply a manifestation of 'problem of accession', 'a dispute between India and Pakistan' or 'law and order problem' as it is understood by some people. It brings to the fore the inadequacies of European enlightenment project of modernity and liberal nationalism in colonial and post-colonial world, to which "surfacing 'old styles of conflicts' of nationalities or communalism prove that 'savages' have entered the modern age and have begun to delinquently climb the social evolution ladder so thoughtfully gifted to them by European enlightenment so thoughtfully."⁸ To such nationalists and statist, escalating communal, ethnic or nationality violence in South Asia is only an unavoidable product of State and nation-building, and could be easily handled by law and order machinery of State given an adequate political will. Ideology and politics of national identity and unity resisted any understanding of India as multinational (in multinationality, subnationalities sense of the term) federal polity and continues to be officially resisted till today.

8. Ashish Nandi, (Introduction) *Creating a Nationality: The Ram Janma Bhumi Movement and Fear of Self*, (eds.), Oxford University Press, p. VII, PP.212.

In Chapter I attempt shall be made to present a brief and general overview of theoretical, conceptual and political spaces created by Marxism-Leninism within which it became possible to think of colonial and post-colonial nationalism. While presenting the overview of this chapter the complex nature of debate coupled with time-space limitation of this study must be kept in mind.

This chapter further traces how colonial question came to be known pre-eminently as national question and examines briefly the nature of Roy-Lenin debate, which provided the general framework within which Indian left movement conceptualised the above issue.

Chapter II starts with theory and practice of first Communist Party of India, CPI, which in defining itself as 'Marxist' and seeking to specify its role in India was forced to try and "define the relation between socialist goal and nationalist one and between the class struggle and national struggle."⁹ This chapter also examines the Kashmir problem in its historical settings as it was approached by CPI and suited into its framework over a period of time.

Chapter III looks into the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI[M])'s (formed in 1964, claiming to fight

9. Sanjay Seth, *Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1995, p. 13.

against revisionism of CPI) framework towards nation/nationality problem in India in general and Kashmir in particular.

The final chapter deals with Marxist-Leninists popularly known as 'Naxalites' in Indian politics since 1969 and concentrates mainly on a dominant M-L faction - CPI-ML (Liberation) which came to formulate its approach and stand on nationality question and Kashmir problem in India.

Methodology adopted in this study is historical-analytical one. Here political-theoretical developments at various stages are critically examined and evaluated in the light of national question and Kashmir issue.

Marxist-Leninists in general and Indian Marxists in particular, and their approach towards nation, nationality, nationalism and Kashmir issue can be approached and evaluated from various frameworks and perspectives but in present study the debates are confined generally within 'broader Marxian framework'. Studying three left parties attitude on Kashmir is important not because of its impact on the developments in Kashmir but how these parties have been exposed to frame and conceptualise their attitude towards nationality problem and Kashmir issue which remains one of the crucial problem of entire Indian subcontinent.

Here, some organising concepts and definitions¹⁰ used in broader sense in this study need to be clarified. The term 'National question' denotes the 'Marxist problematic covering all phenomenon like nation, nationality, nation-State or nationalism. 'Nation' in classical western sense of the term is understood as 'a type of political society established by a nationality'. The term 'nationality' refers to 'a community which is defined historically by its actions in the political field.' Unlike formation of nation state based on single nationality which was a general rule in western Europe, multinationality national movements emerged under the conditions of colonialism in other parts of the world where nationa-states were established encompassing various nationalities. This happened in India too. Hence every nationality question is not a national question in classical sense. Even in Europe there are nations with more than one nationality. There is a broad division among Indian Marxists, between those who argue that India is a multinational state and those who argue that India is a multinationality state where nationality formation precedes nation formation but does not necessarily lead to the lat-

10. Based mainly on Ronaldo Munck's *Difficult Dialogue: Marxism and Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1986, PP.184.

ter.¹¹ The term has been used interchangeably in present study and also by left parties under consideration only in latter sense of the term.

'Nation-State is understood as 'the symbiosis established between nation and a given State in the era of bourgeois revolution' and 'nationalism is the political movement whereby given nationality strives to accomplish nationhood or free itself from domination by other.'

The Chapters which follow are based generally within above definitional frameworks.

11. Achin Vinaik, *The Painful Transition*, VERSO, London, p.115.

CHAPTER I

MARXISM AND NATIONAL

QUESTION

MARXISM AND NATIONAL QUESTION

National and social revolution have been the central themes of twentieth century history; all pervasive colouring all our acts, positive or negative. National phenomenon has always proved a slippery ground for Marxism, which makes universal claims to plot a course for the liberation of mankind. In present Chapter, we attempt a brief survey of arguments, historically tracing various encounters and conflicts between Marxism (Marxist theories) and nationalism which form the core of debate and provides a conceptual background for the issue under consideration. The principle of nationalism emerged gradually in western Europe and was theoretically formulated in revolutionary France. Historically, the formation of nations or nation-states was generally a byproduct of the world wide expansion of capitalism. The charge against Marxism has been that 'it has tended to focus on economic phenomenon of capital accumulation and has neglected the accompanying physical and political consolidation of territory'.¹ Determinism leads Marxism into unconscious or willful ignorance of several factors and aspects which shape the complex debate between Marxism and National-

1. Ronaldo Munck. *Difficult Dialogue : Marxism and nationalism*. OUP. Delhi, 1986. p.1.

ism in its entirety. Hugh Seton Watson refers to Marxist's insufficient understanding of process of formulation of revolutionary elite, the social conditions and personal conditions which impel men to revolutionary leadership.² Marxist tendency to attribute all social movements including nationalism in terms of 'rise of middle class' or 'bourgeoisie' seem to be based on mistaken tendency to regard the formation of bourgeoisie in western Europe, between the end of middle ages and end of 18th century as normal and universal pattern in historical development of societies. "The truth", Watson writes, "is rather that formation of bourgeoisie is an exceptional and uncharacteristic phenomenon confined to a part of European continent and its successor societies of North America and Pacific. The Social group which has played a leading role in political movements in underdeveloped societies from post-Petrice Russia to mid 20th century tropical Africa has not been 'middle class' but an 'intelligentsia'. The difference is more than semantic".³ The argument makes a point for closely looking into the process of capitalist development and resultant creation of bourgeoisie in non-Western part of the world.

2. Hugh Seton Watson. Nationalism and Communism. Methuen and Co.Ltd., London, 1964.

3. Ibid, p.3

Nationalism is a subject on which Marx and Engels are commonly felt to have gone astray, most markedly in their earlier years, by greatly underestimating a force, which grew explosively. Emigrants themselves, it was natural for them to have little comprehension of patriotic fervour of nationalism. They had little like for sentiments which professed to transcend social divisions and blunt class consciousness. "No part of their pronouncements on national question has invited more criticism than the vehemence with which they condemned the minor Slav peoples of Habsburg Empire during the revolution of 1848-49, for turning against the stronger German speaking Austrians and Magyars and thus helping conservatism to regain control. They were trying to fit all heterogeneous forces astir in those years into black and white, reactionary and progressive".⁴ Poland was too big a country to be thought in the same way, its political efforts for independence was to weaken Tsarism and establish barrier between Germany and Russia. Marx despite some misgivings (On Eastern Question Art.59), in the final section of Communist manifesto, support was proclaimed for the more progressive wing which held that agrarian revolution was necessary condition for national emancipation, the

4. V.G. Kiernan. Dictionary of Marxist Thought (eds). Tom Bottomor. OUP. Delhi, p.587.

social advance as pre-requisite for such support. Marx wrote in relation to Poland "The victory of Proletariat over bourgeois is at the same time the signal of liberation of all oppressed nations".⁵

Ronaldo Munck argues that founders of Marxism were not free from 'national stereotypes'.⁶ Munk cites various examples to show that probably Marx and Engels were prey to Euro-centric (even racial) chauvinist sentiment and they indicate a concept of nation which accepts privilege for 'large' and 'centralized' over 'small and scattered'. They seem to have believed in similar pattern and levels of social developments as result of inevitable, all pervading march of capitalism and neither a common language tradition nor geographical and historical homogeneity constituted nation. Thus Germany was 'revolutionary' and 'progressive' compared to Scandinavian nations because of its higher stage of capitalist development. Marx and Engels went to say "By the same right under which France took over Flanders, Lorraine and Asace....By that same right Germany takes over Schleswig; it is the right of civilization against barba-

5. K. Marx, F. Engels Collected Works, Vol.6, p.388.

6. Ronaldo Munck. Difficult Dialogue. OUP. Delhi, 1986. p.10.

alism, of progress against stability".⁷ The right of nations to self-determination was preceded by the right of civilization against barbarism which was later used for justifying imperialism by liberals and socialists both. These are undoubtedly Euro-centric evolutionary strains in Marxism which run counter to its revolutionary democratic essence.

The year 1848 was one of revolution in Europe and allowed Marx and Engels to become practical revolutionaries. This period witnessed clash of 'revolutionary' (German etc.) nations with various national aspirations. In 1848 socialists and working class failed to integrate with democratic aspirations of national movements and disunity and split was the result. It was Irish question which led Marx and Engels to revise their attitude on various aspects of 'nationality question'. Marx indicated in a letter to Engels in 1867:

"Previously I thought Ireland separation from England impossible. Now I think it is inevitable, although after separation there may come confederation".⁸ Engels too expressed his more sympathetic attitude in his letter to Kautsky in 1882 "I therefore hold the view that two nations in Europe not only have right but even duty to be

7. K. Marx, F. Engels Collected Works. Lawrence - London, p.423.

8. K. Marx and F. Engels. Ireland and Irish Question. Progress Pub. Moscow 1971, p.143.

nationalistic, before they become inter-nationalistic : The Irish and Poles. They are most inter-nationalistic when they are most nationalistic".⁹

Marx in communist manifesto praised the progressive effects of capitalist expansion. Nationalism was not a central but marginal and peripheral concern for Marx and Engels, who used concepts of nation, nationality and nationalism according to current usages and not as a part of any 'theoretical revolution'. According to Bloom, for Marx "the nation was a complex product and function of environmental, economic, historical and other influences" from which followed the conclusion that "nationality was an objective condition not a subjective preference".¹⁰ As to 'nationalism' this was very fluid concept; exaltation of 'further land', worship of state or simply attachment to one's homeland. Above all categories, notion of classes accorded absolute primacy in understanding the evolution of capitalist society. "More precisely the internal structure of nation was seen to depend on level of development of production forces and social divisions of labour. The modern nation-state was seen as product of rise of

9. Ibid, p.332.

10. B. Bloom. Cited in Ronaldo Munck. Difficult Dialogue. OUP, Delhi, p.21.

bourgeoisie which was fated to disappear when this class was overthrown".¹¹ In their analysis, Marx and Engels turned to Hegel's analysis and distinction between 'historic' and 'non-historic' nations which, probably they used metaphorically for 'revolutionary' and 'non-revolutionary' nations. Munck argues that essentially these categories reflect a form of Social Darwinism - fittest to survive and losers to be condemned to oblivion. Marx had written in capital that "the country that is more developed industrially may show to the less developed the image of its own future".¹² This was a historical determinist, evolutionist image where one country was to follow the historical ladder of succession in mechanical stages. This mirror image theory later came to be disapproved empirically. This unilinear conception was modified only when Marx turned his attention to Russia in 1870s. The qualitative break with earlier outlook was explicit in recognition of distinction between oppressor nation and oppressed nations.¹³ In short, Irish and Poland question led Marx and Engels to recognize the inter-dependence

11. Ibid, p.21.

12. K. Marx. The Capital. Vol. Penguin. London. p.9.

13. R. Munck. Difficult Dialogue. OUP. Delhi. 1986, p.22.

between national and bourgeois-democratic revolution. The social revolution could only advance once national question was settled. Marx and Engles wrote in Communist Manifesto:

"National differences and antagonisms between people are daily more and more vanishing, owing to development of bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding them"...¹⁴

"In the national struggles of proletarians of different countries they point out and bring in the front, the common interests of whole proletariat independently of all nationalities."¹⁵

Their argument that national differences tend to disappear with the universalizing effects of capitalism is still questionable, because contemporary world is witnessing parallel trends; integration of world under world capitalism on the one hand and proliferation of national differences and new nationality struggles on the other. Marxist call "working men have no country" does not mean that working men have no nationality but that workers must become leading class force in particular nation-state not in bourgeoisie-chauvinist sense. Thus by setting their scores with their own bourgeoisie they can march forward in the direction of world proletarian internationalism. Thus the call "working

14. K. Marx & F.Engels Collected Works; vol.6, p.503.

15. Ibid, p.497.

men of all countries unite"! Aijaz Ahmad writing in defence of Marxism argues for evaluating Marxism in totality of its historical contexts and cautions against detaching passages from its context, inserting into ideologically biased, orientalist or post-modernist archives and move in different even contradictory directions.¹⁶

Karl Kautsky was undisputed expert on national question within second international formed in 1889. He developed his understanding after a deeper study of Irish question. Kautsky argued that the classical form of modern state was 'nation-state' even though this was a tendency rarely realized completely. Just as capitalism co-existed with remnants of previous modes of production, so the nation-state embraced other fragments of nations. Kautsky subscribed that small national groups would find it unable to survive in the world of large national groups. Common language was to provide basis of social production of nationalism. Finally Kautsky mentioned that while the development of capitalism threw the capitalist of one nation into competition with that of another, there was no contradictions between workers of different countries. Second International witnessed bitter debates regarding

16. Aijaz Ahmed. IN Theory. OUP. Delhi. 1994, p.223, pp.358.

nature of national question, whether it was primarily on economic question or a cultural question. Kautsky disagreed with Engels characterization of Austro-Slav groups as 'non-historic' nation destined for extermination and argued that empirical evidence has disapproved this description. Right to self determination and independence was relative, depending upon wider national community. That welfare of a single nationality was not the criterion for action and went on advocating that Austria should continue on federal basis and nationalism should not preclude the unification of Balkan people in federal state. Thus democratic federalism was to provide an alternative to independent national aspirations in a multinational state. Kautsky maintained the distinction between nation and nationality and national question was largely considered only in relation to problems presented by the multinational empires. Second, his Euro-centric approach to nation-language and state in particular geographical area, left him ill prepared to perceive different forms of national question outside Europe. This was the age of imperialism and question of socialist attitude towards overseas expansion and subsequent nationalist revolts was left ambiguous by Marx, Engels and Second International. Munk charges that Second International developed a 'social imperialist' line which

advocated for evolving a 'socialist colonial policy' in the interest of all humanity in their 'civilized' refusal to "abandon half of the globe to the caprice of people still in infancy".¹⁷

First world war led to collapse of internationalist principles in 1914, when respective nation's socialist parties, particularly largest 'German social democratic party' despite initial hesitations, threw their weight behind 'national defence' and its representatives voted unanimously for war credits which the government demanded. This was followed by French, Belgian and English. Kautsky was optimistic that international would regroup after war was over and crisis in international socialist movement was not a question of principle but a product of geographical accident.

Rosa Luxemburg, synonym for uncompromising internationalism whose 'radical left' formulation led to famous debate with Lenin on national question. In the light of national question in her native Poland Rosa Luxembourg rejected the 'orthodox Marxist position of national independence' and 'reunification of country' and asked for

17. Ronaldo Munck. Difficult Dialogue. OUP, Delhi 1986, p.34.

correct communist position in changed historical context.

She wrote:

"By failing to analyse Poland and Russia as class societies bearing economic and political contradictions in their bosoms, by viewing them not from the point of view of historical development but as if they were fixed, absolute condition as homogeneous, undifferentiated units; this view was counter to the very essence of Marxism".¹⁸

She was of the opinion that industrialization would strengthen the bourgeoisie, it would also create a growing proletariat. It was only continuation of this tendency that proletariat capable of seizing power and building socialism would be formed. To her, preaching separation of Poland from Russia would interrupt this process. She attacked nationalism of Polish socialist party. Nationalism was a political reality; however Luxemburg termed it 'a series of fruitless national struggles' weakening the coherent struggles of proletariat. But her hostility to Polish nationalism did not preclude her support for oppressed nations (Greeks, Serbian, Bulgarian, Armenian). She argued that formulae of national self-determination did not give practical guideline for day to day policies of Proletariat or any political solution to nationality problem. Luxemburg

18. H.B. Davis (ed) The National Question : Selected Writings of Rosa Luxemburg, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1976, p.77.

welcomed 1917 October revolution but in the 'Russian Revolution of 1918', she once again took the issue of self-determination with Bolsheviks, which she argued was disintegrating Russia, supplying bourgeois of border areas finest pretext for counter-revolutionary efforts. She could not understand the "obstinacy and rigid consistency" with which Lenin and his comrades maintained slogan of self-determination while their general organisational principles were rigidly centralist. Though Luxemburg did not generalize her internationalist outlook for non-European world, she opposed elevating principle of self-determination as 'right' because class position could be only guide of socialist politics. The attitude towards the national question would be determined by historical circumstances. "Of all the debate within Marxism on nationalism, Lenin's doctrine of right of nations to self-determination even secession, is the most famous and one which has most practical political effects".¹⁹ Political context to this formulation was provided by February and October revolution of 1917, in which right to self-determination was put to test and national minorities had played a major role in breaking up of old empire. Bolsheviks turned to a more

19. Ronaldo Munck. Difficult Dialogue. OUP. Delhi, p.69.

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centralized policy and redefined self-determination to apply only to the workers and progressive bourgeoisie of oppressed nationalities.

