

**SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENT
IN ASIA : A CASE STUDY OF COMINTERN AND INDIA,
1919-1928**

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

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1990**

July 17, 1990

DECLARATION

Certified that the dissertation entitled, "SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENT IN ASIA : A CASE STUDY OF COMINTERN AND INDIA, 1919-1928" submitted by Lakshman Rai is in partial fulfilment of six credits out of a total requirement of Twenty four credits for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree in this University and is his own work.

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



Chairman



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Supervisor

PREFACE

This study belongs to one of the most complicated areas of Soviet foreign policy which was directly guided and dictated by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. During the period of this research work, i.e., 1919-1928, the institution of Soviet foreign policy was hardly in making owing to which one could find no difference between the government and party. In this study we have tried to investigate the roots of Soviet policy towards anti-colonial movement in Asia with a special case of Communist International and India.

The study consists of five chapters which begins with a brief historical and ideological background that led to the adoption of anti-colonial foundation as a pillar of Soviet foreign policy immediately after the Bolsheviks came in power in October 1917. The same foundation took an institutional shape through the Communist International when it was established in March 1919.

The second chapter deals with the Soviet strategy in the formation of Communist International as its main ^{aim} was to play a dual role in an extremely hostile international atmosphere during that period. On one hand, the Soviets tried to intensify the anti-colonial struggles in the colonies, particularly in the East and on the other, they got definite success

in getting new communist parties established in all the Continents of the World. The formation of the Communist International also provided the Soviets ever-biggest means of bargaining with the hostile western powers.

In Third chapter, we have discussed the role played by the Communist International in helping the anti-colonial movement in India between 1920 and 1924, as this period had marked the great beginning of "Non-cooperation" movement under the leadership of Gandhiji. This period also marked the emergence of different communist groups for the first time, particularly in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Lahore. Though this period faced with the failure of the "Non-cooperation" movement due to its withdrawal by Gandhiji after 'Chauri Chaura' incident, the emergence of communists provided a new turn to the anti-colonial movement in India.

The Fourth chapter has been devoted to the formation of Communist Party of India and the policy of Communist International during 1925-28. As already mentioned, the emergence of communist and the formation of the CPI was a historical phenomenon in Indian politics. For the first time, an organised party under the direct guidance of Communist International put forward the slogan of complete independence and revolution after throwing out the British colonial rule in India. During this period, hectic activities of the Communist International strengthened its deep relations with Indian revolutionaries which but farreaching impact on the

future politics in the country. The concluding year of this study, i.e., 1928 was the year of the penultimate Congress (Sixth) of the Comintern that became historical landmark particularly in the international communist movement. As it is remarkable fact that the ideological difference became so sharp in the Communist International that the leaders, like Trotsky (USSR) and M.N. Roy of India, were expelled immediately after the sixth Congress of the Comintern.

The last chapter has drawn the conclusion of this study which may always create academic interest among the scholars of this area.

I owe a debt of gratitude to a number of my teachers, friends and well wishers. First of all, I would like to record my thanks to Dr. Tulsi Ram, my Supervisor without whose compassionate attitude and able guidance my research work would not have been completed in time. He was a constant source of inspiration both academically and personally. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. S.K. Jha for the keen interest he regularly showed in my research work.

I am also indebted to Dr. P.N. Singh my senior colleague, who has been a great source of encouragement and solace all through the period of my research. I benefited in many ways from his deep human sympathy and warm personal care. My other colleagues like Mr. H. Singh, Dr. R.S. Singh and Shri B.N. Singh were instrumental in many ways to extend their help and co-operation.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not thank my wife and children, whose contribution to my research work was by ^{no} means negligible. They suffered the pangs of separation and endured it silently during my long absence from them.

In the course my work I have consulted Central Library J.N.U., Sapru House, Nehru Memorial Library. I express my thanks to the staff of all these libraries.

Finally, I alone, am responsible for the views expressed and errors committed in this work.

Dated: July 17, 1990
New Delhi.


Lakshman Rai

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CHAPTER - I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SOVIET POLICY
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CHAPTER - I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SOVIET POLICY
TOWARDS ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENT IN ASIAI. Introduction

If we keep aside for a moment the era of Gorbachev's Perestroika after 1985, it will appear that the Soviet policies be it domestic or foreign, had been derived from the Lenin's ideological formulations in the past. These policies received dogmatic treatment during the early decades after October Revolution. During that period most of the Asian countries were reeling under the colonial domination, that is why, Lenin took special interest in Asian affairs and tried to help ideologically these people to fight against colonialism. He formulated that the national liberation movement developed parallel to the growth of capitalism in these countries. This is the reason why the revolutionary people of these countries had to adopt dual policy while fighting against colonialism. On one hand they had to fight against international colonialism while on the other, against domestic capitalism. In such a complex situation, it was not so easy to adopt a ready-made policy during the struggle for national liberation. That is why, the urgent need was felt to form Communist International in 1919 to solve all these complex problems.

At the outset of formation of the Comintern Soviet Russia was dangerously surrounded by hostile powers and subsequently engaged in fierce civil war which posed a potential threat to the basic existence of newly born revolutionary state. At the same time, Soviet Russia had already lost the diplomatic relations with almost all major powers of the world. Under these circumstances the Comintern was very wisely used by the Soviets to make urgent appeals to international proletariats in the East and West both to defend Soviet Russia and wage struggles for national liberation in the colonies throughout the world.

As a result of the above appeals, thousands of revolutionaries from all over the world, most of them had already been living in Russia, fought shoulder to shoulder with Red Army against domestic as well as foreign invaders. The struggle for Soviet Russia was coincided by promoting national liberation and communist movements, particularly in the East. In this process a Soviet scholar says that an outstanding role was played by the Communist International. It effectively contributed to the unification of communist elements in the oppressed countries, played an indispensable part in arming the emerging communist parties in the East with Marxist-Leninist theory and helped them to chart their strategy and tactics and policy of forming alliances with the non-proletarian anti-imperialist forces.¹ He has further

1. R.A. Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East (Moscow, 1979), P. 5.

pointed out: "As the head of the Comintern's collectives leadership Lenin guided the organizations activities in the post-October period when the proletariat launched an assault on imperialist citadels in the West and there was a powerful upsurge of the struggle of the oppressed people against imperialist domination throughout the colonial East."² In a different language, the comintern provided the instrumentalities through which Leninist foreign policy was sought to be projected.

It was natural, therefore, that there should have been a distinct commonness between the objective of the comintern and those of the Soviet State. It would not be exaggeration to say that with the passage of time this commonness became all the more conspicuous when aims and objectives of the comintern were largely subordinated to those of the Soviet State.

It is in this background the present chapter aims at analysing the historical and ideological background of Soviet policy towards anti-colonial movement. The genesis and development of this policy which was pursued in a highly effective manner by the Soviet state and Comintern can be traced in an embryonic form in the writings of Marx and Engels. Later from the early years of the present century we find Lenin coming back to this question again and again, each time expounding his theory in much clearer and sharper form.

2. Ibid., P. 6.

II. Soviet View of Anti-Colonial Movement in Asia

Soviet policy against colonialism had emanated from Marxism-Leninism. It can be traced from the early writings of Marx and Engels on different Asian colonies during that period. Marx also wrote a series of articles on India in an American news paper, called New York Daily Tribune. Earlier in the 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' Marx and Engels wrote: "The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West..."³

In an other writing Karl Marx said: "While the bourgeoisie of each nation still retained separate national interests, big industry created a class which in all nations has the same interest and with which the nationality is already dead."⁴ However, some scholars think that the ideas of Karl Marx were not very clear

3. K. Marx and F. Engels, On Colonialism (Moscow, 1976), p. 14.

4. Karl Marx, The German Ideology (Moscow, 1964) p. 8.

in understanding the colonial question. For example E.H. Carr has written that Marx gave little thought to colonial questions... The first international ignored them. The second international remained for a long time equally apathetic.⁵ Even a famous Soviet scholar has pointed out that Karl Marx had not known imperialism. The historic merit of exposing its economic, social and political essence, and conditions and capabilities engendered by imperialism for revolutionary activity belonged to Lenin.⁶ The foregoing discussion makes it abundantly clear that Marx's ideas about national and colonial question were rather imprecise and of generalised nature. The focal point of his revolutionary strategy were the highly industrialised nations of Europe where, according to his formulation the sharpness of class division and class struggle would lead eventually to proletarian revolution. Clearly, for a socialist revolution Marx depended largely on industrially developed nations. The colonial world did not occupy a position of great significance in his scheme of things. This was reflected even in the activities of the First International led by Marx. The national and colonial issue was not discussed separately at the Congress of the First

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5. E.H. Carr, Bolshevik Revolution 1917-23 (London, 1971), Vol. 3, p. 232.
 6. R.A. Ulyanovsky, in A. Reznikov, The Comintern and the East: Strategy and Tactics in the National Liberation Movement (Moscow, 1984), p. 5.

International, it was recognised as an important aspect of the struggle of the international working class against the capitalist countries only at the next stage of this movement. The main reason for such an approach was that the world system of capitalist economy was still in the process of formation and therefore the international significance of national and colonial issue had not been fully studied by Marx and Engels.⁷

Nevertheless, Marx's formulations, however imprecise they were, provided a seedbed of ideas for the successive generations of revolutionaries for chalking out their own respective strategies. Some of the basic ideas constituting the determining principles of national and colonial question to be taken up by the successive generation of revolutionaries, were related to the following: the specific feature of the Eastern society; the link between colonial expansion and the primary accumulation of capital; the contradictory and dual socio-historical role of foreign capitalist domination in the colonial world; the forms and methods of colonial exploitation; the inter-connection between the national liberation movement in the colonies and the proletarian class struggle; the attitude of the working-class movement towards the national movements when it comes to regard the national problem as a national colonial one, etc.⁸

7. F.B. Belelyubsky, "The International Working Class Movement and the Struggle Against Colonialism Prior to the Formation of the Comintern", in R.A. Ulyanovsky, ed., n. 1, p. 39.

8. Ibid., pp. 32-33.

The most consistent among the successive generation of revolutionaries were V.I. Lenin and his revolutionary party of Bolsheviks who, after the Victory of October Revolution in 1917, went further to establish the Third International (Comintern) through which they sought to put into practice their ideas about the anti-colonial movements.

However, before going into the details of Lenin's ideas on colonialism and anti-colonial movement it would be quite relevant here to scrutinise carefully the validity of such claims made by a group of western scholars that Lenin's theoretical interest in the colonial question, which became manifest at the time of Second Comintern Congress in 1920, was the result of the disillusionment of Russian revolutionaries with the receding prospects of revolution in the west. It is claimed, for instance, that the defeat of revolution in Germany, the collapse of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the liquidation of Soviet regimes in several countries which were formerly members of the Tzarist empire, such as Finland and the Baltic states, had resulted in the decline of revolutionary fervour throughout Europe, and discovering that the revolutionary prospects in the west were at low ebb, Lenin turned his attention towards the East.⁹

9. Hugh Seton-Watson, The Pattern of Communist Revolution: A Historical Analysis (London, 1960) p. 127; Branko Lazitch and Milorad M. Drachkovitch, Lenin and Comintern, Vol. I (Stanford, California, 1972), p. 377.

Such an interpretation, although scholarly it might appear, fails to acknowledge that Lenin's interest in the colonial countries of the East in the 1920s was not precipitated by the sudden collapse of revolutionary opportunities in the west, but was in direct continuation of his preoccupation with colonial problems for quite a long time.

Analysing in detail about the colonial process, Lenin estimated that by 1876, the colonialists had occupied 51.5 per cent of all the territories of Asia, 100 per cent of Australia and 27.5 per cent of Central and South America while Africa was in the tragic period of partition.¹⁰ When London Congress of the International in 1896 adopted resolution recognizing the right of nations to self-determination, the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was the first socialist party at its Second Congress in 1903, to introduce this slogan into its programme.¹¹

In the meantime, the Russian Revolution of 1905 influenced all anti-colonial movements throughout Asia. Lenin had rightly called this revolution as "dress rehearsal" for the October Revolution of 1917. In his work, "The Right of Nations to self-determination", Lenin wrote: "In Eastern Europe and Asia the period of bourgeois democratic revolutions did not begin until 1905.

