

# **A Study of Lenin's Concepts Of Soviet Foreign Policy**

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of the Degree of  
**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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1989**

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## PREFACE

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This is a study of Lenin's views and ideas on Soviet Foreign Policy. The importance of the subject need not be overemphasized. Although Scholars and experts have over the years written profusely on the subject, we have in our study made a modest attempt to investigate it in a systematic manner. We have undertaken this exercise in the specific context of the problem of laying down a foundation for Soviet Foreign Policy, during the first six crucial and difficult years of the existence of the new Soviet State.

The first chapter deals with Lenin's ideas on World Politics, and the place of Soviet Russia; it further analyses the manner in which a socialist state should conduct itself in international politics, the forces it represents and to what extent its foreign policy is a departure from the old one. The second chapter examines Lenin's frame work for Soviet Foreign policy and focuses attention on how Soviet Russia should achieve its aims and objectives by adopting this frame work. The third chapter is an attempt at examining Lenin's concept of Soviet Russia's relationship with the imperialist-capitalist system of states, and how to conduct this relationship.

It has been shown how the actual experience led to his concept of peaceful co-existence. The fourth chapter deals with Lenin's insight into marshalling the potentialities of the various world social forces in weakening the imperialist-capitalist system in other words, how Soviet Russia should

conduct its relations with national liberation movements in the East and working class movements in the West.

Finally an overview co-relates our findings and underlines the significance of these concepts. Two points need classification. The one, we have used the term Soviet Russia as it was called for some years after the revolution, and not the Soviet Union. The second, we have deliberately used the term 'concepts' and not 'concept' so as to bring into focus various strands in Lenin's thinking on the subject. Finally we add that this study is essentially a study of Lenin's concepts of Soviet Foreign Policy and not its operational aspect.

This study is based on published source material in English.

I am greatly indebted and grateful to my supervisor Prof. Zafar Imam for his patience, tolerance and constant encouragement. In spite of being busy he always found time for my problems and provided me with constructive criticism and invaluable suggestions through out the course of my study.

I am extremely grateful to Mr.K.N.Dar for his co-operation. I would like to thank my associate Mr.Harshwal and all my friends especially Anuja, Ritu, Nutan, Jassu and Archana for all the help they have rendered.

Finally, the shortcomings in this study if any, are indeed mine.

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DATED : JULY 21, 1989

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CHAPTER I

The concept of World Politics ;  
the place of Soviet Russia.

V.I. Lenin was the founder of the Soviet State, and the leader of the revolutionary movement, which had overturned Czarist Russia. The successful completion, of a social revolution in Czarist Russia, and the founding of a new state system in November 1917, both were an event of enormous international importance. They ushered in a new era in World Politics.

It is interesting to note that it was no other person than Lenin himself who sought to identify and clarify the international significance, of the October Revolution; in the process he also outlined his views on World Politics. Lenin viewed the October Revolution as the beginning of the process of change and development in World Politics. For him the October Revolution symbolised a sharp break in the powerful chain of capitalist-imperialist system of states. Against the background of the fact, that Czarist Russia was an under-developed state as compared to other industrialized states in Europe, he had explained that such a break had occurred at the weakest link in the chain of capitalist-imperialist state systems.

From the above it followed that Lenin considered the October Revolution, in Russia simply as the beginning of the process of similar revolutions in other industrialized countries of Europe. As Lenin declared, "The great honour of beginning the revolution has fallen to the Russian proletariat. But the Russian proletariat must not forget that its movement and revolution are only part of a world revolutionary proletarian movement...."<sup>1</sup> During the first few months, after the revolution, Lenin and other leading Bolshevik leaders looked with hope and optimism, towards Germany in particular, for making a socialist revolution. It was therefore not accidental that the first foreign minister of the new Soviet State Leon Trotsky, spent most of his time in issuing declarations and appeals, to the proletariat of the world to rise and come to their assistance of Soviet Russia. Broadly speaking Lenin firmly believed, that the founding of the new Soviet State of Workers, Peasants and their allies had totally changed the character of World Politics. It may however be noted that Lenin began to apply his mind, to analysing World Politics even before the Bolshevik

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1. V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, Volume II, (Moscow, 1947), p.267.

Revolution : however it was after the revolution that as a response to the practical task of conducting the foreign policy of the new state that Lenin's views on the subject became more concretized. We shall now make an attempt at analysing Lenin's views on the subject in a systematic way.

Right from his early revolutionary days, Lenin had begun to show interest in international events of his time. As early as 1900 he wrote an article, on Boxer rebellion in China, and highlighted its significance. As a matter of fact, it was the events in the colonies and semi-colonies that had attracted Lenin's attention to International Politics of his time. For instance it was in 1907, that Lenin presented his views on the colonial question, before the Stuttgart Conference of the Second International.

"One of the important factors that influenced Lenin's views from 1903 onwards was the new developments in Asian countries. In his article, 'The Inflammable Material in World Politics', written in 1908, he hailed the Persian Revolution of 1905, the Young Turk Movement of Turkey and welcomed the general strike in Bombay, in protest against Tilaks imprisonment. He realized



that every advanced country, was facing an upheaval." 2

Before 1913, he had not comprehensively examined the problem of national and colonial oppression beyond the domains of Czarist Russia. But after 1913, under the impact of the new developments taking place, Lenin developed a wider perspective in his advocacy of the ~~right~~ to nations to self-determination, linking the national problem in Czarist Russia and Europe, and the colonial question in Asia with the general weakening of the hold of imperialism all over the world. Within a few months he was convinced of the practical advantages of forging a common link between the problems posed by imperialism and capitalism in Asia and in Europe. As these developments took place, Lenin became more optimistic about the potentialities of the class-conscious workers in Asia. Their strength indicated that no force could prevent them from attaining victory. These developments led to Lenin, in understanding the genesis of these movements more completely, and he absorbed himself in the study of the problem during the period 1913-1916.

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2. Zafar Imam, Colonialism in East-West Relations : A Study of Soviet Policy towards India and Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1947, (New Delhi, 1969)  
pp.3-4.

The outbreak of the first World War was another major event, which impelled Lenin to focus his attention on the role of imperialism in international politics, he outlined the view, how capitalist states in search of imperialistic gains, wage war among themselves, and how war is inevitably the product of capitalism.

"The growth of armaments, the extreme, sharpening of the struggle for markets in the epoch of the latest, the imperialist, stage of capitalist development in advanced countries, and the dynastic interests of the most backward East European monarchies were inevitably bound to lead and have led to this war.<sup>3</sup> Then we have a major theoretical work of Lenin in his, 'Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism', which was published just before the October Revolution. This is a work of major importance and has now become a classic of Marxism.

The overall significance of Imperialism - the Highest of Capitalism is in the fact, that Lenin has

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3. V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, Volume I, (Moscow, 1947), p.607.

analysed the changes and development in capitalism since the days of Marx. He begins, where Marx has left in his analysis of capitalism.

He agrees with Marx; on the basic essential of capitalism, and then goes on to analyse and explain its later growth of development. In the process Lenin contributes to Marx's ideas and thus enriches, Marxist Leninist theory.

Lenin analyses the main reason for the expansion of capitalism beyond its borders: further he outlines how capitalism has expanded into imperialism, a world wide phenomena, in search of more profit and influence. It is precisely such a transformation of capitalism that has intensified search for colonies and their extensive exploitation by capitalist states. As a result, people of the colonies and semi-colonies had also begun to play, a role in strengthening capitalism as well as imposing a potential threat to the continued supremacy, in other words he concludes that the transformation of capitalism into imperialism has also transformed World Politics from Eurocentric to a world-wide process.

Further, he concludes that such a transformation of World Politics, had brought to the surface the need for further intensification of revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries; as well as, an upsurge in the nationalist movements in colonies and semi-colonies.

After November 1917, the practical problem of conducting foreign policy of the new Soviet state further impelled Lenin to an understanding of World Politics. As we have pointed out earlier Lenin regarded the Bolshevik revolution as beginning of a new era, in International Politics. Essentially the Soviet State was to him a new challenge, to the historic domination of imperialism, over World Politics.

He concluded that World Politics was poised for change and development as the Soviet State consolidates and strengthens itself. This view was further strengthened, after the optimistic belief in revolution in the West, had nullified, by the close of the year 1918.

It was thereafter Soviet Russia was challenging the supremacy of capitalist imperialist states. Hence


the problem before Lenin and his government was to devise ways and means to conduct such a policy.

In his numerous speeches and writings on Soviet Foreign Policy during 1917-23, Lenin continued to analyse World Politics against the background of the emergence of the new Soviet State. A major landmark in his efforts was his thesis 'On Colonial and National Question' presented before the 2nd Congress of the Communist International held in June 1920. It gave concrete shape to the principle as applied to colonial and semi-colonial countries. In the thesis it was noticed that, "the struggle against imperialist oppression in the colonial and semi-colonial countries had been greatly intensified on the basis of the deepening post-war political and economic crises of imperialism."<sup>4</sup> We shall come back to the details of his thesis late in our studies : suffice here to point out that Lenin for the first time, brought into focus the potentialities of nationalist movements in colonies and semi-colonies as a viable social force in

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4. Tomashevsky, D., Lenin's Ideas on Modern International Relations, (Moscow, 1975), p.8.

World Politics. He further outlined, how this viable social force was objectively operating against capitalism-imperialism, and how this social force needs to be aligned with Soviet Russia and working-class movements in the West, in their common struggle against imperialism-capitalism. In other words, by the beginning of the revolution Lenin had concluded that World Politics had truly become a world-wide process, and not simply confined to European States.

 Let us now attempt at summarizing Lenin's concept on World Politics. Lenin agreed with Marx that International Politics is determined by a basic contradiction of two main social forces, namely the labour and the capital. He rejected the notion that nation-states or their leaders determine international politics. Although he conceded a formalistic role of nation-states in international politics, he stressed that international politics is essentially the extension of class conflict within a nation-state to international class conflict, the basic contradiction between labour and capital.

Another important strand of Marx's view was the interconnection between internal social structure of a nation-state and its foreign policy. In other words the ruling class project their interest in foreign policy as well as it is affected by the nature and degree of social

structure of a nation-state and class conflicts within it.