Stalin as People's Commission of 'Affairs of nationalities' played a major role in suppressing nationalist revolts, Lenin though at first backed this policy, began to develop grave objections. Confronting Stalin, he sowed many doubts as to whether 'Leninism' had in fact resolved the relation between 'socialism' and 'nationalism'. Lenin evolved an elaborate and complex national programme from 1912 onwards under the impact of events in Balkans and rising international tension. He stressed the "particular urgency of the demand under imperialism" the distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations and against "the inconsistent purely verbal recognition of self-determination by opportunists and Kautskytes".²⁰ Against Otto Bauer's idea of minority cultural autonomy Lenin counterpoised the argument that "there are two national cultures within every national culture"²¹ of proletariat and bourgeois and warned Austro-Marxists against advocating secessionism. While

20. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.22, Progress Pub., Moscow, 1964, p. 155.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

appreciating the Luxemburg struggle against Polish social nationalists, Lenin argued that she had forgotten the great national chauvinism of Russians and she in fact was assisting opportunist tolerance of privileges of "Great Russians"²² Thus Lenin attempted to evolve an alternative to "Radical Left internationalism" and "Austro-Marxists' Right Separatism". Lenin, like other Marxists before him, closely related the nation to the rise of capitalism which was "politically unified territory established by rising bourgeoisie to capture the home market". Thus nation-states are normal and typical form of bourgeoisie rule as it emerges from feudalism and in which requirement for modern capitalism are best satisfied. Bourgeois democracy was "best possible shell" for capitalism. He wrote "Developing capitalism knows two historical tendencies in the national question; the first is the awakening of national life and national movements, the struggle against national oppression and the creation of nation-states, the second is development and growing frequency of intercourse in every form, the breakdown of international barriers, the creation of international unity of capital, of economic life in general,

22. Ibid., p. 412.

of politics, science, etc."²³ To Lenin, Marxists must take both tendencies into account, advocating the equality of nations on the one hand the struggle against bourgeois nationalism on the other. The first tendency lead to the basic principle of national self-determination, second trend was to lead to breaking away of national barriers. "To raise the slogan of nations right to self-determination then was not only to seek to build working class unity across and against the divisive efforts of national oppression under capitalism; nor was it merely a question of welcoming the arrival of capitalism in hitherto pre-capitalist part of the world and supporting their bourgeois democratic national struggle. It was both these, but it was also a crucial aspect of the struggle against imperialism; the highest stage of capitalism itself".²⁴ For Lenin, "The focal point in the social democratic (national) programme must be that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which form the essence of imperialism ".²⁵ Thus, Lenin attempted to do away with Marxist categories of historic and non-historic nations and replaced it with oppressor and oppressed

23. Ibid., p. 27.

24. Sanjay Seth. Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics, Sage Publications, Delhi, 1995. p.47.

25. V.I. Lenin. Collected Works. Vol 21, p.409.

nations. Lenin developed a three-fold categorisation of countries where self-determination took different meanings:

1. The advanced capitalist countries of western Europe and US where progressive national movements had already run their course;
2. The multi-national states of Austria, Balkans and Russia where the class struggle was combined with the democratic task of national self-determination;
3. The colonial and semi-colonial countries, where the democratic movement had barely begun and where socialist should support the movement for national liberation.

Regarding third category of colonial and semi-colonial countries, there evolved an intense debate between Lenin and M.N. Roy which has been elaborated in this chapter.²⁶ The nationalism was not viewed as an independent, self-sufficient cause but was seen dialectically, realistically and subordinate to class politics. Lenin's principle (principle of self-determination) was not to be taken as an abstract timeless formulae divorced from particular historical - political context in which it was developed and it was to be applied. Alfred Row along with Ronaldo Munck argue that dichotomy and contradiction which characterize Lenin's thought

26. Ibid, p.151.

leaves enough space for subjectivism, where nationalism and socialism both can utilize the principle in their own ways - counter revolutionary or progressive.

Stalin in his pamphlet 'Marxism and National Question (1913) dealt mainly with Austro Marxist approach: "the fate of national movements which is essentially a bourgeois movement is naturally connected with the fate of bourgeoisie".²⁷ Though national oppression can only be overcome by socialism, democratization under capitalism can reduce the national struggle to the minimum. He cited the examples of Switzerland and America. Nation was "a historically evolved stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make up manifested in community of culture".²⁸ As against 1899 Brunn Programme granting non-territorial autonomy to nationalities, Stalin argued that this would disrupt class unity and spread to other groups 'unable to withstand nationalist epidemic'. He counterpoised right of nations to self-determination in which "nations have right to arrange their affairs as they please. That does not mean that social democrats will not combat and agitate the pernicious

27. J. Stalin. Marxism and National Question. Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1945, p.24.

28. Ibid, p.11.

infiltration of nations and against the inexpedient demand for nations".²⁹ The substantive definitional part of 'nation' by Stalin has been criticized as reductionist, undialectical, scholastic, dogmatic, restrictive and rigid. One of the most serious criticism of Stalin's essay is that it fails to distinguish between oppressor and oppressed nations. The actual phrase 'oppressor nations' occurs so often in Stalin's work but the position is contradictory in practice. Stalin's main aim was to resist nationalism and he saw little difference between nationalism from above and nationalism from below.³⁰ While in Lenin theme of democracy runs clearly through his works, Stalin was clearly pragmatic and his approach to national question is far from sensitive in his dogmatic checklist to assess whether people meet the criterion to become a nation. In case of 'Georgia', self-determination was reduced to 'bourgeois fiction', to be swept aside when it conflicted with the unifying tendencies of socialist economic construction. History has clearly belied this position.

29. Ibid, p.66.

30. Sanjay Seth, Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics, Sage Publicatioins, Delhi, 1995, p.34.

The Colonial Question and National Question:

Second International was founded in the background of enormous race for colonies. In late 19th century and early 20th century, enormous expansion of colonies took place colonizing large part of Asia and Africa. Socialist movement confronted colonialism and anti-colonial national movements. International described it as "only other name for extension of area of capitalist exploitation in the exclusive interest of capitalist class". Paris Congress of 1900 too, called separately for proletariat 'to fight the colonial expansion of bourgeoisie. Amsterdam Congress of 1904 condemned colonialism and declared complete emancipation of colonies' to be ultimate goal of socialist movement but it was qualified by 'liberty and autonomy compatible with the state of development'.³¹ Stuggart Congress International 1907 proposed resolution on colonial question condemning present capitalist colonization but it also declared that "The Congress does not condemn in principle and for all time, every colonial policy, under socialist regime, colonization can be work of civilization".³² The imperial civilizing mission! This

31. Ibid, p.34.

32. Ibid, p.36.

clause was opposed by minority of committee members. Lenin argued for a right attitude, which would promote the development of democratic or socialist class consciousness among the European working class. To him world had entered "a new and in comparatively a higher stage in the international proletariat struggle".³³ The awakening in Asia had important implications for class struggle in Europe. The 'awakening' was a metaphor for the fact that 'East has definitely taken the western path',³⁴ that too due to factors external to itself, not generated by its own history. He termed Sun-yat-sen in China as representative of 'Revolutionary bourgeois democracy' of a class that is rising and not declining. Europe's imperial connection with Asia was not accidental and episodic but as structural and 'necessary'. The relationship between capitalist west and non-western world was conceived in terms of 'Imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism'.

"Even the capitalist colonial policy of previous stages of capitalism" Lenin wrote "is essentially different from colonial policy of finance capital. For, to the numerous old motives of colonial policy, finance capital has added to

33. V.I. Lenin, National Liberation Movement in East. Progress Publishers, Moscow.

34. Ibid, p.70.

the struggle for the sources of raw materials, for the export of capital, for sphere of influence, for economic territory in general.³⁵ In the era of monopoly capital where banking and industrial capital coalesced, with the former dominant-colonies were important at every stage of reproduction of capitalism. Not only primarily as markets but as sources of raw materials and as a field for self expansion of capital, as investment outlets.³⁶

In Marx-Engels writings orient was brought within the ambit of Marxism as 'embryonic west - a west in formation. In Lenin's thought East was included within Marxism through the theory of imperialism which suggested that East had been incorporated into capitalism though not becoming fully capitalist.³⁷ For Lenin colonial questions came to be linked with national question - to be regarded as ally of proletarian revolution. M.N. Roy differed with Lenin who described nationalist movements in colonies as 'bourgeois democratic, never considering that even nationalism of oppressed nationality could become reactionary aligning with imperialism. Whatever formed 'bourgeois' in colonies was

35. V.I. Lenin. Imperialism : The Highest Stage of Capitalism. Progress Publishers, Moscow.

36. Ibid, p.118.

37. Sanjay Seth. Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics. Sage Publications, 1995.

not essentially progressive and in fact bourgeois had not properly crystallized in colonies in western secular sense of the term. Lenin seems to have been guided by evolutionist view of historical stages where rising bourgeoisie was inevitably champion of democracy. The related question that anti-colonial nationalism can be anti-imperial but not necessarily bourgeois democratic and progressive; it may even obstruct genuine capitalist democratic development let alone socialist revolution. Third Communist International brought third world and national question into the forefront of Marxist politics. In the first Congress of COMINTERN (1919) colonial national liberation was seen as a task subordinate to task of world revolutionary movement. But second Congress of COMINTERN saw serious theoretical debate on national and colonial question.

One of the most difficult encounters of communism with nationalism in colonial and semi-colonial countries is linked with the development of communism and socialism in India from the Second Congress of Communist International in 1920. A brief recapitulation of the debate generated by M.N. Roy, the founder member of Communist Party of India, is a good entry point for an insight into this historic confrontation. M.N. Roy made his debut in the international

communist movement at the second world congress of 'Comintern' which was held in Moscow in July-August, 1920. Lenin had prepared a draft thesis on "National and Colonial Question", which was circulated among the delegates with a request for comments and criticism. As a result of response Lenin invited Roy to propose an alternative draft. Both Lenin's and Roy's thesis were laid before "National and Colonial Commission" for its consideration. In the subsequent debates within commission, a distinction evolved between different kinds of "bourgeois Democratic movements" in dependent areas - between those of truly "revolutionary" and those of merely "reformist" character, based on differences in their class character and composition.³⁸ In countries where reformist nationalist movement prevailed, Roy argued that "COMINTERN should eschew alliances with nationalist leaders, who were bound to desert to the imperialist camp in revolutionary situation and should instead assist extensively the institution and development of communist movement and the organization of broad popular masses for the class interests of the latter".³⁹ After

38. John Patrick Haith Cox, *Communism and Nationalism in India*, OUP, Princeton, 1971, p.11.

39. *Situation in India - Report of Commission - Roy*, Petroford Pravda Pub., Moscow; July, 1920.

making some modifications in theses of Lenin and Roy, Congress took unusual step of combining both. In the revised version of Lenin's thesis the COMINTERN was counselled to support only "revolutionary movements of liberation" rather than all "bourgeois democratic movements" as stated in the draft. Lenin too, for the first time attempted to formulate in systematic manner his ideas on problems of promoting communist revolution in Asia and incorporated in his thesis distinction Roy made between different types of bourgeois democratic liberation movements. Lenin argued

"very often even in the majority of the cases perhaps where the bourgeoisie of the oppressed country does support the national movement, it simultaneously works in harmony with imperialist bourgeoisie, i.e. to join the latter in fighting against all revolutionary movements and all revolutionary classes.....in the [National and Colonial] commission it was proved irrefutably and we came to the conclusion that only correct thing was to take this distinction into consideration and nearly everywhere to substitute the term 'Nationalist revolutionary' for the term 'bourgeois democratic'. The meaning of the change is that we communists should and will support bourgeois liberation movements in colonial countries only when these are really revolutionary, when the representatives of these movements do not hinder us in training and organizing the peasant and working masses of the exploited in revolutionary spirit."⁴⁰

40. V.I.Lenin "The Report on the National and Colonial Question" at the Second Congress of COMINTERN, Selected Works, X:240-241.

In the early years of his Comintern career Roy had felt that the United Front Policy, which called for communist support for nationalist movements in colonial and semi-colonial areas, was inappropriate for India. And when he warned of the possible betrayal of "bourgeoisie democratic" nationalist leaders, he had Indian National Congress in mind. Lenin in contrast felt that the national bourgeoisie could be a progressive force particularly in early stages of nationalist movement when anti-imperialist fervour was strong but he agreed with Roy that continued alliance with this group, once its revolutionary potential is exhausted, would be self-defeating. While communists of the time had anti-imperialist proletarian socialist revolution in their mind there was no objective/subjective criterion laid down for determining the point at which communists should shift from policy of "revolution from above" to "revolution from below". Identifying that time was ripe when communist party should give away nationalist movement and seek support directly among the workers, peasantry and petty bourgeoisie. This question was linked with the stage of revolution, its nature, content and class forces which were to fight for it. Although never clearly formulated, it was left open for assessment, both of relative strength of bourgeoisie and proletarian forces and of class composition of nationalist

movement within the country in question. On both these points, Lenin and Roy disagreed with respect to India. Lenin did not share Roy's confidence in the strength of Indian peasantry and his class understanding of Indian society. He was also opposed to spontaneity in development of class consciousness. At the Second World Congress there was no communist party in India. Lenin pointed out that it would take some time before Indian workers and peasants could be mobilized effectively. Their differing assessment of Indian situation resulted in contrasting attitude towards nationalist movement in general. Lenin argued "temporary relations, even unions" with such movements⁴¹ Roy spoke only in terms of "co-operation" with national movement. He stressed on developing an independent communist movement in dependent areas than on supporting existing national movements. He stressed also on organization of "Peasants and workers' Soviets". In the supplementary thesis Roy stated that "imperial policy of preventing industrial development in colonies has restricted the growth of proletarian class until recently".⁴² Roy's stress on "revolution from below" was based on his assumption that

41. V.I. Lenin. Theses on National and Colonial Question; p.70.

42. M.N.Roy - India In Transition, p.29.

India had already attained a stage of capitalist development in which proletarian class consciousness was beginning to solidify. Indian bourgeois according to Roy shared the British fear of mass revolt and though for a time they would use the strength of masses to win still further concessions; they would eventually compromise with colonial rulers and settle for something less than complete independence.⁴³

Thus, Roy-Lenin debate nevertheless has an important historical significance in that it marks the first attempt within COMINTERN to formulate a policy, which would "successfully merge the revolutionary aspiration of a nationalist anti-colonialism and communist anti-capitalism".⁴⁴ The persisting historical confusion and conflict among communist parties over the correct attitude towards national regimes, nationality/national movements in underdeveloped post-colonial areas is a manifestation of a long standing controversy which dates back to the early days of COMINTERN, over how to utilize nationalist movements for communist ends. Prominent leader and theoretician Dr. G.M. Adhikari in his critique of Namboodripad's document "Revisionism and Dogmatism in CPI" found it necessary to

43. Ibid, p.29.

44. J.P. Haith Cox. Communism and Nationalism in India, Oxford University Press, Princeton, 1971, p.18.

review the history of debate within the international communist movement over the role of National bourgeoisie. He rightly takes 1920 COMINTERN Congress as starting point and argued that the debate lies in the perennial controversy over the "role of national bourgeoisie in our country and in national democratic revolution in its various phases". It is quite difficult to understand differences among major left parties that separate them without keeping in mind the context in which they have been carrying their struggle: "The struggle for national political independence (before liberation) and its extension: The struggle for national economic independence (after liberation). J.P. Haithcox⁴⁵ rightly mentions that the central problem has always been, (both before and after independence) how to unite the national bourgeoisie, counteract its comprador character, and at the same time build an independent communist party and movement.

Thus in brief, we outlined the theoretical context of nationality debate in Marxism - western, colonial and post colonial context, which provided the ideological-political space for left groups to outline their policies.

45. Haith Cox J.P. Communism and Nationalism in India, Oxford University Press, Princeton, 1971, p.19.

CHAPTER II

**CPI, NATIONALITY QUESTION
AND KASHMIR ISSUE**

CPI, NATIONALITY QUESTION AND KASHMIR ISSUE

Chapter II focuses on the historical background to the concrete shaping of nation-nationality debate in colonial/post colonial context and the way first communist party of India CPI came to formulate its strategy and tactics towards national question in general and Kashmir in particular.

Emigre Communist Party of India was organized in Tashkent in late 1920, predominantly from among Indian Muhajirs.

At the time of COMINTERN Congress (Nov.7 to Dec.3, 1922) M.N. Roy continued to warn against unreliability of Indian nationalist leaders, who he predicted would "eventually become counter-revolutionary force". Writing in his "thesis on Eastern Question"¹ he classified colonial and semi-colonial countries with three types - areas where capitalism and class differentiation were well developed; where capitalism was at low level and feudalism remained the backbone of the society, and where primitive conditions still prevailed and feudal patriarchy prevailed. He placed India in the first category. There not even the

1. Roy M.N., Thesis on "Eastern Question" in International Press Correspondence (ed.), 109 (1922).

successful conclusion of nationalist struggle, much less the class war was assured unless close attention was paid to political indoctrination and organization of workers and peasants, who in the end would have to assume the leadership of the liberation movement. "The thesis on the Eastern Question" drafted by Eastern Commission of which Roy was the member was adopted unanimously. Thus thesis defined the task of communist worker's parties of 'colonial and semi-colonial' countries as dual one: "to fight for most radical possible solution to the task of bourgeoisie democratic revolution which aim at the conquest of political independence and to organize the working and peasant masses for the struggle for their present class interest and in doing so exploit all contradictions in nationalist democratic camp.² Thus he emphasised on maintaining the political independence of communist party and not allow themselves to become helpless appendages of national liberation movements. In 5th COMINTERN Congress (June 1924) Damitry Manwilsky criticized Roy's position that class differentiation within Indian nationalist movement and society was well advanced at that point of time. Though he

2. Roy, M.N. Thesis on National Question. Cited in J.P. Haith Cox's Communism and Nationalism in India. oUP Princeton 1971. p.14-15.

conceded that in India there had been a relative development of class struggle but he warned against generalizing this fact. Thus in pre 47 period, national question emerged as an important question before communists in India under the leadership of CPI which claimed to adhere to the principles of right to self-determination including the right to secede. An analysis of 1942-48 and 1948-51 documents provide an authentic version of how and why CPI upheld this principle. The resolutions of the first period were prepared in response to Muslim League demand for Pakistan, which was far from a sound theoretical formulation of the problem.

Gautam Adhikari commented on pre-40 approach:

"In 1938 we did not understand the real nature of communal problem which was becoming clear in the process of national political and economic development. We were groping towards it. It became crystal clear to us when in March 1940 the Muslim League adopted the Pakistan resolution. In 1938, we were yet wrapped up in theory like the rest of the nationalists that India was one nation and that Muslims were just a religious cultural minority and that Congress-League united front could be forged by conceding "protection of cultural and religious demands". We stood on the basis as Congress leadership and we were guilty of courage of denying the people of Muslim nationalities their just right to *autonomy in free India*.³

3. Adhikari, G., "Pakistan and National Unity September 1942 in Pakistan and National Unity The Communist Solution (ed.) G. Adhikari, PPH, Bombay, 1957.