10. B.G. Gafurov and G.F. Kim, eds., Lenin and National Liberation in the East (Moscow, 1978), p. 30.

11. F.B. Belelyubsky's article in, R.A. Ulyanovsky, ed., n. 1, p. 58.

The revolutions in Russia, Persia, Turkey and China, the Balkans war - such is the chain of world events of our period in our "Orient." And only a blind man could fail to see in this chain of events the awakening of a whole series of bourgeois democratic national movements, which strive to create nationally independent and rationally uniform state.¹² According to another Russian source, the first Russian revolution aroused the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries; it exercised considerable influence on the Chinese revolutionary democrats headed by Sun Yat-sen. Its influence was also felt by the leaders of young Turks in the revolution of 1908 and the revolutionary upsurge in India (1905-8) and in Persia (1905-11) was also connected with the revolutionary movement of the masses of the people of Russia. Imperialism was experiencing a tangible shake up in its colonial system.¹³ At the stuttgart congress of Second International, commenting on the deliberations on the colonial question Lenin had severely castigated the unalloyed opportunism of Van Kalf of Holland. His draft resolution to the effect that the stuttgart Congress did not in principle oppose colonial policy as such, for even under socialism colonial policy had a civilising role to play was defeated through the stubborn opposition of Lenin

12. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1969). Vol. 25, p. 406.

13. A group of authors, History of the USSR (Moscow, 1977), Vol. I, p. 308.

and his Comrades.¹⁴ Lenin's contention was that the draft resolution was signifying blatant bourgeois chauvinism and it utterly disregarded the interest of colonial people.¹⁵ Later on, in an article "The Awakening of Asia" published in Pravda on May 7, 1913 Lenin said: "Following the 1905 movement in Russia, the democratic revolution spread to the whole of Asia - to Trukey, Persia, China. Ferment is growing in British India." A significant development is the spread of the revolutionary democratic movement to the Dutch East Indies, to Java and other Dutch colonies with a population of some forty million... World capitalism and the 1905 movement in Russia have finally aroused Asia."¹⁶ He further said: "The awakening of Asia and the beginning of the struggle for power by the advanced proletariat of Europe are a symbol of the new phase in world history that began early this century."¹⁷ With in two weeks after this publication Lenin again wrote in Pravda on May 18, 1913 that every where in Asia a mighty democratic movement was growing, spreading and gaining strength.... No force on earth can prevent its victory, which will liberate both the peoples of Europe and the people of Asia.¹⁸

14. Helene Carrere d'Encausse and Stuart R. Schram, eds; Marxism and Asia : An Introduction with Readings (London, 1969), p. 129.

15. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 13, pp. 75-77.

16. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 19, pp. 85-86.

17. Ibid., p. 86.

18. Ibid., pp. 99-100.

Similarly, it is in the same spirit that in 1916 in his critique of the thesis of Roza Luxemburg, Lenin severely criticised her for her failure to understand that in the age of unbridled imperialism national wars waged by the colonies and semi colonies were not only probable but inevitable and that such battles for national liberation would ultimately take the form of national wars against imperialism.¹⁹

Thus, much before the October Revolution Lenin's writings on the colonial problem pointed in quite clear terms some very significant methodological questions which emanated from his study of the nature and role of imperialism. To put it differently, imperialism was the main focus of Lenin's theoretical formulations on colonialism and national liberation movements.

Firstly Lenin's theory of imperialism was an attempt to explain the formidable fact the revolution had not yet occurred in the most highly developed countries. Explained in simple terms the essence of his theory was as follows: Instead of having developed internal contradictions to a point where Communist revolution must inevitably occur, capitalism had found a way out by expanding into the world in search for cheap raw materials, a market for commodities and excess capital, and cheap labour which would be exploited. Such an expansion was possible primarily because of intense competition between monopolies eager to bring all the processes of manufacture under direct control and stop

19. See V.I. Lenin, "The Junices Pamphet", in Collected Works (Moscow, 1964), Vol. 22, pp. 308-12.

the falling rates of profits at home. Such a process of imperialistic expansion produced super profits from the world dependencies which enabled the capitalists to bribe a part of the proletariat, thereby creating a bond between it and capitalism.²⁰

In short, imperialism was taken as an instrument of robbing the proletariat of its revolutionary character - it was through super profits that the bourgeoisie in the metropolitan countries had succeeded in averting the increase in the misery of the masses which was an essential situation for the out-break of revolution. However, as Lenin argued, this did not remove the irreconcilable contradiction in a capitalist society. Besides some of these contradictions obstinately existing in a capitalist society many of them were transformed on the international level expressing themselves in two forms - (a) Contradictions between the imperialist Powers and (b) Contradictions between the imperialist powers and the colonial world. These questions were specially debated in the Comintern Congress and attempts were made to put them in to practice. So far as, the concret Soviet policy towards Asia is concerned, it began to take proper shape just the next day after the October Revolution, when Lenin announced the famous "Decree on Peace" on November 8, 1917 in which he

20. For a systematic and extensive treatment of Lenin's thought on imperialism, see Alfred G. Meyer, Leninism (Combridge, Mass, 1967); O.F. Kuusinen and others, Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism Manual (Moscow, 1963); Adam B. Ulam, The Unfinished Revolution: An Essay on the Sources of Influence of Marxism and Communism (New York, 1960); Neil Harding, Lenin's Political Thought (Macmillan, 1983).

said: "The workers and peasants' government created by the revolution of November 6-7 and backed by the Soviet of Workers, soldiers and peasants' deputies calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace."²¹

He further stated: "The government considers that it would be the greatest of crime against humanity to continue this war for the purpose of dividing up among the strong and rich nations, the feeble nationalities seized by them and solemnly declares its determination to sign immediately conditions indicated, which are equally just for all peoples without exception... The government abolishes secret diplomacy and for its part, expresses its firm determination to conduct all negotiations quite openly before the whole people. It will immediately proceed to the full publication of the secret treaties ratified or concluded by the government of landlords and capitalists during the period March to November 7, 1917."²²

On the basis of the above declaration, Soviet government abrogated all secret treaties concluded by Tsarist government and paid special attention to Asia countries. Lenin's abrogation of secret treaties between Tsar and the British partitioning Iran and Afghanistan under their sphere of influence, created most

21. V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, (London, 1946), Vol. 6, p. 401.

22. Ibid., p. 402.

favourable atmosphere for the implementation of Soviet policy against colonialism in Asia.

Lenin thus was able to establish both the theoretical and strategical links between (a) the colonial and national questions through the advocacy of a common policy for them; and (b) the united proletarian struggle in the capitalist countries and national liberation movements in the colonies. He, in no circumstances, was prepared to consider 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. He saw a dialectical relationship between the national democratic struggles and the socialist revolution. He showed that the popular masses, the proletariat, peasantry and petty bourgeoisie, of the oppressed nation were the allies of the conscious proletariat of metropolitan countries. Lenin wrote that the world social revolution would occur only "in the form of an epoch of proletarian civil war against the bourgeoisie in advanced countries combined with a whole series of democratic and revolutionary movements including movements for national liberation in the undeveloped backward and oppressed nations."²³ Thus, for a final victory of socialism over capitalism, Lenin laid equal emphasis on the success of socialist revolution in the west, and on the imperative need of national liberation in the colonies.

23. Zafar Iman, Colonialism in East West Relations: A Study of Soviet Policy towards India and Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-47 (New Delhi, 1969), p. 9.

It is quite clear from the forgoing analysis that the elements of theory and strategy intermingled with each other quite admirably in Lenin's formulations on the colonial question. In any case fundamental purpose was never lost sight of. That is to say it was aimed, firstly, to resurrect the proletarian movement in capitalist countries from the reformist quagmire and galvanise it for a new series of militant action to sap the foundation of capitalism. Secondly, it also aimed at forging an inseparable link between the western proletariat and colonised peoples of the east. For this reason the national oppression and colonial exploitation were not distinguished from one another. These two divergent courses were drawn into a common objective - the ultimate victory of socialism and proletarian internationalism.

It is this theoretical position, enunciated by Lenin which subsequently became the guiding principles of Soviet foreign policy and the revolutionary activities of the comintern after October Revolution.

CHAPTER - II

ANTI-COLONIAL SOVIET STRATEGY AND THE
FORMATION OF COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL,
1919

CHAPTER - II

ANTI-COLONIAL SOVIET STRATEGY AND
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Anti-colonialism was the backbone of Soviet foreign policy that had emanated in an extremely hostile atmosphere immediately after the Bolsheviks came in power in October 1917. It was the period of isolation for Soviet Russia in which it had to survive. Most parts of the Asian and African territories had been grabbed by the European colonial masters, who at the same time were the real enemy of the newly born Soviet state in Russia. Under these circumstances Bolsheviks sought their friendship with the colonial people, specially in the East. Through the call of national self determination and freedom for the oppressed people of the world, the Bolsheviks had a definite plan to kill two birds in one stone. Firstly, they wanted to foment revolution in the colonies after ending the domination of the colonial powers and Secondly, to weaken their economic as well as the military position throughout the world. This is how, the anti-colonial policy came into being. It was a miraculous understanding of Lenin who got this policy flourished and world wide most discussed topic through the formation of the Communist International (Comintern) or Third International in March 1919. Thus, the anti-colonial policy of a single isolated state became the

voice of millions of people throughout the world. In this regard Comintern was a miracle for Soviet Russia.

The formation of Comintern was not a sudden phenomenon. It had its root in pre-October Revolution world war I period, when the Social Democrats of Europe belonging to Second International sided with their domestic imperialist rulers' in their war efforts for the world domination. That is why, Lenin called these people social chauvinist or social imperialist. Lenin wrote: "Every one knows that on the question of the attitude to be adopted towards the war the socialists all over the world in all countries, belligerent as well as neutral split into two large main divisions. Some took the side of their governments of their bourgeoisie. These we call social chauvinists, i.e., socialists in words and chauvinists in deeds. A chauvinist is one who conceals the defence of the predatory interests of "his own" ruling classes with the concept "defence of the fatherland."¹

In the beginning the war created a lot of confusions among the workers, so they supported it, however, they gradually came to a clear revolutionary understanding of the events. Therefore, the anti-war movement among the workers was a striking manifestation of this profound left ward shift of the masses. It took shape ideologically and organizationally

1. V.I. Lenin, Selected Works (London, 1946), Vol. 10, p. 14.

in the autumn of 1915 at the International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald (Switzerland) and became known as Zimmerwald movement.² In fact, the Zimmerwald movement became the real ground for the emergence of the Communist International.

The Zimmerwald conference was held from September 5 to 8, 1915 in which 37 delegates from Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Poland, Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania, Switzerland, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden took part. Politically the conference was heterogenous, only 8 delegates from 7 countries took revolutionary internationalist stand. These delegates formed the Left Zimmerwald group. This group took shape ideologically when it moved its own draft resolution and manifesto and then organisationally, when it elected its Bureau headed by Lenin.³ There were two other members of the Bureau—Zinoviev of Russia and Karl Redek of Poland.

The other 29 delegates formed the right-wing of the Conference, known as Zimmerwald majority. The main issue on the Zimmerwald agenda was the question of the proletariat's action for peace. The Zimmerwald Left pointed out in their documents that the only way to put an end to the imperialist war by openly calling and leading the masses of the workers to a revolutionary struggle against the capitalist governments to win political power for the purpose of a socialist organisation

2. A.I. Sobolev and others, Outline History of the Communist International (Moscow, 1971), pp. 28-29.

3. Ibid., p. 29.

of society.⁴

The Zimmerwald Conference, by a majority of 19 to 12, rejected the principled resolution proposed by the left and declared for a manifesto which failed to concretise the tasks and method of struggle. Weighing the importance of the Zimmerwald decisions for the leftwing of International Social Democracy, Lenin wrote that the Conference was the first step to the Third International.⁵

The new International was an urgent need in order to revive the international revolutionary solidarity of the national contingents of the working class, divided by the war and the fit of jingoism and chauvinism, and in order to co-ordinate the efforts of those involved in the spontaneous revolutionary upsurge that was sweeping many countries in various degrees. The Communist International had to help in forming and consolidating still weak communist parties and other left revolutionary groups and organisations. It had also to provide the conditions for collective working out of revolutionary strategy and tactics.⁶ In those days Lenin drafted a concrete plan to arrange an International Socialist Conference to found a Third International. In a note to the G.V. Chicherin, he twice underscored that it must be convened "urgently",

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 30 (Quoted from original sources).