Lenin further developed Marx's ideas and identified the main forces involved in international politics, outlining the typology of relationship between them. The three main forces are:- "imperialist-capitalist countries, the proletarian movement achieving its first success by capturing power in Russia and the National-liberation movement in the East."<sup>5</sup>

He took the view that it is the contradiction or <sup>that</sup> harmony among these three social forces/really determines international politics, while nation-states, play the role of actors in it. The role of the nation-states is only formalistic and itself dependent on their socio-economic formation above all, on the social composition of the ruling class that controls power and wields influence. To sum up, international politics is essentially an extension of class struggle between labour and capital to an international level. "The primary contradiction are those obtaining between the socialist and imperialist-capitalist world systems. The most, important secondary

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5. Zafar Imam "Soviet View of Non-Alignment", in K.P. Misra, (ed.) Non-Alignment: Frontiers and Dynamics, (New Delhi, 1983), p.448.

contradictions are those which obtain between imperialism and the national liberation world systems. International politics is a complex exercise of assessing the primary contradictions, indentifying the potentialities of the secondary contradictions, in relation to the primary one, and trying to strike a balance of all these social forces in a given period of time, or a crisis or any given specific condition."<sup>6</sup>

Another argument which Lenin extended of Marx was that the struggle of the forces, with opposing interests which characterized international politics was simply not confined to Europe. It was a world-wide phenomenon. He declared, "that the socialist revolution in the West was inseparably linked with the emanicipation of the colonies and semi-colonies in the East, as with the process of their socio-economic development."<sup>7</sup> Since the Soviet State was the only socialist state it found itself pitted against the imperialist-capitalist states, it looked for support and sustenance in the unequal fight for survival.

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6. Ibid., p. 452.

7. Ibid., p.447.



It was perhaps natural for them to look upon the anti-imperialist movements in the East as their ally. The struggle of the Soviet State for a democratic peace was at the same time a struggle for the liberation of the peoples. A few days after the victory of the October Socialist Revolution, the Soviet government advanced on Lenin's initiative, a political programme for the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the world, a programme for establishing with the peoples and countries of the East, equal and friendly relations based on the right of nations to self-determination and independent statehood.

### The Role of Soviet Russia in World Politics

At this stage let us now turn to Lenin's concept on the place of Soviet Russia in World Politics as outlined above. As a revolutionary state controlled by workers peasants and their allies, Lenin had emphasized that Soviet Russia must take lead in the international class-struggle against imperialism-capitalism. It can perform the basic task, by pursuing two primary objectives. One is to

protect and consolidate itself against wars of aggression and domination, which was an inevitable product of capitalism-imperialism,

"But what interests us is not the inevitability of this complete victory of socialism but the tactics which we the Russian Communist Party should pursue to prevent the West-European counter - revolutionary states from crushing us." <sup>8</sup> The other was to support and encourage all such forces and movements which were objectively poised against capitalism-imperialism. Soviet policy is directed towards "the utmost strengthening of the world socialist system and promotion of fraternal relations." <sup>9</sup>

In pursuing these two tasks Soviet Russia must act carefully, so that it could survive and develop. It may have to make compromises, face failures and setbacks, yet it must continue to promote these two objectives. Lenin indeed considered that such a role of Soviet Russia

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8. V.I. Lenin, On Soviet Foreign Policy, (Moscow, 1968), p. 417.

9. V.I. Lenin, On Soviet Foreign Policy, (Moscow, 1968), p.313.

was not easy, though not problematic, provided Soviet Foreign Policy was put on a steady course of development with a distinctive framework.

We shall analyse Lenin's framework of Soviet Foreign Policy in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

The Framework of Soviet Foreign Policy, and its short-term and long term goals.

The fact that the foreign policy is an important activity of a nation-state has been recognised by Marx and European Social Democratic Movement. Indeed, Marx had spoken of the need of a foreign policy of the Working Men's International Association. Marx had thus outlined the duty of the working class, "to master themselves the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective Governments; to counter-act them, if necessary, by all means in their power; when unable to prevent, to combine in simultaneous denunciations, and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations. The fight for such a foreign policy forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes".<sup>1</sup>

Earlier in our first chapter we have already outlined Marx's views of International Politics. Suffice here to add, that Marx's advocacy of the foreign policy of the proletariat had stemmed from his view, On International

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1. V.I. Lenin, as quoted in, Sh. p. Sanakoyad and N.I. Kapchenko, Socialism : Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice, (Moscow, 1970), p.22

Politics.

Following Marx, Lenin had also attached considerable importance to foreign policy of a Nation State. His Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism, is an evident testimony to the need for understanding foreign policy of nation-states. On the eve of the October Revolution he even stressed on the foreign policy of the Socialist State, "The foreign policy of the proletariat is alliance with the revolutionaries of the advanced countries and with all the oppressed nations against all and any imperialists".<sup>2</sup> With the founding of the Soviet State, the practical need of formulating and conducting of foreign policy really impelled Lenin to apply his mind to the problem. As in other spheres of his activity Lenin began to tackle this problem, by formulating a framework or a guide to action. Hence an understanding of Lenin's framework for Soviet Foreign Policy emerges as an essential guide over the years. It is therefore no surprise to find Soviet President Gorbachev reiterating that he is eventually guided by Leninist framework for

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2. Ibid., p.26

Soviet Foreign Policy in his 'New Thinking' on international relations.

Let us now turn our attention to analysing Lenin's framework for Soviet Foreign Policy.

The Framework: Let us begin by having a quick look at the international environment in which Soviet Russia found itself in the November 1917, and how it sort to tackle it under the leadership of Lenin'. There was a war raging with the German army almost knocking at the gates of Petrograd.

The new Soviet Government on the very first day of its existence had unilaterally withdrawn from the war, and, this act had turned former allies into hostile powers. In other words the international environment was totally hostile to the new Soviet state. Secondly the much awaited revolutionary upsurge in Germany and other industrialized Western countries, was not yet in sight. Thirdly, the new government was threatened by a Civil war, internal disorder and famine. Finally, there was the old Czarist foreign office which had disintegrated. New norms and administrative set-up for foreign policy had yet to come into existence.

Against such a backdrop, Lenin had to move

cautiously. He began by compromising when he signed an unequal treaty, with Germany. (The treaty of Brest - Litovsk Jan/March 1918), and by seeking a dialogue, with the former allies of Czarist Russia, Britain in particular. On the other hand he began to lay **stress** on special relationships of friendship and non-hostility with the independent states of Asia - Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey, as well as with the nationalist movement in the East. It may be noted that both these lines of policy, essentially stressed the historical factors in Soviet Foreign Policy, namely its geo-political locations and internal weakness. Finally, Lenin made vital moves to organise the administrative set up of Soviet Foreign Policy by shifting Trotsky to other important jobs and making a professional Czarist diplomat turned Bolshevik G.V. Chicherin, as foreign minister.

It is precisely an experience of the first six-months of Soviet foreign policy that further impelled Lenin to define a framework for Soviet foreign policy. Such an exercise he undertook through his numerous speeches and reports on Soviet foreign policy, upto 1903 and also by the actual experience of Soviet foreign policy during the first five years after 1917.



The starting point for understanding Lenin's framework for Soviet foreign policy must necessarily be his understanding of International politics. His understanding of international politics is what may be termed as purely ideological. On the other hand the actual experience of conducting Soviet foreign policy during its crucial formative periods of first five years puts in sharp focus, a characteristic realism, indeed a traditional factor in Soviet foreign policy. Thus for our purpose both these factors ideological and non-ideological factors that is to say reality are relevant. Further, it is necessary to understand the relationship between the two factors, and how they act and react on each other. In defining Lenin's concept of international politics stemmed the argument that the foreign policy of a country was a mere extension of its domestic politics, reflecting the formalistic aspect of the social composition of the ruling class that controls state apparatus. Lenin regarded 'the idea of foreign policy above ideology as totally unscientific'.<sup>3</sup> Thus the framework for the Soviet foreign

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3. K. Ivanov, Leninism and Foreign Policy of the U.S.S.R., (Mocow, 1972), p.39.

policy must have an ideological orientation. Ideology in this case may be defined not as a dogma, or a set of abstract principles or just a philosophical tenet but "it is a scientific method to understand and assess reality in its many facets, a guide to action and means to attain thus defined goals, both short term and long term."<sup>4</sup> In socialism where there are no class divisions it will be that of a society as a whole, because there can be no mid-way between the ideology of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat. But the framework was not based entirely on ideology and its application in a mechanical way. But certain non-ideological inputs like historical legacy, geographical location, national interests and purposes and security needs which may be broadly termed as reality, are also imperative for understanding the framework for Soviet foreign policy.

"In fact the Soviet view of traditional geo-political factors is in itself characteristic. It recognizes them as an important constituent element of ideology and rejects the idea of separation of ideology and geo-politics. From Marxist-Leninist point of view, geo-politics in international situation is a part of ideology, i.e.,

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4. Zafar Imam, Ideology and Reality in Soviet Policy in Asia, (New Delhi, 1975), pp.122-127.

the situation as it exists. The application of ideology becomes relevant only when the reality is correctly taken into account. In other words, the very nature of ideology is such that it must be put into practice and without assessing the reality, ideology can never be applied."<sup>5</sup>

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It must be also remembered that reality undergoes changes and is subject to the influence of variables. The ideology when put into action must consider all these variables assess their manifestations and development and thus analyse the totality of changes in reality; and then accordingly re-phase and re-programme its goals and objectives. This process however, must not lose continuity of an organic link between ideology and reality. It is a complex process and can never work in a straight line; nor can it produce the results that are desired or expected but it is precisely this characteristic nature of this process which "provides resilience, flexibility and continued relevance of Soviet policy."<sup>6</sup>

The concept of national interest is not completely irrelevant to an understanding of Soviet Foreign Policy.

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5. Ibid., pp.122-127.

6. Ibid, p.123.

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National, security, inviolability of frontiers, economic power, international prestige and popularity, winning friends and sympathisers - all these traditional components of national interests are major issues for the Soviet policy makers. But what sets them apart from the traditional concept of national interests is the Soviet view that these issues are interlinked with the long-range perspectives of social transformation, not only of a given country but the entire world, and are not ends in themselves. According to the Soviet view national interests can be achieved by creating a conducive international environment as well as by a socialist politico-economic system. It is in the national interests of the Soviet Union to pursue a policy in international affairs, which would lead to the gradual liquidation of the capitalist system. In other words, Soviet view is that, the national interests do not operate in a vacuum apart from the social basis of power in a given society, but must be usefully linked with international issues and also be correlated to ultimate ideological objectives of a political system.

Ideological Orientation: As we have already mentioned in the first Chapter, Lenin began where Marx had left

that is to say that he agreed with Marx that international politics, was in essence, an international class-war. But Marx confined the struggle to Europe. Lenin propounded that international politics was a world wide phenomena, not only confined to Europe.

Lenin identified that three main forces in international politics, which were identified as the imperialist-capitalist countries, the proletariat movement achieving its first success by capturing power in Russia and the national liberation movements in the East. While designing the foreign policy behaviour of the Soviet State, he further developed the typology of relationship among these forces. The typology of relationship runs as follows.