CPI documents of the period before 1940 sometimes refer to right to self-determination to national minorities but G. Adhikari admitted that all such discussions were conducted under the framework of one Indian nationhood.

Gautam Adhikari in his article "National Security Now" first published in People's War (1948 August 8) on the issue of deadlock between INC and Muslim League wrote that national unity was to be precondition for independence.

"Unity was first precondition for independence...first precondition for striking at freedom. The imperialists knew it as well. That is the reason why they always sought to disrupt the unity, to spread distrust between country and country. Did that however mean that unity can't be achieved before imperialist rule was ended? Not in the least. To say that is to deny the possibility of freedom itself.⁴

Thus Adhikari saw differences between INC and League simplistically as imperialist ploy of divide and rule and failed to provide a proper explanation. Parasitic dependence of bourgeoisie leadership of INC and Muslim League on each other was too obvious. Explaining the problem in more detail, Adhikari traces the 'accentuation of

4. Ibid., p. 17.

communal problem' and 'provincial jealousy' in following words:

"This is due to competition between bourgeoisie of these various communities and provinces for jobs and power which was brought to the surface by new constitution (of 1935)...but in actual practice as the general national anti-imperialist upsurge spreads deeper into the masses it finds an echo in the growing up of sectional, communal provincial patriotism, which may not necessarily weaken or conflict with the larger national patriotism but which is often used by bourgeoisie for accentuating national disunity.⁵

As is evident from the documents of the period bedrock concept of the idea of 'national unity', 'Indian nationhood' looms large in the analysis of the situation. In an attempt to theorize the conflict between nationhood (Indian) and nationalities in colonial India, Adhikari mentions two aspects:

Firstly in spite of imperialist hindrances bourgeoisie (economic) industrial development of our country is proceeding a pace horizontally if not vertically. The level of industrialization is spreading every nook and corner of India. As a result, there is growing competition between bourgeoisie of different nationalities. The provincial autonomy under the new constitution (1935) tended to accentuate these frictions and we have in this period Bengali-Bihari, Marathi-Kannada, Andhra-Tamilian question - the

5. Ibid., pp. 18-20.

bourgeoisie aspect of disruptive aspects which imperialism and its agents use for their policy of divide and rule. This creates and mystifies the problem.⁶

But Adhikari noticed 'healthier aspect' of spreading of All India National anti-imperialist movement which was bringing peasants and masses of most backward nationalities and communities into the vortex.

"The All India national movement for country's emancipation is growing into a rich pattern of a multi-national movement. The common good of Indians political and economic emancipation is seen through the waking eyes of individual national consciousness."

Adhikari wrote that petty bourgeoisie masses of Muslims rallied under the banner of Muslim League. The bourgeoisie character of Muslim League and INC both, were playing an oppositional role vis-a-vis imperialism. Underlining the anti-imperialist content of Muslim League demand for Pakistan, Adhikari argued "behind the demand for Pakistan is the justified desire of people of Muslim nationalities such as Sindhi, Baluchis, Punjabis(Muslims), Pathan to build their free national life within the greater unity of all Indian national freedom.... and we at once see that there is

6. Ibid., p. 20.

a single solution to the communal problem".⁷ This prescription proved too simple to be proved in later historical developments. It ignored the fact that behind demand for 'Pakistan' by various 'muslim nationalities', secular aspect of linguistic cultural factors always played a secondary role and the demand was mainly based on perception of religion as basis of nation, thus making it a bourgeoisie-landlord reactionary movement with communal overtones. The movement was based on 'two nations theory', religion being the rallying point. The Party itself in later years changed its position criticizing it's earlier position enunciated above. Here we see somewhat confused and mechanistic application of Lenin's principles of national self-determination which was the basis of USSR. It overlooked the aspect that though theoretically believing in self-determination, Lenin emphasised on support to national movement provided its nature was progressive and revolutionary democratic. Second underlying above argument was the belief that industrial bourgeoisie of different nationalities, communities or all India bourgeoisie were "no longer an adjunct of imperialism but one which plays an oppositional role vis-a-vis imperialism".⁸ All Indian

7. Ibid, p.22.

8. Ibid, p.24.

national unity was to be achieved on two grounds : first in the common struggle against imperialism and secondly by mutual recognition of interest and differences of different regions, nationalities. Recognition to principle of right to self-determination was to provide the basis for the trust and unity. The growing sweep of all India People's movement tended to unite these communities and "national unity into an United National Front for freedom". Adhikari criticized INC for not recognizing the multinational pattern of national unity based on recognition of right to self-determination. Reacting upon National Conference's 'Quit Kashmir' and 'New Kashmir' movement and arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in 1946, CPI historian Ramesh Chandra criticized Nehru and Congress leadership for compromising and playing disastrous game in Kashmir. He wrote:

"Victory to Kashmir is vital for India today, for our entire freedom struggle today. Kashmir is the hub of today's freedom battle. British imperialist's entire policy retaining its grip on India in the coming days revolves around the princes and the States. You can see it in Cabinet mission plan. In the new British Indian investments in states, in the building up of armies, aerodromes and posts in states. That's why 'Quit Kashmir' movement is mightiest hammer blow which hits direct at the heart of British imperialist policy in India. Where will be the British plans when there are no players to play British game rulers know fully well Kashmir's importance. That's why Sheikh Abdullah is in jail. That's why terror has

become the rule. The Indian people too must know Kashmir's importance and strain every nerve for her victory".⁹

In the same pamphlet Ramesh Chandra's comments on national conference leadership. Organized under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah's president-ship in October 1932, National Conference birth took place in the background of 1931 struggle, which was fought without any organization.

"Though communal in name from its very start, it demarcated itself from communalism. Though formally the name of the organization was not changed to National Conference till 1938, the policy which Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues pursued throughout was one of trying to unite all Kashmiris in a joint front against autocracy Then when finally in 1938 the Muslim Conference changed its name to National Conference and drew the best elements among majority community into its fold, the State authoritarianism followed".¹⁰

Echo of 'imperialist design' thesis can be heard in above pamphlet:

"In the secret military plans of Anglo American imperialism Kashmir loomed large. It was essential to retain Kashmir for British interests. As long as Maharaja retained his autocratic grip over the state, so long British had Kashmir in their grip. But if the powerful national movement of Kashmir succeeded in overthrowing autocracy and establishing real responsible government,

9. Ramesh Chandra, Salute to Kashmir, PPH, Bombay, 1946, p.8, pp.13.

10. Ibid., p.9.

then Kashmir would be lost as base for Anglo-American aggression".¹¹

Period 1948-50 was a turning point in the life of the country, a period of 'greatest opportunity and greatest danger'. From the perspective of Indian left movement led by CPI, this entire period falls into two parts. From the second party Congress (Feb.28 - March 1948 Calcutta) to January 1950 when B.T. Ranadive was the general secretary. M.B. Rao, the editor of 'Documents of history of CPI' of this period classifies the errors of this period into theoretical, strategical, tactical and organizational. A brief recapitulation of ideological formulations of this period is must before we turn to concrete problems of Kashmir.

In the post-war period, British imperialism had become very weak internationally, its main pillars were crumbling inside India. Rao summarizes the developments in following words:

"All the three branches of armed forces as well as the police were seething with revolt, the people were surging forward in mighty anti-imperialist demonstration, the working class was entering the stage of prolonged and bitterly fought strike struggles - both political and economic, the peasantry was fighting heroically for land and against

11. Ibid., p.9.

landlord aggression, and in the princely states, people were up in arms against feudalism and for democratic advance".¹²

Issue of the class character of the movement culminating into political independence in 1947 and leadership which succeeded British has been an important concern for left parties.

The related question, whether India achieved independence on 15th August 1947 remained a vexed question till 1955, when CPI agreed that it was political independence. Earlier position maintained that British imperialism finding it difficult to hold India as bondage, withdrew and handed over the power to a class which it could a certain extent rely. In this situation, it meant that independence was automatic or a 'gift'. In June, 1947, CC resolution called it an advance and a weapon in the hand of people but not complete freedom. On 3 August, 1947, CPI dedicated itself to fight to win complete independence for our country and "to establish traditional co-operation between India and Pakistan as a first step towards voluntary reunion of motherland". Draft thesis for second party Congress called it 'a deal struck with Imperialism' etc.

12. B.M. Rao. Introduction. Documents of History of CPI. 48-50. P.VII.

The related issue of correlation among three classes in power - imperialism, feudalism and bourgeoisie was successively described in various ways: It was argued that first, it was an imperial manouvre to extend its base by compromising with bourgeoisie and transferring the latter political power while economic bondage continued. Indian bourgeoisie became the junior partner in this exploitation of the country. Later, when party started organizing wide ranging actions and government started repression, the junior partner became driving force in imperialist-bourgeoisie-landlord combine. After the editorial in 'lasting peace' of 27 January, 1950, the emphasis was on imperialist and feudal reaction and there was emphasis on uniting with national bourgeoisie; though that section had not got properly crystallized. It was this link which continued till the end of 1950.

It is clear that communist party could not draw its strategy and tactics without tactical analysis of both the periods. Before and after 'lasting peace', attempt was made to theorize and analyse state power and evolve a theory of party. Highly dialectical writings of Lenin were quoted for justifying and explaining any situation anywhere and anytime in the world - forgetting the occasion and context of the writings. In their crude and mechanical application of

Lenin, they overlooked Lenin who always exhorted "investigation, study, seek, derive, grasp that which is particularly national, especially national, in the concrete manner in which each country is to approach the fulfillments of the tasks common to all."¹³ Strategy and tactics of first period was defined schematically in the terms - strikes, agrarian struggles, general strikes. Political strikes to higher forms ending in insurrection and capture of power leading to socialism. In this romantic phase attempts were made for strikes which led to repression and firings. Temporarily action was justified by quoting Lenin on indivisibility of throwing the vanguard into action before whole class is ready to take part. Later, the Party itself, termed it as 'petty bourgeois revolutionism'. Thus before the lasting peace editorial Ranadive leadership had reached a dead end and totally collapsed after it. The power now was taken by Central Committee reconstituted in June 1950, which changed from Russian path to Chinese path. In short, Chinese path advocated that centre of struggle had shifted to countryside. So in the cities under white terror, the working class should fight only small economic

13. Quoted V.I. Lenin. Ibid. P.x.

struggles while in the countryside armed struggle would take place, peasant armies would march to liberate the cities and a 'new democracy' will be established. This was Telengana way.

A third front which was critic of June Central Committee line, was put forward by Ajoy Ghosh, S.A. Dange and S.V. Ghatge in their document which accepted the line advocated by 'lasting peace' editorial but would not wholly accept the Chinese path of revolution, not because it was wrong, but because party at that moment was weak. The illusion of the people was great, the working class struggles in the cities had big role to play. The time was not ripe to go into for armed struggle. But they simultaneously maintained that Telengana was right and be defended at all costs. At the end of 1950, these two trends deadlocked and though an United CC was formed it could not come to any agreed solution.

Political thesis adopted at the Second Congress (28 February - 6 March 1948) describing the "Post-war revolutionary upsurge and New Politics of Imperialism and Indian bourgeoisie -- a new class alignment" took note of movement launched by people of Kashmir in May 1946, as movement for the end of autocracy of Dogra rule and for the immediate introduction of democratic constitution. It said "The rulers promptly arrested Sheikh Abdullah and unleashed the reign of terror against the Kashmiri people, who,

however, struck back and performed the marvels of heroic resistance. It was clear that a new road of states people struggle, this time for final abolition of princely autocracy was being heralded by the fighting people of Kashmir and the people of rest of India were going to support them."¹⁴ Criticizing the Mountbatten award political thesis accused INC and Muslim League both for betraying every slogan of democratic revolution. Political thesis stated:

"The Mountbatten plan partitioned India. The 'National bourgeoisie' leadership of INC and Muslim League which had always opposed the solution of communal problem on the basis of just and revolutionary principle of self-determination of nationalities, accepted the imperialist solution of Pakistan on the basis of religion. This enabled imperialism to organize ghastliest riots and butcheries of minorities creating permanent hostility between Hindus and Muslims and to work up war fever between two states when required in imperialist interests..... it's one of the biggest attack on the unity and integrity of democratic movement and it is also used to weaken the bourgeoisie of both states vis-a-vis imperialism. Secondly the plan keeps princes the age old friends of imperialist order, intact and enhance their bargaining power enabling the national leaders to parade their accession as great triumph ... for princes are now supposed to be independent".¹⁵

14. Political Thesis, Second Congress of CPI 1948. Documents of CPI, p. 36.

15. Ibid. p.39.

On the question of accession which took place during and after independence CPI viewed that it was calculated to achieve the basic objective of destroying the revolutionary movements in the states and preserving autocracy and reinforcing it by means of alliance with bourgeoisie, of getting end of barriers that prevent full exploitation of markets and resources of states by the bourgeoisie in co-operation with princes.

"Accession is not merely a device to side track the attention of the people from struggles for abolition of autocracy and agrarian reforms a weapon to protect the princes and buttress their collapsing regimes against the democratic struggles of the people. This must be recognized and exposed".¹⁶

Party held the view that national unity was to be achieved only after granting nationalities right to self-determination and to avoid disastrous partition of country. "Any forced union was to lead to hostile sentiments among different nationalities of Indian union and create a danger of exploitation of their discontent by reactionary elements".¹⁷

16. Ibid. p.108.

17. Ibid p.115.

An important change which was brought after Partition was that while recognizing the nationalities right to self-determination, CPI leadership criticized partition along communal lines and now principle of self-determination was to be applied to those nationality struggles which were fought under proletariat hegemony and thus exposing and isolating 'treacherous feudal, reformist and compromising bourgeoisie of nationalities'. Regional bourgeoisie though not monopolist, shared the government and economic powers as a satellite of present ruling bloc, are said to be in close cooperation with landlord - bourgeoisie and both are hostile to revolution. In an important theorization Polit Bureau Draft Policy of November 1950 wrote :

"In those national frontiers where the agrarian revolution has not assumed serious proportion as to immediately threaten them (regional bourgeoisie) and where proletariat was not yet seriously exposed for its hegemony over movement for self-determination of nationalities, it may be still discernible that these sections also voice same opposition to present ruling bloc - particularly on the issue of formation of linguistic provinces. This opposition is not a revolutionary opposition but a reformist, compromising and extremely vacillating one, for they demand only linguistic provinces and not full self-determination with right to secede".¹⁸

18. Draft Policy Statement of November 1950, CPI Documents ed. M.B. Rao.

Further, it states:

"The fact that they have acquiesced in merger schemes of Sardar Patel, denying the liquidation of princely states and the right of those people to join their respective homelands, and the fact they are opposed to all active workers and peasant democratic movements on their territories, the growth strength and success of which alone were to win the real national unification and self-determination of those people, was only to prove their reactionary character; hence no question of alliance with those sections arise".¹⁹

Basic programme asking for mobilization of all anti-imperialist classes mentions in Article 4

"abolition of princely states, formation of united homelands of different nations and nationalities, national unification on the principle of right to self-determination of nations and nationalities lining in the sub-continent of India".²⁰

Question of Kashmir was left to concrete study and correct application of political line to settle the question. But Draft Policy warned that Jammu and Kashmir might witness 'national liberation struggle' for self-determination in near future.

19. Ibid. p.1049.

20. Ibid. p.1050.

Thus, prior to the 1964 split, the undivided CPI witnessed two major phases of inner party debates first during the 1946-51 period preceding formation of first party programme and then during 1955-56. Yet Party General Secretary Ajoy Ghosh had to admit in 1960 that ideologically and politically speaking, party had been living from hand to mouth, trying to tackle some urgent questions as they arose and it evaded basic questions and overall assessment. The result was drift, absence of direction and 'chaos'. 1951 programme and tactical line did repudiate all earlier understandings of the question of path of revolution as one sided and defective. The tendency to dismiss the political significance of August 1947 was also rejected, but the thesis of primacy of anti-imperialism as central key link continued. 1951 line minimised the 'Chinese path'. This understanding was first articulated by EMS Namboodiripad in two *New Age* articles in end 1953 which emphasised and rationalised the need for communist leadership to work out an alliance with national bourgeoisie. It was in consonance with Soviet foreign policy requirements in the region which assigned key role to the "anti imperialist Indian bourgeoisie."

The 1951 programme had described India as "the last biggest dependent semi-colonial country in Asia still left

for enslavers to rob and exploit" Subsequently it was felt that the description of the country as whole as semi-colonial negates the fact that India has attained independence not only in juridical sense but also in 'real practical political sense' and expression dependent backward and semi-colonial therefore be reserved for the economy.

Given the 'anti-imperialist' track record of Indian bourgeoisie and given that the CPI continued to regard the anti-imperialist task as its principal task; its strategic relationship with the bourgeoisie could only be of unity first and struggle second. These perspectives led CPI to formulate the concept of "national democracy".

In the entire course of inner Party debate of 1955-56 the national democratic perspective was criticized by so called left group represented by P. Sundarayya, M. Basavapunniah, HKS Surjeet, M. Hanumant Rao and N. Prasad Rao. Occasional reference to agrarian task and agrarian revolution was also made.

Because of the 'nationalist perspective' CPI started looking for avenues of cooperation and unity with 'national bourgeoisie'. Peace movement was considered crucial plank in this context. In February 1954, following the Madurai Congress (December 27, 1953 February 1954) the CPI stressed the need to support Nehru's foreign policy without 'ifs' and

'buts'. In April 1954 central Executive Committee called for launching a united mass movement with the Congress around the points of agreement on foreign policy. In June, P. Ramamurthy, the editor of *New Age* came up with the thesis of 'National Front', a broad national platform for Peace and freedom with Congress. Ramamurthy thesis was soon sanctified by R.P. Dutt, who wrote an article entitled "New features in national liberation struggle of colonial and dependent peoples" in COMINFORM journal " For a Lasting Peace For People's Democracy" (FLPPD). Dutta advised CPI to support Nehru against US imperialism and with Soviet camp and shed its earlier obsession with British Imperialism and critic of Indian membership of British Common Wealth.