6. V.V. Zagladin, ed., The International Working Class Movement (Moscow, 1984), Vol. 4, p. 264.

"very soon".... Lenin considered that the Third International should not only include the communist parties already founded but from the start should also incorporate those parties and groups that were drawing near to Bolshevism, including existing groups within social democratic parties.⁷ At the same time, while delineating this circle, he suggested inviting to the constituent Congress those who resolutely stood for the break with the social-patriots who were for a socialist revolution and for the dictatorship of the proletariat... who were in principle for "Soviet power" and against limitation of bourgeois parliamentarism, against subordination to it and who recognised the fact that the Soviet type of Government was higher and closer to socialism.⁸

Following the above theoretical framework in January 1918 the first international meeting for the preparation of the Communist International was held in Petrograd, which was attended by the Bolsheviks, Left Socialist-revolutionaries and the left social democrats of Sweden, Norway, Britain, USA, Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia etc. According to Pravda of January 30, 1918, the meeting decided to call a conference of the left on the following conditions:

1. Consent of parties and organisations to engage in revolutionary struggle against their governments for an immediate peace;
2. Support of the October Revolution and Soviet Government. This

7. Ibid., p. 265.

8. Lenin's letter to G.V. Chicherin, quoted in Ibid.

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decision was circulated to Left parties and groups which became the backbone of uniting the internationalist forces of different countries into Communist International. At that time the main task was to unite the Communist movement organisationally due to the European Social democrats' chauvinist position, who had begun to build up a "reformist international organisation in a bid to reestablish the Second International. Following this development, the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) made an urgent appeal to the Communists of other countries to get united in the Third International.⁹ Moscow hosted another international meeting in January 1919 which unanimously adopted Lenin's proposal for convening an inaugural Congress to found the Communist International soon in future. So, an appeal signed by eight parties, was published in Pravda on January 24, 1919 which had formulated the ideological and political platform for the proposed International.¹⁰ The signatories on the appeal were Communist Party of Soviet Russia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Latvia, Finland and the representatives of Balkan Revolutionary Socialist Federation and the American Socialist Labour Party. Subsequently the meeting appealed to 39 parties groups and organisations to discuss the proposal of forming the Communist International and take part in the founding Congress.

Thus, a preliminary meeting held on March 1, 1919 under the chairmanship of Lenin discussed the agenda of the forthcoming

9. A.I. Sobolev, n. 2, p. 50.

10. Abid., also see, V.V. Zagladin, n. 6, p. 226.

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Congress, however, due to the opposition of Hugo Eberlein of German Communist Party, the question of constituting Communist International could not be decided. Eberlain had got mandate from his party to oppose the immediate formation the Comintern, as a result of which it was decided to go directly in the session of international communist conference which was held in Kremlin on March 2, 1919.

The International Communist Conference was inaugurated in the evening of March 2, 1919 at Kremlin presided over by a three member committee consisted of Lenin, Hugo Eberlein (Germany) and Platten of Sweden. Conference was attended by 52 delegates from 35 organisations of 21 countries of Europe, America and Asia. Out of these organisations, 19 had voting rights while 16 were without this rights. The delegates represented the Communist and Left socialist parties and groups of Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, the Netherland, Norway, Poland, Románia, Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom, Soviet Russia, Sweden, Switzernland, and the USA. There were separate delegation from Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Bylorussia, Estonia, Armenia, the Volga Region Germans, Turkestan, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The representatives of Iran, China, Korea and Turkey also attended the conference.¹¹ The International Conference was declared open by Lenin and his first act was to appeal the delegates to rise in honour of

11. A.I. Sobolev, n. 2, p. 51.

the memory of the best representatives of the Third International. Karl Liebknecht and Roza Luxemburg. After paying homage to them, Lenin said: "The bourgeoisie is mad with fear in face of the growing movement of the proletariat. This will become understandable if we take into consideration the fact that the progress of events since the imperialist war is inevitably facilitating the revolutionary movement of the proletariat that the International world revolution is beginning and gaining strength in all countries."¹² After two days of hectic discussions on different issues including whether Communist International should be established or not, ultimately the International Communist Conference decided in favour of establishing the Comintern. When this issue was placed before the Conference, all the delegates voted in favour except Hugo Eberlein of German Communist Party who abstained. The resolution related to the foundation of the Comintern stated: "All parties, organisations and groups retain the right of declaring their adhesion to the Third International within a space of eight months."¹³ After the voting, Hugo Eberlein assured the Conference that after returning back to Germany he would do every thing in persuading his party to join the Comintern. It is a fact that the Communist Party of Germany was one of the first parties to join the Comintern.

12. V.I. Lenin, n. 2, p. 26.

13. The Communist International, No I, 1919, p. 68, Quoted in Ibid., p. 57.

Thus, the International Communist Conference was converted into the first Congress of Communist International on March 4, which ended on March 6, 1919. This is how, the Communist International came in to existence on March 4, 1919. The Congress indorsed the famous "Manifesto of the Communist International to the workers of the World" and "the Appeal to the Workers and Soldiers of All Countries." The Congress appointed G. Zinoviev as first Chairman of the Communist International along with Angelica Balabanova and J. Berzin as secretaries.

In his concluding speech Lenin declared: "Let the bourgeoisie of the whole world continue to rage, let it deport, imprison and even Kill the Spartacists and Bolsheviks - this will help it no longer. It will merely serve to enlighten the masses, to liberate them from the old bourgeois-democratic prejudices and to harden them in the struggle. The victory of proletarian revolution all over the world is assured. The foundation of the international Soviet Republic is impending."¹⁴ Writing about the Third International's (Communist International) place in history on April 15, 1919 Lenin said: "The First International (1864-72) laid the foundation of the proletarian international struggle for socialism. The Second International (1889-1914) marked the epoch in which the ground was prepared for a broad, mass, widespread movement in a number of countries. The Third International gathered the fruits of the work of the

14. V.I. Lenin, n. 1, p. 28.

Second International purged it of its opportunist, social-chauvist bourgeois and petty-bourgeois dross and has begun to effect the dictatorship of proletariat."¹⁵

Thus, after the formation of Communist International, the World Communist movement as well as anti-colonial national liberation movements got a new life and began to emerge every where in the world. Many new Communist Parties were also set up within a year before the Second Congress of Comintern was convened in 1920. The Comintern created a wave specially in the colonies of the East.

To sum up, Lenin was motivated into action towards the formation of Comintern for the following specific long as well as short-term reasons. Firstly, with the war being over the Second International of social democratic parties was being reconstituted. A conference had been held from 3 to 10 February 1919. Lenin surely would have liked to take some prestige away from the Social Democrats while at the same time demonstrating that communist internationalism was able to found its own organization. If he did not, the communist movement would look to the world as if it were disintegrating. The motion passed on 4 March that instituted the Comintern included the admission:

If the Conference convoked in Moscow were not to create the Third International, it might give the impression that the communist parties were in disagreement among themselves. This

15. Ibid., p. 31.

would bring discredit upon our position and increase the confusion among those elements of the proletariat that are vacillating in all countries.¹⁶

Interestingly, the Russian Communist Party, too, had been invited to attend the aforesaid Social-Democratic Conference. On 24 December 1918, in reply to their invitation, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, sent a telegram, published the next day in Pravda, calling upon all the revolutionary and internationalist elements in the European Socialist movement to boycott this "conference of enemies of the working class disguised as Socialists", pointing out that "the Third International, in charge of the world revolution, already exists." In such a situation Lenin was left with no alternative but to immediately proceed to set up the Comintern. Indeed he would not sit calmly by and do nothing while his revolutionary International which he had been the first to advocate back in 1914 and which he considered to have been in existence since the revolution in Russia, was outshined by the Second International, that "Corpse" he had so often proclaimed dead since 1914 and whose leaders, in his eyes, were pack of traitors.¹⁷

Secondly, the troubled international situation of those times and the Soviet distrust of the League of Nations were

16. Piero Melograni, Lenin and the Myth of World Revolution: Ideology and Reasons of State, 1917-1920 (Humanities Press International, INC, 1989), p. 57, (Quoted).

17. Branko Lazitch and Milord M. Dra Chkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern (California, 1972), p. 52.

the immediate factors behind the formation of Comintern. The "Appeal for the formation of Communist International" declared that it was in response to the "capitalist alliance under the banners of the League of Nations" which "will strangle this revolution", that it became necessary to convene the Communist International to further the revolution and promote alliance between the revolutionary proletariat and the country which had carried out a socialist revolution. The objective of the Comintern was, thus, clearly recognised to be revolutionary and safeguard the socialist revolution which in this case meant safeguarding first of all the Soviet State.

Thirdly, the success of October Revolution and the Bolshevik ideology had given a tremendous boost to the aspirations of the toiling and exploited people in Europe as well as Asia. The Bolsheviks sincerely believed that they were working for the World revolution and regarded their own revolution as part of it. At the same time they would not like to forego the benefit from the belief spread Worldwide among socialist organisations, according to which the Soviet Russia seemed to realise their aspirations. Moreover, since the Bolsheviks were desperately searching for outside support they could not have missed the opportunities that this belief offered them. They hoped to set up a centralised net work of communist parties capable of what Lenin wrote "subordinating the interest of the movement within each country to the common interests

of the revolution on an international scale."¹⁸ The other parties of the Comintern would be subordinated to Russia's , as Lenin explicitly put it:

Leadership in the revolutionary proletarian International has passed for a time - for a short time, it goes without saying - to the Russians, just as at various periods of the nineteenth century it was in the hands of the British, then of the French, then of the Germans.¹⁹

Thus as the newly founded International stood, there could be no doubt as to its leadership. Compared to the small groups which had joined them, the Russians were like giants to dwarfs. Moscow became the seat of the International, and Grigori Zinoviev was made its Chairman.

Fourthly, there was a strong section among the Bolsheviks still planning revolution on a global scale, which was thought to be the key to enable Russia to overcome her political isolation and make an economic recovery. Occasionally some of them indulged in wildest dreams. The Russians, as they were largely cut off from the rest of the world saw events as they wanted to see them, and as the revolutionary atmosphere of their own country suggested to be. Trotsky, in the Gazette of his armoured train, wrote an article in which he claimed to see the Red Army, after defeating the whites, conquer Europe and attack America. And Zinoviev in number I of The Communist International, prophesied that within a year not only would

18. Piero Melograni, n. 16, p. 57 (Quoted).

19. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1964), Vol. 29, p. 227.

all Europe be a Soviet Republic, but would already be forgetting that there had ever been a fight for it.²⁰ For such revolutionaries the Comintern signified a different meaning. The existence of Comintern would give these Bolsheviks the feeling that something was moving in the right direction.

Fifthly, it was clearly seen by Lenin that the Comintern would serve him very well in pursuing his objectives in international politics. The policy of "coexistence" which he advocated with the West did not imply any kind of immediate "ideological disarmament." In various messages sent to the Allies, Chicherin and Litvinov promised to stop revolutionary propaganda only after a peace settlement had been signed. Until peace was concluded, the fact that the Third International existed strengthened the Bolsheviks' diplomatic position.

Finally, it was the vast colonised world of Asia and Africa which was the focus of the Russian revolutionary attention. The "weakest link of imperialism" was lying in Asia. For the final defeat of imperialism the liberation of colonies was essential. Hence an alliance had to be forged between the revolutionary Russia, the Western proletarian movement and national liberation movement in the colonies.

This was one of the strongest considerations in the formation of Comintern through whose instrumentalities these various revolutionary trends would be coordinated and guided.

20. Brank Lazitch and M.M. Drachkovitch, n. 17, p. 165.

Hence the colonial dimension of the Comintern's policy becomes an important subject of enquiry.

Thus the foundational Congress of the Third International laid the seed bed of the policy pursued by it subsequently towards colonialism and national liberation movement. The most significant in this respect was the Second Comintern Congress well known in history for its debate on the colonial question and formulation of concrete strategy towards that we shall take it up in the next chapter.

CHAPTER - III

COMINTERN AND ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENT IN
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Every political development in Russia had always influenced Indian freedom struggle in the past, but the post-October Revolutionary events proved to be of farreaching results in the revolutionary history of India. The formation of Communist International (1919) was the biggest among all such events which had direct impact on India and her revolutionary people. It is a historical fact that after the formation of Comintern the seeds of communism began to emerge quickly throughout the country. At the same time, the October Revolution had greatly influenced almost all the top leaders of Indian freedom struggle during that period. From Jawaharlal Nehru to Rabindra Nath Tagore, everyone recognized and greeted the victory of October Revolution. As Nehru wrote: "Like every other great upheaval it (Russian Revolution) had its causes deep down in history and in the misery of generations of human beings."¹

Famous historian Bipan Chandra writes: "A major impetus to the national movement was given by the impact of Russian Revolution. On 7 November 1917, the Bolshevik (Communist)

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, "Lenin", in Anand Gupta, Lenin in India (New Delhi, 1980). p. 105.

