

**SOVIET VIEW OF INDIAN POLITICAL  
DEVELOPMENTS 1947 - 1955**

**MAHAVIR SINGH**

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**CENTRE FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI-110067**

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**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**

**CENTRE FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Gram : JAYENU


Telephone : 652282  
652114


New Mehrauli Road,  
NEW DELHI-110067.

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**C E R T I F I C A T E**

**Certified that the M.Phil. dissertation entitled  
SOVIET VIEW OF INDIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, 1947-1955  
submitted by Mr. Mahavir Singh, an M.Phil./Ph.D.  
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**(R.R. SHARMA)  
CHAIRMAN**

  
**(DEVIDRA KAUSHIK)  
SUPERVISOR  
(5.10.1981)**

## C O N T E N T S

	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
<u>P R E F A C E</u>	1 - 11
<u>CHAPTER I</u>	
THE SOVIET IDEOLOGICAL LEGACY AND THE PROCESS OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE IN COLONIAL SOCIETIES	1 - 19
<u>CHAPTER II</u>	20 - 34
SOVIET PERCEPTION TO NEGOTIATIONS FOR TRANSFER OF POWER AND THE PARTITION OF INDIA, 1946-47	
<u>CHAPTER III</u>	35 - 44
SHIFT TOWARD AN EXTREMIST EVALUATION OF INDIAN POLITICAL SCENE	
<u>CHAPTER IV</u>	45 - 53
THE VICTORY OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION AND SOVIET ENDORSEMENT OF THE PATH OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY IN INDIA, 1949-1951	
<u>CHAPTER V</u>	54 - 62
NEW SOVIET APPRAISAL OF INDIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS	
<u>C O N C L U S I O N S</u>	63 - 66
<u>B I B L I O G R A P H Y</u>	67 - 71

## P R E F A C E

It is a common assumption that in the early phase of their relations with India the Soviets took a rather wholly negative view of the political developments in India. This extremist sectarian Soviet approach to Indian politics is generally believed to have lasted until the death of Stalin in 1953, after which there began to emerge a more positive view of Indian political developments reaching its high watermark in the year 1955 which witnessed an exchange of state visits between the two countries. The 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. in 1956 set the final seal of ideological confirmation over the new course in Krenalin's policy towards India. At any rate the bulk of contemporary writings on Indo-Soviet relations speak of prevalence of the negative Soviet approach until at least 1952 when some indications of the impending change appeared towards the close of Stalin's period.

The object of the present study is to reconstruct and analyse the Soviet view of Indian political developments during the 1947-55 period. It seeks to delineate the various shifts in the Soviet appraisal of the Indian scene with a view to identifying the motivating factors. The main thrust of the study lies in determining the extent to which the Soviet view was conditioned by the ideological factor accelerating the social revolution in a former colony and/or Realpolitik goals of the U.S.S.R. in the realm of international relations.

The study is mainly based on important Soviet writings published in the Soviet press and journals, official statements, speeches of Soviet leaders and documents of the party congresses which have been scanned to reconstruct the Soviet view and offer a critique of the same. I am particularly grateful to my research supervisor, Dr. Devendra Kaushik for his invaluable guidance in completing the study. The author also wishes to express his sincerest thanks to the staff and Librarian of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Library and also of the Indian Council of World Affairs Library, New Delhi who generously helped me with necessary research materials for this work. Lastly, thanks are also due to Mr. R. Subramanian who brought this dissertation into limelight in a very short time.

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*Mahavir Singh*  
(MAHAVIR SINGH)

**CHAPTER I**

**SOVIET IDEOLOGICAL LEGACY : MARXISM-LENINISM  
ON THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE AND THE  
PROCESS OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE IN COLONIAL  
SOCIETIES**

It has become rather common to project the Marxist-Leninist theory of Communism as the opposite of nationalism. Marxism-Leninism has however been wrongly criticised for its negative approach to the national factor. It is forgotten that Marx had ridiculed the "supernational" outlook of the French Proudhonists and some French sociologists like Lafargue who called nationality an "antiquated" prejudice. In the International Council of the First International in 1866 Marx took the French ultra-socialists to task for rejecting nationality as an outdated prejudice.<sup>1</sup>

The credit for advocating the idea of national self-determination rightly goes to Marx and Engels who always supported the right of the oppressed peoples to independent statehood. Thus Marx defended the cause of Irish and Italian independence.<sup>2</sup> Engels supported the independence of the colonial peoples also.<sup>3</sup> "No nation can be free if it oppresses others" --- said Marx.<sup>4</sup> If one of his early articles published for the first time in the U.S.S.R. in 1955 Engels declared that the proletariat of the oppressing country must join forces with the national liberation movement.<sup>5</sup> This idea was further developed by Marx in his letter to Kugelman (29 November, 1869) and to Meyer

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- 1 K. Marx, Letter to Engels, (June 20, 1866), Cited by R. Palme Ditt in The International, (London, 1964), pp.20-21.
  - 2 K. Marx, and F. Engels, Labouring Class, (1953), pp.37-38, 195 and 236.
  - 3 Ibid., p.356.
  - 4 K. Marx and F. Engels, Soch., T.16, p.438.
  - 5 F. Engels, "Fergus O'Connor and the Irish People", in Voprosy Istorii, No.2, 1955, p.8.

and Vogat (9 April, 1870).<sup>6</sup>

But Marx and Engels supported the cause of national freedom in the overall interest of the struggle for democracy. It was for this reason that while supporting the national aspiration of Italy, Poland, Germany and Hungary while opposing the movement of the Czechs and the Southern Slaves as the latter were exploited by Tsarism to further its reactionary objectives in Europe. They favoured the cause of Polish independence as the separation of Poland from Russia would have undermined the strength of Tsarist Russia --- the gendarm of European reaction.

The first Socialist International founded by Marx included the right of national self-determination in its programme adopted in September 1865. It declared the urgent necessity of eliminating the growing influence of Russia in Europe by assuring to Poland the right of self-determination "which belongs to every other nation". The London Congress of the Second International also confirmed the right of national self-determination in 1896. But the Congress in Paris in 1900 did not reiterate it while the Amsterdam Congress in 1904 replaced it by demand for independence of the colonial people "to the extent compatible with their state of development". At the Stuttgart Conference it was just confined to a pious wish "to prepare the natives for independence". While

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6 K. Marx and F. Engels, Isbrannic Pisma, pp.227-29 and 234.



Kautsky paid lip service to it, Bauer and Renner distorted it into "cultural-national autonomy".

Lenin who was opposed to a general stand of unmitigated hostility towards nationalism needed for making a scientific study of nationalism, i.e., a concrete analysis of its concrete forms and not just an abstract discussion about it. In his work, The Right of Nations To Self-Determination, he wrote : "The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support. At the same time we strictly distinguish it from the tendency towards national exclusiveness..."<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, Lenin in many of his other works expressed categorical hostility to any and all forms of nationalism. Thus for example, he wrote that in Marxists, "all chauvinism and nationalism will find an implecable enemy ..." <sup>8</sup> He also declared that Marxists "resolutely oppose nationalism in all the forms ..." <sup>9</sup> There appear to be a contradiction in the division of nationalism by Lenin into "progressive" and "reactionary" and his opposition to nationalism in all his forms. But Lenin distinguished between the reactionary essence of nationalism and the possibility of its relative progressiveness in its concrete historical content. To him in the final analysis

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7 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 20, p. 412.

8 Ibid., Vol. 18, p. 421.

9 Ibid., Vol. 19, p. 548.

nationalism conflicted with the truly revolutionary tendency yet the concrete historical content of nationalism though related to and determined by its reactionary essence was something considerably broader. It may in part encompass relatively progressive democratic elements to which Lenin referred to as meriting support. Lenin's assessment of democratic factors in the concrete historical content of nationalism should not be mixed up with the entire social phenomenon of nationalism which is generally reactionary.

Marxism-Leninism makes a distinction between the "national" and the "nationalist". The latter is a "false one-sided and egoistical reflection of the national" while consistently opposing the nationalists for trying to absolutise the transient in the narrow class interest of the dominant exploiting class, Lenin also criticised those socialists who sought to counterpose the fight for "pure-socialism" to the national struggle. He wrote : "To imagine that a social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without the movement of non class conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian against the oppression of the landlords, the Church, the monarchy, foreign nations etc. --- to imagine this means repudiating social revolution. Only those who imagine that in one place an army will line up and say, "we are for socialism", and in another place another army will say,

"we are for imperialism", and that this will be the social revolution, only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic opinion, could vilify the Irish Rebellion by calling it a 'putsch'. Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.<sup>10</sup>

Lenin put forth the idea of supporting the really revolutionary bourgeois-democratic forces in the colonies subject to the condition of safeguarding the organisational and ideological independence of the Communists. It was Lenin who formulated the basis for the creation of an anti-imperialist united front. In the Colonial Commission of the Second Congress of the Comintern Lenin joined issue with M.N. Roy, Serrati and Sultanzade who argued that the support to the national movement headed by the national bourgeoisie would "only lead to the weakening of the proletarian class consciousness".<sup>11</sup> Lenin on the contrary wished to see the Communist in the oppressed countries to become the vanguard in the struggle for national independence. In his opinion the awakening national consciousness of the oppressed people had a progressive role.

Lenin's advice to the Communists in the colonies ran like this : "You will have to base yourself on the

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10 V.I. Lenin, "Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", Collected Works, Vol.22, (1916), p.356.

11 Cited by G. Adhikari, Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India, Vol.1, 1917-22, (Delhi, 1971), p.197.

bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples, and which has its historical justification".<sup>12</sup> He also warned them against the consequences of a hasty attempt to give "a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries".<sup>13</sup>

Lenin always pleaded for a creative search for more effective forms and means of struggle for socialism in consonance with national conditions and urged the Communists to apply the general principles of scientific socialism in a way that would "correctly modify these principles in certain particulars, correctly adopt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions".<sup>14</sup> Lenin also wrote, "all nations will arrive at socialism --- this is inevitable --- but all will do so in not exactly the same way, each will contribute something of its own to some form of democracy, to some variety of dictatorship of the proletariat, to the varying rate of social transformations in the different aspects of social life".<sup>15</sup>

Marxism-Leninism subscribes to the principle of Proletarian Internationalism which however does not come in the way of the Communist Parties of the different countries

12 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol.30, p.162.