The Central Executive Committee appointed special commission to go into the implication of Dutt's advice and when commission split into two conflicting positions, the party swung into action and worked out a patch up by combining parts from both positions. Two of June's CEC documents were entitled "The CPI in struggle for Peace, Democracy and National advance of communist proposals for national reconstruction". Setback to CPI in Andhra elections in February 1955 further intensified the debate. The strategic term of the debate centered around the question of characterisation of 'Indian ruling class'. The

tactical implication of this debate was the kind of policy CPI should adopt vis-a-vis Congress; whether to unite with Congress Party as a whole, or with sections of it and whether this unity should be merely issue based or should it also extend to a coalition government at the centre. EMS Namboodiripad responded to this debate with an elaboration of his 1953 thesis in an article "Stalin and Mao on the National Liberation Movement" (New Age 1956) and formulated dual policy "towards Indian bourgeoisie Policy of uniting with and struggling against.

His prescription was :

"To the extent to which bourgeoisie as a whole or any section of it goes against this practical basis, goes against the interests of the masses of the people, to that extent proletariat and its party to struggle against it. However, even when carrying on the struggle against bourgeoisies, the proletariat should take care to see that struggle is so conducted that all those sections of bourgeoisie which really stand for struggle against imperialism and feudalism are drawn into the camp of united struggle".

But both EMS and Ajoy Ghosh don't comment on the question as to which is primary of Indian bourgeoisie : compromise or conflict. CPI opposed the very idea and way of putting the question in this manner which may lead to 'endless controversy'. In keeping with 'dual' nature of the

'reformist' bourgeoisie, EMS and Ghosh (Ajoy) advocated a relation of unity and struggle with Congress, listing out the issues on which unity within Congress was permissible at different level. Addressing a Central Party School years later communist leader Basavpunnaiah would tell:

"The very concept of supporting the foreign policy and opposing the internal policy is dubious because both are an integral part of a particular class policy of Indian bourgeoisie. A Communist Party, if it is really genuine and loyal to the revolutionary working class, should declare itself as part of revolutionary opposition without any prevarication. It is crude eclecticism to go on.

... Asserting that we support what is 'good' and oppose what is 'bad' and we support the foreign policy and oppose the internal policy: such a stand compromises the proletariat stand towards a capitalist state, whether it is led by big bourgeoisie or big national bourgeoisie."²¹

Despite above complaint, ironically enough integral description of Communist Party in Parliamentary arena remains conspicuous by its absence in all programmatic documents of two communist parties - CPI and CPI(M).

Thus, CPI programme as stated in 8th Congress, Patna, described Indian state as "The organ of class rule of national bourgeoisie as a whole in which big bourgeoisie

21. On the Programme of CPI(M), M. Basavapunniah, a CPI(M) Publication, October 1985, p. 28.

holds powerful influence. The class rule has strong links with landlords. These factors give reactionary pulls on the State power." To CPI landlords don't have a direct share in state power and if the powerful influence of the big bourgeoisie and links with landlords could somehow be eliminated and weakened the state could be freed from reactionary pulls and set an revolutionary course. Rajeshwar Rao said.

Our characteristic of state as one in which big bourgeoisie holds powerful influence but it is not in complete leadership of the state explains the phenomenon of progressive foreign policy of our country."²²

Thus while the big bourgeoisie ostensibly formulates the reactionary internal policies the medium and small bourgeoisie maintains the progressive foreign policy and together these sections of the bourgeoisie run state.

It was in this background of above theoretical political reformulations that CPI evolved its attitude towards "ruling party in the centre" and approach towards various ethnic or nationality movements. Under the impact of these formulations CPI turned into a 'National Marxist

22. Cited by H.K.S. Surjeet in Pamphlet "On CPI(M)-CPI Differences", National Book Centre, October 1985, pp. 36-37.

Party' of 'nationalist Marxists' and on several occasions it failed to distinguish itself from 'bourgeoisie nationalist' slogans and went on supporting its stand. Leaving the specific details of pronouncements on nationality and Kashmir issue in successive party congresses we now turn to CPI's present day understanding on the issue mentioned in some of the recent Party Congresses and documents of this period.

There was no considerable change in CPI's earlier understanding on nationality question and Kashmir in particular in 15th Party Congress. Though 15th Party Congress of April, 1992 took place after the gap of three years (14th Party Congress held in March 1989) and party recognised that political situation, both internally and internationally changed. While on international front, party recognises various movements as 'National Liberation movements and forces as pressing forward and achieving new democratic gains in a number of countries',²³ Internally various movements are termed negatively as 'regional', 'terrorists', 'secessionist' or 'anti-democratic' movements. Emphasising the need for unity of all anti-imperialist national forces party ask for fighting the common struggle

23. Political Resolution. 15 Party Congress Document of CPI, CPI Publications, Delhi, p.17.

against imperialism, which remains the primary task before CPI. Political resolution of Party Congress describes political situation:

"Insurgency by secessionist forces in Punjab and Kashmir continues causing huge loss of life. The Sikh militants have spread their outfits in U.P., Haryana and even to distant areas No breakthrough in Kashmir is visible as major factor is external hand of Pakistan, with supply of weapons and training infiltration across the border being coordinated by ISI at the highest level. At the same time emotional and political alienation of the Kashmiri people needs to be attended to, but have been neglected by the centre of course in Punjab, Kashmir and to some extent in Assam the situation is different in as much as the main slogan are for secession from India".²⁴

Discussing "Punjab, Kashmir, Assam", resolution holds the view that unlike Punjab and Assam there is no possibility of mass political activity in Kashmir valley. It views "Pakistan proxy war continues, killing and kidnapping continues unabated. There are several allegations of atrocities on civilian population by armed personnel and almost all Kashmiri Pundit families as well as many Muslims, have been forced out of the valley. There is complete administrative security raj without any political perception".²⁵ It criticizes BJP for further complicating

24. Ibid - p.22.

25. Ibid., p.23.

the situation by its demand for repeal of article 370 of the Constitution and its communal exploitation of plight of Kashmiri Hindu migrants. The whole EKTA yatra of M.M. Joshi because of its communal overtones further alienated the Muslim population of the valley against the centre whose compromising and even collusive attitude towards BJP has dismayed even many Congress men. "Some political initiative must be taken for solution of Kashmir problem while firmly defending Article 370 and in fact enlarging the autonomy given under it. Within the framework of Indian Constitution negotiations could be offered to those militants who are against merger with Pakistan cases of political prisoners detained without trial or held outside the state should be screened with view to their release. The migrants from the valley have to be given adequate compensation/relief and rehabilitation. The Central Government and all major political parties should jointly assure the Kashmir people that free and fair elections will be held as soon as conditions permit".²⁶

As is evident from above discussion that for CPI, the problem of Kashmir and other regional movements is a problem of restructuring Centre-State relations and federalism.

26. Ibid. P.26.

14th Party Congress of 1989 had insisted on "fight for transferring more power and resources to the States and restructuring federal principles and against any discrimination towards states ruled by other political parties". CPI believes that primary cause of alienation has been the "undermining the federal principles of Indian Constitution and excessive concentration of powers in the hands of Central Government and partisan misuse of Article 353 for arbitrary dismissal of elected governments has been one of the blackest sins committed by the Congress Party which has monopolised Central power for the most of post-independence period".²⁷ CPI fails to distinguish itself from bourgeoisie nationalist slogans and resembles closer to their theoretical political understanding and handling of these issues. Except the fact that theoretically CPI attempts to combine its nationalist perception with ambiguously defined class analysis, Practically on all crucial functions Party has supported nationalist stands. 14th Party Congress resolution of CPI states "all forms of chauvinism based on regional, communal, linguistic appeals are fatal for Indian unity as is the opposite trends of concentration of more and more powers in the hands of New Delhi and denial of democratic aspirations and rights of

27. Party Congress Documents.

peoples, compromising our motherland".²⁸ 14th Party Congress of 1989 recognised the existence of various ethnic groups and nationalities in India. But CPI perception is closer to those left groups who ambiguously believe that India is a multi-nationality state where nationality formation precedes nation formation but does not necessarily lead to latter.²⁹ It's evident from recent years' documents and writings of Party leaders that CPI's understanding of nation/nationality question has been based on the programmatic understanding of Indian political situation, its ruling classes, stages of revolution. It is natural that CPI's programmatic understanding characterises various nationality or sub-nationality movements simply as a question of "autonomy", "general democracy" "federalism" etc. which need to be addressed "within the framework of Indian Constitution". CPI theoretically recognises and "unhesitatingly upholds the aspirations of every nationality and ethnic group for developing its own linguistic cultural identity, fight against all policies of discrimination against any nationality and linguistic group and against such policies that aggravate regional balances...our party stands firmly

28. 14th Party Congress Resolution.

29. Achin Vanaik, *Painful Transition*, VERSO, New York, 1990, p .114.

in the concept of unity in diversity".³⁰ Above observations were made in 14th Party Congress (89) before Soviet Union collapsed. While 15th Party Congress emphasised the need for learning lessons from history, there seems to have absolutely no change in CPI's theory - programme or tactics. It emphasised that "the key to de-escalation of Centre-State relations and fissiparous conflicts is the radical restructuring of the Constitution". While on the one hand Party upholds maintaining the sanctity, Constitution in relation to Article 370 - how is it compatible with radical restructuring of constituents as to what should be the exact nature of restructuring? This "centre-state" federal framework results into CPI asking for giving states a larger share of financial and administrative powers for raising resources for their own developmental projects, instead of being treated as beggars asking for charity. The acute resource crunch is compelling some states to demand jointly an upward revision of royalties in oil, mineral, etc. Regional imbalances need to be corrected. More autonomy for tribal regions is must. "This is the only way to strengthen national unity and to ward off the danger of disintegration of states". CPI's primary concern for national unity and

30. Fourteenth Party Congress.

threat of disintegration leads CPI to rally behind national chauvinistic slogans of ruling bourgeoisie parties. Party accuses Congress government for not implementing even the limited recommendations of Sarkaria Commission. But 14th and 15th Party Congress confirmed to support state autonomy and creation of Uttarakhand and Jharkhand States. It warned that "restructuring of Centre-State relations books no delay if the Centre is not to fall apart".

Defining CPI's tasks, Congress explicitly mentions its tasks to "safeguard the special provision of Constitution of India regarding Jammu & Kashmir, Nagaland, Mizoram and other States"³¹ and for political solution to Punjab, Kashmir and other problems". Political review report of CPI held the view that while Punjab problem remained resolved, new threats to unity of country increased in Kashmir as well as in Assam. It writes that Kashmir problem has become extremely serious because of "external dimensions, with Pakistan militant and ruling circles fighting a proxy war, giving all possible help to militant groups training them for the terrorist activities in the Valley".³² It condemned kidnapping and killings of leaders and civilians and took a serious note of "serious situation which forced most of

31. 15th Party Congress Resolution. Art.4.1 p.32.

32. Ibid., p.76.

Kashmir pundit families to migrate from the Valley and which is a blot on Kashmir secular ethos". Party criticized the Jagmohan rule as Governor in J&K in the critical period and his communal approach to the political problem which added to the seriousness of the problem. It criticized BJP which further complicated the issue by repeatedly raising the demand for abrogation of article 370 of the Constitution and by exploiting the tragedy of Kashmiri (Pundit) migration in a communal way. The Ekta Yatra of M.M. Joshi further complicated the Kashmir problem and only helped the pro-Pak militant groups. 15th party Congress appreciated then Prime Minister V.P. Singh for taking "positive steps to diffuse the Kashmir problem and to start some political process". An All Party Advisory Committee at the national level was set up with George Fernandes (now a political ally of BJP!) as Minister in-charge of Kashmir Affairs, which was disbanded, although something could have been done through this Committee, some initiation in political process. But that could not be. Party complains that today Kashmir is at the mercy of administrative forces who don't have and cannot have the political perception. Party appreciated the Central Government's initiative of "talk of negotiations with militants within the framework of Indian Constitution".

Recommending suggestions for resolving the problem, CPI
15th Party Congress suggested:

"Kashmir will have to be given more autonomy under Article 370. It seems among Kashmir leaders there is unanimity to go back to 1952 position i.e. before the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah. Only BJP is opposed to such an approach. It does not even want the eroded Article 370 of the Constitution to remain. It is a dangerous role that BJP is playing. However, all the other National parties have reiterated their commitment to protect Article 370. Many sided initiatives political economic and administrative will have to be taken to win the hearts of Kashmiri people. The Party should take some initiative to create conditions for political process to begin. We should demand release of prisoners kept in jail without trial for more than six months after screening is done by High Court Judge and return of Kashmir prisoners kept inside the State. The Kashmiri migrants must be settled properly. A differentiation has to be done between JKLF and other militant groups."³³

It appreciated CPI leadership which had taken initiative to focus Kashmir issue by organising a round table of leaders of left and secular parties. Party criticised gross undermining of federal principles of Indian Constitution which is the major reason behind Punjab, Kashmir and Assam problems. It accused Congress which ruled the country for most of the time in post-independence period and has used its monopoly of power to concentrate powers in

33. Party Congress of CPI. Documents, p. 77.

its own hands of central government. It demanded for stopping the misuse of Article 356, which has been grossly abused.

Fifteenth Party Congress strongly criticised Pakistan for aiding and abetting, training supply arms to the so called Mujahideen, violating Shimla Agreement. CPI doubted any possibility of holding fair and free elections under present circumstances. It emphasised need for taking effective steps to revive political activity and restore confidence among the people. Resolution urged upon the government to take political initiatives for resolving the problem, while firmly defending Article 370.

Attempts of distortions of Article 370 should be done away for ensuring the autonomy granted under it within the framework of Indian Constitution. Resolution states:

"It will take a long time in raising confidence of Kashmiris, allaying their fear and doubts and isolating the pro-Pak Mujahideen groups and their killer gangs... Dialogue should start at national level and state levels with all political parties and even some extremist groups opposed to merging Kashmir with Pakistan to evolve a peaceful political solution by uniting the hearts of Kashmiris....reports of commissions and committees set up to enquire into the charges of excesses of security forces be published. Strong diplomatic steps and measures by taken to force Pakistan to respect Shimla agreement. Stop her proxy war against India and refrain from aiding and abetting and arming the killer gangs."

Sixteenth Congress of Communist Party of India, held in (October 7-11, 1995) in the background of debate over elections in Kashmir failed to improvise or make any bold shift from its earlier position. Though it emphasised the need for taking bold political initiative for a solution of Kashmir problem. Political resolution equates President rule in Kashmir as 'army rule' which is adding to the sense of alienation among the people in valley. Prospects of an early election have been scotched for the time being by the happenings at Charar-e-Sharif and Hurriyat leaders refusal to participate in the elections. It appreciated Congress move to have unconditional talk with groups opposed to merger with Pakistan and that it would have positive results if it had been made earlier. Political Resolution says:

Our Party stands firmly defending Article 370 for rectifying the erosion that has taken place in it and restoring it into original form. Maximum possible autonomy within the framework of Indian Constitution should be a priority item on the agenda for negotiations with the forces advocating 'Azadi'. The Central Government should announce an economic and political package on the basis of consensus among all the national political parties and the National Conference. They should jointly assure the Kashmiris that free and fair election will be held as soon as conditions permit...." "Meanwhile Pakistan's ISI will continue to carry on its Jihad by training and arming the Mujahideen and Jamat-e-Islami militants who now include a number of mercenaries from other Islamic countries."³⁴

34. Political Resolution adopted by 16th Congress of CPI, Delhi, October 7-11, 1995, CPI Publication.

M. Farooqi, a prominent leader of the Communist Party of India reviewing the historical developments of Congress policies on Kashmir in his pamphlet "Kashmir: A Historical Review of Disastrous Congress Policies"³⁵ blames Congress for alienation of Kashmiri people. Emphasising the need for taking political initiatives first, he argues that ground situation in Kashmir is not conducive for holding a fair and free election. "One of the ground realities" CPI leader argues, "which the Election Commission would have taken into account was the decision of the Working Committee of the National Conference lead by Farooq Abdullah that their Party would not take part in election at present."³⁶ CPI questions the meaning of holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir. When main political force in State and so in Kashmir valley, the National Conference decides to keep away. Without outlining the nature and content of political initiative to be taken, Farooqi expresses apprehensions that "if the policy in Kashmir is poor and that is bound to be so in such a situation; what message it would give to the outside world can be imagined: Pakistan ruling classes and

35. M. Farooqi, Kashmir: A Historical Review of Disastrous Congress Policies, Communist Party Publication, December 1995.

36. Ibid., p. 3.

its ISI would be main beneficiary from the course advocated by Narasimha Rao government....Of course, the US imperialists would then pursue their vile game with greater vigour, US wants a foothold in Kashmir because of its being a strategic region."³⁷ As mentioned earlier, CPI perceives Kashmir problem as a question of autonomy of State. It demanded autonomy package for the Kashmir and enlisted the government for taking the line that the question of autonomy should be decided by J&K Assembly not before but after the elections which is unacceptable not only to the National Conference but to other left democratic secular parties too.

The National Conference has raised the demand to accept 1952 Agreement as basis for resolving the question of Autonomy. Farooqi does not comment on F.Abdullah's above demand.