(i) The proletarian movement exerts its influence as a rule in unity and solidarity and in harmony with the national liberation movement directed against imperialist-capitalist States. (ii) The imperialist-capitalist States invariably play their role in contradiction with proletarian as well as national liberation movements in the East (iii) The proletarian movements invariably act in unity and solidarity in

the same way as the imperialist-capitalist States are united against it. (iv) The unity of the imperialist-capitalist states is beset with its own contradiction mainly because of rivalry among them. The other, although the proletarian forces invariably act in solidarity, they may probably act differently in a peculiarly given situation as for example under the condition of being swayed by a false consciousness of nationalism and national interest. (v) The national liberation movements represent a force, against imperialist-capitalist states, although they may waver from time to time. (vi) Finally the proletarian and the national liberation movements, being interdependent have common interest in weakening imperialism-capitalism. The primary contradictions are obtained between (1) and (2), and also between (1) and (5). The secondary contradictions are those between (4) and (5). On the other hand, a harmonious relationship is between (3) and (6), and the primary one is to be found in (3). In this scheme the primary contradiction is considered to be the main determinant in international politics. The secondary contradictions are essentially correlated with the primary one, and in a given situation they act more decisively".<sup>7</sup>

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7. Zafar Imam, "Soviet View of Non-Alignment," in K.P. Misra, (ed.), Non-Alignment: Frontiers and Dynamics, (New Delhi, 1983), pp.448-449.

Keeping in mind the above typology of relations, Lenin stressed that all the forces conducive to socialism should be strengthened while antagonistic forces should be weakened. In this scheme the unity and solidarity among socialist states, working class movement in the west and national liberation movement in the East occupy primary importance.

Thus the framework for Soviet Foreign Policy was based on the optimistic belief, that primary contradictions are eventually bound to be resolved by the overall supremacy of the forces hostile to imperialism-capitalism in a peaceful way.

The discussion above clearly underlines, the fact that Soviet Foreign Policy must act within the relationship between ideology and reality. It can neither be purely ideological ~~or~~ must it be purely non-ideological. An over-emphasis on pure ideology may generate dogmatism and make the task of Soviet Foreign Policy more problematic. On the other hand as a revolutionary state, it must also pursue ideological goals of an international class-war taking into account concrete realities of international

politics. Certain exercise is deemed by Lenin, not an easy one, yet it must be undertaken, with courage foresight and realism. As the Soviet Foreign Minister Chicherin commented on Lenin's style of guiding Soviet Foreign Policy "The policy bequeathed to us by Lenin, which we shall continue to implement, is political realism, resting upon certain fundamental principles stemming from our actual situation and from the state of affairs."<sup>8</sup>

This brings us to the short term-long term goals of Soviet Foreign Policy. It is quite obvious that short term goals of Soviet Foreign Policy according to Lenin must be geared towards creation of a non-hostile if not friendly international environment, which can enable Soviet Russia to survive and develop. In practical terms it really meant, how to deal with the system of powerful capitalist states encircling Soviet Russia. To pursue the short term goal, concrete actions based on the realistic appraisal of international situation was needed. These details we will take up in our next chapter.

Likewise Lenin never hid the fact that the long-term goal of Soviet foreign policy must necessarily be directed towards weakening the capitalist-imperialist system of states, and gradually in stages replacing it with the socialist system of states. The pursuit of this long-term objective also sanctioned the need for a careful and realistic policy,

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8. G.V. Chicherin as quoted in, Sh.P. Sanakoyad and N.I. Kapchenko, Socialism: Foreign Policy in theory and Practice (Moscow, 1970) p.27.



particularly when Lenin was careful, not to lay down its definite time-frame. These details will be investigated in our subsequent chapters.

Finally it needs to be emphasised that Lenin's framework for Soviet Foreign Policy does appear relevant even today. In spite of drastic changes in Soviet Foreign policy thinking, there is no evidence to suggest that the Leninist framework has now been forgotten in Soviet Union. On the contrary it does appear that the new Soviet leadership to day has rightly emphasized continuity and change, in Lenin's framework for Soviet Foreign Policy as Soviet President Gorbachev in his speech to the 27th Congress of the CPSU stated that his party,<sup>9</sup> "stands for pooling the efforts of the fraternal parties aimed at studying and using the experience in building socialism and in the Communist education of working people, at developing the theory of Marxism-Leninism while deepening its creative nature and upholding revolutionary essence. In the same speech he pointed out, that CPSU will continue to work in the following direction, to uphold the revolutionary ideals and the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism in the world Communist movement, creatively develop the theory of scientific socialism, consistently fight against dogmatism and revisionism, against all the influences of the bourgeois ideology on the working class movement."

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9. M. Gorbachev, Report of the C.P.S.U. to 27th Congress, (Moscow, 1986), p.305.

CHAPTER III

Soviet Relations with Capitalist  
Imperialist States.

Lenin's theoretical analysis of capitalism is contained in his classic work, "Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism". It is therefore logical for us to begin this chapter by an analysis of his views on capitalism, before we take up the actual problem of developing state relations, of Soviet Russia, with capitalist countries.

Views on Capitalism: Capitalism, no longer remained of its old nature, where private property based on the labour of small proprietors, free competition and democracy were its catch words. It "steadily grew into a world system of colonial oppression and financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population, of the world by a handful of minority".<sup>1</sup>

It was in the late twentieth century, when one could notice the gradual transformation of old capitalism to its new form. "Under the old capitalism, when free competition prevailed, export of goods was its most typical

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1. V.I. Lenin, 'Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism', Selected Works, Vol.I, (Moscow, 1947), p.633.

feature, but under modern capitalism, when monopolies prevailed, the export of capital became its typical feature."<sup>2</sup> Lenin adopted a systematic approach in analysing this gradual transition of the old stage of capitalism to its new mono-polistic stage:- the highest stage of development in capitalism. He opined that free competition is the attribute of capitalism and of commodity production in general, whereas the later stage can be explained as; "the enormous growth of industry and the remarkably rapid process of concentration of production in larger enterprises."<sup>3</sup> This results in the substitution of capitalist monopolies for capitalist free competition.

Lenin pointed out that there was no longer the old type of free competition between manufacturers scattered and out of reach with one another and producing for an unknown market. "Concentration reached to a point, where it was possible not only to make an approximate estimation of all sources of raw materials of a country, but that of several

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2. Ibid., p.673.

3. Ibid., p.637.

countries or of the whole world."<sup>4</sup> Not only could one make such estimates but "these sources were captured by gigantic mono-polist countries.

Further, an approximate estimate of the capacity of markets was also made and the combines divided them up by agreement. Skilled labour was monopolized and so were the best engineers."<sup>5</sup> These were the beginning of monopoly capitalism, where these gigantic monopolies combines took the form of "cartels, syndicates, trusts and merged with them the capital of a dozen or so banks which manipulated thousands of millions."<sup>6</sup>

Imperialism found its starting <sup>in</sup> the monopoly stage which with its domination of monopolies, syndicates, trusts and a number of similar agreements of a handful of millionaires, controlling vast amount of capital. Hence Imperialism with its domination of giant monopolies resulted in unevenness. The development of capitalism became spasmodic, the rise of individual enterprises constantly upset the equilibrium and changed the relative economic and military strength of the capitalist countries. It seemed that it was not sufficiently content with

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4. Ibid., p.645.

5. Ibid., p.645.

6. Ibid, p.694

the exploitation of sources but it sought to penetrate the colonies and economically underdeveloped countries. And the greater their strength, the more insistent became their demand for new markets and colonies.

"Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the division of the all territories of the globe among the great capitalist powers has been completed".<sup>7</sup>

Another factor which Lenin held relevant in the process of development was that capitalism in its imperialist stage arrives at the threshold of complete socialization of production.

"In spite of themselves the capitalist is dragged as it were into a new social order from complete free competition to complete socialization".<sup>8</sup>

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7. Ibid, p.695.

8. Ibid, p.645.

"Imperialism rendered all the contradictions of capitalism extremely acute, above all the basic contradiction — production was becoming increasingly social in character, while appropriation remained private, the means of production being private property of a handful of monopolists. It was the latter and not the proletariat who benefitted from the gigantic development of the productive process. Having concentrated immense wealth in their hands the monopolies were all powerful and in fact controlled the whole power of the state. Political reaction was becoming more pronounced everywhere. Monopoly rule brought with it a drastic rise in living costs, more unemployment and excessive taxes to maintain the army and government machine. Oppression and exploitation were carried to unprecedented extremes. This greatly aggravated the contradiction between the labour and capital, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat."<sup>9</sup>

It was against this economic backdrop which Lenin carefully analysed, and from the prevailing

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9. A. Rothstein, (Ed.), History of the Communist Party, (Moscow, 1960), p.199.

international situation . . . Lenin argued that International Politics was in essence an international class war. The struggle between labour and capital, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, a world-wide phenomenon not only confined to Europe.

In the capitalist society which is based on private ownership of the means of production, the desire of the ruling class is to strengthen the exploiting system. "To preserve and extend the sphere of exploitation, to retain and seize markets, strategic positions and foreign territories and to enslave other peoples." Capitalism always shows "tendency towards expansion and aggression, towards the preparation and unleashing of wars and aggrandisement, the creation of military blocs and the arms race. These aggressive tendencies in the foreign policy of capitalism become strong at monopoly stage of capitalism, when capitalism turns into imperialism."<sup>10</sup> A striking example of this predatory policy were the efforts of the biggest capitalist states to divide the world among themselves.

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10. Gromyko and Ponomarev, (Ed.), Soviet Foreign Policy, Vol.I, 1917-1945, (Moscow, 1980), p.10.



The domination of a handful of capitalists was achieved fully, when the whole world was partitioned, not only in the sense that various sources of raw materials and means of production had been siezed by the biggest capitalist powers, but also in the sense that the preliminary partition of the colonies had been completed. Hence "the first imperialist war of 1914-1918 was the inevitable outcome of this partition of the world, of this domination by the capitalist monopolies of this great power exercised by an insignificant number of very big banks. As the world was already divded among the capitalists parties, the war was waged in order to repartition the whole world. "It was waged to decide, which of the small groups of the biggest states — the British or the German would get the opportunity and the right to rob, strangle and exploit the whole world".<sup>11</sup>

Imperialist economic relations constituted the core of the entire international situation as it existed. It was the basic factor and determinant of International politics and naturally did not favour the forces which tried to arrest its development.

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11. V.I. Lenin, On Britain, (Moscow, 1973), p.429.