13 Ibid., Vol.31, p.149.

14 Ibid., Vol.30, pp.161-62.

15 Ibid., Vol.23, pp.69-70.

from taking a prominent part in the struggle for national freedom and democracy. The international character of Communism is nothing but the carrying forward by the working class of the banner of the international brotherhood first raised by the bourgeoisie while fighting against the feudal monarchs and tyrants. An emphasis on the basic unity of the working class in different countries does not mean disregard for the national specifics.

The dialectical unity of the national and the international, the national and the social is becoming more and more clear in the present-day conditions of the struggle of the two world systems of Capitalism and Socialism. The fusion in our epoch of the two interconnected tasks --- anti-colonial (national) struggle and the struggle for social progress has resulted in the emergence of a new type of revolution designated in the Marxist literature as the national democratic revolution. In many Third World Countries the realisation of national goals through the deepening of social changes has become characteristic of the contemporary process. Anti imperialism is showing signs of growing into anti capitalism.

#### The Comintern and the National Liberation Movement

The October Revolution greatly changed the international environment and created conditions favourable for the formation for the Third International. The assault on imperialism, wage slavery and colonial oppression, needed

organisation and consolidation of forces on a world scale.

In January 1918 the first meeting for organising the Comintern was held in Petrograd followed by another meeting in Moscow in January 1919. On the evening of March 2, 1919 the first Congress of the Comintern opened in the Kremlin. Fifty two delegates from 35 organisations of 21 countries of Europe, America and Asia took part in it. Representatives of the oppressed peoples of Persia, China, Korea and Turkey participated in it. No representative from India however participated in the Congress.

The First Comintern Congress did not adopt any document on the colonial question but the guide lines of the Communist International stated in clear terms that, "The Comintern considers it it's obligatory task to establish a permanent and close bond between the struggle of the proletariat in the imperialist countries and the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples in the colonies and semi-colonies and to support the struggle of the oppressed peoples to facilitate the final breakdown of the imperialist world system".<sup>16</sup>

Indian representatives were invited to the Second Congress of the Comintern which met in Moscow in July 1920. M.N. Roy and his American wife Evelyn Roy participated as

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16 The Communist International --- A Short Historical Outline, (Moscow, 1970), pp.63-64.

official delegates from the Communist Party of Mexico. Abani Mukherji and M.P.B.T. Acharya were delegates from British India with no right to vote. Roy a former militant nationalist subscribing to the cult of violence and armed insurrection with foreign help to win India's independence, embraced Communism in a land far off of his country. A fancy for the path of armed struggle continued to haunt this "Bolshevik Brahmin". Before the session of Congress Roy met Lenin and discussed with him at length the subject of Communist line regarding India and the countries of the East. Their approaches differed widely. Roy harped on the dichotomy of national and class movements as Lenin took an integrated approach. The role and place of Gandhism in anti imperialist struggle was the crucial point of difference between the two. Roy records in his memoirs : "Lenin believed that, as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement he (Gandhi) was a revolutionary. I maintained that as a religious and cultural revivalist he was bound to be a reactionary socially, however, revolutionary he might appear politically".<sup>17</sup>

Roy being the first Indian Communist to come in contact with him, Lenin was naturally sympathetically inclined towards Roy. He asked him to draft the supplementary theses for the Second Congress of Comintern. Soviet scholar Resnikov discovered in the Party archives Roy's original draft with

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17 M.N. Roy's Memoirs, (Bombay, 1964), p.545.

numerous changes made in Lenin's hand. In the light of this discovery Roy's claim that his original draft was accepted by Lenin with only "verbal alterations" and adopted by the Congress together with Lenin's theses is hardly tenable. It is clear from a comparison of the original draft of Roy's theses with its amended version as finally adopted, as well as the record of the proceedings of the plenary session of the Congress and of the Colonial Commission of the Congress that the alterations made were of a substantial character and related to such dogmatic formulations as contradicted the general line of Lenin's theses. To say that Lenin himself compromised with the sectarian approach in Roy's theses is quite incorrect. The only change which Lenin agreed to make in his theses was substitution of the words "national revolutionary" for the "bourgeois democratic" movement which was not a substantial change at all.

The main thrust of Roy's sectarian position at the Second Congress was that the Comintern and the Communist Parties should not support the "bourgeois democratic nationalist movements" which were limited to small middle classes but should exclusively concentrate on the building of the Communist Parties and developing the workers and peasants movements. Roy also argued that "without breaking up of the colonial empire in the East, the overthrow of capitalism is not possible".<sup>18</sup>



Lenin rejected this view and insisted that support to the national liberation movement must be combined with the fight against the bourgeois democratic compromising tendencies and the struggle for building independent class movement and the Communist Parties. Lenin's theses also stressed the necessity of combined action of the workers of Europe fighting against capitalism and of the peoples of the colonies fighting for their national freedom.

Despite his disagreement with Roy over the appraisal of the rising national movement in India under Gandhi's leadership, Lenin agreed to give a free hand to Roy to pursue his favourite plan of leading a military expedition through Afghanistan to liberate India from the British colonial rule.

Roy expected to raise a nucleus of the Indian liberation army at Tashkent by giving military training to the Muslim Muhajirs who left India because of the British stand against the Caliphate in Turkey.

During his brief stay in Tashkent during the autumn and early winter of 1920-21 Roy came for the first time face to face with the practical problems of organising the Communist movement in the East as also the problems of establishing proletarian hegemony over the national struggle for liberation so energetically espoused by him at the Second Congress of the Comintern. Having quarrelled with Acharya and Abdul Rab, Roy was called back to Moscow alongwith his other compatriots.

In May 1921 when M.N. Roy reached Moscow a delegation of Indian revolutionaries consisting of representatives of the Berlin Committee was already there for talks with the Comintern. Aboul Rab and Acharya also joined this group. The Indian national revolutionaries stayed in Moscow for four months. They had several rounds of discussion with members of the Comintern Commission.

According to Roy the disapproval by the nationalist revolutionaries of the formation of C.P.I. in Tashkent and their demand for its dissolution as the condition for any cooperation gave a deadly blow to the talks in Moscow.<sup>19</sup> Roy's account however is not wholly satisfactory and is not corroborated by the account of Moscow talks given by Bhupendra Nath Dutta.

Roy thus continued to direct Comintern's policy towards India. He sought to influence the non-cooperation movement led by Gandhi from distant Moscow. If his experience at Tashkent prompted him to take a more cautious approach to social revolution in the colonies, the motive of consolidating his personal influence in the Comintern led him to continue his dogmatic line towards the bourgeois-led national movement in India.

Roy alternated between a sectarian and a realistic attitude towards the non-cooperation movement. Roy set-forth at length his ideas about the Contemporary Indian society and

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19 M.N. Roy Memoirs, pp.485-489.

the various forces operating in it in his book, India In Transition which was ready in October 1921 it came out of the press in April 1922 after the withdrawal of non-cooperation movement by Gandhi. In the preface of the German edition of the book, Roy declared that the liberal bourgeoisie would not play the revolutionary role which the European bourgeoisie played in 18th and 19th centuries. Roy accused the weak-kneed Indian bourgeoisie of concluding an alliance with imperialism in return for a promise of changes offering it better possibilities to develop as a class.<sup>20</sup>

It must however be said to Roy's credit that he never advocated an extremist adventurist line following the withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement. He wanted the movement with no tax campaign to be continued upto a general strike all over the country.

The Comintern failed to forge a working relationship with the Indian nationalists during the phase of the first mass struggle for national independence in the post World War I period. This happened inspite of the existence of an objective basis for cooperation between the two and tremendous sympathy in India for the ideals of the October Revolution. Roy's assessment of Gandhi and non-cooperation movement is generally criticised by both Communist and non-Communist writers. While the anti-Communist writers describe Roy's critical attitude towards the national movement in India as typical of inherent antipathy of Communism for nationalism, Communist scholars

have been critical of him for his failure to forge a cooperative relationship with the nationalist movement by distorting the correct Leninist line through his dogmatic and sectarian approach. Of course Roy undoubtedly played the major role in giving a sectarian slant to the Comintern's policy towards the nationalist movement. Yet it would be wrong to make Roy solely responsible for this. A zealous and youthful disciple of Lenin that he was, Roy must have been influenced by the master's remark about the Indian proletariat's growing maturity. Roy's mistake lay in mechanically to India the Marxist idea of hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois democratic revolution which Lenin had elaborated as far back as 1905 in his work "Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution". Later on, while elaborating his ideas on imperialism Lenin had pointed out the absence of barrier between the democratic (national) and socialist stages of the revolution in the new epoch which had brought to the fore not the bourgeois but the proletariat.

Lenin's correct theoretical formulation on the dialectical link between the national and the social aspects of the revolutionary process notwithstanding, the Manifesto of the First Congress of the Comintern in which Roy had not participated had spoken of the national liberational struggle "assuming an explicitly social character". The Theses on the world situation and the Tasks of the Comintern adopted at the Third Congress of

the Comintern had also overrated the level of capitalist development in India in the same manner as Roy's book India in Transition. It had stated : "The vigorous development of capitalism in the East, particularly India and China has created new social bases for the revolutionary struggle. The bourgeoisie of these countries tightened their bonds with foreign capital, and so become an important instrument of its rule. Their struggle against imperialism is essentially half hearted and feeble. The growth of indigenous proletariat paralyses the national revolutionary tendencies of the capitalist bourgeoisie, but at the same time the vast peasant masses are finding revolutionary leaders in the person of the conscious communist vanguard".<sup>21</sup>

Thus the Comintern failed to forge a working relationship with the Indian nationalists during the first phase of beginning of the mass struggle for national independence following World War I. Roy continued to urge a complete break with the Indian nationalists on the ground that bourgeois nationalism was bound to become conciliatory. At the Fourth Congress of the Comintern he reiterated his standpoint. Without directly rejecting Lenin's ideas about tactics of the United Front Roy argued that the bourgeoisie could be the vanguard of the movement in countries where it fought against feudalism.

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21 Jane Degras, (Ed.), The Communist International Documents, (London, 1956), Vol. I, p.234.