Outlining the genesis of Kashmir problem, CPI leader takes the debate into the history of Kashmir, since the independence of the country. The narrative (phraseology) does not seem to be a Marxist-Leninist discourse and it sounds more like a liberal nationalist explanation of the issue. Its starting point is how Kashmir although a Muslim majority state, decided to be with India and not with the

37. Ibid., p. 4.

Pakistan, at the time of independence and partition of country in 1947. "But for Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference which he was leading, this historical development of Kashmir joining India would not have taken place. Sheikh was not only leading the movement against princely order in J&K he was also elected President of All India States Peoples Conference which was an ally of Indian National Congress conducting the battle against the most loyal stooges of British colonialists that is princely states."³⁸ Above characterisation of 'INC' as "fighting battle against imperialists and their stooges princely states" is very much subject to debate among left groups and Marxist circles, and contradicts CPI's earlier position. There were more than 500 princely states big and small in the pre-independence India (including Pakistan and India). The biggest were J&K and Hyderabad. The ruler of Hyderabad, the Nizam was bestowed with the title of 'His Exalted Highness' while others 'His Highness' or even less. "The National Conference a broad based secular organisation of J&K (Sheikh Sahib had converted the earlier Muslim Conference into National Conference in late thirties) conducted a very powerful movement for abolition of princely order. It was a very progressive movement and very much inspired by the

38. Ibid., p.5.

ideas of socialist resolution of 1917 and building of Socialism in Soviet Union". National Conference had adopted red flag with plough as its Party banner and 'Land to the tiller' as the main slogan of "Naya Kashmir" programme. The Communists were an important segment of National Conference and its movement. Naya Kashmir had borrowed considerably from Uzbek Constitution (a Republic of Soviet Union). Its three important points included, charter of rights of women (ensuring equality of women with men), a charter of rights of peasants and a charter of rights of working class. It had also promised free education up to university level for all the residents of the State. The National Conference had also set up trade union of its own in 1939 called "Central Labour Union". In later years, particularly after Sheikh Sahib took over, it had a very large membership almost half a million consisting of forest workers and workers in small industries. The Communists were quite active in this trade union movement. This movement led to enactment of laws for the working class. On the eve of partition Jinnah went to Srinagar to pursue Kashmiris to join Pakistan but returned disappointed "Kashmiris will stay with India and with the National Conference." Sheikh Abdullah constantly asserted. It needs to be remembered, Farooqi writes that during the turbulent days of post partition communal riots Kashmir

remained a picture of communal peace (though it is only partial truth). Pointing out at the British imperialists designs for independent Kashmir and disturbing the national unity of India, CPI leader argues that once the partition had been decided upon between British ruler on the one hand and Congress and the Muslim League on the other, the British worked out another vile strategy to keep their bases in India and Pakistan. "They declared that any princely state could become independent and they would accept the decision. They were particularly keen to make Kashmir and Hyderabad states independent of India. Maharaja Hari Singh was toying with the idea of independent Kashmir being supported by Jammu Praja Parishad. The Parishad had the backing of Jan Sangh. Maharaja did not accede till October 1947 when the so called tribal raiders (in fact Pak and British trained soldiers) entered Kashmir and almost reached the Srinagar airport. Maharaja police had no capacity to resist and the state had no army. Only resistance which was put up was by hurriedly formed peoples' militia of national conference. Leftists were very active in people's militia. The Maharaja fled to Jammu and signed instrument of accession something for which Sheikh had been insisting all along."

"After the instrument of accession was signed, the Indian army landed in the valley and drove out the Pakistan trained raiders. The Indian army was even in a position to drive out the raiders from whole of Kashmir including what's now POK." Calling the taking of the Kashmir issue to UN by Nehru as "serious blunder" CPI leader criticises Nehru government which accepted the advice of Lord Mountbatten to take the issue to UN that Pakistan has to vacate its occupied territory before the plebiscite "India is paying for the serious mistake till today Pakistan rulers always take advantage of this despite Shimla Agreement of 1972 that the issue should be resolved bilaterally"³⁹ Farooqi writes. Describing the status of J&K CPI leader views that the accession to India took place on the basis of three subjects: Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communication, while other subjects were to be administered by the State. Farooqi writes that accession was given constitutional status under Article 370 when the Indian Constitution was adopted. It was further 'fortified' by 1952 Delhi Agreement between Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah, ratified by Parliament in New Delhi and J&K Assembly in Srinagar. The J&K Assembly also became Constituent Assembly to frame the Constitution

39. Ibid., p.7.

of State. "The first and essential part of Delhi agreement is that the accession of J&K to India is full and final."⁴⁰ Narrating the post-1952 developments Farooqi writes that when Sheikh Abdullah had taken over after the Maharaja had fled and signed the instrument of accession, one of the first thing he did was to implement the "land to the tiller" item of Naya Kashmir Programme. Land was distributed without any compensation being given to landlords which indeed was a revolutionary step. The J&K Assembly subsequently adopted laws freeing peasants of debts and mortgages of liabilities. "This however did angered not only landlords. Home Minister Sardar Patel as well who thought idea would spread all over the country and similar demands would be made in other states. Later Jan Sangh, launched a movement with communal overtones against the National Conference land reforms and against Article 370 of Indian Constitution."⁴¹ Farooqi thinks that it was home ministry and Jawaharlal Nehru's differences with Sheikh Abdullah which made Sheikh upset and angry. "US imperialists took advantage of it and started playing their game to feed Sheikh Sahib with the idea of independent Kashmir." Sheikh was arrested in 1953 for the charge that

40. Ibid., p. 8.

41. Ibid., p. 8.

he was planning an independent Kashmir with the help of the Americans. Arrest of Sheikh triggered of a wide spread and angry agitation all over the State. Calling Sheikh's arrest as "big blow to the process of integration" Farooqi traces beginning of alienation since his arrest itself, which has reached a climax in recent years with "Pakistan backed militancy gaining an upper hand." Farooqi wrongly reduces the differences between Nehru and Sheikh merely as clash of ego ("ego problem in great individuals"). Thus for more than twenty years Sheikh Sahib was sought to be kept away from the political picture of J&K but CPI leader believes that people of the State had their hearts with Sheikh Abdullah. In the last days of his life Nehru tried a rapprochement. Farooqi writes that if he had lived a few years more, perhaps things would have started taking positive turn. In 1975 an accord was reached between the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah, which enabled the Sheikh to return to the political scene of J&K. He was made the State Chief Minister in place of Mir Qasim. The accord laid down that whatever erosion of autonomy has taken place between 1952 and 1975 would be gone into. The accord was the result of intense discussions between "G. Parthasarathi representing Indira Gandhi and Mirza Aslam Beg representing Sheikh Abdullah. The J&K Assembly then had a

Congress majority. Mir Qasim behaved gracefully and accepted Indira Gandhi's advice. But several other Congressmen in the State were not that graceful. They kept on annoying Sheikh Sahib. However, in the 1977 elections of the State (with Janta Party headed by Morarji Desai ruling in the centre) the National Conference got a massive vote in free and fair poll. This was repeated again in 1982 election when the National Conference headed by Farooq Abdullah (Sheikh Sahib had passed) got a decisive majority. "But Indira Gandhi resorted to sordid tactics in this sensitive border State. Farooq Abdullah democratically elected government was dismissed and Farook's brother in law G.M. Shah was installed as the Chief Minister in Srinagar."⁴² Such was a popular indignation against G.M. Shah that most of the time during his short lived rule, he was attempting to survive with curfew imposed in the Capital and some other places. His was 'Curfew Raj' people nicknamed. The alienation of Kashmiris continued in 1987 elections when the Congress forced the National Conference to have an alliance with the Congress. This proved to be the "last straw on camel's back. Pakistan ISI took advantage of loss of confidence situation and launched the militancy, the proxy war, writes M. Farooqi.

42. Ibid., p.10.

Concluding CPI's narrative of Kashmir history, Farooqi writes "This Situation we have been facing since 1985 and of its tragic offshoots is the disruption in the Kashmir's secular- democratic ethos. The then Governor Jagmohan encouraged the Kashmiri Pundits who for centuries were integrated in great ethos, to leave the Valley and migrate to Jammu and elsewhere."

For CPI, Kashmir problem is a problem of "restoring the confidence among Kashmiris which is no easy task". "The political process is fairly long journey. It requires lot of patience and political sagacity....Congress does wishy-washing business. BJP uses Kashmir in its various communal game. The US imperialists have their own designs in their strategic region. The Pakistani ruling classes and the ISI continue the proxy war through militants." In such a situation Congress rulers in New Delhi will have to take a bold stand to frustrate all these designs. If they do this they will have a widespread support of all the left secular democratic and other anti-imperialist forces of the country."⁴³ Farooqi insists "Kashmir will remain an integral part of India, if the state gets proper autonomy within the framework of Article 370 of Indian Constitution,

43. Ibid., p. 11.

it in no way disturbs Indian unity, on the contrary will strengthen it." In another pamphlet M. Farooqi⁴⁴ attributes American imperialists Pakistani designs as primary reason behind Kashmiri problem. During the recent American visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto President Clinton declined that J&K was a disputed territory and followed it up with his willingness to mediate between India and Pakistan. Farooqi calls it most mischievous declaration intended to aggravate tension between India and Pakistan and ultimately to create a situation in which both India and Pakistan are forced to ask US to settle the matter.

44. Farooqi, M. International Developments in Recent Period, CPP, p.7.

CHAPTER III

**CPI(M), NATIONALITY
QUESTION AND KASHMIR
ISSUE**

CPI(M), NATIONALITY QUESTION AND KASHMIR ISSUE

In this Chapter, we look at theory and practice of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] in relation to nationality question in India in general and with special reference to Kashmir. It is interesting to note that in defining themselves as 'Marxists' and seeking to specify their role in India, CPI(M) leadership was compelled to compromise and redefine its relation between socialist goal and reality of post-independence Parliamentary politics and nationalist ideology.

Party formation in Indian Communist movement has taken place in three stages: first initial founding in Soviet Union by M.N. Roy (1920), second, the creation of CPI(M) in 1964 and third, CPI(ML) in 1969. CPI's split and formation of CPI(M) had a long historical background. 1950s was a period of growth for united CPI which after a period of radical underground activity won 29 seats in Parliamentary elections. From 1952 onward Party acquired a parliamentary form, mainly as leading opposition Party. Critics of CPI claim that Party had become defacto parliamentary and concessions and compromises to socialist revolutionary goals can be traced from then itself. Increased mass support was accompanied by paralleled increasing divisions within the party which gradually led to the split. Immediate cause of

split was over differences on question whether party should play a supportive or an oppositional role to the ruling Congress. Furious inner-party debate rocked the party and ultimately led to division of party in 1964.

CPI(M) leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet rejects the view that division arose out of personal conflicts, temporary misunderstandings or as solely being the offshoot of conflicts in international communist movement, as it is over-emphasised by CPI.¹ CPI(M) leader termed their secession from CPI as 'liberation of majority of liberated souls' from CPI's revisionism and class collaborationism. CPI leader Bhowani Sengupta writing in pamphlet "The Truth About CPI(M) : A Critique of Ideological Political Line of CPI(M)"² wrote that "The ideological debate which followed the first Congress after split showed that they (CPI(M)) had first revolted against the party without ideology and then began to discover their ideological platform!" Thus attributing split to personal or collective political opportunism. But the document adopted by CPI(M) Seventh Congress at Calcutta elaborately dealt with the developments leading to the split. According to this document, crux of

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1. H.K.S. Surjeet "On Left Unity" The Marxist, Jan-March 1995, p. 8.
 2. People's Publishing House, 1972, pp.35.

disagreement was in characterisation of class nature of Indian state. This is the theme that has been elaborately covered in various writings of recent past. Briefly they relate to class character of states and government, stage and strategy of revolution and role of different classes in it. Attitude on different autonomy and sub nationality movements is mainly a derivative from those basic ideological political perceptions. H.K.S. Surjeet recapitulates the debate briefly in following terms:

"Those who remained in CPI understood the class nature of State to be that of national bourgeoisie. As opposed to those who later formed CPI(M) advocated that it was a bourgeoisie-landlord State headed by big bourgeoisie collaborating with foreign capital."

... From this emerged distinct ideological and tactical lines. While both characterised stage of revolution as democratic one, the strategic class alliance to achieve it was fundamentally different. CPI on the basis of its understanding gave the concept of 'national democracy' while we asserted 'people's democracy'. While we affirm that people's democratic revolution can only be under the leadership of working class based on worker-peasant alliance in alliance with petty-bourgeoisie and non-monopolist bourgeoisie. The CPI maintained that the alliance will be

under the joint leadership of bourgeoisie and working class and through this, working class will strengthen its position to ensure its leadership."³ Since the very beginning of left movement, the debate regarding the role of colonial bourgeoisie had been central to the difference between Lenin and M.N. Roy as we have discussed in previous chapter. It is surprising as to why the debate did not lead to split much earlier. It has also been observed that the timing and polarisation of split in 1964 appears to be in international circumstances of the Communist movement. "The Question of bipolar Communist system arising from Sino-Soviet dispute shattered the common point of consensus and guidance to which Indian Party could appeal."⁴

After a brief recapitulation of historical and theoretical context of split we now turn to the issue under consideration CPI(M), nationality issue and Kashmir.

National question in India constitutes an important aspect of programmatic understanding of CPI(M). "The right to self-determination' which was contained in earlier programmes was deleted from the programme adopted at

3. H.K.S. Surjeet, "On Left Unity", The Marxist, People's Publishing House, January-March 1995, p. 8.

4. Mallick Ross, "Indian Communism", Opposition, Collaboration and Institutionalisation, OUP, New Delhi, 1994, p. 31.

Calcutta Congress in 1964. It was decided to make a deeper study of nationality question in India and to take a final decision after detailed discussion. Prakash Karat, CPI(M) Central Committee Member writes that while the ideological approach of the Party was settled after inner party discussions at Burdwan Plenum in 1968, the programmatic approach to national question was given final shape at the Ninth Congress of the Party held in Madurai, 1972.

The "Note on National Question" adopted at the Party Congress after inner Party discussion preceding the Congress, provided the framework for amending the Party programme to include the present section in para 88 of programme dealing with state structure of people's democracy. This note on national question constitutes an important document which provides the basis for the party's approach to the nationality question. It is necessary therefore to discuss above section of the document. Earlier Calcutta Congress of CPI(M)⁵ had characterised India's attaining 'national independence' as a result of struggle which threatened to develop into a general revolt. The hegemony over mass anti-imperial struggle might slip away from its hand and thus a settlement was reached between the

5. Programme of the CPI(M) adopted by Seventh Congress, Calcutta, October 3 to November 7, 1964, pp. 3-4, pages 64, C.P. Publication.

British imperialist on the one hand and national Congress and Muslim League on the other.

"As a result, the country was partitioned into India and Pakistan and political power was transferred in India to the leaders of Congress Party on 15 August 1947. Thus ended the British rule in India and state headed by big bourgeoisie was established."⁶

Thus with the 'first stage of Indian revolution' the stage of general national united front, chiefly directed against imperialist rule came to an end. CPI(M) too characterises 15 August 1947 as 'transfer of power' and further argued that bourgeoisie national struggle did not carry forward 'national democratic struggle' to its completion; on the contrary it tends to compromise with imperialists and allies with domestic landlord reaction. 1964 programme characterized Indian state as organ of class rule of bourgeoisie and landlord, led by big bourgeoisie increasingly collaborating with foreign finance capital in the pursuit of capitalist path of development. 1972 Madurai Congress document of CPI(M) Programme characterises India as multinational state a state which comprises various clear cut linguistic nationality groups and society which is multilingual and multiethnic. Spelling out the specific

6. Programme of CPI(M), adopted by Seventh Congress, Calcutta, October 31-November 7, 1964, pp.3-4, pages 64.

features of 'nationality problem' in India it rejects the "India being one nation as put by bourgeoisie, denying multinational character and diversity of India's people speaking different languages and belonging to various ethnic - regional and cultural groups."⁷ The understanding also rejected "Pernicious theory of religion being the basis of nationality as contained in two nation theory.

CPI(M) argued that the demand for national self-determination which arose in the struggle against British imperialism, saw the people of various nationalities of India united to overthrow the British rule. The demand for independence from British justified the slogan of self-determination for every nationality. This was in the context of that stage of Indian revolution which was anti-imperialist and national liberation struggle was on the agenda. Here, CPI(M) deliberately confuses national struggle with nationality struggles and it is not clear as to what were to be the specific meaning and features of 'national liberation' in multinational context. Prakash Karat argues that with the political independence in 1947, however the strategic basis of national question underwent a

7. Prakash Karat, CPI(M) on National Question, p.8, People's Democracy.

qualitative change with self-determination from imperialism having been accomplished, "The basic democratic slogan was no more relevant in the Indian context."⁸ In its effort to deny the relevance of nationalities right to self-determination CPI(M) bases its arguments on what it calls "concrete application of Marxist-Leninist understanding to the national question as it obtains today in India."⁹ IT argues that after the advent of political independence India does not have the classic division between an oppressor nation and an oppressed nation. The struggle against the new state of bourgeoisie and landlord classes which oppresses the people of all nationalities became the dominant aspect. The note adopted by the Ninth Congress, spelt out the situation in following terms:

"With the winning of political independence in the year 1947, the national question in our country has undergone a significant change. The demand for self-determination and political independence i.e. secession from British imperialist state has been won and therefore does no more remain in the orbit of demand of political democracy, but acquires the pronounced character of the struggle against economic dependence on the imperialists and the attempts at perpetuating their economic exploitation. Similarly different linguistic or sub national currents and the struggle for their economic advance

8. Ibid., p. 8.

9. Ibid., p. 8.

is not a struggle against one or the other oppressor nation in the Indian Union, but it is a part of the common struggle of all nationalities in the country for the liquidation of economic dependence and backwardness. The common struggle will be facilitated by the preservation of Indian unity. On the other hand growth of fissiparous forces help the ruling classes to disorganise and disrupt the fighting people."¹⁰

CPI(M) argues that the continuation of earlier demand for self-determination in 'post independence' period would have been sectarian. The capitalist path of development embarked upon by the new state, led by big bourgeoisie saw new threats to the unity of working people. The conflict between the big bourgeoisie and non-big sections, the struggle between regional bourgeoisie-landlord groups -- all saw the ruling classes trying to rally the people on narrow linguistic and regional chauvinist basis. As the crisis of capitalist path deepened with its adverse impact on people's living conditions fertile grounds were created for the ruling classes to divert this discontent into 'disruptive channels' with the twin aim of consolidating their political influence, while at the same time disrupting the democratic movement and the growing united struggles. Karat argued that the slogan of self-determination would only disarm the

10. CPI(M) Programme adopted by Ninth Congress, Madurai, 1972. Note on National Question in India, pp. 97-98, p.103. Ganasakti Printers, Calcutta.

working class and help secessionist forces. Thus after branding all sub nationality and regional movements as 'disruptive' and 'divisive', Prakash Karat switches over to the problem of 'national unity' which he attempts to see from class view point: as how to ensure, protect and strengthen the unity of people of different linguistic nationalities while at the same time fighting the oppressive bourgeoisie landlord order. Party fails to see that at democratic stage of revolution, contradiction between regional, sub-national bourgeoisie and an all India or any dominant oppressing bourgeoisie may lead to nationality aspirations towards autonomy, federation or self-determination movements. Related is the issue of absence of clear cut class-conscious class formations at regional-nationality levels in certain nationality movements working too channelising their aspirations mainly in nationality terms. CPI(M) attempts to distinguish its stand point on national unity which it argues, has nothing common with the slogan of national unity raised by big bourgeoisie, "which is only interested in authoritarian vision of India in order to ride roughshod over the legitimate demands of various linguistic nationality states in India for equality and autonomy." CPI(M) argues that big bourgeoisie seeks to suppress the democratic aspirations of various linguistic

nationalities, its only aim being to strengthen all India market and its access to raw materials, as capitalist development progresses and demands.