Party led by Lenin, overthrew the Czarist regime in Russia and declared the formation of the first socialist state, the Soviet Union, in the history of the World. The new Soviet regime electrified the colonial world by unilaterally renouncing its imperialist rights in China and other parts of Asia, by granting the right of self-determination to the former Czarist colonies in Asia, and by giving an equal status to the Asian nationalities within its borders which had been oppressed as inferior and conquered people by the previous regime.² He further writes that thus the Russian Revolution gave people self confidence and indicated to the leaders of the national movement that they should rely on the strength of common people.³

So far as the freedom struggle or the anti-colonial movement in India is concerned, it is older than the October Revolution, therefore, it is necessary to examine the major events, which were directly related to Lenin and the Indian revolutionaries during the period before and around October Revolution. For the first time Lenin mentioned India in his famous book "Development of Capitalism in Russia" which was published at the outset of the beginning of the Twentieth Century. He said: "Agricultural capitalism is taking another

2. Bipan Chandra, Modern India (New Delhi, 1976), p. 262.

3. Ibid.

enormous step forward; it is boundlessly expanding the commercial production of agricultural produce and drawing a number of new countries into the world arena; it is driving patriarchal agriculture out of its last refuges, such as Russia and India."⁴

However, the first most powerful opinion by Lenin was expressed in his famous article "Inflamable Material in World Politics," which he wrote after the arrest of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1908. Tilak's trial had aroused massive protest in Bombay and other places of India. A large number of workers in Bombay had gone on strike against his arrest. Lenin called Tilak and his followers democrats and political leaders of the people and wrote: "In India the street is beginning to stand up for its writers and political leaders. The infamous sentence pronounced by the British jackals on the Indian democrat Tilak - he was sentenced to a long term of exile, the question in the British House of Commons the other day revealing that the Indian jurors had declared for acquittal and that the verdict had been passed by the vote of the British jurors - this revenge against a democrat by the lackeys of the money bag evoked street demonstrations and a strike in Bombay."⁵ He further wrote: "In Indian lately, the native slaves of the 'civilized' Britished capitalists have

4. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1968), Vol. 3, p. 329.

5. V.I. Lenin, Ibid., Vol. 15, pp. 183-84.

been a source of worry to their 'masters'. There is no end to the acts of violence and plunder which goes under the name of the British System of Government in India."⁶

Though the proper link between Lenin and Indian revolutionaries could be established only after the formation of Communist International in March 1919, some Indians did come in close to Lenin long back in 1907 when Madam B.R. Cama and S.R. Rana attended the famous International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart along with Lenin. However, nothing is known whether these two Indians had any separate discussion with Lenin or not.

Later on, the first two Indians who met Lenin after October Revolution were two brothers Abdul Jabbar Khairy and Abdul Sattar Khairy. Both were living in Germany and after hearing the news of October Revolution they decided to see Lenin. They met Lenin on November 23, 1918 in Kremlin. No record of their talks with Lenin is available but they are understood to have conveyed the greetings of Indian people on the victory of the October Revolution and told him that "his slogan calling for the self determination of nations had penetrated India crossing all barriers set by the British and made the Indian people confident of their victory over the British imperialists."⁷

6. Ibid.

7. Anand Gupta, Lenin in India, n.l, p. 30.

After their meeting with Lenin both were invited by All Russians Central Executive Committee on November 25, 1918. In a address they said: "Leaders of the Russian Revolution, Comrades, Friends!

"Allow us to thank you for affording us the joy of speaking to you personally and of congratulating you on behalf of the Indian people. Allow us to convey greetings to the Russian Revolution which has brought us new hope and showed us a new road in our struggle."⁸

Jabbar and Sattar presented a sandalwood stick with an ivory tip to Lenin as a token of their admiration for the Russian Revolution. This has been preserved in the Lenin Museum in Moscow.⁹

However, the editor of the documents of Communist Party of India has written: "Strictly speaking the documents connected with Jabbar and Sattar Khairy, who were Pan islamists from the very beginning and later on their return to India became supporters of Hitler fascism, do not belong to CPI."¹⁰

Later on Jabbar Khairy attended the International meeting held at Petrograd on December 5, 1918. Speaking on that occasion Jabbar said: "I am speaking in the name of 330 millions

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. G. Adhikari, ed., Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India (New Delhi, 1971), Vol. I, p. 93.

of Indian people who are being oppressed by British imperialism. I express my deep gratitude to you for making it possible for me to visit your country, to see with my own eyes the success achieved by the Russian proletarian movement, and for the opportunity offered to me to speak to you about my country...¹¹

Though the Communist Party of India sources have made an attempt to prove Khairy brothers as German agent by presenting several documents,¹² their meeting with Lenin as first two Indians after October Revolution will always remain as an important historical event regarding Indian revolutionaries' contact with Lenin. After Jabbar brothers meeting with Lenin, it became possible only after the formation of the Comintern that a delegation of Indian revolutionaries led by Raja Mahendra Pratap reach Moscow and met Lenin on May 7, 1919. Other members of the delegation were M. Barkatullah, M.P.B.T. Acharya, Abdul Rab Peshawari, Dalip Singh Gill and Ibrahim.¹³ Raja Mahendra Pratap had earlier set up a "Provisional Government of India" in Kabul and in 1919 he along with other Indian revolutionaries was asked to leave Afghanistan as a result of which he looked towards Bolsheviki for their help support to Indian freedom struggle.

11. Ibid., p. 101.

12. See for detail, Ibid., pp. 93-95.

13. Ibid., p. 110.

Later on Raja Mahendra Pratap wrote in his memoirs: "This is the story of 1919. I had come back to Russia from Germany. I stayed at palacial building of the former sugar-King. Maulana Barakatullah could establish his headquarters at this place. He was in very good relation with the Russian Foreign Office. When there was scarcity of food in the city we were right royally feasted. My Indian friends who had started on this journey with me from Berlin could also come and gather here. One evening we received a phone call from Soviet foreign office. I was told that some one was coming and that I should hand over my pamphlets to the man. This I did. Next morning was the day when I with my friends were to meet Comrade Lenin at the Kremlin."¹⁴ He further wrote: Prof. Vosnesensky took us to the ancient Imperial Palace of Moscow. We passed through the guards. We went upstairs. We entered a big room with a big table at which was sitting the famous Red leader Comrade Lenin. I being at the head of the party, entered first and proceeded towards the figure sitting right before me. To my astonishment the man or the hero stood up suddenly, went to a corner and fetched a small chair and put the chair near his office chair. And as I arrived by his side he asked me to sit down. For a moment I thought in my mind, where to sit, asking myself should I sit on the small chair brought by Mr. Lenin himself

14. Raja Mahendra Pratap, Reflections of an Exile, (Lahore, 1946), pp. 44-47, Quoted in Ibid., p. 112.

or should I sit on one of the huge easy chairs covered with morocco leather. I decided to sit on that small chair and sat down, while my friends Maulana Barakatullah and others, took their seats on richly upholstered chairs.

"Comrade Lenin asked me, in what language he was to address me - English, French, German or Russian. I told him that we should better speak in English. And I presented to him my book of the "Religion of Love." To my astonishment he said that he had already read it. Quickly arguing in my mind I could see that the pamphlets demanded by the foreign office a day earlier were meant for Lenin himself. Lenin said that my book was "Tolstoyism". I presented to him also my plan of having notes repayable not in gold or silver but in more necessary commodities such as wheat, rice, butter, oil, coal etc. We had quite a long conversation. Mr. Lenin had a few words to say to all of us. So much so that Lenin also asked a couple of questions of a servant of Maulana Barkatallah who remained standing a bit far. Prof. Vosnesensky also did not sit."¹⁵

Providing an interesting information Raja Mahendra Pratap writes: "It was after this interview that the Foreign Office decided that I must accompany His Excellency Mr. Sourits, the first Russian Ambassador to the court of Afghanistan.

15. Ibid., p. 112-13.

My job was to introduce Mr. Sourits to King Amanullah Khan. Of course, the official position of the ambassador needed not any introduction of some private character. But it was thought that I was a personal friend of the King, I could better plead personally on behalf of Red Bear."¹⁶ During this period Maulana Barakatullah proved to be an important link not only between India and Soviet Russia but always between Afghanistan and Soviet Russia. As Barakatullah in an interview with Petrograd Pravda in 1919 said: "I am not a communist nor a socialist, but my political programme at present is the expulsion of the English from Asia. I am an irreconcilable enemy of European capitalism in Asia whose main representative is the English. In this I concur with the communists and in this respect we are genuine allies."¹⁷

Regarding his link between Soviet Russia and Afghanistan, he said: "In March 1919 after Habibullah was assassinated and Amanullah, who hated the English, ascended the throne, I, as one of the most trusted persons of the new Amir, was sent to Moscow as 'ambassador extraordinary' for establishing permanent relations with Soviet Russia. With this the new Amir cancelled the alliance treaty with the British, according to which Afghanistan was obliged not to enter into diplomatic relations with any other country

16. Ibid., p. 113.

17. Ibid., p. 118.

than England.¹⁸

So far as, the ideological trend in Anti-colonial movement in India is concerned, it began to emerge particularly after the conclusion of Second Congress of Comintern which was held from July 19 to August 7, 1920 in Petrograd and Moscow. The Second Congress was a turning point for Soviet Russia in expanding her influence throughout the world, particularly in Asia. The long period of the Congress deliberations continuously for 19 days (first 4 days in Petrograd and the rest in Moscow) also proves its urgency and importance.

According to Lazitch and DrachKovich, when Lenin undertook a task that he regarded as important, he threw himself into it totally. There were no half measures. He was interested himself directly and almost all the theses that Second Congress was to adopt either personally writing their original text (as on the national and colonial issues, the agrarian question, the basic tasks of the Second Congress, conditions for admission to the International) or over seeing their writings (as Parliamentarianism and Syndicalism.)¹⁹

National and colonial question was most important among all the above issues which was thoroughly debated in the

18: Ibid., p. 119.

19. Branko Lazitch and Milord M. DrachKovitch, Lenin and the Comintern (California, 1972), p. 280.

Congress and became famous due to fierce controversy between Lenin and M.N. Roy of India. It was a very crucial period in the anti-colonial struggle in India as the British colonialism had to face the famous Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement between 1919 and 1922. In the absence of diplomatic relation between Soviet Russia and the British, it was extremely difficult for Bolsheviks to have direct contact with Indian revolutionaries. This is why every Indian revolutionary who visited Russia, had to travel through Europe or through Afghanistan. In this way an outstanding Indian revolutionary M.N. Roy (real name Narendra Nath Bhattacharya) went to attend the Second Congress of the Comintern in Moscow as a Mexican delegate, and created a tempest by putting up a parallel thesis on colonial question before the Congress against the formulations of Lenin. If we look briefly at their formulations, it will appear that Lenin had argued in favour of an united front between communists and the national bourgeois leaders to fight out the colonizers, however, M.N. Roy advocated that the communists should launch a dual struggle against colonizers as well as national bourgeoisie in order to fulfil the task of a pure socialist revolution.

Lenin clearly pointed out, "the Communist International must support the bourgeois democratic national movements in colonial and backward counties only on the condition that the

elements of future proletarian parties existing in all backward countries, which are not merely communist in name, shall be grouped together and trained to appreciate their special task, viz., the tasks of fighting the bourgeois democratic movement within their own nations; the Communist International must enter into temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in colonial and backward countries, but must not merge with it, and must unconditionally preserve the independence of the proletarian movement even in its most rudimentary form."²⁰

Recalling the debate about colonial question and his difference with Lenin M.N. Roy says in his memoirs: "I pointed out that the bourgeoisie even in the most advanced colonial countries like India, as a class, was not economically and culturally differentiated from the feudal social orders; therefore, the nationalist movement was ideologically reactionary in the sense that the triumph would not necessarily mean a bourgeois - democratic revolution. The role of Gandhi was the crucial point of difference. Lenin believed that as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, he was revolutionary. I maintained that as a religious and cultural revivalist, he was bound to be reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically."²¹ He further says that Lenin's

20. V.I. Lenin, Selected Works (London, 1946), Vol. 10, p. 273.

21. M.N. Roy's Memoirs (Bombay, 1964), p. 379.

attitude was very kind and tolerant. In the beginning he appeared to be amused by the naivete of a novice. But before long, he was impressed by my arguments, and could not dispute the authenticity of the facts I cited. It was perhaps the most valuable experience of my life until then. I had the rare privilege of being treated as an equal by a great man who proved his greatness by doing so. He could refuse to waste his precious time in discussing with a young man of no importance. I would have no chance to make myself heard in the International Congress.²² About his own thesis, M.N. Roy mentions: "Lenin finally amazed me by proposing that, after a general discussion in the commission set up to examine the question, he would move that his thesis as well as mine should be recommended for adoption by the Congress. There upon I agreed to formulate my critical notes and positive ideas in a document, which I insisted, should be presented not as the alternative, but as supplementary thesis. Lenin agreed with remark that we were exploring a new ground and should suspend final judgement pending practical experience. I also agreed, but with a mental reservation. It was not a new ground for me. I was quite sure of my position, and Lenin's open-minded attitude gave me the conviction that was right."²³ About argument and counter argument he finally says

22. Ibid., p. 380

23. Ibid., pp. 380.81.

that Lenin reported the discussion in the Commission to a plenary session of the Congress and recommended the adoption of both theses.²⁴