While in India it fought not against feudalism but against foreign capitalism. Roy's theses on the colonial question were turned down by the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, which called upon Communists to organise trade unions in the colonial countries and cooperate with bourgeois agencies struggling for national liberation.<sup>22</sup> In its theses on the Eastern question the 4th Congress stated "... the Communist International supports every national revolutionary movement against imperialism .... in the conditions prevailing in the West ... the slogan put forward is that of the proletarian United Front, but in the colonial east the slogan that must be emphasized at the present time is that of the anti-imperialist United Front ... a danger of an agreement between bourgeois nationalism and one or several rival imperialist powers is far greater in the semi-colonial countries like China or Persia, or in the countries which are fighting for their independence by exploiting inter-imperialist rivalries like Turkey, than it is in the colonies".<sup>23</sup>

The Fifth Congress of the Comintern held in June-July 1924 issued a manifesto supporting the revolutionary movements of the peoples of the East. The Congress recommended in a resolution that the executive council of the Communist International must expand direct contact with the "national movements for emancipation".<sup>24</sup> Roy it may be pointed out opposed this

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22 Ibid., pp.82-93.

23 Ibid., pp.393-94

24 Ibid., Vol.II, pp.156-9.

resolution and suggested "direct connection with the masses",<sup>25</sup>

At the Fifth Congress, Roy was reprimanded by the Chairman of the Colonial Commission Manuilsky for trying to challenge the Leninist course. He said: "Some deviations were recorded by the Commission. Roy, as at the Second Congress exaggerated the social movement in the colonies to the detriment of the national movement .... in regard to the colonial question Roy reflects the nihilism of Rosa Luxemburg. The truth is that a just proportion should be look for between the social movement and the national movement".<sup>26</sup>

Upto the Fifth Congress Roy's attempts at changing the correct Leninist line of the Comintern on the colonial question failed. Though he himself did not attend the subsequent sixth congress, his views were amplified by other diehard dogmatists from India. This Sixth Congress was characterised by a struggle between two trends, namely the Leninist line of the Second Congress and the sectarian challenge posed by Roy's views. Speaking at the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. Kunsinen the main speaker on the Colonial question at the Sixth Congress observed thirty years later that the Sixth Congress line "had a certain touch of sectarianism" in regard to the national bourgeoisie of the colonies and semi-colonies.

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25 International Press Correspondence, Vol.4, 25 July, 1924, pp.518-19.

26 Ibid., Vol.4, No.57, 12th August 1924, p.608.

The rupture of the alliance between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang on account of the action of Chiang-Kai-Shek resulted in a backlash of a sectarian approach. It served as a base for the apprehension that the national bourgeoisie would inevitably betray the cause of national liberation. The Congress also stressed the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolutionary movement of the colonies which meant that it must be achieved already at the anti-imperialist stage of the struggle when the national bourgeoisie had not yet earned the odium of coming to a compromise with imperialism. It should however be said to the credit of Kunsing that he disagreed with those who asserted that the nationalist bourgeoisie in India had already gone over to the side of counter revolution and united with the imperialists. Kunsing referred to the no tax campaign in Bardoli conducted on Gandhi's instruction, the participation of the Indian National Congress in the Anti-Imperialist League and the election of "Nehru Junior, a national revolutionary" as general secretary of the Indian National Congress as examples of certain revolutionary potentialities still possessed by the Indian national bourgeoisie.<sup>27</sup> The idea that the national bourgeoisie was bound to betray the cause of national liberation which was a running threat through all documents of the Sixth Congress represented a serious concession to left sectarianism. Indian delegates to the Sixth Congress Shaukat Usmani and Souendra Nath Tagor took an extremely critical attitude toward Gandhi and the Indian National Congress.



It was Shankar Usmani (Sikander Sur) who called Gandhi an "agent of imperialism".<sup>28</sup>

This deviation however was corrected at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern which reiterated the necessity of all anti-imperialist forces to unite. The Congress gave a call for the formation of united anti-imperialist front which was to be the main task for the Communist Parties <sup>in the colonial</sup> and semi-colonial countries. G.M. Dimitrov in his report to the Congress declared : "in India the Communist must support, extend and participate in all anti-imperialist mass activities, not excluding those which are under national reformist leadership, while maintaining their political and organisational independence, they must carry on active work inside the organisation which take part in the Indian National Congress facilitating the process of crystallisation of a national revolutionary wing among them, for the purpose of further developing the national liberation movement of the Indian peoples against British imperialism".<sup>29</sup> The leftist errors in the activity of the Communist Party of India were pointed out by Wang Ming who refer to them as "an example of how not to carry on the tactics of the United National Front".

Little progress however could be made in the task of forging a united anti-imperialist national front because of the widely divergent attitude of the Communist and the Nationalist towards the Second World War which broke out in 1939. The change in the Communist attitude toward after the Nazi invasion of the U.S.S.R. further aggravated these differences.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.1248.

<sup>29</sup> G. Dimitrov, The Fifteenth Anniversary of the Communist Party of China, The United Front, (New York, 1938), pp.61-62

**CHAPTER II**

**SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR TRANSFER  
OF POWER AND PARTITION OF INDIA, 1946-47.**

It was the desire to fulfil their internationalist duty and uphold the cause of democracy and socialism in the fight against Fascism which prompted the Indian Communists to take a stand in favour of British military efforts in India to attain victory in a conflict in which not only the fate of the U.S.S.R. but of the entire humanity was involved. However, the sophistication of their argument was not likely to carry conviction with the Indian masses who enthusiastically responded to the call of the Congress leadership to boycott Britain's military effort in India. This doomed the United front tactics of the Communists. Even their efforts in 1944 to establish cooperation with the Indian National Congress with Gandhi's help did not succeed. The communists had to quit the Congress and their relations with the national movement remained estranged during the crucial phase of negotiations for transfer of power leading to the partition of the country. This estrangement was bound to influence the Soviet perceptions of these developments in India to some extent. The changing international environment also conditioned these perceptions.

It is wrong to assert that because of its alliance with Britain in the war and the growing differences between the Communists and the nationalists in India the Soviet Union did not take much interest in Indian independence. Nehru, it may be recalled noted the clear distinction between British and Soviet war aims in his Discovery of India. He contrasted Churchill's shameless declaration about the non-applicability

of the Atlantic Charter to India with Stalin's declaration of Soviet war aims.<sup>1</sup> Just two weeks after the outbreak of the war, Soviet journal World Economy and World Politics as the "mass anti-imperialist organisation of the Indian people". The same journal carried an article by Halsen towards the end of 1942 surveying the political developments in India including the "Quit India Movement" sympathetically. The author expressed disagreement with the British propaganda which projected the movement as pro-Japanese. He pleaded for ending the political deadlock to ensure full mobilisation of India's resources for the war effort.<sup>2</sup> The Communist Party of India continued to support the war effort aimed at routing the main enemy, "Fascism", while demanding the release of the Congress leaders and urging the unity of the national forces.

When the war ended the Soviet Union was prevented by its preoccupation with the reconstruction of its devastated economy and the need to ensure its security in the cold war atmosphere from taking an active interest in the developments in Asia and Africa. The Comintern line of supporting United front action against imperialism adopted at the Seventh Congress which called for joint action with the nationalists was still

1 Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, (Calcutta, 1946), pp.397-8.

2 See Bimal Prasad's article "Soviet Victory in the Second World War and India's Struggle for Independence", in Historic Victory, (Bombay, New Delhi, 1973), pp.123-24.



valid. At the San Francisco Conference of the United Nations in May 1946 the Soviet foreign minister, Molotov, expressed his happiness over the presence of an Indian delegation and stated: "We know that the time will come when the independent voice of India will be heard too".<sup>3</sup>

The period 1945-47 represented the time of transition towards Indian independence. It is difficult to agree with American scholars Overstreet and Windmiller that the Soviet Union displayed an "indifferent attitude to Indian affairs during this period".<sup>4</sup> Writing in early 1945, Dyakov described the Congress as "undoubtedly a progressive organisation". Gandhi was portrayed by him as "the most influential and popular leader" in spite of the "strong imprint of backwardness" which his philosophy bore.<sup>5</sup> In his article published in Bolshevik December 1945 leading Soviet commentator, E. Zhukov while referring to the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition as heading the "forces of democracy", also urged that its programme be applied to the colonies.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, A.M. Dyakov in another article pointed out the paradox of India, a member of the U.N., not being granted the right of self determination. He wrote, "the fact that the colonies continued to be deprived of elementary political rights creates additional handicaps in the maintenance

3 The Hindu, December 1946.

4 Gene. D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, Communism in India, (1960), pp.223-25.

5 A.M. Dyakov, "The Indian Problem", The War and the Working Class, No.2, 1945, p.14.

6 E. Zhukov, "Porazheniye Iaponskogo Imperializma i Natsionalno - Osoboditel'naya borba Narodov Vostochnoi Azii", Bolshevik, (December 1945), p.80.

of international peace and security".<sup>7</sup> In his article referred to above Zhukov had also warned that granting of formal sovereignty to the colonies unaccompanied by economic independence would only be a mask for their continued subjugation as in the case of U.S. -- Philippines relationship. Zhukov had however refrained from placing India in the same category.

Though he did not identify the Indian National Congress as the embodiment of national liberation movement, Dyakov portrayed the national liberation movement as the struggle in which all classes in India with the exception of feudal princes and a section of the big landlords had a part to play.<sup>8</sup> The Soviet Indologist did not identify the Congress leadership with any single class and confined himself to the observation that the bourgeoisie played a large role in it. He even went to the extent of saying that the Congress aimed at complete independence of India and that its social and economic programme was under Indian conditions "Progressive". But Dyakov hastened to add that it was not clear whether the Congress would decisively and continuously fighting for achieving the goals put forward by it. Dyakov attributed to Pakistan as reflecting the strong urge of the bourgeoisie to control the whole of the Indian market. Stating that the Congress stood for a federative state, Dyakov took note of its omission to concede its constituents the right to seced. The Muslim League

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7 A.M. Dyakov, "India After the War", New Times, January 15, 1946, p.10.

8 A.M. Dyakov, "Sobremennaya Indiya", Bolshevik, (February, 1946), p.41.

though given less attention also came in for a sympathetic reference as the "most influential Muslim organisation". The Congress was also criticised for paying little heed to the needs of the Muslims. In a subsequent article Dyakov described Nehru as a "Progressive democratic" and praised him for his "in the main correct appraisal of the international situation". Patel and Rajendra Prasad on the other hand were characterized as narrow nationalists.<sup>9</sup> Dyakov was neutral on the issue of Pakistan. Though he mentioned that Rajagopala-chari supported the demand of the Muslim areas for a separate state which was also endorsed by the AIUC and other peasants and workers organisations. He also referred to the views of "many progressive Indian leaders "that partition of India was no solution of Hindu Muslim problems and would weaken the country".<sup>10</sup> The Soviet writer while maintaining that India was multinational, did not openly endorse the C.P.I. line on partition.<sup>11</sup>

To sum up the Soviet Union's attitude as reflected in the writings of its leading Indologists and Oriental scholars was far from extremist and dogmatic. Nehru was viewed as a progressive democrat, the Congress programme was

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9 A.M. Dyakov, "Indian National Congress Leaders", New Times, (May 15, 1946), pp.27-29.