It glorified war and worked objectively against all those forces which served as an obstacle to its spreading itself. Its attempt was in the direction of annihilating all the forces which it considered were against it -- the most dominant was that of socialism which was striving for raising the material well-being of the workers and in the process of doing so confronted itself with the imperialistic process. This accounted for the specific class struggle between them.

From the above discussion let us summarize some relevant ideas for our purpose. Firstly, capitalism in the stage of imperialism is an exploitative system enveloping almost the entire globe. In the pursuit of these objectives it can wage war, and use all means at its command. Secondly it is particularly directed against working class-movements, and all other movements struggling against it. Finally the capitalist system is beset with its own internal contradictions as a result of rivalry among capitalist states in pursuit of more profit and power.

Lenin had argued, as we have pointed out

in our first two chapters that the establishment of Soviet State in November 1917, had radically changed the international balance of power; for the first time, a new type of state, controlled by the working class and its allies had risen among the world-wide system of capitalism-imperialism. Such a novel situation had brought urgency to the problem of relationship between Soviet Russia and capitalist states:

Relations with capitalist states:- Lenin's theoretical analysis of capitalism indeed provided the very framework of developing Soviet Russia's relations with capitalist states. Lenin fully realized that Soviet Russia must learn to live and deal with the system of capitalist-imperialist states which had encircled Soviet Russia. On the other hand, he was also convinced that while dealing with capitalist-imperialist states, Soviet Russia must not give up, its basic commitment to revolution and change, outside its borders; indeed it must resolutely wage an international class struggle against its main hostile force. He was also

convinced that rivalry among the capitalist-imperialist states and their urge for more and more profit, can be usefully utilized by Soviet Russia in dealing with them. However to him the survival and consolidation of Soviet power was the primary task of immediate and urgent importance.

It was precisely under such a framework that Lenin visualized Soviet Relations with capitalist imperialist states and began to steer Soviet foreign policy. We shall now examine them in detail.

It was on the eve of the October revolution that Lenin had declared, "Socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in all countries, it will achieve victory first in one or several countries while the others for sometime will remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois".<sup>12</sup>

The founding of the Soviet state, as well as the failure of social revolutions in the West, had proved Lenin right. There was no alternative left than to deal with capitalist-imperialist systems and to strive for a workable state to state relations.

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12. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 23, (Moscow, 1964), p. 79.

Soviet power had to wage a bitter and resolute struggle for peace from the very moment of the victory of the October revolution. It had barely triumphed, before the imperialist powers had recourse to armed intervention against it. Lenin constantly pointed out the danger of imperialist intervention and all possible measures to strengthen the military potential of the Soviet state. By mercilessly repulsing the aggressive designs of Imperialism Lenin sought to ensure peace which was essential for the consolidation of the gains of the young socialist state. Most Bolsheviki shared the assumption, that the revolution in Russia could prove successful only if accompanied by revolutions outside. Lenin too shared this assumption but felt that the question required a different tactical approach. Lenin argued with force and clarity, that preservation of the revolution in Russia must outweigh the more uncertain prospects of world revolution. At least for the immediate future, the interests

of the international proletariat must be subordinated, and indeed the best way to ensure the eventual success of the world socialist revolution was first to safeguard the revolution in Russia. Continuation of the war, threatened the cause of revolution and put the very ~~existence~~ existence of Russia in mortal danger.

The very next day after the victory of the October Revolution, Lenin announced clearly and firmly the intention of the Bolsheviks to conclude a general peace. On October 26th the second<sup>d</sup> All Russian Congress of Soviets<sup>s</sup> called upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start negotiation<sup>s</sup> for<sup>a</sup> just and democratic peace. "The fight for peace is on", Lenin said, "It will be an uphill fight. International imperialism is mobilizing all its forces against us"<sup>13</sup>.

It was highly significant for the nature of the new, socialist state that its first foreign policy act under the guiding force of Lenin was devoted to the struggle for peace. The Decree on Peace embodied an entirely new foreign policy and diplomacy which was fundamentally different from

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13. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 26, (Moscow, 1964), p. 316.

the foreign policy and diplomacy of the exploiting classes. In the Decree on Peace Lenin clearly defined what sort of peace the Soviet government recognised as just and democratic, "Peace without annexations (i.e. without the seizure of foreign lands without forcible co-operation of the foreign nations) and without indemnities".<sup>14</sup> (LENIN). The imperialist government of the Entente powers ignored the Soviet Government proposals for a democratic peace. Not only refusing to take part in the negotiations, at the very outset, they hoped with their assistance that the Russian counter revolutionaries would overthrow Soviet power and set up a bourgeois government. But the Germans though just as bitter as the governments of the Entente reacted differently to the Soviet Proposal, to start negotiations for an armistice and peace. The actions of Germany were based on political and economic factors. "The German imperialist dreaded the influence of the Russian revolutionaries on Germany and its army. Nor could the Germans fail to take into account the anti-war sentiments of the German people and army which sometimes took the form of open demonstration against the existing system".<sup>15</sup> On November 14, 1917 the Germans

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14. Ibid., pp. 249-50

15. Gromyko and Ponomarev, (Ed.), Soviet Foreign Policy, Vol.I, 1917-1945, (Moscow, 1980), p.35.

announced their agreement to the opening of armistice negotiations. Soviet Russia still hoped for a general peace, not a Russo-German alliance but the Entente countries and U.S.A. did not reply favourably to Russian peace proposals.

The signing of peace with German imperialism was not an easy task. It involved a series of complex problems from both sides. The Germans intended "to impose a predatory and humiliating peace". They wanted to enslave Poland, Lithuania and parts of Latvia Byelorussia, having annexationist designs on Ukraine. The internal and international situation at that time dictated the advisability of "retreating before so strong and dangerous a marauder as German imperialism and of accepting onerous peace terms in order to save the young Soviet Republic." <sup>16</sup> On Jan. 8, 1918 Lenin submitted to a conference of members of the Central Committee of the party and the Bolshevik delegates

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16. A Rothstein, (Ed.), History of the Communist Party, (Moscow, 1960), p.276.



to the third Congress of the Soviets his theses regarding the conclusion of a separate and annexationist peace. He showed that an "objective appraisal of the social, economic, political situation in the country and the fact that the Soviet Republic lacked an efficient army, dictated the necessity of concluding an immediate peace".<sup>17</sup> But Lenin's view point did not receive the support of the majority. It required Lenin's tremendous perseverance and firmness to prove to the party the necessity of accepting severe terms of peace in order to win a breathing space. Also to expose the adventurist tactics which spelled disaster for the Soviet republic. It was the German offensive, which as a result of a treacherous statement of Trotsky, made imperative the necessity of concluding the peace, though imperialist Germany in addition to the old demands presented still more onerous terms. On March 3, 1918 the peace treaty with Germany was signed. Left communists called for the policy of wrecking the Brest-Litovsk peace.

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17. Ibid., p.227

"And if the new terms are worse, more onerous and humiliating than the bad, onerous and humiliating Brest terms," wrote Lenin "it is our would be Left wingers Bukharin, Lomov, Uritsky and co. Who are guilty of it before the great Russian Soviet Republic."<sup>18</sup>

The conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk peace was of tremendous significance to the working people of the whole world, who had before them the example of the Soviet Republic which had with-drawn from the imperialist war inspite of incredible difficulties. The peace strengthened Soviet power, won a breathing space in which to normalise the country's economy and strengthen alliance of the proletariat and the labouring peasant masses.

Though it had obtained a temporary breathing space, and its position had improved, it was by no means secure. It was surrounded by enemies who would attack as soon as they recovered sufficiently

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Ibid., p. 278.

from the war. The Soviet republic was still weak and to overcome famine and internal confusion and to build up its defence it needed an extension of the breathing space, and economic aid from the capitalist states. It became important for the Soviet state to desire for international peace and to establish relations with the capitalist states. In these conditions the only possible policy for Soviet Russia was to manoeuvre and retreat. In order to get the best terms and "to minimize the danger of capitalists' attack it was necessary to make use of the capitalists' greed for profits"<sup>19</sup> and simultaneously to keep alive the rivalries between the groups. Lenin had not forgotten that "Soviet success during the Civil war & intervention had been due in large measure to irreconcilable differences among the anti-Bolshevik forces and believed that the Soviet Govt. had to take full advantage of the antagonism among its enemies."<sup>20</sup> Lenin stressed on the

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19. Xenia Jouekoff Budin and Robert, C. North, Soviet Russia and the West, 1920-1927, (California, 1957), p. 16.

20. Ibid., p. 27.

possibility and need for compromise and guided Soviet diplomacy to make concessions and sacrifices. In this way it hoped to gain a longer period of peaceful co-existence during which it would cooperate or struggle with its enemies as the situation dictated, and continue its efforts for existence in a capitalist encirclement.

Lenin defined the policy of concessions, introduced by the decree of the Council of the Peoples Commissars on November 3, 1920 as "Our task is to maintain the existence of our isolated socialist republic..... which is so much weaker than the capitalist enemies who surround it; to remove the opportunity for the enemies to create an alliance among themselves for a struggle against us, to keep interfering with their policies, to prevent them from winning".<sup>21</sup>

In this same speech Lenin declared that it was essential to re-establish trade relations but added,

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21. Ibid., p.18.

"We do not for a moment believe in lasting trade relations with the imperialist powers. What we shall obtain will be simply a breathing space (peredyskha)"<sup>22</sup>.

The Western powers too had revised their idea as to how the Russian situation could be tackled. It was apparent that the Soviet Government was not likely to be overthrown by any White force or would collapse from internal weakness or mismanagement. The Entente powers too were feeling war-weary and experiencing the moral and economic effects after the war. War-weary people questioned the pursuance of an undeclared war which was costly, indecisive and interminable. They too realized the need for Russia as necessary for recovery of war. They felt that Russians could not be restored by threats and force but by abundance. "Commerce they realised has a sobering as well as beneficial effect"<sup>23</sup>. Russia was only too willing to fight with abundance. Lenin

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22. Ibid., p. 17.

23. Ibid., p. 16.

saw "trade and economic ties between the socialist and capitalist state as a economic basis for peaceful co-existence of states with different social and economic systems".<sup>24</sup> He also stressed that business relations were advantageous not only for the Soviet but also for the Western part.