Prakash Karat argues that the democratic policy to nationality problem requires that we formulate the issues in terms of common struggle to end the oppression by the big bourgeoisie and landlords and their collaboration with foreign capital and don't see it as any form of national oppression pitting one nationality or against the other. He further argues that nationality problem today is expressed in the form of centre-state relations. CPI(M) blames constitutional order of today subordinating states to the centre. The states are at the mercy of the centre in which there is concentration of power. The trend towards centralism and denial of federalism is an expression of class interests of strongest strata of the ruling classes, the big bourgeoisie. After the struggle for formation of linguistic states which manifested in a powerful way in the 1950s and 1960s, the struggle continues for restructuring centre-state relations, for more rights to be developed to states and for state's autonomy. The first ever programme of newly born CPI(M) argued that the language problem had not been solved satisfactorily and languages of different states are yet to be enshrined as languages of courts and

administration and as medium of instruction. Centralism continued to be the cardinal feature of ruling classes thus minimising federalism and autonomy to constituent states and nationalities. 1964 programme outlined that the tribal areas where population was specific in composition and distinguished by specific social and cultural composition and distinction, would have "regional autonomy with regional government within the state concerned and shall have full assurance of their development or full autonomy."¹¹ The Party was to help each nationality including tribal people to develop their own distinctive way and in unison with common aspirations of democratic masses of the country as a whole.

People's democratic programme while claimed to champion right of all linguistic nationalities and the right of minorities religious and ethnic, the national question in India as understood in CPI(M) programme also attempted to incorporate what it calls 'class attitude' to fight all divisive and disintegrative forces which 'act as barriers to working class unity and disrupt people's common endeavors'. CPI(M) talks of national unity from class view

11. Programme of CPI(M) Seventh Calcutta Congress, 1964, Communist Party Publication, p. 38, pp.64.

and distinguishes itself from bourgeoisie national chauvinism but in concrete practice party has failed to distinguish itself from bourgeoisie nationalist ideology as we shall see later.

Ninth Congress document (Madurai Session of CPI(M) 1972) wrote:

"while the proletariat and genuine communist party shall have to unequivocally champion the real equality and autonomy of states in the Indian union and oppose any or every manifestation of national oppression it cannot but take serious note of alarming developments that seriously threaten the unity of working class and the toiling people of India at the hands of narrow nationalists and chauvinists of different nationalities... Different linguistic and nationality groups in government services at the centre and as well as in the states often become victim of narrow nationalism and chauvinism fostering mistrust and animosity between different nationalities in the Indian union. Hide bound religious divisions are exploited by certain interested forces even to disrupt the same language speaking nationality as seen in the case of Punjab."¹²

CPI(M) accuses "different sections of regional bourgeoisie and landlord classes for dangerously utilising linguistic and regional chauvinistic platforms, religious differences to form communalism in order to erode secular

12. Ninth Congress of CPI(M) Document Resolution, Madurai, 1972, p.39.

foundations of our state."¹³ CPI(M) wages struggle for 'national unity' from class stand point, defending the unity of working people of all nationalities and combating all forms of national religious, caste or regional chauvinism. CPI(M) leader Prakash Karat criticised CPI for adapting a 'left sectarian approach' in its programme adopted in 1964, denying the multinational character of state in India. CPI(M) criticises CPI's programme which tends to echo 'national outlook' set out by the ruling Congress Party at the centre and thus going to the extent of blaming regional parties representing 'fissiparous forces'. Later CPI(M) also criticises 'left deviation in the form of Naxalites [CPI(ML)] and need for combating them who 'dogmatically stuck to the slogan of self-determination with their erroneous understanding of stage of Indian revolution as that of national liberation as the Indian state is a comprador one for India has not yet achieved real political independence. Para 88 of the [Ninth Congress Session of CPI(M) 1972] Programmatic Document states:

"The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is opposed to the drive of ruling classes for centralisation denying autonomy and it is

13. Prakash Karat, CPI(M) Programme of National Question, People's Democracy November 13, 1994, p. 10

also opposed to all disruptionist secessionist movements...The Communist Party of India (M) works for the preservation and promotion of unity of the Indian Union on the basis of real equality and autonomy for different nationalities that inhabit the country and to develop a democratic state structure."¹⁴

The Party emphasises an equality of all languages and opposes imposition of any official language and states that the language of intercommunication will evolve in practice by the intercourse of the people of different states. CPI(M) emphasises more on the concept of 'regional autonomy within the state' to be more relevant in present situation. It recognises the fact that after the formation of major linguistic states in many of these states there are substantial tribal and ethnic minorities. The present bourgeoisie landlord order deprives them of equal rights and opportunities to develop their language, cultures and protect their identities. Party views that the movement of the tribal people as in the case of Bodos and Jharkhand and problems of hill people like in Uttarkhand -- all point to the need for the struggle for establishing regional autonomy with maximum powers. The programmatic understanding of the CPI(M) provides the direction for concretising the concept

14. Ninth Congress of CPI(M), Document Resolution Madurai 1972, p.40.

of regional autonomy to be provided for such distinct minority groups. Note on National Question in India adopted by Ninth Congress Madurai quotes Lenin in his famous treatise on the national question written during the years 1913-16, had divided the countries and states into three main types in order to examine the task of revolutionary proletariat and their parties regarding the national question.

"First the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the United States";

"Secondly, Eastern Europe: Austria, the Balkans and particularly Russia";

"Thirdly the semi-colonial countries such as China, Persia and Turkey and all the colonies which have combined population of 1000 million."

Pointing out the tasks of respective contingents of the revolutionary proletariat Lenin states thus:

"The task of proletariat of these ruling nations are the same as those of the proletariat in England in the 19th Century in relation to Ireland" i.e. to come out openly in support of secession of Ireland and its independence.

...With regards to second type of countries which includes Soviet Russia where a developed bourgeoisie democratic national movement and intensified national struggle were present, the proletariat has to champion the right to self-determination against the particular oppressor nation and the most

difficult and most important task in this is to unite the class struggle of the workers of the oppressor nations with workers of oppressed nations."

Regarding the third category of countries, 'Marxists' Lenin writes "must not only demand unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation and this demand in its political expression signifies nothing else than recognition of right to self-determination. They must render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in bourgeoisie democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their uprising - or revolutionary war in the event of one against imperialist powers that oppress them."¹⁵

CPI(M) document clearly rejects the view that present state of Indian Union and specific nature of character of nationalities problem does fit into above three categories and substantial differences exist. It states:

"In the case of our present day Indian Union, this slogan is neither directed against imperialism as was the case before political independence nor against any particular oppressor nation since such a nation is absent in that form."¹⁶

... In any case the Party programme which is

15. Lenin on National Question, cited in Ninth Congress Document, CPI(M), pp. 100-1, p.107.

16. Note of National Question in India, Ninth Congress of CPI(M), Madurai, 1972, Calcutta.

the programme for all the working class of India, irrespective of their separate linguistic or national entity, cannot delineate which is the oppressor nation and which are the oppressed nations. The inclusion of demand for right to self-determination and secession might carry with it the danger of different linguistic contingents of Indian proletariat acquiescing in the secessionist agitation instead of opposing them and unitedly fighting for real autonomy of states and against any traces of inequality."¹⁷

Thus denying any possibility of 'progressive content' in various nationality demand for separate state. The very first amended document of CPI(M) vehemently criticised movement for creation of separate Telengana state as 'reactionary' "where vested interests - landlords were exploiting people's anger over the economic backwardness of Telengana for their own purpose. The right Communists (CPI) in a thorough going opportunist fashion lent their support to the demand."¹⁸ It further stated that:

"The criminal manner in which the decadent bourgeoisie-landlord Congress leaders are indulging in these and similar heinous activities of rousing bestial passion of casteism, regionalism, parochialism and national chauvinism in several states all over the country is a serious menace to every progressive and democratic minded man and woman in India.

17. Ibid., p. 103.

18. Work Report to Ninth Congress CPI(M) Madurai, June 27-July 2, 1972, Calcutta, p. 80.

... Several of these dangerously disruptive movements, it seems are not only financed by certain big landlords and big business circles but also foreign agencies like American CIA."¹⁹

The Party criticises 'adventurist deviant Naxalite groups' for locating in all national liberation movements their positive and decisive role for final destruction of imperialism. It calls it as bourgeoisie nationalist position according to which national movements can achieve their anti imperialist objectives in isolation from socialist camp; a position without class perspective and its not based on proletarian internationalism. Specific nationality or national liberal movements for Marxist-Leninists have meaning only as a component part of socialist working class world proletariat revolution. Anything else will be a bourgeoisie democratic movement, consolidating the position of bourgeoisie capitalist-landlord combine hegemony. On the other hand it criticizes 'CPI revisionists' for distorting the concept of intervention in nationality movements and their attempt to eliminate the role of nationality movement itself.

It is useful to remember here that period between 1964-72 was a period of ambiguity regarding Party's attitude

19. Ibid., p. 81.

towards nationality or ethnic movements. It's only in 1972 Madurai Congress that CPI(M) programme on national question was given final shape which continues to provide the basic guidelines for its current programme on nationality issue in India till date.

It is broadly from the theoretical-political background CPI(M) derives its understanding towards Kashmir problem. In its specific attempt to frame its policy towards Kashmir Party's utterances resemble closer to what other 'ML' factions call it 'national chauvinistic slogans of bourgeoisie'. CPI(M) political resolution of 14th Party Congress stated that continuing threat to national unity, intensification of separatist and terrorist activities in Kashmir with backing of imperialism was manifestation of the crisis of bourgeoisie landlord system. The basic bourgeois landlord approach and policies are failing to resolve the chronic problem of national unity. The threat to national unity are emanating from secessionist forces who are operating from across the border backed by imperialism. The Congress accused the government which has been treating the problem merely as law and order problem and has failed to go to the root cause of alienation. It warned that any further drift may lead to situation going out of hand:

"The Balkanisation trends which developed in Soviet Union and the break up of USSR in its old form will have a direct impact on nationality problem in India. CPI(M) has always advocated consensus on the issue concerning national unity which are of the great importance for very future of the country".²⁰

The clause dealing with Kashmir states that the situation is extremely serious and large sections of people are totally alienated from the Indian state and apprehensive about their identity due to long years of misrule of the Central Government. It took note of depredations of secessionist forces which has led to large scale migration of minority community. CPI(M) argues that problem cannot be tackled 'merely on the basis of army and paramilitary forces' and it is necessary for the government to differentiate between those forces who are fighting for their identity and those advocating Muslim fundamentalism and accession to Pakistan. Party strongly opposes demand for scrapping article 370 of Constitution by BJP and asks for giving more "autonomy to state and regional autonomy for Jammu and Ladakh region". Thus supporting the idea of regional autonomy within the state. CPI(M) is desperate to

20. Political Resolution of 14th Party Congress of CPI(M) Madras, January 3-9, 1992, CPM Publication Delhi, 1992, p.20, pp.45.

prove itself as most ardent champion of national unity.

Para 2.28 of Political Resolution states:

"The Party has emerged as the most consistent defender and champion of national unity. This is proved by the record of 1980s in Punjab, Tripura, Assam, Darjeeling and Kashmir. Our Party units and comrades were in the forefront for the struggle against separatist and divisive forces hundreds of our comrades gave their lives for the cause of national unity...The small unit of Party in Kashmir refused to succumb to the dictates of secessionist forces."²¹

Party justified its struggle for national unity on the basis of ensuring working class unity, which defends the unity of the people along class lines. CPM feels that its stand on national unity has "enhanced its prestige and standing among people." Political report adopted by CPI(M) Central Committee meeting took note of Hindu communalism and Ayodhya issue which further complicated the Kashmir issue. It alleges communal elements of fueling to extremist propaganda and appeal. It states:

"until identity of Kashmir people is tackled...without guaranteeing autonomy and rights which have been eroded since 1953, confidence cannot be instilled in the people that their future is secured in secular India....The demarcation between those who act on behest of Pakistan and fundamentalism like Jamat-e-Islami and its outfits and the

21. Ibid., p. 32.

forces like JKLF which champion Kashmiri identity must be maintained. Internationally the condemnation of Pakistan intervention in Kashmir in support of terrorism, by USA and UK and the support to India's position by Russia are positive developments.²²

Report on political developments adopted by CC in 1993 took note of developments in Kashmir in much detail. Thrust of the view was that movements in Kashmir has been essentially 'separatist' in nature. It blamed Indian government for not taking political measures to settle the problem as suggested by democratic parties and national conference. It held the view that government dependence on imperial power for their support on Kashmir issue will further create and complicate the problem. "The USA however has chosen to counterpose problem of Human Rights in Kashmir to this issue in pursuance of imperialist aim to keep the conflict alive".²³ CPI(M) criticised Congress government for not heeding the suggestions made by similar opposition parties which included.

22. Political Report adopted by CPI(M) Central Committee meeting 1993, April 16-18, 1993, CPI(M) Publication, Delhi, p.20, pp. 23.

23. Report on certain political developments adopted by CPI(M) cc meeting April. 21-23, 1993, CPM Publication Delhi, p.18, pp.23.

1. Appointing an advisory committee that would allow the people to have to place their grievances and seek remedies.
2. Concentrating against Jamat-e-Islami, which had been advocating accession to Pakistan and more rational approach towards JKLF which had been fighting for maintaining identity of Kashmiri people.
3. More autonomy to the people of Kashmir that would ensure the protection of their identity and
4. Negotiating with JKLF and bringing them on negotiating table and not to make administrative changes which further complicate the problem.

Senior Party leader of CPI(M) Harkishan Singh Surjeet²⁴ warns government that it must mend its ways before it is too late. Claiming that the Government of India has not learnt any lessons from the experience of pursuing misguided policies at different point of time, he states that the Government has landed the State in such a situation where the writ of the extremists has been running for the past five-six years with no amount of military and para-military forces being able to curb it. The situation in Kashmir has

24. H.K.S. Surjeet, Government Must Mend Its Way Before It's Too Late, People's Democracy, Vol. XVIII, No.46, November 13, 1994.

deteriorated to the extent that no political Party including the National Conference has been able to conduct any political activity in the State during this period. The Party recognises that Pakistan is a major player in Kashmir game and it accuses both Pakistan and Indian governments for internationalising the issue. Surjeet states:

"Major political forces in Pakistan are vying with one another, rousing the people on the issue. Everything else apart Kashmir has come as handy weapon for the Pakistani ruling circles to channelise the discontent arising due to the policies that have led to growing unemployment, poverty, etc."²⁵

H.K.S. Surjeet accuses Pakistani Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharief for making Kashmir as their one point programme, offering both material and moral support to those attempting to accede Kashmir to Pakistan. Party criticises Pakistan's attempt to move resolutions on Kashmir at international fora like OIC and the United Nations General Assembly. It blames Indian side for its delay and weakness in mobilising international support in its favour and to explain its position before international community. The trust of various resolutions, seeking settlement of the issue between India and Pakistan, with the mediation of UN, once it is adopted it will mean

25. Ibid., p. 1.

that Pakistan has succeeded in its mission, even though India will not accept this line. Surjeet states that whether Pakistan's effort at tabling the motion succeeds or not is a different matter, but it has succeeded in no small measure to focus the spotlight on Kashmir before the world community. Pakistan's success lies in the fact that the world community has by and large not condemned its intervention in Kashmir through overt and covert means the Indian Government has failed to highlight Pakistan's interference in the Valley, its imparting of training to extremists to conduct subversive activities and the huge quantities of arms and ammunitions that it supplies them. Surjeet blames Pakistan that the arms that had been earlier supplied by the USA for Afghan Mujahideen militants are now being diverted to extremists operating in Kashmir.

More or less in tune with CPI kind of anti-imperialism, CPI(M) too sees behind Kashmir problem American imperialist designs in Indian subcontinent. Accusing American diplomacy for never being rational towards the Kashmir issue, Surjeet blames US for utilising it for its own ulterior motives that its spokesmen have raked up the issue of plebiscite from time to time:

"But with Soviet Union no more there and the removal of Najib from power in Afghanistan, the importance of Pakistan in US strategic

interests has waned. Hence, the shift in US attitude to India without any way giving up their relations with Pakistan. In the American perception Kashmir has to be an independent State bordering India, China and Pakistan that would enable US to pursue its dirty game while the central aim remains unchanged, a slight shift has been noticed recently and US has called for settlement of the dispute between India and Pakistan through negotiations. However, Americans also continue to add that the 'will of the people of Kashmir' will have to be taken into consideration."²⁶

The Party strictly rejected the very idea of plebiscite in Kashmir. Before May 1996 elections in J&K, the Party was of the opinion that elections were not going to help improving political situation in Kashmir but it would rather expose the Government's weaknesses. In reaction to Rabin Raphel, US Under Secretary of State's remarks, regarding the possibility of around 5% voters turn out in Kashmir, Surjeet rebuked her and stated:

"The answer that under the Indian system there is no provision that seeks a minimum number of votes to be caste to validate the elections."²⁷

Such is the concern of CPI(M) towards the democratic process in Kashmir! On the other side, he warned the government that supposing the voting figures are really low

26. Ibid., p. 1.

27. Ibid., p. 2.

opponent players will attempt to project a different picture. Then it doubted the very feasibility of conducting elections in Kashmir. The Party opposed the releasing of some of the leaders of some extremist group in the backdrop of creating congenial atmosphere for elections until they came out in support of elections. CPI(M) states that positive change in the mood of people in Kashmir has taken place not due to any misconception about the policies of the Government of India, but due to the acts of extremists, both Kashmiris and mercenaries like extortion, molestation, etc., compounded by a shattered economy and declining means of livelihood. Then H.K.S. Surjeet goes on counting certain remedial measures to be taken for winning over the people who have been alienated and for creating confidence in them for most of them being protection of Kashmiri identity:

"Those who are demanding abrogation of Article 370 simply ignore the background under which the Article was incorporated into the Indian Constitution when thousands were being brutally massacred in the name of religion, the people of Kashmir had fought the Pakistani raiders and cast their lot with secular India. The 1952 agreement was its natural consequence."²⁸

28. Ibid., p. 2.

The Party strongly criticised the erosion and dilution of Article 370 by an 'authoritarian centre governed by the Congress' which simultaneously tried to impose its own rule in Kashmir much to the discomfort of Kashmiris. The National Conference which had a strong base due to the leadership it gave to the struggle against both Maharaja and British imperialism started loosing ground. But later political developments lead to the extent where politicians of all hues were looked upon with suspicion. Militancy further deteriorated the situation when not only minority, but a major population of majority community also migrated from the Valley. The Party asks the Government of India to address crux of the problem and only holding of elections are not going to solve the problem.