10 Bolshevik, February 1946, pp.48-51.

11 For Dyakov's views on Multinational character of India's population, see his article, "India and her Peoples", New Times, March 1, 1946, pp.25-31.

progressive under Indian conditions and the national movement was still seen as an all class affair with the sole exception of the Indian Princes. While not extending open support to the League's demand for Pakistan, the Soviet writings did recognise the need for including the right to succession for the various nationalities of India to strengthen the unity of the country. The Muslim League was termed as the most influential Muslim organisation and the Congress leadership came in for mild criticism for neglecting the Muslims. Soviet scholars also took up a principled position in warning against the pitfalls ahead in the form of imperialist manoeuvres for keeping the peoples in the colonies under their continued exploitation while granting them nominal sovereignty.

At this juncture the British sent a cabinet mission to India in March 1946 which announced a plan of it's own on May 16, in view of the failure of the Congress and the League to reach an agreement. The Cabinet Mission plan was described in the Russian press as a new imperialist manoeuvres. The plan provided for a federal system with a weak central government. It also provided for an intermediate level of government based on regional groupings of provinces --- Hindu majority and Muslim majority areas.

Around this time the international security environment which had already deteriorated on account of the cold war began to increasingly condition the Soviet perceptions of



negotiations for transfer of power in India. The visit of Field Marshal Montgomery to India in June 1946 was suspected by Soviet commentator on colonial affairs, V. Balabushevich, to be a part of the British conspiracy to draw India's resources into the so-called defence plans after the introduction of the new constitution. The Bengal Governor Casey was reported by Balabushevich to have held talks with some Indian political leaders and projected bogey of Soviet menace before them. Balabushevich drew attention to a write-up in the National Herald, a paper close to Jawaharlal Nehru which stated: "the atmosphere is full of fears that India in its zeal to adjust with Britain may find itself compelled to support Anglo-American bloc, but the Congress would not allow it to be misled so easily".<sup>12</sup> Balabushevich also drew attention to the fear of the national congress right wing influenced by the big Indian capitalists like Birla and Tata affecting the policy to conclude an agreement with Britain. But he wrote that the national congress was not satisfied with the British proposals. According to Balabushevich the Cabinet mission plan gave some concession to the growing national freedom movement with a view to preserving the colonial position and keeping the country subordinate to the interests of British imperialism. He also accused the British of sowing the seeds of antagonism between the religious communities in India. He noted with satisfaction that a number

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12 V. Balabushevich, "Borba Indii za Nezavisimosti", Mirovoe Khozyaistvo, Mirovaya Politika, No.9, (1946), pp.39-55.

of Congress leaders and newspapers were inclined to view the interim government as not a threshold of total national freedom.

Soviet scepticism about developments in India continued to increase in October 1946. E. Zhukov wrote that Britain's essential tactics towards the nationalist movement throughout Asia was to isolate the more militant element and then strike a bargain with the right wing forces. He referred to the utilization by the imperialist powers of the "steadily strengthened reactionary tendencies of Kamalism in Turkey, the influence of Gandhism among the Indian National bourgeoisie, the treachery of the counter revolutionary right wing of the Kuomintang in China".<sup>13</sup>

In spite of some stiffening of Soviet attitude to political developments in India expressing fears of the Indian bourgeoisie walking into the trap of a compromise with British imperialism, the Soviets did not yet suggest that the Indian bourgeoisie or even the right wing of the Indian National Congress was prepared to accept a deal with the British colonialists.

A certain warmth towards the interim government headed by Nehru could still be noticed. Dyakov still characterised Nehru as a "left wing progressive" and noted that the Indian delegation

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13 E. Zhukov, "Velikaia Oktjabrskaiia Sotsialisticheskaiia Revolutsiia i Kolonialnii Bostok", Bolshevik, October, 1966, p.43.

to the U.N. included some progressive leaders.<sup>14</sup> Soviet Press hailed the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and the Soviet Union as "a sign that India is moving towards an independent policy".<sup>15</sup>

A sharp change in the Soviet perception of developments in India however became noticeable beginning with May 1947. A conference was held in that month in Moscow to discuss the views expressed by Varga in his recently published book. Varga had argued that the colonies were becoming economically less dependent on imperialist power and therefore there was a substantial industrial growth. This change in the economic status of the colonies some of which became even creditors of their imperialist rulers suggested by implication the strong possibility of attaining independence through an revolutionary process. Varga's hint of an evolutionary perspective for the colonies was condemned as an underestimation of the need for revolutionary struggle in the colonies.

In the first week of June 1947 the leaders of both Indian political parties gave their approval to the Mountbatten Plan which announced 15th August as the date for British withdrawal from India. The acceptance of the plan raised a wave of angry denunciation in the Soviet press. Dyakov decried the Mountbatten Plan as a British manoeuvre calculated to perpetuate imperialist control of the sub-continent.<sup>16</sup> Dyakov attributed its acceptance

14 A. Dyakov, Pravda, October 21, 1946.

15 New Times, April 18, 1947, p.15.

16 A.H. Dyakov, "The British Plan for India", New Times, June 13, 1947, pp.12-15.

by the parties to the strong pressure on the national congress leaders by the top levels of India's wealthy classes. Even now Dyakov did not abandon his old cautious approach, pleading ignorance about their "the leaders" true motives. He also hailed Nehru's declaration that the Indian Constituent Assembly would act as a sovereign body and not be limited by the British proposals.<sup>17</sup>

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17. Ibid. Later Dyakov came out with a well argued and more clearcut Soviet denunciation of the acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan for partition of India. He called the partition a "retrograde step" regarding the solution of the national problem. Dyakov wrote: "The acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan by the leaders of the Indian National Congress was result of a compromise and deal between the Indian bourgeoisie and the British imperialism. The deal is based on concessions made from both sides". Dyakov stated that the partition had not solved even a single socio-political problem of India but had only created a number of new and difficult problems in the relation between the two countries. He expressed an apprehension that "these problems may be exploited .... by British imperialism to exercise political pressure on both India and Pakistan". Dyakov noted that the Governor General of India, the joint commander in chief of India and Pakistan and many Governors in both the countries were British and that British capital retained its stronghold on the economies of the two states which clearly showed that the struggle for genuine independence was still far from completed.

See A.M. Dyakov, "Partitioned India", New Times, 14 January, 1948.

Yet whatever little caution was left in the Soviet approach was fully abandoned with the appearance of a sharply critical article by E. Zhukov in July 1947. According to Zhukov the leadership of the national congress which now represented the Indian big bourgeoisie had gone over to reaction in agreeing to the British proposals for a political settlement. Zhukov accused the leadership of capitulating before imperialism. It did not desire full independence and feared the masses more than it feared the British. Zhukov further wrote echoing the spirit of Stalin's 1925 speech at the Communist University for the Toilers of the East. Nehru was described by him as a millionaire and accused of throwing his weight behind the Right.<sup>18</sup> Zhukov, however, took a differentiating approach towards the rank and file Congress membership which still included progressive elements. Similarly the Muslim League's mass following was also distinguished from the reactionary leadership.

Another hallmark of Zhukov's article was his great stress on the role of the working class which was projected as the leading force of the anti-imperialist movement. Zhukov recommended a united front from below based on four classes. Besides the petty bourgeoisie the middle bourgeoisie also found a place in his united front concept.

Zhukov's concept of a four class united front did not find favour with other Soviet ideologues like Dyakov and

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18 E. Zhukov, "K Pologheniiu v Indii", ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
Mirovaia Kholiativnaia Mirovaya Politika, (July, 1947),  
 pp. 3-14.

Balabushevich who favoured a three class united front excluding the middle bourgeoisie Zhukov's formula called for a moderate programme as the basis for opposing the Nehru government whereas the three class Dyakov-Balabushevich formula aimed at revolution and projected radical programmes. The differences among the Soviet ideologues were further fanned by the discussion on the concept of People's Democracy which arose in the wake of establishment of new revolutionary regimes in East Europe.

According to American scholars John Kautsky and Overstreet and Windmiller, a debate on Indian developments took place at the June 1947 joint session of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow in which Balabushevich and Dyakov took up a stand against Zhukov. However, another American scholar Robert H. Donaldson who has minutely scrutinised all the published material of the Academy conference of June 1947 holds the view that no such debate ever took place in this conference.<sup>19</sup> Even if no debate on India was held in Moscow, it is obvious that two sets of views came to be aired in Soviets writings of mid 1947. As such it may be reasonably concluded that on the eve of Indian independence in August 1947 the earlier favourable Soviet outlook towards the Indian bourgeoisie including its leader Gandhi and Nehru and the Indian National Congress had undergone a big change. This has been admitted by Donaldson

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19 See Robert H. Donaldson, Soviet Politics Toward India: Ideology and Strategy, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1974), pp.72-73.

himself. A debate may or may not have taken place formally at the Academy Conference, divergent views were being fought with divergent implications for evolution of new revolutionary tactics were being aired around this time. On the whole, despite differences of nuance the views current among Soviet ideologues and indologists indicated changed perceptions manifested through a more critical approach towards the nationalist leadership and the national bourgeoisie of India. Of course to say this does not mean that no unambiguities were left and that the conflicting view point had become crystallised.