✓ The first triumphant diplomatic breakthrough was the Anglo-Soviet trade agreement as Britain showed the most interest in trading with Russia, as it needed raw materials and markets. But the negotiations were not so smooth as things would seem, as the British sought to use the negotiations a means of exerting pressure on the Soviet Government to make it halt the advance of Red Army and conclude an armstice with Poland. Therefore the negotiations continued with intervals. The Soviet proposals were - "completion of the lifting of the blockade; mutual trade representation; inviolability of Soviet funds and property in Britain; elimination of crises in the Baltic and an end to British support of Poland in Soviet-Polish War."<sup>25</sup> Britain

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24. Gromyko and Ponomarev, (Ed.), Soviet Foreign Policy, Vol.I, 1917-1945, (Moscow, 1980), 127.
25. Xenia Jouekoff Eudin and Robert.C.North, Soviet Russia and the West, 1920-1927, (California, 1957), p. 29.

insisted that Soviet should guarantee to end anti-British propaganda in the Near East, Persia, Afghanistan and India. To give a guarantee against Soviet attack upon the Baltic states of Wrangel from the Black Sea. Further condition which was added from the British side was that the Soviet Government recognize the Czarist Government debts.

"The Soviet Government was willing to revise its foreign policy and cease all propaganda and other activity hostile to Britain. To re-examine the British financial claims and the question of Russian liability for property expropriated and debts repudiated but only on the basis of reciprocity",<sup>26</sup> which meant the inclusion of counterclaims of damages, caused by British intervention. Lenin noted that the trade and economic relations between Soviet Russia and the capitalist countries should be based on full equality of rights and mutual advantage and the Russia should not allow

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26. Ibid.p. 29.

anyone to dictate conditions to it. It was after further negotiations and compromises that a trade agreement was signed on March 16, 1921.

This agreement was of considerable significance because it was the first treaty to be concluded with a great capitalist power; an example of the implementation and peaceful co-existence and co-operation between Soviet Russia and the capitalist country. "Although the Soviet leaders had attempted to gain full de-jure recognition of the Soviet Republic, the defacto recognition implicit in the agreement represented a major victory"<sup>27</sup>. It paved the way for the establishment of economic relations with other Western European States.

The Anglo-Soviet agreement ended the diplomatic ostracism of the Soviet Government, as other states quickly followed in order to have their share in whatever advantages were to be had from the new trade. The first country to do so was *Italy*.

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27. Ibid., p.31.



Italy initiated a negotiation to secure coal concessions in Southern Russia. This was followed by a plea for lifting the Russian blockade. At the non-governmental level, the Russian wheat could be shipped to Italy. After deliberating for a while both the governments opened trade negotiations and on December 26, 1921 a preliminary economic and political agreement was signed between the two. The German-Soviet relations which had also been severed after the German collapse were also renewed. Relations between them gradually improved and measures were taken regarding the repatriation of prisoners of war of the two countries. Added to this was the willingness of the political and business circles to enter into a trade agreement with Russia.

France in those years had become very hostile to U.S.S.R. and the political circles pursued a very hostile policy. It was only in the later years that "the trend for recognition began to grow stronger in the French

commercial circles." <sup>28</sup> Objective causes were pushing France to normalize relations with U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union offered French industrialists a market where they could sell their goods profitably and at the same time buy raw materials. "There could be no doubt that French recognition of the USSR and the normalization of Soviet-French political relations coincided with french interest, enabling it to consolidate its position".<sup>29</sup> But now that the french also saw USSR as a political factor which could not be ignored speaks of the strengthening of its international position and the success of the peaceful foreign policy pursued by the Lenin.

The U.S. also took a firm stand against any kind of recognition of the Soviet Government and continued to reject systematically all Soviet relations designed to establish normal relations and produce a just settlement of disputed issues".<sup>30</sup> Soviet Government however was anxious to establish contact with U.S. for several reasons . "They hoped

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28. Gromyko and Ponomarev, (Ed.), Soviet Foreign Policy, Vol. I, 1917-1945, (Moscow, 1980), p.201.

29. Ibid., p. 201.

30. Ibid., p. 216.

to derive both economic and diplomatic benefits from Britain and American competition for commercial advantages, and looked up to U.S. as being a lesser menace to Soviet Union than other countries".<sup>31</sup>

The American Government's refusal to normalize relations with the USSR, seriously hampered the development of Soviet American economic ties, although these did grow as a result of Soviet purchases in the U.S.A. When the trend to normalize relations with U.S.S.R. began to grow in the ruling circles of many European countries, the U.S.A. itself took energetic steps to reverse the trend. Though the business circles in America saw differently and felt that the U.S. "could no longer put off recognition of the real government of Russia; on conditions in keeping with common interests and the honour of both governments. They pointed out that all other leading countries had recognized the present government and established trade relations. Further post-ponement of such recognition did not coincide with the economic

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31. Ibid., p. 217.

interests of the United States".<sup>32</sup> But the U.S. remained the only major power not to establish diplomatic relations with U.S.S.R. in the twenties.

The process of development and establishing relations with the capitalist countries involved repeated pleas for peace, negotiations, compromises, willingness to grant concessions, coming to agreements, provided that it was mutually advantageous to both sides was brought about by Lenin's diplomatic skill and political realism. It was based on a cautious study of the adversary, taking fully into account the trends within the bourgeoisie and rejecting an indiscriminate approach which reduced the possibility of a flexible yet firm and effective policy of acquiring allies. He taught that the foreign policy should combine high principles with flexibility, idealism with pragmatism. "He rejected all sectarianism and dogmatism. He did not shun compromises in cases when they were of use

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32. Ibid., p. 218.

to the Soviet State for building socialism without being detrimental to the principle of communism".<sup>33</sup> Lenin's approach was an effective departure from the earlier approach of the Bolsheviki with their "rigid adherence to their basic programme of world revolution".<sup>34</sup> There was the abandonment of the Utopian missionary zeal and the readiness to adopt a new type of revolutionary strategy; the preparedness to cease frontal attack upon Western capitalism and for sometime atleast to exist peacefully with Western nations." It must be emphasized that the earlier dreams of immediate revolution in other countries were not put in cold storage. The goal was to preserve the socialist Soviet Republic within the capitalist encirclement. In the struggle to achieve peace with capitalist ranks and in practically solving the tasks that beset the Soviet State gave birth to Lenin's idea of peaceful co-existence.

"About twenty proposals were submitted by the Soviet Government, during the period between 1918-1921

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33. Gromyko and Ponomarev, (Ed.), Soviet Foreign Policy, Vol.I, (Moscow, 1980), p.24.
34. Xenia Jouekoff Eudin and Robert. C. North, Soviet Russia and the West, 1920-1927, (California, 1957), See Intro. 1-ii.

to the Entente countries, before and during intervention, and after the armies of the Entente countries had been driven out. All this was done in order to conclude peace and establish trade relations between the socialist and capitalist countries".<sup>35</sup> All possibilities for negotiations were used, all channels were explored, in an effort to bring the governments of France, Britain and U.S.A. to take heed of Soviet Russia's efforts to obtain peace. Hence in the process to peacefully co-exist gave rise to the idea which has served as a basis for the Soviet foreign policy "Peaceful co-existence, or the phrase 'Mirnoe Sotushestvovanie' is used to convey, what the term 'detente' does in the West. But, we see that in the official English rendering of Russian texts, however it is the term 'detente' that is now often used. In the West and elsewhere the term detente conveys the idea of easing or relaxation of strains, a trend or process. "Sotushestvovanie" denotes a state of affairs, not just a process but a basic tenet of Soviet foreign policy, since the beginnings of the Soviet State. In other words, the Soviets regard it as something more positive than rapprochement".<sup>36</sup>

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35. V.I. Lenin, On Peaceful Co-Existence, (Moscow, 1970) p. 13.

36. Zafar Imam "Soviet View of Detente" in Detente: Perspectives and repercussions (ed.), by M. S. Agwani (Vikas; Delhi 1975) p.41.

The theory of peaceful co-existence was first enunciated by one of the earliest decrees of the Soviet Government--namely the Decree of Peace issued on 8 November, 1917 and concretized and elaborated by V.I. Lenin himself in his numerous speeches and writings on Soviet Foreign Policy, and the prevailing international situation. The Decree on Peace declared, the readiness of the Soviet Union to enter into peace negotiations with all the belligerent countries of the 1st World War without pre-condition and to conclude equal treaties with them, This was how the theory of peaceful co-existence of all states originated. A number of significant details emerge from Lenin's theory in the numerous and speeches made by him during 1917-22.

Firstly Lenin was emphatic in his belief that in order to save the Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet Russia should strive to live in peace with capitalist countries. In Feb-March 1918, in his characteristic, polemical style he ridiculed the Ultra Leftest elements in his party, "A Socialist Republic surrounded by imperialist powers could not from the point of view

which insists on the impossibility of peaceful co-existence conclude any economic treaties and could not exist at all without flying to the moon".<sup>37</sup>

Secondly Lenin stressed, with equal force that there could never be a long term or permanent co-existence between capitalism and socialism. He regarded permanent co-existence as a breathing space for winning conditions "enabling us to exist side by side with the capitalist powers".<sup>38</sup>

Thirdly Lenin decisively rejected the idea of exporting revolution by armed or non-armed means under **cover of** peaceful co-existence. He believed in short term gains and even long term help for a World revolution which he desired by creating favourable conditions for promoting class struggle, with the capitalist system itself, and not through armed struggle or by imposition.

Fourthly Lenin was fully convinced that the peaceful co-existence of Soviet Russia with

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37. V.I. Lenin, On the Foreign Policy of Soviet State, p.42, as quoted in Ibid.p.42.

38. Ibid., p. 287, as quoted in Ibid.p.42.



capitalist states was bound to benefit the socialist cause. He declared that through co-existence alone could Soviet Russia gain the much needed res-pite for building and consolidating socialism with and for promoting contradiction in capitalist societies. He held this belief not only because it was logical and realistic in view of the shaky position of Soviet Russia and the receding tide of proletarian movements in West after 1919, but it was also in line <sup>WITH</sup> victory of socialism sooner or later.

Finally and perhaps **more** importantly Lenin evolved an elaborated strategy and tactics incorporating his ideas on peaceful co-existence into a well-integrated plan of action. Lenin was a man of action who put theory to the supreme test of its practical efficacy and rated it with reference to its actual record of achievement and failure—regarding every failure as a temporary set-back and every achievement as a step taken forward in the long march towards the final goal of a World Revolution. Thus every strategy and tactic he adopted was designed to promote

the cause of World Revolution, and likewise his concept of peaceful co-existence and his plan of action were no exceptions.

Lenin underlined, two main tactics—one was to encourage rivalry among capitalist states and profit by this exercise and the other was to marshal all means available to save the revolution from destruction, and put it on the course of development. He stressed that the Soviet State had emerged victorious from the traumatic experiences faced during foreign intervention, civil war, as they had succeeded in exploiting among other things the rivalries obtained between capitalist states. He assigned a specific role to trade and commerce with capitalist countries with a view to promoting rivalries between them and developing Soviet Russia, economically.