About the same affair, speaking in the Second Congress of the Comintern on July 26, 1920, Lenin said: "Comrades, I will confine myself to a brief introduction, and later, Comrade Maring, who acted as Secretary of our Commission, will submit to you a detailed report on the changes which we have made in theses. After him, Comrade Roy, who formulated supplementary thesis, will speak. Our commission unanimously adopted the preliminary thesis, with amendments and also the supplementary thesis. Thus we succeeded in achieving complete unanimity on all the important questions..."²⁵ Lenin further says: "I would particularly to emphasize the question of the bourgeois democratic movement in backward countries. It was this question that gave rise to some disagreement. We argued about whether it would be correct, in principle and in theory, to declare that Communist International and the Communist Parties should support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of this discussion we unanimously decided to speak of the nationalist-revolutionary movement instead of the "bourgeois democratic" movement. There is not the slightest doubt that every nationalist movement can only be a bourgeois

24. Ibid., p. 382.

25. V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. 10, n. 20, p. 239.

democratic movement, for the bulk of the population in backward countries are peasants, who represent bourgeois-capitalist relations."²⁶ Earlier Lenin had termed M.N. Roy's thesis as "written mainly from the point of view of the situation in India and among other large nationalities which are oppressed by Great Britain, and this is what makes them very important for us."²⁷ According to the proceedings of the Comintern: "Roy maintains that the revolution in Europe depends utterly on the course of revolution in the East. Unless revolution triumphs in the Eastern countries, the Communist movement in the West may fall apart. World capitalism draws its main resources and income from the colonies, primarily from Asia... It is therefore essential to fuel the revolutionary movement in the East, and adopt as a fundamental thesis that the fate of world communism depends on the victory of communism in the East."²⁸

Refuting M.N. Roy's view point, Lenin said: "The Hindu Communists must support the bourgeois democratic movement without merging with it. Comrade Roy goes too far when he says that the fate of the West depends entirely on the development and strength of the revolutionary movement in the Eastern

26. Ibid., p. 240.

27. Ibid.,

28. Branko Lazitch and Milord M. DrachKnovitch, n. 19, p. 388 (Quated from original Russian Sources).

countries. Though India has five million proletarians and thirty seven million landless peasants, the Hindu Communists still have not succeeded in forming a Communist Party in that country, a fact which by itself cuts much of the ground from under Comrade Roy's opinion.²⁹ Perhaps it was Lenin's remark which expedited M.N. Roy to set up a Communist Party of India at Tashkent on October 17, 1920. However, under the shadow of these controversies, M.N. Roy's thesis was amended and brought in line with Lenin's thesis and thus both theses were adopted. Though the original thesis of M.N. Roy was forgotten by the Comintern, its impact could not be wiped out from the mind of many leaders and activists of anti-colonial movements particularly in India.

Just after Second Congress of the Comintern was over the "Congress of the Peoples of the East" was held in Baku from September 1 to 8, 1920. It was attended by 1891 persons representing various nationalities inhabiting the former Russian empire as well as independent Eastern states. The chief speaker representing Russian Communist Party were Zinoviev and Pavlovich. These communist dignitaries exhorted the delegates to declare a holy war against the British and French capitalist and to join with Soviet Russia in a common struggle.³⁰

29. Ibid., p. 389.

30. Xenia Joukoff Eudin and Robert C. North, Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-27: A Documentary Survey, (California, 1957), p. 80.

Following the Baku Congress of the People of the East a permanent Council for Propaganda and Action of the Peoples of the East was set up as an auxiliary for the Comintern. Since India was at first the object of particular interest for Moscow, the office of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in Tashkent assumed at an early date the task of revolutionary minded Indians and in due course a special training school was set up there. Later, the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International, three man organization including M.N. Roy carried on work.³¹

In October 1920 a group of thirty six (including one Shaukat Osmami) reached Tashkent, where they were met by Roy and enrolled in a training course for revolutionaries. After ten months of training at Tashkent, three members of this group (Shaukat Osmami, Abdul Majid and Abdul Kabir Sehrai) were selected for further instruction in Moscow. Somewhat later (March 1921) the Tashkent School was closed (as a result of conditions laid down by the British in concluding the Soviet-British agreement of March 16, 1921) and most of the remaining Indian revolutionaries enrolled there were also shifted to Moscow, where they were admitted to the Communist University of Toilers of the East.³²

In June 1921, another deputation of Indian revolutionaries reached Moscow. This group (led by Virendra Chattopadhyaya

31. Ibid., p. 82.

32. Ibid., p. 84 (Quoted from Original Sources).

and including Bhupen, C.P. Dutt, G.A.K. Luhani, Agnes Smendhey, Khankoji and Nalini Gupta) represented Indian revolutionaries who had organized themselves in Berlin during World War I, their object being, of course, to exploit that conflict to the detriment of British rule in India. At about the same time fifteen or so Indian students from the University of the Toilers of the East returned to India, where they were arrested in 1922, tried at Peshawar and sentenced to imprisonment in proceedings of the Tashkent Conspiracy Case.³³

So far as, Military or Training School for Indian revolutionaries in Tashkent is concerned, it was an unique land mark in Soviet policy towards anti-colonial movement in India. Regarding this school M.N. Roy says: "The group of Russian officers who had accompanied me from Moscow was still in Tashkent. To then was entrusted the organisation of the school. John, the American Wobbly, was appointed the Commandant of the school. He was to look after the discipline. Having looked over his wards, he circastically remarked "We are going to train not an Indian army of revolution, but an army of God."³⁴ In fact, this remark was made by him specially due to Muslim Muhajirs from India who were mostly getting training at the school.

33. Ibid.

34. M.N. Roy, n. 21, p. 465.

Regarding foundation of the Military School M.N. Roy has given some interesting accounts according that: "The formal foundation of Military School was ceremonious affair attended by high officials of the Turkestan Republic and the leaders of the Turkestan Communist Party. According to an agreement Russians kept away in view of the fact that, just at that time diplomatic negotiations were going on between Soviet Government and the Britain for resumption of trade relations which would end the long economic blockade of the Soviet Republic."³⁵

Roy further says: "There anxious to put an end to the economic blockade, the Soviet Government was reluctant to do anything which might queer the pitch of the diplomatic negotiations for the resumption of trade with Britain. A pathological suspicion, however, could not be easily allayed. Before the year was out, the Soviet Government received a blistering note from the British Foreign Secretary which referred to the Indian Military School at Tashkent as evidence of Soviet aggressive design against the British Empire. As a rupture of newly establish economic relations with Britain would prejudice the painful process of Russian reconstruction, the Indian Military School at Tashkent had to be disbanded."³⁶

35. Ibid., p. 468.

36. Ibid.

According to the official documents of the CPI, there were three courses in the Indian Military School at Tashkent: One for training airforce pilots and officers, another for infantry officers and a third for ordinary infantry soldiers. Better educated cadres were selected for the first two courses while the uneducated were taken to the third course. General political education was given to all but the more educated were given an impressive political education course.³⁷

Regarding the closure of Indian Military School, N.I. Fovrovsky, a deputy member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Turkestan Front and a veteran Communist Party member since July 1917 who was appointed to look after the Muhajirs, refuting M.N. Roy's version says: "At one of the council meetings, Roy, speaking for the entire group asked for food, military equipment and assistance in organising military training; of course, we knew what this entailed. When Roy left the meeting after putting his case, there were such remarks as adventurism, fantastic, etc.... It was decided to give Indian comrades all possible support without however being involved in their plan. That too as far as I know was the attitude of Moscow. Indian were allotted a shooting range of the Chirchik highway near Tashkent and began their military training....but it was not long before the whole plan had to

37. G. Adhikari, n. 10, p. 53.

be abandoned... The Afghan Government categorically refused permission to cross Afghanistan on the way to India. Roy's repeated and insistent appeals to Afghan Consulate in Tashkent were of no avail. In the spring of 1921 military training stopped. Some of the Indian decided to return to India illegally, other stayed on in Tashkent, several joined Red Army and 22 returned to Moscow to study at the Communist University of Toilers of the East."³⁸

However, during that period the Indian Military School at Tashkent and the Communist University at Moscow played great role in creating ideological framework for the Indian revolutionaries. In fact, this period inspired some dedicated Indian revolutionaries to convert themselves into communists and thus four different communist groups emerged in India for the first time in country's history. These groups were in Bombay led by S.A. Dange, in Calcutta led by Muzaffar Ahmed, in Madras led by Singaravelu Chettiar and in Lahore led by Gulam Hussain. Regarding these groups Muzaffar Ahmed writes: "For all of us, the epicentre was the Communist International its headquarters lay thousands of miles away, in Moscow. However, the Communist International established independent contacts with each of these four places. In some cases the

38. New Times, (Moscow, 1967), No. 14, Quoted in Ibid., pp. 237-38.

Communist International introduced us to one another, as for instance, it did Dange to me."³⁹ This is the time when Dange's famous book "Gandhi vs Lenin" drew the attention of Communist International toward Indian affairs.

During this period 36th Session of Indian National Congress was held in Ahmadabad in 1921. In the name of Communist Party of India a manifesto under signed by M.N. Roy and Abani Mukherjee was addressed to this session. The Manifesto put forward a full fledged programme of anti-imperialist democratic revolution with particular stress on the demands of the workers and peasants so as to draw them fully in to the freedom struggle. It is on the basis of this Manifesto that Maulana Hasrat Mohani moved a resolution for complete independence at the Ahmedabad session - a resolution which was defeated only due to vehement opposition of Mahatma Gandhi.⁴⁰ As it was the period of "Non-Cooperation Movement, the India witnessed unprecedented movement of the people against British colonialism. Thousands of students had left schools and colleges to plung in to freedom struggle. On February 1, 1922, Mahatma Gandhi announced that would start mass civil disobedience, including non payment of taxes unless within seven days the political prisoners were released and the press freed

39. Muzaffar Ahmed, Myself and the Communist Party of India (Calcutta, 1970), p. 78.

40. For the text if the Manifesto, see, G. Adhikari, n. 10, pp. 341-54.

from Government control.⁴¹

Just after the above declaration of Gandhi, on February 5, 1922 a Congress procession of 3000 peasants a Chauri Chaura a village in Gorakh Pur district of U.P., was fired upon by the police. The angry crowd attacked and burnt the police station causing the death of 22 policemen. Gandhiji took a very serious view of the incident. It convinced him that the nationalist workers had not yet properly understood nor burnt the practice of non-violence without which he was convinced, civil disobedience could not be success... He therefore, decided to suspend the nationalist campaign.⁴² To give Gandhi's opinion an official line of the Congress Party, its Working Committee met at Bardoli in Gujarat on February 12, 1922 and decided to withdraw the non-cooperation movement. Regarding this affairs Subhas Chandra Bose writes in his biography, "The Indian Struggle": "To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was nothing short of a national calamity. The principal lieutenants of Mahatma, Desh Bandhu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai, who were all in prison, shared the popular resentment. I was with Desh Bandhu at the time and I could see that he was beside himself with anger and sorrow at the way Mahatma Gandhi was repeatedly bungling."⁴³

41. Bipan Chandra, n. 2, p. 274.

42. Ibid., pp. 275-75.

43. Quoted in Ibid., p. 275.

In the meantime Kilafat movement also ended with Kamal Pasha declaring the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924. Thus we see the period under study in this chapter - 1920-24 was marked by great upheavals in the anti-colonial struggle in India. Many revolutionaries were illusioned following the withdrawal of non-cooperation movement by Gandhiji. This situation provided opportunity to a lot of prominent revolutionaries to embrace Marxism under the influence of Communist International. Following Second Congress of the Comintern, its Third, Fourth and Fifth Congresses held in 1921, 1922 and 1924 respectively during the mentioned period, paid much attention on anti-colonial movement in India as well as whole of the Asia. In a resolution the Third Congress of the Comintern (1921) said: "The revolutionary national movement in India and in other colonies, is today an essential component part of the world revolution to the same extent as the uprising of the proletariat in the Capitalist countries of the old and new world."⁴⁴ The Fourth Congress of the Comintern 1922 came out with the slogan of anti-imperialist front in Asian countries which was directly connected with the slogan of United working class front in the Western countries. The Congress

44. R.A. Ulyanovsky, ed., The Comintern and the East (Moscow, 1979), p. 154 (Quoted).

underlined that there is a long struggle ahead of the proletariat of the East...and said: "The refusal of the Communists in the colonies to take part in the struggle against imperialist tyranny on the ground of the ostensible 'defence' of their independent class interests is opportunism of the worst kind, which can only discredit the proletarian revolution in the East. Equally injurious is the attempt to remain aloof from the struggle for the most urgent everyday interests of the working class in the name of national unity of 'civil peace' with the bourgeois democrats."⁴⁵ The Congress further said: "The Communist Parties of the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East, which are still in a more or less embryonic stage must take part in every movement which gives them access to the masses."⁴⁶ The above analysis of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern proved to be a forecast for the Indian Communists whose refusal to adopt that resulted in disastrous situation in early 1940s during "Quit India" movement.