Despite differences over tactics to be followed for forging the anti-imperialist united front, all Soviet ideologues on India agreed in their assessment of the nationalist leadership's action of accepting the partition of India as capitulationist. Thus in general both the positions represented a great shift in the previous Soviet approach characterised by moderation. The fact that the shift in the Soviet perceptions of Indian developments took place roughly between March and June 1947, that is in the period which witnessed an escalation of cold war in the wake of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, can not be lightly dismissed as of no consequence. One can only speculate about the continuance of the old positive Soviet line towards the national movement in India led by the national bourgeoisie if the cold war had not forced a reconsideration. The atmosphere of suspicion to the growth of which the

cold war made no small contribution resulted in unfavourable and antagonistic perceptions of the Indian reality by the Soviets. Following a peaceful transfer of power which was viewed by Moscow as a compromise and betrayal by the national bourgeoisie, all its actions were seen in unfavourable light. Thus Zhukov viewed the Indian foreign policy of neutrality as essentially a justification of policies of closeness with British capitalists. Nehru's plea for retaining the Commonwealth ties was viewed by Zhukov as emanating from the necessity for maintaining military between Britain and India. The circulation of a report India and inter Asian communication at the Asian Relations Conference held in Delhi in April 1947 was seen as an anti Soviet act by Zhukov who highlighted from it the following phrase: "the growth of Soviet power and it's closeness to India necessitates the urgency to build roads in certain strategic places".<sup>20</sup> The discussions raised by several Indian officials at the Asian Relations Conference about the problem of defence of India from the imaginary "Northern expansion" was viewed and rightly so by Zhukov as submission of a part of Indian bureaucracy to British political and military plans. The cold war thus brought a new dimension to the Soviet perceptions of Indian developments. From the very beginning the Soviet approach towards the process of national liberation and the socio-political changes in colonial societies had been plagued by a perpetual dilemma of striking a proper



balance between the social and national as also the national and the international. The task became further tangled by the new complexities added by the Soviet involvement in the World War II. Moscow had no sufficient time to correct the many distortions inducted into it's perceptions by the war when it was again faced with new challenges arising this time from the cold war situation.

**CHAPTER III**

**TOWARDS AN EXTREMIST EVALUATION OF INDIAN  
POLITICAL SCENE**

In the preceding pages we have traced the beginning of a critical yet by no means an extremist evaluation of Indian political developments by leading Soviet ideologues. The conference of Soviet scholars convened in Moscow in May 1947 to discuss Varga's book and the report on the situation in India presented by E.M. Zhukov to the Soviet Central Committee's Academy of Social sciences somewhat later (a short version of it appeared in print in August 1947) fired the first shot in the discussion among Soviet specialists on the strategy to be followed in place of the earlier "united front from above" approach. Zhukov's report drew attention to the gauge-up of the big capitalist and feudal elements with British imperialism and their striking a compromise through their acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan.

Thus on the eve of India's independence the Soviets view of Indian politics which was relatively friendly in the aftermath of the war and which became cautious during 1946 now became openly critical. Soviet writings which had not taken any notice of the stand of the Communist Party of India now began to make frequent references to its criticism of the compromising attitude of the nationalist leadership at the instance of the big bourgeoisie. Zhukov's report made a dig at Gandhi's preference for violence in the struggle against the Communists while strictly exhorting the course of non-violent resistance against imperialism.<sup>1</sup> The new critical

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<sup>1</sup> See E. Zhukov, "K Polozheniiu v Indii", Mirovye Khranitel'stvo Mirovaya Politika, (July 1947), pp. 3-14.

approach to developments in India which was the result of the Soviet suspicion of an anti-Soviet collusion between the Indian nationalists and the British imperialists aimed at working out a new strategy of "united front from below" which by its very nature oriented towards the C.P.I., the revolutionary vanguard of the Indian working class.

This was the period when the Soviet and Yugoslav scholars were keenly debating various aspects of the concept of People's Democracy which had arisen after the establishment of Communist led regimes in East Europe in the wake of World War II. Soviet ideologists were inclined to view the People's Democracy as a new transitional state form in which the proletariat used the bourgeois democracy to promote the interest of the workers and peasants alliance. The Yugoslavs on the other hand treated Peoples Democracy not as transitional phase between bourgeois and socialist revolutions but a combination of the two following a strong anti-capitalist policy aimed at the bourgeoisie as a whole. The Yugoslavs pleaded for the replacement of bourgeois democracy by new forms of Soviet Democracy determined by the specific circumstances in each country.

The Yugoslav views were contained in the report presented to the Cominform Meeting held in Warsaw in September 1947 by Edvard Kardelj.<sup>2</sup> In his article published in the official theoretical journal of the Yugoslav Party Kardelj had called the National bourgeoisie a reactionary agent of the foreign imperialism and advocated the view that the victory of People's Democracy could

be achieved only through a violent revolution. The Yugoslav theoretician recommended a three class strategy to accomplish a version of People's Democracy in the colonies.<sup>3</sup>

The reaction of the Communist Party of India to Mountbatten Plan was one of mild criticism and general approval. The C.P.I. resolution called it an important concession and "new opportunities for national advance". It was looked upon as a partial satisfaction of the nationalist demands. The C.P.I. resolution conceded that the Indian big business was aligned with British imperialism as also the feudal landlords and had great influence over the right wing of the Congress leadership yet the C.P.I. was still working on the assumption that the compromising elements of the big bourgeoisie did not dominate either the Congress organisation or the new government. The C.P.I. referred to the Congress as the "main national democratic organisation" and urged the Congress leadership to consistently implement the professed anti-imperialist democratic programme of the Congress offering the Party's full cooperation in this direction. It may be recalled that R. Palme Dutt, the British mentor of the C.P.I. also viewed the Mountbatten Plan as an "enforced retreat of imperialism and did not criticise the Congress leadership for accepting it.

The early reaction to Mountbatten plan was far less sympathetic. It was a "new imperialist manoeuvre". But Soviet writers put the blame on the British rulers and refrained from calling the Congress leaders reactionary. Thus in his lecture

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3 See Edward Kardelj, Problems of International Development, (Bombay : PPH, ), pp.28-32.

delivered in early July, V. Avarin while alluding to the Congress fears of the mass movement and making a general remark that it (The Congress) was "falling under the influence of elements prepared to come to an agreement with British imperialism, did not use the label "reactionary" for the Congress leaders whose acceptance to the Mountbatten Plan was said to have been motivated by a desire "to find a way out of the political impasse."<sup>4</sup> Similarly Dyakov's article in *Izvestia* merely attacked British policy and omitted any critical attack on the nationalist leadership.<sup>5</sup>

The restraint/<sup>reflected</sup> by these ture writings of July 1947 appears to be in sharp contrast with Zhukov's article referred to above. Zhukov had dubbed the acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan as an alliance of British imperialism and Indian "big capitalist and feudal elements". Zhukov had attributed this deal to the fear of the mass national liberation movement as well as the American attempt to elbow out Britain from its colonial markets by extending support to India's independence. Zhukov had also alleged that the Indian big bourgeoisie was employing Gandhism for "poisoning the masses with disbelief in their strength". Gandhi was described by him as the "apostle of backwardness" and Nehru "a rich millionaire" who had recently evolved toward the right and was currently supporting the general

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4 V. Avarin, "Politicheskie Izmeneniia na Tikhom Okeane Posle Vtoroi Mirovoi Voini", (Moscow, 1947).

5 See *Izvestia*, 5th July, 1947.

aims of the big bourgeoisie in preserving the ties with Britain. The omission of Dyakov and Avarin to criticize either Gandhi and Nehru or the Indian National Congress showed that the Soviet thinking though moving towards a more critical appraisal of Indian developments in general was still far from unambiguous.

Meanwhile the Communist Party of India was slowly moving towards a more militant anti-nationalist line. The success of the revolutionary peasant movement in Telengana began to influence the views of the Indian communists. A sharp struggle was going on in the C.P.I. between the Right Wing Joshi faction and the radical left wing led by Randive. At this juncture the speech delivered by Zhdanov at the first Cominform meeting held in Poland in September 1947 came as a big morale booster for the radical C.P.I. faction which seized upon it as an endorsement of its struggle.

But the Zhdanov theses was far from an endorsement of a militant left line for India. His reference to the two camps in the world -- the imperialist and anti-democratic camp headed by the U.S. and the anti-imperialist democratic camp headed by the USSR was no blanket rejection of the policies of the newly independent countries like India. Infact Zhdanov's remarks about the two camps was made in the context of the situation in Europe which had worsened in the wake of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Zhukov had only briefly referred

to the "sharpening of the crisis of the colonial system" resulting from the war and to "increasing armed assistance" to imperialism by colonial peoples. The two passing references to India in the speech of Zhdanov were far from a denigration of the new nationalist regime. Zhdanov mentioned the attempts at blackmailing and frightening "in particular" China and India by "instigators of a new war" with the aim of keeping them under "imperialist enslavement". This, however, did not mean that India and China had joined the anti-democratic camp. Zhdanov included Indonesia and Vietnam in the anti-imperialist camp, and observed that "India, Egypt and Syria sympathise with it."<sup>6</sup>

But the Zhdanov speech while pointing to the imperialist threat to India and China did not spell out whether the new strategy in these countries was to be anti-capitalist as well as anti-imperialist. Neither the C.P.I. nor the Chinese Communist were mentioned by Zhdanov. The other speech at the Cominform meeting delivered by the Yugoslav ideologue Kardelj called for fusion of the democratic and socialist revolutions. This speech was published in the official C.P.I. journal Communist in January 1948. In November 1947 another conference of Soviet Indologists was held at the Pacific Institute of Moscow which heard reports on the October Socialist Revolution and the countries of the East. No disagreements surfaced at this meeting which according



to Donaldson paid "more attention than usual" to the "leading role of the C.P.I. in the national movement."<sup>7</sup>

It was not before December 1947 when Zhukov published an article in Bolshevik under the title "The sharpening Crisis of the colonial system" that an attempt was made to apply the Zhdanov thesis to the colonies in a detailed manner. Zhukov argued that a change had taken place in the leadership of the national liberation movement. With the betrayal of the "big national-compradore and industrial-bourgeoisie". The leadership role had passed on to the working class and the Communist Parties. According to Zhukov in many countries of the East the Communist Party had become "the soul and organizer of the block of national-democratic forces" unity proletariat peasantry and "in many countries even part of the bourgeoisie, chiefly petty and middle. Yet while Zhukov mentioned the Communist Parties of China, Indonesia and Vietnam as examples of working class leadership of the national democratic forces, the Indian communists found no mention in his article.

The C.P.I. had already taken a clearly anti-Nehru stand at the December meeting of its Central Committee. Before its second party Congress met to confirm its policy change in February-March 1948. The conference of the youth and students of South-East Asia held a little earlier in Calcutta helped the C.P.I. in effecting a change in its policy. While there was no

General approval of armed struggle nor a clear condemnation of neutralist governments at the Calcutta youth Conference, the military successes of the Chinese, Indonesian and Indo-Chinese struggles and a marked antipathy towards the national bourgeoisie provided the major thrust to the speeches of the delegates, the Second Congress of the C.P.I. adopted a extremist line under the influence of Yugoslav delegates. No Soviet delegate had attended this Congress. The political thesis adopted at the Congress declared that a "revolutionary upsurge" was in motion in India and that the final phase of revolution, the phase of "armed clashes" had arrived. This people's democratic revolution, it said, involved the consummation of the task of democratic revolution together with socialist construction.