"The statesman of the Entente and the U.S. do not seem to understand that Russia's present economic distress is simply part of the World's economic distress, Without Russia Europe cannot get on her feet. And with Europe prostrate, America's position becomes critical. What good

is America's wealth, if she cannot buy with it that which the needs?"<sup>39</sup>

In Novemebr 1960, he underlined the role, of trade with capitalist states as "The entry of the socialist country into trade relations with capitalist countries is a most important factor, ensuring our existence, in such a complex and absolutely exceptional situation".<sup>40</sup>

However about 1921, as the tide began to turn in favour of Soviet Russia, Lenin began to see Soviet Relations with the capitalist World more and more in terms of trade and commerce, and peaceful economic development. The focus of strategy and tactics of peaceful co-existence decidedly fell on more extensive commercial relations with capitalist states which ensured better and faster economic development of Soviet Russia, within the framework of the incompatibility of the two opposing blocs. At this point, there is a need for some explanations in Lenin's exposition of the strategy and tactics of peaceful co-existence. To Lenin, peaceful co-existence certainly did not mean

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39. Ibid., p.289, as quoted in Ibid., p.46.

40. Ibid., p.381 as quoted in Ibid., p.47.

destruction of Soviet State or "peace at any price..." He was uncompromising in his commitment to defend the Soviet State against foreign intervention and aggression armed or otherwise. In Feb. 1921, he declared, "We have reiterated - our desire, for peace, our need for peace, and our readiness to give foreign capital, generous concessions and guarantees. But we do not propose to be strangled to death for the sake of peace". He told the U.S., "Let the American capitalists leave us alone. We shall not touch them." 41

We should keep in mind, that while he elaborated on the theory of peaceful co-existence. "he made a clear distinction between the kind of class struggle that was waged on the international level (i.e the kind of struggle that was waged between states that were organized within definite boundaries, which had contradictory internal social systems or in other words, the kind of class struggle that was waged on the national level, between antagonistic classes within a state itself). Although peaceful co-existence had a common utility, and the two forms of class struggle were interlinked, Lenin believed

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41. V.I. Lenin, On the Foreign Policy of the Soviet State, (Moscow, 1918) p. 287 as quoted in *Ibid.*, p.46.

that success could be now on the international level, only through economic, political and ideological competition between the two systems under conditions of peace: for he was now **sure that** the socialist system, being internally superior, would finally derive more benefit from the competition than vice-versa". He thought that the theory of peaceful co-existence would help in creating conditions, favourable to the eventual victory of the proletariat, in the class struggle waged within various capitalist states. He was convinced that the two forms of struggle were interlinked--and would converge eventually, leading finally to the world revolution.

Lenin's theory of peaceful co-existence, as outlined above should be viewed as a virtue born of necessity or an expedient adopted for saving the revolution both externally and internally. Hence we see that Lenin, as founder of the Soviet State made the theory of peaceful co-existence with different social systems, like socialism and capitalism as the corner stone of Soviet foreign policy in its formative period. As it has successfully in practice, its relevance cannot be doubted even to-day.

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42. Ibid., p.48.

By the end of 1922, it was obvious that the worst was over for Soviet Russia. Most of the European powers had accorded de-facto recognition to the Soviet government, and had begun to trade and have commercial relations with it.

Relations with Germany, had become more stable; as the result of signing of the Rappall<sup>o</sup> treaty 1922, a treaty which provided a much needed opening for Soviet Russia for the import of German technology during the 20's and 30's. Moreover Soviet Russia had made its mark by participating in various international conference, like the Genoa conference, (1922) and Montreanx conference on Turkish State (1923).

Besides it had succeeded in establishing cordial and neighbourly relations with the independent states; and had taken the lead in organising Communist International. The revolutionary fervour was directed to the East. This we shall take up in our next chapter.

It was perhaps a tribute to Lenin's successfully handling of Soviet Relations with the capitalist states,

that by the time he died (Jan, 1924) the leading imperialist power Great Britain had decided to accord de-jure recognition to Soviet Russia, and to exchange ambassadors. Soviet Russia now transformed into the Soviet Union had finally succeeded, in changing the international environment, from a hostile one to at least hostile, if not friendly, conducive to its further consolidation.

CHAPTER IV

**Soviet Relations with National  
Liberation Movements in the  
East, and Working Class  
Movements in the West.**



We have in our first Chapter discussed how Lenin viewed World Politics as a global process, not merely confined to European States. We have seen that he has concluded that the colonies and semi-colonies are involved in World Politics; so much so that they represent a third important social force, which along with the other two namely labour and capital are determining World Politics. Such an understanding of the role of colonies and semi-colonies was a major contribution, made by Lenin to an understanding of International Politics of his time.

As a revolutionary leader, he was not merely interested in finding out how capitalism, has expanded to colonies and semi-colonies, to transform itself into imperialism; he was also deeply involved in finding out the process of weakening of imperialism in colonies and semi-colonies. Looking at the non-European World at the turn of the century, he had become fully aware of the fact that, the national liberation movements in colonies and semi-colonies were the potential source of weakening imperialism. In the same manner as the working class movement in the

East and West were complimentary, joined in a struggle against the common enemy capitalism-imperialism.

With the founding of the Soviet State, Lenin lost no time in realizing that National Liberation Movements in colonies and semi-colonies must be encouraged and supported by the new Soviet State; like wise the working class movements in the West also must be encouraged and supported. The historical fact that Soviet Russia even at its early formative stage had extended support both to Europe and Asia, was also, a contributory factor for Lenin, the realist that he was.

As long ago as in the first decade of the 20th century Lenin had stressed that the peoples of the East were an active force, which would strike a blow at the imperialist system from its colonial flank. He had opined in 1908, "The revolutions in Asia which followed the 1905 revolution in Russia like wise greatly stimulated the development of the

national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples in Asian Countries. The development of these movements fully confirmed the role of masses, in the revolution in the countries of the East".<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact Lenin's understanding of the colonial problem was stimulated by the cumbersome problem "of nationalities in Europe in general and inside the Czarist empire in particular. He tried to give an effective solution to this problem by advocating the right of self-determination for all nationalities in Europe. Lenin realized that the basic issue involved in the national question, namely suppression and domination of one nation by another had much in common with <sup>the</sup> colonial question. In advocating this principle to the right of nations, he also extended it to the colonial world, thereby linking up the national and colonial questions.<sup>2</sup> But one of the

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1. R. Ulyanovsky, *National Liberation*, (Moscow, 1978), pp.30-31.

2. Zafar Imam, Colonialism in East-West Relations : A Study of Soviet Policy towards India and Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1947, (New Delhi, 1969), p.4.

important factors which influenced his views were the developments taking place in Asia. Before 1913 Lenin's examination of the national and colonial question did not extend beyond the domains of Tsarist Russia. But after 1913 Lenin developed a wider perspective in his formulation to the right of nations to self determination, linking the national problem in Tsarist Russia, Europe and the colonial question in Asia with the general weakening of the hold of imperialism all over the world. Thus Lenin's attitude towards the colonial question, by the time of the October Revolution was neatly defined by his ideas on self-determination. It must be kept in mind that Lenin did not examine the colonial question and the prospect of proletarian revolution in the West, and the final victory of socialism over capitalism as entities separate from one another. In fact for a final victory of socialism over capitalism he gave equal stress on the success of socialist revolution in the West, and on the imperative need for national revolution in the colonies.

Early as 1919, Lenin believed that the national interest of Soviet Russia was still merged with the

idea of bringing about World Revolution. Everyone looked "hopefully towards Western proletariats to rise against the capitalists of their own countries and join hands with the victorious Russian working class to stamp out capitalism all over the world and to establish a World Union of Soviet Socialist Republic".<sup>3</sup> In the first Congress of the Communist International all the speakers gave expression to such revolutionary optimism, and no special significance was attached to the colonial problem beyond a general awareness of its connecting link with the revolution in the West. The manifesto of the Congress reiterated the classical position that the emancipation of the colonies is possible only in conjunction with the emancipation of the working class in their metropolis; and emphasized that it was the proletariat dictatorship in Europe that would free the colonial slaves of Africa and Asia from the shackles of colonialism. Although an immediate uprising of the European proletariat was thus no longer expected, the injection of the previously neglected waiting period did not weigh heavily at first. Lenin continued to think in

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3. Ibid., p.14.

terms of a relatively short interim:- a few weeks, perhaps a few months or a year or two. The remaining year of the world war and its aftermath continued to give him reason to expect the chain reaction to set in very soon. On the eve of the German revolution of November 1918 Lenin stated, "A whole group of countries is seized with the flame of the workers revolution. In this respect our efforts and the sacrifices that we have made have been justified".<sup>4</sup> But each seemingly propitious event was followed by a set back. One such was the failure of the Red Army at the gates of Warsaw. The offensive in Poland and the setting of Warsaw as the objective of this offensive was intended as a last desperate gamble to break Soviet Russia's isolation from Europe and to bring about another revolutionary situation in the West. "With every new set back the theory of spark suffered an additional blow. For this reason it gradually turned into a different theory altogether. The new theory was that of the transitional period during which the Soviet state must preserve itself as the

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4. "Speech on International Situation",  
8 November 1918, LENIN, Vol.23, p.265.

home of the revolution, which would take a very long time to spread. Lenin no longer talked about the single great upheaval throughout the world, but spoke of an era of revolutions in which the capitalist order would be replaced by socialism".<sup>5</sup>

"The working class in Europe failed miserably. Spartacists and the left socialist upheavals in Germany were crushed. The hope of bringing about World Revolution was dampened and in its place the consolidation of Soviet Russia and the weakening of the capitalist powers were regarded as guarantees for promoting the World Revolution at a future date. The success of the Red Army in the civil war boosted the morale of the Soviet government and provided some self assurance in their own capacity, to consolidate themselves and to deal with the capitalist powers"<sup>6</sup>. The hopes of the success of the revolution in the West faded by 1920 and it had been a complete blunder to place the main emphasis on the Western proletariat. The weakest link in the capitalist chain was not the West.

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5. Alfred Meyer, LENINISM, PP.227-228.