The year of Fourth Congress of the Comintern was also the year of famous 37th Gaya Congress of the Indian National Congress in 1922 which was held after the disastrous collapse of non-cooperation movement.

45. Documents of Fourth Congress of Comintern, in G. Adhikari, n. 10, p. 534.

46. Ibid.

In a message to Gaya Congress, the Communist International said: "To the All India National Congress, Gaya, India. Representative of Indian people! The Fourth Congress of the Communist International sends to you its heartiest greetings. We are chiefly interested in the struggle of the Indians to free themselves from British domination... The infamous methods by which British imperialism sucks the life blood of the Indian people are well known. They can not be condemned too strongly; nor will simple condemnation be of any practical value. British rule in India was established by force and is maintained by force, therefore it can and will be overthrown only by a violent revolution. We are (not?) in favour of resorting to violence if it can be helped; but for self-defence the people of India must adopt violent means, without which the foreign domination based upon violence can not be ended. The people of India are engaged in this great revolutionary struggle. The Communist International is whole heartedly with them."⁴⁷

The document of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern suggested the in leading the struggle for national liberation the Indian National Congress should keep the following points always in view:⁴⁸

- (1) that the normal development of the people can not be assured unless imperialist domination is completely destroyed;

47. Ibid., pp. 573-74. (Quoted).

48. Ibid., p. 576.

- (2) that no compromise with the British rulers will improve the position of the majority of the nation;
- (3) that the British domination can not be overthrown with out a violent revolution, and
- (4) that the workers and peasants are alone capable of carrying the revolution to victory.

Therefore, in order to declare its complete freedom from all connection with reactionary upper classes, the National Congress should categorically declare that its political programme is the establishment of a democratic republic, completely independent of any foreign control.

The above suggestions of the Comintern to the Indian National Congress are historically very crucial as it appears from them that the way Gandhiji withdrew the non-cooperation movement was not at all liked by the Soviets as well as the Comintern, however, the most important and crucial point was, putting in the minds of Indian National Congress the need for a violent revolution in India led by workers and the peasants.

After Gaya Congress there was a kind of 'stand still' situation in India during 1923 and 24. According to Soviet sources The National Congress as an organization was undergoing a profound crisis: in 1921-1923 its membership had dropped from ten million to a few hundred thousand. The withdrawal of masses could be explained in the light of the temporary defeat of the freedom movement.⁴⁹ Later on the

49. A. Antonova, G. Bongard-Levin, and G. Kotovsky, A History of India (Moscow, 1979), Vol. 2, p. 173.

Fifth Congress of the Comintern was held in June 1924 at a crucial stage when Lenin was already dead. The key issue at the Congress was that of rallying the ranks of the working class and of whole world revolutionary movement in face of the attacks of capital especially the task of strengthening the Communist parties.⁵⁰ Three Indian - M.N. Roy, Mohammed Ali and Clemens Dutt attend the Fifth Congress of the Comintern. Attentions were again focussed on national and colonial questions, however, this period was also marked by left deviation and anarchism in the anti-colonial and communist movements. Though there was no official communist party in India, the different communist groups operating through out the country were just on the verge of uniting them selves to form a party soon, which was materialized in 1925. Due to withdrawal of non-cooperation movement by Gandhiji, the communist groups found more ground to follow the extremist course in the freedom struggle. Thus the period under study in this chapter passed through great ups and downs, a trend which continued to prevail even in the future course of anti-colonial movement in India.

50. A.I. Sobolev and others, Outline History of the Communist International (Moscow, 1971), p. 210.

CHAPTER - IV

EMERGENCE OF COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE
COMINTERN POLICY IN INDIA, 1925-28

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The Communist Movement in India emerged during freedom struggle as a result of direct impact of October Revolution in Russia. Like many revolutionaries of the world the Indian revolutionaries were also the first to grasp the message of October Revolution. That is why, Many of them sneaked into Russian territory after passing through great difficulties caused by the then British colonial rulers. A Soviet scholar M.A. Persits has rightly pointed out that it was in Soviet Russia that the pioneer forces of the Asian Communist movement were trained and formed in the context of a revolutionary upsurge among its working people. It was there, through practical work rather than through theory alone, that they realized that they needed a Marxist-Leninist party as a powerful organizing guiding force.... It was there, too that Lenin's famous dispute with M.N. Roy, the first Indian communist took place. Lenin expended too much energy and so much time for his discussions and disputes with Roy, for he saw him as a typical representative of Eastern emigrant revolutionaries who were turning to Marxism.¹

1. M.A. Persits, Revolutionaries of India in Russia, (Moscow, 1983), p. 13.

Hundreds of Indian revolutionaries migrated to Russia between 1918 and 1922. Most of them stayed in Soviet Central Asia. Some of the emigrants were Indian Muslims as they belonged to famous Khilafat movement in India. According to Soviet sources those people stayed on in Soviet Republic for months and years and some even became its citizens.... The first Indian communist group was formed by emigres in Soviet Central Asia. Some of its leaders were the exponent of the most left radical views in the communist movement that was emerging in the East.²

Quoting P. Unni Krishan's article published in Link, 1964, Persits has provided an important information about an Indian emigre, the 23 years old Nisar Mohammed of Peshawar who became a communist in Soviet Russia and appointed to the post of Minister of Education of Tajik Soviet Republic and later on changed over to research.³ According to an other account the Indian revolutionaries, once they turned up on Soviet soil clashed in heated debates about socialism which often split them into small groups of partitions of Socialist principles. It happened in Termez in August 1920, where one of such debates took place. There was quite a clash between them, as an official of the Council for International Propaganda reported. As a result, the Indians broke into two groups, a "nationalist majority" led by Mamed Akbar, a land owner's son, and a minority

2. Ibid., pp. 17-18.

3. Ibid., p. 112.

(22) "communist trend" headed by Abdul Qwayum.⁴ Later on Abdul Qwayum just like Nisar Mohammed adopted Soviet citizenship and served as a Red Army Commander in the city of Kalinin and shared in rebuilding railway transport and industry.⁵

In this way, we may find dozens of such cases about Indian revolutionaries, who played an important role not only in Indian freedom struggle but also in the fight for socialism in Russia. We have already mentioned about first two Indians, the Jabbar and Sattar brothers who had met Lenin in 1918 and also about the activities of other top revolutionaries like M.N. Roy etc. in Comintern. Behind the background of such activities, the first attempt to form a Communist Party of India was made on the Russian soil itself. As mentioned in the previous chapter, M.N. Roy immediately after returning from the Second Congress of the Comintern to Tashkent announced the formation of the Communist Party of India on October 17, 1920. Besides M.N. Roy six others who took part in the foundation of the party were Mrs. Evelyn Trent (Roy's American wife) Abani Mukherji, Bosa Fitingof (Abani's Russian wife), Mohammed Ali (Ahmad Hussain), Mohammed Shafiq Siddiqui and M.P.B.T. Acharya. According to the minutes of the meeting: "It adopted a resolution establishing the condition of 3 months probation period (as candidate member) for those persons who wished to join the party. Comrade Shafiq is elected as secretary. The Indian Communist Party adopts principles proclaimed by the Third International and undertakes to work out a programme suited

4. Ibid., pp. 113-14.

5. Ibid., p. 115 (Quoted).

to the conditions in India."⁶ It was undersigned by M. Acharya as Chairman and Roy as Secretary.

According to another document related to the formation of the party a letter was sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan written on December 20, 1920 which says: "It is hereby testified that the Communist Party of India has been organised here in accordance with the principles of the Third International. The Indian Communist Party is working under the political guidance of the Turkestan Bureau of Comintern."⁷

Here, it is also interesting to note that the conflict which arose among, the Indian communist in Tashkent also figured on the agenda of the meeting of the Turkestan Bureau, Central Committee, Russian Communist Party and Bureau, Communist Party of India, dated December 31, 1920. According to the minutes of this meeting: "The conflict took place between members of the Indian Revolutionary Committee, Comrade Roy and Acharya, on grounds of disagreement on question of methods of work among the Indian emigres in Tashkent. Comrade Roy proposes to leave with the revolutionary committee the charge of the work outside the country (USSR) and entrust the work among emigres inside the country to the Turk Bureau of the Comintern. In this way, Comrade Acharya, remaining in the revolutionary committee (Indian), has to conduct wide underground work and the question

6. G. Adhikari, Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India (New Delhi), Vol. I, p. 231. Also, see, Muzaffar Ahmad, Myself and the Communist Party, of India (Calcutta, 1970), pp. 46-47.

7. Ibid., p. 220.

dividing the members of Revolutionary Committee, therefore, ceases to exist at the moment. Comrade Roy is ready to abide by the decisions which would be taken in the present meeting and suggests that Comrade Acharya continue to stay in the Revolutionary Committee.

"Comrade Acharya considers it necessary to remove Comrade Roy from the work in the Bureau of the Comintern and the Indian Revolutionary Committee as he has lost popularity among the Indians."

"The new Revolutionary Committee should consist of two Indians and one representative of the Russian Communist Party. The Indian should be explained that they would not be forced to join the party. Comrade Roy may be kept for propaganda and literary work only."⁸

The minutes further mention: "(a) The composition of Indian Revolutionary Committee is left intact as before until the meeting of an all India Congress (in Moscow) and until the conflict is resolved in the main by the Executive Committee of the Comintern; (b) None of the Comrades should speak about these disagreements; (c) The care of the Indian emigrants is temporarily given over to the Tashkent Bureau of the Comintern; (d) The members of the Revolutionary committee should leave for Moscow as soon as possible to resolve these problems."⁹

The above documents are enough proof to show as to what extent the Comintern was involved in the affairs of the Communist

8. Ibid., pp. 231-32.

9. Ibid., p. 232.

Party of India at Tashkent. At the same time, perhaps inner conflict was the sole reason as a result of which the Indian Communist Party in Tashkent could not flourish for a long time and therefore, an urgent need was felt to form a Communist Party on the Indian soil.

In the previous chapter we have already mentioned about Communist University of the Toilers of the East which was known in Russian as *Kommunisti cheskii Universitet Trudiashchikhsia Vostoka* (KUTV). It played great ideological role in training hundreds of revolutionaries of the East including many dozens of Indians too. This University was established on April 21, 1921 following a decree of the All Russian Central Executive Committee. The decree stipulated that the KUTV was to be located in Moscow and was to be under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities which was instructed with the organization and direction of the project.¹⁰ Speaking on the fourth anniversary of the Communist University, Stalin defined the purpose of the University in the following words:

"There are two lines of activity at the University: one, the purpose of which is to train cadets competent to attend to the needs of the Soviet Republics of the East, and the other, the purpose of which to train cadres competent to attend to the revolutionary needs of the toiling masses of the colonies and

10. Xenia Joukoff Eudin and Robert C. North, Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-1927: A Documentary Study (California, 1957), p. 85 (Quoted from original sources).

dependent countries. Hence the two kinds of tasks that confront the University of Toilers of the East.

"In the University of the Toilers of the East there are about ten different groups of students, who have come to us from colonial and dependent countries. We all know that these Comrades thirst for light and knowledge. The task of the University of Toilers of the East is to forge them into true revolutionaries, armed with the theory of Leninism equipped with the practical experience of Leninism and capable of conscientiously fulfilling the immediate tasks facing the liberation movement in the colonies and independent countries."¹¹

The KUTV proved to be another landmark in the field of political education for the Indian emigres in Moscow after Indian Military School's closure at Tashkent. Soviet scholar Persits has pointed out that the news of the creation of the Communist University of Toilers of the East reached quickly and made many of its nationalist revolutionaries eager to study in Moscow.¹² He further reveals: "One Indian Communist we could never identify, who had left the Soviet capital in August 1921, reached Bombay on December 15, wrote to Secretary of Indian Communist Party, to tell him about his nearly seven months travels throughout the land (until June 2, 1922). He said that he had passed through ten industrial centres of India and met many who wanted to go to Moscow to learn the art of revolution

11. Ibid., p. 174.

12. M.A. Persits, n. 1, p. 242.

Of that number, "some 50 young students were ready to pay their way to Moscow, if there was a chance for them to enrol at the Communist University."¹³

The first group of eight Indian who had completed their course of study at the Communist University sent messages of gratitude to the Executive Committee of Communist International (ECCI) and the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) on November 20, 1921. In their first letter to Comintern, they said: "We, the Indian section of the Communist University for Eastern peoples, on the completion of our course of study of social sciences, send our greetings to the Executive Committee of the Communist International and...we wish to express our loyalty to the communist ideas which we have received through our contact with the Communist International, the first revolutionary organs of the world proletariat to extend the hand of Comradeship to the oppressed peoples of the East."¹⁴

In their second message, the Indians expressed their gratitude to the RCP (B) "for the welcome we have received in Russia and the opportunities for study and improvement that have been given to us there...."¹⁵

Regarding Indians study in Communist University, Soviet sources have disclosed some interesting informations. It is

13. Ibid., p. 209.

14. Ibid., p. 210.

15. Ibid.,

already mentioned earlier that the sharp differences among Indian revolutionaries in Tashkent had surfaced to the boiling point. M.N. Roy was the centre of all these conflicts among Indians. So Persits says that in the prevailing situation, the Comintern took what was a wise decision, indeed. The idea behind it was to help Indian revolutionaries learn Marxist-Leninist theory so as to switch them from futile pursuit of an immediate socialist revolution to a strategy of long and fundamental preparations for it. That was at the same time, a real way to shaping the Communist Party of India, a true party of the Indian working class. Therefore, in April 1921, the Small Bureau of the Comintern resolved to stop with Indian immigrants in Turkestan and transfer all Indians to Moscow to be admitted to the just established Communist University of the Toilers of the East.¹⁶

Thus the Tashkent and later on the Moscow based Indian communist revolutionaries despite their differences, played historical role in formation of real Communist Party of India in 1925 in India. In this regard, the official documents mention four trends from which individuals and groups in their search for a new paths for the struggle for independence turned to scientific socialism and communism under the impact of October Revolution. These four trends are the following:¹⁷

16. Ibid., pp. 206-207 (Quoted from original sources).

17. G. Adhikari, n. 6, pp. 1-2, Also see, Guidelines of the History of the Communist Party of India (New Delhi, 1974), pp. 2-3.