But as already stated neither the Bolshevik December 1947 article by Zhukov nor the subsequent article by Dyakov published in New Times of January 14, 1948 appear to anticipate the new militant line of the C.P.I. On the contrary an article by V. Balabushevich ("India Posle Razdela" in Mirovaia Politika, December 1947) echoed the Joshi line by referring to the Mountbatten Plan as a real concession and a step ahead for India. It is significant that as late as June 1948 Dyakov did not refer to the Indian situation as revolutionary. He only spoke of the peoples "deep disappointment" with the new government and and declared that the governments of India and Pakistan "are

becoming more and more isolated from the masses ... and tools of imperialism".<sup>8</sup> Another article by M. Alexeev appearing in the June 1948 issue of the Bolshevik stated clearly that only the big bourgeoisie which was the dominant force in the Nehru government had turned reactionary. The author pleaded for United front of the workers, peasants and the petty bourgeoisie and cited Stalin's authority in its favour. The middle bourgeoisie included by Zhukov in this front was omitted by Alexeev.

Thus Soviet writings continued to air different views regarding the Indian situation upto mid-nineteen forty eight. It is only with the appearance of Dyakov's book, Natsionalnyi Voprosi Angliiskii Imperializm V Indii, in 1948 that the ambiguity which marred the Soviet view of Indian developments finally disappeared. Dyakov's book offered a comprehensive analysis of the <sup>book</sup> offered a comprehensive analysis of the ethnic composition of the Indian population. Dyakov argued that the national movement in India was dominated not by the big bourgeoisie of the country as a whole but few nationalities represented by the Gujarati Marwari business group which wanted to monopolise the Indian market jointly with the British capitalists. According to Dyakov the Gujarati Marwari big bourgeoisie oppressed not only the workers peasants and the petty bourgeoisie but also the weaker bourgeoisie of a number of other Indian nationalities such as the Marathi, Bengali, Telugu etc. He called upon the

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<sup>8</sup> A Dyakov, "The situation in India", New Times, (June 2, 1948), pp.14-17.

Communists to support the national movements of these peoples. Dyakov's formula was approved by Zhukov who reviewed his book in the February 1949 issue of the Bolshevik. While commenting Dyakov's plea for considering weaker nationalities as allies of the progressive movement, Zhukov criticised Dyakov for underemphasising the agrarian aspect of the revolution in India. As an implicit criticism of R ndive's line of orthodox proletarian socialist revolution oriented to armed urban uprising, Zhukov's views only foreshadowed the coming Soviet support for the four-class strategy for Indian revolution which has been interpreted by leading western writers on Indian communism like Overstreet and Windmiller as endorsement of the Chinese model for India by Soviet ideologues. We shall however examine this question at greater length in the next chapter.

**CHAPTER IV**

**THE VICTORY OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION AND SOVIET  
ENDORSEMENT OF THE PATH OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY IN  
INDIA 1949-51**

The urban basis of the Randive leadership of the C.P.I. soon came under fire by the Andhra Communists. In a letter in June 1948 the Andhra group invoked the example of the rural based Chinese revolution as more suitable to India than the Russian model. The Andhra Communists favoured an agrarian revolution in the style of Mao-Tse-tung's "New Democracy". The Soviet press and the Cominform organ began to take notice of Mao-Tse-tung's strategical pronouncements in January 1948. The Pravda of January 6 and the Cominform organ For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy 1 of January 15 carried extracts from Mao's speech of December 1947 wherein he had underscored the Chinese parties opposition to feudalism and monopoly state capital. In this speech Mao had favoured the policy of protecting the "national industry and trade" of the "middle class bourgeoisie" which had suffered as a result of the oppressive rule of Kuomintang. Mao had urged a "broad united front embracing the overwhelming majority of the population ... Under the firm leadership of the Communist Party", and had warned against "pursuing an erroneous ultra-leftist policy in regard to the petty and middle bourgeoisie".<sup>1</sup>

However the publication of these views of Mao in the USSR did not mean an endorsement of their application in other Asian countries. This did not take place until mid-1949 although Randive in his polemics against the Andhra committee's advocacy of Mao's "new democratic" path quoted at length from Lenin, Stalin and the theses of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in

support of his views that the bourgeois democratic revolution had no place in India where a democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants was required to build socialism.

Pravda published in June 1949 a long article by Liu Shao-Chi. The article had been written about one and half year earlier and was a critique of the Yugoslav line. At the end of this article Liu had hinted at the "objective progressive historical significance" in such countries as China, India, Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Burma, Egypt etc. Liu urged the communists in Asian countries to follow the strategy worked out by Lenin in 1920 and specifically called upon the communists in India and other Asian colonies not to commit a "grave mistake" of rejecting an alliance with bourgeois nationalism however "unreliable, temporary and unstable" it might appear to be. To be fair to Liu, he also advocated the necessity of a "firm and irreconcilable policy" against the "big bourgeoisie which had already surrendered to imperialism".<sup>2</sup> But if Liu's article was an exhortation for following the Leninist line of 1920; it also as Donaldson had rightly pointed out contained an idea expressed by N.N. Roy at the Second Congress where he had asserted that victory of the national movement in the colonies would result in the success for the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries.

The key ideas contained in Liu's article published in Pravda in June 1949 also emerged from discussions at a joint session of Economic and Pacific Institutes of the Academy of

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2 Cited by Robert H. Donaldson, op. cit., p.86.

Sciences held in June 1949. E. Zhukov delivered the main address at the Moscow conference under the title "Problems of the National Colonial Struggle Since the Second World War". Zhukov highlighted the armed struggle in Indonesia, Indochina, Malaya and Burma and the "peasant uprisings in India" as evidence of a higher stage of national liberation movement which was now being led by the working class and the communist party. In place of the immediate goal of the previous stage which was confined to bourgeois democracy, the goal of the present stage was described as establishment of peoples-Democracy. Zhukov took care to describe the peoples democracy in the East as similar in its general pattern to its manifestation in Europe --- "a special form of regime which corresponds to the path of transition from capitalism to socialism and has become possible owing to the victory of socialism in the USSR and the strengthening of the democratic forces throughout the world". He however admitted of the possibility of an Asian variant because of the "more protracted" period of transition to socialism in view of the greater range of bourgeois democratic tasks to be achieved by the revolution in the East. Among the classes vitally interested in the success of people's democracy in the colonies and semi-colonies, Zhukov included besides the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, a certain section of middle bourgeoisie as well facing competition from the imperialist bourgeoisie.<sup>3</sup>

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3 E. Zhukov, "Voprosy Natsionalno-Kolonialnoi Borbi Posle Vtoroi Mirovoi Voiny", Voprosy Ekonomiki, No.9, 1949, pp.55-59.



V.V. Balabushevich in his report also admitted that certain groups of the bourgeoisie in competition with foreign capital or belonging to backward national areas could become temporary though not reliable "follow-travellers of the democratic forces".<sup>4</sup> The Telengana movement was described by Balabushevich as the first attempt to establish people's democracy in India. Dyakov in his article projected Telengana as the noddle point of peasant, anti-feudal and national movements proceeding under the communist leadership.<sup>5</sup>

In the latter half of 1949, the Soviet press gave publicity to the statements of the Chinese leaders who were now emerging victorious in the revolutionary struggle in China. Pravda of July 6, 1949 carried Mao's views on people's democratic dictatorship emphasising his formula of four days alliance under the leadership of the working class. Writing in the Pravda of November 1949 Dykov alleged that the American imperialists were planning to shift to Nehru's India their main base in the East after the overthrow of Chiang's regime.

Liu Shao-Chi's speech at the trade union conference of the Asian and Australian countries held in Peking in December 1949 reprinted in both Pravda and Cominform journal clearly stated that the Chinese Path "must be followed by the peoples of

4 V. Balabushevich, "Novyi Etap Natsionalnoi-Osvoboditelnoi Borby Narodov Indii", Voprosy Ekonomiki, No.8, 1949, pp.30-48.

5 A.M. Dyakov, "Krisis Angliiskogo Gospodstva v Indii i Novyi Etap Osvoboditelnoi Borby ee Narodov" in E.M. Zhukov, (ed.), Krisis Kolonialnoi Sistemy i Natsionalno-Osvoboditel' naja Bor'ba narodov Vostochnoi Azii, (Moscow, 1949), pp.87-123.

many colonial and semi-colonial countries in their struggle to win national independence and a people's democracy. ... This path is Mao Tse-tung's path".<sup>6</sup> Liu included India in the list of the countries in which an armed struggle had already begun. However, the Cominform paper For a Lasting Peace, For People's Democracy in its editorial on January 27, 1950 while quoting from Liu's speech and endorsing his comments on the Chinese path, excluded India from the list of countries following the path of armed struggle.

Nevertheless it left no doubt that the other features of "Chinese Path" were applicable to India also. Soviet endorsement of the four-class strategy in India and their publicity of Mao's views endorsing this strategy in their press as also of the exhortation by Liu Shao-Chi to follow the "Chinese path ... Mao Tse-tung's path", did not imply a recognition by them of the Chinese origin of this strategy. The idea of an alliance with the national bourgeoisie was advocated by Lenin himself. Stalin in his 1925 speech dealing with India had distinguished between the "compromising" and "revolutionary" sections of the bourgeoisie and had enjoined upon the Indian communists to form an alliance with the latter section. But Stalin's anti-big bourgeoisie tactics was advanced within the framework of a two stage revolution under the leadership of the working class, with the first stage aimed at overthrowing imperialism and feudalism to be followed subsequently by destruction of indigenous capitalism. It is difficult not to agree with Donaldson who holds that "Soviet writers in the post-war period, even when they employed the term

"Chinese Path", were not ~~xxxxxx~~ unaware that Mao's basic approach was not original with him".<sup>7</sup> In fact, it is possible to discern in Zhukov's report to the joint session of the Economics and Pacific Institute's held in Moscow in June 1949 a stress on the essentially common features and characteristics of the new phenomenon of people's democracy in both East Europe and the orient with only some variations due to the extended character of transition in the East. From the beginning Soviet ideologues were never inclined to accept the claims made by Liu Shao-Chi that Mao changed Marxism from a European to an Asiatic form.