6. Ibid., p.15.

"We thought : Either the international revolution will come to our assistance and then our victories will be fully secured or we shall do our modest revolutionary work with the clear understanding that if we are defeated we shall nevertheless have contributed to the cause of the revolution and that our experience will be of value to other revolutions. It seemed clear to us that without the support of the international revolution the victory of the proletariat was impossible. Even before the revolution and also after it we thought either now or at least very soon, revolution will take place in all the other countries, in more advanced capitalist countries or we shall perish".<sup>7</sup>

After all the hopes of the revolution were dashed, the orientation was towards the East. The convocation of the Second Congress of Muslim Communists in November 1919 was marked by renewed vigour and consciousness of the seriousness of the task ahead. Lenin personally addressed the Congress and laid emphasis on the need for the delegates to

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7. Xenia Jouekoff Eudin and Robert C. North, Soviet Russia and the West, 1920-1927, (California, 1951), 'Lenin's Speech, p.57.



work extensively among the masses. The resolution of the Congress declared boldly that "the problem of international social revolution cannot be solved without the participation of the East as a definite social and economic unit".<sup>8</sup>

The search for allies in the East also assumed great importance for Lenin and by the end of 1919 friendly relations developed between the Soviet Union and its neighbours in the East. Lenin showed readiness to establish new and genuinely equal relations with the independent countries of the East. Not only did the Soviet government annul all the treaties and agreements with tsarist Russia, but it also helped the Eastern peoples in the struggle for political and economic independence and that the whole Eastern policy of Russia will be diametrically opposite to the imperialist powers. It will aid them in every possible way.

From its very first days the Soviet government set about severing all inequitable tsarist agreements

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8. V.I. Lenin, On the Foreign Policy of the Soviet States, (Moscow, 1968), p.133.

with neighbouring all countries. The rapacious treaties between tsarist Russia and other imperialist powers, on the division of spheres of influence of in Iran, Turkey and China, were all declared null and void. Soviet decree of August 29, 1918 annulled the tsarist governments treaties and agreements with Russia and Austria-Hungary on the divisions of Poland. It regarded it as being contrary to the principle of self determination of nations and the revolutionary sense of legality of the Russian people who recognized the alienable right to independence and unity. The new Soviet State, right on the day of its establishment (7th Nov, 1917) publicly denounced colonial exploitation and unequal relations in international politics and came out unequivocally in support of the right of self-determination and emancipation of colonies and semi-colonies.

No one could disregard the fact that the addition of Eastern component to the West was a crucial development. Briefly it can be summed up that it was with Marx that the idea of colonial and semi-colonial world as a potential force against imperialism had

taken place. He laid down that the proletarian revolution in Europe is interlinked with colonial emancipation of the East. The first international under Marx's leadership took some cognizance of this view, but because of international dissensions it was not put into practice. It was the second international which really came to grips with Marx's view in the subject and debated the future of the colonial and semi-colonial world. The Stuttgart Conference 1907 was a water-shed. After a fierce controversy the Socialist Democratic movement came out with the formulation "that the future of the colonial and semi-colonial worlds was inseparably linked, with the future of the capitalism in the 'mother' countries. If capitalism in Europe was defeated, the colonial world would automatically achieve freedom; if it remained in power, the future of the colonial world was doomed. In other words, the West had precedence over the East from the view point of the Socialist Revolution in the West".<sup>9</sup> Later it was Lenin who revived this controversy and thrashed out the question over precedence between East

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9. See Zafar Imam, "Soviet View of Non-Alignment", in K.P. Misra's (ed.), Non-Alignment : Frontiers and Dynamics, (New Delhi, 1983), p.447.

and West for the future of the Socialist Revolution in the West.

It was at the ~~the~~ Second Comintern Congress which met in July that ~~—~~ the colonial and semi-colonial commission of the Congress was presented with the two sets of theses—one by Lenin, and the other by M.N. Roy. The general theme of the theses was - the division of the world into oppressor and oppressed nations by imperialism; the growing importance of the colonies and semi-colonies in the struggle against imperialism and the need to draw them into this struggle and the inevitability of the world-wide revolution embracing the colonial as well - was quite common.

The second basic idea was that the relations between the peoples and the world political system as a whole are determined by the struggle waged by a small group of imperialist nations against the Soviet movement.

"World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus - the struggle of the

world bourgeoisie against Soviet Russian Republic, around which are inevitably grouped, on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries, and on the other, all national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities who are learning from bitter experience that their only salvation lies in the Soviet systems victory over world imperialism".<sup>10</sup>

He emphasized that in view of such a world political situation it was necessary to pursue a policy "that would achieve the closest alliance of all national and colonial movements of the liberation with Soviet Russia."<sup>11</sup>

The controversy centered around the fundamental question of tactics, as to what should be the form and content of the support of all such movements in the colonies and semi-colonies, which were directed against foreign rule and imperialist domination.

Lenin viewed the whole question from the strategy of the world revolution. He emphasized on the alliance,

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10. V.I. Lenin, The National Liberation Movement in the East, (Moscow, 1969), p.270.

11. Ibid., p.270.

"of the proletariat and the working masses of all nations and countries for the common struggle."<sup>12</sup>  
This would lead to the overthrow of the landowners and the bourgeoisie in feudal and backward countries and capitalism in advanced countries.

Lenin underlined the actual tactics to be adopted and emphasized that the question of the bourgeois democratic movement, in backward countries had given rise to certain differences. Lenin was in the favour of supporting "bourgeois liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary and when their exponents do not hinder the work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit, the peasantry and the masses of the exploited".<sup>13</sup>

He clarified by stating, "it is beyond doubt that any national movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, since the overwhelming mass of population in the backward countries consists of peasants who represent bourgeoisie capitalist

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12. Ibid., p.284.

13. Lazitch and Drachkovitch, M.M., Lenin and the Comintern, Volume 1, (Hoover, 1972), p.391

relationships. It would be utopian to believe that the proletarian parties in these backward countries, if indeed they can merge in them, can pursue communist tactics and a communist policy, without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support".<sup>14</sup>

Roy on the other hand emphasized the growing class character of the nationalist movements as a result of the industrialization of such colonies as India, China. He pointed out that to support the national liberation movements in the colonies and semi-colonies would merely amount to supporting the bourgeoisie against the working class movement of these countries. Roy stressed for the need of the Comintern to establish close relations with the revolutionary forces in the economically and politically oppressed countries. He felt that India has the ingredients for the formation of a strong Communist party and that the revolutionary movement there in so far as the broad masses of the

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14. V.I. Lenin, The National Liberation Movement in the East, (Moscow, 1969), p.283.

people are concerned has nothing in common with the National liberation movement. He stressed for the need of formation of the Communist Party and to help the Communist to take over the leadership of national movements from the bourgeoisie. The growing class character of the National liberation movement as perceived by Roy led to the modification in Lenin's theses which was less committed than the total and unstinted support to the national bourgeoisie. Lenin final theses laid down, 'The Communist International should collaborate provisionally with the revolutionary movement in the colonies and backward countries and even form an alliance with it but it must not amalgamate with it, it must conditionally maintain the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is only in an embryonic stage'.<sup>15</sup> Hence the Comintern adopted a tactical policy of supporting the national bourgeoisie in their struggle against imperialism and also influence them during this struggle.

Lenin then turned to the question of Communist tactics and policy in countries with pre-capitalist conditions with no industrial proletariat and no purely

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15. The Second Congress of the Communist International: Full Report of the Proceedings of the Petrograd sessions of July 17th, 1920. (Publishing Office of the Communist International, America, 1921), p.114.



proletarian movement. Taking as an example the Russian Communists work in Turkestan, Lenin explained that the idea of peasants' Soviets was applicable to feudal and semi-feudal conditions. The essential conclusion was that the backward peoples must not inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. But the social revolution in colonies would not be successful simply by its own independent action and by forming Soviets and working through them. The Communist International "should advance the proposition that with appropriate theoretical grounding and aid to the proletariat of the advanced countries the colonies can go over to socialism without having to pass through the painful and long process of capitalist stage. Lenin insisted on co-ordination between the proletarian revolution in the home country and revolutionary forces in the colonies in order to secure the final success of the world revolution".<sup>16</sup> The theses of both Lenin and Roy were adopted by the Congress. Lenin's theses became the guiding light of Soviet policy whereas Roy's theses were relegated to the background. Though extension of support was given to the national movements in the colonies and semi-colonies on the assumption that they would weaken the hold of capitalism all over the world. But the form of support that would be extended was left undecided. This would depend on the future course of the World politics and Soviet Russia's position

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16. Lazitch and Drachkonitch, Lenin and the Comintern, Volume 1, (Hoover, 1972), p.391.

vis-a-vis the capitalist states. The world politics had indeed given rise to a peculiar kind of state of affairs. Though on one hand the international national bourgeoisie was filled with furious hatred and hostility towards Russia, who prepared to strangle her at any given moment on the other: "all attempts at military intervention which had cost the international bourgeoisie hundreds of millions of francs ended in complete failure inspite of the weakness of the Soviet power. Opposition to the war against Soviet Russia had grown considerably in all capitalists countries; this added fuel to the revolutionary movement of the hundreds of millions of oppressed peoples of the East-which was growing with remarkable vigour".<sup>17</sup> All this resulted in the inability of the international imperialism to strangle Soviet Russia, inspite of the latter being much stronger. So it had decided for the time being, to grant recognition or semi-recognition and to conclude trade agreements with her. So the international position of the Soviet Republic was distinguished by a certain kind of equilibrium which although extremely unstable enabled the Soviet Republic to exist within capitalist

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17. V.I. Lenin, The National Liberation Movement in the East, (Moscow, 1969), p.305.

encirclement. It was this international situation which led Soviet leaders to believe that under the present international situation propaganda rather than actual commitment was the most effective instrument, of the policy against the capitalist powers - because the attempts to prepare grounds in Turkey and Persia were being regarded in England as something the Soviet Republic was doing for the purpose of creating trouble for England. They wanted England to regard it as a misconception and to be the work of Communist International. The Soviet government was fulfilling its duty as a detachment of the international.

When the third Congress met, the trade agreement with Britain had already been signed and there were high hopes for detente with the other capitalist powers. The attention of the Congress was not therefore focused on colonial question. It was shadowed by the future of Revolution in the West. Leaders argued that capitalism had managed to restore a temporary balance in its favour. Lenin stressed that although there was no chance for the success of the international situation in the near future - a fundamental preparation for revolution was necessary. Again we notice that the dual tactical policy of supporting the national movements in the

colonies and semi-colonies on one hand and at the same time emphasising the growth of "new social foundation for the revolutionary struggle"<sup>18</sup>, which was to be based on the vigorous development of capitalism in the East.