1. Indian national revolutionaries operating from abroad in the period of the First World War and thereafter from Germany, the USA, Turkey and Afghanistan who earlier functioned through the Berlin Committee and the "provisional government" of "independent India" or otherwise, and later came to be influenced by the October Revolution - persons like V. Chattopadhyaya, M. Barkatullah, M.P.B.T. Acharya, M.N. Roy and Abani Mukherji.
2. National revolutionaries from Pan-Islamic Khilafat movement, who went abroad in the war period (1914-16) and those from the great hijarat movement of the post war period and who similarly came under the influence of the October Revolution such as Mohammed Ali Sepassi, Rahmat Ali Khan, Firozuddin Mansoor, Abdul Majid and Shaukat Usmani.
3. National revolutionaries of the Ghadar Party organised among the sikh and Punjabi labour (U.S.A.) before and first world was who staged an unsuccessful armed action at the time when the Komagata Maru arrived in India. These persons directly drawn towards the ideas of Marxism-Leninism come from the second period of the movement when it was revived and reorganized by Rattan Singh and Santokh Singh and who took the initiative to establish contact with Communist International.
4. The fourth and the most important trend was of the national revolutionaries in India itself - from the left wing of the National Congress, the terrorist organizations and parties, the Khilafat movement, the Akali movement (specially

its Babar Akali leftwing linked with the Ghadar Party). Individuals and groups of this trend - when disillusioned with Gandhiji's ideology of non-violent resistance after the debacle of movement in 1921-22 or those who never accepted it - turned to scientific socialism and to building the class organizations of workers and peasants under the impact of the October Revolution and later became the founders of the Communist groups in the country - Dange in Bombay, Singaravelu Chettiar in Madras, Muzaffar Ahmad in Calcutta and Inquilab group in Lahore.

All these groups functioned separately without having any contact in each other in the beginning, however, it was Comintern again which came forward to unite them. As recalling those activities Muzaffar Ahmad writes: "At various times, both earlier and later, attempt to build the Communist Party began at four places in India. These attempts were not the outcome of any decision taken after discussions at a joint meeting of those who first ventured upon this task; they started independently of each other and at a different places: one even did not know the other. Calcutta, Bombay, Lahore and Madras are separately from one another by a distance of more than a thousand miles. Far apart from one another as we were, we ventured upon the task of building an all India Party. We were able to do so because communism is an international movement. For all of us, the epicentre was the Communist International, its headquarters lay thousands of mile away in Moscow.

However, the Communist International established independent connections with each of these four places. In some cases the Communist International introduced us to one another (as, for instance, it did Dange to me).¹⁸

In fact, Sripad Amrit Dange was the first to be contacted by the Comintern as his book "Gandhi vs. Lenin" drew the attention of the leaders of October Revolution like Lenin. The first paragraph of the book begins with: "On 15th March 1917 the success of the first Russian Revolution was announced to the world by the abdication of the Czar, the "Autocrat of the Russia." The English statesmen and all the world hailed it as one step towards the realization of democracy in the world. But when Kerensky's Government was overthrown by the Second Russian Revolution of November 7th and the Russian policy, directed by the Bolshevik in the Soviet Government, was changed by the peace with the central powers and when Russia withdrew from the war, then as if by magic, the British statesmen began to see the hideous monster of despotism and danger to the whole world, in the place, in which not long ago, they were disposed to find the very heaven of democracy. They began to cry down the Bolsheviks and Russia as "Treachorous", then refused to have any connection with her government and began to spread news of alleged devilish atrocities on the part of Bolsheviks, in other nations...."¹⁹

18. Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, p. 78.

19. S.A. Dange, Selected Writings (Lok Vangmay Grish, Bombay, 1974), p. 74.

In the book, Dange made an interesting comparison between Gnadhi and Lenin. Covering their common aims in destroying social evils of the day specially the misery of the poor and subverting despotism.²⁰

In May 1922, S.A. Dange began to publish a weekly English journal called "Socialist", which was India's first Marxist periodical. It gave detailed coverage of the works by Marx and Lenin provided information on the October Revolution in Russia and discussed aspects of the national liberation movement in India. In September 1922 the "Socialist" announced the formation of the Indian Labour Socialist Party of the Indian National Congress. The name of this Marxist group which counted among its members S.A. Dange, S.V. Ghate, K.N. Joglekar and R.S. Nimbkar, shows that the emergence of a Marxist wing of the national movement at that period was viewed by Dange and his associates as the creation of a left faction within the Congress.²¹

As the activities of the four communist groups of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Lahore are well known in the process of forming the Communist Party, a Soviet scholar G. Kotovsky has mentioned about a Marxist group in Varanasi. He says: "In 1922 Shaukat Usmani after returning from Moscow set up a communist group in Banares."²² The details about this group is not

20. For the detailed study, see, Ibid., pp. 92-95.

21. K. Antonova, G. Bongard-Levin and G.Kotovsky, A History of India (Moscow, 1979), Vol. 2, p. 180.

22. Ibid.

available. However, between 1922 and 1924 the communist activities grew fast particularly in the industrial centres of the country. In the meantime contacts were established with Communist International. The growing strength of the communists inside India and their frequent contacts with the leadership of Comintern alarmed the British rulers. That is why, between 1922 and 1924, four conspiracy cases against Indian communists were held at Peshawar alone. But the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case, 1924 became very important because almost entire top leadership of the different communist groups of the country was implicated in this case.

Muzaffar Ahmad, an accused in Kanpur Conspiracy Case has pointed out: "At first, a list of 155 persons was prepared, which included the names of even those at whose addresses our literatures, letters, etc. were sent. This, I think, was an absurd list. Finally, the Intelligence Bureau prepared a list of 13 persons furnished with full details about them and forwarded it to their counsels for consideration."²³ These 13 persons were: M.N. Roy, Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani, Ghulam Hussain, S.A. Dange, M. Singaravelu Chettiar, Ram Charan Lal Sharma, Nalini Gupta, Shamsuddin Hassan, M.H.T. Velayudhan, Manilal Doctor (Shah), Sampurnanand and Satyabhakta.

Out of the 13 accused S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmad, Nalini Gupta and Shaukat Usmani were arrested and the session judge

23. Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, p. 239.

delivered the verdict on May 22, 1924 and sentenced them to 4 years of imprisonment. The two main charges against the accused in Kanpur case were: (1) Communist International was trying to set up a branch in India through the accused; (2) the accused were trying to set up a workers and peasants' party.²⁴ In the meantime, Comintern sent Percy Gladding a member of British Communist Party to India in January 1925, but he could not contact the real communists.²⁵

Amid these developments "The First Indian Communist Conference was held from 26 to 28 December 1925 at Kanpur. This conference was convened by Satyabhakta who was not a member of any of the recognised communist groups functioning in India at the time and the leaders of which were prosecuted and sentenced in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case."²⁶ The official CPI documents have revealed that the first session took place on 25 December 1925 in a special pandal built near the Congress pandal in Kanpur. According to Kirti (February 1926) 300 delegates attended the Conference. However, the confidential report of Government of India gives the number as about 500. In the first session, Satyabhakta's message was read out. This was followed by the speech of the Chairman of the reception committee Hasrat Mohani and then by the presidential address of M. Singaravelu.²⁷

24. Guidelines... n. 17, p. 13.

25. Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, p. 459.

26. G. Adhikari, n. 6, Vol. 2, p. 591.

27. Ibid., p. 613.

The second session met in the evening of 26 December. This was devoted to resolutions while the third session was held on 27 December which was devoted to the adoption of the Constitution and to the elections of the Central Executive Committee. On 28 December 1925 the Central Executive Committee met and elected the office bearers, the president, the vice president, the general secretaries and the members of the CEC incharge of various provinces.²⁸ Later on this meeting announced the formation of the Communist Party of India. It elected M. Singaravelu as president and S.V. Ghate as one of the secretaries. K.N. Joglekar, R.S. Nimbkar, Muzaffar Ahmad were among first Committee.

After the formation of the Communist Party of India, the workers movement grew very fast throughout the country. In the meantime Comintern International began to play much attention on communist affairs along with national liberation movement in India. According to Soviet sources the problems of the national liberation movement in India were discussed in March 1926 once again at the Sixth Plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International. It underlined in its resolution: "No one says that the communists are able to lead the Indian proletariat in a historic struggle for national independence and social liberty. It still had not had objective information on the Kanpur Conference (Roy was

28. Ibid.

largely to blame for that), and so the resolution noted that many attempts that had been made to unite the scattered communist groups had been so far unsuccessful. As the most important task of Indian Communists the Plenum nominated the setting up of a strong communist party on the basis of the existing communist groups. It underlined the importance of work by Indian Communists within the unions so as to turn the All India Trade Union Congress into a militant proletarian organization.²⁹ The Plenum further noted that the peasantry, whom the proletariat was to lead, would be a decisive factor for the destiny of the Indian revolution. Therefore, Indian Communists were recommended to adopt a detailed programme of work among the peasant masses so as to unite the various peasant organizations into a single general national organization under the influence of Communists.³⁰

So far as, the Indian Communists' relation with Indian National Congress is concerned, the communists had to enter that organisation as a most active force so as later to occupy a vanguard position in the popular struggle for national emancipation. In this regard, the Comintern recommended Indian Communists to do the following:³¹ to work within the Indian National Congress; to form an alliance with its left-wing

29. A. Reznikov, The Comintern and the East: Strategy and Tactics in the National Liberation Movement (Moscow, 1984), p. 145.

30. Ibid., p. 146.

31. Ibid.

groups for the purpose of putting pressure on the right; to strengthen the left-wing of the Congress, so that it might go over to national revolutionary position. At the sametime, Comintern believed that the communists should fortify and extend their own influence and mass base within the Indian National Congress; that way (acting wherever the masses are to be found) they would be able to establish a broad revolutionary organization on the basis of the Congress's left-wing; to influence its policy, but by no means try to "seize" control of it or turn it into a Communist Party.³²

After the Sixth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, George Allison another leader of British Communist Party came to India. He reached Bombay on April 30, 1926. Muzaffar Ahmad writes: "I never heard him say what instructions he had received from the Red International of Labour Unions at the time of coming to India but from his programme of activities are got the impression that he would do trade-union work openly, while maintaining contact with the party secretary. He was in Bombay from May to October 1926 and did not have to face any dangerous situation there."³³

In fact, George Allison had come to India under an assumed name, Donald Campbell. He was sent out to help bring into existence a militant trade union movement in India. In

32. Ibid.

33. Muzaffar Ahmad, n.6 , p. 460.

a letter dated November 1926 and addressed to Indian Comrades, the foreign bureau of the CPI says, "I hope you are already informed about Campbell....His main task is to help the development of the left wing inside the Trade Union Congress. He has been advised to keep out of party politics except in an advisory capacity where necessary. Some other Comrade especially charged with this task will meet you soon if he has not done so already."³⁴ Thus George Allison became deeply involved in trade union activities specially in Bombay and Calcutta. However, his identity was disclosed in early 1927 and was arrested in Calcutta and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for 18 months.³⁵ Later on Philip Spratt from the British Communist Party, a graduate from Cambridge University came to India in December 1926. He was sent by Clemens Palme Dutta, the brother of Rajni Palme Dutta. He was followed by another top British Communist Benjamin Francis Bradley (Ben Bradley) who arrived in India in September 1927. They also got deeply involved in communist movement in India as a result, Spratt and Bradley, both were later arrested in famous Meerut Conspiracy Case in 1929.³⁶

During the activities of British Communists advised by Comintern in India, some important events took place in 1926-27.