"It should initiate measures that would lead to winning over the alienated people by an assurance of more autonomy and protection of their identity. The lack of such an assurance is precisely the reason the forces like the National Conference and others have refused to participate in elections if they are held against such a background."²⁹

Fifteenth Party Congress (Chandigarh, April 1995) re-emphasised the need for assuring Kashmiris their identity and ensuring regional autonomy to Jammu and Ladakh regions within the State.

29. Ibid., p. 2.

CPI(M) General Secretary H.K.S. Surjeet maintained that Shimla Agreement of 1973 provides the basis for India-Pakistan to solve their standing disputes including Kashmir. H.K.S. Surjeet opined that the Parliamentary elections (May 1996) in Jammu and Kashmir held after a gap of seven long years did have a clear cut indication that people of the State are fed up with extremist depredations and want peace. Keeping in mind Parliamentary elections held in May 1996 and Assembly elections scheduled to be held in July-August 1996, H.K.S. Surjeet states:

"The situation in Jammu and Kashmir is ripe for political intervention. Though the National Conference remained aloof from parliamentary elections, there is an imperative need to get it involved in the process through suitable measures....If the Prime Minister reiterates in a statement in Parliament before the Assembly elections are held that maximum autonomy will be granted to Kashmir, as has been promised in Common Minimum Programme (CMP), it should go a long way in assuring the feelings of the people."³⁰

Thus to CPI(M) Kashmir problem is not merely a problem of one State but a major problem of national unity of India to which entire nation is concerned.

30. H.K.S. Surjeet, Assembly Elections in Kashmir, The Hindu, July 1-2, 1996, p. 10.

CHAPTER - IV

**CPI (ML)-LIBERATION,
NATIONALITY QUESTION AND
KASHMIR ISSUE**

CPI (ML)-LIBERATION, NATIONALITY QUESTION

AND KASHMIR ISSUE

Story of Communist movement in India Presents a peculiar record of split within split-each splinter faction charging the other with epithets of 'left deviationism', 'petit bourgeois-revolutionism, 'reformism' and the like. In 1964, breakaway group calling itself CPI (M), blamed CPI of 'revisionism' and 'bourgeois collaborationism' and in 1968-69, defected factions called CPI (ML) or 'Naxalites' branded CPI (M) of 'neo-revisionism'. In present chapter, we deal with one of largest surviving group, CPI (ML)-Liberation (also known as Vinod Mishra group after the name of its general secretary) and its attitude on nationality issue in concrete settings of Kashmir issue.

It is necessary to mention in brief CPI-ML (Liberation) stand on Kashmir issue as it exists today, before we turn to ideological-political background, in which it formulates its policies on nationality question. CPI-ML is more critical of ruling class handling of Kashmir issue. To it Kashmir is a nationality issue, not in the sense that it is oppressed by any single dominant nationality, but this oppression a part of 'comprodor big bourgeoisie landlord' combine exploiting the people of all nationalities. CPI-ML

recognises that in Kashmir basis for separatism appears to be strong "primarily because of centres handling of Kashmir question and ruthless war it is waging against Kashmiri people now". CPI-ML while theoretically maintains 'right of nationalities to self determination' but does not consider 'separation as a practical proposition now', because independent Kashmir 'sandwiched between two hostile powers, will be always vulnerable to US imperialist designs in the area of strategic importance'. Thus CPI-ML liberation opposes plebiscite in Kashmir and asks for maximum possible autonomy to Kashmir within a restructured federal framework. It stands for restoring article 370 to its original position and asks for doing away with erosions which have taken place. CPI-ML liberation formal adherence to principle of 'right to self-determination even secession' does not carry much practical political importance in concrete Indian context because according to party at present there is no nationality in India which can be accorded this right. Party holds the view that solution to Kashmir problem cannot be separated from solution of exploitation and oppression of vast masses of India, of achieving genuine democracy and independence for people of all nationalities in India. Thus Kashmir issue is a part of its wider ideological political problematique - the programmatic debate on nature of Indian

society, stage of revolution and communist movement and national question to which we shall turn now.

The internal context of 'Naxalite out break' can be traced since 1951 itself as elaborated by a CPI (ML) historian Suniti Kumar Ghosh in following words. Ghosh accuses CPI and CPI(M) for their

"task to pretify the ruling class politics and keep the people under subjection by means of all kinds of ideological deception. their deep seated opportunism, their long history of tailism behind Congress leaders, their loyalty to Nehru and his Kin instead to Marxism-Leninism and the people, their never failing hostility to Mao-Tse Tung thought, their addiction to peaceful path, the ideological Political position they took during and after China war, the formation of CPI its ideology and Politics, their betrayal of people's struggle."¹

It is necessary to mention in brief the original 'Naxalite' ideological political positions which continued and still to a larger extent continue to provide CPI (ML) liberation, a basis for understanding on the nationality question in India. One of the earliest programmatic statements of 'Naxalism' is found in the communique of 'All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries', issued on 22nd April 1969 which stated the Political resolution² of newly formed CPI (ML), its' assessment of stage

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1. Suniti Kumar Ghosh, the Historic Turning Point: A Liberation Anthology Published by S.K. Ghosh, Calcutta 1992. p.14, (Introdulion) pp.405.
 2. Political resolution of CPI (ML) cited in Liberation Anthology, ed. Suniti Kumar Ghosh Calcutta, 1992, p.46.

nature and character of Indian society, state, and government.

It characterized India as a 'semi colonial' and 'semi feudal' country; that the Indian state is the state of 'landlords and camprodor, bureaucrat capitalists' and that its government is lackey of 'US imperialism' and 'Soviet social imperialism', The abject dependence of Indian economy on aid from imperialist countries chiefly from 'US imperialism and Soviet revisionism was manifested in thousands of collaborating agreements, imperialist plunder of the country through unequal trade and aid, the utter dependence for food on PL 480 etc go to prove semi-colonial nature of our society. Semi-feudal nature of Indian society was characterised by

"...the increasing concentration of land in the hands of few landlords, the expropriation of almost total surplus produced by toiling peasantry in the form of rent, the complete landlessness of about 40% of rural population, the backbreaking usurious exploitation, the ever growing evictions of poor pleasantry coupled with brutal social oppression-including lynching of Harijans, reminiscent, of the medieval ages and the complete backwardness of the technique of production clearly demonstrate the semi feudal character of our society".³

3. Ibid. p.46.

capitalist nature of state' in following terms

"The fleecing of Indian People by extracting the highest rate of profit, the concentration of much of Indian wealth in the hands of seventy five comprador bureaucrat capitalists, the utilisation of State Sector in the interest of foreign monopolies and domestic big business and the unbridled freedom of the landlords to plunder and oppression of the peasantry with the help of state machinery: all go to prove that it is big landlord and comprador bureaucrat capitalists who run the state".⁴

Party stood for making use of contradictions between imperialism and people, between feudalism and peasants between capital and labour and between different section of ruling classes which it claimed were growing sharper and sharper. CPI ML called struggle of Nagas, Mizos Kukis as 'revolutionary struggle against reactionary regime' on the one hand but on the other hand it cautioned that:

"every effort is being made to divide the people and disrupt their struggles. Communalism, Casteism and provincialism and all types of parochialism are being pressed into service to destroy the unity of fighting people. National chauvinism is fanned against socialist China and neighbouring Pakistan to dupe the people and suppress their struggles. In the name of national integration the ruling classes are trying to impose Hindi in the teeth of stiff opposition from various nationalities, equality of all Nations and national languages is being denied".⁵

4. Ibid.p.47.

5. Ibid. p.49.

It called CPI (M) as 'Neo-revisionist' and their 'United front' government experiment as an attempt to create illusion among the people in order to blunt their revolutionary consciousness and divert them from the path of revolutionary struggle'. The earlier understanding did not distinguish between 'nationalities' and 'full grown national struggles' and used them interchangeably. It also didn't have a proper understanding of various nationality struggles which in many cases were not being led by progressive, anti-imperialist regional bourgeoisie. It is from this understanding, founder architect of CPI ML groups Charu Majumdar characterised Nagas, Mizos and people of Kashmir struggle on the path of building 'armed forces' and 'rule of liberation front'. To him peasantry struggle was to be an ally of various 'democratic liberation struggles' in states to accomplish 'revolutionary task'. Explaining in one of earliest formulations on nationalities, their role in accomplishing 'New Democratic Revolution' CPI ML Leader Charu Majumdar summarised the debate in following words.

Charu Majumdar summarizes its position:

"The United Front can be built up only in the course of an armed struggle, led by revolutionary Party. Only such a revolutionary Party can unite the uprising of various nationalities. The victory of national struggles, now being led by various petty bourgeoisie elements, depends on how

much such struggles develop into class struggles. Their complete victory will depend on how much class struggle can unite their national struggles. The revolutionary party must resolutely and unequivocally declare that we must firmly unite with these national struggles against the common enemy and that each and every nationality has and will have full right to freedom and independence. A revolutionary Party can unreservedly unite with national struggles of Nagas, Mizos, and others on the basis of this principle. The precondition for forming such united front is however that such a nationality must be continuing armed struggle".⁶

Charu opposed the idea of revolutionary Party leading the national (nationality) struggles. Principle of nationalities right to self-determination was to be the basis of Unity of different nationalities and it was must to prevent disruption of class Unity' and class struggle'.

"By trying to become leader we can only reduce ourselves into mere appendages of petty bourgeois of various nationalities. We will find that as we march forward as leaders of class struggles, the character of various national struggles itself will begin to change. And so, on the eve of victory every national struggle will ultimately transform into class struggle".⁷

CPI (ML) in the beginning failed to offer any concrete political programme as to when, how and to what extent

6. Charu Majumdar, United front and Revolutionary Party Liberation, Vol.1, No. 9. July 1968. Liberation Anthology, Calcutta 1992, p.101. pp.405.

7. Ibid. p.101.

communists were to intervene these nationality movements. They also maintained inadequate formulation of 'semifeudal', 'semicolonial' India, assuming that India was a homogeneous entity with similar patterns all over the country. Identification of nature of nationality/identity struggles was left to subjective wishes of the Party leader and no conceptual criterion was laid down: whether it was led by feudal, fundamentalist, pro-imperialist elements or genuine anti-imperialist progressive forces, committed to democratisation and secularisation of India.

Now let us turn to CPI (ML) Liberation identified as Vinod Mishra group after its general secretary's name. Here it's not necessary to outline the history of myriad splits and Ideological dead-ends within naxalite movement mired in barren swamp of left Sectarianism and anarchist adventurism. Liberation group has made several, radical/reformist departures from original 'Naxalite' Path of charu Majumdar and other ML groups. Liberation group formed I.P.F. (Indian Peoples Front) in 1983 contested Parliamentary and state assembly election with significant gains. Party has its support bases mainly in Bihar and its Units exist in several other states too.

In 1994, Party completed 25 years of its life and since 1993 it started functioning openly. CPI (ML) General

Secretary Vinod Mishra admits that since opening of the Party there has been 'certain decline on ideological plane and theoretical level of Party has gone down'.⁸ CPI (ML) Liberation criticises CPI for abandoning the study of Marxism since long back and CPI (M) of 'regimented study with heavy dose of metaphysics' and abstraction. It criticises other left ML groups as "ultra left groups who have nothing to do with Marxism Leninism" and terms them "idealist anarchist".⁹ Party claims to distinguish itself from right opportunist CPI and CPI (M) and the left adventurist tactics of immediate seizure of power practiced by PWG and other ML factions who have been caught in 'blind alley and are showing' definite signs of decay and degeneration'. Vinod Mishra emphasised that by late 70s party had realised that first phase of direct revolutionary onslaught was over and immediate call for building 'red army' and 'base areas' by raising armed struggle will be nothing but a 'left adventurism'.

CPI ML since late 1970s evolved a critique of all earlier including 1970 programme and reforms and changes in its programme were justified under the "need for synthesis" or "eternity of change".¹⁰

8. Vinod Mishra, Marxism and Indian Revolution CPI (ML) Publication Delhi. 1994. p.6. pp.152.

9. Ibid. p.6.

10. Ibid. p.13.

Fourth Congress of CPI (ML) was held in Jan 1-5, 1988, marked a turning point in programmatic and political history of the Party. It is necessary to note in brief the changes in their outlook which continue to effect their policies on specific issues.

The most significant change was to break out of mould of 'naxalism' as it is traditionally identified. The Party is suffering from nostalgia, it is still in transition and its ideological, programmatic and tactical positions seem to be in a state of flux and evolution, and final crystallisation on certain basic issues is still not complete. It is necessary to recapitulate that party prided itself of being the true inheritor of Charu Majumdar and as mainstream Naxalite force. International line of Party was marked by antisovietism, former Soviet Union as social-imperialist and thus an 'enemy' because of it's influence on Indian ruling classes. Some of the major changes as mentioned by one of its leader has been the "rejection of thesis of Soviet Social imperialism, recognition of relative autonomy and bargaining power of Indian states and India's big bourgeoisie vis-a-vis specific imperialist power; albeit within the general framework of dependence and subservience to world imperialism and a demarcation between strategy and tactics enabling the Party to free the questions of form of

struggles from the strategic straight jacket of Chinese type revolutionary Path"¹¹ Dipankar Bhattacharya in his polemical writing 'Programatic Debate in Indian communist movement' argues that 1970 programme had certain 'left sectarian traits' and the changes brought about in last three party Congresses helped the Party to steer clean out of "anarchist or semi-anarchist tendencies latent in ML movement". CPI (M) considers 'transfer of power' in Aug 1947 as conclusion of first stage of Indian democratic revolution and thus in the absence of any dominant nationality the national question to have resolved in main. But for CPI (ML) nationality problem is by no means only a residue of past, but it acquires new meanings, drawing fresh strength from every degree of capitalist development, as capitalism develops not just in spite of but also through these "remnants". Bhattacharya cites the example of whole range of experience of Soviet Union, Eastern Europe or even developed Canada where "separatist movement is raising its head". He is of the opinion that there is thus little possibility that even peoples democratic or socialist India can escape the challenge of rewriting her stand on "national unity".

11. Dipankar Bhattacharya in Marxism and Indian Revolution
CPI ML Liberation Publication Delhi 1994, p.68, pp.152.

CPI(ML) in a very cautious and reluctant defense of principle of self-determination argues that this principle is not so much a principle of nationalism as of democracy. For Lenin too, party argues, recognition of right of all nations to self-determination implied maximum of democracy and minimum of nationalism. "The proletariat" said Lenin "cannot be victorious except through democracy, i.e, by giving full effect to democracy and by linking with each step of struggle, democratic demands formulated in most resolute terms... we must combine revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary programme and tactics on all democratic demands: a republic, a militia, the popular election of officials, equal rights for women, self-determination of nationalities etc." For Lenin it was not unreserved recognition of right to self-determination but each and every such demand has to be decided on the basis of concrete analysis of each case subject to overriding interest of proletarian class struggle. Dipankar Bhattacharya argues that timely correction of party's position on nationality question can be and infact has been a handy weapon in the hands of revolutionary working class movement in India and asks other left parties to learn lessons from rising nationality movements in South Asian subcontinent: "The lesson for working class could be to

recognise the objectivity of such movements in India and strive for closer political unity of proletariat and working people of whole country on the basis of recognition of principle (of right to self-determination)". He criticises CPI(M) for refusing the principle which had only helped corrupting revolutionary proletariat consciousness and thus exposing the working class to dangerous consciousness of national chauvinism.

In an attempt to explain CPI(ML) position Bhattacharya cites a rather long excerpt from the writings of EMS Namboodiripad, in which he had made an attempt to expose CPI 'revisionists' in 1966. EMS clearly cautioned Marxist-Leninist to make it clear to the people that "so called struggle between nationalism and fissiparous forces", the struggle in the nature of which leaders of ruling party are trying to beat oppositional forces into submission is a 'fake struggle'. It is the means through which dominant section of bourgeoisie is trying to maintain its domination, not only over the working people but over a section of it's own class. Thus the slogan of "national unity" is the weapon with which the dominant monopoly group tries their competitors into submission. EMS pointed out "while thus exposing the false claims of dominant and other sections of ruling classes, Marxist Leninists should see what is anti-

feudal and democratic in the struggle and waged by various national and social groups against dominant section of ruling classes....Such a Marxist Leninist approach to national unity and democracy is absurd in ideological stand of revisionists (CPI) whether it is in relation to India's foreign policy, or in connection with international problems, the revisionists are adapting the typically chauvinist approach to bourgeoisie."¹²

EMS was probably unaware that when he was accusing CPI 'revisionists' for "shameless example of subservience to bourgeoisie and its ideological political outlook", later CPI(M) too chose the same path of ideological subservience. CPI(ML) liberation links revisionist bankruptcy on foreign policy with that on international problems, two distortions joined by key link of 'vulgar opportunist variety of anti-imperialism'.

Bhattacharya writes:

"...at the root of this distorted theory and practice of anti-imperialism and opportunist tendency of class collaboration that follows from it, lies the CPI(M)'s programmatic prevarication in analyzing the nature of Indian big bourgeoisie."¹³

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12. EMS Namboodiripad, "The Revisionists on the National Question: The Programme Explained", 1966, CPIM Publications, pp. 118-24.
 13. Dipankar Bhattacharya, Marxism and Indian Revolution, CPI(ML) Publication, Delhi, 1994, p. 78.

CPI(ML)(Liberation) criticizes CPI(M) for supporting the position of national chauvinism of bourgeoisie and supporting bourgeois position in Punjab, Assam and Kashmir.