Soviet orientalists have taken pains to prove that Mao's claims to be the founder of Asian Marxism have no basis, and that his concept of "new democracy" was far from original and based on the strategical innovations of Lenin and Stalin. Even during the mid-1949 discussions among Soviet orientalists G.V. Astafiev harped on the indebtedness of the entire Chinese movement to the ideas of Lenin and Stalin. In his long article included in the 1949 volume edited by Zhukov Astafiev reproduced numerous quotations from Stalin's works to prove Stalin's brilliant foresight. Under scoring the role of Soviet victory over the Fascist aggressors in creating an atmosphere favourable to the outcome of revolutionary struggle in China as also the benefit

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7 R.H. Donaldson, op. cit., p.92.

derived from the experience of the CPSU, he however described the Chinese successes as "a vast treasury of revolutionary experiences".<sup>8</sup> Soviet writings as Donaldson observes refer to the Chinese path not because the Chinese had originated it but because the Communist Party of China had successfully applied what to them represented a product of Soviet theoretical insights.<sup>9</sup>

Thus by January 1950 a broad agreement had emerged among Soviet orientalists about the strategy of the revolution in India. The new strategy was based on a broad united front of the four classes of workers, peasants, petty-bourgeoisie and the revolutionary section of the national bourgeoisie for waging a struggle under the hegemony of the proletariat and its party for a revolution primarily agrarian and directed against imperialism, feudalism and big capital. The Nehru government and the Congress leadership were both characterised as pro-imperialist and anti-national. Soviet assessment of the new Indian constitution was extremely critical. In a commentary on the Indian constitution published in the New Times under the title "Indian version of bourgeois pseudo-democracy", T. Yershov wrote that the Indian constitution perpetuated the "dominant position of the foreign imperialists". He also observed: "The Indian constitution in no way hinders foreign monopolists and the native big bourgeoisie and feudal landlords from exploiting the working people. But it does restrict the right of the working people to fight against exploitation."<sup>10</sup> The reservations on the prescription of a violent

8 G.V. Astafiev, "Ov Polukolonii K Narodnoi Demokratii", in E.M. Zhukov, (ed.) op. cit., pp.29-86.

9 Donaldson, op. cit., pp.92-93.

10 New Times, No.11, 15th March 1950, pp.3-7.

form of people's democratic revolution for India even now continued to persist among Soviet theoreticians. The January 1950 editorial of the Cominform organ, For a lasting peace, For a People's Democracy omitted India from the list of Asian countries where armed revolutionary struggle was going on but the May 19, 1950 editorial of the same paper included India in the list of such countries. It also noted: "in the present conditions, as shown by the experience of China, armed resistance to the imperialist plunderers is the most effective form".

But no sooner ~~was~~ a broad consensus of views among Soviet ideologues on India was reached by the end of 1950 favouring a four class united front from below against imperialism and feudalism in the international scene began to undergo vast changes which called for a reappraisal of the policy of duplicating the Chinese revolution. The emergence of Communist China in October 1949 at the doorsteps of India compelled the west-oriented bourgeois Indian regime to have second thoughts about its international policy having a definite tilt towards the west. The Nehru regime came out with peace proposals for Korea and started supporting Communist China's claim for a U.N. Seat. It also rejected the western feelers for a regional military alliance put forward at the Conferences in Colombo and Baguio. The need to strengthen the peace movement against the global western strategy of forging military blocs and acquisition of military bases also called for a review of the policy of unmitigated hostility towards the new bourgeois nationalist regimes in Asia. A hint of impending reappraisal of the left sectarian policy appeared in an interview

between British Communist leader R. Palme Dutt and the two Indian Communists in which Dutt linked the peace movement to the struggle for real national independence. Indian Communist leaders, Rao, Dange, Ghosh and Basava Funniah made a trip to Moscow early in 1951 to get a brief in the form of the document called the "tactical line" which formed the basis for the C.P.I.'s draft programme and statement of policy issued by the C.P.I. in April 1951. The C.P.I. Statement of policy reminded the Indian Communists about the need to take account of the national peculiarities of India and utilize the lessons of both Russia and China. The peasant struggle along the Chinese path alone, it concluded, cannot lead to victory in India. The document advocated "a path of Leninism applied to Indian conditions". While admitting that the present crisis was deep, it called the assessment of the situation as revolutionary a "gross exaggeration". Thus ended the brief period of extremist Soviet perception of Indian reality. The groundwork was laid for replacement of the so-called "Chinese path" by what came to be termed as the "Indian Path". Soon the development of friendly ties of cooperation with the newly independent India was held out as a model for the relations of the USSR with the countries of the Third World having a different social system.

**CHAPTER V**  
**NEW SOVIET APPRAISAL OF INDIAN POLITICAL**  
**DEVELOPMENTS, 1951-55**

It was through the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain that Moscow sought to effect a change in the militant extremist line of armed struggle against the bourgeois nationalist regime adopted by the Indian Communists. The line had gone too far to sow the seeds of antagonism between India and the USSR ~~and~~ without any gains in the direction of promoting a social revolution. The situation called for a retreat from the position of rigid hostility towards the government headed by them. R.P. Dutt answered five questions addressed to him by the C.P.I. in his letter on the situation on India. He stressed the need for mobilising the peace movement against the Anglo-American bloc for the liberation of Asia. Dutt called for support to progressive actions of Nehru's foreign policy. He pleaded for recognition of Nehru as a potential friend of peace in view of his initiative to terminate the war in Korea and support for the admission of China to U.N. Nehru's policy was still not viewed by Dutt as consistent peace policy who favoured extending support to hesitant and limited opposition offered by the Indian rulers to the imperialist war policy. Underscoring the link between peace and freedom, Dutt suggested a new tactical line for India --- the line of united front with leftist parties and organisations from above and united front from below in relation to the Congress. Dutt rejected the path of armed struggle in the Indian conditions.<sup>1</sup>

After the April 1951 meeting of the C.P.I. Politburo which adopted the Draft Programme and the statement of the policy of C.P.I.

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<sup>1</sup> See Devan and Bal Krishna, Talks with Comrade R.P. Dutt, PH 2 Unit, January 6, 1951.



Rajeshwar Rao resigned as General Secretary. The new programme followed Dutt's views. It recommended the four class strategy and did not demand establishment of Socialism in the initial stage of development. The C.P.I. kept Britain and America separately considering the United States as the chief enemy of peace and Britain of national freedom. Both the draft programme and the statement did not stress the issue of peace as Dutt had done. The election Manifesto of the C. P.I. declared that a government tied to imperialism could not pursue an independent foreign policy, a genuine policy of peace. The extended plenum of the Party held at the end of 1952 criticised the party for neglecting the peace movement but the resolution of the Central Committee meeting of March 1953 again projected Britain as the main enemy of national freedom and characterised the Nehru government as a collaborator of imperialism.

The Third Congress of the C.P.I. held at Madurai in December 1953 --- January 1954 witnessed the sharp debate over the attitude towards the Nehru government. The political resolution adopted at Madurai represented an uneasy compromise while opposing the government in general the party supported its specific acts. The inner party controversy continued to weaken the party. Ajoy Ghose left for Moscow late in July 1954 ostensibly for medical treatment. R.P. Dutt again raised his voice to help the Party overcome its inner differences over the issue of peace and freedom. He stated that the fight for national independence was inseparable from the fight for peace. Ajoy

Ghosh wrote an article in the New Age weekly on his return from Moscow in December 1954 in which he posed the following questions : "Can any serious student of Indian affairs deny that the foreign policy of Pandit Nehru's government has undergone a shift in the last few years".<sup>2</sup> Ghosh declared support for this change and said at a press conference on December 7 : "the internal policy of the Nehru government does not suit the interests of the masses while the foreign policy does".

The C.P.I.'s acceptance of Moscow's changed attitude towards the bourgeois Indian government headed by Nehru was signified by Ajoy Ghosh's statement in December 1954. In fact a change in the Soviet attitude could be noticed from 1952 onwards during the last days of Stalin. The Soviet policy towards India was under review during this period even though the assessment of the Indian situation in Soviet academic circles continued to be far from favourable. As a matter of fact Soviet Union's offer of 50,000 tonnes of wheat to India in 1951 was the earliest indication to Moscow's interest in wooing India. The same year at a trade conference at Singapore the Soviet delegate suggested exchange of such Indian products as jute, tea, rice, rubber and spices with Soviet industrial equipments. U.S.S.R. displayed its products at an International

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2 New Age, Ajoy Ghosh, "Communist Answer to Pt. Nehru", New Age, (December 5, 1954).

industrial exhibition held in Bombay in January 1952. The offer of Soviet machinery equipment on payment in national currency was repeated in an article published in Soviet Weekly, New Times.<sup>3</sup> Stalin's work Economic Problems of Socialism suggested economic cooperation with the newly independent countries. Stalin wrote that the socialist world market would soon find it necessary to locate outside markets for its surplus products. The policy of peaceful coexistence has thus begun to take concrete shape during the last days of Stalin. In his reply to a question put to him by a group of American journalists Stalin had stated : "the peaceful co-existence of communism and capitalism is fully possible".<sup>4</sup>

Malenkov's report to the 19th Congress of the C.P.S.U. also stated that the Soviet Union stood for, "and now advocates the development of trade and co-operation with other countries irrespective of differences in social systems".<sup>5</sup> The then Soviet Ambassador in India, K.V. Novikov offered Soviet assistance for Indian development projects. He also expressed a keen desire of his country for closer trade relations with India. Indian businessmen participated in the international economic conference in Moscow in April 1952. Stalin granted an interview to Indian Ambassador Dr. S. Eadhakrishnan and also received his successor Mr. K.P.S. Menon who was the last foreigner to meet him before his death.

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- 4 Denise Folliot, (Ed.), Documents on International Affairs, 1952, (London, 1955), p.225.
- 5 L. Grulicov (Ed.), Current Soviet Politics : The Documentary Record of the 19th Party Congress and the Reorganisation after Stalin, (New York, 1953), p.106.