34. Meerut Conspiracy Record, D 371, Quoted in G. Adhikari, n. 6, Vol. III A, p. 48.

35. For the details of Allison arrest and trial, see, Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, pp. 462-64.

36. For the detailed activities of Spratt and Bradley, see, Ibid., pp. 465-70.

For the first time Communist Party of India brought out a "Manifesto to the All India National Congress"³⁷ in December 1926. It was a historical document in the sense that for the first time theoretically the communists expressed their readiness to cooperate with Indian National Congress on the basis of anti-imperialist and democratic demands. This Manifesto was addressed to the Congress Session at Gauhati held in 1926.

Muzaffar Ahmad says about the above Manifesto: "It was printed in London by the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India. We got printed copies of the manifesto in packets by post in Calcutta. Comrade Abdul Halim arranged to distribute them in Gauhati."³⁸ Earlier on the advice of Comintern several units of workers and peasants parties were set up by the Communists particularly in Bengal, Bombay, U.P. and Punjab. These parties were set up as left-wing nationalist organizations of workers and peasants within Indian National Congress. But the Comintern feared that the energy spent on building such parties might hamper the prospect of united communist party in India.

Therefore, in December 1927, the Comintern prepared a letter to the Central Committee of the workers' and peasants' party of Bengal and pointed out that the formation of workers'

37. For the detailed study of the Manifesto, see, G. Adhikari, n. 6, Vol. III A, pp. 231-35.

38. Muzaffar Ahmad, n. 6, pp. 467.

and peasants' party by no means signified the elimination of the Communist Party. So, it emphasised the need to preserve and safeguard the ideological political and organisational independence of the Communist Party of India.³⁹

In the meantime, the historic Sixth Congress of the Comintern was held in Moscow from July 17 to September 1, 1928. The Congress adopted a new programme of the Communist International which evaluated the strength of imperialism and the strength of revolution, gave a profound analysis of the general crisis of capitalism and drew the conclusion that the downfall of capitalism and the victory of the world socialist revolution were inevitable.⁴⁰ It was the Congress in which the question of "socialism in one country" became a hot point of theoretical controversy in the international communist movement. Trotsky called this concept as revisionist and pleaded that the "victory of proletarian revolution in a single given country is impossible without the support of a world revolution."⁴¹

The controversy about the role of national bourgeoisie arose again in this Congress. It brought India once again at the centre of controversy like Second Congress of Comintern. Regarding the formulation about temporary agreements with the national bourgeoisie, the Indian delegates attending the

39. A. Reznikov, n. 29, pp. 149.50.

40. A.I. Sobolev and others, Outline History of the Communist International (Moscow, 1971), p. 277.

41. Ibid.

Congress raised their voice against it. One of the Indian delegates Narayan said: "I consider this formulation to be fundamentally wrong. After our experience in India in 1922, when the bourgeoisie betrayed the great mass movement, which shook India from one end to the other, it is high time now to formulate it more clearly to show that the bourgeoisie can never fight imperialism genuinely..."

"Even political alliance with the bourgeoisie means the abandonment of the slogan of agrarian revolution, which means the virtual abolition of revolutionary struggle in the colonial countries, especially in such a predominantly agricultural country like India."⁴²

During and after the Sixth Congress of the Comintern the controversy regarding ideological position of the Communist towards national bourgeoisie engulfed the Asian Communist Parties. Indian Communist became worst victim of sectarianism. The above speech by Indian delegate is an outstanding example of sectarianism. Comintern tried time again to advise Indian Communist to save them from deviations but ultimately failed. It was the period of the second non-cooperation movement launched by Indian national Congress in 1927-28. The foot print of ideological position of communists could be clearly seen in this movement. In the meantime M.N. Roy's political differences

42. H.C. Encausse and S.R. Schram, Marxism in Asia, (London, 1969), p. 235.

with Comintern leadership regarding his ideological position in India became very acute and ultimately he was expelled from the Comintern in 1929.

Thus, we see that the period under study in this chapter, 1925 to 28 passed through great upheavals in India and the Comintern got itself involved time and again in advising the Indian Communists to stand ideologically correct, however, the sectarianism which prevailed in the entire International Communist movement during that period, did not allow Indian Communists to correct themselves.

CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

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In the preceding chapters we have discussed the ideological and historical background of the Soviet policy towards anti-colonial movement which constituted the basis of the subsequent foundation of Communist International. Drawing from the ideological and revolutionary experience of the European working class movement from the days of Marx and Engels the establishment of the Communist International at the initiative of Lenin was by far the most significant attempt to promote revolution on a world scale. It was also an attempt to resurrect revolutionary Marxism from a degenerate reformist stage where it had been reduced by the Second International. But was it that the formation of Communist International was prompted mainly for ideological considerations? The available evidence would defy such an assertion. The historical facts eloquently suggest that the compelling reasons behind the formation of Comintern was as much strategic and tactical as ideological. To put it differently, in Lenin's conception there was hardly any contradiction between ideology and strategy - in fact, one logically flowed from the other. Thus the Comintern was both the ideological and strategic quintessence of the aspirations and efforts of Russian revolutionaries led by Lenin.

The international communist organization, the Comintern, was founded in Moscow on 4 March 1919, through the initiative

of Lenin. As to Lenin's role in its creation zinoviev seems to have expressed the truth most succinctly: "In as much as in a thing like the Communist International one may speak about the role of an individual, one may consider it Lenin's creation."¹

The creation of Comintern was the result of a long drawn out process which had been initiated by Lenin much before the October Revolution. It was he who primarily conceived the idea, armed it with a driving spirit, launched it as a slogan and translated it into concrete revolutionary action. The year 1914, the year which saw the beginning of the world war I was ominous for Lenin's ideological and strategic departure from the European Social Democracy. It was in this year Lenin had publicly suggested that the party led by him abandon the name "Social Democratic" in favour of communist as well as given the slogan "Long live the Third International."² Although both of these objectives of Lenin could be fulfilled only after the revolution in Russia, the creation of the Third International signifying a rupture and revolutionary tilt in the European working class movement may be said to have begun in 1914 only. In other words, although the Comintern's creation could be possible only in 1919 its idea and the conviction of its necessity continued to motivate

1. Branke Lazitch and Milorad M. Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), p. 50 (Quoted).

2. Ibid.

Lenin from 1914 onwards.

Lenin's revolutionary action at this time was guided by "an extremely simple and clear perspective, based upon an unshakable conviction" that the split within the Russian Social Democratic movement in the early years of this century between the revolutionaries (Bolsheviks) and the reformers (Mensheviks) was required to be within the international workers' movement with the sole aim of reasserting the supremacy of revolutionary Marxism. He had also the firm conviction that the Russian events of 1917 constituting the fall of Tzarist regime, the democratic revolution, the collapse of the ensuing liberal regime and the ultimate victory of communism would all be reenacted in the immediate future throughout Europe as well. Hence the revolutionary events of Europe during the war period provided the Russian revolutionaries a historical opportunity as well as a set of formidable challenges, the most prominent among them were to defeat opportunist and reformist Socialism, to found a new revolutionary international and to bring about the triumph of the revolution. According to Lenin these were the three imperative goals which always, particularly between 1918 and 1920, thought as on the verge of achievement.³

Lenin's all important decisions throughout his career was motivated by either his historical perspective or tactical

3. For the detail, see, *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

considerations. He used both these factors interchangeably depending upon their suitability in given circumstances. Hence, although in the sense of logic, and historical perspective the foundation of Communist International should have been preceded by the creation of communist parties in Europe as had been suggested by Roza Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches, Lenin showed his preference for tactical considerations mainly. Accordingly, he took recourse to actual possibilities open to him, i.e., if he "was unable singlehandedly to bring about immediate formation of Communist parties in the leading countries of Europe, he certainly was able, in Moscow, to impose the founding of the Communist International. Thus, though lacking communist parties in Europe, one would at least have a Communist International ready when the Revolution unfurled its banners."⁴

It would be relevant here to take into account the international situation in the immediate aftermath of October Revolution which created compelling reason for Lenin's new Soviet power to take urgent steps for the creation of Comintern. Needless to emphasize that the complexity of the then International situation stimulated not only the ideological perspectives of the Russian revolutionaries but prompted them also to further elaborate their strategy in the face of mounting challenges.

One of the first decrees passed by the new Soviet Government after the revolution asked for a "just and democratic

4. Ibid.

peace." This was explained as "an immediate peace without annexations (i.e. without seizer of foreign territory, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nationalities) and without indemnities."⁵ Apart from making an appeal to the West the Soviet Government called on the least as well, declaring the sevut treaties of the Tzar as abrogated. More particularly, the treaties of the Tzarist government on the division of Persia and Turkey were ended as also were the unequal ties with Afghanistan, Mangolia and China.⁶

It was a period of hectic diplomatic moves by the Soviet Government. A proposal was made for an immediate armistice to the armies of the Central Powers followed by a series of appeals for peace and peace negotiations.⁷ In the international conference attended by Soviet representatives, proposals for peace negotiations included a clause and demanded that colonies be treated at par with other countries, no forcible annexations be allowed and peace as well as national and political independence be given.⁸

While preparations were being made for the Versailles Treaty four out of five main Allied and Associated powers had

5. Jane Degras ed., Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, 1917-1924 (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), Vol. 1, p. 1.

6. The Soviet Union and Peace: The Most Important Documents issued by the Government of the USSR Concerning Peace and Disarmament from 1917 to 1929, with an introduction by H. Barbusse (London: Martin Lawrence, 1929), p. 4.

7. Degras, n. 5, pp. 3 and 9.

8. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

intervened militarily in Russia in order to over throw the Bolsheviks and keep it at war with Germany. Though the principles of "Peace and Security for all" were stressed in President Wilson's "14 point charter", which formed the basis of the League of Nations in April 1919, curiously Soviet Russia was not covered by this scheme. In a note to President Wilson on his speech Chicherin, Soviet Foreign Minister complained that the West advocated for the independence only of Poland, Serbia and Belgium and freedom for the peoples of Austria-Hungary. He wrote further:

"Most probably you mean by this that the masses of the peoples must everywhere first take their destiny into their own hands, in order to unite afterwards in a free League of Nations. But strangely enough we donot find among your demands the liberation of Ireland, Egypt or India, nor even the liberation of the Philippines and we would find it a matter of deep regret if these people were to be denied the opportunity of taking part, together with us, through their freely elected representatives in constructing the League of Nations."⁹

Chicherin warned that "the League of Nations may not turn out to be a League of capitalists against nations."¹⁰

Behind this background, it was Communist International which became the real advocate of freedom and liberty for the

9. Barabusse, n. 6, p. 52.

10. Ibid., p. 55.

oppressed nations, specially in the East. Since India was the biggest British colony of the world, it attracted comintern's attention more than any other problem that came before Soviet Russia. Historically India was very important for the Soviet strategy in the East. Looking at the past, it becomes quite obvious that the British and the Tzarist Russia could not see each-other eye to eye in their colonial strategy in the East over India. Tzarist Russia had, ofcourse, her own plan of colonial expansion in the East. In this process, the British framed their policies to contain russia within her borders, so as to continue their domination over India. This is why, these colonial ambition of Britain and Tzarist Russia turned in to fierce rivalry in Iran and Afghanistan due to their neighbourhood with India.

However, this rivalry continued ever after October Revolution but with a difference. Of course, the Soviet Russia had no colonial ambition, but their revolutionary pursuit created more problems and alarm for the British empire. In this regard, the well-defined anti-colonial policy by the Second Congress of the Comintern earned a lot of friends in India as well as in the entire East for Soviet Russia. At the same time, it also turned to be a problem for Soviet Russia in the west as all the colonial powers got together to nip the first socialist state in the bud, however, it was anti-colonialism alone which provided Soviet Russia the greatest ever strength to fight the west. Thus the Comintern became

most powerful instrument of Soviet strategy in implementing their policies in the East. The Comintern proved to be more successful in India as due to its efforts the communist movement emerged and then flourished during early twenties. It also influenced the national liberation movement in India particularly during the period of this study, i.e., 1919-1928.

We have already seen in the preceding chapters how the Comintern and the Soviet leaders became involved in Indian affairs. However, not all the times, it played its role with authority, as the differences of Indian leaders like M.N. Roy and others with the Comintern and Lenin proved to be of farreaching impact not only in India but also on the entire international communist and anti-colonial movements. The concluding period of this study, i.e. 1928 is a landmark in the history of Comintern and Soviet strategy in the East because it was the year of penultimate Congress of the Comintern. The last and Seventh Congress could be held in 1935 after a long gap, as Soviet Russia became deeply involved in her own affairs of building socialism as well as making preparation to face a World War in coming future. Better still the facts will always remain and tell about the historical role, the Comintern played during the anti-colonial and Communist movement in India.

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