CPI(ML)(Liberation) programmatic understanding characterizes the Indian society not only as "semi-feudal" but also as "semi-colonial" in which state is being led by "big bourgeoisie in alliance with landlords. Programme refers to India as land of several nationalities and ethnolinguual groups. Growing economic and cultural interaction and decades of unity forged in course of "anti-colonial freedom movement and anti-imperialist democratic struggles" have lent a unified Indian face to the multinational mosaic of our society. Programme argues:

"But this process of evaluation of Indian identity suffers from major bureaucratic and chauvinistic distortions, large scale regional disparities and cultural, economic discriminations. Various nationalities and national minorities in India are locked in a serious contradiction with the over-centralized Indian state, which also expresses itself through strong centrifugal tendencies."¹⁴

14. Basic Documents of the CPI(ML) Fifth Party Congress, Calcutta, 20-26 December 1992, p. 5-6, pp.48.

For CPI(ML) liberation Indian society is marked by four main contradictions - the contradiction between imperialism and Indian 'nation'; that between feudalism and the broad masses of people, between big capital and Indian people, the working class in particular, and the contradiction among various sections of ruling classes. Party determined the stage of revolution as the stage of 'people's democratic revolution' with agrarian revolution at its axis. Party had the opinion that a people's democratic revolution in India can only be consummated under the leadership of working class and it called for:

"support and unite with the struggles of the oppressed nationalities for right to self-determination, of the religious minorities for religious freedom and of the oppressed castes particularly Dalits, for social equality and justice."¹⁵

Party stands for reconstruction of national unity on the basis of federal, democratic, secular. Polity recognizing the nationalities' right to self-determination including right to secession and instilling a sense of belonging, equality and security in all minority groups, effective democratization of decision making, devolution of resources, decentralization of developmental activities to enlist popular participation in 'nation building'. CPI(ML) thus

15. Ibid., p. 7.

maintains both positions, nationalities right to self-determination including right to secede and national unification based on principles of federalism and autonomy and thinks that this position provides the party maximum scope in dealing with the nationality question. Other CPI(ML) factions criticize Liberation group for confusing two stages - struggle for self-determination and autonomy as one, and describe it as party's search for maximum political space for practising political opportunism. Given the absence of clear cut criterion for determining the nature of movement, whether for self-determination or autonomy, the question remains a 'practical question'. In such cases party argues for demarcating itself from bourgeois nationalism and national chauvinism, "even while actively supporting genuine nationality aspirations of various nationalities in India."¹⁶ CPI(ML) visualizes that in the post-colonial India, under the newly emerged Indian nation with a multinationality state, economic foundations for capitalist development has already been laid, fulfilling the precondition for modern Indian nationhood. Thus nationality question in India remains a "question of general democracy, that is of

16. B. Sivaraman, Nationality Question for India, Marxism and Indian Revolution, CPI(ML) Liberation Publication, Delhi, 1994, pp.115-116, pp. 152.

equality of nationalities and their self-determination."¹⁷

In the light of above formulations Marxist-Leninist doctrine of self determination remains only a residual question and merely a ritual formulation with nostalgic hangover of naxalite past. CPI(ML) attempts to provide an economic explanation to national phenomenon. Party holds the view that in later stages of capitalism, when such economic foundations were laid for several nationalities collectively in a larger framework, the tendency for every nationality to have its own home market and its own 'nation state' was substantially weakened. Here lies a pure economic reductionist understanding of national question which gives ignores formal politico-cultural side of specific nationality, which has equally powerful role in constituting national question. CPI(ML) argument that requirement for modern capitalism are largely satisfied collectively in all Indian nationalities under Indian nation state and national question to be resolved for them, has also been severely criticized by other ML factions. Given the massive economic inequality, discrimination and disparity among various regions which reflect different stages of development and under-development, above argument can't be sustained. The argument for existence of an all India capitalism also seems

17. Ibid., p. 116.

to be in contradiction with CPI(ML) characterization of Indian society as 'semi-feudal - semi-colonial' led by 'dependent bourgeois landlord combine'. Underlying CPI(ML) mutually contradictory formulation there seems to be also an erroneous belief that India constitutes a homogeneous political, economic and cultural entity either 'semi-feudal - semi-colonial' or capitalist, thus denying heterogeneous patterns of political-economic reality. It is true that every nationality cannot be equated with nation and every nationality question can not be considered as national question in classical 19th century sense of the term. Nationality formations precede nation state in multinational nations but may not lead to demand for creation of nation state. It happens only in exceptional political-economic circumstances.

CPI(ML) argues, Leninist principle of self-determination including right to secede is only a means of fusion of nationalities ensuring their dialectical unity. It is always related to concrete political context, approached in relation to other principles like 'national unification, anti-imperialism and above all, proletarian hegemony in democratic movement'.

B. Sivraman writes:

"moreover, this principle figures in our programme as part of a package of radical reform which include expropriation of big bourgeoisie, radical agrarian reforms and through going democratisation of state structure including federal restructuring of the polity, etc."¹⁸

Party asks for implementation of the reforms which it argues; "will substantially do away with the basis of separatism and the self-determination principle is supposed to guarantee against any kind of oppression or coercion of nationalities."

It clearly states "recognition of this principle does not amount to supporting each and every nationality movement."¹⁹ Sivraman argues that self-determination in era of imperialism is linked with its overthrow and establishment of socialism, because otherwise, in a multinational state it may lead to replacement of one form of national oppression by another. Related issue of instigation and support to a weak nationality by an alien strong nation (imperialist) is also not a solution and it will only lead to balkanisation.

Sivraman discussing nationality question in post-colonial, multi-nationality nation states identifies the factors which in extreme cases could lead to breaking away of some nationalities and emergence of new nations:

18. Ibid., p. 119.

19. Ibid., p. 119.

"a weak bourgeoisie, highly centralised state structure with excessive concentration of economic and political powers, overwhelming domination of one nationality in state structure and exclusion of all other nationalities from power structures, inadequate economic integration, extreme uneven development, crisis of ruling classes and putrefaction and decay of state and the cultural and linguistic oppression of one nationality over other, etc."²⁰

Arguing for a weakening case of separatism in Indian scenario, Sivraman points out that due to weak material formation for the nationalities question in the wake of fulfillment of demand for unified home market; nationalities with distinct tendency for establishing a separate statehood, except in the case of Tamils - were mainly religious and communal -- Muslim and Sikh nationalism.

"Except Muslim nationalism in pre-1947 period, other tendencies including Sikhs were by and large overwhelmed by a pan Indian national movement. They died down, at least for a while, following the basic fulfillment of laying the economic foundations that a separate nation could have created for these nationalities....The creation of linguistic states further weakened the separatist tendencies."

He overemphasises the fact that 'capitalism' provided the basis for national unification in immediate post-1947 phase and ignores politico-cultural and historical factors. CPI(ML) takes note of nearly four decades of distorted process of capitalist development, which has created new inequalities, discrimination and oppression of nationalities, thus bringing back agenda of nationalities at

20. Ibid., pp. 119-120.

a qualitatively higher plane. For CPI(ML) India is not dominated by one nationality and there is no oppression by a single or a group of nationalities over other. But it takes note of central presence of political and bureaucratic elite from Hindi region in political process which sometimes creates resentment and alienation among other nationalities, but argues that this cannot be equated with full scale national oppression -- interestingly some of most developed regions lying outside Hindi belt.

B. Sivraman, CPI(ML) theorist, rejects the theory that with the development of capitalism and productive forces, India too like other multinational nation states (whether under socialism or capitalism) will inevitably break up; that nation state and not multinational nation state is the norm of developed capitalism. Accordingly USSR collapse was a 'systemic collapse' and 'nationality question' was not central to it. The reason for rejecting above theory he identifies

- breakups are not likely to take place in revolutionary regimes
- there are instances of inseparable fusion of nationalities in developed capitalist conditions

- It (modernisation framework) absolutises economic side of nationality question abstracting them from historical stage
- the question of alienation can be addressed politically.

But CPI(ML) liberation warns that "Indian state continues to remain centralised and if nationalities in India continue to face the kind of discrimination and oppression that they face at present, certain nationalities in India too might go to a point of no return in their alienation and at an opportune moment might breakaway from India".²¹FP

25-99

Now we turn to a brief survey of CPI(ML) stand on nationality situation in concrete terms of Kashmir.

The party recognises that Kashmir issue is "the most complex of all cases of movement for autonomy/secession".²² Accusing Indian government for its arrogant refusal to recognise the very problem of Kashmir, CPI(ML) asks for identifying factors which led to isolation of entire people, clamouring for either independence or joining Pakistan. It takes note of factors aggravating the situation : BJP demand

21. Ibid, p.122.

22. 5th All India Party Congress. Dec 1992; Political Organisation Report CPI(ML). Delhi. January 1993. p.34.pp.75.

for scrapping article 370, appointment of Jagmohan as Governor, Islamic resurgence in Pakistan and its attempt to turn Kashmir as Islamic issue, aggressive and communal nationalism of BJP, prolonged military, curfew raj in Kashmir denying basic human rights to people, coercion as government way to solve the problem, etc. Party sympathises Kashmiri people in their quest for identity but expresses its fear that an independent Kashmir sandwiched between two hostile powers of India and Pakistan is not a viable option. Nor is the Kashmir accession to Pakistan in the larger interests of the Kashmiri people. Party witnessed the marked hike in Islamic fundamentalism in recent years in Kashmir which has never been a stronghold of fundamentalism. Organisational report writes:

"We are aware that phenomenon of Pan Islamism, while playing a positive anti-imperialist role in the global context, is fraught with reactionary implications for the democratic forces in sub-Continent.

...Against this backdrop, we as communists cannot support demand for plebiscite or secession at this juncture. We will therefore continue to mount pressure on Indian Government to restore all civil rights in Kashmir, declare general amnesty to all political prisoners in the State and initiate a process of dialogue with independence-seeking groups, with concrete offer of autonomy bordering on self-government within Indian framework.²³

23. Ibid., p. 35.

CPI(ML) criticises CPI and CPI(M) and other opposition parties for not criticising "India's war in Kashmir". It also take note of the fact that an independent Kashmir sandwiched between two hostile powers, will always be vulnerable to US imperialist designs in an area of strategic importance and cannot really remain independent. B. Sivraman writes:

"What is shocking about the struggle is its utter insularity from other democratic struggles in India....The ultimate guarantee for self-determination of Kashmir or its independence is the victory of revolutionary-democratic forces in India and the lasting solution to the Kashmir Question can be found only within a democratic confederation of peoples of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Kashmir."²⁴

24. B. Sivraman in *Marxism and Indian Revolution*, CPI(ML) Liberation Publication, Delhi, 1994, p. 125. pp.152.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

National question has always been a major sphere and source of weakness of communists in present century. It has always blurred their vision from grasping the basic contradictions of concerned societies. Indians left too has been victim of 'nationalist disorientation' and it has been unable to provide a reactionary democratic opposition and alternative in Indian politics.

In Marxist thought and practice 'nationhood' and 'nationalism' has always occupied an ambivalent and ambiguous position. Lenin saw national question as colonial question and by making an analysis of imperialism as higher stage of capitalism, he made a distinction between 'progressive' and 'reactionary' nationalisms. Nationalism in non-western 'oppressed' countries, was perceived as 'progressive' 'performing'; anti-imperialist democratic task. Lenin's idea of 'inevitability of progressive nature of national struggles in colonial countries' was challenged not only by M.N. Roy in Second International but it continues to be challenged by many other theorists too. Subaltern scholars¹ argue that the social forces which were

1. Asma Bazlas, Democracy Nationalism and Communalism: A colonial legacy in South Asia, Wesview Press, Oxford, 1996, p.11, pp.240.

interested in democratic transformation of Indian society (peasantry and working class) were not necessarily nationalist and social class which claimed to be nationalist (bourgeoisie middle class) was not necessarily interested in progressive democratic transformation. Related is the issue of anti-imperial content in this 'nationalist-bourgeois' in colonial and post-colonial phases. Hence to club all social group of colonial period as 'nationalist' is erroneous and subjects all 'subaltern' groups, regions and nationalities under bourgeois hegemony. Above argument makes a valid case for maintaining a distinction between the historical processes and forces which facilitate emergence of democracy and those that enabled a particular class to acquire hegemony with the help of 'nationalism'. Theorists also make critique of Marxist-Leninist determinism, which ignores the specificity of cultural and intellectual factors which shape politics. They criticise Marxism which subjects histories of various nations and nationalities to a homogenising universalist and reductionist logic.

Apologists of Marxism argue that Marxism must be understood as a theory of political action, especially as a theory for a socialist transformation of humanity, and not as an exercise in logic or theoretical abstraction. To

detach Marxism as theoretical abstraction from its political-historical context, is to utterly misconstrue it.

Critics also take note of 'Eurocentric' in Marxism that surfacing old styles of conflicts nationalities prove that 'savages' have entered the modern age and have been climbing social evolutionist ladder so thoughtfully given to them. This 'mirror image' concept of Third World following the Western path, was not only used for legitimising imperialist and social-imperialist aims but it still continues to be used for justifying and maintaining neo-colonial structures of dominance. the argument of 'parallel' or 'periphery' joining 'mainstream' (globally and internally both) is a logical extension of such evolutionist argument.

Nationalism as a most powerful social, political and ideological force of our times is a historical phenomenon with class and society specific character, potentialities, limitations and usages and thus capable of manifesting itself in variety of forms. Nationalism as an ideology of struggle against imperialism and national oppression (before 1947) was inevitably a progressive and liberationist force in India because it aimed at resolving basic structural contradictions of Indian society, concealed in imperialism, whose resolution alone could clear the path for Indian people continuing their struggle for a better future. But

during the same period colonial ruling classes and their allies in Third World found nationalism useful not only for consolidating their rule at home but also to defend and justify aggression and domination abroad. Randhir Singh rightly argues that in historical terms nationalism is not in itself 'progressive' or 'reactionary', 'secular' or 'communal', 'democratic' or 'authoritarian' but all depends on its specific character, its programme, leadership and above all concrete historical context and conjecture - several factors determining its precise nature and historical role.² Communists in India and other colonial countries sought to organise their struggle for socialism but because national independence was seen to be a necessary stopping point on the road to socialism; they also sought to link class struggles to nationalist struggles.'³ The tragedy was that in their attempt to combine class struggle with national struggle (in pre-1947 period) they failed to keep form (unity with national bourgeois) distinct from substance (class struggle and socialist goals). By aligning with bourgeois democratic struggles, they sought to harness

2. Randhir Singh, Five Lectures on Marxist Mode, Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1993, p.101, pp.131.

3. bSanjay Seth, Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics, Sage Publication, Delhi, 1995, p. 227.

class struggle to national struggle hoping that in this way nationalist struggle and its outcome would reflect in the interest of exploited rather than exploiter class.

Whatever justification communists provide for linking class struggle with nationalist struggle, it is a fact that nationalist struggles are essentially led by big bourgeois and rich peasantry. Struggle for independence in India under their leadership culminated into "tragic victory given the truncated nations that emerged and the communal bloodshed which accompanied their emergence".⁴ Even in post-1947 period communists and their parties by connecting themselves with nationalist agenda have lent themselves to appropriation by non-Marxist modernising or anti-Marxist reactionary nationalist bourgeoisie. A brief overview of history and policy of communist movement in India seems to be verifying Eric Hobsbawm argument that 'Marxist movements and states have tended to become national not only in form but in substance, i.e. nationalist'.⁵

In preceding chapters, we examined how 'nation' and 'nationalism' entered left ideology and politics and gradually attempted to seduce it. The root cause behind

4. Ibid., p. 228.

5. Eric J. Hobbawn, "Some Reflections on the break up of Britain", 'New Left Review', 105, September-October 1977, p. 13.

this nationalist appropriation of dominant left stream in India lie not only in the limits of Marxist theory and international communist movement but their collaborationist political practice and also in the relative strength and force of bourgeois nationalist ideology and politics. Nationalist perspective on politics as against class perspective is not the only reason for communist left surrender to bourgeois politics and their failure to evolve an alternative framework on nationality questions and Kashmir issue.

In Chapter 1, we briefly examined Marxism's theoretical encounter with nationalism in western and colonial world and traced how national questions continued to be a permanent source of tension for Marxist theory and practice. It is to comment that in colonial context Marxism as body of theory came to see in nation not simply a given framework within which the class struggle occurred but the form and substance through which socialist goals could be realised. In Chapter 2, we attempted to trace the concrete application of national question in Indian context by Communist Party of India and its attitude towards Kashmir issue. CPI in its attempt 'fit' well into parliamentary institutions failed to maintain a Marxist class position in relation to Kashmir issue. It is post-1951 period applied a vulgar kind of

'anti-imperialism' thus overlooking substantial internal dimensions to the problem. CPI maintains that Kashmir problem can be resolved within Constitutional-federal framework by correct political handling of the issue, by ensuring maximum political autonomy, restoring eroded Article 370 and ensuring their identity. It also asks Indian Government to counter imperialist designs in Kashmir which aggravates the problem with the help of Pakistan. CPI(M) (discussed in Chapter 3) initially claimed to distinguish itself from CPI 'revisionists' and their 'co-option to bourgeois nationalism' but later it also came to follow the suit. Though it maintained relatively more consistent democratic position on Kashmir, politically it seems to have been unable in distinguishing itself from bourgeois nationalist understanding on Kashmir issue. Party stands for ensuring maximum autonomy within constitutional framework and asks for giving regional autonomy to Jammu and Ladakh regions within Jammu and Kashmir. In Chapter 4, we analysed CPI(ML-Liberation), which still continues to maintain in principle, 'right of nationalities to self-determination even secession' but does not consider any of the nationalities in India, which at this stage can be accorded this right. To it right to self-determination is a means to fusion of nationalities and not secession. It

recognises that Kashmir is a case for 'autonomy/secession' but does not consider secession as a practical proposition now reasons being - class nature of Kashmir movement, its insularity from other progressive movements in India, US Imperialists game plan in region, etc. But Party demands stopping 'India's war in Kashmir' and to ensure identity and 'maximum possible autonomy' to people of Kashmir within a restructured federal framework. CPI ML also criticises any demand for abrogation of Article 370, which will further aggravate the problem. Almost all three Communist parties argue that Kashmir issue cannot be separated from the solution of exploitation and oppression of vast masses of India, of achieving true democracy and independence for all the people of all nationalities in India. Thus their sensitivity on Kashmir issue and nationalities in India remains only a matter degree of concern and concrete application of their programmatic understanding which has been evaluated in present study after a brief scrutiny of their political actions and pronouncements vis-a-vis Kashmir issue.

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