Stalin's successor continued to deepen the new course. In his August 8, 1953 speech to the Supreme Soviet, Malenkov declared: "Of great importance for the promotion of peace in the East is the attitude of so big a country as India. India has made substantial contribution to the efforts of the peace-loving countries to stop the Korean War. Our relations with India are growing firmer, and cultural and economic intercourse with her is becoming wider. We hope that relations between India and the Soviet Union will become stronger and develop in a spirit of friendly cooperation".<sup>6</sup>

In 1955 the Soviet move towards befriending the Indian regime gained considerable momentum. The trade agreement concluded in December 1953 came in for the following favourable comment in a 1954 Soviet publication: "The conquest by the Indian people of the state independence creates the conditions for the development of national economy".<sup>7</sup>

If the fear of a strong communist neighbouring China forced the ruling classes in India to correct their pro-West tilt and take initiative for peace in Korea and advocate the admission of Communist China to the U.N., the conclusion of American military aid agreement with Pakistan in February 1954 embittered Indo-U.S. relations. Nehru condemned the U.S. action towards expansion of the military bloc politics to India's door-steps and tried to meet the growing <sup>U.S.</sup> threat to peace and security in Asia through launching the movement for non-alignment. The

6 Supplement to New Times, No.33, 1953, p.15.

7 See I.S. Patapov, (ed.) Neshomarnochnaia Tokkoviia, contribution by A.A. Kutsenkov and A.B. Frumkin, "India" (Moscow, 1955), pp.614-635. Also V. Solodovnikov, "Soviet Union and the Under-developed countries", New Times, No.52, (1954), pp.12-14.

who  
 Soviets were looking for a wide popular support for their peace offensive against imperialism now began to look to Nehru as their potential ally. In April 1954, India and China concluded an agreement on Tibet which incorporated in its preamble the famous five principles of co-existence. Improved Sino-Indian relations resulted in exchange visits by Nehru and Chou-En-Lai in the same year. The Soviet Press showered praise on the development of Sino-Indian ties. An article in the C.P.S.U. organ Kommunist voiced criticism of the resolution passed by the C.P.I.'s third Congress. Its author G. Bondarevsky, highlighted the mounting threat faced by India from American imperialism.<sup>8</sup>

In January 1955 the Indian National Congress at its Avadi session proclaimed the establishment of a socialist pattern of society as the goal of its economic planning. In April 1955 India played an important part at the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian states. India's role at the Conference was lauded by E.M. Zhukov.<sup>9</sup> Zhukov expressed the conviction that close cooperation between the communist and the nationalist against the common imperialist enemy was both possible and necessary.

The stage was thus set for the exchange of state visit of Nehru and the Soviet leaders in 1955. The joint declaration after the conclusion of Nehru's visit affirmed that Soviet Indian

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8 G. Bondarevsky, "Shpanskiye Monopolii SSHA v Indii", Kommunist, No. 12, (1954), pp. 121-128.

9 E.M. Zhukov, "The Bandung Conference and its Historic Significance", International Affairs, No. 5, (1955), pp. 18, 28.

relations could be guided by the five principles of the peaceful coexistence and that the existence of different social systems should not be a barrier to cooperation between them. The Soviet leaders Khrushchev and Bulganin took note of Nehru's declared intention of leading India along the socialist path. "That is good. Of course, our conceptions of socialism differ. But we welcome this statement and the intention",<sup>10</sup> --- said Khrushchev in one of his speeches. Bulganin praised Gandhi as a "glorious patriot". He said: "We, Lenin's pupils, do not share Gandhi's philosophical views, but we consider him an outstanding leader."<sup>11</sup> ~~xxxx~~ In Bangalore Khrushchev while promising Soviet assistance to India's development said: "you must choose your own path of development, that which pleases you most. Not only shall we not try to ~~xxxx~~ deter you; we shall assist you ... We say, perhaps, there is something in our practical experience that may suit you. If so, use it, if not, don't. We do not force anything upon anyone. We are not seeking to impose any political obligations".<sup>12</sup>

The 1955 visit of Soviet leaders India laid the foundation for a new Soviet line towards the newly independent countries. This line stressed the development of economic and cultural relations between the Soviet and those countries in the fundamental interest of their people. The Soviet breakthrough in strengthening their ties with India not only helped them in breaking the Western

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10 New Times, (Supplement), No.52, 1955, p.19.

11 Ibid., p.16.

12 Ibid., p.22.

encirclement on their periphery, but also to move further and seize the initiative on a worldwide scale. The Soviet Union became active not only in South and South-East Asia but almost in West Asia. The successful growth of its relations with India gave Moscow a big propaganda value by strengthening its claims to have forged a global united front against imperialism consisting of not only socialist countries but also the newly emergent states. The development of Indo-Soviet ties seems to have fulfilled Lenin's dream of the alliance of socialism with bourgeois nationalism in Asia against imperialism.

Soviet orientalists came in for criticism at the 20th Congress of the C.P.S. U. in the speeches by O.V. Kusinen and A. Mikoyan/<sup>one</sup> after another --- Zhukov, Dyakov, Reisner, and Balabushevich --- admitted their past mistakes in evaluating the Indian political developments. The 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. spoke of the strengthening of the forces of peace as a result of the rise of peace loving states both socialist and non-socialist in Europe and Asia forming a vast zone of peace. Such a development it was pointed out at the Congress, pointed the possibility of many paths to socialism., including the path of peaceful transition. However, Khrushchev had cautioned against the hope for transition to socialism without the "political leadership of the working class headed by its vanguard".<sup>13</sup> There was nothing wrong with the Soviet Union developing relations with newly independent countries like India ruled by the national bourgeoisie

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13 N.S. Khrushchev, "Report of Central Committee of CPSU to the 20th Party Congress", New Times, (Supplement), No.8, (1956), p.23.

within the framework of peaceful coexistence. Such a policy strengthened a worldwide front of forces of peace against imperialism and had an objective basis in the existence of deep contradictions even ~~less~~ between the detachment of big bourgeoisie (constituting part of the national bourgeoisie) and the imperialist bourgeoisie. Such a policy did not clash with the policy of promoting the cause of social revolution in the newly independent countries either. The Indian communist failure in their attempt to come to power through armed struggle, their failure to mobilise the masses behind them, ruled out a militant extremist approach to a socialist revolution in India. But the new Soviet approach was also not without pitfalls. It generated euphoric and unrealistic expectations about the possibility of transition to socialism under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie.



## **C O N C L U S I O N S**

The Soviet view of Indian political developments both before and after independence has been conditioned by the Marxist-Leninist ideology. The ideological factor continues to provide the key for properly understanding the Soviet perceptions of the outside world. The Soviets organise and evaluate their perceptions in an ideological framework which is also used for explaining and justifying their behaviour in the international sphere. But the Marxist-Leninist ideology serves the Soviets only as a compass. It does not provide them a readymade blue print for their foreign policy.

Soviet view of political developments in India have been in the main guided by the Leninist ideological line of alliance of the proletariat struggling for socialism and the forces of national liberation fighting against imperialism in the former colonies under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie. This line laid down at the second Congress of the Comintern in 1920 was however distorted by the sectarian tinge contained in the line of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928. The Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935 removed this distortion.

In the period beginning with the end of World War II upto at least April 1947 when diplomatic relations between India and Soviet Union were established, Moscow had taken a more or less positive view of the national movement headed by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi. Soviet Indologists characterised the national struggle as a multi-class movement.

The Indian National Congress was described by them as working for the goal of complete independence and its socio-economic programme was termed as "progressive". Nehru was described a "left-wing progressive" and a "progressive-democrat", and Gandhi's activities were called "progressive".

Soviet assessment of the Indian political scene, however, gradually started moving towards a negative direction largely under the international environment dominated by the cold war. It is not simply fortuitous that the Soviet perceptions of the congress ~~and~~<sup>led</sup> nationalist movement as also the Soviet assessment of the Indian nationalist leaders hardened in May, June 1947 when the cold war was at its height in the wake of Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. The Soviet Union also grew apprehensive of the military implications of a compromise between the colonial big bourgeoisie wielding influence over the nationalist leadership and British imperialism for its (Soviet) security. Soviet writers expressed concern over the Indian visit of Field Marshal Montgomery and over discussion at the Asian Relations Conference in Delhi on a report by the Transport Department of India containing suggestions for improvement of ~~strategic~~ strategic roads to meet the so-called expansionist threat from the North West. It was in such an atmosphere of suspicion and misunderstanding that Soviet orientalist Zhukov called Nehru a "millionaire" and Gandhi "the apostle of India's backwardness".

The success of the people's democracies in East Europe and the victory of the Chinese revolution resulted in a tendency towards overemphasising the role of the proletariat and its vanguard, role of the proletariat and its vanguard, the Communist

Party, as also the path of armed struggle. The pro-west slant of the ruling bourgeois leadership of India in the early period after independence also reinforced the negative Soviet approach. Even then the Soviet approach was marked by great caution and restraint. Some Cominform articles which lauded the path of armed struggle in other Asian countries did not mention India among these countries.

The new foreign policy stance of non-alignment followed by India under Nehru's leadership which became particularly noticeable during the Korean war, alongwith the Soviet need to enlist the support of the national bourgeoisie for a broad anti-imperialist struggle for peace compelled Moscow to have a new look at Indian political developments. All thus resulted in the Soviets viewing Nehru's India as a potential ally in the struggle against imperialism. The development of friendly Soviet relations with India led to the replacement of the advocacy of a Chinese model by projection of Indian model for development of a cooperative relationship between a socialist state and newly independent countries having different social systems. This model is held out by Soviet publicists as the realisation in practice of Lenin's dream for an alliance of socialism with bourgeois nationalism in a worldwide united front against imperialism.

This new Soviet assessment of the Indian scene which from one side corrected the short lived sectarian error and brought maturity and realism to the Soviet approach also

manifested a certain euphoric tendency towards over expectations about the socialist orientation of the bourgeois leadership in India.

Yet on the whole, the Soviet approach towards Indian developments has succeeded in striking a balance between its ideological motivations and the Realpolitik goals. As a revolutionary world power, Soviet Union's interests of national security are best served only through championing social change and not through advocacy of social status quo. The Soviet policy of cooperation with the bourgeois nationalist regimes in the former colonies has in general weakened imperialism and helped in creating the objective pre-requisites for their advance towards socialism. Viewed in a long-term perspective the favourable Soviet approach to India is likely to strengthen the forces of social change and progress in the country. This however, does not mean that there can be no short term losses at times to the national revolutionary forces on account of display of what may be termed "overfriendliness" of the Soviets. The setback caused to the electoral fortunes of the Communist Party of India in Andhra during the 1955 elections by the publication of an editorial in Pravda in January 1955 speaking in speaking in superlatives about Nehru government's foreign and domestic policies is a case in point.

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