Thus we see that it was in the third Congress, it was finally felt that the possibility that the prospect of revolution in the West had become obscure and remote, but because of the newly found entente of the capitalist powers, full attention was not given to the semi-colonies. It was after the series of set backs and the failures of efforts of the Soviet power to come to terms with capitalist powers led to a period of frequent friction. This made imperative the need for the consolidation of the Soviet power paramount. Other factors like unification of the Anglo-Persian treaty and the growth of national movement in India, China and Eastern countries had become vital factors which could not be ignored. Soviet Russia's advocacy to the right of

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18. Decisions of the Third Congress, Communist Party of Great Britain (n.d.), p.125.

self-determination which had resulted in declaring the unequal treaties with Afghan, Turkey and Persia null and void, had created a favourable impression on these countries, under colonial and semi-colonial rule. Since both of them had common interest, it was not difficult to find a dependable ally in them. Thus Soviet Russia did her best to extend her influence as she possibly could.

Thus with the view of these developments that had taken place the fourth Congress was significant for Soviet Russia. A well-defined pattern of the Soviet attitude emerged towards the colonies and semi-colonies. Though the discussions remained casual but in actuality more than the customary attention was given to it. The broad alternative programme as outlined by the Second Congress was welded into one single integrated plan. Since the stabilization of capitalism in Europe had become inevitable and the revolution in the West had become a remote possibility, Soviet Russia had to co-exist with the capitalist world. Hence it was necessary to find the only and dependable ally in the nationalist movement in the colonial and

semi-colonial countries against imperialism even if they were of bourgeois or of a pure religious nationalist character. A general support of nationalist movement of every strand and colour was agreed upon. But the nature and form of support would be essentially determined by the objective test of its revolutionary role in the general struggle against capitalism, which was now adhered to the strengthening of Soviet Russia against capitalist powers. The theses on the Eastern question adopted by the Fourth Congress fully reflected the strategy and tactics of Soviet policy towards the colonial world. It stressed the importance of these movements in the colonies and semi-colonies which had already disrupted the balance of the entire imperialist world system. The strategy and tactics were finally laid down utilizing all national movement which according to their opinion were directed against the imperialist powers.

Thus we see that though these two social forces were regarded as important components of Lenin's ideology in upstaging a world revolution,

both merited a different kind of attention from him. Though Lenin recognized the National liberation movements as a potential force against the imperialist system his attitude towards it was not like a straight line. **Initially** he was non-committal and simply verbal keeping in mind that the outlining of a definite policy at an early stage towards them was still pre-mature and was dependent on the course the world politics would take how the position of the Soviet Union would be effected vis-a-vis the capitalist states. **The** proceedings of the four Congress of the Communist International provided ample testimony to the manner in which his attitude to the National Liberation movement developed and it was only when hopes of revolution in the West had totally died that Lenin set out underlining a clear-cut policy.

VIEWS ON THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENTS IN THE WEST:

At the stage let us look at Lenin's attitude towards the Western proletariat. This was always bordered on the hope that since capitalism in the West had reached the advanced stage there lingered some possibility of it creating a international revolution.

But by the Fourth Congress Lenin was convinced that there would not be an occurrence of any such thing. After 1921, the Western Communist Parties existed in a kind of ~~vaccum~~ without any prospect of revolution. But they did not lapse into the ~~opportunism~~ of the socialist parties, ~~because~~ the national sections of the Communist International became gradually patterned on the Bolshevik model. The growing dependence of the ~~Comintern~~ on Soviet Russia prevented them from "wallowing into sins that Lenin laid at the door of Second International reformism pacifism etc."<sup>19</sup> After 1921 they were steered more towards a Bolshevik type organization. "This created another paradox, as the prospects for revolution diminished, the popular basis of Western Communist Parties contracted, but their apparatus broadened; in other words party members and voters grew less numerous but the number of full time functionaries increased".<sup>20</sup> Since the Western proletariat had proved unsuccessful in the revolutionary task of safeguarding and supporting Soviet Russia in particular or promoting a world revolution in general - led Lenin to direct

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19. Lazitch and Drachkovitch, Lenin and the the Comintern, volume 1, (Hoover, 1972), p.531.

20. Ibid., p.532.



more attention to the East.

Lenin's stand towards these two social forces laid down the precedent for the conduction of the Soviet foreign policy. The problem of reconciling the ideology with the practical set up could be tackled by cautiously creating a favourable balance between the two. The manner in which the Soviet Union tried to establish peaceful relations with the capitalist powers and yet not ignore the forces that would be actually responsible for upholding the ideology of socialism was a major break through. The relations between the social forces and the Soviet State led to the evolution of tactics in conducting the Soviet foreign policy and helped to create a optimal balance between high idealism and pragmatism - which is relevant even to-day. Lenin's view on the colonies and semi-colonies had indeed emerged out of his understanding of Imperialism. However there were not simply Eurocentric. The people of the colonies and semi-colonies were regarded by Lenin, as an independent factor in their own right in International Politics... . He was particularly attracted to National movements that had begun to

rise in major colonies and semi-colonies, at the turn of the century. In fact, Lenin regarded these movements as a viable third force in international politics, which was potentially important to Soviet Russia; hence these must be supported and encouraged. Thus he laid the foundation of one of the essential components of Soviet foreign policy ever since. It must be however noted that Lenin's concept on National Liberation Movements was ~~by~~<sup>no</sup> means simply a search for the allies, in conduct of Soviet foreign policy. It was primarily based on revolutionary commitment and idealism, to change and develop the world on the lines as he had perceived. The fact that major colonies and semi-colonies lay on the border states of Soviet Russia (later Soviet Union) was a reality and Lenin could not have ignored it. Soviet support to National Liberation Movement in the East however remained more verbal than real. But it certainly made this into an international issue which proved conducive to the aims and aspirations of National Liberation Movements, in the East late in the 40's, when

the process of decolonization had begun.

Broadly speaking the same can be said about working-class movements in the West. Despite Stalin's tendencies to make use of Working Class Movement in the West for promoting Soviet foreign policy aims and objectives during the inter-war years, one fails to see how they could have developed without support and encouragement, which Lenin extended to them in the formative period of the Soviet State.

CHAPTER V.

An Overview.

V.I.Lenin, was the leader of Socialist revolution in Czarist Russia and founder of the Soviet State. Although he was not formally a foreign minister of the new state, he laid down the foundations of Soviet Foreign Policy, and guided its activities, during the crucial formative years of its existence. As in his other activities, we find that in foreign policy as well, Lenin sought to develop a close link between theory and practice. He begins with the theory of foreign policy of the Soviet State, then he seeks to apply it in practice and the process, he develops his theory more and guides further activities of Soviet foreign policy. Thus we find that Lenin's concept of Soviet foreign policy was not merely a theoretical exercise, but it also served as a guide to action. In other words Lenin's concepts of Soviet Foreign policy is extremely relevant for understanding the actual working of Soviet foreign policy, during his own times, and later.

By concepts we essentially mean various important strands in Lenin's theory of Soviet foreign policy. Besides, our general approach in the study is mainly conditioned by the two-way process of linking theory with practice, in Lenin's framework for Soviet foreign policy, as we have explained above.

We have begun our study by examining Lenin's views on World Politics of his times. Lenin began from where Marx had left. He agreed with Marx that international politics was determined by the struggle of the two main forces namely

labour and capital. Then Lenin developed this idea by stressing that yet another force represented by the national liberation movement in the East was also determining world politics; so much so that he outlined the typology of relationship between the three social forces namely labour, capital and national Liberation movement in the East. He further explained that the role of the nation-states was only formalistic and itself dependent on their socio-economic formation. Another argument that Lenin extended from Marx was that the struggle of the forces, with opposing interest which characterized international politics was not only confined to Europe but it was a world-wide phenomenon. Lenin stated that in this world-wide process of revolutionary struggle Soviet Russia must take lead and perform the basic task of consolidating itself and at the same time, of supporting and encouraging movements which were objectively against, capitalism-imperialism.

Chapter II seeks to identify and analyse Lenin's framework for Soviet Foreign policy. We have pointed out how the framework has emerged out of his understanding of World Politics of his times. Here we have considered the two main functions that appear to be crucial in the framework : one is, which may be called traditional, that is to say - historical, geo-political defence and security needs of the Soviet state; while the other may be called, non-traditional, that is to say purely ideological ideas and concept. While giving importance to traditional factors, we have examined in detail ideas and concepts. Lenin emphasized that

Soviet foreign policy must act within the relationship between ideology and reality; and it must strike optimum balance between them depending on the situation and circumstances. It can neither be purely ideological nor must it be purely non-ideological.

From Chapter III we begin to examine Lenin's concepts against the background of the actual realities of the International politics which Soviet Russia faced during its first six years of its existence. It is amply demonstrated how the practical task of guiding the conduct of Soviet foreign policy enriched Lenin's theoretical concepts. For example, it was precisely the problem of dealing with the capitalist system of states that led Lenin to evolve his concept of peaceful co-existence with states of different social system. He opined that through co-existence alone could Soviet-Russia gain the much needed respite for building and consolidating socialism. A basis for peaceful co-existence would be economic and commercial ties with capitalist states. This would promote rivalry between them and also help develop Soviet Russia economically. Peaceful co-existence would lead to saving the revolution and simultaneously put it on the course of development.

Finally, in Chapter IV we have sought to analyse what may be called Lenin's main contribution to the armoury of ideas of Marxism-Leninism on International politics and foreign policy. We have focused our attention on Lenin's concept of Soviet relations with what Lenin called a viable social force in World Politics; namely national liberation movements in the East and the working class movements in the West. Lenin was particularly attracted to the national liberation movement and

regarded this force as potentially important to Soviet Russia, and stressed that it must be supported and encouraged. In the formative years, Lenin's hopes were bordered on the revolution in the West, and he encouraged these movements whole heartedly. It was only when the hopes of the future of the revolution in the West had receded that Lenin directed more attention to the East. Thus we see that Lenin's views on colonies and semi-colonies were not Euro-centric. He regarded them as an independent factor in their own right.

The broad canvas of our study clearly brings out the fact that Lenin presented novel ideas on International Politics as well as foreign policy of a Socialist State. He thus not only enriched Marxist-Leninist theory on International Politics and Foreign Policy but also adapted these ideas on laying the foundation of Soviet foreign policy. Considering the critical situation, which faced Soviet Russia (later the Soviet Union) in the first six years of its existence, this was no mean achievement. By the time Lenin died in January 1924, Soviet foreign policy was already set on a steady course of development.

More than seven decades of the record of Soviet foreign policy, has amply upheld the validity of Lenin's concepts on Soviet foreign policy. Not that this record has been a record of success and glory only but Leninist framework has certainly provided Soviet foreign policy a vital



tool for groping with the realities of international situation, in a programmatic manner for more than seven decades. Gorbachev's New Thinking On International Politics and Soviet foreign policy perhaps could not have seen the light of the day, had Lenin not provided the basic frame work for Soviet foreign policy.

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